

**JOB RESOURCES, JOB DEMANDS, BURNOUT AND WORK  
ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**



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**November, 2012**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that "Job resources, job demands, burnout and work engagement of employees in the public sector" is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other institution of higher learning, and that all references have, to the best of my knowledge been indicated and acknowledged as complete references. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Western Cape.

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Signed.....



## ABSTRACT

The variables in this study are explored from a positive psychology paradigm, which is largely concerned with effecting psychological health and well-being of employees. The aim of this study will be to examine the impact of job resources, job demands on work engagement and burnout of employees within the public sector.

Both survey and data analysis will be employed to guide the investigation. Standardised questionnaires will be used for the two different constructs, using the responses of employees on a composite questionnaire. Pearson correlation analysis and analysis of variance will be used to determine the relationship between the constructs of the study.

The contribution of this study to the existing theory and literature is the exploration and inclusion of job resources and job demands and its relationship with burnout and work engagement. Various studies have reported that work engagement is important for organisations because it is related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, low turnover intention and employee performance.

The strengths in conducting the research could assist organisations to determine the level of engagement of employees in their current jobs. It may also assist organisations to implement interventions to address and manage burnout of employees in order to deal more effectively with symptoms. Furthermore it may be useful for organisations in order to act timeously to prevent those employees who are already showing signs of burnout from becoming sick as well as to increase work engagement. In addition, support those who are suffering from ill-health or decreased well-being caused by chronic occupational stress.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank **GOD** because nothing is possible without **HIM**. **HE** gave me strength, discipline, endurance and hope.

I thank my loving husband, Kelly Meyer who was by my side encouraging and supporting me unconditionally especially through difficult times. Know that everything I do is not only for myself but for both of us and our future.

I also extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Marieta du Plessis for your undivided attention and unlimited support in making this journey an exciting and gratifying experience. I do not have enough words to explain how much it means to me.

To my co-supervisor Karl Heslop, I thank for your invaluable support and always being willing to assist anytime; I truly cannot articulate how much I appreciate it.

To my sister, Shireen Chandley for the role you played in creating awareness about my survey and encouraging people to complete it. Thank you for your support.

Thank you to the Provincial Treasury and the Department of the Premier for investing in my tertiary education and enabling me to achieve my personal and academic aspirations.

Last but not least to all the family, friends, colleagues and participants who completed my survey, your assistance is truly appreciated, you had a part in my success.

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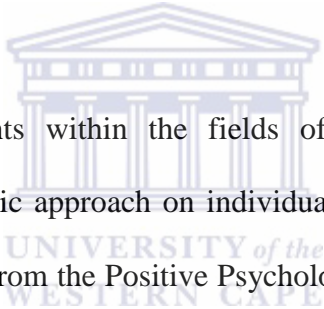


# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the context of the study, exploring the postulated relationship between job resources, job demands, burnout and work engagement of employees in the public sector. The chapter begins by setting the context for the study through an exploration of the field of employee engagement. This is followed by the objectives and aims of the study. Finally the benefits of the study are identified and an outline of the remainder of the thesis is presented.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION



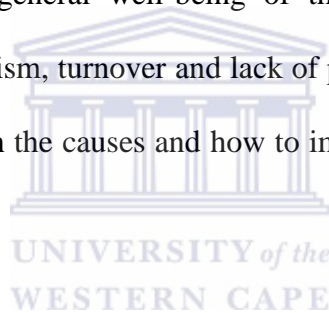
Recent studies and developments within the fields of psychology and organisational psychology have taken a fortigenic approach on individual and organisational health. This school of thought has originated from the Positive Psychology Movement initiated by Martin Seligman in 1998 (Luthans, 2002). The aim of positive psychology is to move away from the emphasis on what is wrong with people to what is right with people, therefore focussing on human strengths as opposed to weaknesses (Luthans, 2002). Drawing from the groundwork of positive psychology, positive organisational behaviour (POB) has emerged. Positive Organisational Behaviour (POB), a term developed by Fred Luthans, is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace” (Youssef & Luthans, 2007, p. 774).

Positive psychology research has also influenced the field of organisational behaviour and human resource management recently, giving rise to the Positive Organisational Scholarship or POS movement. The POS movement has been influential in providing a conceptual basis for organising and integrating research on positive organisations (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Positive Organisational Scholarship is defined as “the study of that which is positive, flourishing and life-giving in organisations” (Luthans & Youssef, 2007, p. 337). The primary aim of POS is to determine in which ways organisations can develop and build on existing human strengths and how this can positively impact organisational performance (Luthans, 2002).

Employee motivation and health may be determined by the working conditions as described in the Job-Demands Resources Model which classifies working conditions into job resources (i.e. job aspects that are functional in achieving work goals, stimulating personal growth and development, and reducing job demands) and job demands (i.e. job aspects that require sustained physical or psychological effort) (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007; Stewart, Donaldson & Ia Ko, 2010). Among various antecedents of well-being, job demands and lack of job resources were found to be linked to cynicism and burnout that in turn contributed to ill-health, whereas job resources were related to work engagement that contributed to organisational commitment (Jackson, Rothmann, & Van de Vijver, 2006; Richardsen, Burke, & Martinussen, 2006). According to Rothmann and Joubert (2007), research on well-being has indicated that there are benefits for both the organisation and employees, for example, increased organisational and individual performance. Performance may be promoted by factors such as job resources, organisational support, trust, emotional intelligence, helping experience and by reducing such factors as excessive job demands, job stress, and perceived antisocial impact (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007).

Management in South Africa today show concern for the general health and well-being of employees (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Some areas of concern that are particularly high includes levels of absenteeism, turnover, lack of service delivery and customer satisfaction, lack of organisational commitment and lack of job satisfaction, which are common organisational issues (Xu & Cooper Thomas, 2010). The focus will therefore be on individual and organisational health, which will place emphasis on the development and building of human strengths and spirit and how this can cultivate outstanding organisational performance (Van Sckalkwyk, Du Toit, Bothma & Rothmann, 2010).

The management of the government departments within the public sector has become more and more concerned with the general well-being of the workforce, noting the present unusually high levels of absenteeism, turnover and lack of productivity. Several interventions have been undertaken to establish the causes and how to improve the current level of service delivery within the public sector.



It is therefore important for management to have a framework which will guide them in determining specific organisational problems and causes and what appropriate actions to take to address the problems. By determining the relationship between job resources, job demands, work engagement and burnout, organisations will be able to identify which factors lead to work engagement, and which factors lead to burnout. This information can then be effectively used to manage organisational interventions to improve work engagement and decrease burnout.

## 1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

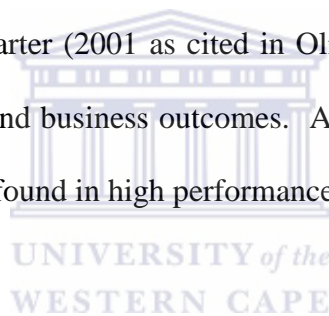
People spend more than a third of their lives at work and because work is fundamental to their existence they tend to build their identities around it. Therefore, work is an important setting where employees are to be engaged in goal-directed activities and where they are able to find meaning in their lives (Van Zyl, Deacon, & Rothmann, 2010).

In the past, psychological health research has focussed primarily on psychological dysfunction, ill-health and unwell-being instead of health and well-being at work (Mostert, Cronje, & Pienaar, 2006). Recently, research has taken interest in psychological health and well-being, the so-called 'positive psychology' paradigm, which focuses on restoring the negative things in life to building positive qualities. Positive psychology is therefore aimed at human strengths and optimal functioning instead of weaknesses and malfunctioning (Mostert et al., 2006, Rothman & Joubert, 2007). Furthermore, the direction towards the positive end of employee well-being, the concept of burnout has been substituted by its positive antithesis known as work engagement, which allows for employee's adaptation at work to be researched in a positive way (Mostert et al., 2006).

Burnout is a reaction to chronic occupational stress. Employees who suffer from burnout experience 'symptoms' such as emotional exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy (Mostert et al., 2006). Engaged employees however experience quite the opposite; they have a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind associated with high levels of energy and mental resilience, enthusiasm and dedication to their work (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007).

A healthy organisation focuses on the resources that support performance and health, which impacts positively on the organisation (Mendes & Stander, 2011). According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2008 as cited in Mendes & Stander, 2011) the modern organisation invests in the management of human capital and positive psychology. This is a contemporary and effective approach which focuses on human strengths. Positive organisational behaviour promotes engaged employees and this is fundamental for ensuring high performance and general wellness for employees and the organisation while increasing the commitment of employees and the retention of talent (Mendes & Stander, 2011).

Currently organisations are expecting their employees to be proactive, innovative, creative, and team players, responsible for their own development and committed to performance (Mostert & Rathbone, 2001). Harter (2001 as cited in Olivier & Rothmann, 2007) found a link between work engagement and business outcomes. Additionally they found that highly engaged employees were mostly found in high performance units.

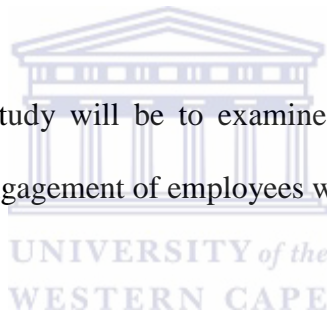


Dissatisfied employees are not committed to the organisation and are frequently absent from work in an attempt to cope with high work demands. Organisations with a disengaged workforce may experience severe financial constraints and lack the competitive edge to survive in the market. It is therefore important that management focus on ways in which to augment aspects of the job that will make employees feel energetic, dedicated and engaged in their work (Mostert & Rathbone, 2001). According to Mostert and Rathbone (2001) it is important for management to determine the stimulants and consequences of work engagement which may shed light on whether the levels of work engagement can be positively linked to certain employee characteristics and working conditions. It could therefore be argued that it is important that an organisation takes the responsibility to provide

meaningful work to its employees because it can lead to their personal growth and motivation (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007).

Previous studies shows that not all employees develop burnout and on the contrary many may seem to find satisfaction and pleasure in working hard and dealing with high job demands (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Engaged employees show affective commitment to their job and the organisation enabling them to deal with high demands of the job (Buys & Rothmann, 2010). The concept of work engagement is important for organisations because it is related to job satisfaction, organisational commitment, low turnover intention and employee performance (Coetzer & de Villiers, 2010). It is also important for employees in terms of their development and learning (May et al., 2004 as cited in Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Hence the aim of this present study will be to examine the impact of job demands, job resources on burnout and work engagement of employees within the public sector.



### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study aims to:

- Determine the relationship between job resources, job demands, burnout and work engagement of employees
- Determine whether there are significant differences in job demands resources, burnout and work engagement based on marital status, job level and tenure.

### **1.4 HYPOTHESIS**

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



- H1: There is a relationship between job resources demands and work engagement.
- H2: There is a negative relationship between burnout and job demands resources.
- H3: There is a negative relationship between Work engagement and Burnout
- H4: There is a statistical significant difference between marital status and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.
- H5: There is a statistical significant difference between tenure and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.
- H6: There is a statistical significant difference between job level and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.

## 1.5 DEFINITION OF CONSTRUCTS

The pertinent constructs for the study are briefly defined below. These include:

Job resources, job demands, occupational stress, work engagement, organisational commitment, burnout, well-being, performance, public sector, employee.

**1.5.1 Job resources:** Job resources can be defined as the physical, psychological, social and organisational characteristics of the job that enable individuals to achieve work goals, reducing job demands and stimulating personal growth and development (Rothmann, 2008). Job resources are located at an organisational level (e.g. salary, career opportunities, access to resources and job security), at an interpersonal and social relations level (e.g. supervisor and co-worker support, and team climate, at the level of an organisation of work (e.g. role clarity and participation in decision-making) and at the level of tasks (e.g. skill variety, autonomy, performance feedback and task significance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

1.5.2 **Job demands:** Job demands are defined as those physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects of the job that involves the constant need for physical and/or psychological effort which are associated with certain physical and/or psychological costs such as work pressure, role overload and emotional demands (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

1.5.3 **Work engagement:** Work engagement can be defined “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances” (Kahn , 1990, p. 692).

1.5.4 **Burnout:** According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 as cited in Rothmann, Steyn, & Mostert, 2005, p. 55) burnout can be defined as “a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind (or syndrome) developing in the so-called ‘normal’ individuals, characterised by an array of physical, psychological and attitudinal symptoms, primarily exhaustion, and accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and the development of dysfunctional personal and societal attitudes and behaviours at work.

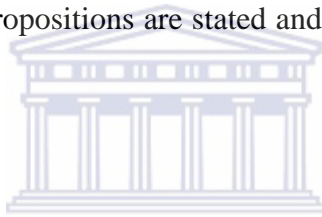
## 1.6 LIMITATIONS

It could be perceived that a limitation of this study is that participants may not be honest in answering the questions because of a fear of being exposed or victimised within their working environment. However, the issue of confidentiality will be addressed by describing the process of procedure of the research in the informed consent form. This will ensure participants that their identities would be kept anonymous.

A further limitation is the use of convenience sampling. This limits the generalisability of the findings to other contexts.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 2 focuses on the definition of the constructs used for the purposes of this study. The constructs of job resources, job demands, burnout and work engagement are defined and described. The chapter also includes cited research on the inclusion of each of these constructs in the study of work engagement and burnout. Previous research conducted on these constructs and possible relationships between the respective constructs are also discussed. Finally, the research propositions are stated and the theoretical model of the study is outlined.



Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in this study, which includes correlation analysis, t-test and ANOVA. The results of the quantitative data analyses are presented in Chapter 4.

The interpretation and discussion of the research findings and their link to the research propositions are presented in Chapter 5. Moreover, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The workplace has changed over the past decade and it has become important for organisations to survive in a very competitive and volatile global economy. In order for organisations to survive depends much on their ability to satisfy customer needs (Olivier & Rothmann).

In addition, providing a quality product or service, flexibility as well as innovation and organisational responsibility can be achieved through engaged and committed employees (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007).

However, employees have to cope with limited resources. Therefore it has increasingly become important to monitor and improve employee effectiveness in coping with many new demands, stimulating their growth and enhancing their well-being as well as their organisational performance (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007).

#### 2.1.1 Work engagement

Research on the concept of burnout has stimulated studies on its presumed opposite, work engagement (Bakker, 2009). The concept of work engagement is a relatively new addition to the field of occupational health psychology and could be viewed as a part of a more general emerging trend towards positive psychology that focuses on human strengths and optimal functioning rather than on weaknesses and malfunctioning (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Work engagement is not a short-lived specific state but rather a more on-going and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on a particular object, event, individual or behaviour (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002).

According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2008), work engagement is closely related but separate from constructs such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement. Organisational commitment refers to an employee's link to the organisation because the organisation provides employment and the focus is on the organisation. Furthermore, work engagement focuses on the work itself (Oliver & Rothmann, 2006). Rothmann and Jordaan (2007), purports that on the one hand, people can be engaged in their work but not be committed to their organisation and on the other hand be committed to their organisation but not be engaged in their work.

