# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BURNOUT AMONGST SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH REGIONS OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

The social work profession is strongly client based with workers being involved in complex social situations (Lloyd, King & Chenoweth, 2002). Social workers judgement and decision making are influenced by their emotions and the emotional context of the situation. Thus emotional intelligence is a core skill for every social worker. Morrison (2007) purported that in order to be a good practitioner one had to be able to comprehend and mange one's emotions and be completely aware of the power of these emotions.

Social work thus requires emotional involvement and it is therefore not uncommon for social workers to be emotionally drained and frustrated, which inevitably can lead to burnout (Lukelelo, 2004). According to Howe (2008), on a daily basis social workers face the complex world of human behaviour within the social context. Within this world relationships are broken, emotions run high and personal needs may not be met. However, Kinman and Grant (2010) postulated if social workers possessed the correct emotional and social competencies it would assist them in coping with the stressors of the profession and could reduce psychological distress and enhance well-being.

This study was therefore undertaken to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

Convenience sampling was used to select the sample. One-hundred and ninety-two social workers employed in the Social Development Department participated in the study. In order to collect the data a self-developed Biographical Questionnaire, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test and the Maslach Burnout Inventory were used. The data was analysed using SPSS and the results were interpreted by using descriptive and inferential statistics (T-Test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Analysis of Variance).

The results indicated that there was a significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. Furthermore, for the dimensions of burnout and total emotional intelligence, there was a significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion, as well as a statistically significant and inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and depersonalisation. Moreover, a significant and direct correlation was found between personal accomplishment and emotional intelligence.

Further findings of the current study showed that there are significant differences in burnout based on social workers' gender, age and tenure. Also, significant differences in emotional intelligence were found based on social workers' gender, age and tenure.

Recommendations are proposed on the findings and conclusions drawn of the current study.

**KEY WORDS**

Emotional Intelligence, Burnout, Social Worker, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation, Personal Accomplishment, Stress, Social Work Development Department

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the **"The relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape"** is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other institution of higher learning, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Magister Commercii at the University of the Western Cape.

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**Date:**        **May 2013**

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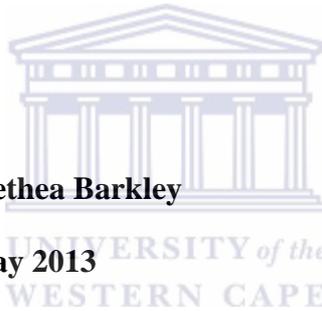
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*"… if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you"*

*(Matthew 17 vs. 20).*

I hereby wish to express my gratitude to the people and entities that played a role in enabling me to complete this mini-thesis:

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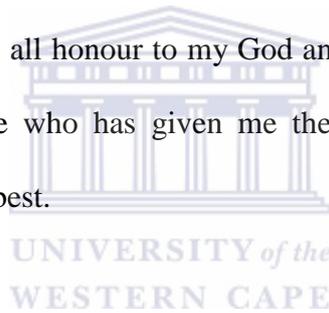
To my entire family, friends and acquaintances for their inspiration, encouragement, support and understanding throughout my studies, especially:

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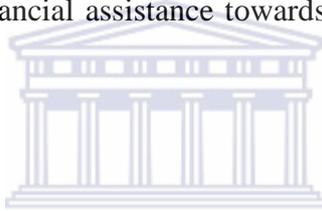
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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1  INTRODUCTION

There are many difficulties and challenges in the workplace, especially during recent years as the pace of work in organisations has rapidly increased. There are various factors which contributed to this phenomenon occurring today, which could have included changes in the economy, sustaining a competitive edge, changes in organisational structures and technological advances (Nel, Werner, Poist, Sono, Du Plessis & Ngalo, 2011). Organisational stressors could have had a major impact not only on employees but organisations as well. Prolonged stress can develop into burnout, which is a phenomenon which has been on the rise for the past two to three decades (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Findings by Brotheridge and Lee (2003) have increased the interest in the role of emotions in trying to understand how increased interpersonal reactions in a job may have contributed to an employee developing burnout.

van Tonder and Williams (2009) postulated that burnout has become a vital issue for many organisations whose aims were to produce quality products and services on a sustainable basis and to remain innovative in an increasingly competitive environment. It is important that organisations understand the elements that contribute to burnout in order to assist employees in interventions and coping

strategies. Research has shown workers in human service occupations such as nurses, police officers, social workers and teachers are more vulnerable to high degrees of burnout (Coffey & Coleman, 2001 cited in Brand, 2007). According to Arrington (2008), the social work profession often has several challenges or obstacles that may have caused social workers to experience overwhelming feelings and stress. Many studies have indicated that social work is an occupation which reaps high job satisfaction however, this particular occupation tends to report higher levels of work related stress and burnout than many other occupational groups (Collins, 2007; Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor & Millet, 2005; Lloyd, King & Chenoweth, 2002; Rose, 2003 all cited in Kinman & Grant, 2010).

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) established that burnout was not only due to the frequency and high quantity of relations with clients, but that the quality of experiences played a vital role in the development of burnout. A growing number of studies have shown that the emotional content of interpersonal encounters between workers and their clients and the need to regulate emotional expressions in a mandated way can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and eventually a diminished sense of personal accomplishment (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Diefendorff, Croyle & Gosserand, 2005 all cited in Furnell, 2008).

Emotional intelligence not only assisted in dealing with emotional responses, but it also enabled the appropriate exploitation of emotions in various situations and could predict reductions in burnout (Alam, Mombeni, Maleki, Monazami, Alam, Vatandoust & Nasirzade, 2012). Chan (2006) postulated that individuals who had heightened levels of emotional intelligence might have been less susceptible to burnout, since these individuals may have been able to produce healthier information and action tendencies within emotions and use this information to make sense of their reactions of stressors as well as to guide adaptive actions.

Bar-On (2000) defined emotional intelligence as a collection of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management) that could influence an individual's ability to manage with environmental demands. Similarly, Cartwright and Solloway (2007, p.1) defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to understand, accept and recognise our own emotions and feelings, including their impact on ourselves and other people and to use this knowledge to improve our own behaviour as well as to manage and improve our relationships with others."

Some studies have shown emotional intelligence is just as important as cognitive intelligence (Tucker, Sojka, Barone & McCarthy, 2000). Gryn (2010, p. 2) stated that "emotional intelligence is important in the work context and should therefore be the focus of any competitive company." Similarly, Brand (2007) posited that the capacity of individuals to manage their emotions could have a positive impact

on relationships with colleagues and clients, which could reflect in the work quality they deliver and subsequently affect the profitability of the organisation.

Various studies have debated the influence of emotional intelligence on stress and researchers have argued that emotional intelligence provide the mechanisms to respond fittingly to different stressors (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). For example, in a study conducted by Slaski and Cartwright (2002) it was claimed that emotional intelligence could serve as a moderator in the stress process. Thus it is important that organisations employ and develop employees' emotional intelligence in order for the workforce to be able to be aware of their own emotions and the emotions of others, in order to increase organisational effectiveness.
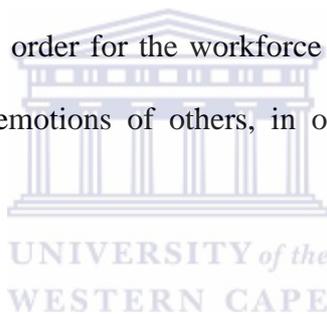
Social workers deal with emotional work on a daily basis, thus it is imperative they possess high levels of emotional intelligence in order to deliver an efficient service to society. According to Howe (2008 cited in Kinman & Grant, 2010), the successful management of emotions is likely to underpin resilience in social care workers. Furthermore, the authors were of the opinion that poor emotion management skills are likely to have a negative impact on colleagues and clients as well as the individual social worker. Isen (2000 cited in Kinman & Grant, 2010) found that positive emotion is associated with many mental capabilities which have an effect on judgement and decision making as well as greater flexibility in negotiation which has clear implications for effective assessment

skills and collaborative social work practice. Emotional intelligence is vital in order to gain the cooperation of other colleagues and services on which social workers depend to achieve their outcomes and to survive and thrive in tough competition.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The social work profession is strongly client based, with workers being involved in complex social situations (Lloyd, King & Chenoweth, 2002). This characteristic of the social work profession makes it one of the professions which can experience many of the conflicts that are evident in human service work. According to Megele (2011), social work is a relationship based profession which involves:
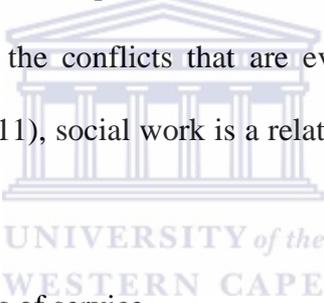
- Engaging the users of service,

- Engaging with other professionals,

- Interagency and interdisciplinary working,

- Relationships with colleagues and

- Relationships with service providers.

There are many obstacles and challenges which social workers may face on a daily basis which can lead to stressful encounters with clients and may lead to burnout. Evidently job burnout was initially recognised as a psychological problem among healthcare and social service professionals in the 1970's (Salahian, Oreizi, Abedi & Soltani, 2012). According to a study conducted by

Whitaker (2008), social workers experienced inadequate time to complete work tasks, had a heavy workload, received poor compensation, dealt with demanding and difficult clients, had few resources and long working hours, all of which were work related stressors.

Bradley and Sutherland (1995 cited in Lloyd et al., 2002) conducted a study and found higher levels of ill health for social workers and home help workers in comparison with the normative group. The findings indicated that social work symptoms of distress included physical exhaustion (51%) and emotional exhaustion (38%). Thus the measure of mental health found that both home help workers and social workers reported poorer mental well-being than other occupational groups. The authors' further suggested that over time these stressors could result in burnout and eventually these issues could cause social workers to consider changing careers. A study conducted by Jayaratne and Chess (1984 cited in Lloyd et al., 2002) found that burnout levels with regard to the exhaustion and depersonalisation (constructs of burnout) were high amongst child welfare workers and family service workers; more than forty per cent of the participants reported they would likely change jobs.

McCarthy (2006) was of opinion that the emotional complexity of workers in the social setting has increased. Since the demands on workers to use their personality resources and engage in close teamwork with their clients has increased. McCarthy (2006) further stated the reason for this was that workers had to deal

with the various difficulties and demands of clients. Thus, the author was of the view that emotional intelligence was a core skill for every social worker to possess. According to Megele (2011), social workers' judgment and decision making are influenced by their emotions and the emotional context of the situation. Similarly, Howe (2008, p. 1) stated social work is "emotional work of a high order whether it is with older people, children and families or offenders." Morrison (2007) also claimed that in order to be a good practitioner an individual must be able to comprehend and manage his/her emotions and be completely aware of the power of these emotions.

Morrison (2007, p. 2) conducted a study and found the framework stressors that the intra and inter personal skills required of social practitioners include:

- 'listening and building empathy,
- understanding the effects of non-verbal communication and
- self-awareness about how working with children may affect an individual emotionally and how to seek help."

The findings also provided evidence that social workers should have a high degree of emotional intelligence in order to be successful (Morrison, 2007).

Arrington (2008) reported that social work professionals who provided direct services may have experienced higher levels of stress and burnout as a result of their emotionally attenuating practice setting. According to Kinman and Grant (2010), a report examining child protection in England found that there was a

desperate need for social workers to develop the emotional intelligence to manage the challenges faced on a regular basis. The authors believed that emotional intelligence and burnout were constructs which represented elements of human interaction. Cipriano (2002 cited in Dette, 2008) was of the opinion that burnout and emotional intelligence represented the end of a continuum where emotional intelligence was situated at the high end of successful adaptation and burnout represented the accrued effects of a failure in an effort to adapt within a caustic environment. According to Akbari and Tavassoli (2011), various studies have shown that employees with high emotional intelligence will not be as prone to burnout as individuals with low emotional intelligence. It has been found by Morrison (2007) that social workers who are more emotionally intelligent are resilient to stressors and thus will protect their emotional well-being.
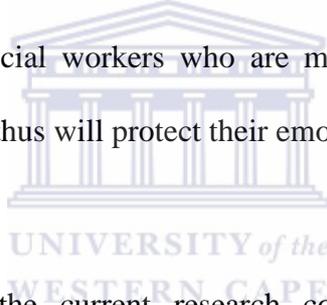
Based on the above, the current research could assist social workers in understanding how their emotions can impact their stress levels, which if persist, could result in burnout.

## 1.3  RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study is explicitly:

1. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

2. To determine if there is a negative relationship between emotional exhaustion and emotional intelligence.

3. To determine if there is a negative relationship between depersonalisation and emotional intelligence.

4. To determine if there is a positive relationship between personal accomplishment and emotional intelligence.

5. To determine if there is a significant difference in the biographical factors (namely, age, gender and tenure) and emotional intelligence levels of social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

6. To determine if there is a significant difference in the biographical factors (namely, age, gender and tenure) and burnout of social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

## 1.4 HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

**H₁**: There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

**H₂:** A significant negative relationship will exist between emotional exhaustion (as a dimension of burnout) and total EI.

**H₃:** A significant negative relationship will exist between depersonalisation (as a dimension of burnout) and total EI.

**H₄:** A significant positive relationship will exist between personal accomplishment (as a dimension of burnout) and total EI.
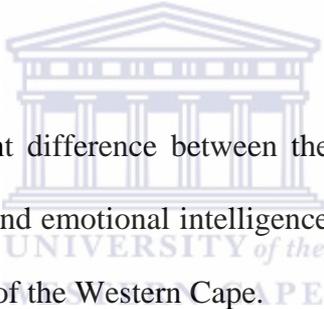
**H₅:** There is a significant difference between the biographical factors (namely, gender, age and tenure) and emotional intelligence levels of social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

**H₆:** There is a significant difference between the biographical factors (namely, gender, age and tenure) and burnout experienced by social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape.

## 1.5  DEFINITIONS OF IMPORTANT CONSTRUCTS

### 1.5.1  SOCIAL WORKER

A social worker works with individuals to assist them in addressing their personal issues, is an advocate on behalf of the poor and socially excluded and also help to maintain the social system against the demands of individuals whose behaviour is problematic (Asquith, Clark & Waterhouse, 2005).

### 1.5.2  EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Mayer and Salovey (cited in Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002, p. 56) defined emotional intelligence as the "ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth."

### 1.5.3   BURNOUT

Burnout characterises a chronic on-going reaction to one's work and a negative affective response to prolonged stress which is not immediately reversible after changes in tasks or the working conditions and by adequate recuperation (Demerouti, LeBlanc, Bakker, Schaufeli & Hox, 2009).

## 1.6  SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Social workers deal with stressful situations on a daily basis and this could ultimately lead to burnout which not only affects them but also the clients whom they serve. Since social workers deal with "emotional" work it would serve in their best interest to possess a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence since this could assist in decreasing burnout among social workers.

This chapter presented an overview of the problem statement and objectives of the study, as well as the hypotheses which were formulated. It concluded with defining the important constructs (namely, emotional intelligence and burnout) being investigated in the study.

## 1.7  OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Chapter two provides a theoretical background of the study. It extensively explores the concepts emotional intelligence and burnout among social workers who form part of the human service profession. Reference is also made to theoretical models as well as research studies conducted in this area or in the helping and human service profession.

Chapter three highlights the research methodology which is employed in the study. It provides a discussion of the research design, more specifically a description of the sample size and its selection methods, the procedure followed to

collect the data, the questionnaires and their psychometric properties as well as the statistical techniques employed to test the hypotheses.

Chapter four reports on results obtained from the data analysis.

Chapter five provides a discussion of the results of the study and makes reference to current findings. Limitations of the study are also provided and recommendations for future research are explored.

The following chapter proceeds with a literature review on the central constructs of the study.
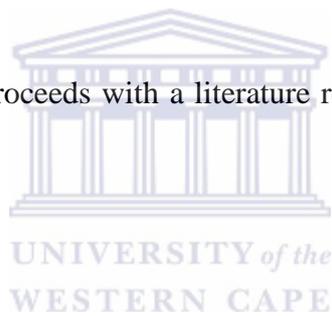
# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework which underlies the rationale for the study. An overview of each variable being investigated in the study (namely, emotional intelligence and burnout) will be explored in detail and reference will be made to relevant literature and current research.

## 2.1  BURNOUT

## 2.1.1  INTRODUCTION

Burnout has been noted in various occupations and is characterised by high levels of exhaustion and negative attitudes toward an individual's work (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Individuals who are employed within the human service profession, such as social workers, are required to spend a considerable amount of time engaging in intense involvement with their clients in order to solve their problems (Munson, 2002). According to Maslach (1996 cited in Clayford, 2010), within these occupations solutions to these problems will not be easily obtainable and can lead to frustrations in both parties. The author further stated that individuals who continuously worked with people under these circumstances may have experienced chronic stress which could have become emotionally draining and  lead to burnout. Milner, Fisher and Latif (2007) were of

a similar opinion that burnout was an occupational hazard, particularly in the helping profession and human service organisations.

Numerous stressors are predominant in the social work profession such as long hours, time constraints and deadlines, large and professionally challenging client caseloads, limited or inadequate resources, crises and emergencies, low pay and safety concerns (Whitaker, Weismiller & Clark, 2006). A study conducted by Ramphele (2004) hypothesised that burnout has a crippling effect on the economy of South Africa and attention is required on this phenomenon in order for the social work profession to be sustained and proper care to be given to social work clients. According to Takeda, Ibaraki, Yokoyama, Miyake and Ohida (2005), social workers suffering from burnout are more likely to deliver a poor quality service and this can become a serious problem affecting clients, colleagues and society in general.

## 2.1.2  HISTORY OF BURNOUT

Burnout among employees has for decades been recognised as a prominent phenomenon in the modern age and on-going research has been conducted since the 1970's (Morgan & Bruin, 2010). The common thread which stays true to burnout is the fact that it is a concept which seems to be a common experience among people (Schaufeli, Leiter & Maslach, 2008). According to the authors, burnout has been recognised as a social problem which is worth the attention and

deserves additional research as it has grown to become significant problem in many employees' daily lives.

According to Schaufeli (2003), the burnout metaphor was originally used as a colloquial term by professionals such as poverty lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists, teachers, probation officers, and hospice counsellors. These professionals used the term burnout to explain their steady reduction in energy and the loss of drive and commitment which was related to a wide variety of other physical and mental symptoms. Schaufeli and Buunk (2002) stated that the concept of burnout also came to the fore when Bradley used the term "staff burnout" in an article about probation officers who ran a community based treatment programme for delinquents.
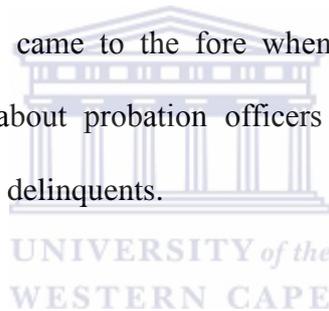
Even though the term burnout was used as a colloquial term in its initial founding, the true concept of the burnout phenomenon was first recognised in a group of volunteers in a health care agency by psychiatrist Freudenberg (Schaufeli, 2003). It was further elaborated and operationalised by Maslach in 1984 (Bakker, Van der Zee, Lewig & Dollard, 2002; Unterbrink, 2007). Thus the initial scientific founding of burnout were conceptualised by Freudenberg and Maslach. However, their approaches to the phenomenon of burnout were in isolation to each other (Schaufeli, 2003). van Tonder and Williams (2009) purported that Freudenberg defined burnout as a state of physical and emotional depletion that developed from work conditions and that typically left the individual feeling exhausted and

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worn out and experienced feelings of failure. Whereas Maslach argued that burnout was a syndrome exclusive to fields such as healthcare, teaching and human services and that it comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and diminished personal accomplishment (van Tonder & Williams, 2009).

According to Maslach et al. (2001), the roots of burnout were in the care giving and service occupations, where the core of the job was the relationship between professional and the client. These earlier studies by Maslach had an interpersonal context and the attention was focused on the individual's emotions and motives and values underlying his or her work with the recipient (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Schaufeli et al. (2008), the duration of Maslach's investigation was focused on how employees in the human services coped with their emotional stimulation using cognitive strategies. From the results it was found that these employees regularly felt emotionally exhausted, there was a development of negative perceptions and feelings about their clients or patients and professional incapability was experienced due to emotional disorder.

According to Moore (2000), the awareness of burnout became prevalent among researchers and the public. There are a number of reasons, specifically:

- The new concept was moderately impartial with regards to potential respondents' self-esteem or self-concept;
- The new notion did not carry a stigmatising brand, nor did it essentially involve self-blame and
- Its usefulness in the description of a new unlabelled occurrence.

Since the introduction of the burnout phenomenon, there have been various developments especially over the past two decades. According to Schaufeli (2003), the five most critical developments are:

- The phenomenon was taken up seriously as a scientific matter and research within the field escalated,

- It started attracting attention in many countries outside North America, especially Europe,

- Employees who worked outside the human services were included in the burnout research. This happened after the introduction of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) General Survey in 1996,

- As time progressed the value of burnout research was enhanced and theory motivated research and longitudinal designs were employed and

- Burnout has become such a researched topic that the complete range of workers' well-being is covered.

Burnout is internationally coined as a phenomenon which is of substantial significance and has a detrimental impact not only on employees but organisations in its entity, which affects human and economic costs (Leiter & Maslach, 2001; Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo & Mutanen, 2002). Similarly, Brand (2007) posited that burnout has become one of the foremost areas of concern in numerous professional fields relative to the rapidly developing research concerning stress and its harmful consequences both in personal as well as career life. Therefore

since the foundation of burnout was built, it has entered a more purposeful, practical and empirical period.

### 2.1.3  DEFINING BURNOUT

Since burnout is a phenomenon that has been on the rise for the past two to three decades there are various definitions that have come about.

Maslach (1996 cited in Schuafeli et al., 2008, p. 206) defined burnout as "... a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one's occupation and doubtful of one's capacity to perform." Furthermore the most common and accepted definition of burnout is that of Maslach and Jackson who defined it as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do people work of some kind (Jonker & Joubert, 2009). Similarly, Schaufeli et al. (2008, p. 205) also acknowledged burnout to be a "syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity."

In order to understand this phenomenon more simply, Edelwich and Bodsky (1980 cited in Clayford, 2010) offered a narrow definition where burnout is seen as a progressive loss of optimism, energy and purpose. The authors posited that the physical symptoms of burnout consisted of ulcers, headaches, numerous colds

and sexual problems. Burnout is also perceived as a syndrome of job-related negative experiences, including feelings of exhaustion and disengagement from work (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2003 cited in Jonker & Joubert, 2009). The consequences of burnout are potentially serious, seeing that it can lead to deterioration in the quality of service that is provided by employees. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Bosman, Rothmann & Buitendach, 2005, p. 36) were of a similar opinion that burnout is work related and they define the construct as "a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind in 'normal' individuals that is primarily characterised by exhaustion, accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work."

Cooper, Dew and O'Driscoll (2001) noted that burnout is an extreme case of chronic stress. This is the result of constant emotional pressure which the individual cannot control. Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker and Lloret (2006) were of a similar opinion stating that this phenomenon is a reaction to chronic occupational stress which is characterised by emotional exhaustion (the draining of emotional resources), depersonalisation (negative attitude towards one's job) and lack of professional efficacy (tendency to evaluate one's work negatively). It was found by Maslach and Schaufeli (1993 cited in Dette, 2008) that the various definitions of burnout had similar descriptors and elements such as: symptoms of fatigue such as mental or emotional exhaustion, tiredness and depression.

Jonker and Joubert (2009) postulated that research over the past two decades indicated burnout does not only affect the individual negatively, but also has negative outcomes for the organisation, such as high turnover rates, absenteeism and lowered productivity. Kondylis, Pandelis, Sfakianikis and Prokopiou (2004) purported that burnout affects mental and physical health, personal relationships and professional behaviour and performance.

