

# **BURNOUT AND ENGAGEMENT OF NON-PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **DEDICATION**

## **SOLI DEO GLORIA**

**“alles wat ek is, is net Genade—  
alles wat ek het, is net geleen”**  
Na die woorde van Koos du Plessis

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“Slegs met Sy triomfantelike almag en liefde is hierdie studie voltooi”.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	vi
Summary	viii
Opsomming	xi
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 Problem statement	1
1.2 Research objectives	8
1.2.1 General aim	8
1.2.2 Specific objectives	8
1.3 Research method	8
1.3.1 Research design	8
1.3.2 Study population	9
1.3.3 Measuring instruments	9
1.4 Statistical analysis	11
1.5 Overview of chapters	15
1.6 Chapter summary	16
References	17
<b>CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH ARTICLE 1</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH ARTICLE 2</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH ARTICLE 3</b>	<b>90</b>

**CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1	Conclusions	154
6.2	Limitations of this research	158
6.3	Recommendations	160
6.3.1	Recommendations for organisations	160
6.3.2	Recommendations for future research	163
	References	167

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figures</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
	<b>Research Article 2</b>	
Figure 1	Maximum likelihood estimates for the Burnout Model	77
	<b>Research Article 4</b>	
Figure 1	Maximum likelihood estimates for the Work Engagement Model	143

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Research Article 1</b>		
Table 1	Characteristics of the participants	36
Table 2	Goodness-of-fit statistics for the hypothesised MBI-HSS model	41
Table 3	Goodness-of-fit statistics for Model 2	42
Table 4	Goodness-of-fit statistics for Model 3	43
Table 5	Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the MBI-HSS.	43
<b>Research Article 2</b>		
Table 1	Characteristics of the participants	66
Table 2	Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the MBI-HSS, orientation to life and counselling experiences.	71
Table 3	Product-moment correlation coefficients between burnout, sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences.	72
Table 4	Results of the canonical analysis: stressors and burnout.	73
Table 5	Standard multiple regression with emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation as dependent variables (DV) and job demands, job resources, emotional exhaustion and sense of coherence as independent variables (IV)	75

## LIST OF TABLES (continued)

<b>Table</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Research Article 3</b>		
Table 1	Characteristics of the participants	101
Table 2	Goodness-of-fit statistics for the hypothesised 3-factor UWES Model.	106
Table 3	Goodness-of-fit statistics for the hypothesised 1 factor UWES Model.	107
Table 4	Goodness-of-fit statistics for Model 2 of the UWES 1-factor Structure	108
Table 5	Goodness-of-fit statistics for model 3 of the UWES 1-factor Structure	108
Table 6	Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the UWES	109
<b>Research Article 4</b>		
Table 1	Characteristics of the participants	132
Table 2	Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the UWES, MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ.	138
Table 3	Product-moment correlations between sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences, burnout and engagement.	139
Table 4	Regression analysis of work engagement with sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences.	141

## SUMMARY

**Topic:** Burnout and engagement of non-professional counsellors in South Africa

**Key terms:** Burnout, trauma, stress, secondary traumatic stress, violence, job demands, job resources, voluntary counselling, work engagement, positive psychology, social support, coping, reliability, construct validity.

Counselling services as provided by non-professional counsellors have been in place for a number of decades. Counselling traumatised people demands a significant amount of emotional investment from the counsellor. A neglected area as far as non-professional counsellors in South Africa is concerned, is the well-being of the counsellors. Burnout as well as its antithesis, work engagement, are two possible transactional outcomes impacting on the well-being of these counsellors. The measurement of burnout and work engagement requires valid and reliable measuring instruments. The dearth of research studies in the area of burnout and work engagement, together with the unique contribution of non-professional counsellors in organisational settings, has led to the primary focus of this study being the exploration of the experience of this group of counsellors doing trauma counselling in financial institutions in South Africa.

A lack of norms for the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) for non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling makes the identification of burnout and work engagement within this specialist environment difficult. Consequently, investigating the reliability and validity of the MBI-HSS and the UWES would result in the standardisation of these specific measuring instruments, therefore contributing to the identification of burnout and work engagement with non-professional trauma counsellors. Some of the factors that could play a role in the prevalence of burnout and work engagement are secondary traumatic stress, the demands of counselling, lack of resources, personal consequences, social support and sense of coherence.

The objectives of this research were to standardise the MBI-HSS and UWES for non-professional counsellors as well as to develop and test a causal model of burnout and work engagement for this specialist group.

The research method involved four separate articles, each consisting of a brief literature overview and an empirical study. A cross-sectional design, whereby a sample is drawn from a population at a particular point in time, was used. The data for this study was collected from 168 non-professional counsellors, employed by three of the major banks in South Africa. The MBI-HSS, UWES, Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ) as well as a Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) and a biographical questionnaire were administered. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, correlations, canonical analysis, and structural equation modelling were used.

Structural equation modelling confirmed a three-factor model of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment). In contrast with research findings confirming the three-factor model of the UWES (vigour, dedication and absorption), a one-factor model for the UWES was confirmed for non-professional counsellors. The internal consistency of the scales for the MBI-HSS and UWES was found to be satisfactory and in line with reported findings in the literature.

Structural equation analysis showed that the lack of resources and job demands predicted the core of burnout, namely emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. The conflicts and pressures that are already associated with the everyday work of non-professional counsellors are likely to be magnified by the counselling role. Non-professional counsellors continually face conflicts created by the fact that they are accountable to large organisations, but professionally, ethically and morally devoted to their clients (the victims of trauma who are being counselled by them). They must balance the competing, and sometimes opposing demands of several parties such as trauma victims, employees, families and communities. To add to these circumstances it is important to remember that counselling is not the main job objective of the non-professional counsellors. Counselling is seen as an “add-on” to their job description and is in most instances not part of their performance measurement/assessment.

Work engagement was related to low burnout scores, while personal accomplishment was associated with work engagement. High sense of coherence had a mediating effect on burnout

and a positive effect on work engagement. This study seems to emphasise that job demands have a more negative effect on engagement when sense of coherence is low than when sense of coherence is high. Conversely, it is assumed that sense of coherence provides functions such as increased perception of coping capacity or minimised stress appraised, which decreases the effects of stress on an individual.

Recommendations for the organisations and future research were made.

## OPSOMMING

**Onderwerp:** Uitbranding en werksbegeestering van nie-professionele beraders in Suid-Afrika.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Uitbranding, trauma, spanning, sekondêre traumatiese spanning, werkseise, werks hulpbronne, vrywillige berading, werksbegeestering, positiewe sielkunde, sosiale ondersteuning, coping, betroubaarheid, konstruktiviteit.

Beradingsdienste soos verskaf deur nie-professionele beraders bestaan reeds vir 'n aantal dekades. Berading van getraumatiseerde mense vereis 'n merkbare hoeveelheid emosionele investering van die berader. Een van die studiegebiede ten opsigte van nie-professionele beraders in Suid-Afrika wat op hierdie stadium nog nie veel aandag gekry het nie, is die welstand van hierdie beraders. Psigiese uitbranding, asook die teenpool daarvan, werksbegeestering, is twee moontlike transaksionele uitkomstes wat die welstand van beraders beïnvloed. Die meting van uitbranding en werksbegeestering vereis geldige en betroubare meetinstrumente. Die gebrek aan navorsing op die gebied van uitbranding en werksbegeestering asook die unieke bydrae van nie-professionele beraders in die organisatoriese omgewing, het aanleiding gegee tot die primêre fokus van hierdie studie, te wete die verkenning van die ondervindinge van beraders wat traumaberading in finansiële instellings in Suid Afrika doen.

'n Gebrek aan norme vir die Maslach Uitbrandingsvraelys – Menslike Dienste-opname (MBI-HSS) en die Utrecht-werksbegeesteringskaal (UWES) vir nie-professionele beraders wat trauma berading doen, veroorsaak dat die identifisering van werksuitbranding en werksbegeestering binne hierdie spesialisomgewing moeilik plaasvind. Gevolglik sal ondersoeke in verband met die betroubaarheid en geldigheid tot die standaardisering van die spesifieke meetinstrumente lei, waardeur 'n bydrae gelewer word tot identifisering van werksuitbranding en werksbegeestering van nie-professionele traumaberaders. Faktore wat 'n rol kan speel in uitbranding en werksbegeestering sluit onder andere die volgende in: sekondêre traumatiese stres, eise van berading, 'n tekort aan hulpbronne, persoonlike gevolge, sosiale ondersteuning en lewensoriëntasie.

Die doel van die navorsing was om die MBI-HSS en UWES vir nie-professionele beraders te standaardiseer, asook om 'n oorsaaklike model van werksuitbranding en werksbegeestering vir hierdie spesialisgroep te ontwikkel.

Die navorsingsmetode het bestaan uit vier afsonderlike artikels wat 'n kort literatuuroorsig en empiriese ondersoek by elke artikel insluit. 'n Dwarssnee opname-ontwerp, waardeur 'n steekproef van die populasie op 'n sekere tydstip getrek word, is gebruik. Die inligting vir hierdie studie is verkry vanaf 168 nie-professionele beraders werkzaam in drie van die vernaamste bankgroepe in Suid-Afrika. Die MBI-HSS, UWES, Lewensoriëntasievraelys (OLQ) asook 'n selfevalueringsvraelys en 'n biografiese vraelys is afgeneem. Beskrywende statistiek, variansie-analise, korrelasies, kanoniese analise en strukturele vergelykingsmodelle is gebruik.

Strukturele vergelykingsmodellering het 'n drie-faktor oplossing vir die MBI-HSS (Emosionele Uitputting, Depersonalisasie en Persoonlike Bereiking) opgelewer. In teenstelling met navorsingsbevindings wat 'n drie-faktor model vir die UWES (Energie, Toewyding en Absorpsie) bevestig, is 'n een-faktor model van die UWES vir nie-professionele beraders bevestig. Voldoende interne konsekwentheid van die MBI-HSS en UWES skale, in ooreenstemming met ander navorsingbevindings in die literatuur, is gevind.

Strukturele vergelykingsmodellering het aangetoon dat 'n tekort aan hulpbronne en die vereistes van die werk die kern van werksuitbranding (emosionele uitputting en depersonalisasie) voorspel. Die konflikte wat bestaan en druk waarmee nie-professionele beraders in hulle alledaagse werksituasie mee gekonfronteer word, word deur hulle beradingsrol vergroot. Nie-professionele beraders word deurlopend gekonfronteer met die feit dat hulle 'n werksverantwoordelikheid teenoor die organisasie vir wie hulle werk het, maar ook professioneel, eties en moreel aan hulle kliënte (die slagoffers van trauma, wat deur die beraders bygestaan word) verantwoordelik is. Die beraders moet die kompeterende en soms konflikterende vereistes van verskeie partye soos byvoorbeeld die trauma slagoffers, werknemers, families en gemeenskappe kan balanseer en hanteer. Om die rol nog meer te kompliseer, is dit belangrik om daarop te let dat berading nie die kernrol van 'n nie-professionele berader is nie. Berading word gesien as 'n toevoeging tot die werklike

posbeskrywing van die berader en is in die meeste gevalle nie deel van hulle prestasiebeoordeling nie.

Werksbegeestering het met lae uitbrandingsvlakke verband gehou, terwyl persoonlike bereiking en werksbegeestering 'n direkte verband getoon het. 'n Hoë vlak van koherensiesin het 'n negatiewe effek op werksuitbranding en 'n positiewe effek op werksbegeestering gehad. Hierdie studie het die feit beklemtoon dat persone 'n groter negatiewe invloed op begeestering het, wanneer koherensiesin laag is, in vergelyking met 'n kleiner negatiewe invloed wanneer koherensiesin hoog is. Dit word dus aanvaar dat 'n hoë vlak van koherensiesin daartoe lei dat die individu 'n groter gevoel van effektiwiteit ervaar om moeilike situasies te hanteer.

Aanbevelings vir die organisasies en voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing is aan die hand gedoen.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis researches burnout and work engagement of non-professional trauma counsellors in a South African banking environment.

In this chapter the problem statement is discussed and research objectives are set out. The research method is explained and a division of chapters is given.

#### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Counselling services as provided by non-professional counsellors have been in place for a number of decades. The utilisation of non-professional counsellors in South Africa has largely developed as a result of the increasing demand for counselling of people with HIV/Aids and their families (Ankrah, 1993; Baker & Seager, 1991; Danoff & Kopel, 1994) as well as people affected by the increase in social health problems and crime, such as drug abuse, violence and robberies (Louw, Shaw, Cameren & Robertshaw, 1998; Schlemmer, 1996) on the one hand and the limited supply of professionally trained counsellors on the other.

A number of studies have been undertaken to compare the relative effectiveness of non-professional counsellors (Collins, 1976; Hill & Corbett, 1993; Larson, Suzuki, Gillespie, Potenza, Bechtel & Toulouse, 1992). They found that non-professional counsellors produced better results than mental health professionals in terms of the client's perceptions of the effectiveness of the counselling process. This was attributed to the energy, enthusiasm and involvement displayed by these non-professional counsellors. The quality of care they provide and their ability to do so over a sustained period depends on the protection of their own well-being and morale (Bureaux 1994; Evian 2000).

Working with traumatised people and their families demands a significant amount of emotional investment from the counsellor. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) describe human service providers as a population particularly vulnerable to burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1979) concluded that those who do "people work" and spend a considerable time with

clients under conditions of chronic stress and tension often show signs of emotional, physical and occupation exhaustion. It is further accompanied by an array of helplessness and hopelessness, disillusionment, negative self-concept, negative attitudes towards work, people and life itself (Cherniss, 1980; Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980; Keane, Du Cette & Adler, 1985; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). All these factors contribute to possible work stress and burnout of the non-professional counsellor (Edwards & Talbot, 1994). The consequences of burnout are potentially serious for counsellors and the client with whom they interact. Maslach and Jackson (1986) stated that burnout could lead to deterioration in the quality of service that is provided by the counsellors. It can also have negative effects on the non-professional counsellor's health and job performance (Maslach, 1982). Taking into account the shortage of counselling services in South Africa, the drop-out rate of non-professional counsellors because of workload as well as the high cost in training and supporting these counsellors, research regarding burnout of non-professional counsellors is relevant.

The term *burnout* was first coined by Freudenberger in 1974 (Ursprung, 1986). Freudenberger had noticed in himself and some of his colleagues a syndrome of behavioural and somatic disturbances including a wide range of symptoms. He defined burnout as to fail or wear out due to job demands (Freudenberger, 1974). Some behavioural changes he noted in individuals he called burnt-out included withdrawing from social contact outside of work, workaholicism, having a quick temper, suspiciousness, rigidity, cynicism, overconfidence, alcoholism, stubbornness, paranoia, and/or feelings of omnipotence. A burnt-out person may also experience headaches, fatigue, exhaustion, insomnia, and/or gastrointestinal disturbances. Freudenberger further noted that people who were initially the most committed to their positions seemed to be the most likely to suffer from burnout.

Since the term was coined in 1974, interest in burnout has mushroomed (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). In his 1986 review, Ursprung showed that research on burnout has been done on a variety of occupations, including those of teachers, police officers, physicians, counsellors, nurses, social workers, child care workers and group home workers. Cordes and Dougherty (1993) suggested that the study of burnout has focused on the helping professions but that future research should aim to study burnout in all types of occupations. The existence of more current articles from the business literature (Maslach, 1993; Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993) suggests that there is a growing recognition that burnout is not limited to the helping professions.

As interest in the burnout syndrome grew, researchers refined the concept of burnout. A number of definitions existed during the mid- to late-1970s; it appears that researchers disagreed about the exact nature of burnout. Periman and Hartman (1982) reviewed 48 articles and listed each definition of burnout used. These definitions varied greatly. Loss of commitment at work (Maslach, 1982); exhaustion (Maslach, 1993); fatigue and boredom (Freudenberger, 1975); inappropriate attitudes towards clients and self (Maslach, 1982), role conflict (Friedlander, Keller, Peca-Baker & Olk, 1986) and total emotional and physical exhaustion (Maslach & Leiter, 1997) are some examples of the variety of ideas that researchers had about burnout. However, as more research studies were conducted, one particular definition, proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1986), emerged as the standard in most studies (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Kahill, 1988; Ursprung 1986).

Maslach and Jackson (1986) considered burnout to be a syndrome that results from job stress, usually in jobs involving a lot of work with people. According to Maslach and Jackson, this syndrome has three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and lack of personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is a feeling of being depleted emotionally, and of no longer having emotional resources to share with others. Depersonalisation refers to feeling negative and cynical about the people with whom one works. Lack of personal accomplishment entails unhappiness and dissatisfaction with one's own performance. Maslach and Jackson (1986) stressed that burnout is most appropriately understood by examining the degree to which an individual exhibits each of the three components rather than an overall level of burnout. Since prior studies have reported that healthcare professions require high levels of commitment and interpersonal involvement (Beaton & Murphy, 1995; Maslach, 1982) it is conceivable that non-professional counsellors are at greater risk for occupational burnout.

Based on their definition of burnout, Maslach and Jackson (1986) developed an instrument to measure the syndrome. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is now the most widely accepted burnout measure and is used in nearly all empirical research regarding burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Kahill, 1988; Ursprung, 1986). Since Maslach and Jackson conceptualised burnout as a continuous variable with three components, present to some degree in everyone, the MBI evaluates the degree of the components of burnout rather than their presence or absence (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Each component of the original MBI was assessed in terms of frequency and intensity. The second, most current edition assesses

only frequency of the components due to reported high correlations between frequency and intensity of each scale (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

Although the instrument most widely used to measure burnout – the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) – was originally designed for use in human services (Maslach & Leiter, 1997), no evidence could be found in literature of cases where the MBI was used to determine the level of burnout of non-professional counsellors in South Africa. Therefore the first research problem is that the MBI is not validated and standardised for non-professional counsellors in South Africa. In order to assess the levels of burnout of non-professional counsellors in various demographic groups the MBI needs to be validated and standardised.

Possible causes of burnout can be classified into personality characteristics, work-related attitudes, and work and organisational characteristics (Rothmann, Malan & Rothmann, 2001). Richardson and Burke (1995) argue that one of the major challenges in burnout research is to integrate research findings into a coherent and comprehensive framework that constantly and reliably reflects the dynamics of the burnout process in a variety of work settings. They also mention that a comprehensive model of burnout has to a) incorporate various individual and organisational variables that constitute sources of stress and demands leading to burnout and b) incorporate consequences of burnout in terms of personal, work-related and organisational outcomes. In a study done by Bennett, Ross and Sunderland (1996) with HIV/Aids volunteers, the MBI was used to determine burnout among these volunteers. Correlation data indicated that a lack of training and an absence of personal effectiveness are both independently associated with burnout frequencies.

Leiter (1989), like others (Maslach, 1978, 1982; Pines & Aronson, 1988), finds that demands in the work environment lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to feelings of depersonalisation. In a study with 148 human service supervisors and managers, Cordes and Dougherty (1993) found that emotional exhaustion is a direct function of demographic characteristics (including age) and job demands, (including role stress and time spent interacting with clients and subordinates). The demographic variable of gender, age and work experience has been investigated as potential correlates (Greenglass & Burke 1989; Whitehead, 1987) with age being most consistently related to burnout, especially emotional burnout. Younger and less experienced individuals may be more susceptible to emotional exhaustion because they have yet to learn effective means of coping with work demands

(Maslach, 1982). As far as job demands are concerned Hellman and Morrison (1987) found that therapists working with very disturbed patients in institutional settings experienced greater energy depletion and self-doubt than did therapists working with less disturbed patients in private settings.

There is a growing body of theoretical and empirical literature that recognises that engaging in counselling work with traumatised people can, and does, impact on the therapist (Beaton & Murphy, 1995; Figley, 1995, 1998; Maslach, 1997; Maslach & Jackson, 1984). Stamm (1995) indicates that people can be traumatised without actually being physically harmed or threatened with harm. Instead, they can be traumatised simply by learning about the traumatic incident. The people who are at risk of being traumatised in this way are the significant others of the primary victim and include family, friends, community, work colleagues and helping professions who assist the primary victim (Figley & Kleber, 1995). Working directly with victims and survivors of catastrophic events poses a psychological threat to the caregiver (Jones, 1987). Over the last decade, secondary traumatic stress, more commonly known as compassion fatigue, has been recognised as a major risk for non-professional counsellors. Compassion fatigue is therefore seen as a form of burnout that manifests itself as physical and emotional exhaustion (Figley, 1995; Stamm, 1997).

Because of the possible presence of burnout among non-professional counsellors and its negative consequences, it is important to try to pinpoint the factors involved in non-professional counsellor burnout so interventions can be made to alleviate these effects. From a human resource management perspective, combating burnout would be one way to increase the effectiveness of non-professional counsellors. Furthermore, since the behaviour of counsellors has an effect on their clients, combating counsellors' burnout could also have positive effects on the traumatised clients. Finally, concern for non-professional counsellors' emotional and physical health makes this a worthy topic to explore. Therefore a greater understanding of counsellor burnout could lead to appropriate screening, training and/or programmes that could be implemented to help avoid burnout.

It is important to note that, while the information above discusses the possible negative effects one might experience when working with trauma survivors, there is also the possibility of a great sense of satisfaction. Figley (1995) describes it as "Compassion Satisfaction", which involves the development over time of a much stronger sense of

strength, confidence, meaning and respect for human resiliency. Burnout research done by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) was also extended to the more positive side of the continuum of employees' well-being. Seen from this perspective, burnout is replaced with an erosion of engagement with the job.

*Engagement* is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). *Vigour*, the opposite of mental exhaustion, relates to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to put effort into one's work and to persist even in the face of adversity. *Dedication*, the opposite pole of cynicism or depersonalisation, is characterised by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Finally *absorption* refers to a state where the individual is fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in his/her work, a state where time passes quickly and where the individual has difficulty detaching him- or herself from work. Engagement in this context is a persistent, pervasive affective-cognitive state which is not focused on a specific object, event, individual, or behaviour (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe burnout and engagement as opposite concepts that should be measured independently with different instruments. Therefore they developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and found acceptable reliability and validity for it in studies in Europe. No evidence could be found in the literature of cases where the UWES was used to measure engagement of non-professional counsellors in South Africa. This makes it difficult to assess the levels of engagement of non-professional counsellors and to compare the levels of engagement in various demographic groups. Therefore the UWES will be validated and standardised for non-professional counsellors in South Africa in this study.

In a study done by Rothmann, Malan and Rothmann (2001) with 68 pharmacists and 42 pharmacist assistants, it was found that those with a strong sense of coherence will experience less burnout. Other contributing factors to enhance engagement could be social support and sense of coherence (Rothmann, 2000; Strümpfer, 2002). A number of authors have noted that when faced with stressful situations, some individuals suffer from a number of undesirable effects, while others cope much better under the same conditions (Antonovsky, 1993; Mc Sherry & Holm, 1994; Strümpfer, 1995). This has led to a focus on models of resilience (Semmer, 1996), such as sense of coherence. Sense of coherence is a personality construct defined as a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring, though dynamic feeling of confidence that the stimuli deriving from

one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured and predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can be reasonably expected (Antonovsky, 1987; Semmer, 1996). A strong sense of coherence is also related to general well-being (Feldt, 1997) and emotional stability (Mlonzi & Strumpfer, 1998).

Despite the fact that clinicians and researchers in the counselling field have intuitively understood the implication of social support in the experience of trauma/counselling (Herman, 1992; Kleber & Brom, 1992), Flannery (1990) notes that very few studies have focussed specifically on the relationship between social support and counselling. Murphy (1988) noted that there is a lack of clarity regarding the manner in which support prevents or relieves stress. House (1981) defines social support as an interpersonal transaction involving one or more of emotional concern, instrumental aid, information and appraisal. In this conceptualisation of social support, emotional concern refers to caring trust and empathy; instrumental support incorporates practical or financial aid; information support involves the provision of information or skills which are helpful in finding solutions to a problem; and appraisal support is manifested in the feedback given to a person as evaluation of personal performance. This study will also focus on the relationship between secondary traumatic stress, coherence, biographical factors and social support as contributing factors (engagement) in retaining non-professional counsellors.

Contributions that this research could make to Industrial Psychology as a science include:

- A standardised measuring instrument for burnout of non-professional counsellors in South Africa that is reliable and valid will be developed.
- A standardised measuring instrument for engagement of non-professional counsellors in South Africa that is reliable and valid will be developed.
- Major areas that contribute to burnout and engagement of non-professional counsellors in South Africa will be defined. This can be used to predict burnout and engagement within this specific job group.

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 General aim**

The general aim of this research is to standardise the MBI-HSS and the UWES for non-professional counsellors in South Africa and to test areas that contribute to their burnout and engagement.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this study may be identified as follows:

- To determine the reliability and validity of the MBI-HSS for non-professional counsellors in South Africa.
- To determine the reliability and validity of the UWES for non-professional counsellors in South Africa.
- To develop and test a causal model (including personal and organisational variables) of burnout for non-professional counsellors in South African banks.
- To develop and test a causal model (including personal and organisational variables) of work engagement for non-professional counsellors in South African banks.

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The thesis is presented in terms of four research articles.

### **1.3.1 Research design**

A survey design is used to reach the research objectives. The specific design is a cross-sectional design, whereby a sample is drawn from a population at one time (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). Information collected is used to describe the population at that time and is appropriate for studying various groups at different stages of development (Burns & Grove, 1993). This design can also be used to assess interrelationships among variables within a

population. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997) this design is ideally suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correctional research.

Structural equation modelling is used to address the problems associated with this design (Byrne, 2001). Structural equation modelling is used to test causal models of burnout and work engagement. As such, structural equation modelling is a statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory (i.e. hypothesis-testing) approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on some phenomenon (Byrne, 2001). The term “structural equation modelling” (SEM) or covariance analysis, conveys two important aspects of the procedure:

- the causal processes under study are represented by a series of structural (i.e. regression) equations, and
- these structural relations can be pictorially represented or modelled to enable a clear conceptualisation of the theory under study.

### **1.3.2 Study population**

According to Bailey (1987), sampling entails the selection of a subset of some predetermined size from the population being studied whereby those selected will participate/respond in the study. The sample was made up of non-professional counsellors in the trauma environment. Working relations in several institutions (in this case, three of the major banks in South Africa) were established and the staff of the banks served as a database for the selection of a sample group.