Job satisfaction is the extent to which work is a source of fulfilling a need and brings a feeling of contentment or a means of freeing employees from hassles or dissatisfaction and does not encompass the person's relationship with the work itself (Oliver & Rothmann, 2007).

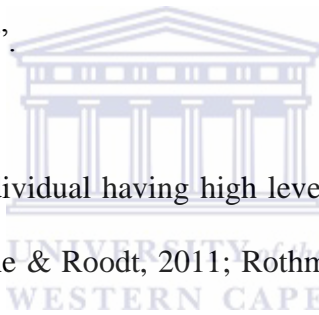
Job involvement however is quite similar to the involvement aspect of work engagement but does not include the energy and effectiveness dimensions (Oliver & Rothmann, 2007).

According to Maslach and Leiter (1997 as cited in Bakker, 2009), there are two schools of thought regarding the concept of work engagement which assumes that burnout and work engagement are two opposite poles of a continuum. The first school of thought rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job, where energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness.

On the contrary, work engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and professional efficacy, which are the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions as mentioned previously (Bakker, 2009).

The second school of thought agrees with the notion that burnout is the positive antithesis of work engagement, but is defined and operationalised it in its own right. It is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, 2003).

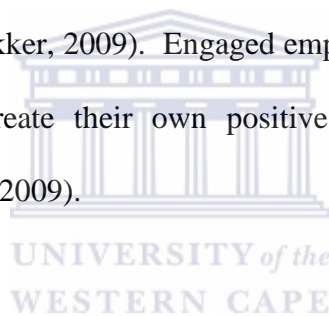
According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004 as cited in Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006, p. 87) engagement is “a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption”.



Vigour is characterised by an individual having high levels of energy and mental resilience while doing their work (De Braine & Roodt, 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Similarly, Bakker (2009) characterises vigour as having high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Dedication is experienced when individuals feel inspired by their work, are enthusiastic about their work and who feel challenged while performing their work (De Braine & Roodt, 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Bakker (2009) refers to dedication as being strongly involved in one’s work and feeling a sense of significance, enthusiasm and challenge. Absorption is described as being fully and happily engrossed in one’s work (De Braine & Roodt, 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Likewise, Bakker (2009), defines absorption as being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one’s work whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulty with separating oneself from one’s work.

In recent research vigour and dedication have been identified as the main dimensions of work engagement (Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006 as cited in De Braine & Roodt, 2011). Therefore, engaged employees experience high levels of energy and identify strongly with their work and are thus better equipped to deal with job demands (Bakker et al., 2008; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008 as cited in De Braine & Roodt, 2011). Engaged employees are also completely immersed in their work so that time flies (Bakker, 2009).

A qualitative study conducted on a group of Dutch employees (Schaufeli et al., 2002) showed that engaged employees have high levels of energy, are self-efficacious and are capable of influencing events that affect their lives. For example, some of the interviewees specified that they changed jobs after no longer feeling challenged and seek to find meaning in other organisations or occupations (Bakker, 2009). Engaged employees have positive attitudes and activity levels and can thus create their own positive feedback such as appreciation, recognition and success (Bakker, 2009).



Notwithstanding, engaged employees do feel tired at the end of a long day at work, however, they define their tiredness as a somewhat pleasant state because it is associated with positive accomplishments (Bakker, 2009; Van Den Berg, Marais & Burger, 2008). Similarly, according to Van Den Berg et al., (2008), engaged employees take initiative and self-direct their lives, generate their own positive feedback, they encourage themselves and also engage in outside of their employment. Furthermore, their values and norms correspond to that of the organisation for which they work (van den Berg et al., 2008).

Work engagement is also defined as a person's involvement in his or her job. Individuals who are highly engaged in their jobs identify personally with their job and are motivated by the work itself (Coetzee & de Villiers, 2010, Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). These individuals

work harder and are more productive than others and tend to deliver on their organisations' and customers' expectations (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Employees who are engaged report that their job utilises their skills and abilities well, stimulate and challenge them, which provides them with a sense of personal accomplishment (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006).

According to Khan (1990 as cited in Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006, p. 87) engagement can be defined as “the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles, [by which they] employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance”. Therefore engaged employees become physically involved in their work, are cognitively alert and are connected emotionally to others while executing their tasks. Engagement happens consistently on a day-to-day basis and can be observed through the behaviours and actions of employees (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006).

Disengagement can be defined as the separation from work roles (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Therefore, individuals who are disengaged become disconnected from their jobs and do not show their true feelings, identity and thoughts while performing their work roles (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006).

### **2.1.2 Burnout**

Common in most definitions of burnout is that it occurs on an individual level, it is an internal psychological experience which involves feelings, attitudes, motives and expectations and that it is a negative experience for individuals caused by concerns for problems, distress, discomfort, dysfunction and or negative consequences (Maslach et al., 2008).



Burnout is considered as being the antipode of work engagement and is characterised by low levels of energy and a poor identification with one's work (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010). According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998 as cited in Rothmann, Steyn & Mostert, 2005, p. 55) burnout can be defined as “a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind (or syndrome) developing in the so-called ‘normal’ individuals, characterised by an array of physical, psychological and attitudinal symptoms, primarily exhaustion, and accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and the development of dysfunctional personal and societal attitudes and behaviours at work. This psychological condition develops gradually but may remain unnoticed for a long time by the individual involved”.

The key dimensions of burnout are namely, exhaustion and mental distancing or cynicism. According to Rothmann et al., (2005) exhaustion is characterised by individuals being incapable of performing their work because all their energy has been drained and mental distancing points out that the individual is no longer willing to do the work because of an increasing intolerance to put in any effort. Another definition comes from Maslach and Leiter (2005 as cited in Jonker & Joubert, 2009, p. 36) who described burnout as “a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors”. The costs associated with burnout could be potentially serious, due to the fact that it can lead to the decline in the quality of service that is provided by employees as well as seeming to contribute to job turnover, absenteeism, low morale and job dissatisfaction (Jonker & Joubert, 2009).

Research has shown that employees who are in service-type professions are most likely to be predisposed to burnout because of the intense and demanding person-to-person contact and interaction with people (Jonker & Joubert, 2009; Rothmann & Malan, 2011).

### 2.1.3 Burnout and work engagement

According to Schaufeli (2003; Maslach et. al., 2001) exhaustion and cynicism constitute the core of burnout and exhaustion represents the individual stress component of burnout.

Individuals experience exhaustion when their emotional and physical resources are depleted and they are incapable of performing at work because all their energy has been drained (Maslach et al., 2001).

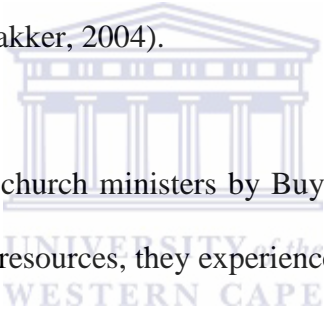
Cynicism refers to a general indifferent, callous or cynical attitude towards the work and to cope with excessive job demands and feelings of exhaustion, the individual psychologically withdraws from the work (mental distancing) (Maslach et al., 2001).

According to Schaufeli and Buunk (1996) professional efficacy refers to an individual's negative evaluation of competence, achievement and productiveness as well as feelings of insufficiency.

According to Seiler and Pearson (1984-5) there are two forms of withdrawal due to consequences of dysfunctional stress (burnout), namely the employee may resign (physical withdrawal) or the employee may remain in employment but will continue to do the bare minimum (psychological withdrawal). A study conducted by Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996) indicated that burnout is the cause of job demands and the lack of job resources that eventually could lead to negative outcomes such as physical illness, staff turnover and absenteeism. When employees are burnt-out, they tend to show signs of exhaustion, with low levels of energy, are more cynical, less involved and less productive at work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Wong & Tay, 2010). On the other hand, employees with positive self-efficacy

and psychological state of minds are energised and totally involved and engaged in their work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Nelson and Simmons (2003) regard distress as a negative outcome in the work environment, whereas eustress is regarded as a positive outcome. Therefore distress is a negative psychological response to a stressor and eustress refers to a positive psychological response to a stressor (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Engaged employees are therefore enthusiastically involved in their work and find it pleasurable to be occupied by demands of the work at hand (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). This research supports findings which indicated that some individuals do not develop burnout, irrespective of high job demands and long working hours. However, they find pleasure in working hard and dealing with job demands (Nelson & Simmons, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).



A study conducted on Reformed church ministers by Buys and Rothmann (2010) indicated that when ministers had more job resources, they experienced more engagement and affective commitment and improved social functioning. Additionally, high job demands resulted in burnout, which triggered more ill health problems. Therefore, their findings indicated that work engagement among ministers lead to improved social functioning and more affective commitment towards the congregation and the ministry (Buys & Rothmann, 2010).

The findings also indicated that exhaustion was best predicted by pace and amount of work therefore showing a positive correlation. According to Maslach et al. (2001), burnout is the response to overload particularly in the exhaustion dimension. The study also indicated that ministers developed a tendency to mentally distance themselves in such a way that they could protect themselves from intense emotional arousal (Buys & Rothmann, 2010). Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, (2001) agrees with this finding in their study which

assumes that work characteristics may cause an energetic process of wearing out in which high job demands exhaust the individual's energy and lead to feelings of exhaustion and mental distancing.

Buytjens and Rothmann (2010) found that engagement is positively linked to growth opportunities, social support and job significance. Therefore, ministers felt more engaged when they experienced variety in their work and also felt a sense of significance as well as available opportunities where they could learn, accomplish and when they received the necessary support from co-workers and friends. These findings are supported by Maslach et al., (2001; Demerouti et al., 2001) that found burnout is related to job demands for example, work overload and emotional demands and engagement is related to job resources, such as job control, availability of feedback and learning opportunities.

Rothmann and Jordaan (2010) also found that the factors which play a pivotal intrinsic motivational role (i.e growth opportunities in the job, such as variety, learning opportunities and autonomy) as well as factors that play an extrinsic motivational role (i.e advancement and organisational support, such as the relationship with the supervisor, information, communication, participation, and role clarity) impacted on work engagement.

## **2.2 Theoretical Models explaining work engagement**

### **2.2.1 The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model**

The Job demands-resources model is one of the models used to explain work engagement and burnout (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). This model proposes that every occupation has its own unique characteristics associated with well-being and that it is possible to model these

characteristics into two broad categories, namely job resources and job demands (Buys & Rothmann, 2010, Rothman & Jordaan, 2006).

Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects of the job that may be functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and stimulate personal growth and development. Job demands involve the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that require unrelenting physical and/or psychological energy and that are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Studies on work engagement by Bakker, Demerouti, Hakanen & Xanthopoulou (2007 as cited De Braine & Roodt, 2011) reported that the JD-R model confirmed that work engagement is predicted by job resources primarily when job demands are high.

Rothmann, Strydom and Mostert (2006) found that job demands and resources consist of five factors, namely (1) overload, (2) job insecurity, (3) growth opportunities, and advancement and (4) organisational support. Overload is defined as the amount of work, mental load and emotional load. Job insecurity refers to the feeling of insecurity in one's current job and the future thereof. Having enough variety, opportunities to learn, and independence is known as growth opportunities. Advancement entails moving forward within one's organisation which includes remuneration, training and career opportunities. Organisational support is the relationships with supervisors, availability of information, communication, participation, social support by colleagues, and contact opportunities within the organisation (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

The Job demands-resources model illustrate job resources as the sole predictor of work engagement and specific job resources, such as social support by colleagues, supervisory coaching, performance feedback and time control have a significant opposite relation to

turnover intentions and organisational involvement (Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2003). According to the JD-R model's explanation of burnout, job demands predict feelings of exhaustion and a lack of job resources leads to work disengagement (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007) the JD-R model of work engagement assumed that job resources and personal resources autonomously or collectively predict work engagement. When job demands are high, job and personal resources have a positive impact on engagement and in turn have a positive impact on job performance. As such, engaged employees who are performing well are able to create their own resources, which then foster engagement again over time (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).



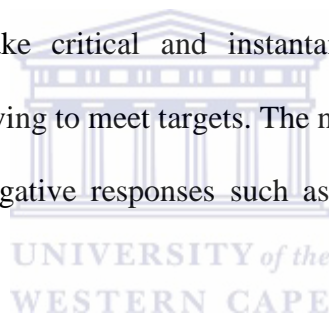
### **2.2.2 Job demands**

Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social and organisational aspects of the job that involves the constant need for physical and/or psychological effort which are associated with certain physical and/or psychological costs such as work pressure, role overload and emotional demands (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010).

On the one hand, quantitative job demands involves the amount of work required and the available timeframe in which work has to be performed. Job demands are not necessarily seen as negative, however, they may turn into stressors when facing demands that require high effort and is therefore associated with high costs that prompt negative responses such as depression, anxiety or burnout (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Work overload or high job demands may also come to the fore when individuals do not have the necessary skills, abilities and support in order for them to cope with the demands (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2010). Job demands have the propensity to drain individual's energy levels which results in exhaustion and in order for the individual to cope he or she withdraws mentally (Maslach, 1993). When an employee withdraws mentally from their work, their engagement levels decrease. According to Schaufeli & Bakker (2004), job demands may lead to burnout, which has an impact on the engagement levels of employees.

On the other hand, qualitative workload refers to individuals affective reactions to their jobs (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007). Rothmann and Joubert (2007) found that job demands include situational factors such as role ambiguity, role conflict, stressful events, heavy workload and work pressure, pressure to make critical and instantaneous decisions, being assigned additional responsibilities and having to meet targets. The need for high effort is associated with high costs that produce negative responses such as depression, anxiety and burnout (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).



### **2.2.3 Job resources**

According to Rothmann and Rothmann (2010) job resources refer to the physical, psychological, social and organisational characteristics of the job that enable individuals to achieve work goals, reduce job demands and stimulate personal growth and development.

Job resources include social support which involves supervisory and co-worker support, job enhancement opportunities which includes a form of increased control and autonomy, participation in decision-making, recognition, advancement opportunities, rewards and

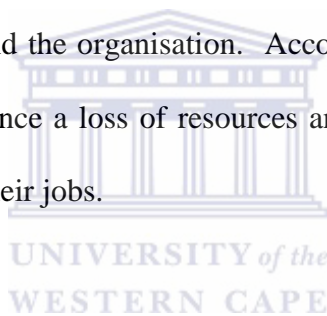
reinforcement contingencies (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007 as cited in De Braine and Roodt, p. 5, 2011) “job resources are located at an organisational level (e.g. salary, career opportunities, access to resources and job security), at an interpersonal and social relations level (e.g. supervisor and co-worker support, and team climate, at the level of an organisation of work (e.g. role clarity and participation in decision-making and at the level of tasks (e.g. skill variety, autonomy, performance feedback and task significance”.