Maslach and Schaufeli (1993 cited in Maslach et al., 2001) observed five universal elements of burnout, namely:
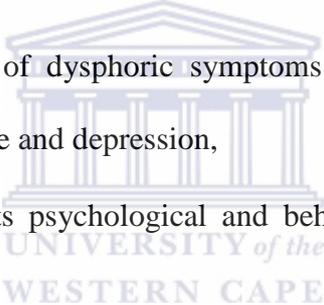
- A high majority of dysphoric symptoms such as mental or emotional exhaustion, fatigue and depression,

- Burnout highlights psychological and behavioural symptoms more than physical ones,

- The symptoms of burnout are job-related,

- The symptoms are apparent in "normal" persons who did not experience psychopathology before and

- Negative attitudes and behaviour transpire because of decreased efficiency and work performance.

Theoretically, burnout consists of three distinct but interrelated dimensions namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment which are felt to be stages of the process by which an individual becomes burnt out (Visser & Rothmann, 2009).

From the above discussion it can be acknowledged that researchers, who have studied the construct of burnout, have found that it includes both constructive and emotional components. According to Brand (2007), even though there are a variety of burnout definitions, there is an overall agreement that it involves internal processes of a psychological nature involving aspects such as attitudes, feelings, motives and expectations which is experienced as a negative owing to feelings of distress, discomfort and dysfunction.

## 2.1.4 BURNOUT MODELS

Over the past decades there have been an increase in the number of research initiatives which focused on the phenomenon of burnout; however, there has been no development of a comprehensive theoretical structure. According to Dette (2008), various models of burnout have been created and could be connected with a variety of conceptualisations of the construct. Schaufeli and Buunk (2002) proposed that due to the complexities of this phenomenon it was highly improbable that a single universal theory would be able to be developed and agreed upon.

The different models of burnout which will be briefly discussed for this research are namely the Multi-Dimensional Model of Burnout, the Phase Model of Burnout, the Process Model of Burnout, the Conservation of Resources Theory of

Burnout and the Job-Demands Resource Model. However, the focus of this research is based on the Multi-Dimensional Model of Burnout.

## 2.1.4.1 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF BURNOUT

Primarily no standard definition of burnout existed and thus it was not taken up seriously, although there were extensive opinions regarding the concept especially looking at what it was and how it could be dealt with (Maslach et al., 2001). The very first definition of burnout which was generalised to the helping profession was developed on the foundation of exploratory research, through numerous interviews, conducting of surveys and observations of employees who were predominantly within the helping profession, such as social services and health care (Maslach, 2003). Through extensive research over the years it was found that burnout could occur in employees who are outside the helping profession (Schuafeli et al., 2008). Thus burnout was seen in a more universal light.

The Multi-Dimensional Model illustrates burnout as a condition consisting of three key dimensions namely, feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001).

*(i)Emotional Exhaustion*: This component is the central feature of burnout and the most obvious manifestation of this complex syndrome (Maslach et al., 2001). It is said to be the most critical dimension in burnout, and is usually the first reaction

to set in (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993 cited in Visser & Rothmann, 2009). Schaufeli (2003) explained that the concept of emotional exhaustion referred to the fact that an employee could no longer perform what was required due to the fact that all physical and mental energy had been drained. When workers felt their emotional resources were worn-out they were not able to contribute to the psychological aspect of the job. With emotional exhaustion the individual would have feelings of depleted physical and emotional resources this in turn, makes the individual distance him/herself emotionally and cognitively from their work, in all probability this may be used as a technique to cope with work overload (Pienaar & Sieberhagen cited in Sadien, 2010). Furthermore, it refers to feelings of strain, fatigue, helplessness and depression. Schaufeli et al. (2008) contended that the emotional anxiety within the profession of human services may exhaust a service provider's capability to be involved with and receptive to the needs of service recipients.
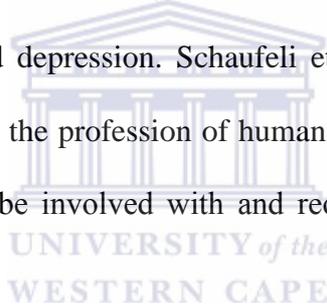
*(ii)Depersonalisation*: Maslach et al. (2001) stated that depersonalisation attempts to make a detachment from oneself and service recipients by deliberately ignoring the qualities that make them unique. Brand (2007) gave a more simplistic view on depersonalisation where she referred to depersonalisation as the treatment of other individuals in the work setting (clients, patients or co-workers) as objects rather than people. Distancing is such an instantaneous response to exhaustion that a strong relationship from exhaustion to depersonalisation is found consistently in

burnout research, across a wide range of organizational and occupational settings (Maslach et al., 2001).

*(iii) Reduced Personal Accomplishment*: According to van der Colff and Rothmann (2009), reduced personal accomplishment represents the self-evaluation measurement of burnout and refers to feelings of uselessness, lack of achievement and unproductiveness. Individuals at this level of burnout usually have feelings of unhappiness about themselves and are dissatisfied about their accomplishments at a job level (Maslach, 1996 cited in Clayford, 2010). Pienaar and Sieberhagen (2005 cited in Sadien, 2010) stated that reduced personal accomplishment is a diminished sense of capability and accomplishment in one's work and a general sense of inadequacy especially in the work setting. Cooper et al. (2001) had a similar view postulating that a diminished feeling of personal accomplishment refers to a tendency to negatively evaluate one's behaviour and performance, which results in feelings of incompetence on the job and an inability to achieve performance goals. According to Brand (2007), how the third dimension fits in the model depends on the circumstances; it can either occur as the result of exhaustion or depersonalisation.

The way these three dimensions of burnout relate to workplace variables will differ (Maslach, 2003). Maslach's research showed that exhaustion and cynicism predominantly manifested as a consequence of work overload and interpersonal conflict, whereas reduced personal accomplishment occurred from a shortage of

resources or lack of support (Brand, 2007). According to Angerer (2003), Maslach attempted to develop a theoretical framework for burnout and stress research by analysing the three dimensions in terms of six fields namely, work overload, lack of control, insufficient reward, break down of community, absence of fairness and conflicting values.

### 2.1.4.2 PHASE MODEL OF BURNOUT

The Phase Model of Burnout was introduced by Golembiewski, Munzenrider and Stevenson and is based on the approach of the multidimensional model of burnout (Crow, 2004). Maslach et al. (2001) purported in terms of the expansion of the model, depersonalisation is the initial stage of burnout, followed by inefficiency and lastly exhaustion. Brand (2007) elaborates as to why the dimensions occur in this order:

- Depersonalisation constitutes the symptoms of burnout and subsequently impairs performance,

- The individual's sense of accomplishment is then reduced which constitutes the second phase of Golembiewski's et al. model and

- Depersonalisation and lack of personal accomplishment will surpass the individual's coping capacity and thus result in emotional exhaustion.

The Phase Model (illustrated on the following page) proposed an eight phase model of progressive burnout based on two conventions (Goodman & Boss, 2002; Crow, 2004), namely:

a) An individual's three dimension (Depersonalisation, Emotional Exhaustion and Reduced Personal Accomplishment) score can be coded as high (HI) or low (LO), which is based on norms from a great population and

b) The significance of the dimensions is not equal with regards to burnout.

Research which was conducted on the Phase Model found that the progression of phases from low to high burnout is concurrent with deterioration of both work and personal wellbeing (Crow. 2004).

**Table 2.1: Phase Model of Burnout**

| SUBSCALES | PHASES OF BURNOUT | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| **Depersonalisation** | LO | HI | HI | HI | LO | HI | LO | HI |
| **Personal Accomplishment** | LO | LO | HI | HI | LO | LO | HI | HI |
| **Emotional Exhaustion** | LO | LO | LO | LO | HI | HI | HI | HI |

Source: Crow (2004, p. 15)

According to Crow (2004), depersonalisation is the least powerful contributor to burnout and emotional exhaustion the most severe. As depicted in the Phase Model of Burnout above, personal accomplishment is inverted, thus a low (LO) assignment on this measurement indicates an individual is doing well on a job perceived as meaningful. According to Crow (2004), there are three categories in the phase model: **Initial** (phases 1, 2 & 3), **Moderate** (phases 4 & 5) and

**Advanced** (phases 6, 7 & 8). The author purports that the Phase Model is one of the most inclusive and methodical ways to study burnout.

Cipriano (2002, p. 61 cited in Dette 2008) argued that the Phase Model of Burnout did not maintain that the individual should or must advance through each phase but proposed that each phase is "progressively virulent." According to Goodman and Boss (2002), the model built on a common medical distinction and allowed for two types of progression to advance burnout namely, chronic and acute burnout.
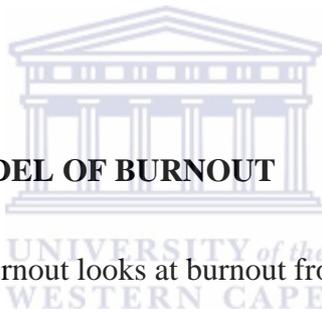
### 2.1.4.3  PROCESS MODEL OF BURNOUT

The Process Model of Burnout looks at burnout from the view that elements of the work environment and the characteristic of the individual are sources of strain (Cherniss, 1980 cited in Brand, 2007). The way in which individuals deal with this strain takes on different forms which could incorporate negative feelings and attitudes towards the situation such as detachment from work, reducing workload and taking less responsibility for work outcomes (Cooper et al., 2001). Cherniss regarded these negative attitudes as the fundamental definition of burnout. Cherniss' model depicts burnout has a high correlation to negative attitudes, which incorporates an extensive range of variables under burnout. However, Cooper et al. (2001) argued the Process Model of Burnout is too broad and the difference between burnout and job strain cannot be easily distinguished.

**2.1.4.4 CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY OF BURNOUT**

The Conservation of Resources Theory was developed by Hobfall (1989) and illustrates a general perspective of stress with relevance to burnout in organisations (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Hobfall (1989 cited in Dette, 2008) purported that this specific theory is a basic motivational theory, which argues if motivation is threatened, or there is a deprivation, stress follows which ultimately leads to burnout. Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) were of a similar opinion and surmised that the Conservation of Resources Theory seeked to obtain and preserve resources. According to Brotheridge and Lee (2002), the Conservation of Resources Theory proposed that individuals endeavoured to obtain, retain, protect, and foster valued resources and lessen any threats of resource loss. Threats to resource loss are usually in the form of role demands and the energy and efforts expended toward meeting such demands. The reaction to the environment is regarded as stress, where there is a threat to the loss of resources, a definite loss in resources or a decrease in the expected gain in resources (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

According to Neveu (2007), the Conservation of Resources Theory states individuals have access to four categories of resources: **objects** (for example, houses and cars), **conditions** (for example, relationships and steady jobs), **personal characteristics** (for example, self-esteem and skills) and **forms of energy** (for example, money, knowledge and favours). Hobfoll and Lilly (1993 cited in Halbesleben, 2006) found that when asking participants about resource gains and losses, losses were more strongly related to emotional distress than

resource gains. Cooper et al. (2001) posited burnout will result over time when there is a continuous loss of resources and will not be the result of a single event.

## 2.1.4.5  THE JOB-DEMANDS RESOURCE MODEL

According to Schaufeli, Bakker and Van Rhenen (2009), the Job-Demands Resource Model (JDR) specifies how job strain (burnout) and betterment is produced through two specific sets of working conditions which can be found in every organisational setting namely, job demands and job resources. Within the JDR Model the presence of job demands and absence of job resources relate to burnout through a psychological energetic process, whereas the presence of job resources associates with work engagement through a motivational process (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte & Lens, 2008). The JDR Model is depicted on the following page (see Fig 2.1)

**Figure 2.1: Job-Demands Resources (JDR) Model**

Emotional Demands

Workload | JOB DEMANDS | Work-Home Conflict

Autonomy | JOB RESOURCES | Social Support

Possibilities / Development
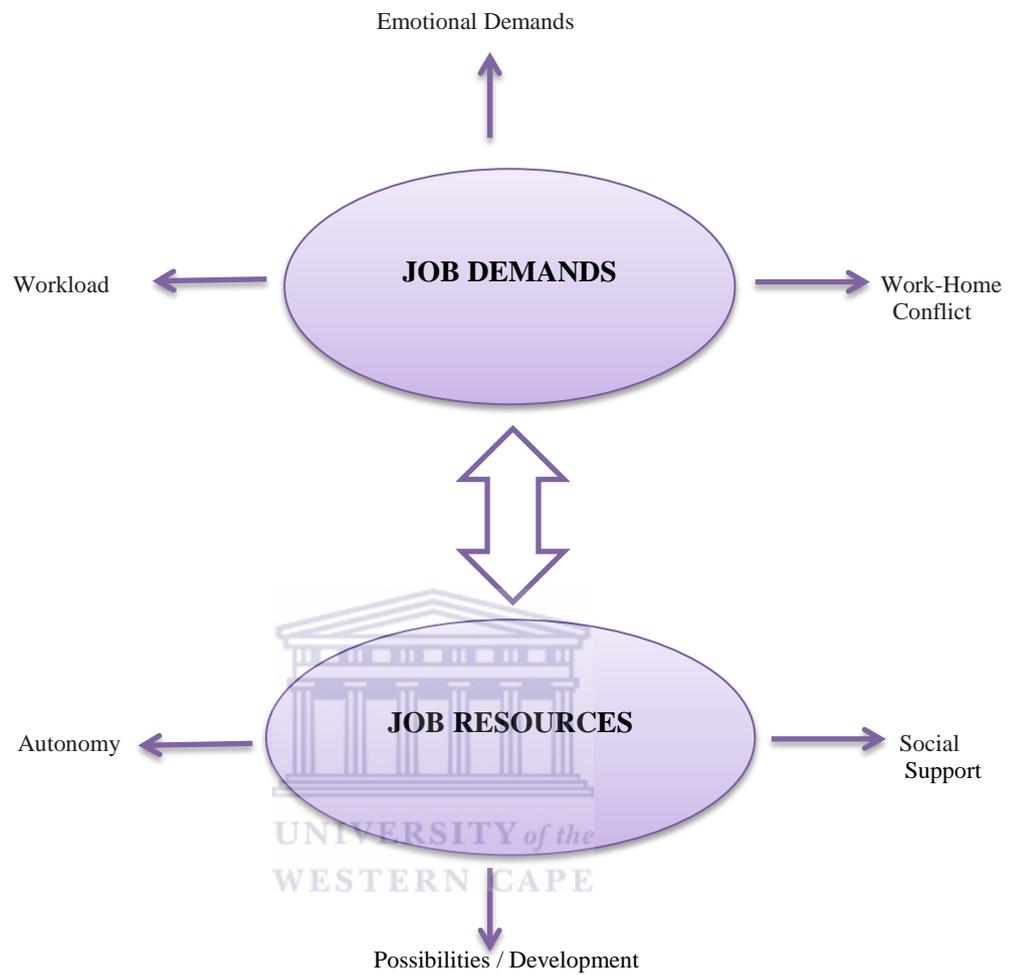
Source: Van den Broeck et al. (2008, p. 287)

Job demands refer to those features of a job that require continual physical and/or psychological exertion and are therefore connected with certain physiological and/or psychological costs, for example exhaustion, workload and work-home conflict (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004; Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008). When job demands increase, regulatory problems occur in the sense that

compensatory effort has to be mobilized to deal with the increased demands whilst maintaining performance levels (Schaufeli et al., 2009). It is postulated by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Sonnetag and Zijlstra (2006) that even though these demands are not negative, they become job stressors when they require an effort and/or they require certain costs that produce negative effects such as depression, anxiety and burnout. The JDR model proposes that numerous demanding features of the working environment, including emotional demands, problems with the work equipment (that is, computers) or changes in the task, may lead to the diminishing of health and subsequently absenteeism (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003).
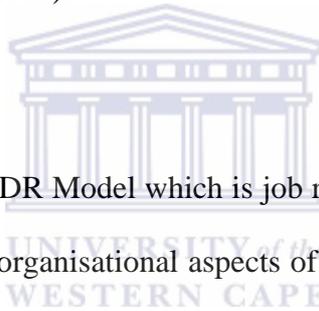
The other feature of the JDR Model which is job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job for example, autonomy, social support and development (Bakker et al., 2004; Bakker et al., 2003). These job resources are either/or: (1) functional in achieving work goals, (2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2011). This agrees with the Conservations of Resource Theory that states that the chief human motivation is fixed towards the maintenance and accumulation of resources (Hobfall, 2001 cited in Bakker et al., 2004). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), job resources are functional in the attainment of job goals and stimulate personal growth and development. Kahn (1990 cited in Bakker and Demeouti, 2004) acknowledged job resources as characteristics of work situations that outline the degree to which people employ and express themselves physically,

cognitively, and emotionally during role performance. It is hypothesised that job resources enhance employees' well-being, meaning that job resources are assumed to stimulate employees' work engagement and prevent burnout (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Several studies have shown that job resources are negatively related to exhaustion and cynicism (Bakker et al., 2004; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006).

The main emphasis of the JDR Model is that employees may be particularly at risk of developing burnout if confronted with high job demands and low job resources and if their personal resources such as self-efficacy and optimism are low. Additionally, employees may engage in their work and flourish if job demands and job resources are high, and if their personal resources such as resilience and hope are high as well (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

## 2.1.5  BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO BURNOUT

Demographic variables such as age and gender, or the time the person has worked in the profession or in a particular organisation may have an effect on emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. Various studies have concluded contradictory results about which influences increase risk and which are protective and how great the effects are (Kowalski, Ommen, Driller, Ernstmann, Wirtz, Kohler & Pfaff, 2010; Mukundan & Khandehroo, 2009).

**2.1.6.1 AGE**

According to Brewer and Shapard (2004), the results have not been conclusive; some studies have found no correlation between age and burnout, whilst others have found such correlations.

According to Ahola, Honkonen, Virtanen, Aroma and Lonnqvist (2008), in reviews mostly concerned with human service work, burnout has been reported to decrease with age. Ahola (2007) was of the opinion that experienced human service workers may have learned special professional and coping skills that protect them especially against burnout in demanding non-reciprocal interactions.

The level of burnout among younger employees is reported to be higher in comparison to employees over 30 or 40 years of age (Maslach et al., 2001). Matin, Kalai and Anvari (2012) reported that in terms of age, the rate of younger employees' burnout is greater than those employees who are in their thirties or forties. In another study it was observed in investigations that young nurses had higher burnout levels than nurses older than 40 years of age and that burnout increased as experience and length of service prolonged. It was claimed that as employees' age and associated length of service is prolonged, the level of burnout increases. It was concluded that emotional burnout and depersonalization reduced as employees' age advanced, whereas sense of personal accomplishment increased (Yavuzyılmaz, 2008 cited in Cackinberk, 2011).

The above results are however contradictory to other studies (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005; Leu, Yeun & Chan, 2005 both cited in Clayford, 2010) where it was found that teachers who are younger are significantly more burned out than their older colleagues. A study conducted by Hughes found that employees more at risk for burnout were those between the ages of forty-six and fifty-five (Rush, 2003). It is established by Rush (2003) that age is related to burnout due to midlife crisis.

### 2.1.6.2 GENDER

Matin et al. (2012) postulated that that gender is not a strong predictor of job burnout. Various studies showed contradictory results. A study conducted by Surgevil (cited in Cackinberk 2011) established that female municipal workers experienced increased levels of 'emotional exhaustion' and 'depersonalisation' than men.  Research conducted within the human service profession showed that women experienced a slightly higher level of exhaustion (Ahola, 2007). It is suggested that the differences in burnout may reflect differences in roles and occupations. Comechero (2004) suggested that females may show higher levels of burnout due to the multiple roles (parent, wife, professional) they have on a daily basis.

Schaufeli and Enzman's study (1998 cited in Coetzee & Rothmann, 2004) found that women tend to score higher on emotional exhaustion, whereas men scored higher on depersonalisation. According to Maslach et al. (2001), males tend to

score higher for depersonalisation and females slightly higher on emotional exhaustion. These results could be associated with gender role stereotypes, but they may also reveal that certain occupations may have a higher percentage of certain gender groups within the specific job (for example police officers are more likely to be male; nurses are more likely to be female).

### 2.1.6.3  TENURE

A study conducted by Ilhan, Durakan, Taner, Maral and Bumin (2008) found that the total time that nurses were employed in their job was inversely associated with emotional exhaustion scores (Kowalski et al., 2010). Burke revealed that there seems to be certain associations between job tenure and burnout, in that new workers develop distinctively from workers who have adapted to the environmental factors of the job (Pourghaz, Tamini & Karamad, 2011).
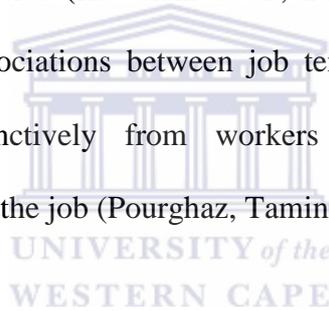
Comechero (2004) postulated that tenured employees could be affected by their status in that they may feel under-challenged and feel less passionate about their profession; all this could have an impact on increased burnout levels. Trendall (1989 cited in Nagel & Brown, 2003) challenged this statement, as the researchers found that teachers with five to ten years tenure, felt more stressed than older teachers with more experience. Research conducted by Hughes (1995 cited in Rush, 2003) also found that tenured respondents scored the most in the burnout range. According to Cackinberk (2011), burnout appears in the first years of an individual's profession; it has been detected that overall burnout decreased and personal accomplishment increased as employees became more tenured. Van der

Merwe and Miller (1988, p. 75 cited in Sadien, 2010) purported that "separation is more likely to occur in the early weeks of employment when there is little to hold the new entrant to the working group."

**2.1.6  CAUSES OF BURNOUT**

There are a number of factors which could result in burnout. According to Lonne (2003, p. 281), these stressors could be things such as, "particular practice fields, work role issues, organisational structure and culture, high workloads, low levels of control and autonomy, supervision practices, lack of accomplishment and efficacy, violence and conflict, and racism within the organisation." A large amount of research indicated that structural work stressors rather than personal characteristics are the most influential causes which contributed to burnout (Lonne, 2003). However, burnout is an individual experience which mainly takes place within the work context (Maslach et al., 2001).

According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Dette, 2008) when looking at the personal aspects which cause burnout, the individual perspectives of the person emphasises in the role of factors and processes within the person which could lead to burnout. However, the individual factors (for example, personality) which have been found to be related to burnout do not show a strong correlation with burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Shirom (2003) argued that personality traits could influence the development of burnout within the interaction with organisational factors. Judge and Bono (2001 cited in Hatinen, 2008) posited that

personality factors such as core self-evaluations (low levels of self - esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability) are related to burnout.

According to Maslach et al. (2001), individuals do not purely act in response to the work setting, rather individuals bring a unique quality to the relationship. According to Bakker et al. (2002), over the past two decades numerous studies have indicated that personality plays a significant role in the development of burnout. The various types of personalities relates to an individuals' capability to tolerate stress (Dette, 2008). According to Theron (2005 cited in Dette, 2008), the likelihood of experiencing burnout is higher among Type A personalities, since they create their own stress. It is furthermore suggested by the author that Type B personalities experience less stress at home and in their personal lives.
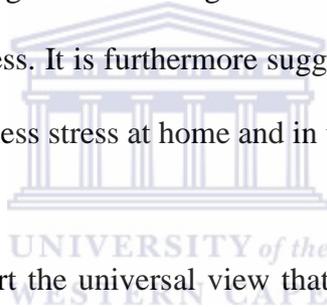
Research findings support the universal view that burnout is a response to work overload (Maslach et al., 2001). A study conducted by Bakker, Demerouti and Euwema (2005) found that work overload were related to the burnout components, emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Various social work studies found that high case loads are one of the predominant influences of social work burnout (Anderson, 2000; Zosky, 2010). According to Stalker, Mandell, Frensch, Harvey and Wright (2007) social workers overburdened by great quantities of work risk experiencing feelings of emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction. Anderson (2000) was of the opinion that cases accumulate because workloads are large and authorised deadlines for starting new investigations are

short. Lonne (2003) however, argues that boring monotonous jobs, with a little diversity are uniformly distressful.