### **1.3.3 Measuring instruments**

The following measurement instruments are used in the empirical study.

The *Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS)* (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) measures respondents’ relationships with their work on a continuous basis from engagement to burnout. The MBI-HSS consist of 22 items and has three subscales. The factor-analysed subscales for the MBI-HSS include: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalisation (DEP), and personal accomplishment (PA) (Maslach et al., 1996). Maslach

and Jackson (1986) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 for emotional exhaustion, 0,79 for depersonalisation and 0,71 for personal accomplishment. Maslach and Jackson (1981) also reported test-retest reliability of 0,82 for emotional exhaustion, 0,60 for depersonalisation and 0,80 for personal accomplishment as well as 0,54 to 0,60 (applied after one year), which could be regarded as acceptable. In comparison a South African study by Pretorius (1990) reported alpha coefficients of 0,89 for emotional exhaustion, 0,71 for depersonalisation and 0,79 for personal accomplishment. All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (“never”) to 6 (“daily”). High scores on EE and DEP, and low scores on PA are indicative of burnout.

The *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)* (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá and Bakker, 2002) is used to measure the levels of engagement of non-professional trauma-counsellors. The UWES measures levels of engagement on a 17-item seven-point frequency rating scale, ranging from 0 (“never”) to 6 (“every day”). Three dimensions can be distinguished, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. Engaged individuals are characterised by high levels of vigour and dedication as well as elevated levels of absorption. In terms of internal consistency, reliability coefficients for the three subscales have been determined between 0,68 and 0,91. In a study by Fourie and Rothmann (in press) with a sample of non-professional trauma counsellors ( $N = 169$ ) it was found that the Cronbach alpha coefficients ( $\alpha = 0,93$ ) was most satisfactory with a 1-factor structure of the UWES.

The *Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ)* (Antonovsky, 1987) is used to measure participants’ sense of coherence. The OLQ consists of 29 items. Antonovsky (1993) reported alpha coefficients of the OLQ in 29 research studies varying between 0,85 and 0,91. Test-retest reliability studies reported coefficients between 0,41 and 0,97 (Antonovsky, 1993). Rothmann (2002) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,89 for the OLQ, which may be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Regarding the construct validity of the OLQ, it was found that there is a negative relationship between the OLQ and experienced stress; and that the OLQ correlates negatively with the “State Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait” and the “Beck Depression Inventory” (Frenz, Carey & Jorgensen, 1993).

A *Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ)* with 33 items is used to measure job demands, job resources and personal consequences which can be related to burnout and engagement. All items are scored on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

#### **1.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

The statistical analysis is carried out with the SAS programme (SAS Institute, 2000). Firstly, mean standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis are computed to analyse the data. To determine the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments, Cronbach alpha coefficients and mean inter-item correlations are used to analyse the internal consistency of the measuring instruments.

Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. According to studies by Clark and Watson (1995), the mean inter-item correlation coefficient (which is an understandable and useable measure of internal consistency) is a recommendable index to supplement information supplied by coefficient alpha. It must be borne in mind though that unidimensionality of a scale cannot be ensured simply by focussing on the mean inter-item correlation – it is necessary to examine the range and distribution of these correlations as well.

Principal factor extraction with varimax rotation is performed by means of SAS FACTOR on the items of the MBI-HSS, UWES, OLQ and SRQ prior to testing for the structural equivalence and bias of the different instruments. Prior to principal factor extraction, principal component extraction is done to estimate the number of factors, the presence of outliers and the factorability of the correlation matrices. Furthermore, the oblique method with a promax rotation is used to determine the interfactor correlations of each measuring instrument. Correlations higher than 0,30 are deemed sufficient to accept the factor solution provided by this method of principal factor extraction.

Canonical correlations ( $r_c$ ) are used to determine the relationships of the dimensions (scales) of burnout and work engagement with occupational stress, coping strategies and affect. The

goal of canonical correlations is to analyse the relationships between sets of variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and as such it is a descriptive rather than a hypothesis-testing technique.

Standard multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the contribution of the independent variables to burnout and engagement. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), the correlation between an independent variable and a dependent variable reflects variance shared with the dependent variable, but some of the variance may be predictable from other independent variables. The unique contribution of an independent variable to predicting a dependent variable can be assessed by semipartial correlation. Squared semipartial correlation ( $sr_i^2$ ) expresses the unique contribution of the independent variable to the total variance of the dependent variable. In standard multiple regression  $sr_i^2$  for an independent variable is the amount by which  $R^2$  is reduced if that independent variable is deleted from the regression equation. The difference between  $R^2$  and the sum of  $sr_i^2$  for all independent variables represent shared variance, variance that is contributed to  $R^2$  by two or more independent variables. Effect sizes were calculated with the following formula (Steyn, 1999):

$$f^2 = \frac{sr_i^2}{1 - R^2}$$

Steyn (1999) suggested the following guidelines in terms of effect size, namely  $f^2 = 0,01$  (small effect),  $f^2 = 0,15$  (medium effect) and  $f^2 = 0,35$  (large effect). In the present study a cut-off point of 0,15 (medium effect) was set for the practical significance of  $f^2$ .

Structural equation modelling (SEM) methods as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 1999) are used to test the factorial model for the MBI-HSS and UWES using the maximum likelihood method. SEM is a statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory (i.e. hypothesis-testing) approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on some phenomenon (Byrne, 2001).

Several aspects of SEM distinguish it from the older generation of multivariate procedures (Byrne, 2001):

- Firstly it takes a confirmatory rather than an explanatory approach to data analysis. By demanding that the pattern of inter-variable relations be specific a priori, SEM lends itself well to the analysis of data for inferential purposes.
- Secondly, although traditional multivariate procedures are either assessing or correcting for measurement error, SEM provides precise estimates of these error variance parameters.
- Thirdly, SEM procedures can incorporate both unobserved (latent) and observed variables.

Therefore hypothesised relationships are tested empirically for goodness of fit with the sample data. Goodness-of-fit tests determine if the model being tested should be accepted or rejected. It is imperative to examine several fit indices when evaluating a model and never to rely solely on a single index. Jaccard and Wan (1996) recommend the use of at least three fit tests, while Kline (1998) recommends at least four.

Among the fit indices produced by the AMOS programme is the Chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ), which is the test of absolute fit of the model. The  $\chi^2$  tests the hypothesis that an unconstrained model fits the covariance/correlation matrix as well as the given model. The  $\chi^2$  should not be significant if there is a good model fit, while a significant  $\chi^2$  indicates lack of satisfactory model fit.

Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) suggest that the  $\chi^2$  value may be considered more appropriately as a badness-of-fit rather than as a goodness-of-fit measure in the sense that a small  $\chi^2$  value is indicative of good fit. The statistic and the degrees of freedom (the difference between the number of distinct parameters to be estimated) are usually used as tests of absolute fit. However, Kline (1998) and Neilands (2000) have cautioned that the  $\chi^2$  statistic is too sensitive to the size of the sample for it to be interpreted as a significant test. They have argued that the  $\chi^2$  statistic usually becomes significant even though the difference between observed and model implied covariance are slight. A large  $\chi^2$  relative to the degrees of freedom indicates a need to modify the model to fit the data better.

Not all the indices of fit are commonly used, therefore those chosen for consideration in this study are the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Root Means Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The GFI indicates the relative amount of the variances/co-variances in the sample predicted by the estimates of the population. The AGFI is a measure of the relative amount of variance accounted for by the model corrected for the degrees of freedom in the model relative to the number of variables. The values of these indices range from 0 (which indicates a poor fit) to 1 (indicating perfect fit) (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). The GFI is analogous to a squared correlation in so far as it indicates that the proportion of the observed covariance explained by the model-implied covariances, while the AGFI, which is calculated from the GFI, includes an adjustment for model complexity (Kline, 1998; Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). The GFI is a relative measure of how well the data fits the model (Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). Recommended values should be greater than 0,90.

PGFI addresses the issue of parsimony in SEM (Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bennett, Lind & Stillwell, 1989). The PGFI is a variant of GFI and takes into account the complexity (i.e. number of estimated parameters) of the hypothesised model in the assessment of overall model fit and provides a more realistic evaluation of the hypothesised model. Mulaik et al. (1989) suggested that indices in the 0,90s accompanied by PGFI's in the 0,50s are not unexpected, although values > 0,80 are considered to be more appropriate (Byrne, 2001).

The NFI is used to assess global model fit and varies from 0 to 1, where 1 is a perfect fit. Marsh, Balla and Hau (1996) suggest that this index is relatively insensitive to sample size. The CFI is an incremental fit index which indicates the proportion of the improvement of the overall fit of the restricted model relative to the independence (null) model in the determination of goodness of fit (Kline, 1998; Neilands, 2000). It also varies from 0 to 1. CFI values close to 1 indicates a very good fit, and values above 0,90 an acceptable fit. The TLI (Tucker & Lewis, 1973) is a relative measure of co-variation explained by the model that is specifically developed to assess factor models. The TLI has values ranging from 0 to 1,

indicating lack of fit to perfect fit respectively. Hu and Bentler (1999) and Neilands (2000) recommend a TLI value of 0,95 or higher. However, Schumacker and Lomax (1996) contend that values close to 0,90 reflect a good model fit. For these fit indices, it is more or less generally accepted that a value less than 0,90 indicates that the fit of the model can be improved (Hoyle, 1995).

The RMSEA, with its lower and upper confidence interval boundaries, is another valuable fit index that is commonly reported. (The RMSEA estimates the overall amount of error; it is a function of the fitting function value relative to the degrees of freedom.) RMSEA is one of the fit indices less affected by sample size. By convention, there is a good model fit if RMSEA is less than or equal to 0,05. There is adequate fit if RMSEA is less than or equal to 0,08. More recently, Hu and Bentler (1999) and Neilands (2000) have suggested a value of 0,06 to be indicative of a good fit between the hypothesised model and the observed data.

MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996) elaborated on these cut-off points and noted that RMSEA values ranging from 0,08 to 0,10 indicate medium fit, and those greater than 0,10 indicate poor fit. RMSEA is a popular measure of fit, partly because it does not require comparison with a null model and thus does not require the researcher to propose a plausible model in which there is complete independence of the latest variables as does, for instance, CFI.

Schumacker and Lomax (1996) and Kline (1998) have each argued that there is no straightforward answer to what constitutes good fit in SEM. Furthermore, Kline (1998) had argued that good fit might be easy to achieve. However, it must be accompanied by meaningful model-data correspondence. It is possible to find several favourable values of overall fit indices, but specific portions of the model might not be fitting the data well. Given the lack of consensus regarding the best measure of fit, the more criteria a model satisfies, the better its fit.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

In Chapter 2 the construct validity and internal consistency of the MBI-HSS for non-professional counsellors, doing trauma work in a banking environment, are dealt with. In Chapter 3 a causal model of burnout is developed for non-professional counsellors. Chapter 4

deals with work engagement of non-professional trauma counsellors, more specifically in terms of the construct validity and internal consistency of the UWES. In Chapter 5 a causal model of engagement is developed for non-professional counsellors, while Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, shortcomings and recommendations of this research.

## **1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with the problem statement and research objectives. The measuring instruments and research method that are used in this research were explained, followed by a brief discussion on the subsequent chapter outline in this thesis.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ARTICLE 1**

# THE VALIDATION OF THE MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY HUMAN SERVICES SURVEY FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS\*

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## ABSTRACT

Non-professional counsellors have been introduced to assist employees with coming to terms with their experiences during violent work-based incidents. These counsellors are subject to the effects of burnout as a consequence of the type of work they do. The objective of this research was to validate the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) for non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in banks. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The sample consisted of 168 employees of the three major banks. The MBI-HSS and a biographical questionnaire were administered. Structural equation modelling confirmed a 3-factor model of burnout, consisting of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment. The three factors showed acceptable internal consistency.

## OPSOMMING

Nie-professionele beraders word gebruik om werknemers te ondersteun om hul ervarings van werksverwante geweld te kan verwerk. Hierdie beraders is onderhewig aan die effek van uitbranding as gevolg van die tipe werk waaraan hulle blootgestel word. Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om die Maslach Uitbrandingsvraelys – Menslike Hulpbrondienste Opname (MBI-HSS) vir nie-professionele beraders, wat hoofsaaklik traumaberading in banke doen, te valideer. 'n Dwarsdeursnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die steekproef het uit 168 werknemers van die drie vernaamste banke bestaan. Die MBI-HSS en 'n biografiese vraelys is afgeneem. Strukturele vergelykingsmodellering het 'n 3-faktormodel van uitbranding, bestaande uit Emosionele Uitputting, Depersonalisasie en Persoonlike Bereiking bevestig. Die drie faktore het aanvaarbare interne konsekwentheid getoon.

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South Africans have been and are still living in an intense stressful environment. In addition to the universal and expected emotional difficulties of present day life they have a past filled with abuse and depletion on many levels (Louw, 1996; Louw, Shaw, Cameren & Robertshaw, 1998). South Africans have to cope with levels of crime and violence five times higher than the average rate on the international crime index (Schlemmer, 1996).

More and more organisations are being confronted with work-related violence. The literature shows that organisations such as banks are increasingly becoming the context in which employees fall victim to acts of criminal violence, such as bank robberies, and that the workplace is no longer a safe haven for employees (Everstine & Everstine, 1993; Flannery, 1996; Richards, 1994). These events not only affect the individual, but also the organisation, resulting in absenteeism and low morale (Maslach, 1998). The potential for experiencing violent or traumatic incidents is particularly pertinent for anyone handling money as a day-to-day part of their work (Allen & Orllepp, 1998; Richards, 1994; Urquhart, 1998). A response to this has been the introduction of trauma management interventions utilising trained non-professional trauma counsellors who aim to assist fellow-colleagues with coming to terms with the experience of being involved in a violent work-based incident (Friedman, 1997; Orllepp, 1998).

Some of the most neglected people in a traumatic incident are often the counsellors who work with the traumatised. They often fail to recognise the full impact that the event has on their own lives. As there are many types of stressors related to counselling, counsellors are subject to the effects of burnout as a consequence of the type of work they do (Maslach, 1981). They are also subject to traumatic incidents and the insidious effects of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma (Herman, 1992). Figley (1995, p. 252) noted that this is a form of burnout that results from empathetic identification and "... is frequently the characteristic that leads people to choose the role of helper, especially as a social worker, counsellor, or other type of professional helper". He also observed that empathetic concerns, linked to emotional contagion (experiencing the feelings of the sufferer as a function of exposure to the sufferer) are amongst the components that contribute to compassion stress or burnout (Figley, 1995; Maslach, 1982). Therefore, burnout may occur in a wide range of persons involved in providing aid to others. It is most prevalent amongst professionals and associates of trauma survivors (Beaton & Murphy, 1995).

Counsellors working in stressful situations need to be very attentive to their own psychological wellness. Quite often they overestimate their capacities to resist stressors inherent to counselling and underestimate their need for receiving respect and validation through others. The consequence of not really dealing with oneself also leads to burnout. What is meant by this is an absolute lack of distance towards one's work, a permanent exaggerated use of one's own capabilities till the point of total fatigue is reached (Maslach, 1976).

Understanding trauma can be challenging because a definition of trauma must include more than the terrible event itself. It also includes the individual victims who were incapacitated with overwhelming force (Herman, 1992; Peterson, Prout & Schwarz, 1991; Young, 1995). Reaction to trauma can be defined as "an emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories of an extraordinary, catastrophic experience which shattered the survivor's sense of invulnerability to harm" (Figley, 1985; Wilson, 1998). The process through which the individual has coped prior to the trauma is arrested; consequently, a sense of helplessness is often maintained (Foy, 1992).

Trauma counsellors have recently been thought of as secondary victims of trauma. Although they do not personally experience the physical and emotional effects of the trauma, they do see the destruction it has produced and experience secondary the losses and pain of others. Non-professional counsellors are therefore secondary victims of trauma. Mitchell (1983) describes it as any situation faced by helpers that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later.

Dyregrov, Kristoffersen and Gjestad (1996) also report that volunteer helpers experience more difficulty regarding their reactions following disaster counselling than professional helpers. They suggest that this finding was due to professional helpers having more work-based social support, as they worked daily alongside colleagues in the same professional field. All the above are contributing to the burnout of non-professional counsellors doing trauma work in a banking environment.

Over the last few years South Africa has been characterised by crime and violence (Louw, Shaw, Cameren & Robertshaw, 1998; Schlemmer, 1996). Organisations are microcosms of

the broader environments in which they function; therefore, they mirror the dynamic conditions in the micro-environment. In the South African context in particular, violence in the broader environment spills over into the workplace. The workplace could therefore become the primary source of violence, such as is evident in the number of armed robberies in financial institutions. These incidents amounted to a total of 315 for the 2002/2003 financial year and included armed robberies in branches, cash in transit robberies and physical Auto Teller Machine attacks (ABSA Security, 2003). Furthermore, the modus operandi of armed robberies has also become more violent and includes hostage taking and threatening staff that they would be set alight after being covered with highly flammable liquids (ABSA Security, 2003). Richards (1994) reports that 25% of bank employees who had experienced robberies displayed symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the long term.

The deployment of non-professional counsellors has largely developed as a result of the steadily increasing demand for the counselling of troubled employees on the one hand, and the relatively limited supply of professionally trained counsellors, on the other (Du Plessis, 1986). There are a number of dimensions at which non-professional or lay counsellors can be differentiated from professional counsellors (Wilson, 1998).

- Lay counsellors are often volunteers who receive no financial remuneration for their services.
- Lay counsellors generally provide their services only on a part-time basis.
- Lay counsellors normally receive some form of short-term training in a specific field (e.g. trauma counselling), whereas professional therapists are required to complete a formal qualification.
- Lay counsellors are volunteers, while professional therapists are required to go through a selection process, prior to completing their qualifications.

A growing body of theoretical and empirical literature recognises that engaging in therapeutic work with trauma survivors can, and does, impact on the counsellor (Figley, 1995; Flannery, 1996; Stamm, 1997). Working directly with victims and survivors of catastrophic events poses a psychological threat to the caregiver. Over the last decade, secondary traumatic stress, more commonly known as compassion fatigue, has been recognised as a major risk for helpers (Figley, 1995; Stamm, 1997).

Beaton and Murphy (1995, p. 51) see non-professional counsellors as crisis workers and define them as “front-line first responders to whom potential exposure to occupational trauma is a fact of daily life”. Therefore, it seems important and relevant to investigate the burnout levels of non-professional counsellors in South African banks. There are a number of terms that describe the phenomenon. It has been described as secondary victimisation (Figley, 1982), secondary traumatic stress (Figley, 1983, 1985, 1989; Stamm, 1995, 1997), vicarious traumatisation (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995), and secondary survivor (Remer & Elliott, 1988). A similar concept, “emotional contagion,” is defined as an affective process in which “an individual observing another person experience emotional responses parallel to that person’s actual or anticipated emotions” (Miller, Stiff & Ellis, 1988, p. 254).

Compassion fatigue is a more user-friendly term for Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder, which is nearly identical to PTSD, except that it affects those emotionally affected by the trauma of another (usually a client or a family member). Compassion fatigue poses a special problem in that non-professional counsellors may be reluctant to identify themselves as suffering symptoms of secondary traumatic stress. They see themselves as “there for the victims” and tend not to admit to needing help from the distress of hearing and seeing heart-wrenching stress of suffering and ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999).

Those who come to help others (e.g. emergency medical service personnel, counsellors, police officials) were thought to be trained not to react to human carnage and destruction or the pain of the survivors or traumatised. They were considered exempt from the psychological sequel which befell the victims and survivors. However, recent research and experience with emergency personnel, paramedics, police officials and counsellors clearly indicate that these helpers are subjected to stressors which can produce an array of psychological, social and physical reactions that may be extremely stressful (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Everly, 1995; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Terr, 1991).

The American Psychiatric Association’s (APA)(1994) diagnostic disorders manual (DSM IV) notes that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is only possible when one is traumatised either directly (in harm’s way) or indirectly, as a parent (or counsellor). Both may experience trauma, but through different social pathways. The latter pathway is called Secondary Traumatic Stress. There are few reports of the incidence and prevalence of this type of stress

reactions. However, based on secondary data and theory analysis, burnout and dissatisfaction may have masked this common problem (Figley, 1995). Vicarious traumatisation, for example, refers to a transformation in the therapist's (or other trauma worker's) inner experience resulting from empathetic engagement with clients' trauma material "... [and] vulnerable to the emotional and spiritual effects of vicarious traumatisation. These effects are cumulative and permanent, and evident in both a therapist's professional and personal life" (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p. 151).

Burnout, or cumulative stress, is the state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by a depletion of the ability to cope with one's environment, resultant from our responses to the ongoing demand characteristics (stress) of our daily lives (Maslach, 1982). High levels of cumulative stress in the lives of counsellors negatively affects resiliency, therefore making them more susceptible to compassion fatigue. Because this is a relatively new area of study, there are very few publications on trauma mental health care givers (Stamm, 1997). Therefore, the specific focus of the current study is on the level of burnout of non-professional trauma counsellors in the workplace.

In the light of the above discussion, the lack of empirical research that systematically investigates non-professional counsellors' burnout in South Africa is a concern. The serious limitations of burnout research in South Africa include poorly designed studies, a lack of sophisticated statistical analyses and poorly controlled studies (Rothmann, 2002). The present study is a step towards addressing this need and constitutes a preliminary exploration of the area.

The objective of this study was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the MBI-HSS for non-professional counsellors doing trauma work in a banking environment.

### **Burnout and the measurement thereof**

Herbert Freudenberger (1974) is generally considered to be the founding father of the burnout syndrome. Freudenberger had noticed in himself and some of his colleagues, mainly young idealistically motivated volunteers in a New York Free Clinic for drug addicts, a gradual energy depletion and a decrease in motivation and commitment, which was accompanied by a wide array of mental and physical symptoms. He defined burnout as failing or wearing out

due to job demands (Freudenberger, 1974). Freudenberger, a clinician, approached burnout from a practical point of view and focused primarily on assessment, prevention and treatment (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996).

Since the term was coined in 1974, interest in burnout has mushroomed (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Pearlman and Hartman (1982) reviewed 48 articles and listed each definition of burnout used. These definitions varied greatly. Loss of commitment for work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), exhaustion (Maslach, 1976), fatigue and boredom (Freudenberger, 1974), inappropriate attitude towards clients and self (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993) and total emotional and physical exhaustion (Maslach, 1982) are some examples of the variety of ideas that researchers had about burnout.

Maslach and Jackson (1986, p. 1) defined burnout “as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do “people work of some kind”. Burnout is viewed as an affective reaction to ongoing stress whose core content is the gradual depletion over time of individuals’ intrinsic energetic resources and is defined as a syndrome in which people feel emotionally exhausted or fatigued, withdraw emotionally from those around them and perceive a diminution of their achievements or accomplishments when at work. The de facto standard of measurement for burnout is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) which contains three subscales purported to measure the three factors identified in the above definition: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment. Each subscale plays an important role in understanding the quality of the burnout experience (Savicki, 1999; Savicki & Cooley, 1987).

To review and understand the burnout phenomenon it is critical to start with a conceptual approach to burnout (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). The first dimension of burnout, emotional exhaustion, is “characterised by a lack of energy and feeling that one’s emotional resources are used up. This may co-exist with feelings of frustration and tension ...” (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993, p. 63). Leiter and Maslach (1988, p. 297) note that emotional exhaustion “refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and drained by one’s contact with other people”. It can manifest itself in physical characteristics such as waking up just as tired as when going to bed or lacking required energy to take on another task or face-to-face encounter (Maslach & Leiter,

1997). Several key determinants of emotional exhaustion are work overload, role conflict and role ambiguity (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

Depersonalisation, a negative, cynical or excessive response to other people at work, is the second dimension of burnout. This phase of burnout typically occurs after emotional exhaustion and represents the interpersonal component of burnout. It refers to an individual's personal detachment from work. For those who deal with people on a day-to-day basis this entails treating individuals as objects rather than people. Depersonalisation is characterised by "a detached and an emotional callousness" (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993, p. 623). Employees in the depersonalisation phase of burnout will "take a cool, distant attitude toward work and the people on the job" (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 13).

Initial research on burnout was focused on health care. However, in talking to an attorney Maslach discovered that a similar phenomenon occurred among poverty lawyers working in legal services. This gave way to the studying of burnout in a wider range of occupations (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). After extensive research, collection of data from hundreds of people in a wide range of health, social service and teaching occupations, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was developed (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Despite all their empirical data, the initial reaction of the academic world to this new test was negative due to the image of burnout as popular non-scientific terminology used by journalists and practitioners. This is illustrated by the rejection of the psychometric article that introduced the MBI. The journal editor returned the manuscript with a short note that it had not even been read "because we do not publish 'pop' psychology" (Maslach & Jackson, 1984, p. 139).

Eventually, however, the research was published (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), and the availability of a standardised measure leads to endless research on burnout (Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993). Research on this phenomenon mushroomed, from  $\pm 200$  publications per year in 1980 to  $\pm 300$  publications per year at the end of the eighties (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). By the turn of the century more than 6000 publications on burnout had appeared. Traditionally, it is assumed that burnout first and foremost occurs in human services. The MBI was even designed for exclusive use in this field. Approximately two-thirds of the research, using the MBI as measurement, were conducted in teaching, social work, health care, nursing, social work and policing (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Maslach and Jackson (1986) conceptualised burnout as consisting of three dimensions which are measured by the MBI-HSS, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion or drawing of emotional resources caused by interpersonal demands. Depersonalisation refers to the development of negative and cynical attitudes towards the recipients of one's services. In this state, once caring counsellors become apathetic towards counselling and lose empathy with their clients. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feelings of competence and productivity. Individuals with reduced personal accomplishment view themselves negatively regarding their ability to perform the job and to have positive interactions (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). As Maslach and Leiter (1997) point out, individuals experiencing reduced personal accomplishment trivialise the things they are successful at and no longer feel they are able to make a difference through their work or personal interactions.