On the one hand, job resources play an intrinsic motivational role as it may help individuals to learn, grow and develop, it also has an important role in goal achievement which may be seen as an extrinsic motivational role (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007). Therefore, it has been found that job resources help fulfil the basic human needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness. Thus, the effects of providing proper feedback has a positive impact on learning and increasing job competence, giving employees the opportunity to participate in decision-making and social support satisfy the need for autonomy and the need to belong (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007). In order to increase the work engagement of employees, providing them with optimal challenges, feedback and freedom in their work creates intrinsic motivation.

Job resources take on an extrinsic role in working environments that offer more resources which fosters an employee’s willingness to dedicate their efforts to the work task (Bakker, 2009). It is more likely that the task will be successfully completed in such environments and that the work goal be achieved. For example, when employees receive support from colleagues and they are given regular feedback on their performance, they are highly likely to be successful in achieving their goals (Bakker, 2009). Therefore, whether employees’ basic needs are met or goals are achieved, the outcome would be positive irrespective and engagement is thus likely to occur (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).



A study conducted by Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) on academics at higher education institutions found that job resources impacted strongly on work engagement which supports the COR theory. The findings indicate that when they are not provided with sufficient job resources (e.g. organisational support, growth opportunities, advancement opportunities and social support), long-term consequences could include withdrawal from work and reduces motivation and commitment (Hobfoll, 1998). According to Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) academics will be more likely to be committed to their jobs if the necessary resources are made available and the organisation must provide the proper environment where their abilities and skills are optimally utilised. Therefore, employees are not able to achieve their goals when resources are lacking which will reduce their ability to effectively deal with high job demands (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). Neither is it possible for them to develop themselves further in their job and the organisation. According to Hobfoll (1998) in such a situation, employees will experience a loss of resources and will defend themselves against resource loss by disengaging in their jobs.



#### **2.2.4 Relationship between job demands and job resources**

According to the study conducted by Coetzer and Rothmann (2010), work engagement was best predicted by organisational support and growth opportunities in the job and job demands indicated a weaker correlation with work engagement. Furthermore, their study showed that social support and advancement have a positive correlation with work engagement and that work overload (job demands) is negatively related to work engagement.

According to Coetzer and Rothmann (2010) growth opportunities in a job, such as variety, learning opportunities and autonomy play an intrinsic motivational role by fostering the employee's growth, learning and development and organisational support, and the

relationship with the supervisors, role clarity, information, communication and participation plays an extrinsic role by being contributory factor in achieving work goals. Therefore, an increase in the general level of job resources will have a significant increase on the work engagement of employees (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2010). It can thus be purported that an environment that provides resources will nurture their employee's willingness to dedicate their efforts and abilities to the work task (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2010). The study also showed job demands such as pace of work, quantitative workload and emotional workload were not suggestively related to the work engagement of employees. It is therefore evident that employees will be more engaged in their work if the necessary resources are provided, irrespective of the level of job demands (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2010).

According to Bakker & Schaufeli (2004; Hackman, & Oldham, 1980), in order for employees to experience high physical and mental energy and high levels of enthusiasm, pride and challenge in their work in order to achieve work goals, the organisation must increase the level of job resources such as organisational support, growth opportunities, social support and advancement opportunities. When job resources are low, employees will find it more challenging to cope with high job demands and this may be the consequence of disengagement as employees will tend to defend themselves against the absence of resources (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2010; De Braine & Roodt, 2011).

### **2.2.5 Relationship between work engagement and job resources**

Several studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between job resources and work engagement. For example, research by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that there is a positive relationship between three job resources, namely, performance feedback, social

support, supervisory coaching and work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption). The study was undertaken among Dutch employees working in an insurance company, an occupational health and safety service company, a pension fund company and a home care institution.

A replication of this study was done by Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli (2006); Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006) in a sample of Finnish teachers where the results indicated that job control, information, supervisory support, innovative climate and social climate all correlated positively to work engagement and similarly, the same findings were reported in a Spanish context.

In a sample of women managers and professionals at a large Turkish bank, the results indicated that work life experiences, in particular control, rewards, recognition and value fit had a positive relationship with work engagement (Koyuncu, Burke & Fiksenbaum, 2006).

Recently longitudinal studies have confirmed a positive relationship between job resources and work engagement. For instance, a study by Mauno, Kinnunen and Ruokolainen (2007), investigated work engagement and the antecedents among Finnish health care personnel, which indicated that job resources predicted work engagement better than job demands. In this study the best predictors of the three dimensions of work engagement were job control and organisation-based self-esteem. Another study also found that changes in job resources over a one year period were predictive of work engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rheeën, 2009), whereby results indicated that job resources such as social support, autonomy, teamwork and supervisory coaching predicted work engagement two years later after controlling for concurrent job demands and resources.

Social support in the workplace, especially in the form of support from supervisors and co-workers is quite useful in that it assists in the proper functioning of employees in organisations (Poon, 2011). Co-worker support can be defined as the employees' beliefs about the extent to which co-workers provide desirable resources in the form of emotional support, such as showing concern and instrumental support (i.e. assisting with work tasks to them (Poon, 2011).

### **2.2.6 Relationship between burnout and job demands**

Several studies and models have been developed to explain the effects of job demands and lack of resources on burnout (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Burnout is primarily predicted by job demands and lack of resources, it is also related to health problems and turnover intentions and facilitates the relationship between job demands and health problems (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). The COR theory advocates that burnout is expected to develop when valued resources are lost or threatened or are insufficient to meet the demands (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). Research studies on burnout indicate that burnout is a response to overload in terms of too much work for the available time (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Furthermore, in the exhaustion dimension, heavy overload and time pressure are strongly and consistently correlated to burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Role conflict and role ambiguity have also shown to have moderate to high correlation with burnout, where role conflict occurs when conflicting demands of the job have to be met and role ambiguity occurs when there is a lack of adequate information to do the job well (Maslach et al., 2001).

Pienaar and Sieberhagen (2005) indicated in their study among student leaders at a higher education institution that job demands in the student environment deals with factors such as unrealistic deadlines, lack of participation in decision-making and the strain caused by

unhealthy work relationships. This shows that there exists a lack of involvement, recognition and support and the demands caused by external time frames placed on individuals (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005). Their study also indicated that overload is caused by long hours and too much work which implies that the demands placed on the student leaders impacted on their personal time because more time was required to complete tasks in time and that the volume of work caused overload on their cognitive ability. Thus, the two factors contributing to emotional exhaustion may be having too much work to do and too long hours. In addition, the lack of communication regarding their performance and information about things that were taking place at the institution and schedules had a negative impact. Therefore, job demands and overload can be positively related to burnout and communication and resources to work engagement. A lack of the latter usually results in strain for the individual and therefore contributes to burnout (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).

Cynicism was also best described by job demands (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005) among student leaders which indicated that an individual who constantly has to deal with high job demands in the form of dealing with students' problems and having to work under pressure becomes more cynical. Therefore, cynicism may be experienced when an individual has too much to do and experience pressure by having to do it right. Furthermore in their study, professional efficacy was reported to be best described by having adequate resources at one's disposal, meaning that when having enough resources, one will be more likely to be able to perform effectively in the job and contribute maximally to it (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).

### **2.3 The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory**

According to Hobfoll (2002) the accumulation of resources is a key drive that initiates and maintains people's behaviour. The COR theory creates an understanding of the effects of job

resources or the lack thereof on employees in the workplace. The main principle of the COR theory is that people have a need to obtain, retain and protect what they value and consider important to them (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006). The theory proposes that stress experienced by individuals can be understood in relation to potential or actual loss of resources (Bakker, 2006). Hobfoll and Shiron (2000) have argued that: (a) individuals must bring in resources in order to prevent the loss of resources, (b) individuals with a greater pool of resources are less susceptible to resource loss, (c) those individuals that do not have access to strong resource pools are more likely to experience increased loss (“loss spiral”), and (d) strong resource pools lead to a greater likelihood that individuals will seek opportunities to risk resources for increased resource gains (“gain spiral”). Hobfoll (2002) also argues that resource gain obtains its significance in the situation of resource loss, which implies that job resources become more salient and gain their motivational potential when employees are confronted with high job demands like work overload, emotional demands and mental demands.

A study conducted by Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti and Xanthopoulou (2007) among Finnish teachers reported that job resources act as a buffer and reduces the negative relationship between pupil misbehaviour and work engagement. They also found that job resources actually influences work engagement when teachers are met with high levels of pupil transgressions.

When their external environment does not provide the resources they need, employees are not able to reduce the potentially negative influence on the job demands. They are also not able to achieve their work goals and develop themselves (Rothmann, 2008). The COR theory proposes that when employees find themselves in such a situation, they are more likely to experience a loss of resources or failure to gain an investment. In order to cope they will reduce their outputs and in doing so they try to reduce their job stress by attempting to

minimise their losses. Similarly, Hobfoll and Freedy (1993 as cited in Rothmann & Joubert, p. 51, 2007) the COR theory states that “burnout is likely to develop when valued resources are lost or threatened or are inadequate to meet demands”.

## **2.4 Personal resources and work engagement**

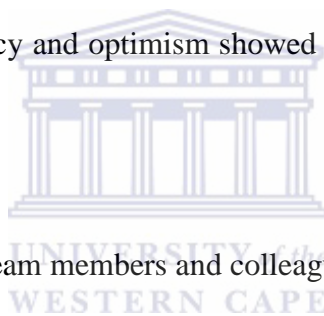
According to Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson (2003), personal resources are defined as positive evaluations that are linked to resiliency and refer to individuals’ sense of their ability to control and impact successfully upon their environment. Research has shown that these positive evaluations predict goal-setting, motivation, performance, job and life satisfaction and other desirable outcomes (Judge, Van Vianen & De Pater, 2004). The possible reason for this, is that the higher the individual’s personal resources, the more positive his or her self-regard and the more goal self-concordance he or she will be expected to experience (Judge, Bono, Erez & Locke, 2005). According to Luthans and Youssef (2007), individuals with goal self-concordance are intrinsically motivated and are more likely to pursue their goals and are thus able to perform at a higher level and feel more satisfied.

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between personal resources and work engagement. One such study was conducted by Rothmann and Storm (2003) on South African police officers and their findings suggested that police officers who are engaged in their work showed to have an active coping style. Furthermore, they also found that the police officers were problem-focussed as they actively took steps to attempt to eliminate or rearrange stressors (Rothmann & Storm, 2003).

In another study conducted by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2007) where they studied the role of self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem and optimism among

Dutch technicians, the study indicated that engaged employees are highly self-efficacious and they believed that they had the ability to meet the demands placed on them in a broad array of contexts. In addition, engaged employees believed that they generally would experience good outcomes in life (optimistic) and by participating in roles within their organisations they would feel satisfied (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2007).

Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2007b) conducted a two-year follow-up study which indicated that self-efficacy, organisational-based self-esteem and optimism contributed uniquely to explaining the variance in work engagement over time, more so than the impact of job resources and previous levels of engagement. In support of this Bakker, Gierveld and Van Rijswijk (2006) found that individuals with more personal resources particularly resilience, self-efficacy and optimism showed to contribute significantly to work engagement.



In addition, social support from team members and colleagues, opportunities for development and social support from the intimate partner also contribute to work engagement levels of employees (Bakker et al., 2006). Resilience can thus be a contributing factor to work engagement in that it facilitates the effectiveness of adapting to changing environments (Bakker, 2009). Engaged employees are not as susceptible to experiencing feelings of anxiety when in stressful situations and also have a positive engagement to the world as manifested in positive affect and openness to experience (Block & Kremen, 1996). Similarly, Bakker (2007) found in his study among bank employees that resilience acts as a safeguard against the impact of high emotional demands on exhaustion and also showed a positive relationship with work engagement in high job demand situations.



## 2.5 Personal resources and work performance

There are several reasons why engaged employees perform better at work than non-engaged employees. For instance engaged employees most often experience positive emotions, which includes happiness, joy and enthusiasm, they also experience good health, create their own job and personal resources and transfer their engagement to others (Bakker, 2009). According to research by (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Schaufeli et. al., 2009) has found that engaged employees are more productive because they experience more positive emotions than non-engaged employees. Therefore, happy people are more sensitive to opportunities at work, are more outgoing and caring to others and have more confidence and optimism about life (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001). According to Fredrickson (2001) particular positive emotions such as joy, interest and contentment all share the capacity to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their personal resources through expanding the range of thoughts and actions that come to mind. To illustrate, joy increases resources by way of creating the urge to play and to be creative. Additionally, interest and other positive emotions create the desire to explore, assimilate new information and experience and the will to grow.

Research has also indicated that employees who are engaged at work are more likely to learn new things through their work activities and are always in search of new challenges in their work as well as asking for feedback from colleagues (Bakker, 2010). A longitudinal study among Finnish dentists (Hakanen, Perhoniemi, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008) illustrated that a positive relationship existed between engagement and initiative and innovation as the dentists were more inclined to do more than was required and tried to be as active in organisational issues as possible. Additionally, they continuously made improvements in their work and gathered feedback and ideas for improvements from clients.

Similarly, in a recent study among Finnish managers (Hyvonen, Feldt, Salmela-Aro, Kinnunen & Makikangas, 2009) found that engaged managers were more enthusiastic about developing themselves in the job and increase their occupational knowledge and were more positive about change and increased productivity. They were also more committed to getting their teams to work towards achieving organisational goals as a collective and encouraged their teams to adopt a winning attitude. In this view, it implies that engaged employees are not passive actors in their working environments but actively change their working environments when it is necessary (Bakker, 2009).

Research also suggests that good health is related to good performance, which implies that engaged employees are in a better position to perform well at work. A study conducted by Schaufeli, Taris and Van Rhenen (2008) has found that engaged employees report less psychosomatic complaints than their non-engaged counterparts. Moderate negative correlations between engagement and psychosomatic health complaints were also reported (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen & Schaufeli, 2001). Similarly, work engagement has a positive relationship with self-rated health and workability (Hakanen et al., 2006).

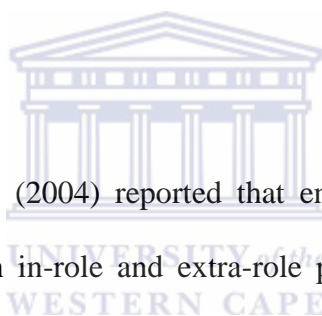
Engaged employees also are less prevalent to suffer from self-reported headaches, cardiovascular problems and stomach aches (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). One significant reason why engaged employees are more productive at work may be because of their ability to create their own resources. According to Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory, momentary experiences of positive emotions can build continuing psychological resources and trigger upward spirals towards emotional well-being. Therefore, positive emotions can make people feel good at the moment but also in the future (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). These findings have been supported by Xanthopoulou et al. (2007b) which indicated that job resources (social support from colleagues, autonomy, coaching and feedback) and personal

resources resulted in higher levels of work engagement and work engagement resulted in more personal resources such as optimism, self-efficacy and organisational based self-esteem. Furthermore, Schaufeli et al. (2007) also found that engagement was predictive of increases in future job resources which suggests that engaged employees are better able to mobilise their own job and personal resources that eventually fuel future engagement.