According to Maslach et al. (2001), studies which were conducted on role conflict and role ambiguity show a consistent moderate to high correlation with burnout. Dollard, Winefields, Winefields and de Jonge (2000) found that role ambiguity and role conflict for social workers and human service workers have consistently been found to be positively associated with levels of emotional exhaustion, burnout and work stress.

Kahn et al. (1964, p. 19 cited in Ruyter, Wetzels & Feinberg, 2001) defined role conflict as "the simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other." When an individual performs tasks which are not related to their work role this could result in stress and burnout since role conflict may occur (Cooper & Sutherland, 2000).

Berndt and Oosthuizen (2008) posited that role ambiguity arises when an individual does not know how to perform on the job or what the expected relationship is (that is, the link between performance and the consequences). It also refers to the confusion a person experiences regarding the expectations of others. Thus role ambiguity may occur in social workers when they are unsure about supervisory expectations or when they do not understand how they will be evaluated.

Within the helping profession client experiences are theoretically identified as one of the main causes of burnout (Lonne, 2003). Research conducted by Cordes and Doughtery (1993 cited in Furnell, 2008) found that the hours of interaction with clients in addition to the need to follow organisationally instructed emotional display rules will result in role overload, psychological strain and burnout. These findings suggest that that interaction with people can be a major source of distress, frustration, or conflict in human services professions. Heverling (2011) found that child welfare social workers experience intense feelings of helplessness to fully protect children from unsafe circumstances. According to Anderson (2000), most child protection workers agree that knowing a child may be seriously hurt or neglected or even die, if the worker misinterprets the parents' capacity to care for the child is a great burden.
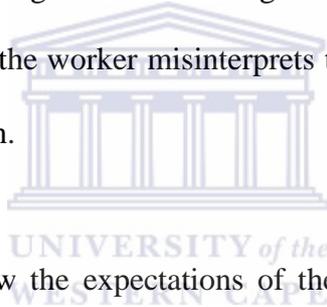
Employees want to know the expectations of the organisation, what should be done in order to succeed in satisfying the job requirements and the security of the job. The lack of clear consistent feedback may result in distress. Maslach et al. (2001, p. 407) postulated "... lack of feedback is consistently related to all three dimensions of burnout."

A study conducted by Stokvelt (2001) found that social support from family, friends, bosses, supervisors and colleagues can assist in preventing burnout. Research by Stalker, Mandell, Frensch, Harvey and Wright (2007) determined that active support from supervisors assists the employee to better manage stress

in an emotionally draining field of work. When a supervisor's support decreases the emotional exhaustion of employees will increase (Heverling, 2011).

Brand (2007) postulated the result of burnout relates not only to professional pressures or workloads but factors which do not relate to the job, such as relationships, ineffective social support and maladaptive coping strategies. The author concluded that it would be rational to assume that an individual's level of emotional intelligence has an impact on the development of burnout and may restrain the level of burnout experience.

### 2.1.7 CONSEQUENCES OF BURNOUT

The studies which have been conducted on burnout have been related to job performance outcomes, although some attention was drawn to health outcomes, since burnout is considered a stress phenomenon (Maslach et al., 2001). There have been a limited number of longitudinal studies done on the consequences of burnout, thus some of the research findings should be taken with caution (Maslach et al., 2001). The consequences of burnout are extensive and span into personal and work settings (van Tonder & Williams, 2009).

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Brand, 2007) classifies consequences of burnout into three categories: (i) **individual level** which constitutes constructs such as depression, health problems, substance abuse and spill over to personal life, (ii) **work orientation and attitudes**, this refers to job satisfaction,

organisational commitment and intention to leave and lastly, (iii) **organisational level**, where burnout affects absenteeism, job turnover and performance.

### (i) Individual Level

Lonne (2003) was of the opinion that the difficulties associated with burnout can cause extensive personal distress to those affected. According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Brand, 2007) burnout is typically related to physical distress symptoms. When workers are exposed to increased feelings of emotional exhaustion over an extended period of time this could threaten their physical and emotional health (Stalker et al., 2007). Heverling (2011) was of the opinion that social workers who use unhealthy procedures to cope with burnout and stress have a greater chance of developing problems with their physical and mental health.
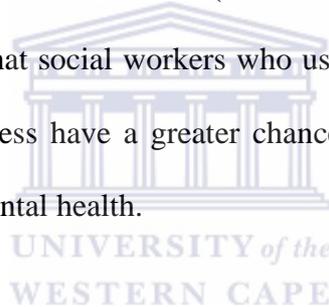
The physical problems which are prevalent in individuals with burnout are things such as sleeping disorders, gastrointestinal tract, exhaustion and high blood pressure (Heverling, 2011). According to van Tonder and Williams (2009), many studies have also reported a relationship between heart attacks and burnout. The exhaustion component of burnout is a prediction of stress-related health outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Adams et al. (2001 cited in Lonne, 2003), due to burnout practitioners may experience anxiety and depression and for some this can lead to increased alcohol and drug intake.

**(ii)    Work Orientation and Attitudes**

Heverling (2011) postulated that burnt out workers jeopardise the quality of service delivery in child welfare agencies due to their lack of commitment. The author is further stated that workers who are burnt out will have negative feelings and these will have a massive impact on the client through a trickle-down effect.

There is some evidence which showed that job satisfaction is negatively related to burnout (Hantinen, 2008). Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Brand 2007) found that job satisfaction has strong negative correlations with burnout. According to Maslach et al. (2001), the physical and psychological consequences of burnout negatively affect the work performance of employees as well as their commitment and the result thereof would be decreased performance and productivity. It was also established by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Brand 2007) that organisational commitment correlates negatively with emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation.

**(iii)    Organisational Level**

Additionally, it has been found that burnout is not only damaging to the individual or employee, but has major consequences for organisations (Schaufeli, 2003). As stated before, burnout can lead to lower productivity and efficiency at work; as a result it is connected with decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organisation (Maslach et al.,

2001). Lonne (2003) states that the consequence of burnout to the organisation is that there may be higher staff turnover and elevated rates of intention to leave. The author further adds that when new staff has to be employed due to the high turnover rate there is a potential loss of trust and confidence by agency clients. According to Brand (2007), employees who are affected by burnout are likely to take leave; organisations will then have expenses with regard to sick leave and funding replacement labour. Furthermore, when employees quit the replacement and training cost results in additional costs for the organisation.
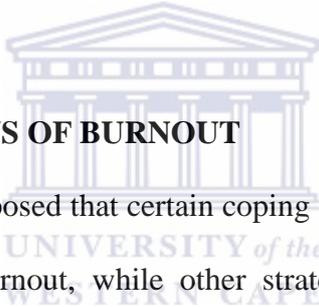
## 2.1.8 INTERVENTIONS OF BURNOUT

Research on burnout proposed that certain coping strategies have been found to be effective in reducing burnout, while other strategies have increased levels of burnout (Wiese, Rothmann & Storm, 2003). Kleinke (1991 cited in Rothmann, 2004, p. 28) defined coping as "... efforts we make to manage situations we have appraised as potentially harmful and stressful." According to Fleishman (1984 cited in van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009), coping referred to either strategies or results. When looking at coping from a strategy perspective, it referred to the various methods individuals utilise in order to manage their particular circumstances, whereas coping looked at the ultimate outcomes of the preferred strategy for the individual.

According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 cited in Dette, 2007), utilising a successful coping strategy (for example, problem solving) will result in an increase in the achievement of goals, an enhancement in professional efficacy and a sense of existential is fostered. Pines, Aronson and Kafry (1981 cited in Wiese et al., 2003) found that unsuccessful coping strategies such as drinking and avoidance were associated with higher levels of burnout.

Lazurus (1978) found an active and inactive dimension which refers to the confrontational approach to coping and the withdrawal or denial mechanism of stress and burnout.

**Table 2.2 : Coping Grid**

|  | ACTIVE | INACTIVE |
|---|---|---|
| **DIRECT** | Changing the source of the stress | Ignoring source of the stress |
|  | Confronting source | Avoiding source |
|  | Adopting a positive attitude | Leaving |
| **INDIRECT** | Talking about the source of stress | Alcohol or drugs |
|  | Changing self | Getting Ill |
|  | Getting involved in other activities | Collapsing |

Source: Pines and Aronson (1989, p. 145)

Four types of coping strategies were generated from these two dimensions namely, direct/indirect and active/inactive which is depicted in the table above as follows (Pines & Aronson, 1989):

a. **Direct-active**: This involves action of changing or confronting the source of stress and searching for positive aspects in the situation,

b. **Direct-inactive**: This is when an individual ignores and avoids the source of stress and ultimately leaves the stressful situation,

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c. **Indirect-active**: This is where an individual confronts the stressors and adaptation to the stressful situation and

d. **Indirect-inactive**: This is when there is the abuse of substance and alcohol and health issues can occur.

Research findings showed high levels of burnout are related to ineffective or withdrawal coping strategies and low degrees of burnout are associated with constructive coping strategies (Wiese et al., 2003).

In a study conducted by Anderson (2000) it was established that child protection workers who used avoidance coping strategies showed an increase in exhaustion. Additionally, it was found by Mitchell and Hastings (2001 cited in Wiese et al., 2003) disengagement coping strategies predicted exhaustion as well as fewer positive feelings of professional efficacy. According to Heverling (2011), generally, negative coping strategies cause harm to the social worker, as well as inhibit his/her performance in working with at risk clients.

Anderson (2000) and Wiese et al. (2003) found that when individuals use active coping strategies, feelings of depersonalisation decreased and their sense of personal accomplishment increased. The author further postulated that individuals must develop coping strategies that are centred on cognitive restructuring and problem solving. According to Ospina-Kammerer and Dixon (2001 cited in

Heverling, 2011), the use of more effective coping mechanisms will increase the productivity of the worker, which will affect the client positively. Thus, social workers and human service professionals must establish healthy coping activities to provide proficient support for their clients.

Given the complex nature of burnout, there are various interventions which can be used in order to decrease the burnout component. However, a general strategy has not yet been developed to combat this phenomenon (Schaufeli, 2003). The interventions which can take place are at an individual level or an organisational level, where workshops are usually adopted.

### i. Individual

According to Schaufeli (2003), most interventions are biased towards the individual, whereas organisational based interventions are rather scarce. A study conducted by Van Dierendonck, Garssen and Visser (2005) established that a personal orientated prevention program can be effective in reducing burnout and therefore enhance happiness, emotional intelligence and feelings of spirituality. Awa, Plaumann and Walter (2009 cited in Heverling, 2011) found that person-directed intervention programs used training in psychotherapy counselling, communication skills, adaptive skills, and other individualized forms of intervention and these decreased the symptoms of burnout. Lonne (2003) posited that sharing one's feelings with co-workers and supervisors and gaining their support will decrease stress levels. The author also suggested that reflective practice can be used to decrease burnout levels.

This is when the worker is in a continual process of self-exploration and improvement.


**ii.     Organisational**

Job redesign is one of the organisational strategies which could be used to combat burnout in employees (Lonne, 2003; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998 cited in Brand, 2007). Other alternatives which could be used to decrease burnout include providing challenging and stimulating training and ensuring that there are adequate resources to deal with the workload. Awa et al. (2009 cited in Heverling, 2011) stated that other interventions which target the organisation involve job evaluations, restructuring of the work process, and providing appraisals for work.
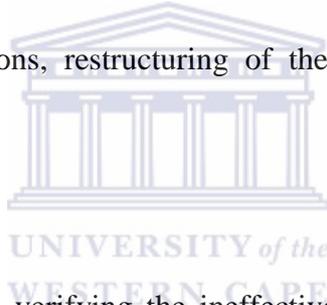
There have been studies verifying the ineffectiveness of burnout interventions; these studies were selected in such a way as a reflection of the typical findings at the various levels of intervention (Schaufeli, 2003):

- Individual, cognitive behaviourally based interventions succeed in decreasing burnout and may increase return rates to work,

- Levels of exhaustion are decreased through burnout workshops for specific groups, although employees may relapse unless they are motivated to continue in their own initiative and

- Interventions aimed at improving work situations are very successful in reducing exhaustion, but once again the effect is short term.

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## 2.1.9   BURNOUT IN SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers employed in health care settings and child care services have been found to have significantly higher stress outcomes, greater perceived stress and emotional exhaustion when compared to workers in other fields of social work (Lukelelo, 2004). Within the social work profession there are numerous factors which contribute to the high stress and burnout levels experienced by practitioners. This profession has unique challenges which are rewarding but can be overwhelming for the social worker as well.

According to Whitaker et al. (2006), the stressors which are prevalent in the social work occupation are factors such as long hours, time constraints and deadlines, large and professionally challenging client caseloads, limited or inadequate resources, crises and emergencies, low pay, safety concerns and lack of recognition and autonomy.

A study conducted by Lewandowski (2003 cited in Nolan, 2005) established that there are three main reasons why social workers experience frustration, stress and eventually burnout:

- Firstly, the labour process which social workers have to go through, not getting enough support from their supervisors and not being able to spend enough time with their clients,

- The second reason relates to the public issues faced by social workers which includes isolation, powerlessness, and having enough energy for clients and their organisation and,

- Lastly are the bureaucratic paperwork and rules which includes aspects such as feeling overloaded by paperwork and feeling like they are constricted by organisation or state rules.

A study conducted by Gilbar (1998) established that social workers in health care who deal with patients who have physical illness, mental illness and physical disability must cope with stress stemming from the patients' feelings of depression, anxiety and anger that arise from threat to life, body image, dependence in daily activities, and the possibility of loss of social role. Furthermore it was also found by Gilbar (1998) that sixty per cent of health care social workers experienced heightened levels of stress and burnout over a two year period since working in the field.

According to Lloyd et al. (2002), being a social worker is associated with higher stress, lower job satisfaction, and higher levels of emotional exhaustion as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Social workers generally feel that their efforts and outputs are not sufficiently recognised financially (Lukelelo, 2004). A study conducted by Martin and Schinke (cited in Lloyd et al., 2002) concluded that burnout was associated with the absence of certain essential job facets, for example, promotional opportunities and remuneration. Lukelelo (2004)

found that social workers employed by the Department of Health often complained of insufficient remuneration caused by constant budget cuts by the Department. The author concludes that this increases the chances of burnout in social workers.

Ramphele (2004) was of the opinion that the social worker's relationship with the client is central to the occupation. There are various difficulties and dilemmas which the client will have and there may be times when certain situations will drain the social worker or make him/her feel helpless, this could lead to prolonged stress and eventually burnout (Ramphele, 2004). Hamama (2012) posited that distinctive challenges inherent to child and adolescent treatment may cause social workers to experience permanent situational stress, which may lead them to distance themselves from or avoid treating young clients.
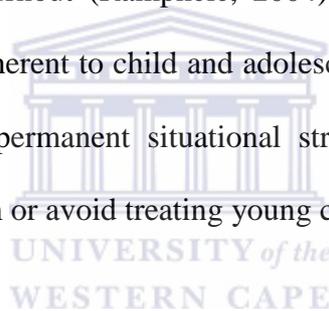
Evans, Huxley, Gately, Webber, Mears, Pajak, Medina, Kendall and Katona (2006) found that high levels of stress and emotional exhaustion among social workers are likely to contribute to the high vacancy rates associated with recruitment and retention problems within the profession. A number of other studies (Hagen, 1989; Samantrai, 1992 cited in Lloyd et al., 2002) found that a high percentage of social workers intended either leaving the profession entirely or leaving their current position.

Takeda et al. (2005) postulated that burnt out social workers may arrive late at work, fail to focus on what clients are saying, exhibit a cynical and judgemental

attitude towards clients and have a custodial rather than humanistic attitude towards clients. Findings of a study conducted by Nolan (2005) revealed that social workers reported that they were happy when the day came to an end and had feelings of disillusionment with the field of social work. The research also found that social workers become angrier at clients and their families because of burnout; the results also indicated that 40% of the workers said they have conflicts with their spouse or significant other and 45% said they have conflicts with colleagues due to burnout.

## 2.2  EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## 2.2.1  INTRODUCTION

According to Howe (2008), since its early development the social work profession has understood that emotions were critical to the profession. The above average level of emotional intelligence possessed by social work professionals is expected to help in the management of felt emotions that are experienced in interactions with others around them (Singh, 2006). It has been postulated by Munson (2002) that the profession of social work offers unique challenges that are both rewarding and potentially overwhelming. Howe (2008) stated the emotionally intelligent social worker is knowledgeable about emotions and how they can be managed, developed and used in the self and others. If social workers possess high levels of emotional intelligence it is likely that they will not experience burnout.

## 2.2.2 HISTORY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is not a new phenomenon; it has come to the fore in the past few decades. Sparrow and Knight (2006) postulated the exploration of emotional intelligence was significant to the fields of personal development and management theory. Furthermore, the authors were of the opinion that over the past decades there has been a growing acceptance of the importance of emotional intelligence as an important variable in determining organisational success.

Emotional intelligence was first acknowledged by Thorndike in 1920; he distinguished between social intelligence and multiple intelligences (Howe, 2008). Thorndike posited there were different kinds of intelligences namely, Abstract Intelligence, Concrete Intelligence and Social Intelligence - the latter was referred to as emotional intelligence (Dette, 2008). Thorndike defined social intelligence as "the ability to perceive one's own and others internal states, motives and behaviours and act toward them optimally on the basis of that information" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990 cited in Brand, 2007, p. 32). Similarly, Assanova and McGuire (2009) referred to social intelligence as the capability to be aware of and supervise individuals, as well as being intelligent when it comes to human relationships. Contemporary theorists such as Mayer and Salovey viewed emotional intelligence as part of social intelligence which suggests that these concepts are interrelated (Bar-On, 2006).

The next step in the development of the concept was when Gardner presented the perspective of multiple intelligence which included intra and interpersonal intelligence (Dette, 2008). Gardner maintained that intrapersonal intelligence constitutes the ability to understand oneself and interpersonal intelligence looks at the ability to read moods, desires and intentions of others and act on this knowledge (Gryn, 2010).

According to Cherniss (2000, p. 325), Salovey and Mayer described emotional intelligence as "a category of social intelligence which involves the ability to control one's thoughts and actions." It has been hypothesised by Salovey and Mayer (1990) that four principles exist which is used to recognize emotional intelligence as "intelligence", namely (i) it had to be defined, (ii) a measurement had to be developed, (iii) its independence from other intelligence had to be documented and (iv) its real world predictability had to be verified.

It was in 1995 that emotional intelligence became widespread. Daniel Goldman raised awareness of the subject with his bestseller, *Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ* (Penceliah, 2004). Goleman argued that emotional intelligence was just as important to succeed in life as cognitive intelligence (Howe, 2008). Goleman noted social and emotional competencies are critical in exceptional job performance (Mackin, 2006).

Extensive research has been done in the field of emotional intelligence over the last decade, it has been found that EI changes with age and can be developed through training and coaching (Bar-On, 2007 cited in Gryn, 2010). Recent research on the concept builds on Goleman's foundation. However, since the origin of emotional intelligence there has been a lack of research to support the validity of emotional intelligence (De Mirande, 2011).

### 2.2.3  THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CONCEPT

In order to understand the emotional intelligence construct, it is important to separate emotions from intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990 cited in Dette, 2008) purported that early theories of psychology considered emotions to be disruptive, disorganised and a characteristic of poor adjustment, but modern theories have postulated that emotions have a great impact with regards to organising, motivating and directing human activity.

### 2.2.3.1 DEFINING EMOTIONS

Emotions originated from the Latin word "movere", meaning to move (Adams, 2011). Sparrow and Knight (2006) revealed that emotions were at the root of our doing, our moving towards or away from. According to Payne and Cooper (2001), the concept of emotion is fundamental to each and every aspect of human experience and yet when defining emotion it seems to be a bit unrealistic. Many psychologists prefer using the term "emotion" instead of "feeling" because it is

perceived to be more objective on account of its biological foundation (Wierzbicka, 1999 cited in Gryn, 2010). Emotions seem to be created in biochemical reactions that occur throughout the body and have been found in the heart and in the immune system as well as throughout the central nervous system (Sparrow & Knight, 2006).

Emotions can be related to expressions of love, hate, attraction, aggression and disappointment (Girdhalwal, 2007). Goleman (1997; 2005) postulated an emotion is a physiological reaction to a situation to leave intellect alone. These would constitute things such as threats, painful loss, building a family etcetera. Farmer (2002) described emotions as disorganised interruptions that are merely a feeling of state. Thus the author delineated that emotions had to be controlled by the logical, rational and intelligent mind. According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1999 cited in Gryn, 2010), emotions are internal actions that organise many psychological subsystems including physiological responses, cognitions, and conscious awareness. Rothman, Scholtz, Sipsma and Sipsma (2002 cited in Beeka 2006, p. 49) found "emotions when properly managed, drive trust, loyalty and commitment and account for productivity gains, innovations and individuals, team and organisational accomplishment."

## 2.2.3.2 DEFINING INTELLIGENCE

There are different types of intelligence, according to Ciarrochi, Forgas and Mayer (2001). According to the authors intelligence is all about the capability to

perceive, understand, and use symbols, that is, to reason theoretically. The concept of intelligence in psychology refers to general intellectual capability involved in calculating, reasoning, perceiving relationships, learning at a rapid pace, storing and retrieving data, and the fluent usage of language and adjusting to new situations (Beeka, 2006). Wechsler purported in 1943 non-intellective abilities were essential predictors for success in individuals' lives (Cherniss cited in Adams, 2011).

Koonce (2006 cited in Beeka, 2006) suggested that intelligence was a goal-directed psychological activity that was marked by effective problem solving, critical thinking and effective abstract reasoning. It has been found by Mayer that highly intelligent individuals seem to be less destructive, more open minded and driven and have a tendency to be superior in verbal, social and other types of intelligence (Gryn, 2010). According to Emmerling and Goleman (2003), even though IQ is a strong predictor for job and academic performance, it is emotional intelligence which can predict a future star employee in the workplace.

## 2.2.3.3 DEFINING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Since the concept of emotional intelligence there has been a plethora of definitions, but they are all interrelated. Goleman (1997) defined emotional intelligence as acknowledging one's feelings and having the ability to manage those feelings without being swamped, being self-motivated to complete tasks,

being creative and performing at the fullest potential, sensing the feelings of others and having effective management skills.

Gryn (2010) provided a simplistic view of emotional intelligence stating that it involved making a distinction between one's own emotions and others and recognising and understanding these emotions. Sparrow and Knight (2006) purported that in order to comprehend emotional intelligence it can be seen as a process. Thus the authors postulated that to act with emotional intelligence an individual needs to: notice feelings, pay attention to them, give them meaning, think about them and take them into account in choosing what to do. This applies to the specific individual and others.
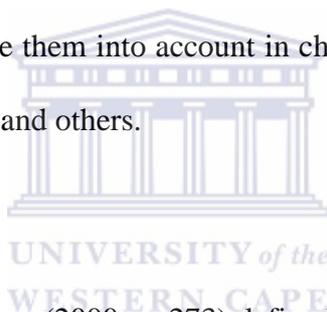
Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000, p. 273) defined emotional intelligence broadly as:

- "The ability to perceive, appraise and express emotion accurately and adaptively,

- The ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge,

- The ability to access and generate feelings where they facilitate cognitive activities and adaptive action, and

- The ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others."