Counsellors often enter their counselling career with service-orientated idealistic goals. They typically work under norms that expect them to continuously invest emotional, cognitive and even physical energy in their clients. In this context the above changes were likely to create a process of emotional exhaustion, mental weariness and physical fatigue (Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993). Counsellors feel depressed because they are not accomplishing what they thought they were capable of, both personally and professionally.

The MBI-HSS, seen as a self-report measure, consists of 22 questions (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). It urges respondents to indicate the frequency over the work year with which they have experienced each feeling on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). Although the MBI was originally developed to measure burnout in the human resources professions, called the Human Services Survey (HSS), the Educators Survey (ES) and the General Survey (GS) were also developed, serving the need to measure burnout in other professions as well. The HSS and ES are virtually identical except that the term "recipients" is replaced by "students". The GS is more generic and includes exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996).

The conceptualisation of burnout, as measured by the MBI, relates to it as a multidimensional construct as it refers to several distinct but related dimensions that are viewed as a single theoretical construct (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). However, the founder of this

multidimensional view of burnout have yet to provide convincing theoretical arguments as to why the three different clusters of symptoms that comprise their conceptualisation of burnout should be viewed together (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

As a result most studies focus on the adequacy of the three-factor model. The factorial validity representing three factors is not completely beyond question, as there have been studies reporting fewer or more factors. However, the basic three-factor structure underlying the MBI has been repeatedly confirmed by explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis (Leiter & Durup, 1994; Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996; Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap & Kladler, 2001).

Confirmatory factor analysis done by Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo and Schaufeli (2000) showed that the three-factor model was clearly superior to alternative one-factor and two-factor models. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) confirmed these findings. It therefore seems reasonable to expect that a three-factor structure will also be contained in this study.

With respect to validity, convergent validity has been demonstrated through correlation of MBI scores with peer ratings, job dimensions associated with burnout and stress outcomes (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The MBI-HSS also shows evidence of relatively high internal consistency (Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1995).

As far as studies in South-Africa are concerned, Pretorius (1990) argues that the psychometric properties of the MBI seem satisfactory and stable, but that attention needs to be given to the reliability of the Depersonalisation scale. Cube (1998) suggests that a separate study is needed to establish the factorial validity and reliability amongst health professionals in South-Africa.

The availability of a standardised measure also foster much subsequent research and made the MBI the most widely used and accepted burnout measurement tool, and is used by researchers around the world in various translations. In fact, this instrument is used in over 90% of the empirical publications on burnout and is translated into Arabic, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Polish (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1995).

In South-Africa, numerous studies on burnout in caregivers have been carried out over the past two decades by using the MBI. These studies were mainly undertaken in the nursing environment (Booyesen, 1993; Cube, 1998; Levert, Lucas & Ortlepp, 2000; Ngcobo, 1997; Simbayi, 2000). Booyesen (1993) found a low level of burnout among psychiatric nurses, while Ngcobo (1997), Munnik and Simbayi (2001) and Cube (1998), who looked at general nurses in urban settings and health care workers respectively, found a moderate degree of burnout present. However, Levert et al. (2000) recently found moderate to high levels of burnout among psychiatric nurses.

Other South African studies where the MBI has successfully been used to assess burnout in people-orientated environments include studies involving church ministers and teachers (Florence, 1998; Odendaal & Van Wyk, 1988; Pretorius, 1992). In these studies the MBI has shown to demonstrate adequate reliability. The study by Pretorius (1990) reported alpha coefficients of 0,89 for emotional exhaustion, 0,71 for depersonalisation and 0,79 for personal accomplishment. In comparison the alpha coefficients of the MBI are 0,90 for emotional exhaustion, 0,79 for depersonalisation and 0,71 for personal accomplishment as were reported by Maslach and Jackson (1986). Maslach and Jackson (1986) also reported test-retest reliability as follows: emotional exhaustion = 0,82, depersonalisation = 0,60, and personal accomplishment = 0,80.

Burnout has important consequences for non-professional counsellors. Both Cherniss (1995) and Maslach and Leiter (1997) have articulated a clear distinction between high and low burnout. High burnout results in physical and psychological difficulties at work and elsewhere, which lead to lower productivity and eventual harm to the individual and to the people with whom they work. In contrast, low burnout results in the individual thriving and growing in their work. The challenges of work stress invigorate and energise the worker to produce more and to become innovative. Burnout causes an erosion of one's dedication and enthusiasm in their profession. Burnout causes a dramatic shift from positive to negative feelings where energy turns to exhaustion, involvement turns to cynicism and efficacy turns to ineffectiveness.

The above discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: Burnout as measured by the MBI-HSS is a three-dimensional construct and the MBI-HSS shows high internal consistency.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A survey design was used to achieve the research objectives. The specific design was a cross-sectional design, where a sample is drawn from a population at a particular point in time (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

### **Study population**

Data was collected from non-professional counsellors employed by three of the major banks in South Africa. These employees were from all the provinces in South Africa and perform line or staff work on clerical, supervisory, managerial and specialist level. Of the 295 eligible participants, 168 participated in the study. However, only 165 questionnaires could be used. Table 1 presents some of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Percentage
<b>Position</b>	Clerical	9,32
	Supervisory	11,80
	Managerial	39,13
	Specialist	39,75
<b>Province</b>	Eastern Cape	4,09
	Free State	6,81
	Gauteng	53,9
	KwaZulu Natal	13,63
	Limpopo	2,84
	Mpumalanga	3,97
	Northern Cape	1,70
	North West	3,97
	Western Cape	9,09
<b>Education</b>	Grade 10	1,83
	Grade 12	17,07
	Certificate	11,59
	Diploma	21,95
	Degree	15,85
	Post-graduate Degree	31,71
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21,60
	Female	78,40
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	15,53
	Engaged or in close relationship	6,21
	Married	54,66
	Divorced	13,04
	Separated	3,73
	Widow/Widower	3,73
	Remarried	3,11
<b>Home Language</b>	Afrikaans	50,62
	English	40,74
	Black Language	8,64

The sample was mostly female (78,40%), married and had a secondary school education. The mean age of participants was 38 years, while the mean length of experience as a non-professional counsellor was 5,8 years and the mean number of years experience in the current working position were 6,2. The type of work-related counselling in which the counsellors were engaged was trauma (71,42%), HIV/Aids (12,60%), relationships (6,72%), death and bereavement (5,88%) and substance abuse (3,38).

## **Procedures**

The researcher approached the directors of Human Resource Management at the three major banks in South Africa to request all the non-professional counsellors to respond to the research instruments. Burnout research has long been done using this type of sample (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). A major consideration for burnout research is that it is done with participants who actually function as trauma counsellors, as it is not possible to conduct simulation studies of burnout. Such a restriction makes it difficult to find a large number of qualified participants. Informed consent from the participants was also sought and granted to the researcher.

## **Measuring instrument**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) was used to measure burnout in this study. The MBI-HSS consists of 22 items and has three subscales, namely Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalisation (DEP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA) (Maslach, et al., 1996). All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (“never”) to 6 (“daily”). Maslach and Jackson (1986) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 (emotional exhaustion), 0,79 (depersonalisation) and 0,71 (personal accomplishment). Maslach and Jackson (1986) also reported test-retest reliability of 0,82 (emotional exhaustion), 0,60 (depersonalisation) and 0,80 (personal accomplishment), which could be regarded as acceptable. A South African study by Pretorius (1990) reported alpha coefficients of 0,89 (emotional exhaustion), 0,71 (depersonalisation) and 0,79 (personal accomplishment).

## **Statistical analysis**

The SAS programme (SAS Institute, 2000) was used to do the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients and interim correlations were used to assess the internal consistency of the MBI (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. According to Clark and Watson (1995), the average inter-item correlation coefficient (which is an understandable and useable measure of internal consistency) is a recommendable index to

supplement information supplied by coefficient alpha. It must be borne in mind, however, that unidimensionality of a scale cannot be ensured simply by focusing on the mean inter-item correlation – it is necessary to examine the range and distribution of these correlations as well.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) methods as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 1997) were used to test the factorial model for the MBI-HSS using the maximum likelihood method (Byrne, 2001). Hypothesised relationships are tested empirically for goodness of fit with the sample data. Goodness-of-fit tests determine if the model being tested should be accepted or rejected. It is imperative to examine several fit indices when evaluating a model and never to rely solely on a single index. Jaccard and Wan (1996) recommend use of at least three fit tests, while Kline (1998) recommends at least four.

Among the fit indices produced by the AMOS programme is the Chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) which is the test of absolute fit of the model. The  $\chi^2$  tests the hypothesis that an unconstrained model fits the covariance/correlation matrix as well as the given model. The  $\chi^2$  should not be significant if there is a good model fit, while a significant  $\chi^2$  indicates lack of satisfactory model fit. Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) suggest that the  $\chi^2$  value may be considered more appropriately as a badness-of-fit rather than a goodness-of-fit measure in the sense that a small  $\chi^2$  value is indicative of good fit.

The  $\chi^2$  statistic and the degrees of freedom (the difference between the number of distinct parameters to be estimated) are usually used as tests of absolute fit. However, Kline (1998) and Neilands (2000) have cautioned that the  $\chi^2$  statistic is too sensitive to the size of the sample for it to be interpreted as a significant test. They have argued that the  $\chi^2$  statistic usually becomes significant, even though the difference between observed and model implied covariance are slight. A large  $\chi^2$  relative to the degrees of freedom indicates a need to modify the mode to fit the data better.

Not all the indices of fit are commonly used, therefore those chosen for consideration in this study are the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) the Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Comparative Fit

Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Root Means Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The GFI indicates the relative amount of the variances/co-variances in the sample predicted by the estimates of the population. The AGFI is a measure of the relative amount of variance accounted for by the model corrected for the degrees of freedom in the model relative to the number of variables. The values of these indices range from 0 (which indicates a poor fit) to 1 (indicating perfect fit) (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). The GFI is analogous to a squared correlation in so far as it indicates the proportion of the observed covariance explained by the model-implied covariances, while the AGFI, which is calculated from the GFI, includes an adjustment for model complexity (Kline, 1998; Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). The GFI is a relative measure of how well the data fit the model (Sobolewski & Doran, 1996). Recommended values should be greater than 0,90.

PGFI addressed the issue of parsimony in SEM (Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bennett, Lind & Stillwell, 1989). The PGFI is a variant of GFI and takes into account the complexity (i.e. number of estimated parameters) of the hypothesised model in the assessment of overall model fit and provides a more realistic evaluation of the hypothesised model. Mulaik et al. (1989) suggested that indices in the 0,90s accompanied by PGFI's in the 0,50s are not unexpected, but that values > 0,80 are considered to be more appropriate (Byrne, 2001).

The next set of goodness-of-fit measures compares the set model to the fit of the independence (null) model. The NFI is used to assess global model fit and varies from 0 to 1, where 1 is a perfect fit. Marsh, Balla and Hau (1996) suggest that this index is relatively insensitive to sample size. The CFI is an incremental fit index which indicates the proportion of the improvement of the overall fit of the restricted model relative to the independence (null) model in the determination of goodness of fit (Kline, 1998; Neilands, 2000). It also varies from 0 to 1. CFI values close to 1 indicates a very good fit, and values above 0,90 an acceptable fit. The TLI (Tucker & Lewis, 1973) is a relative measure of covariation explained by the model that is specifically developed to assess factor models. The TLI has values ranging from 0 to 1, respectively indicating lack of fit to perfect fit. Hu and Bentler (1999) and Neilands (2000) recommend a TLI value of 0,95 or higher. However, Schumacker and Lomax (1996) contend that values close to 0,90 reflect a good model fit. For these fit indices, it is more or less generally accepted that a value of less than 0,90 indicates that the fit of the model can be improved (Hoyle, 1995). The RMSEA, with its lower and upper confidence

interval boundaries, is another valuable fit index that is commonly reported. (The RMSEA estimates the overall amount of error; it is a function of the fitting function value relative to the degrees of freedom.) RMSEA is one of the fit indexes less affected by sample size. By convention, there is a good model fit if RMSEA is less than or equal to 0,05. There is adequate fit if RMSEA is less than or equal to 0,08. More recently, Hu and Bentler (1999) and Neilands (2000) have suggested a value of 0,06 to be indicative of a good fit between the hypothesised model and the observed data.

MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996) elaborated on these cut-off points and noted that RMSEA values ranging from 0,08 to 0,10 indicate medium fit, and those greater than 0,10 indicate poor fit. RMSEA is a popular measure of fit, partly because it does not require comparison with a null model.

Schumacker and Lomax (1996) and Kline (1998) have each argued that there is no straightforward answer to what constitutes good fit in SEM. Furthermore, Kline (1998) had argued that good fit might be easy to achieve. However, it must be accompanied by meaningful model-data correspondence. It is possible to find several favourable values of overall fit indices, but specific portions of the model might not be fitting the data well. Given the lack of consensus regarding the best measure of fit, the more criteria a model satisfies, the better its fit.

## RESULTS

Structural equation modelling (SEM) methods, as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 1997), were used to test the factorial model for the MBI-HSS. Before performing SEM, the frequency distribution of the items of the MBI-HSS was checked in order to assess deviations from normality and multivariate outliers were removed. It was assumed that the  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit statistics are not likely to be inflated if the skewness and kurtosis for individual items do not exceed the critical values of 2,00 and 7,00 respectively (West, Finch & Curran, 1995).

The following operations were performed concerning the data analyses: Firstly, a quick overview of model fit was done by looking at the overall  $\chi^2$  value, together with its degrees of freedom and probability value. Global assessments of model fit were based on several

goodness-of-fit statistics (GFI, AGFI, PGFI, NFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA). Secondly, given the findings of an ill-fitting initially hypothesised model, analyses proceeded in an exploratory mode. Possible misspecifications, as suggested by the so-called modification indices, were looked for and eventually a revised, respecified model was fitted to the data.

### Hypothesised model

The full hypothesised 3-factor model consisting of all 22 items was tested. Table 2 presents fit statistics for the test of the original model.

Table 2

*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for the Hypothesised MBI-HSS Model*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/\text{df}$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model I	538,76	2,62	0,77	0,72	0,63	0,70	0,77	0,79	0,10

The statistically significant  $\chi^2$  value of 538,776 ( $\text{df} = 206$ ;  $p = 0,00$ ) revealed an unacceptable fit of the originally hypothesised MBI model. This, however, cannot be the only indicator to model fit, as Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) pointed out that the use of  $\chi^2$  is based on the assumption that the model holds exactly in the population, which is a stringent assumption. The hypothesised model (Model I) was not feasible from a practical perspective. The GFI value lower than 0,90, the PGFI value lower than 0,80, the NFI < TLI and the CFI values lower than 0,95, with the RMSEA value higher than 0,05 are indicative of failure to confirm the hypothesised model. Thus it is apparent that some modification in specification is needed in order to determine a model that better represents the sample data.

To pinpoint possible areas of misfit, modification indices were examined. Two parameters, which represent the cross-loading of item 16 on item 5 ( $\text{MI} = 11,84$ ), item 6 ( $\text{MI} = 22,25$ ), item 15 ( $\text{MI} = 15,59$ ) and item 19 ( $\text{MI} = 13,69$ ), and of item 6 on items 5 ( $\text{MI} = 15,36$ ) and 19 ( $\text{MI} = 10,28$ ), account for substantial misspecification of the hypothesised factor loadings. This might be caused by the ambivalence of the particular items. Other studies that have examined all 22 items of the MBI have reported cross-loadings for item 12 and item 16 (Byrne, 1993; Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1993). Item 16, “Working with people directly

puts too much stress on me”, is an EE item that has been found to cross-load onto the DP factor.

### *Post hoc analyses*

In the light of the rejection of the initially postulated model, the focus shifted from model test to model development (exploratory factor analysis). Considering the high cross-loadings of items 16 and 6 on other items, it was decided to respecify the model with these items deleted. Also, the regression weights of item 4 (0,45) and item 7 (0,38) were somewhat low. Therefore, it was decided to exclude items 4 and 7 from the respecified model as well. All subsequent analyses are now based on the 18-item revision, which is labelled here as Model 2. The fit statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

#### *Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Model 2*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/\text{df}$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 2	313,65	2,38	0,83	0,78	0,64	0,78	0,83	0,85	0,09

Although the various fit indices have improved, compared to those for the initial model (see Table 2), there is still evidence of misfit in the model. For example, the GFI was still lower than 0,90, PGFI and NFI were lower than 0,80 and the RMSEA value higher than 0,05. Modification indices (MI) were considered to pinpoint areas of misspecification in the model. The constrained parameters exhibiting the highest degree of misfit lay in the error covariance matrix and represent a correlated error between item 5 and item 15 (MI = 26,08), item 3 and item 13 (MI = 10,32) as well as between item 13 and item 14 (MI = 18,10). Compared with MI values for all other error covariance parameters, these values are high and clearly in need of respecification. Based on the modification indices and on theoretical considerations, Model 2 was respecified with these parameters freely estimated. Following Byrne (2001), errors of two item pairs (i.e. EX3-EX6; EX6-XE7; DEP10-DEP13) were allowed to correlate.

The fit statistics of the third model of the MBI-HSS are shown in Table 4. In summary, this model was based on 18 of the original 22 items and included a correlated error between item 3 and item 13; between item 13 and item 14 and between item 5 and item 15.

Table 4  
*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Model 3*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 2	255,95	1,98	0,86	0,82	0,65	0,82	0,88	0,90	0,07

The fit statistics in Table 4 indicate a better fit for the respecified model. According to Byrne (2001) values  $>0,80$  on the GFI are considered to be appropriate. Schumacker and Lomax (1996) contend that values close to 0,90 on the TLI reflect a good model fit. There is an adequate fit if the RMSEA is less than or equal to 0,08. Hu and Bentler (1999) and Neilands (2000) have suggested a value of 0,06 to be indicative of a good fit.

Since this model fit was satisfactory and the results agreed with the theoretical assumptions underlying the structure of the MBI-HSS, no further modifications of the model were deemed necessary. The correlations between the three burnout dimensions are as follows: Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation show the highest correlation (0,72), followed by Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment with a correlation of -0,43.

The descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the three factors of the MBI-HSS are given in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Inter-item Correlations of the MBI-HSS*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	r (Mean)	$\alpha$
Emotional Exhaustion	13,56	8,20	0,68	0,35	0,56	0,90
Depersonalisation	5,00	4,51	0,34	0,34	0,31	0,70
Personal Accomplishment	28,70	5,05	1,25	1,25	0,35	0,75

The scores on the three factors of the MBI-HSS are normally distributed. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the scales are considered to be acceptable compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 0,70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, the inter-item correlations are considered

acceptable compared to the guideline of  $0,15 < r < 0,50$  (Clark & Watson, 1995). It appears that the scales have acceptable levels of internal consistency.

These results provide support for Hypothesis 1.

## DISCUSSION

Firstly, the psychometric properties of the MBI-HSS were tested. Reliability analyses revealed that all three subscales were sufficiently internally consistent. The results obtained using the structural equation modelling approach supported a three-dimensional factor structure, as has been consistently found across various samples, occupational groups and countries (Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schutte et al., 2000; Taris, Schreurs & Schaufeli, 1999).

Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation showed the highest correlation of 0,61. Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment showed a correlation of -0,38. A correlation of -0,43 was found between Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment. Results from a meta-analytical study by Lee and Ashford (1996) reported relationships of 0,64 for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation, -0,22 for Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment, and -0,34 for Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment.

Although individual and organisational factors do predict burnout, researchers have recently begun to examine the role of the broad institutional context on burnout (Cherniss, 1995; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Cherniss (1995) defined this institutional context as the bureaucratic structures that contribute to the unique “culture” of an area and, over time, socialise the people who work within that culture. It has been suggested that the conflicts and pressures that arise as a result of this institutional context may have a greater impact on stress and burnout than any individual or organisational factors (Leiter & Maslach, 1988).

In describing human service environments and therefore also non-professional counsellors, Leiter and Maslach (1988) noted that they do not exist in a vacuum. According to Leiter and Schaufeli (1996), counsellors in this context usually feel helpless, causing a reduction in the qualities that are likely to protect them from burnout (e.g. damaged self-esteem, lowered self-esteem, lowered self-efficacy and isolation from one’s support retrievals).

Thus the conflicts and pressures that are already associated with everyday work of non-professional counsellors are likely to be magnified by the counselling role. Non-professional counsellors continually face conflicts created by the fact that they are accountable to large organisations, but professionally, ethically and morally devoted to their clients (victims of trauma who are being counselled by them).

They must balance the competing, and sometimes opposing, demands of several parties such as trauma victims, employees, families and communities. It is important to remember that counselling is not the main job objective of the non-professional counsellors. Counselling is seen as an “add-on” to their job description and is in most instances not part of their performance measurement/assessment.

Deletion of some of the items in the MBI could also be because of the ad hoc involvement of the non-professional counsellors in counselling. The frequency of counselling depends on the number of robberies during the cycle in which the counsellor has to be on standby. The duration of counselling contact with the traumatised victims is further restricted to at the most four hours per incident. The counsellors consequently experienced difficulty in answering questions that need to be interpreted as though they had fulltime contact with people. An example is item 6, which has been deleted from the model: “Working with people all day is really a strain for me”. It is clear that the respondents, being ad hoc counsellors, had difficulty interpreting this item. This was also the case with items 4, 7 and 16.

Crisis intervention, as done by non-professional counsellors, is defined as the provision of emergency psychological care to victims as to assist those victims in returning to an adaptive level of functioning and to prevent or mitigate the potential negative impact of psychological trauma (Mitchell & Everley, 2000). No long-term counselling or relations are therefore established. That is seen as the responsibility of professional counsellors. Items 4, 7 and 16 focus more on longer-term involvement with people and could therefore also be misinterpreted by the respondents from an infrequent, short-term counselling perspective. The deletion of items 4, 6, 7 and 16 was part of the post-hoc analysis, and should be regarded as a model specification for the sole purpose of data fitting. Validation of this is needed in future studies.

The correlated errors between item 3 and item 13, between item 13 and item 14 and between item 5 and item 15 could be described by the fact that the same construct is measured by these items. Item 5, for instance, reads “I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects” and item 15 “I don’t really care what happens to some recipients”.

Furthermore, error terms within subscales were also allowed to correlate in order to improve model fit. Correlated error terms in measurement models represent systematic, rather than random measurement error in item responses. They may derive from characteristics specific either to the items or the respondents. For example, if these parameters reflect item characteristics, they may represent a small omitted factor. However, as can be the case, correlated errors may represent respondent characteristics that reflect bias, such as yea-/nay-saying, social desirability (Aish & Jöreskog, 1990), as well as a high degree of overlap in item content (when an item, although worded differently, essentially asks the same question) (Byrne, 2001).

A limitation of this study was that it relied exclusively on self-report measures. This causes a particular problem in validation studies that use self-report measures exclusively because at least part of the common variance of the measures has to be attributed to method variance (Schaufeli, Enzmann & Girault, 1993).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the MBI-HSS be used to assess burnout of non-professional counsellors working with trauma victims in a banking environment. However, the validation of items 4, 6, 7 and 16 as part of the MBI-HSS, when measuring non-professional counsellors, need further research.

Other suggestions for future research, as derived from the present findings, are:

- Although this study found the MBI-HSS to be reliable and confirmed the three-factor structure, more research is needed to further determine the reliability and validity in other samples in South Africa.
- Further research is also needed in other occupational groupings to establish norms for burnout levels other than non-professional counsellors.

- Future studies should use large samples and adequate statistical techniques (e.g. structural equation modelling). Large sample sizes may provide increased confidence that study findings would be consistent across other similar groups.
- More research is needed to further determine the validity and structural equivalence of the measuring of burnout for different cultural groups in the non-professional counselling environment.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ARTICLE 2**

# **A CAUSAL MODEL OF BURNOUT FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS IN SOUTH AFRICA\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research was to develop and test a causal model of burnout for non-professional counsellors in a South African banking environment. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The sample consisted of 168 non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in three of the major banks. The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey, Orientation to Life Questionnaire and a Self Report Questionnaire were administered. The results showed that job demands predicted emotional exhaustion. Sense of coherence mediated the effects of job resources on emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion mediated the effect of job demands on depersonalisation, while personal consequences mediated the effect of job resources on depersonalisation. Depersonalisation mediated the effect of emotional exhaustion on personal accomplishment.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om 'n oorsaaklike model vir uitbranding van nie-professionele beraders in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse bankomgewing te ontwikkel en te toets. 'n Dwarssnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die steekproef het bestaan uit 168 nie-professionele beraders, wat spesialiseer in traumaberading by drie van die vernaamste bankgroepe. Die Maslach-Uitbrandingsvraelys – Menslike Hulpbrondienste Opname, Lewensoriëntasievraelys en 'n Selfrapporteringsvraelys is afgeneem. Die resultate het aangetoon dat werkseie emosionele uitputting voorspel. Koherensiesin het die effek van werkhulpbronne op depersonalisasie en persoonlike bereiking gemedieer. Emosionele uitputting het die effek van werkseie op depersonalisasie gemedieer, terwyl persoonlike gevolge die effek van werkhulpbronne op depersonalisasie gemedieer het. Depersonalisasie het die effek van emosionele uitputting op persoonlike bereiking gemedieer.

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The literature shows that organisations, such as banks, are increasingly becoming the context in which employees fall victim to acts of criminal violence, like bank robberies, with the result that the workplace is no longer a safe haven for employees (Everstine & Everstine, 1993; Flannery, 1996; Richards, 1994). This has led to the introducing of trauma intervention programmes (Friedman, 1997; Ortlepp, 1998). This organisational trend has opened the way for empirical studies that may contribute to our understanding of burnout in general and as it would apply to non-professional counsellors (trauma debriefers) specifically. Burnout has been recognised as a serious threat, particularly for those who work with people (Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli & Buunk, 1998).

Burnout is conceptualised as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do “people work” of some kind (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and is defined as a syndrome consisting of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). A broader definition is “a state of physical emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding (Pines & Aronson, 1988), like trauma counselling.