In most organisations, performance is the result of a team effort. It is therefore possible to believe that the crossover of engagement among members of the same team increases performance. According to Westman (2001) crossover or emotional contagion can be defined as the transfer of positive or negative experiences from one person to another. Thus, if colleagues are able to be influential with their work engagement, they may perform better as a team (Bakker, 2009). Other researchers found that emotional contagion in the workplace could be viewed as a reciprocal emotional reaction among employees who work in collaboration with each other. Totterdell, Kellet, Teuchmann and Briner (1998) found that the moods of teams of nurses and accountants were related to each other even after controlling shared work problems. Another study conducted by Bakker, Van Emmerik and Euwena (2006) reported that team-level work engagement was related to individual team members' engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption), after controlling for individual members' job demands and resources. Therefore, a positive team climate is created when engaged employees communicate their optimism, positive attitude and pro-active behaviours to their colleagues, independent of the job demands and resources they had at their disposal. In this view, it is thus suggested that engaged employees positively influence their colleagues and as a result, perform better as a team (Bakker, 2009).

## 2.6 Link between job performance and work engagement

Only a few quantitative studies have shown a relationship between work engagement and job performance. A study conducted by Engelbrecht (2006) among mid-wives has found that highly engaged mid-wives are service-minded and client-oriented in their work which was illustrated by their noticeable quick, calm and patient reactions towards their clients. According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997) employees' performance comprises of their task or in-role behaviour and their contextual or extra-role behaviour. Therefore, the in-role performance of employees could contribute directly or indirectly to their personal and organisational productivity. However, their extra-role performance may contribute directly to their personal productivity but indirectly to the effective functioning of their organisations (Poon, 2011).



Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004) reported that engaged employees showed higher ratings from their co-workers on in-role and extra-role performance, which indicates that employees who are engaged in their work perform better as well as being willing to go the extra mile. Similarly, Bakker et al. (2006), study among school principals and teachers found that engaged principals scored higher on in-role and extra-role performance and that engagement was strongly related to creativity; the higher their engagement levels the better they were able to come up with several ways to deal with work related problems. They were also seen as transformational leaders who had the ability to inspire, stimulate and coach their co-workers. Findings suggested by Poon (2011) indicated that when employees receive the necessary resources from their organisation they would be more engaged in their work and achieve their personal goals as well as organisational goals.

## **2.7 The role of burnout in the workplace**

According to Rothmann and Malan (2011) burnout is a state of exhaustion, depersonalisation and low personal accomplishment occurring in 'normal' people. Burnout is referred to as a potential threat especially to those who work with people. Burnout is considered to be a kind of chronic job stress that employees experience when the demands of the workplace exceed their job resources (Rothmann & Malan, 2011; Rothmann, 2008).

Emotional exhaustion is seen as the first stage in the burnout syndrome. Emotional exhaustion involves a lack of energy and feeling emotionally drained. Depersonalisation is characterised by employees treating clients as objects rather than people. Furthermore, employees may show a detached attitude and may be cynical towards co-workers, clients and the organisation (Rothmann & Malan, 2011). Depersonalisation is considered to be a defensive coping response to emotional exhaustion. This is usually utilised when other coping resources are not available (Rothmann & Malan, 2011). According to Schaufeli (2003 as cited in Rothmann & Malan, 2011) emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation are the core components of burnout and personal accomplishment is a personality characteristic. According to Rothmann and van der Colff (2009) the lack of personal accomplishment, presents the self-evaluation dimension of burnout and refers to the feeling of insufficiency, incompetence, lack of achievement and unproductiveness.

## **2.8 The role of work engagement in the workplace**

A study by van der Berg, Marias & Burger (2008) show that job resources with a positive impact, such as feedback from the supervisor, personal growth, shared support, impact of decisions, social contact, attitudes and the organisations commitment to employees, together

with a lesser workload and a lower degree of home-work interference had a positive impact on employee engagement.

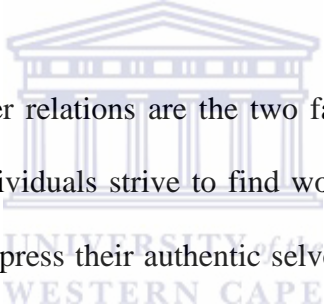
According to Buys and Rothmann (2010) employees experience increased work engagement, affective commitment and improved social functioning when they have more job resources. Furthermore, employees feel more engaged with their work when they have more variety in their work as well as a sense of significance and more opportunities to learn and accomplish and receive the necessary support from their friends and colleagues (Buys & Rothmann, 2010, van Zyl, Deacon & Rothmann, 2010).

## **2.9 The importance of work engagement in the workplace**

According to Khan (1990) people can use varying degrees of themselves, physically, emotionally and cognitively in the work that they perform. Furthermore, the more people draw on their selves to perform in their roles the better they perform. Engagement, according to Khan (1990, p.2), is the “simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in a task behaviours that promotes connections to the work and others.” In this view, the combination of expressing and employing a person’s preferred self, harvests behaviours that bring alive the relation of self to role. Therefore, individuals who are engaged in their work are physically involved, are cognitively alert and become connected to others in the service of work that they are doing.

Khan’s theory of personal engagement relates to three psychological conditions that has an impact on an individual’s engagement. Khan (1990 as cited in Olivier & Rothmann, 2007) the three psychological conditions are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability.

Psychological meaningfulness occurs when employees feel valuable and useful and there exists a work-role fit between individual's self-concept and his or her role as well as rewarding interpersonal interactions with co-workers (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007). Psychological safety refers to as "feeling able to show and employ oneself without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career (Khan, p. 708, 1990). In other words, having trusting and supporting relationships with co-workers and supervisors and having flexibility in behavioural norms without fear of negative consequences. Psychological availability involves having the physical, emotional and psychological resources to engage at a specific moment (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007). Therefore if individuals believe they have the necessary physical, emotional and cognitive resources available, they are more readily able and willing to engage in their roles at work (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007).



Work role fit and good co-worker relations are the two factors that contribute to the work context (Khan, 1990). Thus, individuals strive to find work roles which are meaningful to them whereby they are able to express their authentic selves fully in creative ways (Shamir, 1991) and a fit between their self-concept and their work role will lead to a sense of meaning due to their ability to express their values and beliefs. According to Locke & Taylor (1990 as cited in Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010) when individuals have more rewarding interpersonal interactions with their colleagues, they are more inclined to experience more meaning in their working environments. Furthermore, rewarding interpersonal relations will increase their sense of meaningfulness at work when they are treated with respect and dignity as well as feeling valued for their contributions (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). Additionally, the level of interactions an individual's has with their co-workers has a positive effect on their sense of social identity, sense of belonging and meaningfulness (Khan, 1990).

Supervisory and co-worker relations that are supportive, trustworthy and flexible regarding behavioural norms lead to feelings of psychological safety (Khan, 1990). Subordinates who experience their supervisor as not being controlling and who are supportive will have a greater sense of safety in the work environment (Edmondson, 2004).

Demerouti et al (2001 as cited in du Plooy & Roodt, 2010) suggests that a shortage of available resources will have an impact on the degree of fulfilment of job resources which will expedite withdrawal behaviour and in the long term withdrawal behaviour can lead to work disengagement.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

Engaged employees are those who have enough resources in order for them to do their work and they are focused on the assigned task and not on securing the necessary resources with which to complete the task. Therefore, employees who have sufficient resources to do their job with lesser job demands will experience higher levels of work engagement (Pienaar & Sieberhagen, 2005).

Leader behaviour can contribute positively to increased employee engagement by sharing power with subordinates, emphasising accountability for outcomes, encouraging independent decision-making, sharing information and knowledge, facilitating skills development, encouraging calculated risk taking and new ideas, offering performance feedback and treating mistakes and setbacks as opportunities to learn (van Scalkwyk et al., 2010).



## 2.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the literature relating to and defining the concepts of work engagement, burnout, job demands and resources and more specifically the impact it has on employees. Reference has been made to areas in which similar research studies have previously been conducted.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary focus of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research methodology used to investigate the research problem. Hence, the research design, the sampling technique, and measuring instrument to gather the data will be discussed. The chapter concludes with the statistical techniques employed to analyse the data.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

For the purposes of this research a non-probability sampling technique was used. According to Sekaran (2003) in non-probability sampling, not everyone has an equal chance of being chosen as sample subjects. This means that the findings of the research study cannot be confidently generalised to the population. However, the advantages of non-probability sampling is that it is less complicated, less time consuming and in general less expensive and freer from statistical complexity (Sekaran 2003).

Convenience sampling was chosen because of the easy accessibility and availability of the subjects. Snowball sampling was chosen via a convenience sampling method. Snowball sampling involves identifying an initial number of subgroup members from whom the preferred data are collected and whom then serve as 'seeds' to help identify other subgroup members to be included in the sample (Magnani, Sabin, Saidel & Heckathorn 2005). The questionnaire was initially distributed to approximately sixty respondents. The sixty respondents each sent the questionnaire to twenty or more people and their respondents also send it to twenty or more people.

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

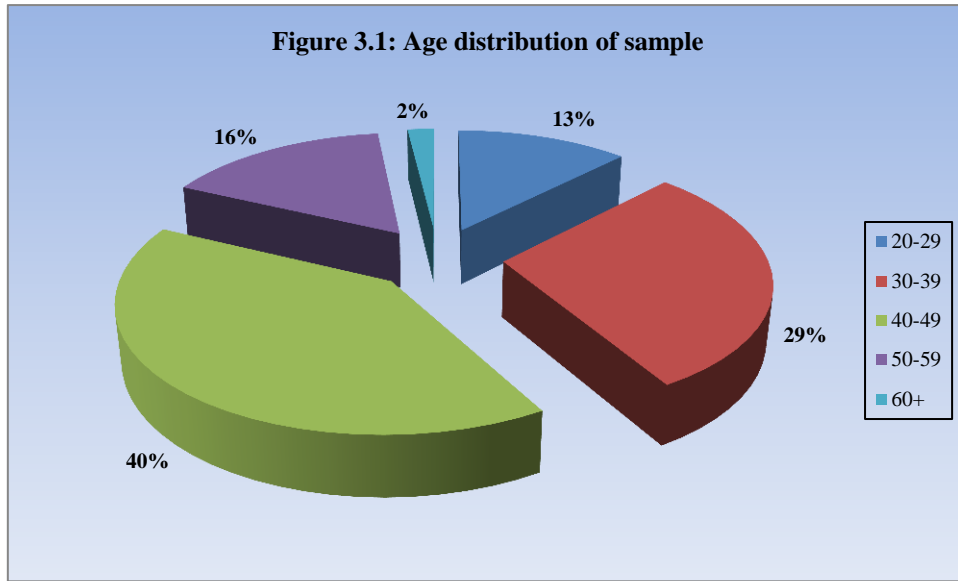
According to Sekaran (2003) a population refers to the total number of people, events or things of interest that the researcher desires to investigate. A sample is a part of the population (Sekaran 2003). Thus it consists of only some of the members from the population. The sample size of (N=384) employees would be a representative sample as the population size of the public sector is approximately (N=1000000) employees. The current sample consisted of n=164 with usable responses. The sample constituted public service employees across all spheres of government, namely Provincial, Local and National government. Additionally, the sample comprised of employees across all occupational levels - non-managerial, first level supervisors, middle-management, senior management and executive management.

### **3.4 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS**



The biographical information of the respondents (sample) for this study is represented in graphical format and explained.

### 3.4.1. AGE



As reflected in Figure 3.1 above, the majority of the respondents (40%; N=65) fall within the age grouping of 40 – 49 years. 2% (N=3) of the respondents were above 60 years, while 29% (N=47) of the respondents were between 30-39 years. A number of 26 respondents (16%) were between 50 and 59 years and 20 respondents (13%) were between 20 and 29 years. All respondents indicated their respective age grouping.

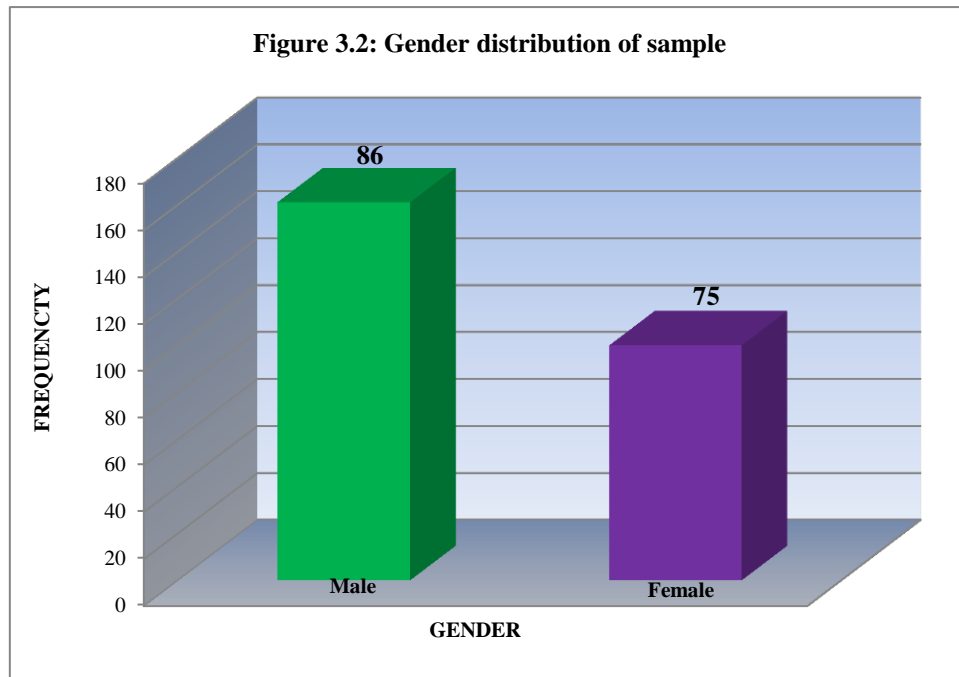
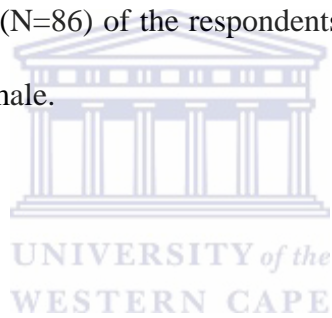
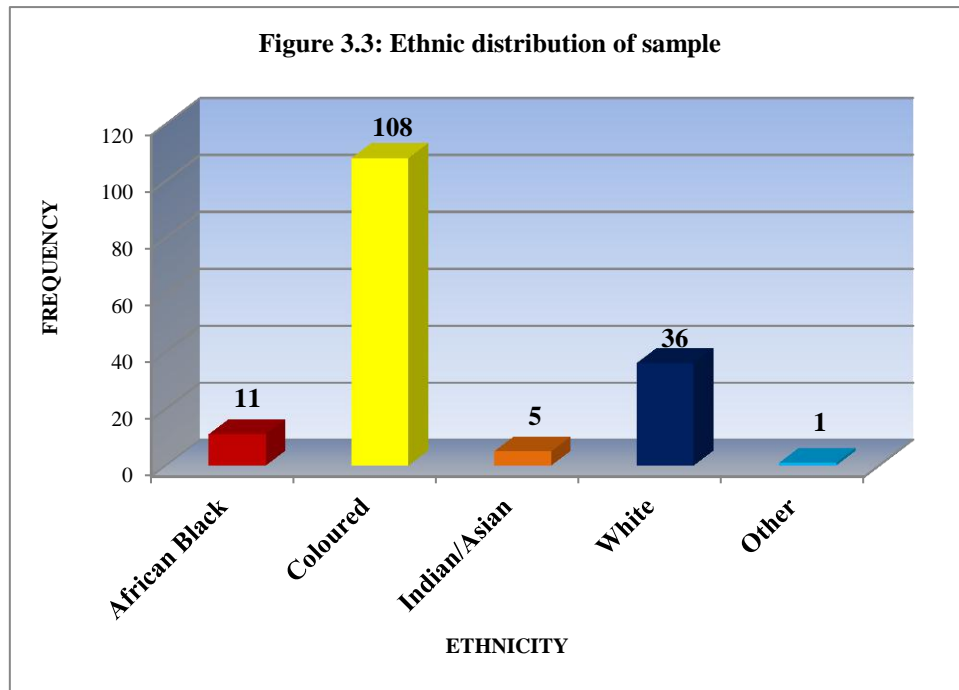


Figure 3.2 reflects that that 53% (N=86) of the respondents in the sample are male and 47% (N=75) of the respondents are female.