Bar-On (2004 cited in Rahgozar, Motahari & Zolali, 2006) referred to emotional intelligence as a set of abilities, capabilities and non-cognitive skills which assists in the success of coping with and overcoming environmental stress. According to van Jaarsveld (2003 cited in Hayward, 2005), an individual who encapsulates emotional intelligence is able to develop alternative methods to become more effective and efficient in both day-to-day living and in the organisation. Hughes, Patterson and Terrel (2005) suggested that emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason with emotions and emotional signals and the capacity to enhance thought, thus when possessing high level of emotional intelligence it assists with personal and organisational demands.
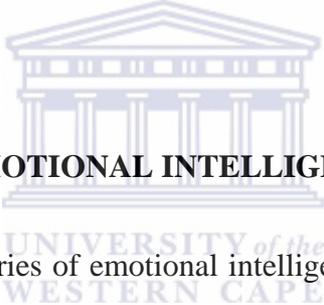
## 2.2.4 MODELS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

There are numerous theories of emotional intelligence; all these theories assist in appreciating the importance of emotional intelligence within the personal lives of individuals as well as in organisations.

The assessment models of emotional intelligence are split into "mixed models" and "ability models" (Bar-On, Maree & Elias, 2006). The mixed models can be viewed as "trait-based models" and assesses aspects of personality and cognitive intelligence, whereas the ability models are more performance based (Bar-on, 2006).

## 2.2.4.1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL: MAYER AND SALOVEY

Mayer and Salovey conceptualised the emotional intelligence term, defining it as a set of mental abilities concerned with emotions and the processing of emotional data (Palmer, Gignac, Bates & Stough, 2003). This model of emotional intelligence consists of four branches or classes of emotional ability (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999). The model defined emotional intelligence as involving abilities to correctly observe emotions in individuals and others, which is concerned with the non-verbal reception and expression of emotion. According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002), the ability of a person to process emotional information differs from one individual to the next and also how the individual relates the emotional processing into a wider cognition. The authors' further stated this ability will only come to the fore in specific adaptive behaviours.

The model proposed that emotional intelligence comprised of two areas, namely experiential and strategic (Stys & Brown, 2004). The **experiential** area deals with the ability to perceive, respond, and manipulate emotional information without necessarily understanding it and the **strategic** area deals with the ability to understand and manage emotions without necessarily perceiving feelings well or fully experiencing them. These two areas are then divided into the four branches which are arranged in order of simple psychological functions to more complex functions (Dette, 2008).

**Figure 2.2: Mayer and Salovey's four branch model of emotional intelligence**
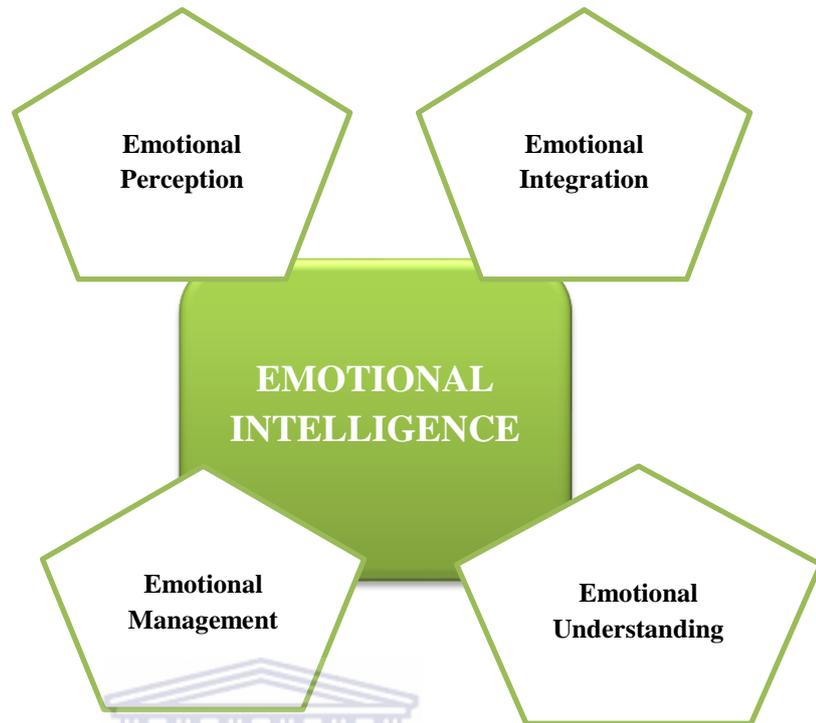


Source: Beeka (2004, p. 54)

The **first branch** deals with the perception and expression of emotion, which is all about the ability to recognise how individuals and those around them feel (Mayer et al., 1999). According to Brand (2007), this specific branch includes several proficiencies such as the ability to identify feelings, express emotions accurately and differentiate between real and fake emotional expressions.

 **Branch two** deals with the capacity of emotion to enhance thought and information processing; this would involve assimilating the most prominent emotional experiences into mental life which encapsulates weighing emotions up against each other and against other sensations and feelings, and allowing emotion

to direct thought (Mayer et al., 1999). The use of emotions may require the ability to harness feelings that are helpful in certain cognitive abilities such as reasoning, interpersonal communication, problem solving and decision making (Brackette & Salovey, 2006).

**Branch three** looks at emotional understanding. This can be defined as "the ability to understand complex emotions and emotional chains, how emotions transition from one stage to another" (Mayer et al., 1999, p. 7). Dette (2008) postulated that the understanding of emotions reveals the ability to examine emotions appreciate their probable trends over time and, understand their outcomes.
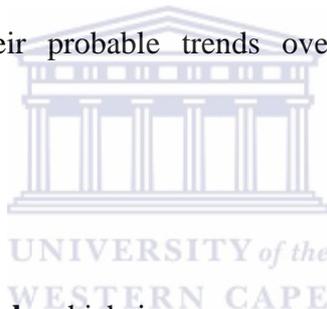
Lastly, the **fourth branch** which is management of emotions incorporates the awareness of an individual's own emotions, possessing the ability to differentiate between clear and typical emotions and capability to solve emotionally burdening problems (Mayer et al., 1999). Brackette and Salovey (2006) posited that through the management of one's own feelings, individuals would be able to monitor, discriminate and label their feelings correctly, believe they can improve or adapt these feelings, employ strategies which could modify these feelings and assess the effectiveness of these strategies.

## 2.2.4.2 THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL OF BAR-ON

The work of Darwin has largely influenced the constant improvement of the Bar-On Model. Darwin argued that the correct usage of emotional expression contributed to survival and adaptation within life (Bar-On, 2005). According to Bar-On (2004 cited in Rahgozar et al., 2011, p. 1391), emotional intelligence is "a set of abilities, capabilities and non-cognitive skills which are effective on the success of individuals to cope with and overcome the environmental stress."

Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence relates to the potential of performance and success, rather than performance or success itself, it is also considered to be process orientated rather than outcome orientated (Stys & Brown, 2004). The Bar-On (2003) model of emotional quotient was established from the exploration of psychological well-being and how emotions contributed to this wellbeing (Farmer, 2004).

It is purported by Bar-on (2005) that emotional intelligence is closely associated to social intelligence and often uses the construct of emotional-social intelligence. According to De Mirande (2011), the Bar-on model (1997) is mainly focused on the various emotional and social capabilities.

The model outlines five components of emotional intelligence, namely:

### 1. Intrapersonal

According to Gardener and Stough (2002), intrapersonal intelligence characterises abilities, capabilities, competencies and independence and skills relating to the inner self. Bar-On et al. (2006) postulated that individuals who have moderate to high levels of intrapersonal skills are in touch with their inner feelings, have high confidence levels and feel good about their lives.

### 2. Interpersonal

This component reflects interpersonal skills and functioning (Bar-On et al., 2006). Interpersonal intelligence consists of empathy, interpersonal relationships and functioning and social responsibility (Gardener & Stough, 2002).
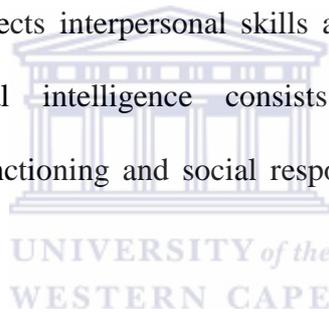
### 3. Adaptability

Adaptability is about how an individual is able to manage the various environmental demands by effectively dealing with problem situations and flexibility (Gardener & Stough, 2004). If individuals are well developed in this dimension they may be able to understand problem situations and be competent in creating adequate solutions (Bar-On et al., 2006).

**4. Stress Management**

If individuals possess this specific component they are inclined to be calmer, are rarely impulsive and are able to work under stressful situations (Gardener & Stough, 2002). According to Bar-On et al. (2006), the stress management component relates to the ability to withstand stressors without losing control.

**5. General Mood**

Lastly, this component refers to individuals who are inclined to attain the ability to enjoy life, are positive, cheerful, hopeful, and happy and are generally optimistic (Gardener & Stough, 2002).
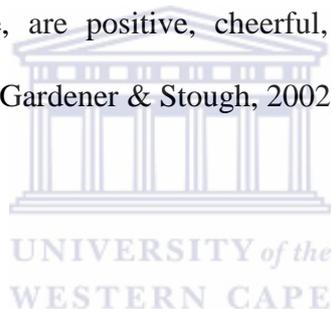
**Table 2.3: The Bar-On EQ-i scales and what they assess**

| Intrapersonal Components | Adaptability Components |
|---|---|
| • Emotional self-awareness<br>• Assertiveness<br>• Self-regard<br>• Self-actualisation<br>• Independence | • Problem solving<br>• Reality testing<br>• Flexibility |
| **Interpersonal Component** | **Stress Management Components** |
| • Empathy<br>• Interpersonal relationships<br>• Social responsibility | • Stress tolerance<br>• Impulse control |
| | **General Mood Components** |
| | • Happiness<br>• Optimism |

Source: Bar-On et al. (2006)

## 2.2.4.3 THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MODEL OF GOLEMAN

Goleman defined emotional intelligence as: "the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those in others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Cartwright & Solloway, 2007, p. 2). Goleman (2001 cited in Emmerling & Goleman, 2003) postulated that the model could be described as an emotional intelligence based theory performance that

involves twenty competencies which are dispersed amongst four clusters of abilities:

(i) **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness is the ability to fully understand oneself and to use that information to manage emotions productively. This component is all about being aware about how emotions affect individuals and how they react (Goleman, 1995 cited in Dette, 2008). It is furthermore stated by the author that emotions are accompanied by immediate physical actions and these can result in appropriate behaviour for external situational factors.

(ii) **Self-management:** Self-management is the ability to manage internal stress, impulses and resources. According to Goleman (1995 cited in Dette, 2008) individuals with this characteristic are renowned for normally possessing an optimistic about life and their ability to affect the future; they have the ability to view any failure as a temporary setback and are willing to accept criticism and to learn from mistakes.

(iii) **Social-awareness:** Social-awareness is the ability to read people and groups accurately. According to Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker (2002), this component includes facets such as understanding others, developing others, having a service orientation, leveraging diversity and possessing a keen political awareness.

(iv) **Relationship management**: According to Goleman (1995 cited in Dette, 2008) relationship management is the ability to induce desirable responses. This involves communication skills, interpersonal expertise and the ability to help other manage their emotions.

Goleman (2001 cited in Emmerling & Goleman, 2003) purported that each of the domains become the foundation for competencies which depend on the fundamental strength in the relevant emotional intelligence domain. Goleman's model is illustrated in figure 3 on the following page.

**Figure 2.3: Four clusters of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model**

|  | **Awareness** | **Management** |
|---|---|---|
| **Self** | **SELF-AWARENESS**<br><br>• Emotional self-awareness<br>• Accurate self-assessment<br>• Self-confidence | **SELF-MANAGEMENT**<br><br>• Emotional self-management<br>• Transparency<br>• Adaptability<br>• Achievement<br>• Initiative<br>• Optimism |
| **Social** | **SOCIAL AWARENESS**<br><br>• Empathy<br>• Organisational awareness<br>• Service | **RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT**<br><br>• Inspiration<br>• Influence<br>• Developing others<br>• Change catalyst<br>• Conflict management<br>• Teamwork and collaboration |

Source: (Goleman, 2001, p.28)

## 2.2.5 BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence has been recognised as a critical factor in academic work as well as general life experiences. According to Joorfi, Yacoob and Shah (2011 cited in Kumar & Muniandy, 2012) age, gender and tenure have a positive relationship with emotional intelligence.

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**2.2.5.1 AGE**

Research which was conducted regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and age shows a slight relationship between emotional intelligence and age (Nasir & Iqbal, 2008). Fariselli, Ghini and Freedman (2008) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and age and the results also showed a slight but positive relationship between the two variables.

It was found by Fariselli et al. (2008) that older individuals are more probable to have higher emotional intelligence levels. It is postulated by the researchers that emotional intelligence is a developing ability, thus it is likely that accumulated life experiences contribute to higher levels of emotional intelligence. According to Calif (2011 cited in Adams, 2011), one of the pivotal elements to success is the emotional intelligence construct and even though older persons are more likely to have higher levels of emotional intelligence than younger individuals, it is a developing ability and thus younger people could be trained to be more dedicated to their development to succeed.

Based on research findings by Bar-On et al. (2006), the emotional intelligence levels of older groups scored significantly greater than that of younger groups. It was found that respondents in their forties obtained the highest mean scores.

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**2.2.5.2 GENDER**

Gender differences in the workplace are constantly altering as legislation, norms and attitudes advance over time (Bennie & Huang, 2010). Robbins (2003) emphasised that women tend to have a greater ability to emotionally express themselves than men. Women tend to demonstrate a greater need for social approval and thus may be able to lead more efficiently and effectively. According to Naghavi and Redzuan (2011), in many cultures globally females are expected to be more expressive of feelings, while males abstain from expressively showing feelings, thus it is more widely believed that females tend to have a higher emotional intelligent level than men.
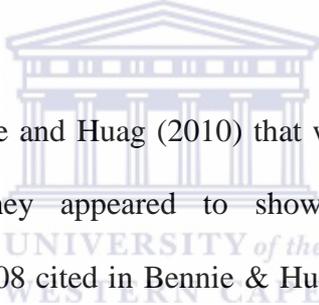
It is postulated by Bennie and Huag (2010) that women showed more emotional expression however, they appeared to show lower levels of emotional management. Crump (2008 cited in Bennie & Huag, 2010) found that there were no significant associations between overall emotional intelligence and gender, but significant correlations were found in the facets of emotional intelligence, for example, females scored higher on the interpersonal facet.

A study conducted by Ahmed, Banghash & Khan (2009) argued that men are more self-confident, optimistic and adaptable than women. Similarly, Jopie Van Rooyen and partners (n.d. cited in Adams, 2011) stated that in relation to men, women have more interpersonal skills, are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy and are more socially responsible. Men however, have a higher interpersonal capacity, are more adaptable, solve issues better, cope better with

stress and are more optimistic. These differences in emotional intelligence levels of males and females indicated a definite gap in workers' ability to cope with stress and deal with crisis management (Shipley, Jackson & Segrest, 2010).

**2.2.5.3 TENURE**

There is paucity of research with regards to the relationship between emotional intelligence and tenure, but the limited research below has shown that there is a relationship between the variables.

It was found by Min (2010) that there is a strong association between tenure and emotional intelligence. The researcher postulated that these differences could be due to particular work experiences or different levels of maturity among individuals. A study conducted by Kumar and Muniandy (2012) found that lecturers who have a vast amount of work experience in an organisation recorded the highest levels of emotional intelligence compared to the other lecturers who have a shorter span of working experience in an organisation.

Contradictory to the above, a study conducted by Bramalge (2009) found that there was a negative weak relationship between emotional intelligence and tenure. Sy (2006 cited in Bramlage, 2009) hypothesised that it is possible that workers with a great level of emotional intelligence are less probable to stay at jobs that are no longer a good match for them. Workers with high emotional intelligence may be able to identify the discrepancy at a faster pace and move on to a new job.

Bramlage (2009) postulated that employees who possess high emotional intelligence levels are able to assess others emotions and moods, but may also be able to realise that the organisational climate may not be a good match for their skills, abilities and personality.

## 2.2.6 BENEFITS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Since the development of the emotional intelligence construct there has been an increase in finding the potential benefits of the emotional intelligent individual. According to Oginska-Bulik (2005), emotional intelligence is an essential factor responsible for determining success in life and psychological well-being; it also seems to play a pivotal role in shaping the interaction between individuals and their work environment. Thus, emotional intelligence cannot only have a great and positive impact on the individual but is beneficial to the organisation as a whole.

According to Dette (2008), studies conducted by Goleman found that emotional intelligent skills have a greater impact than technical skills and IQ levels in an organisation. The work of Goleman is appealing but it has to be stated that it has been widely critiqued for lack of scientific substance (Dette, 2008). This does not mean his findings and research are not relevant; but it should be interpreted with caution. Individuals who possess high levels of emotional intelligence perform better in various aspects of life than people who are less emotionally intelligent

(Bar-on et al., 2006). A study conducted by Stough and Guara (2003 cited in Furnell, 2008) found that emotional intelligence was positively related to various performance indicators, such as the employees emotional recognition and expression and emotional management. Salovey and Mayer (1990 cited in Brand, 2007) argued that positive emotions and moods could change the way individuals approach problems, organise thoughts, process data, apply creative thinking and fulfil other life tasks.

Studies conducted by Chattopadhyay (2002) and Vermeulen (2001) cited in (Pencelian, 2004) found individuals' EQ contributes much more positive outcomes with regards to productivity and achievements in one's personal life than the much researched intelligence quotient. Schutte et al. (1998 cited in Dette, 2008) found that emotional intelligence is linked to affective outcomes in elements such as increased optimism and confidence, less depression and less impulsivity. It was emphasised by Tsousis and Nikolaou (2005) that professionals with high emotional intelligence undergo a reduced amount of stress which is related to occupational stress and burnout. With relevance to this research it could be argued that the link between emotional intelligence and stress and burnout could be based on the assumption that negative emotions and subsequent stress are the result of the dysfunctional relationship between the individual and the environment. There is evidence which suggested that emotional intelligence has an impact on perceived job stress and the consequences of experiencing stress and burnout (Gardener, 2002; Oginska-Bulik, 2005).

According to Le Roux and De Klerk (2001 cited in Pencelian, 2004), there are multiple benefits to being emotionally intelligent:

- There is more responsiveness to one's emotions which results in the recognition of one's feelings. A differentiation can be made between feelings and behaviour, as well knowing the source of those feelings.

- A balance is made between expressing and controlling one's feelings.

- It offers a balance between one's thoughts and feelings.

- The realisation occurs that the responsibility of feelings falls on the individual.

- An understanding of others feelings is developed and thus empathy can be shown towards others.

- There is an improvement in communication skills, which in turn, will increase the positivity in human relationships.

- Possession of skills to assert oneself.

- The fulfilment of needs can be achieved without interfering in other individual's rights.

- The formulation of goals can be achieved, and these goals allow for an interesting life.

- Getting rid of emotional baggage, while still escalating energy makes it possible to strive towards and attain new goals.

## 2.2.7  CRITIQUE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Interest in emotional intelligence has grown greatly over the last few decades; however, there are gaps between studies which have been done within the field of emotional intelligence. Some researchers and practitioners have been optimistic about the value of emotional intelligence in the workplace whereas others have critical questions about the concept, theory and measurement of emotional intelligence (Landy & Conte, 2004; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2004).

There seems to be a lack of empirical validity with regards to emotional intelligence, initially researchers thought they would be able to differentiate between emotional and academic intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1993 cited in Permall, 2011). Cherniss (2000) argued that there was still a major issue in separating abilities which are related to cognitive intelligence from abilities which relate to emotional intelligence, all definitions of emotional intelligence embodied a combination of cognitive and emotional abilities.

According to Zeidner et al. (2004), the potential benefit of emotional intelligence in the workplace was found to be premature and the evidence related to performance and emotional intelligence is contradictory. The authors stated a case reference of a study by Goleman (1998) with Bell Laboratory engineers where it showed that top performers were more intelligent than their colleagues. However, it was found that engineers were not tested with an instrument that actually

measures emotional intelligence. This study's conclusions were accepted uncritically (Zeidner et al., 2004).

Robbins and Judge (2009) point out that the following are also some viewpoints against the construct of emotional intelligence:

- **Emotional intelligence is too vague**: Many researchers do not have a proper understanding of the emotional intelligence construct, and various researchers focus on different skills which makes it difficult to get one solid definition.

- **Emotional intelligence cannot be measured**: Many critics have raised questions with regards to the validity of the emotional intelligent measures, since the construct is a form of intelligence. Also, the measures of emotional intelligence are diverse and they have not undergone the rigorous testing which personality and general intelligence measures have.

- **Validity of emotional intelligence is suspect**: The argument by the critics is that emotional intelligence is too close to intelligence and personality and if these two constructs are controlled, emotional intelligence is reduced to nothing. This argument is centred on the fact that emotional intelligence is closely related to measures of personality, particularly emotional stability.

According to Ashkanasy and Daus (2005 cited in Permall, 2011), although there is suspicion with regards to the emotional intelligent construct, this field of research however, is an exciting and developing area relating to organisational behaviour and signifies a vital element in the increasing interest in emotions within organisations.

## 2.2.8   EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SOCIAL WORKERS

There is a scarcity of research with regards to the social work profession and its relation to emotional intelligence. As a result reference will also be made to other human service and helping professions which are closely related to the social services.
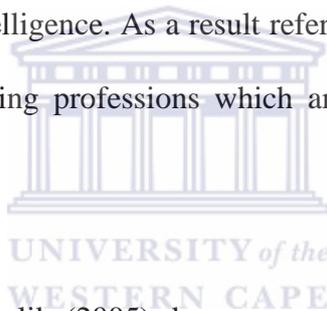
According to Oginska-Bulik (2005), human services are also known as "direct person-related jobs" and include professions such as counsellors, social workers, nurses, and teachers. In these professions, the primary task is to adjust the clients/patients physically or psychologically. Cooper (1998 cited in Brand, 2007) stated that the interaction with patients, clients especially children, demands empathy and emotional involvement which many employees experience as the demand to deal with emotional pressures increase.  Social work is a relationship-based practice and relationships can only be conducted with skill and compassion if the worker is emotionally intelligent (Howe, 2008).

Howe (2008) postulated that the social work relationship between social workers and their clients change from inter-personal to economic, from therapeutic to transactional, from nurturing and supportive to contractual and service oriented. The central feature of this personal relationship within the social work practice is of a social, cultural, emotional and inter-personal dimension. Thus, based on these dimensions needed in the social work profession, it seems that it may be precisely the time of professional and occupational turbulence that an understanding of relationship-based practice and the contribution of emotional intelligence to social work can make their most important contribution (Morrison, 2007).

A study conducted by Singh (2006) found that social workers at a non-governmental organisation had an above average ability to manage their own emotions and the emotions of clients whom they interacted with on a daily basis. It was further stipulated by Singh (2006) that the social workers who possess medium to high levels of emotional intelligence are able to function more effectively than those who have lower levels of emotional intelligence. Lindsay and Orton (2011) were of the view that emotions are central to the social work profession and clients are prone to emotional outbursts, thus it is of utmost importance that social workers know how to deal with these outbursts. The authors argued that social workers, who are able to undertake to work with their own emotions and to value and understand their emotional expressions, will lead to good practice.

Ingram (2012) posited the role emotions play within the social work profession is a two way process in that social workers need to engage with the emotional context of their clients while also identifying the emotional influence this may have on themselves and in turn, their social work practice. Morrison (2007) found empathy to be a fundamental element within the helping professions; it has a strong therapeutic effect on clients' physical, mental and social well-being. More explicitly, evidence has been found that emotional intelligence, reflective ability, aspects of empathy and social competence may be key protective qualities in the social care context (Kinman & Grant, 2010).