According to Slover and Tasci (2001), understanding trauma can be challenging because a definition of trauma must include more than the terrible event itself. It also includes the individual’s reactions that follow the trauma which can temporarily incapacitate victims with overwhelming force. Traumatic events are typically unexpected and uncontrollable. They may overwhelm an individual’s sense of safety and security and leave a person feeling vulnerable and insecure in his/her environment (Boss, 1999). Events that are abrupt, often lasting a few minutes and as long as a few hours can be referred to as short-term or Type I traumatic events (Terr, 1991). Included in this category is deliberately caused human-made disasters (i.e. bombings, rape, hostage situations, assaults and robbery), thus typically the kind of traumatic incidents associated with a banking environment.

Mitchell (1983) defines trauma as “a critical incident defined as any situation faced by persons/helpers that cause them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the scene or later”. The counsellors who have to work with all the victims/survivors in the aftermath of a traumatic incident may be classified as one of the most neglected groups of people. They often fail to

recognise the full impact the event has on their own lives. They direct most of their focus on the people who are directly involved and impacted upon by the incident, and they fail to pay attention to themselves. Working with traumatised people takes its toll on counsellors in much the same way as the event overpowered the people in it.

Over the years crisis intervention (trauma counselling) has proved an effective, frontline intervention for victims of all types of critical incidents, especially the extreme stressors that may result in psychological trauma like a bank robbery (Everley, Flannery & Mitchell, 2000; Everley & Mitchell, 1999). This intervention is defined as the provision of emergency psychological care to victims as to assist these victims in returning to an adoptive level of functioning and to prevent or mitigate the potential negative impact of psychological trauma (Everley & Mitchell, 1999; Figley & Kleber, 1995; Figley & Nelson, 1989).

Support exists for the idea that trauma can be “contagious”. Both Figley (1989) and Terr (1991) found that family members of survivors of trauma were developing symptoms similar to the victim. Figley refers to this phenomenon as “secondary victimisation”, whereas Herman (1992) refers to it as “secondary traumatisation”. McCann and Pearlman (1990, p. 132) argue that “persons who work with victims may experience profound psychological effects; effects that can be disruptive and painful for the helper/counsellor and can persist for months or years after work with traumatised persons”. They labelled this process “vicarious traumatisation”. Stamm (1997, p. 5), after an extensive research of the literature, commented that “the great controversy about helping-induced trauma is not “can it happen”, but “what shall we call it?” She concluded that there is no consistently used term regarding the impact of being exposed to traumatic material as a consequence of being a mental health caregiver (Stamm, 1995). However, in this study the focus is on burnout.

In the burnout literature, Freudenberger (1990) reported that depression, cynicism, loss of vitality, insomnia, loss of intimacy with friends and family and detachment are significant signs of impairment. According to Meiselman (1990), obsessing about the client, having repetitive nightmares, withdrawing from other clients and family members, involvement in minor deviations from professional behaviour or blurring therapeutic boundaries, and finally, wishing that the case would terminate, are all signals that the counsellor is experiencing burnout. It has been proposed that the severity of a client’s problems, working with chronic

clients, time limitations and long-term employment in the mental health field are factors that place counsellors at risk (Maslach, 1982).

Burnout or cumulative stress is the state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by a depletion of the ability to cope with one's environment resultant from our responses to the ongoing demand characteristics (stress) of our daily lives (Maslach, 1982). Stress is thus seen as the result of both physical and emotional exhaustion. As stress increases and is prolonged over a period of time, the result can be burnout, as is often experienced by those who have been placed in caregiving roles (Esmond, 2000; Figley, 1995; Maslach, 1982).

Occupational stress and burnout do not overlap with other psychological constructs such as anxiety, frustration or depression (Maslach, 1982; Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). Maslach (1982) also stresses this when she felt the need to answer her critics when they accused her of "putting old wine in new bottles" that is, of relabelling depression at the workplace as burnout. Burnout has been shown to be more job related and situation specific than emotional distress such as depression (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Burnout constitutes a reaction to role stress and is quite prevalent among human service professionals who are unable to deal with an excessive demand on their energy, time and resources (Maslach, 1982). The term "burnout" has been applied across the helping professions and refers to the cumulative psychological strain of working with many different stressors. It often manifests as a gradual wearing down over time. Lazarus (1995) defines burnout as a response to chronic difficulty in controlling stress.

Despite extensive research on job-stress experienced by caregivers and the impact that engaging in counselling work with traumatised people have on counsellors (Beaton & Murphy, 1995; Figley, 1995; Maslach & Jackson, 1984), burnout in non-professional trauma-counsellors in a banking environment has never been investigated. Freudenberger's (1974) description of burnout depicted idealistic young men and women who, while working harder and harder, sacrificing their own health in the process of meeting ideals larger than themselves, only reaped few rewards for their efforts.

Human service providers are described by Schaufeli, Maslach and Marek (1993) as a population particularly vulnerable to burnout because of the nature of the interpersonal

processes in their work with clients and the organisational factors that generally accompany community-based social support organisations. It has been proposed that the severity of client's problems, working with chronic clients, time limitations and long-term employment in the mental health field are factors that place counsellors at risk (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Maslach views burnout, particularly the depersonalising aspect of it, very much as a social phenomenon, one stemming from and impacting upon the interactions between the person feeling burnt out and those around him/her.

Non-professional counsellors bring their own being into the counselling setting. "To every counselling session we bring our human qualities and the experience that have influenced us most ... this human dimension is one of the most powerful determinants of the counselling session that we have with clients" (Corey, 1996, p. 15). In bringing the instrument of self before clients, non-professional counsellors bring the living model of who they are and how they react in certain circumstances into the counselling model, as Van der Veer (1998, p. 68) explains: "Working with seriously traumatised clients has consequences for the personal functioning of the counsellor". Burnout can be predicted with reference to particular characteristics of the counsellor that either buffer him/her against the effect of burnout or increase his/her vulnerability (Buys & Kendall, 1998).

Working with traumatised clients has consequences for the personal functioning of the counsellor. Maslach (1982, p. 32) maintains that "a positive value is often placed on feeling what the other person feels without considering that such feelings can produce the emotional exhaustion of burnout when experienced over and over week in and week out, with a variety of people". Furthermore, it has been recognised more recently amongst counsellors that "those who have enormous capacity for feeling and expressing empathy tend to be more at risk of compassion stress" (Figley, 1995, p. 1).

Maslach (1978) found that, when looking for possible reasons for burnout, one is better off not to try to identify the "bad" people in an organisation but instead to uncover the characteristics of bad situations where "good" people function. Burke and Richardson (2000) explain that a comprehensive model of burnout has to (a) incorporate various individual and organisational variables that constitute sources of stress and demands leading to burnout and (b) incorporate consequences of burnout in terms of personal and work-related outcomes.

There are factors that may either alleviate or aggravate the experiences and reactions of an individual towards a stressor. In the behavioural sciences, these factors are referred to as moderators, which means that they moderate or affect the relation between the stressor and its consequences. One characteristic which might have a positive effect on the relation between a stressor and outcome (e.g. burnout) is an individual's sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987). For purposes of this research, the focus is on employees' sense of coherence and its possible moderating effect on the relationship between job demands, job resources and burnout. Sense of coherence is a broad-band resource (Hobfoll, 2001), which is negatively associated with burnout (Basson & Rothmann, 2002).

The general objective of this study was to develop and test a causal model of burnout for non-professional counsellors in South African banks.

### **Causes of burnout**

Past reviews of the burnout literature (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Moore, 2000; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000) view it as a consequence of one's exposure to chronic job stress. The chronic stresses that may lead to burnout be of a qualitative (emotional) and quantitative nature (work overload). Therefore burnout has been shown to be more job related and situation specific (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Lower levels of burnout would be expected in work situations that allow employees to experience success and thus feel efficacious, namely under job and organisational conditions that provide opportunities to experience challenge, control, feedback of results and support from supervisors and co-workers (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). Leiter (1988) finds that demands in the work environment lead to emotional exhaustion, which then leads to feelings of depersonalisation. Psychologists maintain that emotionally demanding work and emotional exhaustion are the hallmarks of burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996).

Furthermore, a work situation with chronic, overwhelming demands that contribute to exhaustion or cynicism is likely to erode an individual's sense of accomplishment or effectiveness. Also, it is difficult to gain a sense of efficacy when feeling exhausted or when distancing oneself mentally from a job. In some situations the lack of efficacy seems to arise more clearly from a lack of relevant resources, while exhaustion and cynicism appears from the presence of work overload and social conflict (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Some jobs are more prone to burnout than others. When performance expectations and roles are unclear, the risk of burnout increases. Other contributors to burnout include workplace stressors that are many and varied, such as those associated with the job description itself, including excessive amounts of work, role conflicts, role ambiguity and the perception of being unfairly treated as well as autonomy, inadequate feedback, lack of participation in decision making and lack of responsibility, low opportunity to use skills and poor physical work conditions (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Rothmann, 2002; Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

The extent to which individuals perceive that they have been treated unfairly should contribute to them experiencing more distress, including burnout (Greenglass, 2001). It is important to find a match between the counsellor's skills and experience and requirements of the task so that a challenge exists for the counsellor, while at the same time it is not exploiting or unmanageable. According to Dollard, Rogers, Cordingley and Metzger (1997, 1998) it is important to have good work practices and policies for "volunteers". Two main points were raised here relating to the need for policies and procedures and the opportunity for volunteers to undergo training.

It has been acknowledged that, irrespective of the personal characteristics of the counsellor, particular organisational demands are more likely to engender burnout than others (Buys & Kendall, 1998). According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), organisational stressors can be divided into two groups, namely job demands and lack of job resources. Job demands refer to those aspects of the job that require sustained or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2000). Job resources refer to those aspects of the job that may be functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands at the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001).

According to Schaufeli, Van Dierendonck and Van Garp (1996), counsellors pursue reciprocity in interpersonal and organisational relationships according to what they invest and gain from the relationship. These gains should be proportional to the investment and gains of the other party in the relationship. It is thus likely that a lack of reciprocity develops, in which counsellors feel that they continuously invest much more in the relationship than their

recipient/organisation, or where they feel that they receive less in return. This may eventually deplete their emotional resources and lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and feelings of lack of accomplishment and ultimately burnout (Munnik & Simbayi, 2001). Therefore, experiencing rewards and other positive personal consequences should be considered in a causal model of burnout of non-professional counsellors.

Other organisational factors that contribute to burnout are characteristics associated with bureaucratic organisations and emotionally demanding relationships with clients. Poor team cohesion and interpersonal conflicts at work also contribute to burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). Organisations increasingly need the creativity and involvement of their employees. On the other hand, there are major organisational factors that interfere with the employee's capacity to be engaged with their work. Job burnout is the outcome of this mismatch between workers and the workplace (e.g. values, job expectations and workload) (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The greater the gap or mismatch between the person and the job, the greater the likelihood of burnout.

Cherniss (1980) found that "sources of strain" for professionals include mistrust, organisation conflict, rigid role structure and isolating work practices. These factors lead Cherniss (1980, p. 78) to conclude that it is a "sense of helplessness in the face of failure that is the major contributor to burnout". Leiter (1988), like the others (Maslach, 1982; Pines & Aronson, 1988), has found that demands in the work environment lead to emotional exhaustion, which in turn leads to feelings of depersonalisation.

An individual's sense of coherence may either alleviate or aggravate his or her reactions towards a stressor. Antonovsky (1991) defined the concept of *sense of coherence* as "... a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement" . The definition of sense of coherence includes three dimensions that represent the concept, namely comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987).

- *Comprehensibility* refers to the extent to which one perceives stimuli from the internal and external environment as information that is ordered, structured and consistent. The stimuli are perceived as comprehensible and make sense on a cognitive level.
- *Manageability* refers to the extent to which individuals experience events in life as situations that are endurable or manageable, or even as new challenges.
- *Meaningfulness* refers to the extent to which one feels that life is making sense on an emotional and not just a cognitive level.

Sense of coherence is a coping resource that is presumed to mitigate life stress by affecting the overall quality of one's cognitive and emotional appraisal of the stimuli that impact on one. A strong sense of coherence is negatively related to measures of negative affectivity, such as anxiety and neuroticism (Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Frenz, Carey & Jorgenson, 1993) and job stress (Feldt, 1997). A strong sense of coherence is also related to competence and life satisfaction (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990), general well-being (Feldt, 1997), emotional stability (Mlonzi & Strümpfer, 1998) and successful coping with life stress (McSherry & Holm, 1994).

Levert, Lucas and Ortlepp (2000) reported significant correlations between two components of burnout (exhaustion and depersonalisation) and sense of coherence in a group of psychiatric nurses in South Africa. Gilbar (1998) found significant correlations between social workers' sense of coherence and exhaustion ( $r = -0,30$ ), as well as their sense of coherence and personal accomplishment ( $r = -0,34$ ). Rothmann, Malan and Rothmann (2001) also found significant correlations between sense of coherence and exhaustion ( $-0,56$ ), depersonalisation ( $-0,41$ ) and personal accomplishment ( $0,48$ ). Strümpfer (1990) indicated that an individual with a strong sense of coherence will be able to understand the nature and dimensions of an acute stressor and will be able to cope through applying resources within that individual or other individuals' control rather than becoming helpless.

The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

H1: Job demands will predict emotional exhaustion, which will lead to depersonalisation and low personal accomplishment.

H2: Sense of coherence will moderate the relationship between job demands, job resources, personal rewards and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the objectives of this research. According to Burns and Grove (1997) cross-sectional designs are appropriate where groups of subjects at various stages of development are studied simultaneously, while the survey technique of data collection gathers information from the target population by means of questionnaires. This design is also suitable for the development and validation of questionnaires (McGuigan, 1997; Shaugnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

### **Study population**

Data was collected from non-professional counsellors employed by three of the major banks in South Africa. These employees were from all the provinces in the country and do line or staff work on clerical, supervisory, managerial and specialist level. Of the 295 eligible participants, 168 participated in the study. However, only 165 questionnaires could be used. Table 1 presents some of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Percentage
<b>Position</b>	Clerical	9,32
	Supervisory	11,80
	Managerial	39,13
	Specialist	39,75
<b>Province</b>	Eastern Cape	4,09
	Free State	6,81
	Gauteng	53,9
	KwaZulu Natal	13,63
	Limpopo	2,84
	Mpumalanga	3,97
	Northern Cape	1,70
	North West	3,97
	Western Cape	9,09
<b>Education</b>	Grade 10	1,83
	Grade 12	17,07
	Certificate	11,59
	Diploma	21,95
	Degree	15,85
	Post-graduate degree	31,71
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21,60
	Female	78,40
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	15,53
	Engaged or in close relationship	6,21
	Married	54,66
	Divorced	13,04
	Separated	3,73
	Widow/Widower	3,73
	Remarried	3,11
<b>Home Language</b>	Afrikaans	50,62
	English	40,74
	Black Language	8,64

The sample was mostly female (78,40%), married and had a high school education. The mean age of participants was 38 years, while the mean length of experience as a non-professional counsellor was 5,8 years and the mean number of years of experience in the current working position were 6,2. The type of counselling in which the counsellors were engaged was trauma

(71,42%), HIV/Aids (12,60%), relationships (6,72%), death and bereavement (5,88%) and substance abuse (3,38%).

### **Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were addressed, such as gaining permission to undertake the research, being open and frank about the purpose of the research, establishing trustworthiness, establishing reciprocation with participants, giving participants feedback on observations and interpretations, and developing an awareness of personal values, perspectives and potential biases. The most important ethical issue which had to be addressed was confidentiality. It was largely for reasons of confidentiality that this research was focused at an organisational level and did not directly pinpoint individuals.

### **Procedures**

Following typical procedure, the researcher approached the directors of Human Resources Management at the three major banks to request all the non-professional counsellors on their staff to respond to the research instruments. Burnout research has long been done using this type of sample (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). A major consideration for burnout research is that it has to be done with participants who actually function as trauma counsellors, as it is not possible to conduct simulation studies of burnout. Such a restriction makes it difficult to find a large number of qualified participants. Informed consent from the participants was also sought and granted to the researcher.

### **Measuring battery**

The following measurement instruments were used in the empirical study:

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996) measures respondents' relationships with their work on a continuum from engagement to burnout. The MBI-HSS consists of 22 items and has three subscales. The factor-analysed subscales for the MBI-HSS include Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalisation (DEP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA) (Maslach et al., 1996). The MBI is a widely used instrument in human service professions. The scales have been

established as reliable and valid in a number of studies (Maslach, et al., 1996). Maslach and Jackson (1986) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 for emotional exhaustion, 0,79 for depersonalisation and 0,71 for personal accomplishment. Maslach and Jackson (1981) also reported test-retest reliability of 0,82 for emotional exhaustion, 0,60 for depersonalisation and 0,80 for personal accomplishment as well as 0,54 to 0,60 (applied after one year), which could be regarded as acceptable. In comparison a South African study by Pretorius (1990) reported alpha coefficients of 0,89 for emotional exhaustion, 0,71 for depersonalisation and 0,79 for personal accomplishment. All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale, ranging from 0 ("never") to 6 ("daily"). High scores on EE and DEP, and low scores on PA are indicative of burnout.

The Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ) (Antonovsky, 1987) was used to measure participants' sense of coherence. The OLQ consists of 29 items. Antonovsky (1993) reported alpha coefficients of the OLQ in 29 research studies varying between 0,85 and 0,91. Test-retest reliability studies reported coefficients between 0,41 and 0,97 (Antonovsky, 1993). Rothmann (2000) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,89 for the OLQ, which may be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Regarding the construct validity of the OLQ, it was found that there is a negative relationship between the OLQ and experienced stress and that the OLQ correlates negatively with the State Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait and the Beck Depression Inventory (Frenz, Carey & Jorgensen, 1993).

A Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) with 33 questions was developed, measuring stressors (job demands, job resources and personal consequences), as was found in the empirical study. All items are scored on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Examples of questions relating to the three stressors are the following: job demands (e.g. "I can handle my workload - day-to-day activities, as well as counselling"); job resources (e.g. "I feel I have adequate support from my superiors"); and personal consequences (e.g. "I have experienced personal growth as a result of my involvement as a counsellor").

### **Statistical analysis**

The SAS programme (SAS Institute, 2000) was used to do the statistical analysis. Principal-factor extraction with varimax rotation was performed through SAS FACTOR on the items of

the MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ before performing structural equation modelling. Principal components extraction was used prior to principal factors extraction to estimate the number of factors, presence of outliers and factorability of the correlation matrices. Furthermore, the Oblique method with a Promax rotation was used to determine the interfactor correlations of each measuring instrument. If correlations higher than 0,30 were found, this method was used to extract the factor structure.

Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations were used to assess the internal consistency of the MBI (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. According to studies by Clark and Watson (1995), the average inter-item correlation coefficient (which is an understandable and useable measure of internal consistency) is a recommendable index to supplement information supplied by coefficient alpha. It must be borne in mind though that unidimensionality of a scale cannot be ensured simply by focusing on the mean inter-item correlation – it is necessary to examine the range and distribution of these correlations as well.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to specify the relationships between the variables. The level of statistical significance was set at  $p \leq 0,05$ . Effect sizes were used to decide on the significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect), as identified by Cohen (1988), was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Canonical correlation was used to determine the relationships between hypothesised causal factors of burnout and burnout measurement (MBI). Canonical correlation is the correlation of two canonical variables, one representing a set of independent variables, the other a set of dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Whereas multiple regression is used for many-to-one relationships, canonical correlation is used for many-to-many relationships. Analogous with ordinary correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ), canonical correlation squared is the percentage of variance in the dependent set explained by the independent set of variables along a given dimension (Levine, 1977; Tabachnick & Linda, 1996; Thompson, 1984).

Standard multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the contribution of the independent variables to burnout. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), the correlation

between an independent variable and a dependent variable reflects variance shared with the dependent variable, but some of the variance may be predictable from other independent variables. The unique contribution of an independent variable to predicting a dependent variable can be assessed by semipartial correlation. Squared semipartial correlation ( $sr_i^2$ ) expresses the unique contribution of the independent variable to the total variance of the dependent variable. In standard multiple regression  $sr_i^2$  for an independent variable is the amount by which  $R^2$  is reduced if that independent variable is deleted from the regression equation. The difference between  $R^2$  and the sum of  $sr_i^2$  for all independent variables represent shared variance, variance that is contributed to  $R^2$  by two or more independent variables. Effect sizes were calculated with the following formula (Steyn, 1999):

$$f^2 = \frac{sr_i^2}{1 - R^2}$$

Steyn (1999) suggested the following guidelines in terms of effect size, namely  $f^2 = 0,01$  (small effect),  $f^2 = 0,15$  (medium effect) and  $f^2 = 0,35$  (large effect). In the present study a cut-off point of 0,15 (medium effect) was set for the practical significance of  $f^2$ .

## RESULTS

The descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and the inter-item correlation coefficients of the MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Inter-Item Correlations of the MBI-HSS, Orientation to Life and Counselling Experiences*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	R (Mean)	$\alpha$
MBI-HS						
EE	13,56	8,20	0,68	0,35	0,66	0,91
DP	5,00	4,51	0,97	0,34	0,31	0,70
PA	28,70	5,05	-0,95	1,25	0,35	0,75
Sense of Coherence						
OLQ	148,37	19,57	-0,54	0,51	0,27	0,91
Self-report Questionnaire						
Job Demands	19,70	2,87	-0,36	-0,53	0,34	0,71
Job Resources	32,45	5,39	-0,49	0,42	0,31	0,80
Personal Consequences	41,66	5,42	-0,43	-0,13	0,47	0,88

The scores of all the measuring instruments are normally distributed. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of all the measuring instruments are considered to be acceptable, compared to the guideline of a  $\alpha > 0,70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, with the exception of (EE), the inter-item correlations are considered acceptable compared to the guideline of  $0,15 < r < 0,50$  (Clark & Watson, 1995). It therefore appears that the measuring instruments which have been used, have acceptable levels of internal consistency.

The product-moment correlation coefficients between the MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

*Product-moment Correlation Coefficients between Burnout, Sense of Coherence, Job Demands, Job Resources and Personal Consequences*

Item	EE	DEP	PA	OLQ	JD	JR
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depersonalisation (Dep)	0,61**	-	-	-	-	-
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	-0,38*	-0,43*	-	-	-	-
Sense of Coherence (OLQ)	-0,54**	-0,50**	0,56**	-	-	-
Job Demands (JD)	-0,47*	-0,31*	0,29	0,35*	-	-
Job Resources (JR)	-0,46*	-0,40*	0,30*	0,45*	0,70**	-
Personal Consequences (PC)	-0,35*	-0,45*	0,36*	0,53**	0,58**	0,75**

\* Correlation is practically significant  $r > 0,30$  (medium effect)

\*\* Correlation is practically significant  $r > 0,50$  (large effect).

As can be seen in Table 3, emotional exhaustion is practically significantly related to depersonalisation (large effect). Emotional exhaustion is also practically significantly (negatively) related to sense of coherence (large effect) and personal accomplishment, job demands, job resources and personal consequences (all medium effects). Depersonalisation is practically significantly (negatively) related to personal accomplishment, sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences (all medium effects). Personal accomplishment is practically significantly related to sense of coherence (large effect) and job resources and personal consequences (medium effect). Sense of coherence is practically significantly related to personal consequences (large effect) and job demands and job resources (medium effect). Job resources and personal consequences are also practically significantly related to job demands (large effect); and job resources and job demands are potentially significantly related to each other (large effect).

When the MBI data on the three scales of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment) was analysed, none of the independent variables were shown to be significantly correlated. With the exception of age, which was practically significantly (negatively) related ( $r = -0,33$ ) to emotional exhaustion (medium effect) and counselling performance, which was practically significantly (negatively) related to depersonalisation ( $r = 0,36$ , medium effect).

Canonical correlation using SAS CANCORR was performed between a set of dispositional and situational variables and burnout. Shown in the table are correlations between the variables and canonical variables, standardised canonical variant coefficients within set variance accounted for by the canonical variants (percentage of variance), redundancies and canonical correlations.

The results of the canonical analysis of dispositional and situational variables and burnout are shown in Table 4. The first set included dispositional variables(sense of coherence) and situational variables (job demands, job resources and personal consequences). The second set included burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment).

Table 4

*Results of the Canonical Analysis: Dispositional and Situational Factors with Burnout*

	First Canonical Variate		Second Canonical Variate	
	Correlation	Coefficient	Correlation	Coefficient
Set 1: Dispositional/ Situational Factors				
Sense of Coherence	0,93	0,81	0,22	-0,01
Job Demands	0,65	0,32	-0,35	-0,80
Job Resources	0,67	0,17	-0,04	-0,50
Personal Consequences	0,63	-0,11	0,52	1,35
Percentage of variance	0,53		0,11	Total = 0,64
Redundancy	0,27		0,01	Total = 0,28
Set 2 : Burnout				
Emotional Exhaustion	-0,87	-0,59	0,38	1,12
Depersonalisation	-0,73	-0,16	-0,47	-1,03
Personal Accomplishment	0,77	0,48	0,31	0,29
Percentage of variance	0,63		0,16	Total = 0,79
Redundancy	0,32		0,02	Total = 0,34
Canonical correlation	0,72		0,35	

The first canonical correlation was 0,72 (53% overlapping variance); the second was 0,35 (11% overlapping variance). With the two canonical correlations included,  $F(12,418) = 14,32$ ,  $p < 0,0001$  for the first canonical correlation, and  $F(6,318) = 4,18$ ,  $p < 0,0005$  for the second canonical correlation. Total percentage of variance and total redundancy indicate that the first pair of canonical variants was moderately related, but the second pair was only related to some extent.

With a cut-off correlation of 0,30 the variables in the dispositional and situational set that were correlated with the first canonical variate were sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences. Amongst the burnout variables, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment correlated with the first canonical variate. The first pair of canonical variates indicates that sense of coherence (0,93), job demands (0,65), job resources (0,67) and personal consequences (0,63) are associated with low emotional exhaustion (-0,87), low depersonalisation (-0,73) and personal accomplishment (0,77).

Variables in the dispositional and situational factors set that correlated with the second canonical variate were job demands and personal consequences. Amongst the burnout variables, emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment correlated with the second canonical variate. The second pair of canonical variates indicates that low job demands (-0,35) and personal consequences (0,52) are associated with emotional exhaustion (0,38) low depersonalisation (-0,47) and personal accomplishment (0,31).

Table 5 shows the result of multiple regression analysis with emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation (as measured by the MBI-HSS) as dependent variables, and job demands and job resources (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ) were used as independent variables.