As illustrated in Figure 3.3 above, the racial composition of the sample comprises of N=108 (67.1%) Coloured respondents, 22.5% (N=36) White respondents, 6.8% (N=11) Black respondents and 3.1% (N=5) Indian/Asian respondents. A total of 0.6% (N=1) did not indicate their ethnic profile.

### 3.4.4

### MARITAL STATUS

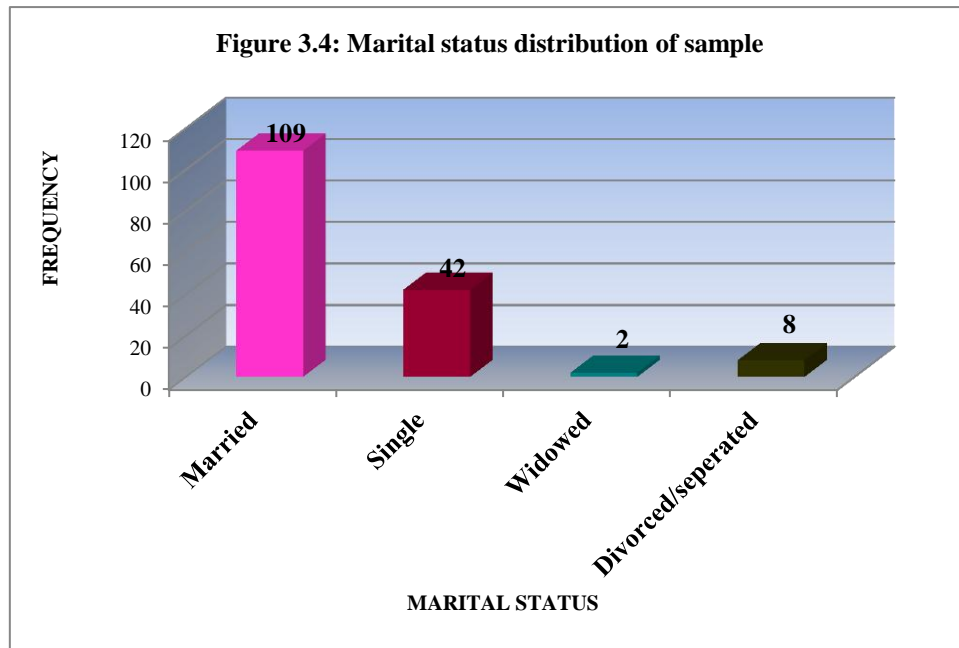
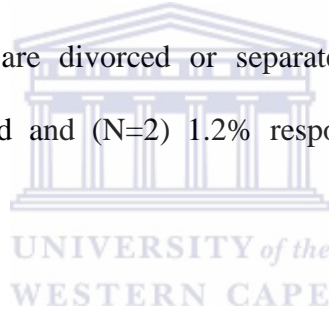
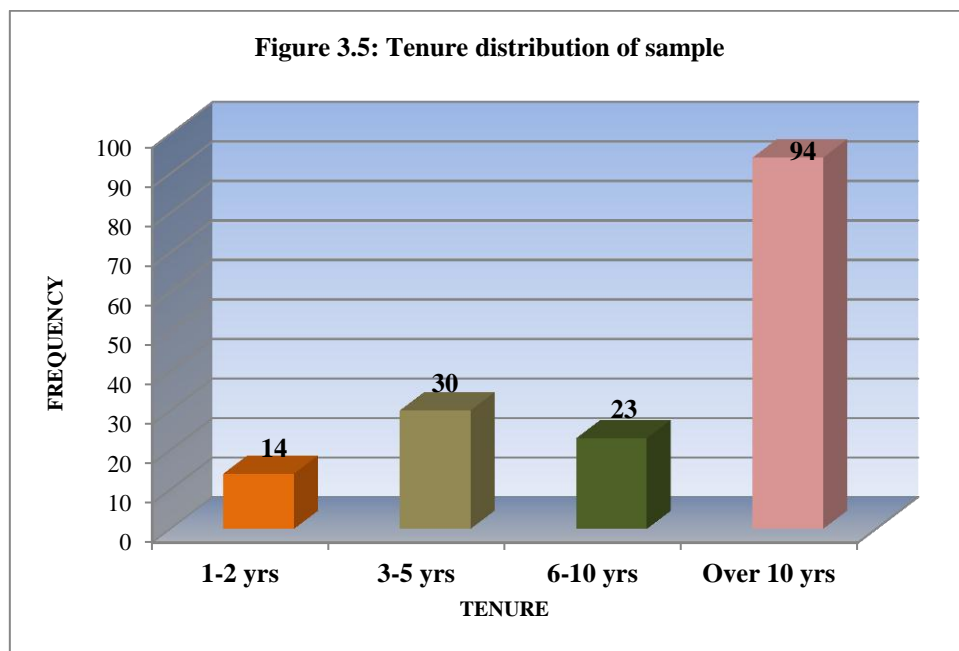


Figure 3.4 above illustrates that 26.1% (N=42) of the respondents were never married, while 5% (N=8) of the respondents are divorced or separated. Furthermore, a total of 109 respondents (67.7%) are married and (N=2) 1.2% respondents indicated that they were widowed.



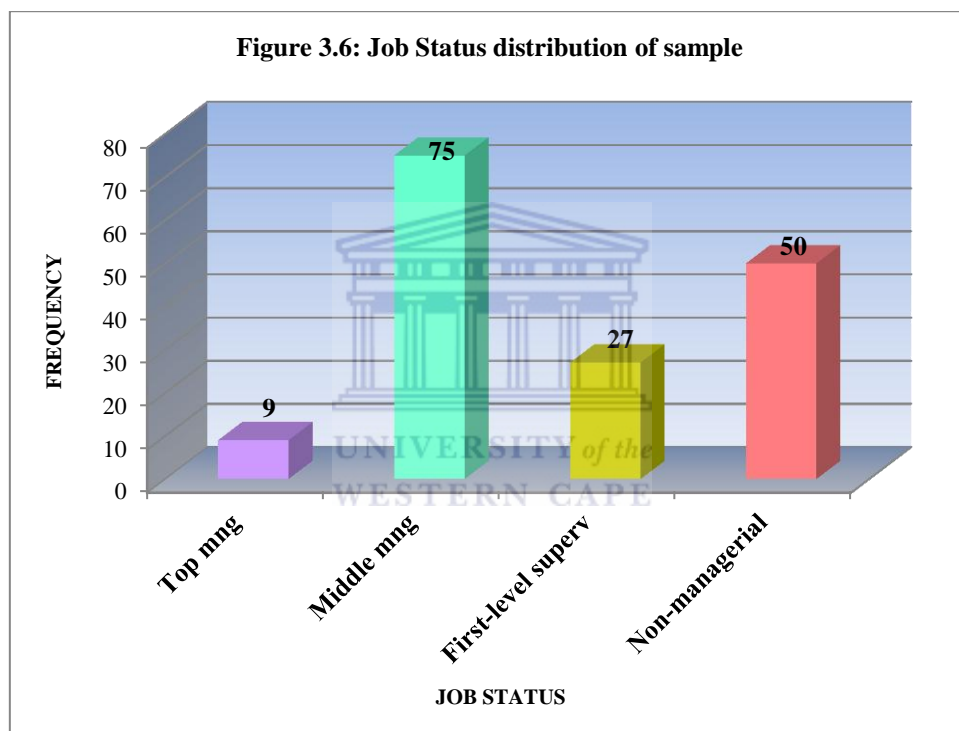
### 3.4.5

### TENURE



This variable assessed the years of service in the Public Service as a whole (all government departments: national, local and provincial). It can be viewed that a total of 14 respondents (8.7%) have between 1 and 2 years' experience in the Public Service, while 58.4% (N=94) of the respondents has more than ten (10) years' experience in the Public Service. 18.6% (N=30) of the respondents has 3 to 10 years' experience and 14.3% (N=23) of the respondents has 6 to 10 years' experience.

### 3.4.6 JOB STATUS



As reflected above, 5.6% (N=9) the respondents were Top management, while a further 46.6% (N=75) were in Middle management. A total of 27 respondents (16.8%) and 50 respondents (31.1%) were in First-level supervisory and non-managerial functions respectively.



### **3.5 PROCEDURE**

An email invitation was sent to all participants with a secure web link taking them directly to the online survey ensuring their anonymity. All surveys were completed via the internet, which facilitated easy administration and collection of the data as well as the fact that it could reach participants across geographical regions. In addition, this method is inexpensive, could be delivered fast and participants could complete the questionnaires at their own convenience (Sekaran, 2001).

Nonresponse bias is particularly troubling when response rates are low. While the research on response rates for Web-based surveys is both limited and mixed, several researchers have found that Web-based surveys elicit lower response rates than paper-and-pencil surveys (Umbach, 2004 & Wright, 2005).

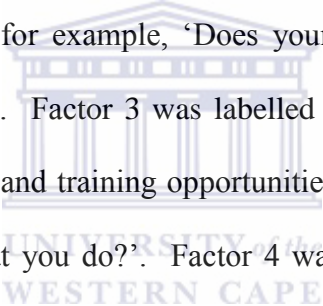


Some have suggested that dramatic differences in computer equipment may suppress response rates for Web-based surveys or inadequate Web browsers may prevent some people from even accessing the survey (Umbach, 2004; Wright, 2005).

### **3.6 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT**

For the purpose of this study, three questionnaires, namely the Job Demands-Resources Scale (JD-RS), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) was utilised to gather the data. The Job Demands-Resources Scale developed by Rothmann, Mostert and Strydom (2005) was used to measure the variables (Job demands and Job resources). The JD-RS consists of 42 items about pace and amount of work, mental load, emotional load, variety in work, opportunities at work, independence in work, relationships with colleagues, relationship with immediate supervisor,

ambiguities about work information, communication, participation, contact possibilities, uncertainty about the future, remuneration and career possibilities. A five-point scale was used ranging from **1 (never) to 5 (very often)**. Rothmann, Mostert and Strydom (2005) found that the dimensions of the JDRS consisted of five reliable factors, namely organisational support ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ), growth opportunities ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), overload ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ), job insecurity ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ) and advancement ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ).

According to their study the following factors are explained (Rothman et al., 2005). Factor 1 was labelled Growth Opportunities refer to having enough variety, opportunities to learn and independence in the job for example: 'Do you know exactly what your supervisor thinks of your performance?'. Factor 2 was labelled Organisational Support refers to the relationship with supervisors and colleagues, flow of information, communication, role clarity and participation in decision-making for example, 'Does your job offer you the possibility of independent thought and action?'. Factor 3 was labelled Advancement which is related to remuneration, career possibilities and training opportunities for example, 'Do you think you are paid enough for the work that you do?'. Factor 4 was labelled Overload and includes items relating to pace and amount of work, mental load and emotional load for example, 'Do you work under time pressure?'. Factor 5 was labelled Job Insecurity which refers to uncertainty about the future for example, 'Do you need to be more secure that you will still be working in one year's time?'.  


The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) is used to measure work engagement and consists of three scales, namely Vigour for example, 'At my work, I feel bursting with energy', Dedication for eg. 'My job inspires me' and Absorption for example, 'I feel happy when I am working intensely'. The UWES consists of 17 items and are scored on a five-point scale varying from 0 (never) to 5 (very often). The alpha coefficients range between 0.78 and 0.89 (Schaufeli et al 2002).

The MBI-GS (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach & Jackson, 1996) measures the three dimensions of the burnout namely Exhaustion for example, 'I feel used up at the end of the day, Cynicism for example, 'I have become less enthusiastic about my work and Professional efficacy for example, 'At my work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done'. The items are framed as statements of job-related feelings and are rated on a five-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (very often). Developed from the original MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a), which was designed for human service occupations, the MBI-GS is a 16-item measure that evaluates burnout among people in all occupations (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). The reliabilities of both scales are 0.90 for exhaustion, and 0.85 for cynicism (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

According to Sekaran (2003, p. 203) 'the reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the 'goodness' of a measure'. This means that the instrument is reliable if it measures what it is supposed to measure. Furthermore, 'the most popular test of interitem consistency reliability is the Cronbach's coefficient alpha which is used for multipoint-scaled items' (Sekaran, 2003, p. 205). According to Sekaran (2001) 0.7 is the threshold value for reliability and the calculated co-efficient alpha is 0.82 indicating test reliability of the instrument thus implying that there is a strong positive item-homogeneity in this measuring instrument.