Morrison (2007) established that the success of assessment and intervention processes relied on an awareness and management of emotions at all stages in casework practice. This links with Goleman's view who was of the opinion that emotional intelligence requires a degree of self-knowledge and in turn "attunement" with service users. According to Ingram (2012, p. 9), attunement referred to "the ability to respond to actions and feelings that requires a worker not only to know that they understand the emotional context of an interaction, but be able to transmit this within the relationship."

A study conducted by Morrison (2008 cited in Ingram, 2012) investigated the relationship that emotional intelligence had on self-reported preferred approaches to dealing with conflict within the nursing profession. The findings revealed that those respondents who scored highly on an emotional intelligence test tended to engage in collaborative approaches to conflict resolution. Ingram (2012) stated

that this provides a useful signpost for the social work profession since the centrality of interpersonal relationships is shared with the nursing profession.

## 2.2.9  EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BURNOUT

Stress, burnout and emotional intelligence have been key theories guiding numerous research studies concerned with characteristics of employees' health and well-being (Dette, 2008). Few studies have been conducted with regards to stress and emotional intelligence. Slaski and Cartwright (2002) view emotional intelligence as a potential moderator in the stress process, but further studies would be advantageous with regards to the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, since little is known about burnout and emotional intelligence in the workplace. Numerous research has however, found consistent results with regards to the emotional intelligent-burnout relationship (Brand, 2007; Cote & Golden, 2006; Kababi, 2010). All these studies found a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout.

Research by Khanifer, Maleki, Nazari and Emami (2012) suggested that burnout stemmed from factors which were related to organisational components such as a person's job as a whole, a person's organisational role, organisational atmosphere and construction, professional improvement flow and professional relations. However, the findings also found that emotional intelligence is a critical factor in decreased burnout levels within individuals. Similarly, Dette (2008) postulated that certain competencies which make up emotional intelligence can be used by

individuals in such a way that they will be able to protect themselves against the negative effects of workplace stressors. Furthermore, this buffer may be able to decrease the likelihood from an individual experiencing and suffering from burnout.

Burnout is a sign that employees are no longer able to manage their emotions sufficiently when interacting with clients (Zapf, 2002). Emotionally intelligent individuals can cope better with life's challenges and control their emotions more efficiently (Taylor, 2001). A study conducted by Weng, Hung, Liu, Cheng, Weng, Hung, Liu, Cheng, Yen, Chang and Huang (2011) found that doctors with higher emotional intelligence had better skills in stress management in the workplace as well as on an individual level. Thus it showed that emotional intelligence acts as a protecting factor which reduces burnout. Research conducted by Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, and Mayer (1999 cited in Mohammadyfar, Khan & Tamini, 2009) are of similar opinion stating that individuals who could control their emotional states were healthier since they could precisely perceive and evaluate their emotional states, know how and when to express their moods, and could efficiently regulate their mood states.

It was found by Jonker and Joubert (2009) that emotion work, social support and emotional intelligence explained 37% of variance in emotional exhaustion. Also, a study conducted by Farmer (2004) revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and depersonalization, indicating that as emotional intelligence increased, depersonalization decreased. This result was

consistent with the argument that individuals with increased levels of emotional intelligence would be less prone to burnout. Results from a study done by Furnell (2008) were consistent with the above finding. It was found that emotional intelligence (total score) was negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and positively related to diminished personal accomplishment. These results proposed that those individuals with higher emotional intelligent scores are more probable to experience an increase in their sense of personal accomplishment than their lower emotionally intelligent counterparts.

Bar-On (2003) purported that educating individuals to be socially and emotionally intelligent is a valuable commodity in the business world since it will not only increase individual performance but also overall organisational productivity. Similarly, Slaski and Cartwright (2002) suggested that training to develop emotional intelligence may possibly be an effective technique for improving an individual's resilience to stress which could result in burnout. Sharma (2007) found that burnout can be prohibited with early detection, timely intervention, and enhancement of emotional intelligence which can be done through emotional intelligence training. According to Alam et al. (2012), emotional intelligent training may increase the awareness of human emotions and improve the ability of listening, effective interaction, emotional expression, conflict resolution, coping with mental pressures, which subsequently reduces burnout.

**2.2.10 CONCLUSION**

There have been various studies which have examined stress within the workplace however, burnout has become a serious problem since it is significant to the individual and the workplace and in it lies links to important outcomes (Maslach et al., 2001). Within the human services, the emotional demands of the work can exhaust a service provider's capacity to be involved with, and responsive to, the needs of service recipients (Maslach et al., 2001). The phenomenon of burnout has spread to many other countries and it has become a phenomenon of notable global significance (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

A vast amount of research has not been done with regards to emotional intelligence within the social work profession. It is evident that it is needed in order to decrease the levels of burnout experienced by social workers as the nature of the job requires dealing with stressful and challenging situations. Brand (2007) concurred that necessary skills such as emotional intelligence are needed in order to deal with these stressful situations in order for burnout not to present itself.

This chapter highlighted the literature as well as the theories pertaining to the evolving constructs of emotional intelligence and burnout. Reference was made to the various definitions, models and measurements, also the problems relating to burnout and emotional intelligence within the social work profession were highlighted.

The following chapter examines the research methodology and design used to gather the data.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## 3.1  INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among social workers in the North and South Metro regions of the Western Cape. The preceding chapter reviewed the literature pertaining to social workers, emotional intelligence and burnout. In this chapter the methods applied in the current investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, the research design and the participating respondents will be discussed. The instruments used to gather the data as well as the statistical techniques utilised in this study is also provided.
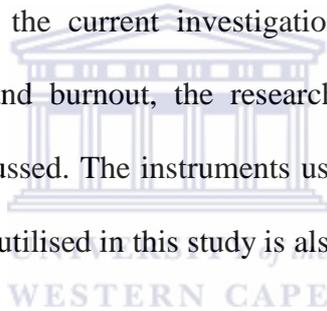
## 3.2  RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study adopted a quantitative methodology as this was the best means to achieve the aims of the research. Neuman (2000) stipulated that quantitative research is concerned with issues pertaining to the design, measurement and sampling of the research. This logical approach emphasised detailed planning prior to data collection and analysis (Neuman, 2000). Gravetter and Forzano (2012, p. 158) purported that quantitative research is based on "measuring variables for individual subjects to obtain scores, usually of numerical value, which are submitted for statistical analysis for summary and interpretation." The

measurement process is vital within quantitative research since it provides an important link between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

To elicit participation for this study a non-probability sampling design was used in the form of convenience sampling. According to Sekaran (2003), when adopting non-probability sampling, the subjects in the population have no probabilities attached to them. Thus the findings of the sample cannot be generalised to the population. In the case of the current research there is not a high level of generalisibility since the study is only based in the Western Cape. Cooper and Schindler (2001) examined the practical considerations for using non-probability sampling other than the more precise method of probability sampling:
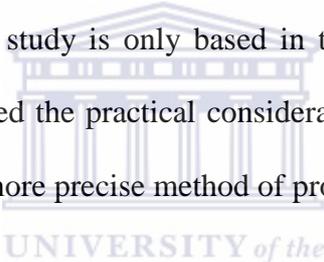
- It meets the sampling objectives in a satisfactorily manner,

- It is less costly and time consuming – if non-probability sampling is carefully controlled, acceptable results are often obtained, thus the researcher may not even consider probability sampling and

- Non-probability sampling may be the only practical alternative since the entire population may not be available for research in certain cases.

The main advantage with convenience sampling is that the selection from the sample is based on easy accessibility. Brysbaert (2011) cited that with a

convenience sample the individuals are readily available and representative for a particular subgroup of the population.

## 3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

According to Sekaran (2003, p. 266), a population referred to "the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate." Samples are drawn from populations (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The population for this study consisted of 192 social workers from the Metro North and South regions of the Western Cape.
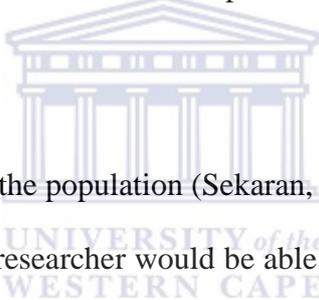
A sample is a division of the population (Sekaran, 2003). The author stated that by studying the sample, the researcher would be able to draw conclusions that would be generalizable to the population of interest. Babbie and Mounton (2008) also postulated that a sample is a representative of the population from which it is drawn if the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely resemble those aggregate characteristics of the population. Thus the sample is those individuals who have been selected to partake in the study.

For the purpose of this research all the social workers employed in the North and South regions of the Western Cape (N=192) were invited to participate in the research. However, a total of 171 questionnaires were returned of which three

were incorrectly completed therefore 168 questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were easily administered and retrieved from the social workers.

## 3.4 PROCEDURE FOR DATA GATHERING

The procedure involved obtaining permission from the Western Cape Social Development Department to distribute and administer the questionnaires to (N= 192) social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape. Once permission was obtained from the Department, the regional office managers were contacted in order to set up suitable dates for office visits. This contact was done for two reasons: Firstly, so that activities at the offices would not be disrupted, and secondly, for the researcher to be available when administering the questionnaires to deal with any queries. The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents. By personally administering the questionnaires, the researcher was able to establish rapport and clarify any doubts respondents may have had.

The aims of the research and the instructions for completing the questionnaires were explained to the participants. They were also asked to sign a consent form before taking part in the study. Participants were briefed that participation was voluntary and would have the right to withdraw from the study at any given point without reason. Furthermore, participants were informed that all information would be kept strictly confidential and results would be used for the intended

research only. They were also assured of their anonymity as no personal information would be needed.

## 3.5  MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

According to Gravetter and Forzano (2012), surveys and questionnaires are used expansively in the behavioural sciences as relatively effective ways to gather large amounts of data. Surveys may be used for descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory purposes (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). Survey research involves collecting the original data from a population which is too large to observe directly (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).
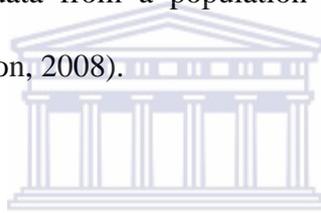
Sekaran (2003, p. 233) defined a questionnaire as "a pre-formulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives". The advantages of this method are: (i) they are less expensive when administered to groups of respondents, (ii) there is almost a 100% response rate assured, and (iii) anonymity of respondents is high. A disadvantage of using questionnaires is that organisations may be reluctant to give up company time for the survey with groups of employees assembled for the purpose (Sekaran, 2003).

For this research three questionnaires were used to gather the data namely, a biographical questionnaire, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

### 3.5.1 BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

A self-developed biographical questionnaire was used to gather information about respondents' gender, age, race, number of years in the social work profession and average hours worked per day. The data collected will be graphically presented as well as to test two of the hypotheses relating to biographical information.

### 3.5.2 SCHUTTE'S SELF REPORT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST
### 3.5.2.1 NATURE AND COMPOSITION

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test was developed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden and Donheim (1998) in an attempt to measure the extent to which respondents are able to identify, understand, harness and regulate emotions in themselves and others. This measure is also known as the EIS (Emotional Intelligence Scale), SEIS (Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale) or SEI (Self Report Emotional Intelligence). According to Austin, Saklofske, Huang, and McKenney (2004) and Ng, Wang, Kim, & Bodenhorn (2009), the SSREIT is one of the initial instruments measuring emotional intelligence and has been widely used in the literature in part because of its relative conciseness and availability in the public sphere.

Salovey and Mayer's model of emotional intelligence was the basis for the conception of the SSREIT items (Jansen, 2006). The development had an initial pool of 62 items to reflect all categories in the model. By using principal component factor analysis on the 62 items, four components were extracted however, only one factor was retained due to its relatively low item loading on other factors (Kim, Wang & Ng, 2010). The single factor which was selected consisted of 33 items that assessed the appraisal and expression of emotion in the self and others, regulation of emotion in the self and others and utilisation of emotion in solving problems (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005). A description of each of these factors is given in Table 2 below (Alston, 2009):

**Table 3.1: The four factors of Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test**

| Four Factors | Construct Definition |
|---|---|
| The Appraisal of Emotion in Self and Others | Verbal and nonverbal appraisal of emotion |
| The Expression of Emotion | Verbal and nonverbal expression of emotion |
| The Regulation of Emotion in Self and Others | Using emotion to motivate |
| The Utilisation of Emotion in Problem Solving | Using emotion to motivate as part of the utilisation of emotions |

Source: Alston (2009)

The questionnaire consists of 33 items which are answered on a 5 point Likert scale where a score of 1 represents *strongly disagree* and a score of 5 represents *strongly agree*. Three of the items (5, 28 and 33) are reversed scored. Respondents have to indicate the extent to which each statement is true of the way they typically think, feel and act at work (Schutte et al., 1998). It is recommended to use the total score of the 33 item scale and not the subscale scores. The sums of all the items result in a total score which can range from 33 to 165 where higher scores indicate a greater level of emotional intelligence (Schutte, Malouffe, Simunek, McKenley & Hollander 2002).

### 3.5.2.2  PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

### 3.5.2.2.1  RELIABILITY

According to Babbie and Mouton (2008), reliability is a matter of whether a specific method, applied repeatedly, would yield the same result each time.

A study conducted by Schutte et al. (1998) amongst a sample of community members, revealed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 and for college students it was observed to be 0.87. According to Murphy (2008), previous studies with the SSREIT using South African populations have yielded good reliability scores. Stone (2004 cited in Murphy, 2008) obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 with an average score of 127 amongst employees in a South African information technology and software development organisation.

The scale has been reported to have a good two week test-retest reliability (r=0.78) (Schutte et al., 1998). Group variances in scores and correlations with other measures have mostly been reported as in accordance with theoretical beliefs (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001; Schutte et al., 2002). The SSREIT has also been found to be reliable measuring emotional intelligence in adolescents and adults (Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Palmer, 2003).

### 3.5.2.2.2 VALIDITY

Cooper and Schindler (2001) define validity as "the extent to which differences found with a measuring tool reflect true differences among respondents being tested" (p. 211).
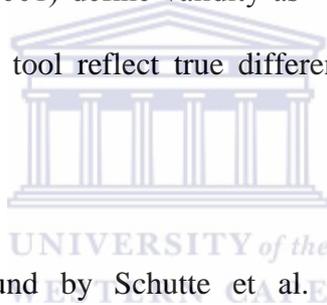
Evidence has been found by Schutte et al. (1998) that validity includes correlations with measures of attention to feelings, clarity of feelings, mood repair, optimism, impulse control and lack of depressed affect. An exploratory factor analysis on the SSREIT which was conducted by Petrides and Furnham (2000), found evidence of construct validity by ascertaining that the items which loaded on the four located factors were closely connected to the components on the model which the measure is based. The scale demonstrated discriminant validity for a sample of college students and the scores showed a positive correlation for only the Openness factor of the Big Five personality measure (Schutte et al., 1998).

According to Murphy (2006), the factorial validity of the SSREIT depends on the construct and content validity of the measure as well. The total score of the SSREIT should only be used, but a number of researchers have found that the four factor solution gives a satisfactory fit to the one dimension model (Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Palmer, 2003; Petrides & Furnham, 2000). The predictive validity of the SSRI using a sample of adolescents, found that the scores were implicitly connected to identifying emotional expression, degree of social support, satisfaction with social support and mood management behaviour (Ciarrochi et al., 2001).

### 3.5.3  MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY (MBI)

### 3.5.3.1  NATURE AND COMPOSITION

According to Bosman et al. (2005), the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) seems to be the most popular measure for burnout. There are various versions of the MBI namely, MBI-GS (General Survey), MBI-ED (Educators) and MBI-HS (Human Service Survey), but all these measures can be applied to employees in any occupation as burnout can occur within any occupation (Clayford, 2010).

The MBI uses a 22 item Likert-type scale written in the form of personal feelings and attitudes where responses range from 1=never and 7=every day (Maslach et al., 2001). This specific measure is the only instrument of burnout which measures all three constructs of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The Emotional

Exhaustion subscale comprises of nine items and measures aspects such as how a person is emotionally drained, exhausted and over extended by their work. Diminished Personal Accomplishment consists of five items and measures the evaluation with one's work with clients negatively. Depersonalisation is an eight item scale which measures the negative attitudes towards clients (Kokkinos, 2005).

The MBI results will have three separate scores for each respondent since each test is scored by using a scoring key for each subscale (Maslach et al., 2001). No single total score will be developed. A high score on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation and a low score on Personal Accomplishment are indicative of a high level of burnout (Kokkinos, 2005).
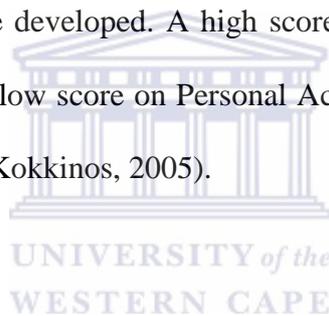
### 3.5.3.2 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES

### 3.5.3.2.1 RELIABILITY

Reliability coefficients were assessed based on samples which were not used in the item selection, thus any inappropriate inflations of the reliability estimates will be avoided. The reliability coefficients for Emotional Exhaustion were 0.90, for Depersonalisation 0.79 and Personal Accomplishment 0.71. The standard error of the mean for each subscale of the measure was 3.80 for Emotional Exhaustion, 3.16 for Depersonalisation and 3.73 for Personal Accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Furthermore, a study conducted by Storm and Rothmann (2003) described alpha coefficients of 0.88 (Emotional Exhaustion), 0.78

(Depersonalisation) and 0.79 (Personal Accomplishment) in a sample of 2396 police officers in South Africa.

A study conducted by Farmer (2004) using Cronabach's Coefficeint Alpha found that there was internal consistency. The reliability coefficient for emotional exhaustion was 0.90, 0.79 for depersonalisation and 0.71 for personal accomplishment. This study's variables obtained the same results as that of Maslach and Leiter (1997). Similar Cronbach Coeffiiceint Alpha scores were obtained by Fives, Hamman and Oliverez, (2006) and Pienaar and Van Wyk (2006). The test-retest data from Farmer's (2004) study varied slightly but all were found to be beyond the .001 level.
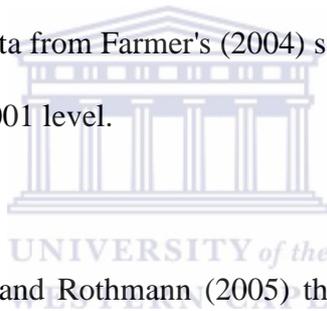
According to Campbell and Rothmann (2005) the MBI is a reliable instrument within the South African context.

### 3.5.3.2.2  VALIDITY

It was found by Maslach and Leiter (1997) that the MBI displays high quality discriminant validity in that a differentiation could be made from other psychological constructs such as social desirability and depression. Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) reported internal validity which varied from 0.87 – 0.89 for Emotional Exhaustion, 0.73 - 0.84 for Depersonalisation and 0.76 - 0.84 for Personal Accomplishment.

Lee and Ashforth (1990 cited in Kalliath, O'Driscoll, Gillepsi & Bluedorn, 2000) found support for the three factor structure of the MBI. Findings indicated a high positive correlation between exhaustion and depersonalisation and a negative correlation between these factors and personal accomplishment. Similar results were revealed by Schaufeli et al. (1996 cited in Campbell & Rothmann, 2005) where depersonalisation was found to be highly related to emotional exhaustion and strongly related to personal accomplishment. A study conducted by Richardsen and Martinussen (2004) found that the factorial validity of the MBI was 0.90 for emotional exhaustion, 0.66 for depersonalisation and 0.77 for personal accomplishment. Campbell and Rothmann (2005) postulate that since the MBI has a strong factorial validity, burnout can be validly measured across a range of different occupations.
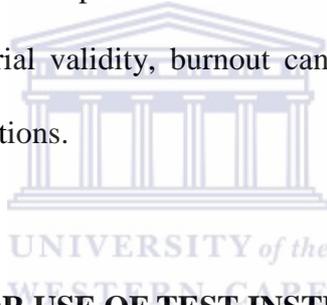
### 3.5.4 RATIONALE FOR USE OF TEST INSTRUMENTS

The instruments are validated for the South African population and are suitable for the purpose of the current study.

Various studies conducted in South Africa indicated that the **Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test** (SSREIT) displayed sufficient reliability and validity in measuring self-report emotional intelligence (Brackette & Mayer, 2003; Murphy, 2006; Stone 2004).

The **Maslach Burnout Inventory** (MBI) remains the most popular and universally used instrument (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) to measure burnout. According to Schaufeli and Buunk (2003), the core symptom of burnout (emotional exhaustion) is the most robust scale of the MBI and is strongly associated to other burnout measures. Cronbach's coefficient alpha of internal consistency, yielded reliability coefficients of 0.83 (frequency) and 0.84 (intensity) (Maslach et al., 1996).

## 3.6  STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The statistical procedures which were employed are namely, descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The inferential statistics include T-Tests, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).
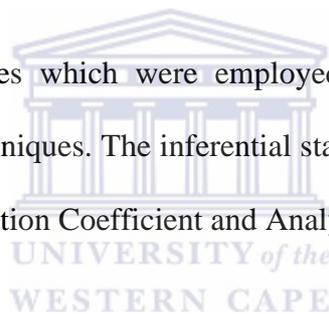
### 3.6.1  DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

According to Brysbaert (2011), descriptive statistics comprise a measure of central tendency to get an idea of the average, typical value and a measure of variability to indicate how strong the deviation from the central tendency is. In simplistic terms, descriptive statistics are methods that help researchers organise, summarise and simplify the results obtained from the research study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), when data is collected the interpretations must be structured in such a way to allow the researcher to correctly interpret the data and trace fundamental trends. The

descriptive statistics used in the current study were means, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies.

### 3.6.1.1 MEAN

According to Sekaran (2003) the mean is a measure of central tendency that offers a general picture of the data without unnecessarily inundating one with each of the observations in the data set.

### 3.6.1.2 STANDARD DEVIATION

Gravetter and Forzano (2012) stated that standard deviations use the mean of the distribution as reference point and measures variability by measuring the distance between each score and the mean.

### 3.6.1.3 PERCENTAGES AND FREQUENCIES

Frequencies discuss the amount of times numerous subcategories of a certain phenomenon occur, from which the percentage and the cumulative percentage of their occurrence can be easily calculated (Sekaran, 2003). The data is usually presented in the form of a histogram or a bar chart.

## 3.6.2 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Sekaran (2003) posited that inferential statistics allows inferences to be made from the data which can determine (i) the relationship between two variables, (ii) differences in a variable among different subgroups, and (iii) how several independent variables might explain the variance in a dependent variable.

## 3.6.2.1 T- TEST

The T-Test is a class of significance tests used to test for significant differences between different kinds of means (Babbie, Halley & Zaino, 2003). The T-Test takes into consideration the means and standard deviations of the two groups of variables and tests whether the numerical difference in the means is significantly different from 0 (zero) as postulated by the null hypothesis (Sekaran, 2003).
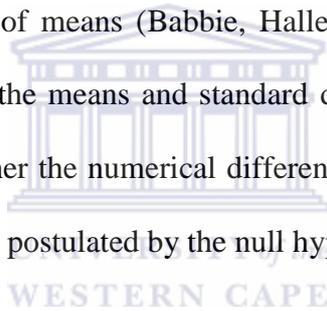
For this study the T-Test was used to determine if there were any significant differences in emotional intelligence and burnout based on gender differences.

## 3.6.2.2 PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation is a numerical summary depicting the strength or magnitude of the relationship which can be seen by the eye, as well as the direction of the relationship (Balnaves & Caputi, 2001). The Pearson Product

Moment Correlation is an appropriate measure of association to be used in the analysis of two interval or ratio variables (Babbie & Mouton, 2008).