Table 5

*Standard Multiple Regression with Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation as Dependent Variables (DV) and Job Demands, Job Resources, Emotional Exhaustion and Sense of Coherence as Independent Variables (IV)*

Variable	Parameter	SE	T	P	$sr^2_i$
DV = Emotional Exhaustion; IV = Job Demands and Sense of Coherence $F = 58,74$ $R^2 = 0,4204$ $\sum sr^2_i = 0,28093$					
Intercept	59,22		13,88	0,0001	-
Job Demands	-0,87	0,18	-4,89	0,0001	0,08572
Sense of Coherence	-0,19	0,03	-7,39	0,0001	0,19521
DV = Emotional Exhaustion; IV = Job Resources and Sense of Coherence $F = 51,41$ $R^2 = 0,3882$ $\sum sr^2_i = 0,22582$					
Intercept	54,05	4,04	13,37	0,0001	-
Job Resources	-0,39	0,10	-3,77	0,0002	0,05361
Sense of Coherence	-0,19	0,03	-6,75	0,0001	0,17221
DV = Depersonalisation; IV = Emotional Exhaustion; Job Demands and Sense of Coherence $F = 39,47$ $R^2 = 0,4238$ $\sum sr^2_i = 0,17891$					
Intercept	8,29	3,55	2,34	0,0206	-
Emotional Exhaustion	0,29	0,04	6,45	0,0001	0,14908
Job Demands	0,01	0,11	0,08	0,9351	0,00023
Sense of Coherence	-0,05	-0,02	-2,89	0,0044	0,02981
DV = Depersonalisation; IV = Emotional Exhaustion; Job Resources and Sense of Coherence $F = 40,65$ $R^2 = 0,4310$ $\sum sr^2_i = 0,16628$					
Intercept	10,49	3,19	3,29	0,0012	-
Emotional Exhaustion	0,27	0,04	6,24	0,0001	0,13741
Job Resources	-0,08	0,06	-1,43	0,1541	0,00725
Sense of Coherence	-0,04	0,01	-2,47	0,0144	0,02162

\* Statistically significant –  $p < 0,0001$

Table 5 shows that job demands (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ) predict 42,04% of the variance in emotional exhaustion (as measured by the MBI-HSS). Stress due to job demands as well as sense of coherence contributed 8,57% ( $sr^2_i = 0,08573$ ) and 19,52 % ( $sr^2_i = 0,1952$ ) respectively to the variance in emotional exhaustion. The unique variances explained by the independent variables were not practically significant. Given that 42,04% of the variance in emotional exhaustion was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,4204$ ), and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,2809 (28,09%), it is clear that the remaining 13,95% of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

According to Table 5, job resources, or lack thereof, (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ) predict 38,82% of the variance in emotional exhaustion

(as measured by the MBI-HSS). Job resources, or lack thereof, as well as a sense of coherence contributed 5,36% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0536$ ) and 17,22 % ( $sr^2_i = 0,1722$ ) respectively to the variance in emotional exhaustion. The unique variances explained by the independent variables were not practically significant. Given that 38,82% of the variance in emotional exhaustion was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,3882$ ), and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,2258 (22,58%), it is clear that the remaining 16,24% of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

Regarding emotional exhaustion (as measured by the MBI-HSS), job demands (as measured by SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by OLQ), Table 5 indicates that these independent variables predict 42,38% of the variance in Depersonalisation (as measured by the MBI-HSS). Emotional exhaustion, job demands and sense of coherence contributed 14,90% ( $sr^2_i = 0,1420$ ), 0,002 % ( $sr^2_i = 0,00002$ ) and 2,98% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0298$ ) respectively to the variance in depersonalisation. The unique variances explained by the independent variables were not practically significant. Given that 42,38% of the variance in depersonalisation was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,4238$ ) and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,01789 (17,89%), it is clear that the remaining 24,49% of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

In Table 5, emotional exhaustion (as measured by the MBI-HSS), job resources (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ) also predict 43,10% of the variance in depersonalisation (as measured by the MBI-HSS). Emotional exhaustion, job resources and sense of coherence contributed 13,74% ( $sr^2_i = 0,1374$ ), 0,72% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0072$ ) and 2,16% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0216$ ) respectively to the variance in depersonalisation. The unique variances explained by the independent variables were not practically significant. Given that 43,10% of the variance in depersonalisation was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,4310$ ), and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,1662 (16,62%), it is clear that the remaining 26,48% of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

The proposed model, including hypothesised relationships, was also tested with SEM analysis. Results indicated that the model did not fit adequately to the data,  $\chi^2 (7) = 126,18$ ; GFI = 0,86; RMSEA = 0,24; CFI = 0,79; IFI = 0,80 and TLI = 0,64. Inspection of the modification indices revealed that the fit between the model and the data could be further improved if covariation was allowed between the measurement errors of two stress

dimensions (job demands and job resources). It is important to note that items with identical rating scales often have measurement errors that are correlated (Byrne, 1989). This means that the fit of the proposed model can be improved if the measurement errors among the items of the subscales are considered. The revised model – including the covariation – shows a good fit,  $\chi^2 (7) = 17,52$ ; GFI = 0,97; RMSEA = 0,06; CFI = 0,99; IFI = 0,99 and TLI = 0,98. The final model is given in Figure 1.

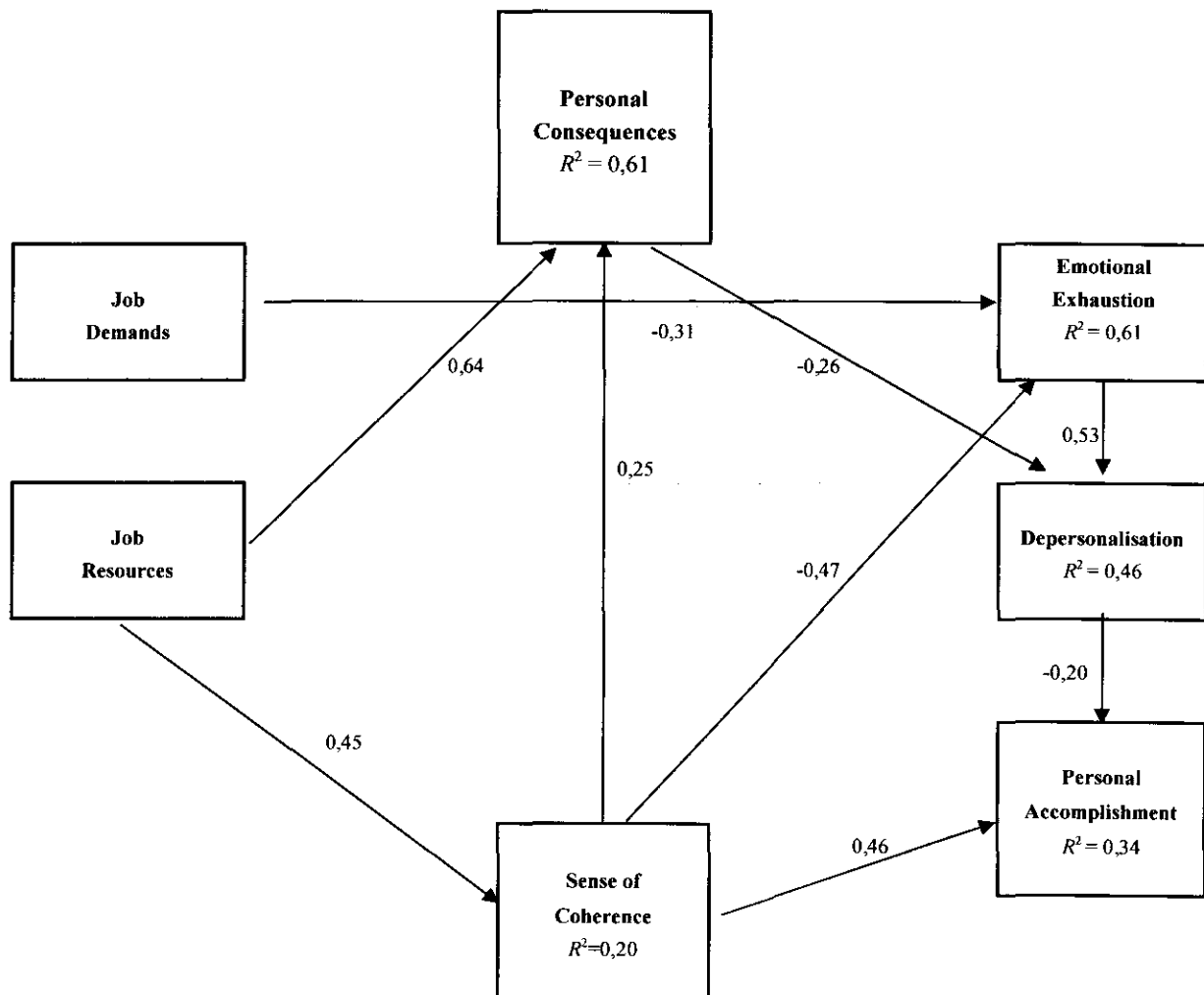


Figure 1. Maximum likelihood estimates for the burnout model,  $N = 168$ . Note. All factors loadings and path coefficients are significant at the  $p < 0,01$  level.

As can be seen in Figure 1, the paths from job resources to personal consequences and sense of coherence are significant. This indicates that sense of coherence moderates the effect of job resources on personal consequences. Therefore, perceiving positive personal

consequences from counselling depends on both job resources and the sense of coherence of counsellors. In addition the path coefficient from personal consequences to depersonalisation was significant. This means that the higher counsellors value the work they do and the more they get satisfaction out of it, the less they will experience depersonalisation. Also, personal consequences mediates the relationship between sense of coherence and depersonalisation.

Figure 1 shows that the paths from job demands and sense of coherence to exhaustion are significant, indicating independent effects of job demands and sense of coherence on exhaustion. Sense of coherence also mediates the effect of job resources on professional efficacy. Therefore, it seems that job resources only impacts positively on personal accomplishment if the counsellor has a strong sense of coherence. Furthermore, Figure 1 shows significant paths from job demands to emotional exhaustion and from emotional exhaustion to depersonalisation. Therefore, higher emotional exhaustion coincided with higher depersonalisation, while higher depersonalisation coincided with lower personal accomplishment. This suggests that counsellors get tired if there is high job demands and a lack of job resources and they have a weak sense of coherence. Because of that, they distance themselves from their clients, with the result that they experience depersonalisation, which has the effect of feelings of failure in their job and therefore lower personal accomplishment.

Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted while hypothesis 2 is partially accepted.

## **DISCUSSION**

The analysis of Pearson correlations in this study showed that sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences are negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Personal accomplishment was related to sense of coherence, job resources and personal consequences. This study has therefore found that sense of coherence is negatively related to burnout. This finding confirms the results of Basson and Rothmann (2002) and Wissing, De Waal and De Beer (1992).

The results of the canonical analysis showed that a combination of a weak sense of coherence, low job demands, low job resources and low personal rewards are associated with higher emotional exhaustion and personalisation and lower personal accomplishment. Job demands include potential stressors such as role overload, paperwork, time pressure and role

ambiguity. Job resources include support of supervisors and colleagues, recognition, training, policies and guidelines, compensation and availability of debriefing services. Personal accomplishment include the individual's attitude towards his/her organisation, support from the family, finding the role of counsellor rewarding (e.g. because of growth opportunities as well as opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills).

Demographic variables do not significantly predict any of the three aspects of burnout, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. It would therefore seem to suggest that factors other than demographic factors might be more important in determining levels of burnout. This theory is supported by another South African study with community mental health nurses (Munnik & Simbayi, 2001).

Standard multiple regression analyses showed that job demands and job resources uniquely explained 9% and 5,4% respectively of the variance in emotional exhaustion. However, sense of coherence uniquely contributed almost 20% of the variance in emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion explained most of the variance in depersonalisation.

The structural model confirms previous findings (Maslach & Leiter, 1997) that emotional exhaustion is caused by high job demands. Also, the results of this study suggest that a weak sense of coherence also has a strong independent effect on emotional exhaustion. Therefore, it seems that a non-professional counsellor with a weak sense of coherence will also tend to feel emotionally exhausted, independent of job demands. Job demands and sense of coherence predict 61% of the variance in emotional exhaustion of non-professional counsellors. Furthermore, it can be deduced that emotional exhaustion impacts on personal accomplishment via depersonalisation. Therefore, it seems that emotional exhaustion contributes to non-professional counsellors developing a mental distance (depersonalisation) towards their clients (i.e. treating them as objects).

However, depersonalisation is also related to perceiving positive consequences of counselling. The structural model showed that perceiving positive personal consequences is a result of having the resources to do your job and a strong sense of coherence (61% of the variance explained). In fact, it seems that sense of coherence moderates the effect of job resources on personal consequences. Perceiving positive consequences of counselling mediates the relationship between job resources and sense of coherence on the one hand and

depersonalisation (i.e. developing a mental distance towards clients) on the other hand. Personal consequences and emotional exhaustion predicts 46% of the variance in depersonalisation. Experiencing low personal accomplishment seems to be a result depersonalisation and a weak sense of coherence (34% explained variance).

Sense of coherence also protects the counsellors from developing low personal accomplishment. Counsellors with a strong sense of coherence experience less emotional exhaustion because stimuli from the environment are perceived as making cognitive sense, as under control of both the counsellor and legitimate others (manageable) and as motivationally relevant and meaningful. According to Hobfoll (2001), burnout results when individuals fail to acquire sufficient resources. Two interpretations are possible of the relationship between a weak sense of coherence and burnout. Firstly, individuals with better and more resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more inclined to gain better resources. Conversely, those with fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and are less able to gain resources. Sense of coherence is therefore regarded as a broad-band resource, while burnout could be the result of a lack of resources. It is also possible that individuals' sense of coherence is deteriorated by burnout (Rothmann, Jackson & Kruger, 2003).

Although the research design does not allow one to prove causal relationships, it seems likely that a strong sense of coherence could provide protection against burnout because it starts developing early in life, outside the work environment, and burnout (if it does occur) occurs only after an individual has been employed for some length of time (Strümpfer, 2002). A tentative conclusion is that sense of coherence, which is regarded as a "meaning-providing variable" (Strümpfer, 2002), may assist in the warding-off of burnout. Individuals with a strong sense of coherence could also experience burnout but will, in the long term, probably benefit even from that. They are likely to use the temporary condition of anguish as an opportunity for growth: for resolving pre-existing and present problems, for reorganising their life and work circumstances, and for going forward with newly discovered skills and perspectives on self and life (Strümpfer, 2002).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Job demands as a cause of exhaustion of non-professional counsellors should be addressed. The results showed that job demands have an independent effect on exhaustion. It is probably difficult for counsellors to address demands from their counselling role in addition to their normal workload.

Supervisors and counsellors should become aware of the causes and symptoms of burnout, as well as certain management actions that could alleviate the burnout of non-professional counsellors. This could help them to become aware of their own exhaustion, depersonalisation and low personal accomplishment, so that interventions could be taken before the effects of burnout become too serious. On an individual level counsellors should be trained in the use of stress reduction techniques and coping skills to facilitate their ability to manage stressors.

Sense of coherence is another target for intervention to prevent and/or manage burnout of non-professional counsellors. One possibility is to include sense of coherence as a variable in the selection of non-professional counsellors. However, more research is needed before this can be done, because this study was not conducted in a selection context. Another alternative is to contribute to the development of a strong sense of coherence of non-professional counsellors. They should be able to identify their counselling role within the greater whole, and as such the comprehensibility component of sense of coherence will be enhanced. With a degree of independence and freedom of choice in the counselling role, counsellors will regard their work as meaningful. Participation in decision-making will enhance the counsellors' feeling of membership and will contribute to the meaningfulness component of sense of coherence.

Management of counsellors involves a complex set of tasks and processes, requiring a range of skills and sensitivities on the part of the organisation's management. Recognition of the role played by the non-professional counsellor is an important aspect of management in terms of positively influencing counsellors' attitudes, as these roles are voluntary, without any extra monetary recognition. Counsellors experience recognition and valuing of their work as a positive and motivating influence. The incentive of regular training and up-skilling could also

have a significant impact upon counsellors' attitude levels. Several counsellors referred to their initial training in meaningful terms, describing it as comprehensive and valuable.

Counsellors' levels of adequacy could also be positively influenced by a combination of individual and group supervision. It is likely that individual supervision may be a primary source of role recognition for counsellors, whereas group supervision is seen as offering counsellors the opportunity not only to learn from one another but also to establish a social network and group identity. Furthermore, organisations who are willing to recognise and value their counsellors' work seem to be effective in sustaining the long-term commitment of counsellors, as well as in enhancing attitudes. The cumulative effects of role recognition, role support, opportunities for skills development, and the provision of different modalities of supervision all help to enhance the counsellors' attitude towards their work and as such contribute to alleviate stress and dissatisfaction, and consequent burnout. The potential value of organisational interventions is great, but these interventions are not easy to implement. They are often complex in the level of collaboration that is necessary and they require a considerable investment of time, effort and money.

The present study only investigated some of the influences of some variables. Future research should also focus on sense of coherence and burnout in other counselling and caregiver environments in South Africa. Furthermore, research is needed regarding engagement (which could be regarded as the "opposite" of burnout) for counselling environments. More research is also needed on the validity and structural equivalence of the measuring instruments for different cultural groups doing counselling work.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ARTICLE 3**

# THE VALIDATION OF THE UTRECHT WORK ENGAGEMENT SCALE FOR NON-PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS\*

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## ABSTRACT

While existing research on burnout has examined the negative side of experiences of exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment, recent work has begun to focus on dimensions of energy, involvement and effectiveness experienced at work. The objective of this research was to validate the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) for non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in South African banks. A cross-sectional survey was used. The sample consisted of 168 employees of the three major banks in South Africa. The UWES and a biographical questionnaire were administered. Structural equation modelling showed the use of a 1-factor model of engagement for non-professional counsellors, rather than a 3-factor model of Vigour, Dedication and Absorption.

## OPSOMMING

Terwyl bestaande navorsing ten opsigte van uitbranding die negatiewe ondervindinge van emosionele uitputting, depersonalisasie en verminderde persoonlike bereiking ondersoek, begin navorsing toenemend fokus op dimensies van energie, betrokkenheid en effektiwiteit soos ondervind in 'n werksomgewing. Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om die UTRECHT Werksbegeesteringskaal (UWES) vir nie-professionele beraders, wat hoofsaaklik traumaberading in Suid-Afrikaanse banke doen, te valideer. 'n Dwarssnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die steekproef het bestaan uit 168 werknemers van die drie vernaamste banke in Suid-Afrika. Die UWES en 'n biografiese vraelys is afgeneem. Strukturele vergelykingsmodellering het 'n 1-faktormodel van werkbegeestering bevestig, eerder as die algemeen aanvaarde 3-faktormodel van Energie, Toewyding en Absorpsie.

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The inherent paradox of revolutions is that they must inherit the power once loathed, and therefore ultimately face the challenge of practising an alternative vision that does not replicate the oppressive hegemony of its precedents. In order to resolve this paradox, the practice of an alternative vision must allow for and encourage the propagation of multiple paradigms, as well as maintain a critical, self-reflective “gaze” to combat the tendency to enshrine one’s privileged position, excluding or ignoring competing claims (Chesterton, 1990).

Positive psychology is a current movement in Psychology that proposes an alternative orientation to a discipline that has become enamoured with the study, classification and treatment of pathology (Seligman, 1998). Historically it was believed that negative things like anxiety and depression were authentic and human strengths like joy and optimism were copying mechanisms. A search of Psychological Abstracts of the past thirty years shows that while 54,040 articles have been written on depression, only 415 have addressed joy. According to Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith (1999), the number of articles examining negative feelings outnumbers the articles on positive feelings by a ratio of 17 to 1. Myers (2000) found a more favourable ratio of 14:1. He mentions further that since 1887, 8000 articles were published in Psychological Abstracts about anger, almost 57 000 about anxiety, 18 600 on fear and almost 70 000 about depression. This compared to only 851 of the published articles about joy, 2 958 about happiness, 416 about forgiveness, 671 on courage and 5 701 about satisfaction.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2001), only 6% of the articles published in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* examined positive aspects of health and well-being. The remaining 94% were related to burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, conflict and psychosomatic complaints. The positive social science of the 21st century may produce a useful side-effect in the form of the prevention of serious mental illnesses, for there is a set of human strengths that most likely buffer against mental illness: courage, optimism, interpersonal skill, work ethic, hope, responsibility, future-mindedness, honesty and perseverance, amongst others (Seligman, 1998). Modern psychology has therefore been preoccupied with healing.

Over the years crisis intervention (trauma counselling by non-professional counsellors) has proved an effective, frontline intervention for victims of all types of critical incidents,

especially the extreme stressors that may result in psychological trauma like a bank robbery (Everly & Mitchell, 1999). This intervention is defined as the provision of emergency psychological care to victims to assist them in returning to an adoptive level of functioning and to mitigate the potential negative impact of psychological trauma. This is also seen as an integral part of healing.

By selecting and training non-professional counsellors, the pool of potential counsellors is expanded beyond those who already have a formal counselling and/or health background. Evaluation of counselling provided by non-professional counsellors has usually revealed high levels of client satisfaction and high quality of counselling and counselling content (Ortlepp, 1998). The definition which is used in this study for non-professional counsellors are people working in other fields of banking (including people management, sales and credit) with or without a formal qualification. They have been trained on a counselling model for five days and are counselling under the supervision of a professional counsellor.

Traditionally, the focus of psychology has been on negative states rather than on positive ones. However, more attention is now being given to the study of human strengths and optimal functioning. This motion of “positive psychology” is seen as an alternative to the predominant focus on pathology and deficits. The aim of this new paradigm is to catalyse a change in psychology from a preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life only, to building the best qualities in life as well (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). To readdress the previous imbalance, the building of health and strength must be brought to the forefront in the treatment and prevention of mental illness. The emphasis must be on “what can go right” rather than on “what can go wrong” (Strümpfer, 2002).

The work of Antonovsky (1979, 1993) also supports this. He introduced the construct of *salutogenesis* (Latin *salus* = health, Greek *genesis* = origin), proposing that the origins of health rather than disease should be studied. Strümpfer (1995) argues that the construct of *solutogenises* should be broadened from a focus on health only, to fortigenises (Latin *fortis* = strong) referring to strength. Recent work of Strümpfer (2002) also focused on the fortigenic paradigm and its relation to burnout. He considered psychological constructs that could help understand alternatives to burnout, as well as helping people to move in the general direction of health. Wissing and Van Eeden (1997) also focused on the nature of psychological well-

being from a fortigenic perspective. They suggested that not only the origins of psychological well-being should be studied, but also the nature, manifestations and ways to enhance psychological well-being.

Well-being at work, like many other psychological phenomena, has mainly been discussed and studied from a problem-orientated pathological perspective. Thus, the study of well-being has actually focused on the lack of well-being (e.g. burnout, job stress). Viewed from the phenomenon of “positive psychology”, it is not surprising that the concept of burnout (which represents a negative psychological state) is being supplemented and enlarged by its positive antithesis of job engagement. Whereas burnout is a metaphor that is commonly used to describe a state or process of mental exhaustion (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998), engagement is defined as an energetic state in which the employee is dedicated to excellent performance at work and is confident of his or her effectiveness (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000).

Staying emotionally and physically healthy is as fundamental to the counsellor who wants to remain effective as it is to the traumatised victim who wants to lead a normal life again. Therefore, the concept of burnout has in recent years been supplemented and enhanced by the positive antithesis of job engagement, so that the full spectrum of a worker’s well-being is studied, running from negative (burnout) to positive (engagement) states (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

While existing research on burnout has examined the negative side of experiences of exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishments, recent work has begun to focus on dimensions of energy, involvement and effectiveness experienced at work. This positive side of the three dimensions appears to include a state of engagement with work in which individuals feel energetic, involved and effective.

The concept of engagement is also applicable to counselling. There has been a growing awareness in the last decade that the counselling profession can be hazardous to the physical and mental health of counsellors (Herman, 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Counsellors working in the field of trauma experience high levels of stress and exhibit considerable impairment (Figley, 1989; Herman, 1992). In their attempts to identify the sources of counselling stress and burnout, researchers have focused almost exclusively on the negative

effects of being involved in trauma counselling (Figley, 1989; Herman, 1992; Maslach, 1976, 1982; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). This resulted in an overall focus on stress and burnout in counselling and thus an absence of well-being. It is therefore also necessary to study counselling in a positive way. This could be done by focusing on the concept of work engagement or the different levels of engagement experienced by non-professional counsellors.

It is important to use a valid reliable instrument when work engagement is measured. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and found acceptable reliability for it. Two recent studies using confirmative factor analysis confirmed the factorial validity of the UWES (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, 2002). However, the UWES has not yet been standardised for non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in South-African banks and no information is available on its reliability and validity (Rothman, 2002). This makes it difficult to assess the levels of engagement of non-professional counsellors and to place research results in context. Therefore it is necessary to validate the UWES for non-professional counsellors doing trauma work.

The objective of this study therefore was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the UWES.

### **Work engagement**

Burnout has important consequences for non-professional counsellors. Both Cherniss (1995) and Maslach and Leiter (1997) have articulated a clear distinction between high and low burnout. High burnout results in physical and psychological difficulties which lead to lower productivity and eventual harm to the counsellor, the traumatised and the organisation in which they work. In contrast, low burnout results in the individual thriving and growing in their work.

Recently, the work on burnout has expanded internationally and has led to new conceptual models. The focus on work engagement, the positive antithesis of burnout, promises to yield new perspectives on the interventions to alleviate burnout. The social focus of burnout, the solid research basis concerning the syndrome, and its specific ties to the work domain make a

distinct and valuable contribution to counsellor's health and well-being. Current work on this concept has taken two different, but related, paths. Maslach and Leiter (1997) rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. Work that started out as important, meaningful and challenging becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling and meaningless. Energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness. These two researchers see engagement as characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy – the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced professional efficacy. By implication, engagement is assessed by the opposite pattern of scores on the three Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) dimensions – low scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and high scores on efficacy are indicative of engagement.