### **3.7 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES**

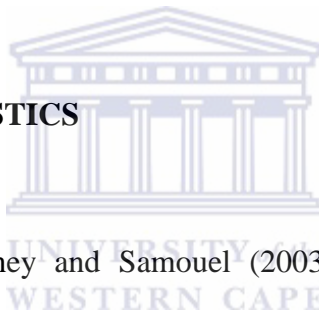
The statistical analyses of the research involved descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical techniques assist the researcher to make certain statistical inferences drawing on sample data in making educated guesses and examining hypotheses about the traits of a particular population (Williams, 1999). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) was used in the analyses and computation of the data in this research. Subsequently, the inferential statistics are utilised in the examination of each hypothesis formulated for the study.

### **3.7.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Descriptive statistics was applied to describe the unprocessed data in an understandable way. De Vos (1998) indicated that the purpose of utilising descriptive statistics is to condense data to a logical and interpretable structure in order to study, test and provide conclusions on the relations of research problems. The descriptive statistics appropriate in this research include percentages and measurement on the distribution of scores, means and standard deviations.

### **3.7.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS**



According to Hair, Babin, Money and Samouel (2003), inferential statistics allow the researcher to make conclusions about a population from a sample. McNabb (2002) concurred by stating that inferences are made about certain characteristics of interest for a population using data from the sample set. The inferential statistics that were utilised to test the research hypotheses included: the Pearson Correlation coefficient, t-tests and ANOVA.

#### **3.7.2.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

De Vos (1998) indicates that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient signifies the strength and the direction of the relationship between two variables. Correlation coefficients are co – relationships between certain variables (Robson, 2002). Leary (2004) contends that a positive correlation amongst two variables signify a direct positive relationship, whilst a negative

correlation connotes an opposite negative relationship. A strong positive relationship between two variables are indicated when changes in one variable are strongly correlated with changes in the second variable, this occurs when Pearson's  $r$  value is 0.70 and higher (De Vos, 1998).

### **3.7.2.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Cooper and Schindler (2003) contend that the ANOVA as a statistical method that is used for the testing the null hypothesis. The ANOVA provides statistical guesstimates of the changeability in test scores related with systematic differences in the allocated ratings and differences in acquired ratings (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2001). This statistical method was used to establish if significant differences existed in between Job demands, job resources, work engagement and burnout amongst employees based on certain biographical characteristics.



## **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The chapter endeavoured to describe and discuss the design of the research, including the research description, the research instrument and the procedure used to obtain the data. Furthermore, this chapter identified and provided insight into the statistical analysis techniques employed (descriptive and inferential analyses) and the relevance in testing the hypotheses of this study, as postulated in per Chapter 1.

### 3.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed during the study. The focus areas included a discussion on the population, sample, measuring instrument (as well as its psychometric properties) and the statistics employed to test each hypothesis. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the characteristics of the sample and inferential statistics are used to test the research hypotheses.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results that were obtained after applying the statistical techniques outlined in Chapter 3. The analyses of the constructs relevant to the study, that is, work engagement, burnout, job resources and job demands, are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. Conclusions are then drawn on the basis of the results that were obtained.

The results of the statistical analysis, which were generated on the basis of the use of inferential statistics, are presented in the forms of tables and are subsequently discussed. The study analyses the work engagement amongst employees who were solicited to participate in the research. The level of statistical significance for null hypothesis testing was set at 5%, with all statistical test results being computed at the 2-tailed level of significance in accordance with the non-directional hypotheses presented (Sekaran, 2001).

#### **4.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS**

The analyses of the constructs relevant to the study, that is, work engagement, burnout, job resources and job demands are presented with the aid of inferential statistical procedures. With respect to each hypothesis, conclusions will be drawn on the basis of the results obtained. The information provided and discussed in the previous chapters will serve as a background against which the contents of this chapter will be presented and interpreted.

Table 4.1 Pearson correlation between the work engagement, burnout and job demands resources dimensions

	Work Engagement	Burnout	Job Demands Resources
Work Engagement	1	-.851**	.657**
Burnout	-.851**	1	-.702**
Job Demands Resources	.657**	-.702**	1

\*p < 0.01

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a relationship between job demands resources and work engagement.

Based on Table 4.1, there is a statistically significant and direct correlation between work engagement and job demands resources ( $r=.657, p<0.01$ ). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a negative relationship between burnout and job demands resources.

There is a statistically significant and direct correlation between burnout and job demands resources ( $r= -.702, p<0.01$ ). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis 3

There is a negative relationship between Work engagement and Burnout

There is a statistically significant relationship and negative correlation between Work engagement and Burnout ( $r= -.851, p<0.01$ ). Thus, hypothesis 3 is also accepted.

## 4.3 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Cronbach's Alpha is viewed as an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the underlying construct (Cronbach, 2004). It is argued that Alpha coefficients range in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors



extracted from dichotomous and or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales. However, there is no lower limit to the coefficient, however, the closer Cronbach's coefficient alpha is to 1, the greater the internal consistency of the items of the scale (Cronbach, 2004).

**Table 4.2 Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for the Work engagement, burnout and Job demands Resources questionnaire**

Questionnaire	N	No. of items	Cronbach
Work Engagement	164	17	0.90
Burnout	164	15	0.88
Job Demands Resources	164	42	0.93

The scores obtained for the Work Engagement, Burnout and Job Demands Resources Questionnaire which was administered can be regarded as satisfactory in terms of the reliability of the instrument (Table 4.2). George and Mallery (2003) argue that coefficients above 0.8 can be considered to be good indicators of the reliability of an instrument. Hence with the current study, this was exceeded, indicating a high degree or reliability.

#### **4.4. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

In order to examine the relationships between the biographical variables with the work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a statistical significant difference between marital status and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of marital status

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
WORK ENGAGEMENT	Married	110	56.9091	11.33683
	Single	44	53.7955	13.18487
	Widowed	2	47.5000	.70711
	Divorced or separated	8	62.6250	11.86757
	Total	164	56.2378	11.94613
BURNOUT	Married	110	33.7545	9.11515
	Single	44	38.5227	11.90171
	Widowed	2	44.0000	2.82843
	Divorced or separated	8	29.3750	6.78101
	Total	164	34.9451	10.09419
JOB DEMANDS RESOURCES	Married	110	209.8182	34.12744
	Single	44	191.7273	43.08907
	Widowed	2	208.5000	54.44722
	Divorced or separated	8	225.8750	25.84259
	Total	164	205.7317	37.41282

Table 4.3 depicts the descriptive statistics for marital status, including the mean and standard deviation of each of the marital status categories for the variables being studied.

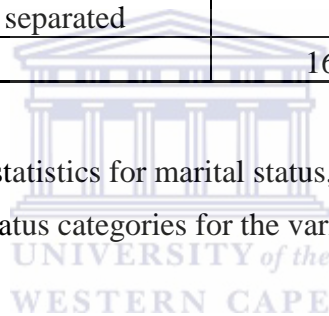


Table 4.4: Summary ANOVA statistics for marital status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WORK ENGAGE- MENT	Between Groups	791.101	3	263.700	1.878	.135
	Within Groups	22470.625	160	140.441		
	Total	23261.726	163			
BURNOUT	Between Groups	1131.281	3	377.094	3.898	.010
	Within Groups	15477.225	160	96.733		
	Total	16608.506	163			
JDR	Between Groups	13727.729	3	4575.910	3.414	.019
	Within Groups	214426.466	160	1340.165		
	Total	228154.195	163			

Table 4.4 presents the results of the one-way Anova with respect to marital status differences at the  $p < 0.05$  level in work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources. The

results indicate that there are statistically significant differences ( $F(3,160) = 3.898, p = .010$ ), in burnout based on marital status. There are also statistically significant differences in Job Demands Resources based on marital status ( $F(3,160) = 3.414, p = .019$ ). In order to further explore these differences, a post hoc analysis was done.

Table 4.5: Post hoc statistics for marital status

Dependent Variable	(I) Marital status	(J) Marital status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
BURNOUT	Married	Single	-4.76818	1.99365	.089
		Widowed	-10.24545	2.18067	.165
		Divorced or separated	4.37955	2.55012	.370
	Single	Married	4.76818	1.99365	.089
		Widowed	-5.47727	2.68688	.335
		Divorced or separated	9.14773*	2.99451	.034
	Widowed	Married	10.24545	2.18067	.165
		Single	5.47727	2.68688	.335
		Divorced or separated	14.62500*	3.12214	.024
	Divorced or separated	Married	-4.37955	2.55012	.370
		Single	-9.14773*	2.99451	.034
		Widowed	-14.62500*	3.12214	.024
JDR	Married	Single	18.09091	7.26533	.071
		Widowed	1.31818	38.63726	1.000
		Divorced or separated	-16.05682	9.69886	.399
	Single	Married	-18.09091	7.26533	.071
		Widowed	-16.77273	39.04417	.965
		Divorced or separated	-34.14773*	11.21057	.036
	Widowed	Married	-1.31818	38.63726	1.000
		Single	16.77273	39.04417	.965
		Divorced or separated	-17.37500	39.56931	.963
	Divorced or separated	Married	16.05682	9.69886	.399
		Single	34.14773*	11.21057	.036
		Widowed	17.37500	39.56931	.963

Post hoc comparisons using the Games Howell test indicated that the mean score for single individuals ( $M = 38.52$ ,  $SD = 11.90$ ) was significantly different to that of separated/divorced individuals ( $M = 29.38$ ,  $SD = 6.78$ ). Table 4.5 also indicates that there are significant differences in burnout between widowed individuals ( $M = 44$ ,  $SD = 2.82$ ) and separated/divorced individuals ( $M = 29.38$ ,  $SD = 6.78$ ).

The post hoc (Table 4.5) comparisons also indicate a significant difference in job demands resources between single individuals ( $M = 191.73$ ,  $SD = 43.01$ ) and that of separated/divorced individuals ( $M = 225.88$ ,  $SD = 25.84$ ).

Hypothesis 4 is therefore partially accepted as there are statistically significant differences between some marital status groups and burnout, as well as job demands resources.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a statistical significant difference between tenure and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.



Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics of tenure

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
WORK ENGAGEMENT	1-2	14	59.4286	14.48455
	3-5	30	51.3333	10.48590
	6-10	25	52.4000	13.91342
	Over 10	95	58.3263	10.84361
	Total	164	56.2378	11.94613
BURNOUT	1-2	14	33.8571	9.55838
	3-5	30	39.0667	10.40203
	6-10	25	38.0000	11.48550
	Over 10	95	33.0000	9.22416
	Total	164	34.9451	10.09419
JOB DEMANDS RESOURCES	1-2	14	217.0714	49.54014
	3-5	30	192.3000	33.45522
	6-10	25	188.0800	37.88571
	Over 10	95	212.9474	34.11413
	Total	164	205.7317	37.41282

Table 4.6 depicts the descriptive statistics for tenure, including the mean and standard deviation of each of the tenure categories for the variables being studied.

Table 4.7: Summary ANOVA statistics for tenure

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WORK ENGAGE- MENT	Between Groups	1646.746	3	548.915	4.063	.008
	Within Groups	21614.979	160	135.094		
	Total	23261.726	163			
BURNOUT	Between Groups	1118.925	3	372.975	3.853	.011
	Within Groups	15489.581	160	96.810		
	Total	16608.506	163			
JDR	Between Groups	19948.390	3	6649.463	5.110	.002
	Within Groups	208205.805	160	1301.286		
	Total	228154.195	163			

Table 4.7 presents the results of the one-way Anova with respect to tenure differences at the  $p < 0.05$  level in work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources. The results indicate that there are statistically significant differences ( $F(3,160) = 4.063, p = .008$ ), in work engagement based on tenure. The results also indicate that there are statistically significant differences ( $F(3,160) = 3.853, p = .011$ ), in burnout based on tenure. There are also statistically significant differences in Job Demands Resources based on tenure ( $F(3,160) = 5.110, p = .002$ ). In order to further explore these differences, a post hoc analysis was done.

Table 4.8: Post hoc statistics for tenure

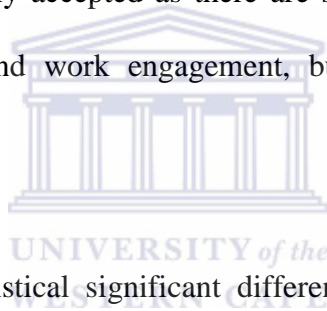
Dependent Variable	(I) Tenure	(J) Tenure	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
WORK ENGAGEMENT	1-2	3-5	8.09524	4.31868	.271
		6-10	7.02857	4.76752	.467
		Over 10	1.10226	2.55012	.993
	3-5	1-2	-8.09524	4.31868	.271
		6-10	-1.06667	3.37764	.989
		Over 10	-6.99298*	2.21424	.014*
	6-10	1-2	-7.02857	4.76752	.467
		3-5	1.06667	3.37764	.989
		Over 10	-5.92632	2.99684	.218
	Over 10	1-2	-1.10226	4.02785	.993
		3-5	6.99298*	2.21424	.014*
		6-10	5.92632	2.99684	.218
BURNOUT	1-2	3-5	-5.20952	3.18318	.376
		6-10	-4.14286	3.43549	.628
		Over 10	.85714	2.72425	.989
	3-5	1-2	5.20952	3.18318	.376
		6-10	1.06667	2.98050	.984
		Over 10	6.06667*	2.12188	.032*
	6-10	1-2	4.14286	3.43549	.628
		3-5	-1.06667	2.98050	.984
		Over 10	5.00000	2.48441	.204
	Over 10	1-2	-.85714	2.72425	.989
		3-5	-6.06667*	2.12188	.032*
		6-10	-5.00000	2.48441	.204
JDR	1-2	3-5	24.77143	14.8116	.352
		6-10	28.99143	15.25499	.257
		Over 10	4.12406	13.69496	.990
	3-5	1-2	-24.77143	14.58116	.352
		6-10	4.22000	9.73249	.972
		Over 10	-20.64737*	7.03979	.025*
	6-10	1-2	-28.99143	15.25499	.257
		3-5	-4.22000	9.73249	.972
		Over 10	-24.86737*	8.34646	.026*
Over 10	1-2	-4.12406	13.69496	.990	

Post hoc comparisons using the Games Howell test indicated that the mean score for individuals with 3-5 years of service (M = 51.33, SD = 10.49) was significantly different to

that of individuals with over 10 years of service ( $M = 58.32$ ,  $SD = 10.84$ ) for work engagement. Table 4.8 also indicates that there are significant differences in burnout between individuals with 3-5 years of service ( $M = 39.06$ ,  $SD = 10.40$ ) and individuals with over 10 years of service ( $M = 33$ ,  $SD = 9.22$ ).

The post hoc (Table 4.8) comparisons also indicate a significant difference in job demands resources between individuals with 3-5 years of service ( $M = 192.30$ ,  $SD = 33.46$ ) and that of individuals with over 10 years of service ( $M = 212.95$ ,  $SD = 34.11$ ). The comparisons further indicate a significant difference in job demands resources between individuals with 6-10 years of service ( $M = 188.08$ ,  $SD = 37.89$ ) and individuals with over 10 years of service ( $M = 212.95$ ,  $SD = 34.11$ ).