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout.

### 3.6.2.3 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)

According to Balnaves & Caputi (2001) when a research study obtains means from more than two groups or more than two treatment conditions, the appropriate hypothesis test is an analysis if variance (ANOVA). Coolican (cited in Paulse, 2005, p. 73) stated "analysis of variance procedures are powerful parametric methods for testing the significance of differences between sample means where more than two conditions are used, or even when several independent variables are involved." According to Pretorius (2007), where tests only have one difference between the means, an ANOVA can reduce six differences between means to one measure called variance.

The ANOVA was used to determine whether there will be significant differences in social workers age and tenure with regard to burnout and emotional intelligence.

## 3.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed the research methodology employed in the study with regards to the method and sampling approach used. The target population and measuring instruments adopted (namely, the Biographical Questionnaire, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test and the Maslach Burnout Inventory) were briefly discussed with their psychometric properties. The chapter was concluded with a discussion of the statistical techniques that will be used (namely, T-Tests, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Analysis of Variance) to test the hypotheses.

In the next chapter the results are presented and interpreted with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

# CHAPTER 4

# PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the research study based on the empirical analysis of the data solicited from the research respondents. The presentation proceeds with an analysis of the descriptive statistics on the variables under consideration. To facilitate ease in conducting the empirical analyses, the results of the descriptive analyses are presented first, followed by the inferential statistical analysis.
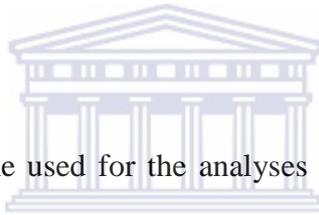
The statistical programme used for the analyses and presentation of data in this research is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The descriptive statistics utilized are based on frequency tables and graphical illustrations to provide information on key demographic variables in this study. This was achieved through summary statistics, which includes the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values which were computed for each of the variables in the study.

This is followed by presentation of the inferential statistics based on examination of each hypothesis formulated for the research. The upper level of statistical significance for null hypothesis testing was set at 5%. All statistical test results were computed at the 2-tailed level of significance in accordance with the non-directional hypotheses presented (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011).

## 4.2  DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated as obtained by the variables included in the biographical questionnaire. The demographic variables that received attention are race, age, gender, years in the social work profession, number of hours worked per day, qualification and tenure.

Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages are subsequently graphically presented for each of the demographic variables.

## 4.2.1  BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS



Figure 4.1: Race of respondents
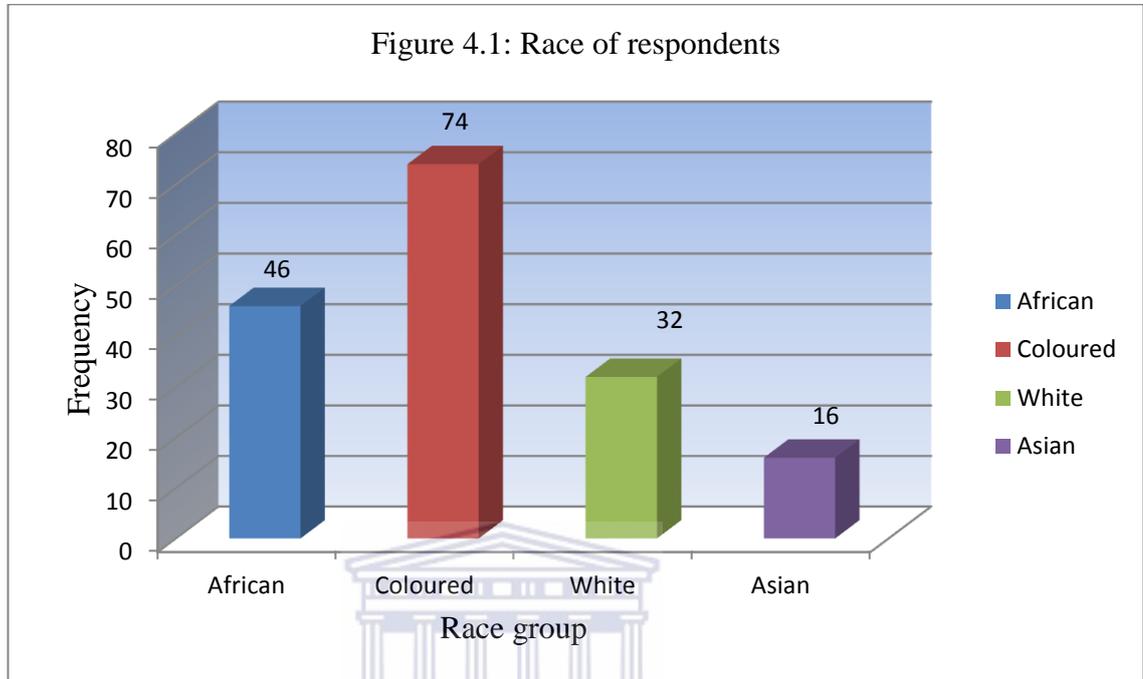
Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the race of the respondents. It depicts that 44% of the respondents (n=74) were Coloured. Moreover, 27% of the respondents were African (n=46), and 19% were White (n=32). Asian respondents comprised of 10% of the sample (n=16).

Figure 4.2: Age group of respondents
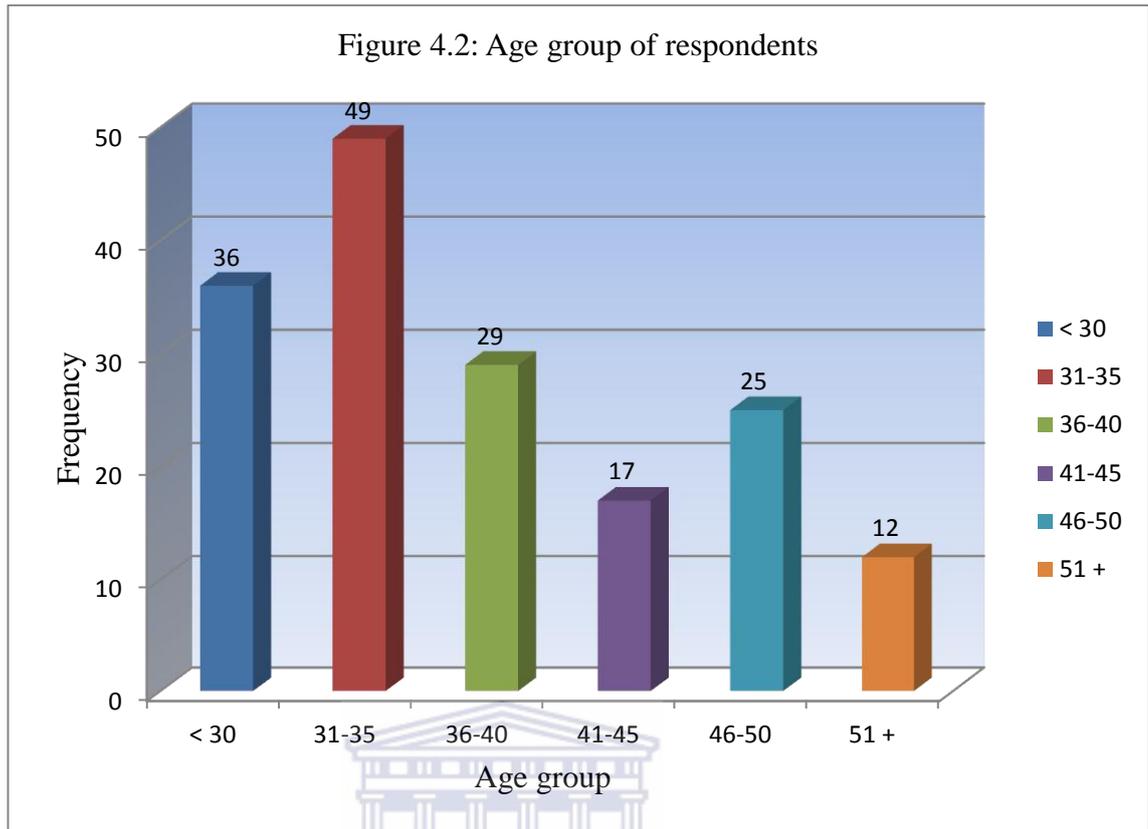
Figure 4.2 reveals that 29% of the respondents were in the age group 31-35 (n=49), with a further 21% being less than 30 years old (n=36). While 17% of the respondents were in the age group 36-40 (n=29), 15% were in the age category 46-50 years (n=25). Those in the age category 41-45 years constituted 10% of the respondents (n=17), with the remaining 7% (n=12) being in the age category 51 years and older.

Figure 4.3: Years worked in the Social Work profession
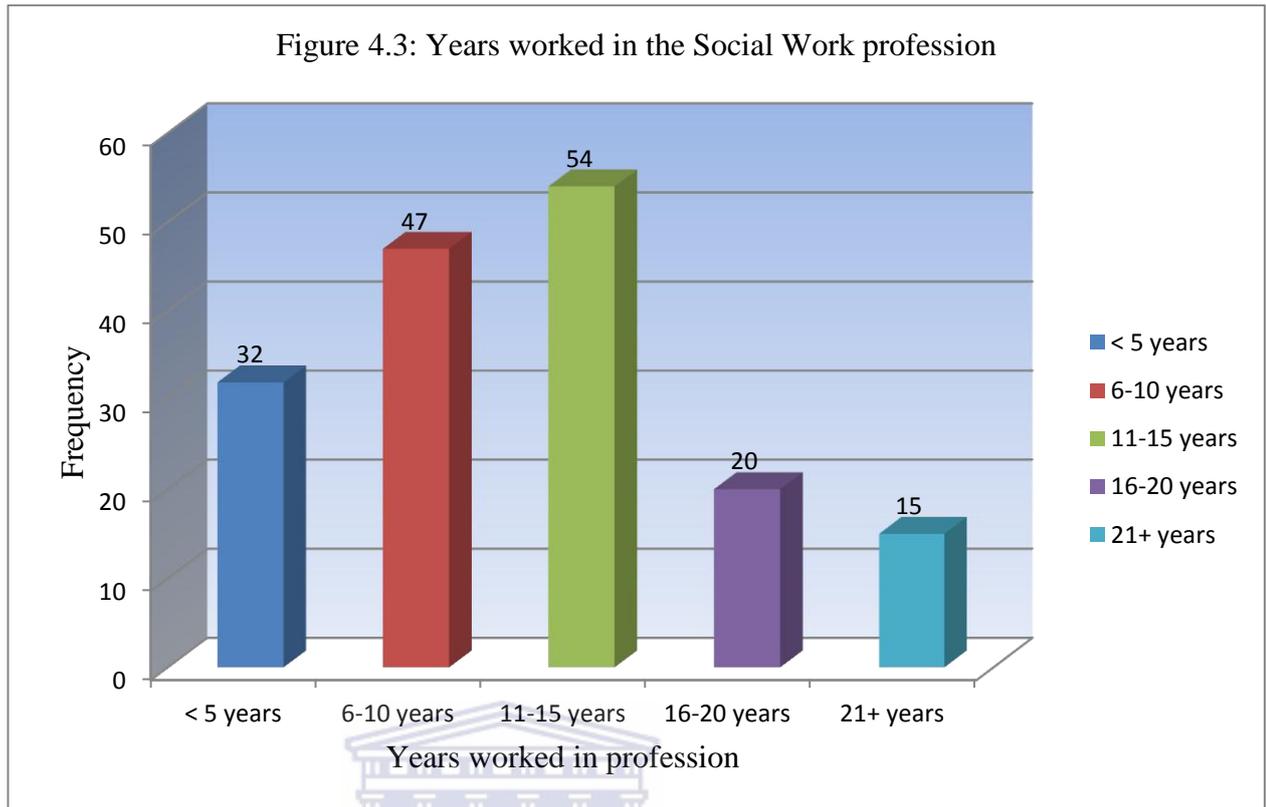
Figure 4.3 reveals that 32% of the respondents had worked in the social work profession for between 11-15 years (n=54). This was followed by 28% of the respondents indicating that they had worked in the profession for 6-10 years (n=47). Of the respondents, 19% (n=32) worked in the social work profession for less than 5 years (n=32), with 12% (n=20) having worked for 16-20 years. Those who had worked in the social work profession for 21 years and more constituted 9% of the sample (n=15).

Figure 4.4: Tenure of respondents
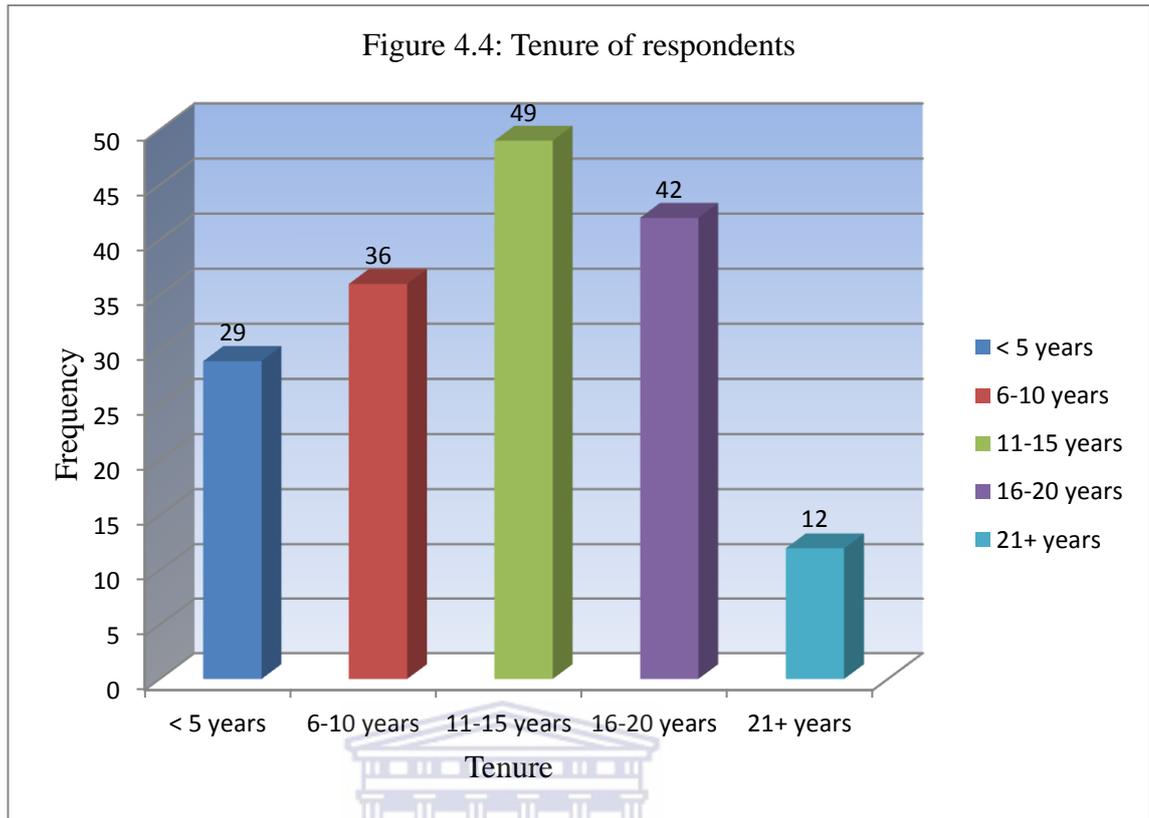
Figure 4.4 depicts the tenure of the respondents in their organisation. The most salient results indicate that 29% of the respondents had worked for 11-15 years in the organisation (n=49), with a further 25% having worked for 16-20 years in the organisation (n=42). While 17% had worked for the organisation for less than 5 years (n=29), 21% had worked for 6-10 years in the organisation (n=36). Respondents who had worked in the organisation for 21 years and more comprised 7% of the sample (n=12).

Figure 4.5: Hours worked per day
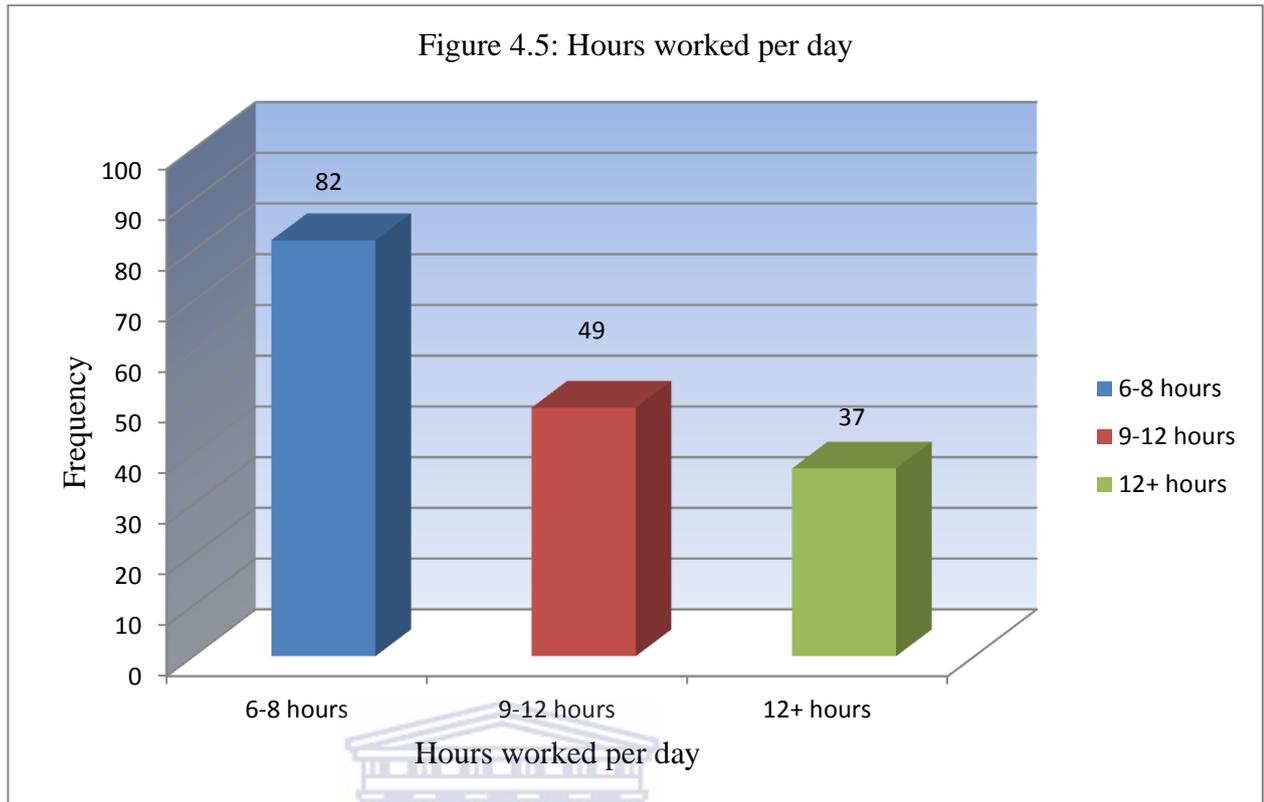
Figure 4.5 indicates that 49% of the respondents work 6-8 hours per day (n=82), followed by those that work 9-12 hours per day, which constitutes 29% of the sample (n=49). Respondents that worked 12 hours and more per day represented 22% of the sample (n=37).

Figure 4.6: Qualification of respondents
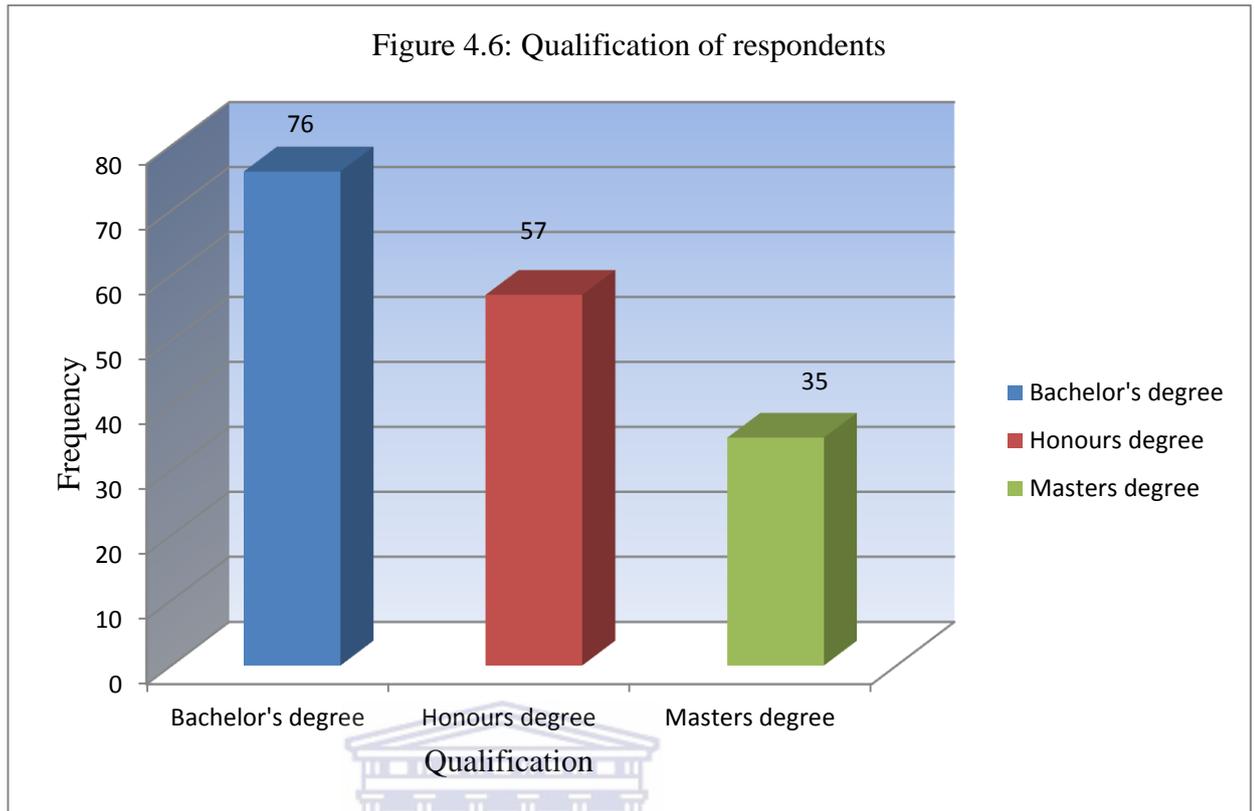


With respect to their qualifications, 45% of the respondents had completed a Bachelor's degree (n=76). Moreover, 34% had completed an Honours degree, constituting 57 of those who completed the survey. Only 21% of the respondents (n=35) had completed a Masters degree.