Schaufeli, who partly agree with the description of engagement by Maslach and Leiter (1997), has taken a different approach by defining and operationalising engagement in its own right. Although engagement is still conceptualised as the positive antithesis of burnout, it should be measured independently with different instruments (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). Furthermore, burnout and engagement should be considered as two prototypes of employee well-being that are part of a more comprehensive taxonomy constituted by the two independent dimensions of pleasure and activation. According to this framework, burnout is characterised by a combination of exhaustion (low activation) and cynicism (low identification), whereas engagement is characterised by vigour (high activation) and dedication (high identification) (Storm & Rothmann, in press).

Maslach and Leiter (1997) suggest that the three dimensions of burnout have a bipolar character and that burnout and engagement will show strong negative correlations. However, it is noted that a positive concept is measured by negative items (i.e. regarding exhaustion and cynicism). Although Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) also regard burnout and engagement as opposites, they believe that the two concepts should be measured independently. This makes it possible to empirically investigate the relationship between burnout and engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) argue that “feeling emotionally drained from one's work ‘once a week’ does by no means exclude that in the same week one might feel busting with energy”.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) two dimensions of engagement are logically related to burnout, namely vigour (exhaustion) and dedication (depersonalisation/cynicism). Vigour refers to the activation dimension of well-being, while dedication refers to identification with work/counselling. However, absorption and professional efficacy seems to be less related than the other dimensions, but both dimensions might also be regarded as components of engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2001) found that burnout and engagement are negatively related, sharing between 10% and 25% of their variance. In their study on police officials (N=2396), Storm and Rothmann (in press) found a canonical correlation of 0,51 between burnout and engagement. A moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0,42$ ) was found between cynicism and dedication. Vigour correlated negatively with exhaustion ( $r = -0,28$ ).

Based on this theoretical reasoning and after in-depth interviews with engaged employees, Schaufeli and his colleagues have defined engagement as a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment in employees/counsellors that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Against this background, engagement can be referred to as a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state, rather than a momentary and specific state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour.

Work engagement, as defined by Schaufeli, Salanova et al., (2002) consists of the following dimensions:

- Vigour: Refers to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, the ability to not be easily fatigued and persistence in the face of difficulties.
- Dedication: Refers to a strong involvement in one's work, accompanied by feelings of enthusiasm and significance and by a sense of pride and inspiration.
- Absorption: Refers to a pleasant state of total emission in one's work, which is characterised by time passing quickly and being unable to detach oneself from the work.

According to Maslach et al. (2001), work engagement is also distinct from other established constructs such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement, in existing organisational psychology. With organisational commitment the focus is on the

organisation, whereas engagement focuses on the work itself. It therefore refers to an employee's allegiance to the organisation that provides employment. Job satisfaction is the extent to which work is a source of need fulfilment and contentment, or a means of freeing employees from hassles or dissatisfactions, and does not encompass the person's relationship with the work itself. Job involvement, on the other hand, is similar to the involvement aspect of engagement with work, but does not include the energy and effectiveness dimensions. Thus, engagement provides a more complex and thorough perspective on an individual's relationship with work and therefore also counselling.

### **Measurement of work engagement**

Whereas Maslach and Leiter (1997) hold the opinion that engagement is adequately measured by the opposite profile of the MBI scores, Schaufeli, Salanova et al., (2002) argue that, by using the MBI for measuring engagement, it is impossible to study its relationship with burnout empirically. Although they agree that engagement is the positive antithesis of burnout, they definitely state that the measurement and structures of the two concepts differ.

To confirm their statement, Schaufeli and his colleagues (2002) developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The UWES, seen as a self-report measure, consists of 17 items. It urges respondents to indicate the frequency with which they have experienced each feeling/item during the work-year on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always/every day).

The conceptualisation of work engagement, as measured by the UWES, relates to it as a multidimensional construct, as it refers to three distinct but related dimensions that are viewed as a single theoretical construct, namely work engagement. The three dimensions measured through the UWES are vigour (6 items), dedication (5 items) and absorption (6 items). Examples of questions asked for each of the three dimensions are:

- Vigour – “I feel strong and vigorous in my job.”  
“I am bursting with energy in my work.”
- Dedication - “I’m enthusiastic about my job.”  
“My job inspires me.”

- Absorption - “I feel happy when I’m engrossed in my work.”  
“It is difficult to detach myself from my job.”

As far as the psychometric qualities of the UWES are concerned, preliminary results based on Spanish and Dutch samples show that the scales of the three engagement dimensions have sufficient internal consistencies (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002). For samples one (314 undergraduate students) and two (619 employees) respectively, the Cronbach  $\alpha$ 's were as follows: vigour (8 items),  $\alpha = 0,68$  and  $0,80$ ; dedication (8 items),  $\alpha = 0,91$  (both samples); absorption (7 items),  $\alpha = 0,73$  and  $0,75$  respectively.

In the students' sample, the value of  $\alpha$  could be improved for vigour when three items were eliminated ( $\alpha = 0,78$ ). The three scales are moderately to strongly related (mean  $r = 0,63$  in sample 1 and mean  $r = 0,70$  in sample 2). Furthermore, the fit of the hypothesised three-factor model to the data is superior to a one-factor solution (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Pinto et al., 2002). In addition, all correlations with the MBI burnout scales are negative, with the correlations between engagement and efficacy being the strongest. Burnout is particularly related to job demands, such as work overload and emotional demands, In contrast, engagement is particularly related to job resources, such as job control, availability of feedback and learning opportunities (Maslach et al., 2001).

From the literature search it appears that only one study (Storm & Rothmann, in press) was done in South Africa on the internal consistency, factorial validity, structural equivalence and bias of the UWES. Storm and Rothmann (in press) tested the full hypothesised 3-factor model consisting of all 17 items. Subsequently the model was modified, followed by a test of a 1-factor model of engagement. SEM analyses showed that the 3-factor solution was not admissible. After removing two items (item 4 and 14) because of the high standardised residuals of the two items and allowing for two correlated errors of two item pairs, a better fitting model was obtained. However, it was clear that this model has still room for improvement. There were high correlations between the three engagement dimensions. Vigour and dedication showed the highest correlation of  $0,97$ , followed by vigour and absorption with a correlation of  $0,96$ , and dedication and absorption with a correlation of  $0,90$ . Cronbach alpha coefficients of the scales were acceptable, compared to the guideline of

$\alpha > 0,70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Alpha coefficients of 0,78 (vigour), 0,89 (dedication) and 0,78 (absorption) were found for the UWES.

Taking everything into account it seems that broadening the scope by including engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout, either by using the full range of the MBI scores instead of concentrating only on the negative pole, or by using the alternative UWES engagement questionnaire, is a promising and exciting new avenue that contributes to the understanding of employees' well-being.

The above discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is an internally consistent and valid measurement for the work engagement construct for non professional trauma counsellors in a financial environment.

H2: Work engagement, as measured by the UWES, is a three dimensional construct.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the objectives of this research. In the cross-sectional design, a sample is drawn from a population at a particular point in time (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). According to Burns and Grove (1993) cross-sectional designs are most useful where groups of subjects at various stages of development are studied simultaneously.

### **Study population**

Data was collected from non professional counsellors employed by three of the major banks in South Africa. These employees were from all the provinces in the country and do line or staff work on clerical, supervisory, managerial and specialist level. Of the 295 eligible participants, 168 participated in the study. However, only 165 questionnaires could be used. Table 1 presents some of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Percentage
<b>Position</b>	Clerical	9,32
	Supervisory	11,80
	Managerial	39,13
	Specialist	39,75
<b>Province</b>	Eastern Cape	4,09
	Free State	6,81
	Gauteng	53,9
	KwaZulu Natal	13,63
	Limpopo	2,84
	Mpumalanga	3,97
	Northern Cape	1,70
	North West	3,97
	Western Cape	9,09
<b>Education</b>	Grade 10	1,83
	Grade 12	17,07
	Certificate	11,59
	Diploma	21,95
	Degree	15,85
	Post-graduate degree	31,71
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21,60
	Female	78,40
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	15,53
	Engaged or in close relationship	6,21
	Married	54,66
	Divorced	13,04
	Separated	3,73
	Widow/Widower	3,73
	Remarried	3,11
<b>Home Language</b>	Afrikaans	50,62
	English	40,74
	Black Language	8,64

The sample was mostly female (78,40%), married and had a high school education. The mean age of participants was 38 years, while the mean length of experience as a non-professional counsellor was 5,8 years and the mean number of years experience in the current working position were 6,2. The type of counselling in which the counsellors were engaged was trauma

(71,42%), HIV/Aids (12,60%), relationships (6,72%), death and bereavement (5,88%) and substance abuse (3,38%).

### **Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were addressed, such as gaining permission to undertake the research, being open and frank about the purpose of the research, establishing trustworthiness; establishing reciprocation with participants, giving feed-back on observations and interpretations to participants, and developing an awareness of personal values, perspectives and potential biases. The most important ethical issue which had to be addressed was confidentiality. It was largely for reasons of confidentiality that this research was focused at an organisational level and did not directly pinpoint individuals.

### **Procedures**

Following typical procedure, the researcher approached the directors of Human Resource Management at the three major banks to request all the non-professional counsellors on their staff to respond to the research instruments. Burnout research has long been studied by means of this type of sample (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). A major consideration for burnout research is that it has to be done with participants who actually function as trauma counsellors, as it is not possible to conduct simulation studies of burnout. Such a restriction makes it difficult to find a large number of qualified participants. Informed consent from the participants was also sought and granted to the researcher.

### **Measuring battery**

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002) and a biographical questionnaire were used in the empirical study.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002) was used to measure levels of engagement of non-professional counsellors. Although engagement was initially viewed as the positive antithesis of burnout, the newly developed scale concluded that this construct can be operationalised in its own rights. The UWES includes three dimensions namely, vigour, dedication and absorption, which are scored on a seven-point

frequency scale, ranging from 0 (“never”) to 6 (“every day”). Examples of questions relating to the three dimensions are the following: vigour – “I am bursting with energy in my work”; dedication – “I find my work full of meaning and purpose”; absorption - “ When I am working, I forget everything else around me”. Engaged individuals are characterised by high levels of vigour and dedication as well as elevated levels of absorption. In a study with police officials (N=2396), reliability coefficients for the three subscales have been determined between 0,68 and 0,91. The alpha coefficient (varying between 0,78 and 0,89 for the three subscales) could be improved by eliminating a few items without substantially decreasing the scale’s internal consistency (Storm & Rothmann, in press).

A biographical questionnaire was developed to gather information on the demographic characteristics of the participants. Information gathered included the province in which counselling is done, the type of counselling, age, current working position, number of years of experience as a non-professional counsellor, level of education, gender, marital status, home language, number of hours of counselling, satisfaction with the role of counsellor, health status and adequacy and accessibility of support network. Participants also had the option to supply their names and contact details, but this was not compulsory.

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SAS programme (SAS Institute, 2000). Firstly, mean standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were determined to analyse the data. To determine the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments, Chronbach alpha coefficients, mean inter-item correlations and their distribution scales, as well as confirmatory factor analysis was carried out by means of the AMOS-programme (Arbuckle, 1997).

Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. According to studies by Clark and Watson (1995), the average inter-item correlation coefficient (which is an understandable and useable measure of internal consistency) is a recommended index to supplement information supplied by coefficient alpha. It must be borne in mind though that unidimensionality of a scale cannot be ensured simply by focusing on the mean inter-item correlation – it is necessary to examine the range and distribution of these correlations as well.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) with the maximum likelihood method of the AMOS programme (Arbuckle, 1997; Kline, 1998) was used to test the factorial validity of the UWES. SEM as a statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory or hypothesis-testing approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on a specific phenomenon (Byrne, 2001; Schumaker & Lomax, 1996). When model-fit with the data is computed, however, an exploratory factor analysis approach is taken in the post-hoc analysis of the data.

With SEM analysis, the hypothesised structural (unobserved, latest factorial) relationships are empirically tested by means of goodness-of-fit with the sample data. Furthermore, the degree of correspondence between the covariance matrices of the hypothesised theoretical structure and the empirical data is compared by means of the  $\chi^2$  statistics and several goodness-of-fit indices. The  $\chi^2$  statistic is also sometimes referred to as a badness-of-fit statistic, as smaller values indicate better fit (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

Indices of fit that was utilised in this study are the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The GFI indicates the relative amount of variance and co-variance in the sample, predicted by estimates of the population. Values usually vary between 0 and 1, with values higher than 0,90 indicating good model fit with the data. The AGFI indicates the relative amount of variance accounted for by the model, corrected for the number of parameters that need to be estimated (degrees of freedom) in the model. Both these values are classified as absolute values, as they compare the hypothesised model with no model at all (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Although both indices vary between 0 and 1, the distribution of AGFI is not known, and consequently no critical value can be obtained (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986). The PGFI adds to a more realistic interpretation of the model but combines the issue of parsimony and goodness-of-fit by taking the number of variables needed to be determined into account (Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bollen, Lind & Stilwell, 1989). Although this index generally demonstrates lower levels in comparison to the other fit indices at the 0,50 level, levels in

comparison to values higher than 0,90, values  $> 0,80$  are considered to be more appropriate (Byrne, 2001).

The NFI is used to measure global model fit giving an indication of the extent to which the hypothesised model compares with the most restricted model where relationships between variables are zero (independent model). This index also varies between 0 and 1 and tends to overestimate fit in smaller samples. The CFI also compares the hypothesised and independent models, but takes sample size into account. The TLI is a relative measure of colouration, explained by the hypothesised model which has been specifically designed for the assessment of factor models (Tucker & Lewis, 1973). Critical values for good model fit have been recommended for the NFI, CFI and TLI to be acceptable above the 0,90 level (Bentler, 1992), although recently Hu and Bentler (1999) recommended a cut-off value of 0,95.

To address the problems associated with samples size, Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggested the use of RMSEA, as well as the 90 confidence interval of the RMSEA. This provides an indication of the overall amount of error in the hypothesised model-data fit, relative to the number of estimated parameters (complexity) in the model. The recommended acceptable levels of the RMSEA should be 0,05 or less, but should not exceed 0,08. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested a value of 0,06 to indicate acceptable fit, whereas MacCullum, Brown and Sugawara (1996) recently suggested that values between 0,08 and 0,10 indicate mediocre fit and values above 0.10 poor fit.

Schumacker and Lomax (1996) and Kline (1998) have each argued that there is no straightforward answer to what constitutes good fit in SEM. Furthermore, Kline had argued that good fit might be easy to achieve, but it must be accompanied by meaningful model-data correspondence. It is possible to find several favourable values of overall fit indices, but specific portions of the model might not be fitting the data well. Given the lack of consensus regarding the best measure of fit, the more criteria a model satisfies, the better its fit.

## **RESULTS**

Structural equation modelling (SEM) methods as implemented by AMOS (Arbuckle, 1997) were used to test the factorial model for the UWES. Before performing SEM, the frequency distribution of the items of the UWES was checked in order to assess deviations from

normality and multivariate outliers were removed. It was assumed that the  $\chi^2$  goodness-of-fit statistics are not likely to be inflated if the skewness and kurtosis for individual items do not exceed the critical values of 2.00 and 7.00 respectively (West, Finch & Curran, 1995).

The data analyses were performed as follows: Firstly, a quick overview of model fit was obtained by considering the overall  $\chi^2$  value, together with its degrees of freedom and probability value. Global assessments of model fit were based on several goodness-of-fit statistics (GFI, AGFI, PGFI, NFI, TLI, CFI and RMSEA). Secondly, given the findings of an ill-fitting initially hypothesised model, analyses proceeded in an exploratory mode. Possible misspecifications as suggested by the so-called modification indices were looked for and eventually a revised, respecified model was fitted to the data.

### ***Hypothesised model***

In this procedure, the 17-item theoretical model was tested. Firstly the hypothesised 17-item 3-factor UWES model was fitted to the data. In Table 2 the fit statistics between the original model and the empirical data are provided.

Table 2  
*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for the Hypothesised 3-factor UWES Model*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Default Model	413,83	3,57	0,73	0,64	0,55	0,67	0,81	0,71	0,12

The statistically significant  $\chi^2$  value of 413,83 (df = 116;  $p = 0,00$ ) revealed an unacceptable fit in the originally hypothesised UWES model. Although this cannot be the only indicator of model fit, as Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993) pointed out that the use of  $\chi^2$  is based on the assumption that the model holds exactly in the population, which is a stringent assumption.

Furthermore, the hypothesised model (Default Model) was not good from a practical perspective. The GFI value lower than 0,90, PGFI value lower than 0,80, NFI < TLI and CFI values lower than 0,95 and the RMSEA value higher than 0,05 are indicative of failure to confirm the hypothesised model.

Consequently, the one-dimensional model, which assumes that all 17 UWES items load on one single factor, was tested. Table 3 provides a summary of the fit statistics for the hypothesised 1-factor model (Model 1).

Table 3

*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for the Hypothesised 1-factor UWES Model*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model I	429,46	3,61	0,72	0,64	0,56	0,79	0,82	0,84	0,12

According to Table 3, the SEM analysis yielded a fair to marginally fit at most between the theoretical and empirical data. The statistically significant  $\chi^2$  value of 429,94 (df = 119;  $p = 0,00$ ) and the relatively low SEM values indicate possible existing misspecifications in the theoretical model. Therefore it could be modified for model-fit improvement in the post-hoc analysis.

Firstly, by studying the standardised regression weights, item 16 demonstrated a comparatively low value of 0,18. Further inspection of the standardised residual covariances confirmed the problematic nature of item 14 and item 16, with loadings of 2,33 and 2,82 respectively. Standardised residuals are analogous to z-scores and make for easy interpretation, because numerically they represent the number of standard deviations. The observed residuals are from the zero residuals that would exist in a perfect model fit with the data (Byrne, 2001). Having identified possible areas of misspecification in the model, modification of the theoretical model and fit with the empirical data is carried out in the post-hoc analysis process.

*Post-hoc analysis*

Given rejection of the initially postulated model, the focus shifted from model test to model development (exploratory factor analysis). The second theoretical model is specified by deleting items 14 and 16, due to their misspecification in the first hypothesised theoretical model. The exploratory phase of this research therefore includes only 15 items of the original UWES scale in the second 1-factor model-data fit process. The results are given in Table 4.

Table 4

*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Model 2 of the UWES 1-factor Structure*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 2	322,24	3,58	0,76	0,69	0,57	0,82	0,84	0,86	0,12

Although the various fit indices improved, compared to those for the initial 1-factor model (see Table 3), there is still some evidence of misfit in the model. For example, the GFI is still lower than 0,90; the PGFI is lower than 0,80 and the RMSEA value is higher than 0,05. Modification indices (MI) were considered to pinpoint further areas of misspecification in the model. The constrained parameters exhibiting the highest degree of misfit involved the error covariance matrix and represent a correlated error between item 1 and item 13 (MI = 23,70), as well as between item 4 and item 13 (MI = 23,76). Compared with MI values for all other covariance parameters, these values are high and clearly in need of respecification. Based on modification indices and theoretical considerations, Model 2 was respecified.

The third theoretical model is specified by deleting item 13 as well. The exploratory phase of this research therefore now includes only 14 items of the original UWES in the second 1-factor model-data fit process. The results are given in Table 5.

Table 5

*Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Model 3 of the UWES 1-factor Structure*

Model	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	PGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Model 3	199,31	2,69	0,84	0,78	0,59	0,88	0,90	0,92	0,10

According to the fit statistics in Table 5 an overall better fit with the data is obtained by the third respecified 1-factor model. The  $\chi^2$  value of 199,31 (df = 74;  $p = 0,00$ ) is significantly higher than that of the first 1-factor model fitted to the data. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit statistics indicate better levels of model fit for the GFI, AGFI, PGFI although the levels are not at the indicated accepted norms yet. The NFI is approaching 0,90 and the TLI and CFI is on and above the acceptable levels of 0,90. The RMSEA value is also 0,10 and this is indicative of acceptable fit.

Since model fit was determined to be acceptable and the results agreed with theoretical assumptions underlying the structure of the UWES (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002), no further modifications of the model were deemed necessary.

The descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations of the 1-factor UWES are given in Table 6.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics, Alpha Coefficients and Inter-item Correlation of the UWES*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	$r(\text{mean})$	$\alpha$
UWES(Tot)	66,61	10,28	-0,78	0,81	0,50	0,93

The scores on the UWES are distributed normally. The Cronbach alpha is acceptable at 0,93, compared to the guideline of  $\alpha > 70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The inter-item correlation is also considered acceptable, compared to the guideline of  $0,15 < r < 0,50$  (Clark & Watson, 1995), and there are acceptable levels of internal consistency.

These findings provide support for Hypothesis 1, while Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The psychometric properties of the UWES were tested in this study, specifically for non-professional trauma counsellors in the financial environment in South Africa. The objective was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the UWES.

In order to obtain a factor structure that best represents the UWES, exploratory factor analyses were used to assess the factorial structure. However, the solution yielded factors that could not be interpreted meaningfully. Although research findings in different samples, groups and countries (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Salanova et al. 2002; Storm & Rothmann, in press) confirm the 3-factor structure of the UWES for the three scales of the UWES, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, results which were obtained by using the structural equation modelling approach supported a 1-factor structure for non-professional counsellors.

The 1-factor model, which included a specification of correlated errors to account for the shared domain-specific variances, fitted the data better than the 3-factor model. The revised 1-factor model of the UWES fitted the data, albeit after removing of three unsound items (item 13, 14 and 16), based on their high standardised residuals, and after allowing some error terms to correlate. Error terms were also allowed to correlate in order to improve model fit (Byrne, 2001).

These results are in contrast to the findings of Schaufeli, Martinez et al., (2002). Although their hypothesised 3-factor model also did not fit well to the data of either of the three samples in their study, the fit of a 1-factor model was inferior in comparison with that of a 3-factor model in all three samples. It must be mentioned that they allowed error terms to correlate in all three subscales.

In examining the factor structure, items 13, 14 and 16 (in the 1-factor model) showed high standardised residual errors as well as high modification indices. These findings suggest that the items may require either deletion or content modification, in which case the latter should rather be considered. The problems with some of these items may be related to the understanding or misinterpretation of some of the words (e.g. *vigorous*, *immersed* and *resilient*) by some of the respondents. This is highly likely, because more than 60% of the sample did not speak English as their mother-tongue.

The specification of correlated error terms for the purpose of achieving a better-fit with a model is generally not an acceptable practice. However, previous research with psychological constructs in general (e.g. Jöreskog, 1982; Newcomb & Bentler, 1988), and with measuring instruments in particular (Byrne, 2001), has demonstrated that the specification of correlated errors can often lead to substantially better fitting models. Therefore, it was considered more realistic to incorporate the correlated errors in this study, rather than to ignore their presence.

For the present study the internal consistency of the scales was found to be satisfactory and in line with reported findings in the literature. Although the deletion of items 13, 14 and 16 was part of the post-hoc analysis, this should be regarded as a model specification for the sole purpose of data fitting and validation of this is needed in future studies.

Notwithstanding the motivation for deleting variables from the UWES for reasons of bias and model-fit improvement, it is disconcerting that model parsimony is sacrificed in the process. Relationships have thus been eliminated, which could be viewed as an erosion in meaning of work engagement construct. It is also possible, due to the relatively small sample size, that these findings could have been obtained by pure chance.

Important relationships between components of work engagement, antecedents and consequences may not be evident when the UWES subscales are combined. The three UWES subscales have been shown to have different correlations and relationships with various outcome variables (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). The present analysis does not elaborate the notion of distinct features of work engagement, but rather uses the existing scales to provide the broadest possible operationalisation of the work engagement construct. One of the main contributions of this research is that it confirms the use of the UWES for non-professional counsellors doing trauma work. This has significant implications for the design of intervention procedures, which could be aimed at ensuring that counsellors experience work engagement for longer.

It can thus be expected that the results of this study could serve as a standard for measuring engagement levels of non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in South Africa. The results show that the UWES is a suitable instrument (as a 1-factor structure) for measuring engagement of non-professional trauma counsellors in a financial environment in South Africa.

A limitation of this study was that it relied exclusively on self-report measures. According to Schaufeli, Enzmann and Girault (1993), the exclusive use of self-report measures in validation studies increases the likelihood that at least part of the shared variance between measures can be attributed to method variance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the UWES (1-factor structure) be used to assess engagement of non-professional counsellors working with trauma victims in a banking environment. However, the validation of items 13, 14 and 16 as part of the UWES, when measuring non-professional counsellors in South Africa, needs further research. More

research is necessary to investigate the reliability and use of the 3-factor structure, and also to further determine the reliability and validity in other samples in South Africa.

Future research should use large samples and adequate statistical techniques (e.g. structural equation modelling). Large sample sizes might increase confidence that study findings would be consistent across other similar groups. More research is also needed on the validity and structural equivalence of the measuring of engagement for different cultural groups in the non-professional counselling environment.

In future studies some of the items of the UWES (e.g. item 16) could be changed so that it would be more understandable to different language and cultural groupings in South Africa. For the same reason the possibility of translating the UWES into other South-African languages should also be considered. Furthermore, future research should focus on other occupational groupings to establish norms for engagement levels other than non-professional counsellors.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ARTICLE 4**

# **A CAUSAL MODEL OF WORK ENGAGEMENT OF NON-PROFESSIONAL TRAUMA COUNSELLORS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN BANKING ENVIRONMENT\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research was to develop and test a causal model of work engagement of non-professional counsellors in a South African banking environment. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Stratified random samples ( $N = 168$ ) were taken of non-professional trauma counsellors in three of the major South African banks. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey, Orientation to Life Questionnaire and a Self-Report Questionnaire were administered. The results showed that job demands, job resources and personal consequences predicted work engagement. Sense of coherence also predicted work engagement of non-professional counsellors.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om 'n oorsaaklike model van begeestering vir nie-professionele beraders in 'n Suid-Afrikaanse bankomgewing te ontwikkel en te toets. 'n Dwarssnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Gestratifiseerde ewekansige steekproewe ( $N = 168$ ) is van nie-professionele traumaberaders by drie van die vernaamste bankgroepe in Suid-Afrika geneem. Die Utrecht Werkbegeesteringskaal, die Maslach-Uitbrandingsvraelys – Menslike Dienste-opname, die Lewensoriëntasievraelys sowel as 'n selfevalueringsvraelys is afgeneem. Die resultate het aangetoon dat werkseise, werkbronne en persoonlike gevolge tot hoër werkbegeestering aanleiding gegee het. Koherensiesin het ook werksbegeestering van nie-professionele beraders voorspel.