Hypothesis 5 is therefore partially accepted as there are statistically significant differences between some tenure groups and work engagement, burnout, as well as job demands resources.



**Hypothesis 6:** There is a statistical significant difference between job level and work engagement, burnout and job resources demands.

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics of job status

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
WORK ENGAGEMENT	Top management	9	64.7778	12.56760
	Middle management	75	56.2933	12.04358
	First-level supervisor	29	56.0690	10.76347
	Non managerial	51	54.7451	12.04133
	Total	164	56.2378	11.94613
BURNOUT	Top management	9	29.4444	10.87556
	Middle management	75	33.9467	10.24681
	First-level supervisor	29	36.9655	10.24166
	Non managerial	51	36.2353	9.38635
	Total	164	34.9451	10.09419
JOB DEMANDS RESOURCES	Top management	9	230.7778	40.36947
	Middle management	75	216.6667	35.33788
	First-level supervisor	29	193.8966	30.16661
	Non managerial	51	191.9608	37.11601
	Total	164	205.7317	37.41282

Table 4.9 depicts the descriptive statistics for job status, including the mean and standard deviation of each of the job status categories for the variables being studied.

Table 4.10: Summary ANOVA statistics for job status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WORK ENGAGE- MENT	Between Groups	771.075	3	257.025	1.828	.144
	Within Groups	22490.651	160	140.567		
	Total	23261.726	163			
BURNOUT	Between Groups	550.355	3	183.452	1.828	.144
	Within Groups	16058.151	160	100.363		
	Total	16608.506	163			
JDR	Between Groups	28347.362	3	9449.121	7.567	.000
	Within Groups	199806.833	160	1248.793		
	Total	228154.195	163			

Table 4.10 presents the results of the one-way Anova with respect to job status differences at the  $p < 0.05$  level in work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources. The results indicate statistically significant differences in Job Demands Resources based on job status



( $F(3,160) = 7.567, p = .000$ ). In order to further explore these differences, a post hoc analysis was done.

Table 4.11: Post hoc statistics for job status

Dependent Variable	(I) Job status	(J) Job status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
WORK ENGAGEMENT	Top management	Middle management	8.48444	4.41400	.280
		First-level supervisor	8.70881	4.64158	.288
		Non-managerial	10.03268	4.51579	.178
	Middle management	Top management	-8.48444	4.41400	.280
		First-level supervisor	.22437	2.43493	1.000
		Non-managerial	1.54824	2.18563	.894
	First-level supervisor	Top management	-8.70881	4.64158	.288
		Middle management	-.22437	2.43493	1.000
		Non-managerial	1.32387	2.61494	.957
	Non-managerial	Top management	-10.03268	4.51579	.178
		Middle management	-1.54824	2.18563	.894
		First-level supervisor	-1.32387	2.61494	.957
BURNOUT	Top management	Middle management	-4.50222	3.81339	.652
		First-level supervisor	-7.52107	4.09377	.301
		Non-managerial	-6.79085	3.85610	.344
	Middle management	Top management	4.50222	3.81339	.652
		First-level supervisor	-3.01885	2.23985	.537
		Non-managerial	-2.28863	1.76847	.569
First-level supervisor	Top management	7.52107	4.09377	.301	

		Middle management	3.01885	2.23985	.537
		Non-managerial	.73022	2.31181	.989
	Non-managerial	Top management	6.79085	3.85610	.344
		Middle management	2.28863	1.76847	.569
		First-level supervisor	-.73022	2.31181	.989
	JDR	Top management	Middle management	14.11111	14.06156
First-level supervisor			36.88123	14.57592	.110
Non-managerial			38.81699	14.42529	.087
Middle management		Top management	-14.11111	14.06156	.751
		First-level supervisor	22.77011*	6.93039*	.009*
		Non-managerial	24.70588*	6.60772*	.002*
First-level supervisor		Top management	-36.88123	14.57592	.110
		Middle management	-22.77011*	6.93039*	.009*
		Non-managerial	1.93577	7.64146	.994
Non-managerial		Top management	-38.81699	14.42529	.087

The post hoc (Table 4.11) comparisons indicate a significant difference in job demands resources between non-managerial employees ( $M = 191.96$ ,  $SD = 37.11$ ) and that of middle-management employees ( $M = 216.66$ ,  $SD = 35.34$ ). The comparisons further indicate a significant difference in job demands resources between first-level employees ( $M = 193.89$ ,  $SD = 30.16$ ) and middle-management employees ( $M = 216.66$ ,  $SD = 35.34$ ).

Hypothesis 6 is therefore partially accepted as there are statistically significant differences between some job status groups and job demands resources.

#### 4.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter objectively presented the results of the study using descriptive statistics to describe the results and inferential statistics to make inferences about characteristics of the population based on the sample solicited to participate in the study. This enabled the researcher to identify significant relationships and differences between the variables in the study.

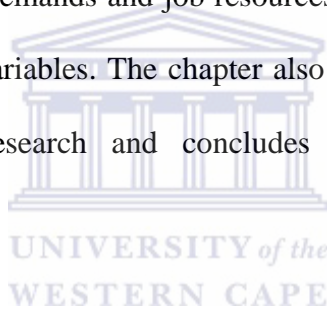


## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the salient research findings originating from the study. Due to the paucity of research in the public sector, studies conducted in other areas are also made reference to. The chapter includes information on the demographics of the sample, descriptive outcomes for the dimensions of work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources. Furthermore, results obtained from the inferential statistics for the dimensions of work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources and relationship, differences and variance between biographical variables. The chapter also provides limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and concludes with recommendations for the organisation.



#### 5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

##### 5.2.1 Sample

The sample consisted of 164 public servants employed by the National, Provincial and Local government departments. The majority of the respondents ( $n = 65$  or 40%) were in the age category of 40-49 years. Fifty three percent of the sample were male respondents whilst females comprised 47% ( $n = 75$ ) of the sample. The majority of the respondents was Coloured ( $n = 108$  or 67%) whilst the least represented group was Indian/Asian ( $n = 5$  or 3.1%). Married respondents comprised 67.7% ( $n = 109$ ) of the sample whilst 26.1% ( $n = 42$ )

were single. Most of the respondents ( $n = 94$ , or 58.4%) have been with the organisation for more than 10 years, with 14 respondents (8.7%) having between 1 and 2 years' length of service. The majority of the respondents ( $n = 75$  or 46.6%) who participated in the study were middle managerial employees.

### **5.2.2 Dimensions of work engagement, burnout and job demands resources**

This study found that work engagement with a mean score of  $M = 56.24$ , indicated that the sample participants are mostly highly engaged in their work. Similarly, the standard deviation ( $SD = 11.95$ ) show that the variance around the mean is of medium strength meaning most employees are positively engaged in their work; some ranging from more to less engaged. The findings further suggest that burnout ( $M = 34.95$ ) indicated that more participants experience slightly lesser levels of burnout at work with the standard deviation ( $SD = 10.09$ ) showing that the variance around the mean is of medium strength, meaning some employees experience more burnout than others. The findings also indicate that job demands resources with a mean score of  $M = 205.73$  show that on average, participant's experience of job demands and job resources is positive. The ( $SD = 37.41$ ) however indicates that some participants experience job demands and job resources to a larger extent and some others, to a lesser extent.

## 5.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS

### 5.3.1 Intercorrelations of the dimensions of work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources

The results in Table 4.1 reflect that the relationship between the dimensions of work engagement, burnout, job demands and job resources are varied. There is a statistically significant relationship and direct correlation between work engagement and job demands resources ( $r = .657, p < 0.01$ ) and the relationship between burnout and job demands ( $r = -.702, p < 0.01$ ). The relationship between work engagement and burnout is both negative and significant ( $r = -.851, p < 0.01$ ).

#### Work Engagement



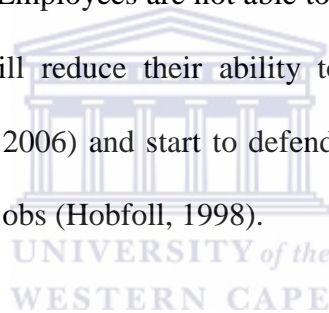
This study revealed that job demands and job resources have a significant impact on the total work engagement of the employees in the public sector. Thus, the findings suggest that one could imply that employees are more engaged in their work when they have adequate access to job resources and a decrease in job demands in order for them to execute their tasks.

This is supported by previous research conducted on Reformed church ministers by Buys and Rothmann (2010) which indicated that when ministers had more job resources to their disposal, they felt more engaged and when job demands were high it resulted in burnout.

These findings are also supported by a study conducted by Maslach et al. (2001; Demerouti et al., 2001), that found burnout on the one hand to be related to job demands such as work overload and emotional demands and on the other hand, job resources is related to job control, availability of feedback and learning opportunities.

Therefore the key factors of work engagement of employees within an organisation may depend on the availability of growth opportunities in the job, such as variety and autonomy which all play an intrinsic motivational role. Extrinsic motivational factors include advancement and organisational support such as the relationship with the supervisor, information communication, participation and role clarity (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2010).

Research conducted by Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) on academics at a higher education institution found job resources to have a strong impact on work engagement which found that when they were not provided with sufficient job resources, in the long-term they would withdraw themselves from their work and resulted in reduced motivation and commitment to their work and the organisation. Employees are not able to achieve their goals in the absence of adequate resources which will reduce their ability to effectively deal with high job demands (Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006) and start to defend themselves against resource loss by becoming disengaged in their jobs (Hobfoll, 1998).



## **Burnout**

The results of this study show there is a direct and significant relationship between burnout and work engagement. This suggest that employees within the public sector do experience burnout, however some more than others. Research conducted by Maslach et al. (2008), states that burnout occurs at an individual level which involves an internal psychological experience of the person's feeling, attitudes, motives and expectations and that it is a negative experience. These negative experiences are caused by concerns for problems, distress, discomfort and or negative consequences (Maslach et al., 2008). Burnout is a psychological condition that develops gradually over time and may remain unnoticed for a long time by the individual (Rothmann et al., 2005).

According to Coetzer and Rothmann (2007), job demands should not necessarily be viewed as negative but for some individuals it may turn into stressors when they are faced with demands that require much more effort and therefore they may respond negatively and experience anxiety, burnout and even depression. The exertion of more effort and use of higher levels of energy may lead to individuals feeling drained of their energy. This may result in exhaustion and mental withdrawal as coping strategy (Maslach, 1993). As a result of the mental withdrawal, the individual's levels of work engagement decreases (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Research by Jonker and Joubert (2009) found that the costs associated with burnout could have potentially serious consequences. It could lead to a decline in the quality of service that employees provide and may also contribute to job turnover, absenteeism, low morale and job dissatisfaction. Furthermore, their findings has also shown that employees who are in the service-type professions are more likely to be predisposed to burnout because of the intense demands placed on them through the constant person-to-person contact and interaction with people on a daily basis (Jonker & Joubert, 2009). These findings are supported by Maslach et al., (1996) which showed that burnout may be caused by high job demands and a lack of job resources that eventually could lead to adversities such as physical illness, staff turnover and absenteeism. Research conducted by Wong and Tay (2010) found burnt-out employees show signs of exhaustion characterised by low levels of energy, cynicism and are less involved in their work and are less productive.

However, not all employees experience burnout to the extent of other employees. Research conducted by Nelson and Simmons, (2003); Schaufeli and Bakker, (2001) found that some individuals do not develop burnout, irrespective of the presence of high job demands and



long working hours, however, they find pleasure in working hard and dealing with demanding tasks.

### **5.3.2 HYPOTHESIS RELATED TO WORK ENGAGEMENT, BURNOUT, JOB DEMANDS AND JOB RESOURCES IN TERMS OF BIOGRAPHICAL VARIABLES**

#### **5.3.2.1 Marital status**

This study has found significant differences in burnout and job demands resources based on marital status. More particularly, it was found that married individuals experience less burnout than those who were single, divorced or widowed. Separated/divorced individuals also experienced higher levels of job demands and resources than single participants.

The findings may suggest that married individuals experience less burnout symptoms which may be due to the existence of a supportive system, for example being able to their share stressful experiences caused by work-related strain with a spouse who they can rely for support. In support of this finding, research conducted amongst the general Finnish population by Ahola, Honkonen, Isometsa, Kalimo, Nykyri, Koskinen, Aromaa & Lonnqvist (2006), found that married or co-habiting men had less burnout symptoms than men who were single, divorced or widowed. This may indicate the important role social support plays, and further points out the valuable resource that family is as being a factor which may counteract the symptoms of burnout (Ahola et al., 2005).

Maslach and Jackson (1985) also investigated the role of gender and family variables in burnout of public contact employees in a federal service agency. Their findings showed that there were consistent lower scores for burnout for married employees than for non-married

employees, that is, single, divorced or widowed. Their study also found that employees who were not married displayed more dissatisfaction with their job (Maslach & Jackson, 1985).

These findings are also supported by a study conducted by Maslach, Schaufeli et al. (2001) that unmarried people (especially men) seem to be more susceptible to burnout compared with those who are married and singles seem to experience even higher burnout levels than those who are divorced. Gallup also observed a difference between single employees and those who are married in that married employees tend to have higher levels of engagement which may be contributed to the fact that they are more settled in both their personal and professional lives (Truss, Soane, Edwards, Wisdom, Croll & Burnett (2006).

The role of job resources is crucial particularly for the employees' level of work engagement must not be underestimated. It is thus important for employees to have a certain amount of autonomy or control in their jobs for example being able to make decisions in how to carry out their work, and influencing how their work should be done and so forth (Mostert, 2006). Employees who feel that they have sufficient support from their supervisors and colleagues such as being listened to, having good working relations and being helped to get the job done, will be more engaged in their work (Mostert 2006).

### **5.3.2.2 Tenure**

This study found that there are statistically significant differences between some tenure groups and work engagement, burnout, as well as job demands resources. Particularly, it was found that individuals with more years of service experience more work engagement as well as burnout compared to those with less years of service. Individuals with more years of

service also experienced higher levels of job demands and resources than those with less years of service.

The findings may suggest that some individuals who have been with the organisation for longer, experience burnout more than others because they have been exposed to unfavourable conditions or the working environment for long periods of time. These findings are supported by research conducted by Montero-Marin, Garcia-Campayo, Fajo-Pascual, Carrasco, Gascon, Gili and Mayoral-Cleries (2011) that found length of service was a significant factor related to burnout. Their study found that employees with four and sixteen years of service in the organisation and those with more than sixteen years of service were at greater risk of developing the 'worn-out' profile compared to those with less than four years of service. Therefore employees with more years of service were at greater risk of developing burnout than those with fewer years of service Montero-Marin et al., (2011). These unfavourable conditions or lack of job resources and increased job demands may have caused them to become cynical towards their work, the people with whom they work as well as their clients.