Figure 4.7: Gender of respondents
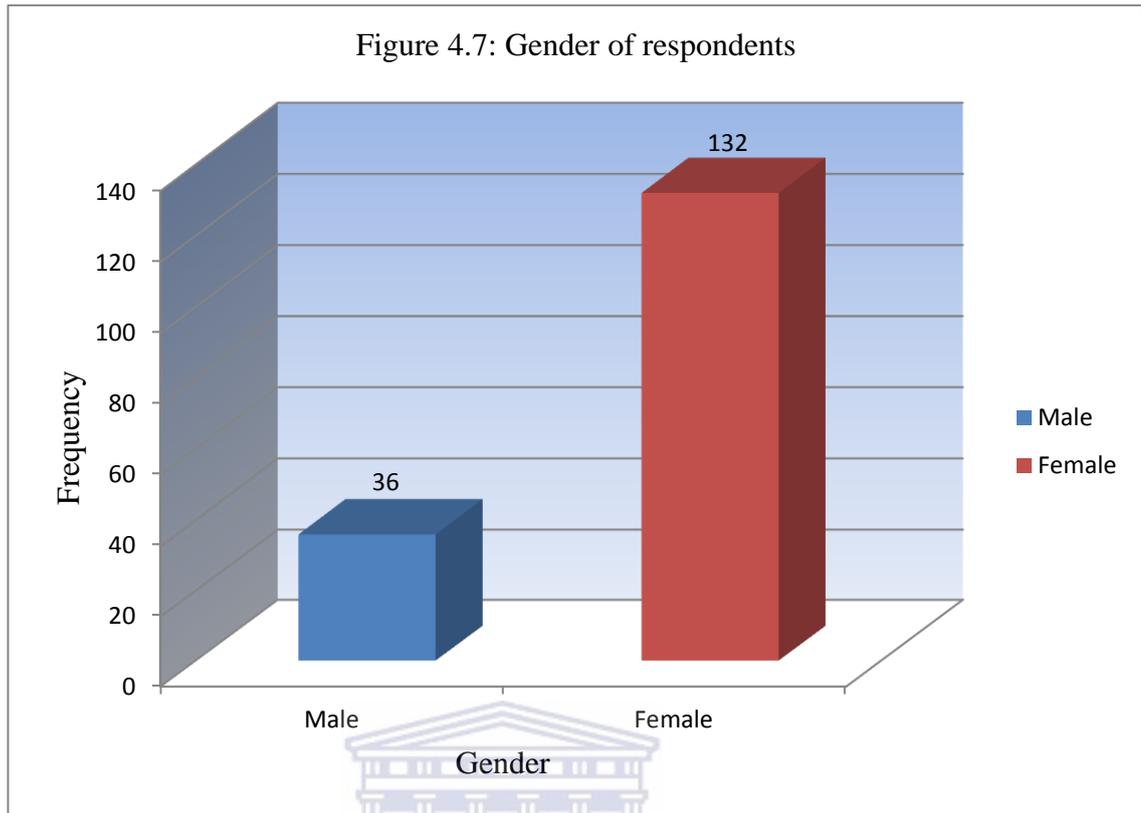
Figure 4.7 reveals that the majority of the respondents, that is 79% were female (n=132), with 21% being male social workers (n=36).

### 4.2.2 MEASURES OF CENTRAL TENDENCY AND DISPERSION

This section outlines the descriptive statistics calculated on the basis of the variables included in the questionnaire. The measures of central tendency and dispersion for the dimensions of burnout are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**     **Means, Standard deviation, Minimum and Maximum scores for the dimensions of burnout**

| Variable | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emotional Exhaustion | 168 | 1 | 5 | 3.28 | .68 |
| Depersonalisation | 168 | 1 | 5 | 2.56 | .54 |
| Personal Accomplishment | 168 | 1 | 5 | 2.42 | .37 |
| Overall Burnout | 168 | 1 | 5 | 2.76 | 1.45 |

The mean score for Emotional Exhaustion indicates that respondents experience highest levels of Emotional Exhaustion (Mean = 3.28, s = 0.68).

For the Depersonalisation dimension, the mean score (Mean = 2.56) indicates that respondents showed moderate levels of depersonalisation. The standard deviation (0.54) indicates that there was similarity in the responses obtained.

The mean score (Mean = 2.42, s = 0.37) for Personal Accomplishment indicates that respondents experience a lower sense of Personal Accomplishment relative to the other dimensions of burnout.

Overall burnout was on the slightly high side (Mean = 2.76, s = 1.45) suggesting that social workers who participated in the research were experiencing higher propensity to burnout.

**Table 4.2     Means, Standard deviation, Minimum and Maximum scores for the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence**

| Variable | N | Min | Max | Mean | Std. dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Emotional Intelligence** | 168 | 33 | 165 | 109.23 | 23.65 |

The mean score (Mean = 109.23) for Emotional Intelligence indicates that respondents demonstrated a relatively high level of emotional intelligence. The standard deviation (23.65) shows that the EI scores ranged relatively broadly.

## 4.3  INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Inferential statistics in the form of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were computed to determine the strength, magnitude and direction between several conjectured relationships.

**Table 4.3**     **Pearson's correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout**

| | Emotional Intelligence | |
|---|---|---|
| **Burnout** | -.476** | .001 |

\* p < 0.05

\*\*p < 0.01

Table 4.3 indicates that there is a statistically significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout (r = -.476, p < 0.01).
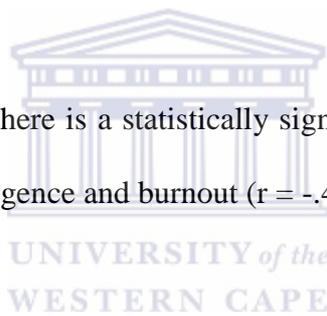
**Table 4.4**     **Pearson's correlation between emotional exhaustion and total Emotional intelligence**

| | Emotional Intelligence | |
|---|---|---|
| **Emotional Exhaustion** | -.392** | .001 |

\*\* p < 0.01

Table 4.4 indicates that there is a statistically significant and inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion (r = -.392, p < 0.01).

**Table 4.5      Pearson's correlation between depersonalisation and total emotional intelligence**

| | Emotional Intelligence | |
|---|---|---|
| **Depersonalisation** | -.378** | .001 |

** p < 0.01

Table 4.5 indicates that there is a statistically significant and inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and depersonalisation (r = -.378, p < 0.01).

**Table 4.6      Pearson's correlation between personal accomplishment and total emotional intelligence**

|  | Emotional Intelligence | |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal accomplishment** | .512** | .001 |

** p < 0.01

Table 4.6 indicates that there is a statistically significant and direct correlation between emotional intelligence and personal accomplishment (r = .512, p < 0.01).
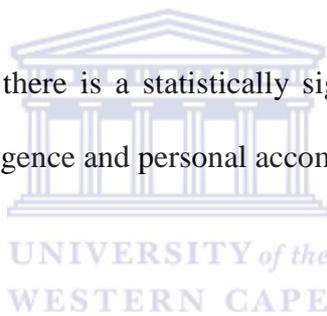
**Table 4.7 T-Test: Burnout and gender**

|  | Male | Female | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Mean | Mean | T | P |
| **Burnout** | 2.814 | 2.223 | -1.387 | 0.000** |

** p < 0.01

Table 4.7 depicts the t-test with respect to burnout based on the gender of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in burnout based on gender (t = -1.387, p<0.01). The results furthermore indicate that female social workers (Mean = 2.223) experience significantly lower burnout compared to male social workers (Mean = 2.814).

**Table 4.8  T-Test: Emotional Intelligence and gender**

| | Male | Female | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Mean | T | P |
| **Emotional Intelligence** | 103.663 | 117.538 | -3.427 | 0.000** |

** p < 0.01

Table 4.8 depicts the t-test with respect to emotional intelligence based on the gender of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence based on gender (t = -3.427, p<0.01). The results furthermore indicate that female social workers (Mean = 117.538) have higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to male social workers (Mean = 103.663).

**Table 4.9  ANOVA: Burnout and Age**

|  | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between groups** | 1645.898 | 5 | 411.474 | 259.390 | 0.067* |
| **Within groups** | 41931.645 | 163 | 471.142 |  |  |
| **Total** | 43577.543 | 168 |  |  |  |

$* \ p < 0.05$

Table 4.9 depicts the ANOVA with respect to burnout based on the ages of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in burnout based on age (F = 259.390, p < 0.05).

**Table 4.10   Scheffe's Post hoc comparison of the age of respondents in relation to burnout**

|  | Mean | P |
|---|---|---|
| < 30 years | 5.72 | 0.000** |
| 31-35 years | 3.18 | |
| 36-40 years | 3.34 | |
| 41-45 years | 2.69 | |
| 46-50 years | 2.13 | |
| 51+ years | 2.51 | |

**         $p < 0.01$

The results indicate that social workers in the age group less than 30 years differ significantly from the other groups, with respondents in the age category 46-50 years and younger experiencing lower burnout relative to the other age categories.

**Table 4.11  ANOVA: Burnout and Tenure**

|  | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between groups** | 1324.934 | 4 | 331.233 | 211.644 | 0.000** |
| **Within groups** | 34231.354 | 154 | 222.281 |  |  |
| **Total** | 35556.288 | 168 |  |  |  |

** $p < 0.01$

Table 4.11 depicts the ANOVA with respect to burnout based on the tenure of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in burnout based on tenure ($F = 211.644$; $p < 0.01$).

**Table 4.12   Scheffe's Post hoc comparison of the tenure of respondents in relation to burnout**

|              | Mean | P        |
|--------------|------|----------|
| < 5 years    | 2.63 | 0.000**  |
| 6-10 years   | 4.68 |          |
| 11-15 years  | 2.84 |          |
| 16-20 years  | 2.14 |          |
| 21+ years    | 2.75 |          |

**p < 0.01

In terms of Table 4.12 Scheffe's post hoc multiple comparisons revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between social workers' burnout on the basis of tenure. Respondents with 6-10 years' tenure evidenced significantly higher burnout relative to the remaining groups (p < 0.01).

**Table 4.13  ANOVA: Emotional Intelligence and Age**

|  | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between groups** | 1268.117 | 4 | 317.029 | 14.46 | 0.000** |
| **Within groups** | 1162.354 | 154 | 7.547 |  |  |
| **Total** | 2430.471 | 168 |  |  |  |

** $p < 0.01$

Table 4.13 depicts the ANOVA with respect to emotional intelligence based on the age of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence based on age (F = 14.46, p < 0.01).

**Table 4.14 Scheffe's Post hoc comparison of the age of respondents in relation to emotional intelligence**

|  | Mean | P |
|---|---|---|
| < 30 years | 97.64 | 0.000** |
| 31-35 years | 113.42 | |
| 36-40 years | 110.37 | |
| 41-45 years | 109.89 | |
| 46-50 years | 107.34 | |
| 51+ years | 114.26 | |
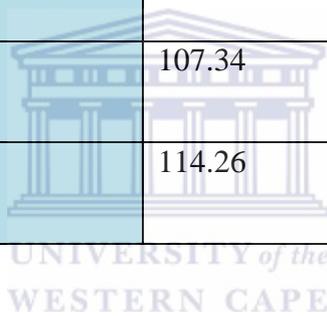
**p < 0.01

The results indicate that there are significant differences in emotional intelligence based on age, with younger social workers reporting significantly lower emotional intelligence relative to the other categories of respondents (p < 0.01).

**Table 4.15  ANOVA: Emotional Intelligence and Tenure**

|  | Sum of squares | Df | Mean square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Between groups** | 1432.646 | 4 | 358.1615 | 14.68 | 0.000** |
| **Within groups** | 1034.265 | 154 | 6.716 |  |  |
| **Total** | 2466.911 | 168 |  |  |  |

** p < 0.01

Table 4.15 depicts the ANOVA with respect to emotional intelligence based on the tenure of respondents. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences (F = 14.68; p < 0.01), in emotional intelligence based on tenure.

**Table 4.16  Scheffe's Post hoc comparison of the tenure of respondents in relation to emotional intelligence**

|  | Mean | P |
|---|---|---|
| **< 5 years** | 113.72 | 0.000** |
| **6-10 years** | 98.18 | |
| **11-15 years** | 110.64 | |
| **16-20 years** | 109.34 | |
| **21+ years** | 108.72 | |

**p < 0.01

The results indicate that social workers with 6-10 years' tenure evidenced the lowest emotional intelligence relative to the other categories (p < 0.01).

**Table 4.17 Reliability of the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Schutte's Self-Report Emotional IntelligenceTest**

| Dimension | Number of items | N | Cronbach |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maslach Burnout Inventory | 22 | 168 | 0.819 |
| Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test | 33 | 168 | 0.784 |

The reliability Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the scales. Table 4.17 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for the various constructs which were assessed. The results indicate that the coefficients were all in excess of 0.7, thereby indicating consistency, stability and freedom from error (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011).
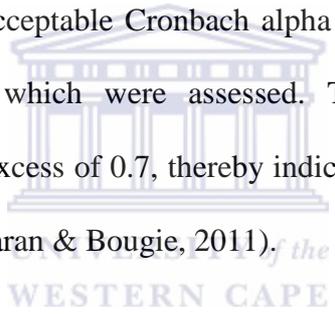
## 4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an overview of the most salient findings obtained based on empirical analysis of the data. Chapter five presents a discussion of the findings obtained and contextualises the research findings based on previous research on emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1  INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of the research with regards to the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape. The discussion will confirm whether the various hypotheses have been accepted or rejected. In order to contextualise the findings of the current research, comparisons will be made with other research studies. Where a paucity of studies exists pertaining to social workers, reference will be made to other helping and human service professions where possible. The limitations of the research study will be discussed with recommendations made for future research as well as for the organisation.

## 5.2  DISCUSSION

## 5.2.1  DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

In this study, the sample consisted of 192 social workers employed in the Social Development Department in the Western Cape. The majority of the respondents, that is 44% (n = 74) are Coloured. The majority of the respondents, which is 29% (n = 49) are in the age group 31-35 years. With respect to the respondents qualifications, 45% (n = 76) completed a Bachelor's Degree.  The majority of the

respondents were female, constituting 79% of the sample (n = 132).Most of the participants, that is 32% (n = 54) have been in the social work profession for 11 – 15 years. With regards to tenure, the majority of the respondents (29%) have been in the employment of the organisation between 11 and 15 years (n = 49).  Most of them (49%) worked 6-8 hours per day (n = 82).

## 5.2.2  INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

### 5.2.2.1  EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BURNOUT

The results of the current research indicate there is a statistically significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.***
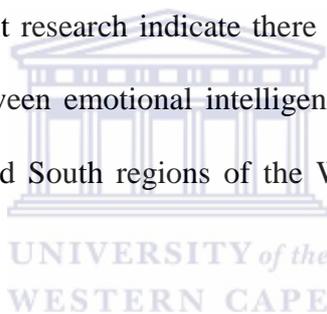
As there is a paucity of research relating to emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers per se reference will be made to other human and helping service professions.

Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler and Mayer (1999 cited in Alvinia & Amadzedah, 2012) purported that individuals who regulate their emotional states are healthier. Therefore, this then suggested that there is a direct connection between emotional intelligence skills and physical and psychological well-being (Tsaousis &

Nikolaou, 2005). Slaski and Cartwright (2002) concurred with the above authors' opinions. The researchers also reported that high scores in emotional intelligence indicated lower stress, better health and better management performance.

A study conducted by Duran and Extremera (2004) amongst professionals employed in organisations for people with intellectual disabilities (n = 472), discovered a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the burnout syndrome. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence which is indicated by the ability to recognize, express, and control emotions may have an impact on perceived job stress and the consequences of experienced stress and burnout. Alam et al. (2012) were of the opinion that individuals who are able to effectively use their emotional responses, it will result in the prediction of burnout and individuals will report lower burnout levels.
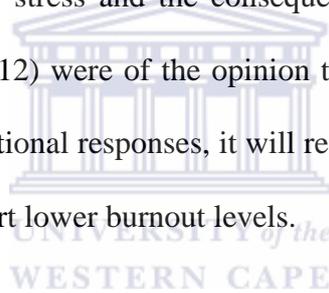
The statistical analysis of a study conducted by Noor (2011) on a sample of 150 special education teachers for children with disabilities revealed that the scores of the three domains of burnout, that is emotional exhaustion; depersonalisation and personal accomplishment do partially correspond with emotional intelligence. Morrison (2007) was of the opinion that social workers within social care organisations have a considerable amount of stressors due to the emotionally charged work which they deal with on a daily basis, but if individuals possess high levels of emotional intelligence they will be able to avoid the consequences of stress and burnout.

A survey conducted by Gerits, Derksen, Verbruggen and Katzko (2005) found that symptoms of burnout among female nurses caring for patients with severe behavioural problems were greatest amongst those individuals who had lower emotional intelligence and lower social skills. However, it was also found by the authors that those with high emotional intelligence and social skills were still vulnerable to burnout. According to Anderson and Burgess (2011), it is imperative that individuals working within the helping profession, specifically social workers should be able to handle stressful situations and as a result they should be trained on how to be emotionally intelligent in order to prevent stress and burnout. Farmer (2004) added that if a negative relationship exists between emotional intelligence and burnout, it is imperative that individuals enhance their emotional intelligence skills through training, since high emotional intelligence skills could prevent burnout. Furnell (2008) highlighted that it would be beneficial to organisations to select employees who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence and organisations should also design intervention or training programmes which incorporate emotional intelligence skills as part of the tools needed to effectively perform on the job.

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) reported that emotionally perceptive individuals are more impacted by stress than others and thus they would be more prone to suffer from burnout. The authors further contended that individuals who have low levels of emotional intelligence are accompanied by high levels of burnout. In a study conducted by Dette (2008) amongst a group of police officers in South Africa, it was found that emotional intelligence is negatively and statistically significantly

related to burnout. The results indicated that police officers with an overall high emotional intelligence score would possess low levels of burnout. Similar to the results of the current study, research conducted by Chan (2006) on 169 secondary school teachers in Hong Kong, showed there was a negatively inversed relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. Emotional intelligence was measured by the SSREIT and indicated a path coefficient of 0.29 ($p = <0.001$) between emotional appraisal (that is, the perception and appraisal of emotions) and emotional exhaustion, and a path coefficient of -0.51 ($p = <0.001$) between positive regulation (that is, management and regulation of emotions) and emotional exhaustion.
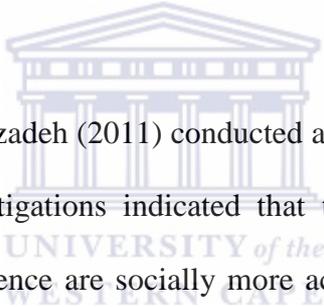
Saiiari, Moslehi and Valizadeh (2011) conducted a study on 183 secondary school teachers and their investigations indicated that those individuals who possess higher emotional intelligence are socially more active, have less excitement and have fewer sufferings from body pains and disorders. Furthermore, the burnout syndrome and other diseases were less evident among these individuals. In another study which was conducted on 250 teachers to explore the effect of emotional intelligence and job burnout on mental and physical health, it was found that emotional intelligence and job burnout explained 43.9% variance for mental health and 13.5% variance for physical health (Mohammadyfar et al., 2009).

Benson, Truskette and Findlay (2007) examined the relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence on a surgical population (n = 126). A series of

regression analysis revealed that emotional control, emotional recognition and expression and understanding of emotions (components of emotional intelligence) were significant predictors of burnout.

According to Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini and Holz (2001), it is evident that the proneness for individuals to develop burnout is an indication of the individual's inability to effectively manage their emotions when dealing with other individuals, employees, colleagues and clients. This provides a strong argument that emotional intelligence could play a vital role in the development of burnout.

## 5.2.2.2 DIMENSIONS OF BURNOUT AND TOTAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

(i) There is a statistically significant and inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion.

(ii) There is a statistically significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and depersonalisation.

(iii) There is a statistically significant and direct correlation between emotional intelligence and personal accomplishment.

For each of the above hypothesis the *null hypothesis is rejected.*

As there are minimal studies conducted for each of the dimensions of burnout, an integrated discussion will be presented.

The results of a study conducted by Brand (2007) with a sample of 143 nurses were contradictory to the findings of the current study with regards to emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion. The Pearson correlation revealed that there was no significant relationship between emotional exhaustion and total EI. Furthermore, Brand's study found that there was a negative relationship between depersonalisation and total EI ($r = -220$, $n = 122$, $p < 0.05$) and a moderate positive significant relationship was found between personal accomplishment and total EI ($r = 0.409$, $n = 122$, $p < 0.01$). The findings revealed that nurses reporting higher levels of emotional intelligence were more likely to report lower levels of depersonalisation and higher levels of personal accomplishment.

Farmer (2004) found that the components of burnout namely, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment were related to emotional intelligence however, the emotional exhaustion component had no relation with emotional intelligence. Even though a significant relationship was found between depersonalisation and emotional intelligence, the determination of this relationship was 0.30 and this is an indication that emotional intelligence would approximately indicate for just 3% of the variance in the measure of depersonalisation in burnout. Farmer (2004) argued that given this low coefficient of variance the other factors which could affect this include coping skills, stress management behaviours, and problem-

solving skills. According to the author, an individual who has an overall ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions would have a better sense of capacity and achievement in his or her interactions with others.

A study conducted by Noor (2011) with a sample of 150 special educators who teach children with disabilities found similar results to the current study. Findings of this study established significant inverse relationships between emotional intelligence and two dimensions of burnout namely, emotional exhaustion (r = -0.605) and depersonalisation (r = -0.537). This indicated that the higher emotional intelligence levels are, the lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation will be. Furthermore, it was also found that there existed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and personal accomplishment (r = 0.502). This means the higher the emotional intelligence, the greater personal accomplishment will be.

In a study conducted by Chakrabarty and Sayeed (2008) on a sample of 700 medical professionals which consisted of doctors and nurses, it was found that emotional exhaustion was negatively but weakly correlated (r = -0.152, p < 0.01) with emotional intelligence. The results however, indicated that there was no significant relationship between depersonalisation and emotional intelligence. As with the current study it was found that the correlation between personal accomplishment and emotional intelligence was strong and positive (r = 0.408, p < 0.01).

Similar results to the current research were also found in a study conducted by Devi (2011) on a sample of regular and special school teachers. Findings indicated that emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation had a negative and significant relationship with emotional intelligence, and personal accomplishment was found to be positively and significantly correlated with emotional intelligence. The author postulated that the higher the teachers' emotional intelligence is the lower their emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation levels will be.

Extremera, Duran and Rey (2010) conducted a study on teachers where they examined the predictive role of self-esteem, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on burnout. The findings indicated that 7.6% of the variance in emotional exhaustion was accounted for by emotional attention (in a positive sense) and emotional clarity (in a negative sense). Emotional clarity had a negative correlation with depersonalisation and a positive correlation with personal accomplishment. The authors' postulated that possessing good intrapersonal emotional clarity will assist in the prevention of the burnout syndrome.

A study conducted by Palser (2005) on a sample of 101 ministerial workers found that emotional intelligence and burnout were related based on the fact that an inverse relationship ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$) existed between emotional exhaustion and using emotion to facilitate thinking (dimension of emotional intelligence). Additionally it was found that an inverse relationship existed between personal

accomplishment and understanding emotions (dimension of emotional intelligence).

### 5.2.2.3  BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS AND BURNOUT

### 5.2.2.3.1  GENDER

The result of the current research indicates there is a significant difference in burnout amongst social workers based on their gender. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.***
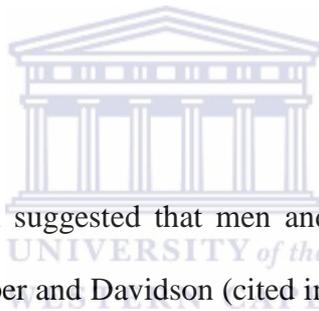
There is evidence which suggested that men and women experience stress and burnout differently. Copper and Davidson (cited in Aamodt, 2007) found that men and women respond differently to various types of stressors.

Hamama (2012) stated that research conducted amongst social workers has shown that burnout is more prevalent among women than men. The author purported that this is the case since there is a predominance of females in the emotionally demanding human service professions. However, contrary to this, a study conducted by Takeda et al. (2005) found that the mean burnout scores for male social workers were significantly higher than for female social workers (p < 0.005).

In a study conducted by Colbert and Slate (2006 cited in Myendeki, 2008) it was reported that female police officers reported physical symptoms of stress where males reported experiencing burnout. Hochschild (1983 cited in Deery & Kinnie, 2002) suggested that women may be more at risk from emotional exhaustion because they are less protected than men from poor treatment of their feelings on the job.