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There is a growing awareness that the counselling of people with traumatic stress can be hazardous to the physical and mental health of the counsellors (Herman 1992; McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Everly and Mitchell (1999) and Kahill (1988) found that 2% to 6% of psychotherapists could be considered burnt out.

Three areas of relevant literature provide information for understanding how clients' traumatic experiences may have an impact on the counsellors (Figley, 1995; Stamm, 1995). Firstly, theories of traumatic stress explain how counsellors may develop trauma symptoms similar to those experienced by their traumatised clients. The literature on burnout provides research relevant to counsellor impairment and offers parallels between symptoms of traumatic stress and burnout. Finally, studies on counter transference reactions among counsellors working in the field of trauma give insight into the internal process experienced by those working with traumatised individuals.

Support exists for the idea that trauma can be "contagious". Both Figley (1995) and Terr (1991) found that family members of survivors of trauma were developing symptoms similar to the victim. Figley (1995) referred to this phenomenon as "secondary victimisation", whereas Herman (1992) referred to it as "secondary traumatisation".

McCann and Pearlman (1990, p. 132) stated that "persons who work with victims may experience profound psychological effects; effects that can be disruptive and painful for the helper and can persist for months and years after work with traumatised persons". They labelled this process "vicarious traumatisation".

In the burnout literature Freudenberger (1990) reported that depression, cynicism, loss of vitality, loss of intimacy with friends and family and detachment are significant signs of impairment. It has been proposed that the severity of client's problems, working with chronic clients, time limitations and long-term employment in the mental health field are factors that place counsellors at risk (Maslach, 1982).

Burnout has been most often defined as a syndrome in which one feels emotionally exhausted or fatigued, emotionally withdrawn from other people and perceive a diminution of one's achievements or accomplishments at work (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996).

Burnout can also be described as occurring in stages. The first stage involves an imbalance between resources and demands. The second stage consists of immediate, short-term emotional tension, fatigue and exhaustion. The third stage consists of a number of changes in attitude and behaviour, such as treating clients in a detached and mechanical fashion, or a cynical pre-occupation with gratifying one's own needs (Cherniss, 1980). A broader definition is "a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" (Pines & Aronson, 1988).

Burnout has important consequences for non-professional counsellors doing trauma-counselling. Both Cherniss (1995) and Maslach and Leiter (1997) have articulated a clear distinction between high and low burnout. High burnout results in physical and psychological difficulties at work and elsewhere, which lead to lower productivity and eventual harm to the counsellors and the organisation in which they work. In contrast, low burnout results in the counsellor thriving and growing in his/her work. The challenges of work stress invigorate and energise the counsellor to produce more and to become innovative.

Psychology is not just the study of diseases, weakness and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong, it also is building what is right. Currently the work on burnout has expanded internationally and has led to new conceptual models. The focus on engagement and the positive antithesis of burnout promise to yield new perspectives on the interventions to alleviate burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Engagement is defined as an energetic state in which the counsellor is dedicated to excellent performance and is confident of his or her effectiveness (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000). Two studies that refer to work engagement in a causal model could be found. In their proposed Comprehensive Burnout and Engagement (COBE) model, Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) found that job resources exclusively predicted work engagement. Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001) also found that lack of job resources was primarily related to disengagement.

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that job stressors (job demands, job resources, personal consequences and resources) might be related to burnout and/or work engagement of non-professional counsellors. However, no studies including these factors in a causal model

of work engagement for counsellors in South Africa were found in the literature. Therefore the objective of this study was to develop and test a causal model of work engagement for non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in a financial environment.

Because of the incidence of burnout among non-professional counsellors and its negative consequences, it is important to pinpoint some factors which can alleviate these effects. Certain human strengths, for instance, act as buffers against stress; therefore a great deal of research has examined the impact of counsellor characteristics, such as self-esteem, coping strategies and social support in burnout (Rosse, Boss, Johnson & Crown, 1991). Other research has focused exclusively on the demands of the work environment (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). There is thus reasonable agreement in the literature about which variables are the most useful predictors of burnout. In terms of the individual characteristics that might protect counsellors from experiencing burnout, even in stressful work environments, most researchers have construed a model of stress and coping (Leiter, 1991). These models suggest that individuals who have high levels of self-esteem (Cherniss, 1995), supportive social networks (Beaton, Murphy, Pike & Corniel, 1997; Rosse et al., 1991) and the belief that they can manage their difficulties successfully (Leiter, 1991) are less likely to experience stress in the workplace.

However, in relation to the demands of the organisational environment, researchers have found that most counsellors are particularly distressed by a lack of role clarity (Cherniss, 1995), low levels of autonomy (Maslach, 1982) and the inability to be involved in the discussions that affect their work requirements (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). Other more tangible organisational factors that have been associated with work stress include job insecurity (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995) and work pressure (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001).

According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), personality characteristics of counsellors are also related to burnout and engagement. Personality hardiness and a confronting coping style are negatively related to burnout. The tendency to perceive events and circumstances as stressful, ways of coping with them and the way in which failure in coping is dealt with, depend in part on the distortional characteristics of a person. These characteristics involve one's beliefs about the world and dealing with it (Semmer, 1996). These include constructs

such as sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), personality hardiness/resilience (Kobasa, 1979) and locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

As is known from a variety of stress-related studies, an individual's personality can also be a determining effect in the development of or resistance to burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996). Counsellors who have a higher stress threshold tend to feel more in control of their lives and have a greater resistance to the development of stress-related illness and burnout. Such individuals are more confident and tend not to compare their performance with that of others as a measure of success or self-worth. For this reason they are also less prone to developing a feeling of inadequacy.

It has been claimed that non-professional trauma counsellors who understand and appreciate the contextual stressors they confront can become more proactive at this level, and therefore more able to manage their own well-being, which will contribute to engagement with their work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Therefore some of the stressors they confront and causal factors contributing to work engagement will be focused on in this research (e.g. role ambiguity, person-job match, social support and sense of coherence). An attempt will be made to identify stressors that are relevant to trauma counselling and to incorporate this level of analysis into an approach of causal factors predicting engagement in counselling.

### **Causes of work engagement**

The non-professional counsellor usually fulfil multiple roles. Counselling and working roles are not independent of each other. In fact, according to Spillover theory, it is believed that the two roles affect each other. Spillover theory postulates that the effects of one domain "spill over" into the other domain and this spill-over can have positive or negative effects (Rothbard, 2001).

Motivating counsellors to engage in their counselling is a classic problem in organisations, complicated by the existence of multiple roles, because the attitudes, behaviour and emotions associated with one role may spill over to another. People are increasingly faced with actively engaging in multiple roles to fulfil job expectations. Two competing arguments, depletion

and enrichment (engagement), have been used to address the process of engagement in multiple roles (Rothbard, 2001).

High case-loads also contribute to burnout, as this situation is associated with lack of autonomy, inadequate feedback, lack of training, and inadequate guidelines. Little opportunity to use skills and poor physical working conditions have also been related to burnout. The opposite is also true: skills learned in one environment can also contribute to and are positive related to well-being and high levels of engagement in other areas.

Other organisational factors which also contribute to burnout include bureaucratic organisations, emotionally demanding relationships with clients, poor team cohesion and interpersonal conflicts. New psychological contracts at work have implications on the three dimensions of energy, involvement and effectiveness experienced at work. While existing research on burnout has examined the negative side of these dimensions in experiences of exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishments, new research is beginning to consider the full range of the three dimensions of energy, involvement and effectiveness. The positive side of the three dimensions appears to entail a state of engagement with work in which individuals feel energetic, involved and effective (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Janssen & Schaufeli, 2001). For many people their work life occupies more time and attention than any other sphere of their life. Work in many ways is central to an individual's self concept and the individual's success or failure in the workplace has profound effects on his or her material well-being.

Work is a central part of human life. It is the expression of the basic need to accomplish, to create, to feel satisfaction and to feel meaningful. Rewarding work is an important and positive part of our lives. Recent work on burnout and engagement has begun to develop new theoretical frameworks that more explicitly integrate both individual and situational factors, rather than considering them in separate terms. Indeed, as Maslach et al. (2001) outlined, "many interactional models have been proposed, trying to explain the behaviour in terms of person and environment". Many of these view person and environment as independent entities, but characterise them along commensurate dimensions so that the degree of fit can be assessed. Recently Maslach and Leiter (1997) have begun to expand the model of person-job fit by formulating a model that focuses on the degree of match or mismatch between the person and six domains of his/her job environment. The greater the gap, or mismatch,

between the person and the job, the greater the likelihood of burnout; conversely, the greater the match, the greater the likelihood of engagement with work. The six areas identified as the most relevant to the relationship which people develop with their work are work load, control, reward, community, fairness and values.

- Workload: Workload is generally perceived as excessive when too many organisational and job demands exhaust an individual's energy to the extent that recovery becomes impossible. Emotional exhaustion can be draining when the job requires too much emotional participation for the counsellor to bear.
- Control: The opportunity to make choices and decisions, to solve problems and to contribute to the fulfilment of responsibilities. This is to be considered in close relation to the lack of, or reduced self-realisation.
- Reward: (Acknowledgement/Recognition): The type of rewards referred to is not only financial remuneration but also social, such as trust and esteem by others (colleagues, superiors), strictly related to motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), feelings of inadequacy and guilt.
- Community (Interpersonal relationships): People thrive in environments characterised by support, collaboration and positive feelings.
- Fairness: The extent to which the organisation has consistent and equitable rules for everyone. It further implies respect for the workers when they encounter recognition and respect, thus sharing emotions and feelings as well as results. A perception of the lack of fairness can amplify the level of emotional breakdown and induce a pervasive sense of cynicism towards all activities concerning work.
- Values: It is what is important to the organisation and to its employees. When organisational and personal values are congruent, successes are shared.

The findings from the research literature support the notion that it is essential to focus on the job environment, as well as the person in it, to combat burnout (Dekker et al.,1995;Demerouti et al.,2001;Figley,1995;Maslach et al.,1996;Stamm,1995). The advantage of this combined approach is that it tends to emphasise the development of engagement with work. The focus on engagement permits a closer alliance with the organisational mission, especially those aspects that pertain to the quality of work life in the organisation. A work environment that is

designed to support the positive development of energy, vigour, involvement, dedication and effectiveness among its employees should be successful in promoting their well-being and productivity (Leiter & Maslach, 2000).

Management has a role to play in instituting preventative measures, including steps to ameliorate chronic work-related stress, particularly overload; training programmes designed to promote effective stress management techniques and on-site recreation facilities. Organisational interventions to reduce burnout have great potential, but are complex to implement and costly in terms of resources required. The changing nature of employment relationships, including the transient and dynamic nature of employee-employer psychological contract, entails putting more emphasis on individual-oriented approaches to combat burnout. The role of individual coping resources, including self-efficacy, hardiness and social support, may become more important in future interventions.

Maslach and Leiter (1997) defined engagement as the opposite pattern of scores on the three MBI dimensions. According to this analysis, engagement is distinct from established constructs in organisational psychology, such as organisational commitment, job-satisfaction or job involvement. Organisational commitment refers to an employee's allegiance to the organisation that provides employment. The focus is on the organisation, whereas engagement focuses on the work itself. Job satisfaction is the extent to which work is a source of need-fulfilment and contentment; it does not encompass the person's relationship with the work itself. Job involvement is similar to the involvement aspect of engagement with work, but does not include the energy and effectiveness dimensions. Thus, engagement provides a more complex and thorough perspective on an individual's relationship with work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

If engagement is indeed the opposite of burnout, a profile of engagement scores on the MBI should be associated with a profile of better matches in the six areas of person-job fit. Such a "matched" profile would include a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Some empirical support for this conceptualisation of engagement is provided by case studies of two hospital units (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The employees in one unit displayed a typical

burnout profile (i.e. high scores on exhaustion and cynicism and low scores on efficacy), whereas employees in the other unit had an opposite profile of engagement (i.e. low scores on exhaustion and cynicism and high scores on efficacy). Indeed, and as expected, the former unit showed unfavourable scores on most of the six areas (especially on reward and values), whereas the latter unit showed predominantly favourable scores (especially on workload, control, fairness and values). Thus, it seems that burnout and engagement (operationalised as favourable and unfavourable scores on the MBI, respectively), are inversely related to the six domains of work life.

According to Patterson (2003), social support involves help from others. Social support emerges as a buffer to burnout and is seen as “information that leads individuals to believe that they are cared for and loved esteemed and valued” (Patterson, 2003). Pines (1996) finds that the better the social support, the less burnout. Social support is also the availability of people whom the individual trusts and who make one feel cared for and loved as a person. All humans actively seek contact with other human beings, but highly resilient individuals are particularly good at forming and utilising relationships for survival because they have a conviction of being valued and loved (Lam & Grossman, 1997). Social support can therefore be instrumental (such as giving one’s time, skill or advice) or emotional (such as provision of trust, empathy, love or evaluative feedback).

Instrumental support is directed towards managing or changing a stressful situation, while emotional support lessens the negative feelings that are usually associated with a stressful situation. Bandura (1995) notes that social support is an ordinary phenomenon, but one of importance to everybody’s psychological well-being, and not only to people confronted with a critical situation or serious life event such as a traumatic experience. Social support reduces levels of stress and enables people to cope better. Counsellors who get social support are more likely to identify their needs for help and have better psychosocial adjustment (Krause, 1997).

Miller, Ellis, Zook and Lyles (1990) also examined people’s personal control and tolerance for ambiguity related to burnout as well as the role of social support in mediating uncertainty. They report findings from their research conducted in a private psychiatric hospital which indicate that participation in decision-making is vital in reducing role stress and increasing perceptions of satisfaction and personal accomplishment.

Hobfoll (1989, 1998) developed the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. COR theory's basic tenets are that people have a basic motivation to obtain, retain and protect that which they value. The things that people value are called resources, of which there are several types, including material, social and energetic resources whereby energetic resources can be seen as physical, emotional and cognitive energies.

According to the predictions of COR theory, the depletion of one's energetic resources and impoverished social support are closely related (Hobfoll, 1989, 1998). Those lacking a strong resource pool, including those with impoverished social support, are more likely to become burnt out, or to go through cycles of resource loss when they cope with work-related stress. Furthermore, people with depleted energetic resources, who complain of physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion and cognitive weariness, may appear to their colleagues as less attractive and therefore less likely to have access to social support. In a review of social support and stress, Carton and Russell (1990) integrated four studies that had investigated the effects of social support on burnout among teachers, nurses and therapists respectively. In all four studies, negative associations were found between social support and burnout.

Trauma can be defined as an event that overwhelms the individual's coping resources and can occur whenever the individual is faced with sudden or unexpected events that involve elements of threat, loss or disruption of basic value systems, as in a bank robbery (Everly & Mitchell, 1999). The traumatic reaction almost always has an impact on the individual's "comfort zone" (that what is familiar, comfortable and safe). Often personal experiences, temperament and recent events can create a buffer to trauma or leave individuals vulnerable to coping in adverse ways (Everly & Mitchell, 1999).

There has been an ever increasing interest in the immense capacity of people, individually and collectively, to withstand, endure and master inordinate demands. The process of resilience is the process of healthy human development, of meeting the basic human needs for caring and connectedness, for respect, challenge and structure, and for meaningful involvement, belonging and power (Benard & Marshall, 1997). According to Purkey and Stanley (1995), human potential is always there – waiting to be discovered. Not everyone believes all people have the innate capacity for well-being. It is therefore important to concentrate on the "health of the helper", or the non-professional counsellor. By learning to

access their own resilience, their own original, healthy thinking, counsellors can also assist their clients.

Sagor (1996) defines resiliency as a set of characteristics that gives us strength “to confront the overwhelming obstacles of life”. It is also a process of persisting in the face of adversity (Antonovsky, 1987). Benard (1991, 1996) describes “resilience” as the term used to describe a set of qualities that foster a process of successful adoption and transformation despite risk and adversity. We are all born with an innate capacity for resilience, by which we are able to develop social competence, problem solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy and a sense of purpose (Benard, 1996).

In an attempt to explain how people stay well, notwithstanding high stressor loads, Antonovsky (1979, 1987) introduced Sense of Coherence to describe a dispositional orientation presumed to engender and enhance health. Antonovsky introduced the neologistic concept of salutogenesis from Latin: “salus” = health, and Greek: “genesis” = origin. He expressed the opinion that all people, even those living in comfortable, benign and sheltered environments, are almost continuously exposed to fairly serious stressors (Antonovsky, 1979). In the light of evidence from his research he concluded that “stressors are omnipresent in human existence” – in fact, “the human condition is stressful” (Antonovsky, 1979). Antonovsky introduced the concept of generalised resistance resources that can facilitate effective tension management in any situation of demand. In Antonovsky’s view (1987), all generalised resistance resources have in common that they facilitate “making sense out of the countless stressors with which individuals are constantly bombarded”. Through repeated experience of such sense-making, a person develops, over time, a strong sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987).

Sense of coherence can be described as a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that one’s internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can be reasonably expected (Antonovsky, 1987, 1991). A strong sense of coherence is negatively related to measures of negative affectivity, such as anxiety and neuroticism (Antonovsky, 1987; Flannery, 1999; Frenz, Carey & Jorgenson, 1993) and work stress (Antonovsky, 1991). A strong sense of coherence is also related to competence and life

satisfaction (Semmer, 1996), general well-being (Antonovsky, 1993; Wissing, de Waal & de Beer, 1992) and to emotional stability (Strümpfer, 1999).

Counsellors with a strong sense of coherence are those who experience their work as consisting of experiences that are bearable and with which they can cope. Sense of coherence on its own, without the appropriate ability, skills, training and development, would be of no avail (Strümpfer, 1990). Furthermore, counsellors with a strong SOC are more likely to show a “readiness” and “willingness” to exploit the resources they have at their potential disposal (Antonovsky, 1994).

### **Work engagement**

Research on the engagement concept has taken two different but related paths. Maslach and Leiter (1997) rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. What started out as important, meaningful and challenging work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling and meaningless. Energy turns into exhaustion, involvement becomes cynicism and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness. Accordingly, engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy - the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions. By implication, engagement is assessed by the opposite pattern of scores in the three MBI dimensions (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova and Bakker (2002) have taken a different approach to the concept of engagement. They define an operationalised engagement as a construct in its own right. Even though engagement is still conceptualised as the positive antithesis of burnout, they do not have the presumption that it is assessed by the opposite profile of the MBI scores.

Based on this theoretical reasoning Schaufeli, Martinez et al., (2002) have defined engagement as a persistent, positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma & Bakker, 2002). “Vigour” refers to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort in one’s job, the ability to not be easily fatigued and persistence in the face of difficulties. “Dedication” refers to a strong involvement in one’s work, accompanied by feelings of enthusiasm and significance, and by a sense of pride and inspiration. “Absorption”

refers to a pleasant state of total immersion in one's work, which is characterised by the feeling that time passes quickly and the ability to detach oneself from the job (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Recently, Demerouti et al. (2001) successfully tested the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. They concluded that job demands are primarily related to the exhaustion component of burnout, whereas lack of job resources is primarily related to disengagement. In their Comprehensive Burnout and Engagement (COBE) model, Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) found that burnout is mainly predicted by job demands and by lack of job resources, whereas work engagement is exclusively predicted by job resources. Based on this, one can expect that job resources, rather than job demands, will predict work engagement.

The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses:

- HI: Personal accomplishment is more strongly related to vigour, dedication and absorption (work engagement) than to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation.
- HII: Lack of resources predicts lower levels of work engagement.
- IIII: Personal accomplishment and sense of coherence will predict higher levels of work engagement.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the research objectives. In a cross-sectional design a sample is drawn from a population at one time (Shaugnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

### **Study population**

Data was collected from non-professional counsellors employed by three of the major banks in South Africa. These employees were from all the provinces in the country and do line or staff work on clerical, supervisory, managerial and specialist level. Of the 295 eligible participants, 168 participated in the study. However, only 165 questionnaires could be used. Table 1 presents some of the characteristics of the participants.

*Table 1*  
*Characteristics of the Participants*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Position</b>	Clerical	9,32
	Supervisory	11,80
	Managerial	39,13
	Specialist	39,75
<b>Province</b>	Eastern Cape	4,09
	Free State	6,81
	Gauteng	53,9
	KwaZulu Natal	13,63
	Limpopo	2,84
	Mpumalanga	3,97
	Northern Cape	1,70
	North West	3,97
	Western Cape	9,09
<b>Education</b>	Grade 10	1,83
	Grade 12	17,07
	Certificate	11,59
	Diploma	21,95
	Degree	15,85
	Post-graduate Degree	31,71
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21,60
	Female	78,40
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	15,53
	Engaged or in close relationship	6,21
	Married	54,66
	Divorced	13,04
	Separated	3,73
	Widow/Widower	3,73
	Remarried	3,11
<b>Home Language</b>	Afrikaans	50,62
	English	40,74
	Black Language	8,64

The sample was mostly female (78,40 %), married and had a high school education. The mean age of participants was 38 years, while the mean length of experience as a non-professional counsellor was 5,8 years and the mean number of years of experience in the current working position were 6,2.

### **Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were addressed, such as gaining permission to undertake the research, being open and frank about the purpose of the research, establishing trustworthiness; establishing reciprocity with participants, giving feedback on observations and interpretations to participants, developing awareness of personal values, perspectives and potential biases. The most important ethical issue which had to be addressed, was confidentiality. It was largely for reasons of confidentiality that this research was focused at an organisational level and did not directly pinpoint individuals.

### **Procedures**

Following typical procedure, the researcher approached directors of Human Resource Management at the three major banks, to request all the non-professional counsellors on their staff to respond to the research instruments. Burnout research has long been researched by means of this type of sample (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). A major consideration for burnout research is that it has to be done with participants who actually function as trauma counsellors, as it is not possible to conduct simulation studies of burnout. Such a restriction makes it difficult to find a large number of qualified participants. Informed consent from the participants was also sought and granted to the researcher.

### **Measuring battery**

The following measurement instruments were used in the empirical study.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002) was used to measure the levels of engagement of non-professional trauma counsellors. The UWES measures levels of engagement on a 17-item seven-point frequency rating scale, ranging from 0 "never" to 6 "every day". Three dimensions can be distinguished, namely vigour,

dedication and absorption. Examples of questions relating to the three dimensions are the following: vigour - "I am bursting with energy in my work"; dedication - "I find my work full of meaning and purpose"; and absorption - "When I am working, I forget everything around me". Engaged individuals are characterised by high levels of vigour and dedication as well as elevated levels of absorption. In terms of internal consistency, reliability coefficients for the three subscales have been determined between 0,68 and 0,91. In a study by Fourie and Rothmann (in press) with a sample of non-professional trauma counsellors ( $N = 169$ ) it was found that the Cronbach alpha coefficients were most satisfactory with a 1-factor structure of the UWES.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) (Maslach et al., 1996) measures respondents' relationships with their work on a continuous basis from engagement to burnout. The MBI-HSS consists of 22 items and has three subscales. The subscales for the MBI-HSS include emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalisation (DEP), and personal accomplishment (PA) (Maslach et al., 1996). The scales have been established as reliable and valid in a number of studies (Maslach et al., 1996). Maslach and Jackson (1986) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,90 for emotional exhaustion, 0,79 for depersonalisation and 0,71 for personal accomplishment. Maslach and Jackson (1981) also reported test-retest reliability of 0,82 for emotional exhaustion, 0,60 for depersonalisation and 0,80 for personal accomplishment as well as 0,54 to 0,60 (applied after one year), which could be regarded as acceptable. In comparison, a South African study by Pretorius (1990) reported alpha coefficients of 0,89 for emotional exhaustion, 0,71 for depersonalisation and 0,79 for personal accomplishment. All items are scored on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 ("never") to 6 ("daily").

The Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ) (Antonovsky, 1987) was used to measure participants' sense of coherence. The OLQ consists of 29 items. Antonovsky (1993) reported alpha coefficients of the OLQ in 29 research studies varying between 0,85 and 0,91. Test-retest reliability studies reported coefficients of between 0,41 and 0,97 (Antonovsky, 1993). Rothmann (2000) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,89 for the OLQ, which may be regarded as acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Regarding the construct of validity of the OLQ, it was found that there is a negative relationship between the OLQ and experienced stress and that the OLQ correlates negatively with the "State Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait" and the "Beck Depression Inventory" (Frenz et al., 1993).

A Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) with 33 questions, measuring stressors (job demands, job resources and personal consequences) as was found in the empirical study, was developed. All items are scored on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Examples of questions relating to the three stressors are the following: job demands (“I can handle my day-to-day activities, as well as counselling”), job resources (“I feel I have adequate support from my superiors”), and personal consequences (“I find my role as a counsellor personally rewarding”).

### **Statistical analysis**

The SAS programme (SAS Institute, 2000) was used to do the statistical analysis. Principal factor extraction with varimax relation was performed through SAS Factor on the items of the UWES MBI-HSS and OLQ prior to performing structural equation modelling. Principal components extraction was used prior to principal factor extraction to estimate the number of factors, presence of outliers and factorability of the correlation matrices. Furthermore, the oblique method with a promax rotation was used to determine the interfactor correlations of each measuring instrument. If correlations higher than 0,30 were found, this method was used to extract the factor structure.

Cronbach alpha coefficients and interim correlations were used to assess the internal consistency of the MBI (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alpha conveys important information regarding the proportion of error variance contained in a scale. According to studies by Clark and Watson (1995), the average inter-item correlation coefficient (which is an understandable and useable measure of internal consistency) is a recommendable index to supplement information supplied by coefficient alpha. It must be borne in mind though that unidimensionality of a scale cannot be ensured simply by focussing on the mean inter-item correlation – it is necessary to examine the range and distribution of these correlations as well.