Those individuals with longer years of service who experience higher levels of work engagement may be due to the fact that they have gained an insurmountable amount of working experience, feel competent in what they are doing, have moved up in the organisation which may makes them feel some degree of personal achievement.

Furthermore, Marin et al., 2011 posits that their findings suggest that the prolonged exposure to the environment provided by the organisation turned out to be a significant risk factor for developing the feeling of helplessness and employees with this profile adopt a passive coping strategy which results in becoming ineffective in their performance of work tasks and feel guilty because they do not fulfil the responsibilities of their post. This finding is also

supported by Ahola et al., (2001) which states that age or work experience may not be the actual cause of burnout but the passage of time emphasises the increasing nature of work stress problems in modern work life.

### **5.3.2.3 Job status**

This study has found significant differences in work engagement, burnout and job demands resources based on job status. It was found that middle managers experienced higher levels of job demands and resources than first-level supervisors and non-managerial employees.

This finding is supported by a study conducted by Towers Perrin (2003 as cited in Kular, Gaenby, Rees, Soane & Truss 2008) which found a trend across industries in terms of job level (senior executive, director/manager, supervisor/foreman, specialist/professional, non-management salaried and non-management hourly) to industry category (non-profit, high tech, heavy manufacturing, insurance, pharmaceuticals, hospital and finance/banking).

These findings may be indicative that senior managers experience higher levels of work engagement due to the fact that they have more autonomy in terms of the way their work is to be performed. They also have more power to make decisions because of their position.

Towers Perrin (2003 as cited in Kular, Gaenby, Rees, Soane & Truss 2008) found that across the job segments, each had only a small group of highly engaged individuals, a slightly larger disengaged group with the majority in a 'moderately engaged group (Kular et al., 2008).

Interesting to note is that senior executives were found to be more highly engaged than the other groups and were less likely to be disengaged, this may be linked to factors such as

income level which may not be the only contributor. More influential factors may be role characteristics, such as challenge, authority, autonomy, stimulation, access to information, resources and growth opportunities which may increase engagement levels (Kular, 2008).

Middle managers on the other hand find themselves between senior managers and first-level supervisors and non-managerial employees. They need to make sure that the work gets done by the levels below them. It is therefore important that senior managers are able to communicate clear goals and objectives, share information, mentor and coach middle managers to delegate authority properly and develop their skills.

In the light of the above, when the first-level supervisors and non-managerial employees are not adequately skilled or incapable of getting the job done, pressure for middle managers are increased because operational pressures increase. It is therefore important that middle managers are provided with adequate job resources such as growth opportunities, support from their supervisors and co-workers, increased control and autonomy, participation in decision-making and so forth. Provision of sufficient job resources will therefore increase the work engagement of middle managers. In addition, when first-level supervisors and non-managerial employees are able to perform optimally in their jobs it may lighten the work load of middle managers which may decrease the chance of them developing burnout.

Kular et al. (2008), further reports that lower levels of engagement have been found among the hourly workers who have less control or influence over their jobs and work experience (Kular 2008). Ahola et al., (2005) found that employees in higher positions can affect and change their circumstances and the rules of their work situations, whereas employees in lower levels in the hierarchy cannot.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

This study contributed to the existing body of knowledge concerning work engagement. Yet, equally important, areas of limitation are noteworthy.

A possible limitation to this study could be that participants were not honest in answering the questions because of a fear of being exposed or victimised within their working environment. However, the issue of confidentiality has been addressed by describing the process of the procedure of the research in the informed consent form. This reassured participants that their identities would be kept anonymous.

Although acceptable, the method of convenience sampling could have introduced elements of biasness by respondents who participated in the research. A greater return rate of the results of the online questionnaire could have increased the strength of the results. The method (emailing the web-based questionnaires) used may have contributed to the low response rate.

Although the response rate was acceptable, web-based surveys do elicit a lower response rate than paper-and-pencil surveys. This could have limited the generalisability of the findings to other contexts.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTHER RESEARCH**

Future research on work engagement should explore the impact of personal resources, such as resilience, locus of control, self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem. The theories previously discussed in this study also postulate that depending on the individual circumstances, such as level within the organisation, different factors increase work engagement levels for different

individuals. Therefore, factors which enhance or decrease the work engagement levels of individuals may differ from one individual to the other as well as the individual's use of different personal resources when faced with high job demands (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007b).

Furthermore, future research could incorporate a qualitative approach as part of a quantitative focus. Qualitative interviews could add value as it may allow for a better understanding and views of different people.

Stratified random sampling as opposed to convenience sampling could be used as a sampling technique for future research. According to Sekaran (2003) stratified random sampling could enhance external validity and reduce sampling erroneoususness of future research. Additionally, stratified random sampling also presents greater reliability (Anastasi, 1990). Cooper and Schindler (2003) maintain that this technique increases the efficiency of sample statistics, sufficient data is provided in the analyses of diverse subpopulations as well as facilitating the usage of various research techniques and procedures in different strata. Stratified random sampling could have been made relevant for study in making comparisons between for example, the various job levels namely, top management, senior management, middle-management, first level supervisors and non-supervisory levels.

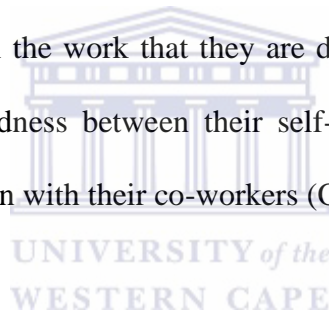
## **5.6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The central purpose of this study was to determine the levels of work engagement and burnout of employees in the public sector.

The following specific empirical findings emerged from the investigation in terms of the stated research hypotheses.

- There is a statistically significant and direct correlation between work engagement and job demands resources.
- There is a statistically significant and direct correlation between burnout and job demands resources.
- There is a statistically significant relationship and direct correlation between work engagement and burnout.

Khan (1990) maintains that people can use varying degrees of themselves, physically, emotionally and cognitively in the work that they perform. Therefore, employees who are engaged in their work are physically involved, are cognitively alert and become connected to others in the service of work that they are doing. The occurrence of psychological meaningfulness for employees in the work that they are doing makes them feel valued and useful and they feel a connectedness between their self-concept and work-role fit which creates an interpersonal interaction with their co-workers (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007).



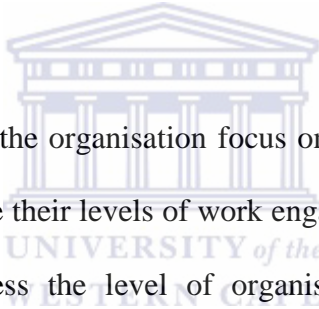
Furthermore, employees who have trusting and supporting relationships with co-workers and supervisors and flexibility in behavioural norms without being fearful of negative consequences have a sense of psychological safety in their working environments (Khan, 1990). Therefore work-role fit and good co-worker and supervisor relationships are two main factors contributing to higher levels of work engagement of employees within an organisation. This contributes further to their ability to express their values and beliefs in the context of their working environment (Shamir, 1991).

Organisations should also ensure that they provide the physical, emotional and psychological resources to their employees which would facilitate the engagement of employees in their



work (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007). This would have a positive effect on employees' ability to be more ready and able to engage in their work roles and have a lesser degree of burnout.

Employees in organisations are likely to experience burnout when job stress becomes chronic when high job demands are exceeded by the availability of job resources (Rothmann & Malan, 2011; Rothmann, 2008). Emotional exhaustion may be the first sign of the burnout syndrome and may involve a lack of energy and feelings of emotional drain. Organisations may intervene by increasing job resources availability namely, supervisors providing feedback to subordinates, allowing space for personal growth, and support from co-workers, and participating in decision-making processes, have all shown to have a positive impact on work engagement (van den Berg et al., 2008).



It is therefore recommended that the organisation focus on attending to the job resources of the employees in order to improve their levels of work engagement. As a point of departure, it would be beneficial to address the level of organisational support in terms of the relationship that employees experience with their superiors, clarity with regards to their job descriptions, feedback that they receive in terms of improving on their performance in the job and the degree of participation they are allowed in decision-making processes (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Other beneficial exercises would include giving employees increased access to information, provide growth opportunities for employees which may increase their variety in their work tasks, create learning opportunities and foster independence. Management's role in paying attention to the influence of relationships and behaviours experienced by employees at work are important indicators of employees' intentions to stay with the organisation. It is therefore important that employees are made to feel a sense of belonging in the organisation, have

trusting relationships with supervisors and co-workers and given the autonomy to make their own decisions (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

Organisations have the ability to make the working environment less stressful for their employees by implementing preventive organisation-based solutions to address the problems (Rothmann et al., 2005). Training and development programmes that are aimed at equipping employees with coping strategies to deal with stress should be implemented.

Another effective intervention for organisations may to embark on job design or redesign of especially middle-management jobs which may provide middle managers with more autonomy and freedom as well as career management interventions, which may create more opportunities for employees to contribute (Bakker & Leiter, 2010).

If the organisation wishes to benefit in terms of building a positive organisation and retain talent, it should adopt empowerment behaviour in its management style (Mendes & Stander, 2011). Development was found to be the strongest aspects of leader empowering behaviour related to retaining and preventing intention to quit. According to Mendes and Stander (2001) it is important that managers are coached and developed to delegate authority, hold employees accountable for outcomes, lead by example, encourage subordinates, show concern for others' feelings, allow participative decision-making, share information and coach and mentor people. This finding is also supported by Schalkwyk et al., (2010) which indicates that leaders in the organisation should incorporate empowerment behaviours in their management style and practice and attention should be focused on delegation of authority, responsibility for outcomes, self-directed decision-making, skill development and coaching for innovative performance.

Leaders have a special role to play in fostering healthy functioning individuals, teams and organisations, as transformational leadership can contribute successfully to this (Bakker, 2010). According to Bakker (2010) it is important from a management point of view to pay close attention to happiness at work, as they (managers) will benefit from well-functioning employees and simultaneously enhance the prospect of future resourcefulness. In view of this, organisations will more likely see results by fostering positive emotions instead of only paying attention to negative emotions and dealing with problems (Bakker, 2010).

## **5.7 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

Effective human resource and management practices should have a strong focus on people as it can have a significant impact on improvements in employee productivity, satisfaction and organisational performance. Furthermore, organisations have to view work engagement as a broad and all-encompassing organisational strategy where all levels within the organisation are involved in and committed to. Organisations must take more effective steps at helping employees cope with their demands, mobilise their resources, stay healthy and perform well.

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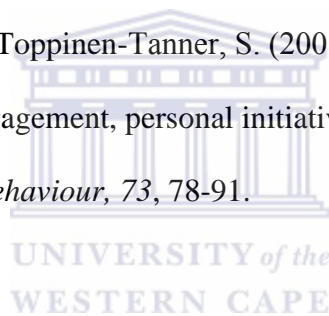
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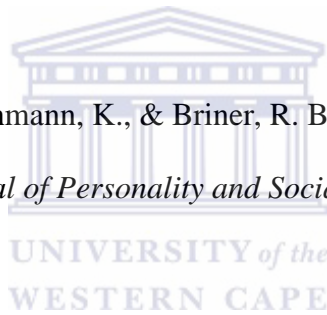
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# APPENDIX



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## WORK ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT

JOB RESOURCES, JOB DEMANDS, BURNOUT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Thank you for taking the time to complete this on-line survey.

The purpose of this exercise is to examine the impact of job resources and job demands on burnout and work engagement of employees in the public sector. Based on the findings, certain recommendations will be made with the intention of enhancing work engagement of employees within the public sector.

The questionnaire is to be completed online and should not take longer than 15-20 minutes. You are not required to disclose your name or any other personal information and all the data will be kept completely anonymous.

If you have any queries regarding this survey or any of its items, please contact Nadia Meyer on 082 771 0945 / 021 466 9714 / [nadia.chandley@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:nadia.chandley@pgwc.gov.za)

Thank you in advance for your participation.

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I have read the introduction to this research study and agree to participate anonymously.

- Yes
  - No
- 

### Age

- 20 to 29
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- Over 60
- Other (please specify):



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### Gender

- Male
  - Female
- 

### Ethnicity

- African Black
  - Coloured
  - Indian/Asian
  - White
  - Other
-

**Marital status**

- Married
- Single
- Widowed
- Divorced or separated
- Other

**Tenure (years in the public sector)**

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- Over 10

**Job status**

- Top management
- Middle management
- First-level supervisor
- Non managerial

**Directions:** The following statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide how frequently you feel this way about your job.

	Never	Sometimes	Average	Often	Very often
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time flies when I'm at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am working, I forget about everything else around me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I get up in the morning, I forget everything else around me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel happy when I am working intensely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the work that I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel used up at the end of the workday.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working all day is really a strain for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel burned out from my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am making an effective contribution to what this organisation does.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have become less interested in my work since I started this job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have become less enthusiastic about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my opinion, I am good at my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel exhilarated when I accomplish something at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



I have become more cynical about whether my job contributes anything.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I doubt the significance of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my work, I feel confident that I am effective at getting things done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am immersed in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can continue working for very long periods at a time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To me, my job is challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get carried away when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate the extent to which you experience the following in your current work situation.

	Never	Sometimes	Average	Often	Vary often
Do you have too much work to do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you work under time pressure?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have to be attentive to many things at the same time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have to give continuous attention to your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have to remember many things in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you confronted in your work with things that affect you personally?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have contact with difficult people in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Does your work put you in emotionally upsetting situations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have enough variety in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your job offer you opportunities for personal growth and development?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your job give you the feeling that you can achieve something?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your job offer you the possibility of independent thought and action?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have the freedom in carrying out your work activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have influence in the planning of your work activities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you participate in the decision about when a piece of work must be completed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you count on your colleagues when you come across difficulties in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If necessary, can you ask your colleagues for help?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get on well with your colleagues?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you count on your supervisor when you come across difficulties in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you get on well with your supervisor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In your work, do you feel appreciated by your supervisor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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Do you know exactly what other people expect of you in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know exactly for what you are responsible?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know exactly what your direct supervisor thinks of your performance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you receive sufficient information on the purpose of your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you receive sufficient information on the results of your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your direct supervisor inform you about important issues within your department / organisation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you adequately kept up-to-date about important issues within your organisation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is the decision-making process of your organisation clear to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is it clear to you to whom you should address within the organisation for specific problems?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you discuss work problems with your direct supervisor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you participate in decisions about the nature of your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have a direct influence on your organisation's decisions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you need to be more secure that you will still be working in one year's time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Do you need to be more secure that you will keep your current job in the next year?

Do you need to be more secure that next year you will keep the same function level as currently?

Do you think that your organisation pays good salaries?

Can you live comfortably on your pay?

Do you think you are paid enough for the work that you do?

Does your job offer you the possibility to progress financially?

Does your job give you opportunities to follow training courses?

Does your job give you the opportunity to be promoted?



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