A survey conducted by Arrington (2008) on a sample of 3653 social workers regarding the coping strategies which women and men use to alleviate stress and burnout found that men (34%) are more likely than women (29%) to engage in meditation while a slightly higher percentage of women participate in some form of therapy. Findings of a study conducted by Ashley and Kleinpeter (2002) on a sample of 63 dementia caregivers it was found that there were significant gender differences in seeking social support and avoidance. It was reported that women were more likely to use social support as a coping strategy and that female caregivers employ more avoidance strategies than do males. These various methods conducted to cope with burnout and stress would suggest why males and females may experience differences in their burnout levels.

There are a number of studies which found no relationship between gender and the burnout experienced. A study conducted by Clayford (2010) on a sample of teachers found there was no relationship between burnout and gender. Pradhan and Khatri (2001) studied the effect of gender on stress and burnout in doctors and similarly, the results indicated that there were no gender differences in the

experience of burnout. Similar results were also reported by Kim, Lee and Kim (2009) and Jackson and Rothmann (2005) where no correlation between gender and burnout were found.

### 5.2.2.3.2 AGE

The result of the current research indicated there is a significant difference in burnout amongst social workers based on their age. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.*** Further analysis indicated that social workers in the age group less than 30 years differ significantly from the other groups, with respondents in the age category 46-50 years and younger experiencing lower burnout relative to the other age categories.
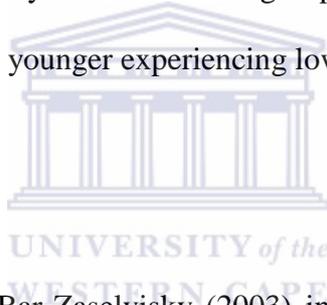
Research conducted by Bar-Zaselvisky (2003) indicated that young employees, especially those under the age of 30, are more prone to burnout than older employees. In a study conducted by Hamama (2012) on a sample of social workers it was found that older social workers experienced less burnout. Negative Pearson correlations emerged between age and burnout (r = −.24, p <.01). Hamama (2012) postulated that older workers are more stable, mature, and balanced in their outlooks about work and life in general. In contrast, young workers commonly have lower financial security, emotional support, self-confidence, mental strength, and sense of self-identity and they tend to develop unrealistically high expectations of the workplace.

A study conducted by Jackson and Rothmann (2005) found opposing results to Hamama's study, where teachers who were approaching retirement were found to be significantly more burnt-out.

In a study by Garrosa, Moreno-Jime´nez, Liang, Gonza´ lez (2008) on a sample of 473 nurses it was found that age was a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion accounting for 16% of variance in emotional exhaustion. In a study conducted by Rush (2003) on a sample of 426 individuals, similar findings revealed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation were related to age. The highest association between age and burnout was found with the emotional exhaustion scale ($r = -0.17$, $p = 0.006$). This association specifies that older respondents tended to have lower levels of emotional exhaustion burnout. Furthermore, it was found that a negative relationship existed between depersonalisation ($r = -0.15$, $p = 0.017$) and age, thereby indicating that older respondents tended to have lower levels of depersonalisation.

A study conducted by Randall (2004) on a sample of 340 ministerial workers found that there was a significant negative correlation between age and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Therefore it was reported that older employees were less prone to suffer from burnout than the younger employees. The author purported that the reasons for this might be those who suffered from emotional exhaustion or depersonalisation at a younger age may have left the job either on grounds of ill-health or to seek alternative employment; older

employees, on the other hand, may have become knowledgeable on how better to pace themselves in their work in order to minimise opportunities for burnout. Cherniss (1995 cited in Rush, 2003) purported that there is a shift in older workers values where they have an increase in self-worth from performing the function of their employment instead of being focused on pay and promotion, and this tends to support lowering emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation as one ages in the job.

Contrary to the studies above Calvertm Fern, Fraiser and Long (1991 cited in Bearschank, 2010) could not produce a significant relationship between age, stress and burnout. However, Maslach (1982 cited in van Tonder & Williams, 2009) found age, marital status and gender to be associated with stress and burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) found that overall burnout was higher for younger employees and associated this with their lack of experience on which to base their judgements.

### 5.2.2.3.3  TENURE

The result of the current research indicated there was a significant difference in burnout amongst social workers based on their tenure. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.*** Further analysis indicated that respondents with 6-10 years' tenure evidenced significantly higher burnout relative to the remaining groups.

A study conducted by Furnell (2008) on a sample of 250 employees found that differences between tenure and levels of emotional exhaustion were significant. The author stated that this is likely because employees who are longer within a job would feel exhausted by the continued job stress in their work role, but that this stress could be compounded by them being older and having more responsibilities in life (that is marriage and children) which could increase stress levels and possibly "spill over" into their work roles.

Bar-Zaselvisky (2003) argued that workers who are longer in service would experience less burnout since they are exposed to more challenging roles and rewards than workers with less experience. Contradictory to this finding is the study conducted by Morgan, Van Haveren and Pearson (2002) on a sample of correctional officers who found that less experienced officers tended to report lower levels of depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion and higher levels of personal accomplishment. This indicated that officers with less working experience had lower levels of burnout than those officers who were in the profession for longer.

A longitudinal study conducted by Dunford, Shipp, Boss, Angermeier and Boss (n.d.) on a sample of employees working in the health industry found that employees who worked in the hospital for two years showed an increasing level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, but as their years in the hospital

increased there was a decrease in the emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation levels.

A study conducted by Thomas (2003) on a sample of 148 human service professionals working within a university setting, found that emotional exhaustion was related to years of experience, but not related to personal accomplishment. It was found with this sample that with years of experience depersonalisation was less likely to be experienced.

## 5.2.2.4 BIOGRAPHICAL FACTORS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

### 5.2.2.4.1  GENDER

The result of the current research indicated there was a significant difference in emotional intelligence amongst social workers based on their gender. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.***

Research has shown that there are gender differences with regards to the emotionally intelligent construct and this has been detected in childhood adolescence and adulthood (Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Young, 2006).

A study conducted by Thingujam and Ram (2000) using the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Test on a sample of 811 participants in the teaching profession found that women were scoring significantly higher than men. Similarly, the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender differences were investigated by Jadhav and Havalappanavar (2009) on a sample of 200 police constable trainees where the findings revealed that women scored significantly higher on emotional intelligence than males. The authors purported that the reason for this might be that men spend most of their time with peers and at home whereas, women spend most of their time from childhood in the home with family members.
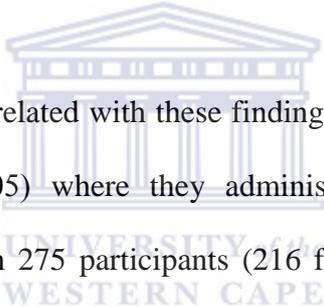
Another study which correlated with these findings are that of Van Rooy, Alonso and Viswesvaren's (2005) where they administered a common measure of emotional intelligence on 275 participants (216 females) and findings indicated that females scored higher than males. According to Penrose, Perry and Ball (2007), many of the studies where females were shown to have higher emotional intelligence levels were because the sample had a larger group of female participants. As a result the authors indicated that they did not know whether the findings of these studies could be generalisable to other populations.

Contrary to the above in a study conducted by Petrides and Furnham (2000 cited in Penrose et al., 2007) it was reported that males' overall emotional intelligence were significantly higher than females. The authors hypothesised males scored

higher on self-estimate of emotional intelligence than females because females tended towards self-derogation on self-report measures.

Tyagi (2004) conducted a study on emotional intelligence of secondary school teachers in relation to gender and age. The sample consisted of 350 males and 150 females and the results revealed there were no significant differences between gender and emotional intelligence. Similarly, a study conducted by Rani (2012) on a sample of teachers (n = 160) concluded that no significant gender differences in emotional intelligence existed. However it was found that males and females have different strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of emotional intelligence.
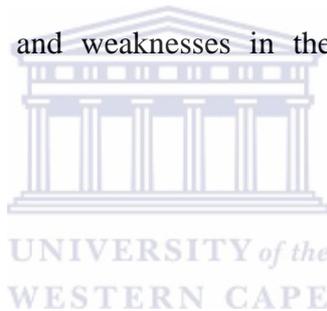
### 5.2.2.4.2 AGE

The result of the current research indicated there was a significant difference in emotional intelligence amongst social workers based on their age. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.*** Further analysis indicated that younger social workers reporting significantly lower emotional intelligence relative to the other categories of respondents.

A study conducted by Girdhalwal (2007) which consisted of 120 respondents in the health care industry found a positive relationship with respect to emotional intelligence and age. The study exhibited that as age increases levels of emotional

intelligence increases and vice versa. Goleman (1997) was of a similar opinion. The author reported that emotional intelligence intensified with age and could be learned, cultivated and increased in adulthood. Based on the findings of Mayer et al. (2000), results in the study revealed that emotional intelligence increased with age and experience.

Most studies conducted investigating the differences between emotional intelligence and age has not only found significant differences but that emotional intelligence was found to be higher in the older age groups.
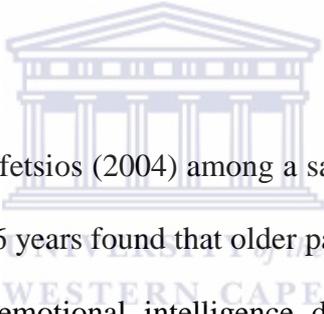
A study conducted by Kafetsios (2004) among a sample of 239 adults whose ages ranged between 19 and 66 years found that older participants scored higher, which supports the view that emotional intelligence develops with age. Pandy and Tripathi (2004 cited in Angadi, 2008) conducted a study on the developmental changes in emotional intelligence amongst 50 males and 50 females from five age groups. They completed an EI measure comprising of identification of emotion, perception and recognition of emotion-with probing, perception and recognition of emotion-without probing, understanding emotional meaning and emotion intensity rating. The results indicated that there was an increase in emotional intelligence with age.

Kumar and Muniandy (2012) conducted a study with a sample 162 lecturers and found that the age group of 40 years and older scored the most in their emotional intelligent levels. This indicated that older individuals have higher levels of emotional intelligence. For example, a study conducted by Jopie Van Rooyen and partners (n.d. cited in Adams, 2011) revealed a significant difference existed between the varying age groups. Moreover, the older participants had a higher score to that of their younger counterparts and the highest mean score was for the age group 40 – 49. Similarly, it was concluded by a study conducted by Srivastava and Bharamanaikar (2009) amongst a sample of 291 army officers that emotional intelligence increases with age.
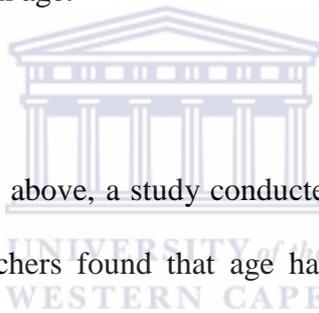
However, contrary to the above, a study conducted by Tyagi (2004) on a sample of secondary school teachers found that age had no significance to emotional intelligence.

### 5.2.2.4.3 TENURE

The result of the current research indicated there was a significant difference in emotional intelligence amongst social workers based on their tenure. ***Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.*** Further analysis indicated that social workers with 6-10 years' tenure evidenced the lowest emotional intelligence relative to the other categories.

According to Mayer et al. (2000), in order for emotional intelligence to be considered a standard intelligence it should increase with age and experience. There are few studies which examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and tenure (Van Rooy et al., 2005).

In their study with a sample of mental health nurses Humpel et al. (2001 cited in Anagdi, 2008) found that nurses with less than two years in the nursing profession were found to experience significantly more personal self-doubt than those with greater nursing experience.

Findings of a study conducted by Cobb (2004) on a sample of 101 school teachers within a public school setting, found that tenure was positively correlated with emotional intelligence. The correlation analysis of ($r = 0.164$, $p = 0.015$) was significant for total emotional intelligence and tenure. This then suggested that teachers with more years of teaching within the organisation had higher levels of emotional intelligence. A study conducted by Shih and Hsu (n.d) on a sample of 179 physicians and nurses also found that EI was positively associated with job tenure ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$). Day and Carroll (2004) found in their study that tenure correlated positively but weakly with overall emotional intelligence and with three of four subscales of the MSCEIT.

## 5.3    LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Although the sample size (N=192) of the current study is appropriate, for future research studies a larger group of respondents could be considered.

- A non-probability sampling method in the form of convenience sampling was used. This method lends itself to low generalisation, low external validity and can introduce biasness as certain groups are under-represented. Thus it is recommended for future research that stratified random sampling be utilised which would enable greater rigour and strive for greater precision and control with respect to the sample.

- Furthermore, the sample consisted of a large group of female participants (79%), thus the results may be skewed. For future research it is recommended that the sample comprise of an equal percentage of males and females.

- The instruments used were self-report measures and these could lead to response biases. Respondents might have answered in a socially appropriate way. It is therefore recommended that qualitative methods (for example, interviews) also be used for future research as this would enrich the quality of the data gathered.

- The study was conducted at the Social Development Department in the North and South regions of the Western Cape, hence the results of the current study cannot be generalised.

- There are limited research studies investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers within the

South African context. As a result reference was made to other helping and human service professions as well.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

In order for the organisation to assist employees in decreasing burnout and increasing emotional intelligence there are a number of things which could be considered:

- The results in the current study indicated that there was an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, thus if social workers possess high emotional intelligence levels they would have lower burnout levels. According to Oginska-Bulik (2005), the increasing of emotional intelligence is necessary for successful job performance, since it can assist workers to deal more effectively with their feelings, and thus directly decrease the level of job stress and indirectly protect their health. The author suggested that organisations should develop intervention programmes which could assist employees to increase their emotional intelligence levels.

- From the results it was evident that the majority of the respondents are in the social work profession for less than ten years, which is an indication they are still new in the profession. Also the results indicated that social workers who have 6-10 years tenure have the highest burnout levels and lowest emotional intelligence levels. If social work students are trained while at university on the management of positive emotions and optimism,

this could possibly help both students and qualified social workers cope more easily with the stressors made by their work (Collins, 2007; Kinman & Grant, 2010).

- The current study indicated that social workers have a high tendency to experience burnout. In order to decrease burnout levels Khanifer et al. (2012) suggested that organisations should provide facilities to employees so that they can familiarise themselves with the skills to improve their mental health, as well as teach employees about various coping skills that will alleviate the burnout syndrome. Furthermore, Lukelelo (2004) was of the opinion that social workers should have case discussions where there is a forum which would enable them to discuss issues about certain cases which overwhelm them. The social workers however, need to keep in mind the principle of confidentiality when engaging in these discussions. By discussing these issues it may assist them in dealing more effectively with the cases.

## 5.5  CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was primarily to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout amongst social workers in the North and South regions of the Western Cape. The current study contributed to some extent to the body of literature with regard to emotional intelligence and burnout. The results emanated from this research indicated that there were biographical factors which contributed to burnout and emotional intelligence levels amongst social workers.

The relationships indicated that the higher emotional intelligent levels were the less prone employees would be to burnout.

Burnout amongst social workers is very critical since the clients they interact with on a daily basis could be the ones who are negatively affected. The environment in which social workers are employed is associated with job dissatisfaction and poor mental health, thus many social workers are overstressed and emotionally exhausted (Evans et al., 2006). According to Oginska-Bulik (2005), having the ability to effectively deal with emotions and emotional information in the workplace assists human service workers in managing occupational stress which is a pre-determinant of burnout and maintains psychological well-being.

According to Ingram (2012), even though emotional intelligence is a developmental concept, the emotional content of social work practice and the impact this can have on the actions and experiences of social workers, suggest that social work could benefit from exploring the role of emotional intelligence more intensively. Mohammadyfar et al. (2009) postulated that individuals who can control their emotional states are healthier since they can accurately perceive and appraise their emotional states, know how and when to express their feelings and can efficiently regulate their mood states.

It would appear that emotional intelligence could aid social workers to respond appropriately to critical client situations which are emotionally draining on the social worker. Thus, it would be imperative for organisations to explore how

emotional intelligence levels can be increased since this may be able to decrease burnout levels experienced by social workers and enable them to serve clients more effectively.

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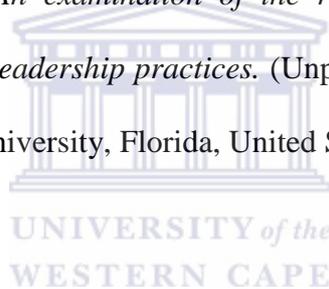
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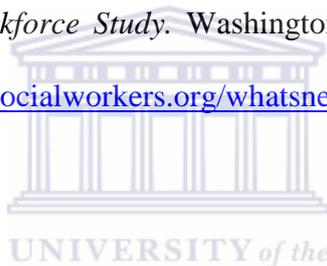
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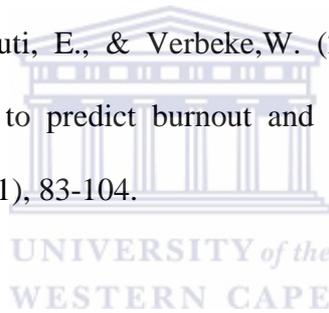
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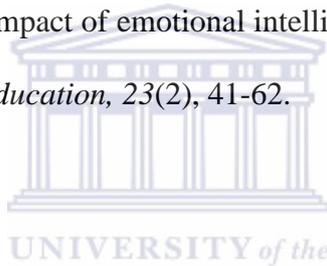
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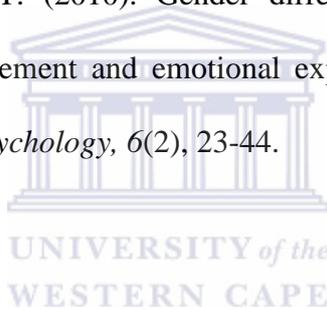
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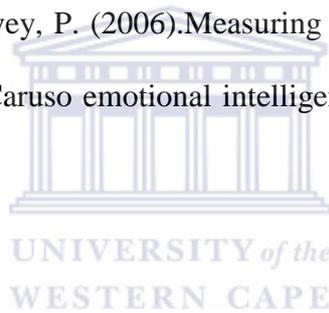
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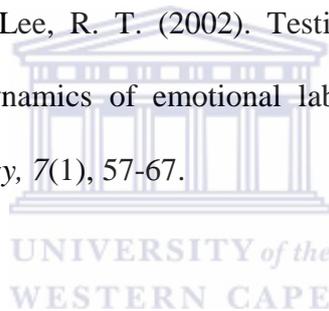
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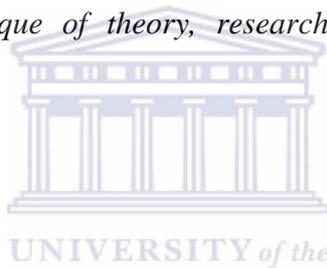
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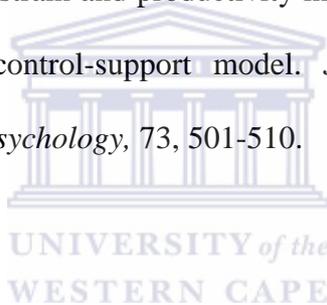
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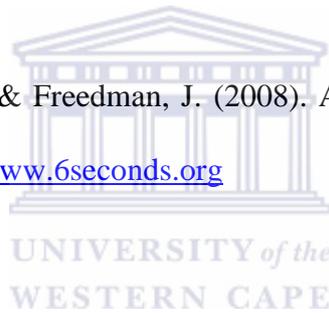
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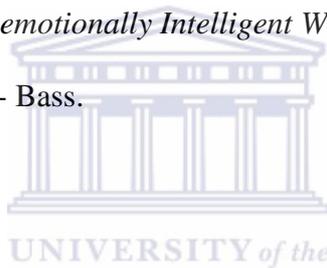
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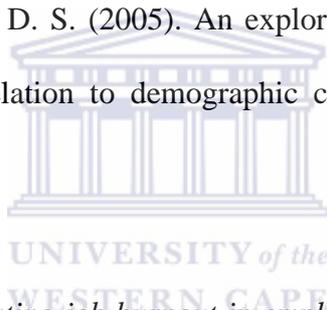
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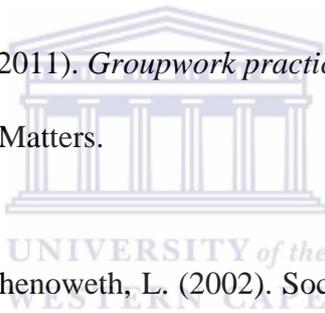
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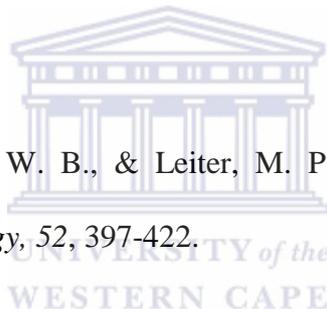
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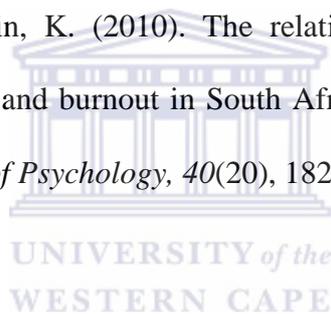
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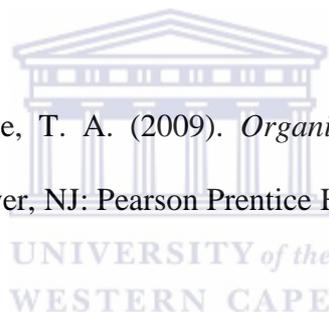
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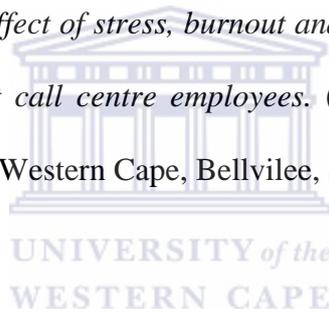
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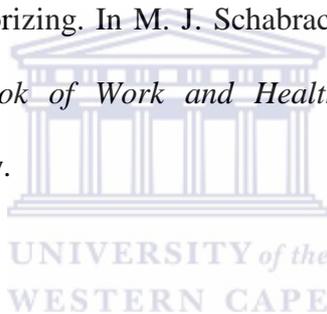
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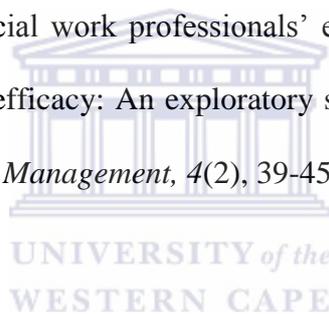
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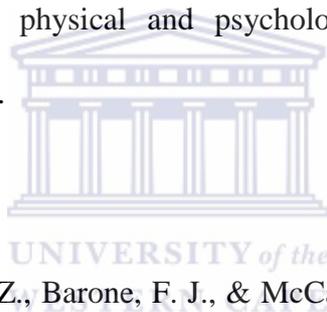
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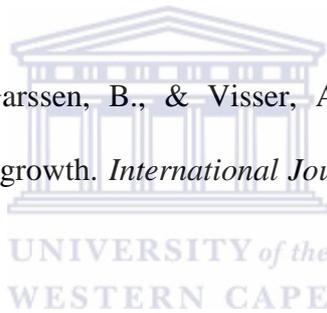
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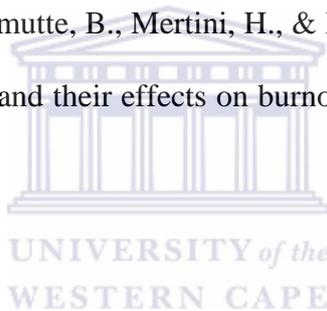
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