The level of statistical significance was set at  $p \leq 0,05$ . Effect sizes were used to decide on the significance of the findings. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to specify the relationships between the variables. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. The

level of statistical significance was set at  $p \leq 0,05$ . Effect sizes were used to specify the significance of the findings.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) with the maximum likelihood method of the AMOS programme (Arbuckle, 1997; Kline, 1998) was used to test the factorial validity of the UWES. SEM as a statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory or hypothesis-testing approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on a specific phenomenon (Byrne, 2001; Schumaker & Lomax, 1996). When model-fit with the data is computed, however, an exploratory factor analysis approach is taken in the post-hoc analysis of the data.

With SEM analysis, the hypothesised structural (unobserved, latent factor) relationships are empirically tested by means of goodness-of-fit with the sample data. Furthermore, the degree of correspondence between the covariance matrices of the hypothesised theoretical structure and the empirical data is compared by means of the  $\chi^2$  statistics and several goodness-of-fit indices. The  $\chi^2$  statistic is also sometimes referred to as a badness-of-fit statistic, as smaller values indicate better fit (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986).

Indices of fit that was utilised in this study are the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted, Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The GFI indicates the relative amount of variance and co-variance in the sample, predicted by estimates of the population. Values usually vary between 0 and 1, with values higher than 0,90 indicating good model fit with the data. The AGFI indicates the relative amount of variance accounted for by the model, corrected for the number of parameters that need to be estimated (degrees of freedom) in the model. Both these values are classified as absolute values, as they compare the hypothesised model with no model at all (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Although both indices vary between 0 and 1, the distribution of AGFI is not known, and consequently no critical value can be obtained (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986). The PGFI adds to a more realistic interpretation of the model but combines the issue of parsimony and goodness-of-fit by taking the number of variables needed to be determined into account (Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bennett, Lindi & Stilwell, 1989). Although this index generally

demonstrates lower levels in comparison to the other fit indices at the 0,50 level, levels in comparison to values higher than 0,90, values  $> 0,80$  are considered to be more appropriate (Byrne, 2001).

The NFI is used to measure global model fit giving an indication of the extent to which the hypothesised model compares with the most restricted model where relationships between variables are zero (independent model). This index also varies between 0 and 1 and tends to overestimate fit in smaller samples. The CFI also compares the hypothesised and independent models, but takes sample size into account. The TLI is a relative measure of covariation, explained by the hypothesised model which has been specifically designed for the assessment of factor models (Tucker & Lewis, 1973). Critical values for good model fit have been recommended for the NFI, CFI and TLI to be acceptable above the 0,90 level (Bentler, 1992), although recently Hu and Bentler (1999) recommended a cut-off value of 0,95.

To address the problems associated with samples size, Browne and Cudeck (1993) suggested the use of RMSEA, as well as the 90 confidence interval of the RMSEA. This provides an indication of the overall amount of error in the hypothesised model-data fit, relative to the number of estimated parameters (complexity) in the model. The recommended acceptable levels of the RMSEA should be 0,05 or less, but should not exceed 0,08. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested a value of 0,06 to indicate acceptable fit, whereas MacCullum, Brown and Sugawara (1996) recently suggested that values between 0,08 and 1,0 indicate mediocre fit and values above 1,0 poor fit.

Schumacker and Lomax (1996) and Kline (1998) have each argued that there is no straightforward answer to what constitutes good fit in SEM. Furthermore, Kline had argued that good fit might be easy to achieve, but it must be accompanied by meaningful model-data correspondence. It is possible to find several favourable values of overall fit indices, but specific portions of the model might not be fitting the data well. Given the lack of consensus regarding the best measure of fit, the more criteria a model satisfies, the better its fit.

## RESULTS

The descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and the inter-item correlation coefficients of the UWES, MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and Inter-item Correlations of the UWES, MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ*

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	R (Mean)	$\alpha$
UWES	66,61	10,28	-0,78	0,81	0,50	0,93
MBI-HSS						
EE	13,56	8,20	0,68	0,35	0,66	0,88
DP	5,00	4,51	0,97	0,34	0,35	0,69
PA	28,70	5,05	-0,95	1,25	0,41	0,73
Sense of Coherence						
OLQ	148,37	19,57	-0,54	0,51	0,53	0,80
SRQ						
Job Demands	19,70	2,87	-0,36	-0,53	0,41	0,73
Job Resources	32,45	5,39	-0,49	0,42	0,36	0,70
Personal Consequences	41,66	5,42	-0,43	-0,13	0,64	0,88

The results in Table 2 indicate that the scores on the UWES, MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ are relatively normally distributed (skewness and kurtosis are smaller than one). Regarding the Cronbach alpha coefficients, all subscales of the measuring instruments are considered acceptable in comparison to the guideline of an  $\alpha > 0,70$  reported by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), except for the depersonalisation subscale of the MBI-HSS. Incidences of scores lower than 0,70 for the depersonalisation scale has been reported on some occasions (Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap & Kladler, 2001).

It appears that the UWES, MBI-HSS, OLQ and SRQ have acceptable levels of internal consistency and could therefore be viewed as suitable instruments for use in the current research.

The product-moment correlation coefficients between the OLQ, SRQ, MBI-HSS and UWES are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

*Product-moment Correlation Coefficients between Sense of Coherence, Job Demands, Job Resources and Personal Consequences, Burnout and Work Engagement*

Item	OLQ	JD	JR	PC	EE	Dep	PA
Sense of Coherence (OLQ)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job Demands (JD)	0,35*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job Resources (JR)	-0,45*	0,70**	-	-	-	-	-
Personal Consequences (PC)	-0,53**	0,58*	0,75**	-	-	-	-
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	-0,59**	0,47*	-0,46*	0,35*	-	-	-
Depersonalisation (Dep)	-0,50*	0,31*	0,40*	0,45*	0,61**	-	-
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	-0,56*	0,29	0,30*	0,36*	0,41*	0,43*	-
UWES	0,65**	0,36*	0,43*	0,57**	0,54**	0,56**	-

\* Correlation is practically significant  $r > 0,30$  (medium effect)

\*\* Correlation is practically significant  $r > 0,50$  (large effect)

As can be seen in Table 3, sense of coherence is significantly positively related to personal consequences, personal accomplishment and engagement (large effects). Sense of coherence is also significantly positively related to job demands and job resources (medium effect) and significantly negatively related to emotional exhaustion (large effect) and depersonalisation (medium effect). Job demands are significantly positively related to job resources (large effect) and to personal consequences and engagement (medium effect). Both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation are significantly negatively related to job demands (medium effect). There is a further significantly positive relation between job resources and personal consequences (large effect) and job resources and personal accomplishment and engagement (medium effect); and also a significantly negative relation between job resources and emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (medium effect). Personal consequences is significantly positively related to engagement (large effect) and to personal accomplishment (medium effect). Personal consequences also have a significantly negative relation with emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (medium effect).

Other significant relationships (large effect) between emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (positively) and between emotional exhaustion and engagement (negatively) are shown in Table 3. Significantly negative relations were also found between depersonalisation and personal accomplishment (medium effect) and between

depersonalisation and engagement (large effect). Finally, personal accomplishment and engagement are significantly positive related (large effect).

Next, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of variance in work engagement (as measured by the UWES) that is predicted by sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ) and job demands, job resources and personal accomplishment (as measured by a SRQ). Fourie and Rothmann (in press) found that a 1-factor model fitted the data better than the revised 3-factor model. Therefore, work engagement was assessed as a unidimensional construct.

Engagement was taken as a dependent variable even so often, with firstly job demands and sense of coherence as independent variables (Table 4). Secondly, job resources and sense of coherence were taken as independent variables (see Table 4). The next set of multiple regression analysis was done with engagement as dependent variable and job demands and job resources as independent variables (see Table 4). Lastly, engagement was taken as dependent variable, with job demands, job resources and personal consequences as independent variables (see Table 4).

Table 4

*Regression Analysis of Work Engagement with Sense of Coherence, Job Demands, Job Resources and Personal Consequences*

Variable	Parameter	Standard error	T	p	$sr^2_i$
DV = Engagement; IV = Job Demands and Sense of Coherence					
$F = 65,26$ $R^2 = 0,4462$		$\sum sr^2_i = 0,33671$			
Intercept	9,05	5,34	1,69	0,0923	
Job Demands	0,55	0,22	2,48	0,0141	0,02105
Sense of Coherence	0,31	0,03	9,61	0,0001	0,31566
DV = Engagement; IV = Job Resources and Sense of Coherence					
$F = 66,36$ $R^2 = 0,4503$		$\sum sr^2_i = 0,28861$			
Intercept	10,99	4,90	2,24	0,0265	
Job Demands	0,34	0,12	2,73	0,0071	0,02520
Sense of Coherence	0,30	0,03	8,81	0,0001	0,26341
DV = Engagement; IV = Job Demands and Job Resources					
$F = 19,49$ $R^2 = 0,1940$		$\sum sr^2_i = 0,07052$			
Intercept	36,66	5,18	7,07	0,0001	
Job Demands	0,42	0,35	1,19	0,2352	0,00706
Job Resources	0,67	0,19	3,57	0,0005	0,06346
DV = Engagement; IV = Job Demands; Job Resources and Personal Consequences					
$F = 26,26$ $R^2 = 0,3285$		$\sum sr^2_i = 0,360187$			
Intercept	20,26	5,55	3,65	0,0004	
Job Demands	0,18	0,32	0,57	0,5725	0,00133
Job Resources	-0,04	0,21	-0,18	0,8555	0,00013
Personal Consequences	1,06	0,18	5,68	0,0001	0,13455

Table 4 shows that approximately 45% of the variance in work engagement (as measured by the UWES) is predicted by job demands (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ). Job demands ( $sr^2_i = 0,02105$ ) and sense of coherence ( $sr^2_i = 0,31566$ ) respectively contributed 33,67 % to the variance in work engagement. Given that 44,62% of the variance in work engagement was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,44$ ) and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,3367 (33,67%), it is clear that these independent variables are good predictors of work engagement and that the remaining 10,95% of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables. This finding confirms that stress (because of job demands) has an effect on work engagement and that sense of coherence moderated the effect of job demands on work engagement.

Table 4 also shows that 45% of the variance in work engagement (as measured by the UWES) is predicted by job resources (as measured by the SRQ) and sense of coherence (as measured by the OLQ). Job resources and sense of coherence contributed 28,86% ( $\sum sr^2_i = 0,2886$ ), 2,52% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0252$ ) and 26,34% ( $sr^2_i = 0,2634$ ) respectively to the variance in work engagement. Given that 45 % of the variance in work engagement was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,4503$ ), and that  $sr^2_i$  adds up to 0,2886 (28,86%), it is clear that the remaining 16,14 % of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

With further reference to Table 4, approximately 19,40% of work engagement is predicted by job demands and job resources (both measured by the SRQ). It seems as if job demands and job resources explain approximately 7,05 % ( $\sum sr^2_i = 0,0705$ ), 0,70 % ( $sr^2_i = 0,0070$ ) and 0,63 % ( $sr^2_i = 0,0634$ ) respectively of the variance in work engagement. 19,40 % of the variance in work engagement was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,1940$ ) and with  $sr^2_i$  adding up to 0,0705 (7,05%), the remaining 12,35 % of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

Lastly, 32,85% (Table 4) of work engagement is predicted by job demands, job resources and personal consequences (as measured by the SRQ). The three independent variables contributed 13,60% ( $\sum sr^2_i = 0,1360$ ), 0,13% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0013$ ), 0,01% ( $sr^2_i = 0,0001$ ) and 13,45% ( $sr^2_i = 0,1345$ ) respectively to the variance in work engagement. As 32,85 % of the variance in work engagement was explained in total by these independent variables ( $R^2 = 0,3285$ ), and with  $sr^2_i$  adding up to 0,1360 (13,60 %), the remaining 19,25 % of the variance can be attributed to interaction between the independent variables.

The proposed model including the hypothesised relationships was also tested with SEM analysis. Results indicated that the model did not fit adequately to the data  $\chi^2(8) = 114,79$ ; GFI = 0,85; RMSEA = 0,29; CFI = 0,78; IFI = 0,77 and TLI = 0,59. Inspection of the modification indices revealed that the fit between the model and the data could be further improved if covariation was allowed between the measurement errors of two stress dimensions (job demands and job resources). It is important to note that items with identical rating scales often have measurement errors that are correlated (Byrne, 1989). This means that the fit of the proposed model can be improved if the measurement errors among the items

of the subscales are considered. The revised model – including the covariation – shows a good fit,  $\chi^2(7) = 6,12$ ; GFI = 0,99; RMSEA = 0,00; CFI = 0,99; IFI = 1,00 and TLI = 1,00. The final model is given in Figure 1.

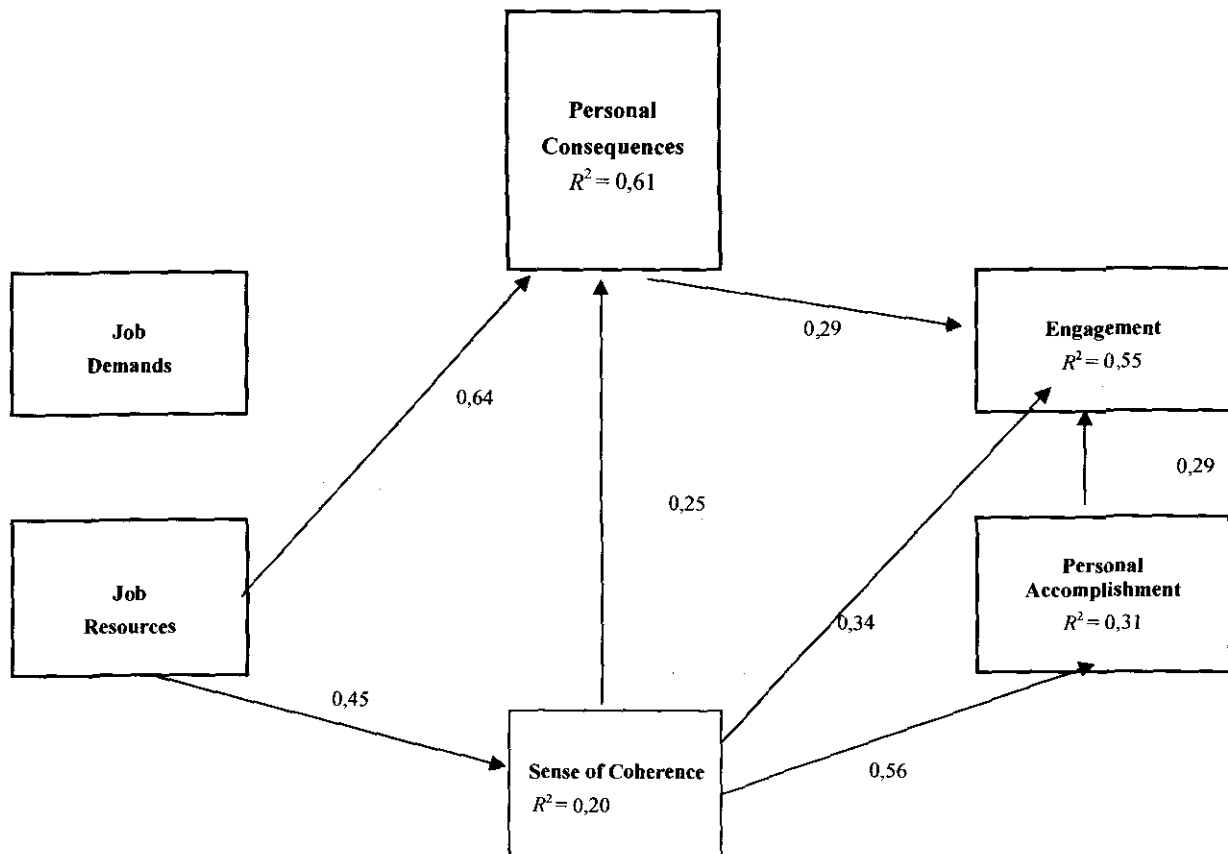


Figure 1. Maximum likelihood estimates for the Work Engagement Model,  $N = 168$ . Note. All factor loadings and path coefficients are significant at the  $p < 0,01$  level.

Figure 1 indicates that the paths from job resources to sense of coherence and personal consequences are significant. This means that the more job resources available to the counsellors (e.g. training, support and guidelines), and the stronger the sense of coherence, the more they will find positive consequences in their role as non-professional counsellors. The path coefficients from sense of coherence to personal consequences, engagement and personal accomplishment are also significant. This indicates that sense of coherence moderates the effects of personal consequences on engagement, while personal accomplishment moderates the effects of sense of coherence on engagement.

Based on these results, support was found for Hypotheses 2 and 3.

## DISCUSSION

It was the aim of this study to develop and test a causal model of work engagement for non-professional trauma counsellors, comprising of stressors caused by job demands and resource availability, sense of coherence and personal consequences.

The analysis of correlations in this study showed that sense of coherence is highly (positively) related to personal consequences, personal accomplishment and engagement. Sense of coherence is also highly (negatively) related to emotional exhaustion and moderately (negatively) related to depersonalisation. The standard multiple regression analyses showed that sense of coherence (when interaction with other factors were removed) explained almost 32% of the variance in engagement. Job demands and job resources explained relatively small percentages of the variance in engagement. Most of the evidence for the stress-buffering effects of sense of coherence suggests that the psychological impact of the exposure to stress can be reduced by sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987).

Significant correlations between engagement and the SRQ as well as between engagement and burnout showed that whether non-professional trauma counsellors believe they have the resources available to meet the demands of their environment and the extent to which these demands are seen as contributing towards personal fulfilment relate to whether or not they will be engaged in their counselling role. According to Antonovsky (1987) a strong sense of coherence enables one to mobilise coping resources in order to effectively deal with stress and avoid burnout.

The structural model showed that a strong sense of coherence, personal consequences and personal accomplishment have positive effects on the work engagement of non-professional counsellors. It is possible that sense of coherence, as a “meaning-providing variable” (Strümpfer, 2001), may assist to strengthen engagement inclinations. Furthermore, counsellors need assurance that they will be provided with the necessary resources and support networks that will enable them to become involved with the issues affecting deeply traumatised people. These needs should be met through a carefully devised, ongoing care plan that supports and informs counsellors. They also must be encouraged to take care of themselves physically and emotionally to ensure effectiveness in their counselling role. Counsellors need to be empowered to use their skills, knowledge and strength as an

investment in the future of their traumatised clients. Making a difference in the people they counsel is a primary goal of non-professional counsellors. Helping them to know how to set boundaries, or limits on their energies, time, competency and resources will enable them to reach this goal and also their expectations.

The results showed that sense of coherence moderated the effect of job resources on personal consequences. Therefore, experiencing positive personal consequences from counselling will result from the interaction between job resources and personal resources (sense of coherence). Furthermore, personal consequences moderated the effect of sense of coherence on engagement. Together sense of coherence and personal consequences predict 55% of the variance in engagement, while sense of coherence predicted 31% of the variance in personal accomplishment.

Although each counsellor has a unique personality and therefore will find some idiosyncratic coping methods for negotiating stress, two key stress reduction strategies are recommended. Firstly, social support appears to be one effective means of reducing stress (Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999; Schonfeld, 2001). Having close, trusting relationships boosts counsellors' ability to alleviate negative emotions and reduce stress responses. Secondly, Roger's (1995) work on controlling negative emotions demonstrates that reducing emotional rumination also improves a person's ability to alleviate stress. Other studies have found that taking direct action to solve problems and using relaxation techniques have helped to reduce stress (Kyriacou, 2001).

A relationship between burnout and engagement was also found. Low levels of burnout were related to high levels of engagement. Therefore, the findings of Schaufeli, Martinez et al., (2002) that burnout and engagement are related but distinct concepts were also confirmed in this study. Furthermore, the personal accomplishment subscale of burnout was found to be a constituting element of the engagement construct. This is in line with reports in the literature (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Counsellors who perceive stimuli from the environment as ordered and structured, experience events in life as manageable and feel that life is making sense, have a reservoir of emotional resources and feel emotionally well. According to Hobfoll (2001), burnout results where

individuals fail to gain sufficient resources following significant resource investment of time, energy, lost opportunities and borrowing from family time and intimacy to support work.

The roles of personal and work-related resources in the process of staying well as a non-professional counsellor are distinct. Compared to many work-related factors, individual resources, especially sense of coherence, seem to be superior determinants of future strain. Strong sense of coherence, strong self-esteem and belief in one's competence can be seen as crucial prerequisites for well-being and therefore work engagement. Strong personal resources seem to protect counsellors from strain in its different forms and thus maintain well-being and work engagement. It seems that strong personal resources help a person to see the work more positively and to give a sense of control over the job, which increases resistance to stress.

The present study also has certain limitations, which should be considered. The research design was a cross-sectional survey design, which makes it difficult to prove causal relationships. Through the use of advanced analytical procedures such as equation modelling techniques, the description of possible causal relationships were possible, although in an interpretive rather than in an established way. The use of other designs, such as longitudinal designs, can aid in establishing causality. A further limitation was the fact that the research exclusively relied on self-reporting. This could lead to "method variance" or "nuisance". Lastly, the sample size as well as sampling method also presented limitations. As a result, the findings cannot be generalised to other settings.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Engagement provides a more complex and thorough perspective on an individual's relationship with work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The ability to deal with stressful situations depends on the fit between individual and organisational characteristics and circumstances. The outcome (engagement) of the counsellor is determined by whether or not the demands of the situation and the resources of the person match.

Consequently, more research on an individual's relationship with work and the influence of organisational factors on engagement is needed. Furthermore, it has been found that different sources of support may vary in effectiveness for different circumstances. In general, it has

been found that support is most effective when the source of the support matches the source of stress. More research and analyses are needed to indicate the relationship between work characteristics on the one hand and burnout and engagement on the other, as exhaustion is mainly related to job demands and personal characteristics that can be considered demanding, whereas personal accomplishment and engagement are mainly related to resource variables and personal characteristics that provide a person with resources.

Whereas the current study examines the dynamics of engagement in a work (counselling) role, future research should also explore the dynamics of work engagement in multiple roles. Experimental research on engagement in multiple tasks suggest that when people are highly engaged in one task and experience frustration as a result of that task, they are less engaged in a subsequent task (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). However, it is not known, whether these processes work in a similar way with non-professional counsellors, who have a dual responsibility (two roles), namely their fulltime work (e.g. as a banking official) and their counselling role. Assumptions about engagement in multiple roles abound, suggesting that trade-offs and sacrifices must be made between roles to achieve success in a particular role. Future research should examine structural factors such as control over the role demands and the social support that people may obtain from peers, supervisors and significant others. Such factors may moderate the relationship between engagement in a role and the types of emotional responses people may have to the role.

More research using the sense of coherence construct is needed (Semmer, 1996; Strümpfer, 1995). Despite the implications in the literature that sense of coherence has a moderating effect on burnout (Levert, Lucas & Ortlepp, 2000), more research on its effect on engagement is needed.

Furthermore, positive constructs such as engagement should be further investigated in other highly stressful occupations in South Africa and should be included in causal models. The findings of the inclusion of personal accomplishment in extending the work engagement construct should also form part of future studies on work engagement.

Finally, in studying the construct of work engagement, researches should consider making use of positively phrased items to measure job resources, rather than negatively phrased items. Future studies should also use large sample groups and adequate statistical techniques.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn regarding burnout and work engagement of non-professional Trauma Counsellors in South Africa. The limitations of this specific research are discussed, followed by recommendations for organisations with non-professional counsellors in their service, as well as suggestions for future research.

#### **6.1 CONCLUSIONS**

The first objective of this study was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the MBI-HSS for non-professional trauma counsellors in a financial environment. The results obtained by means of structural equation modelling supported a three-dimensional factor structure, as has consistently been found across various samples, occupational groups and countries (Leiter & Schaufeli, 1996; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002; Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo & Schaufeli, 2000).

Leiter and Maslach (1988) noted that human service environments and therefore also non-professional counsellors do not exist in a vacuum. According to Leiter and Schaufeli (1996), counsellors in this context usually feel helpless, causing a reduction in the qualities that are likely to protect them from burnout (e.g. damaged self-esteem, lowered self-esteem, lowered self-efficacy and isolation from one's support retrievals).

Thus the conflicts and pressures that are already associated with the everyday work of non-professional counsellors are likely to be magnified by the counselling role. Non-professional counsellors continually face conflicts created by the fact that they are accountable to large organisations, but professionally, ethically and morally devoted to their clients (the victims of trauma who are being counselled by them).

They must balance the competing, and sometimes opposing demands of several parties such as trauma victims, employees, families and communities. To add to these circumstances it is important to remember that counselling is not the main job objective of the non-professional

counsellors. Counselling is seen as an “add-on” to their job description and is in most instances not part of their performance measurement/assessment.

Deletion of some of the items in the MBI could therefore also be because of the ad hoc involvement of the non-professional counsellors in counselling. The frequency of counselling depends on the number of robberies during the cycle the counsellor has to be on standby. The duration of counselling contact with the traumatised victims is further restricted to four hours per incident at the most. The counsellors therefore experienced difficulty in answering questions that need to be interpreted as they had fulltime contact with people. An example is item 6, which has been deleted from the model: “Working with people all day is really a strain for me”. From the discussion it was clear that the respondents had difficulty interpreting this item, being only part-time counsellors. The same was found with items 4, 7 and 16.

Crisis intervention, as it is practiced by non-professional counsellors, is defined as the provision of emergency psychological care to victims as to assist those victims in returning to an adaptive level of functioning and to prevent or mitigate the potential negative impact of psychological trauma. (Everley & Mitchell, 1999). No long-term counselling or relations are therefore established. That is seen as the responsibility of professional counsellors. Items 4, 7 and 16 focus more on longer-term involvement with people and could therefore also be misinterpreted by the respondents from an infrequent, short-term counselling perspective.

The deletion of items 4, 6, 7 and 16 was part of the post-hoc analyses, and should be regarded as a model specification for the sole purpose of data fitting. Validation of this is needed in future studies.

The second objective was to develop and test a causal model of burnout for non-professional trauma counsellors, inclusive of job demands, job resources, personal consequences and sense of coherence.

The analysis of Pearson correlations in this study showed that sense of coherence, job demands, job resources and personal consequences are negatively related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Personal accomplishment was related to sense of coherence, job resources and personal variables. It may therefore be concluded, according to

this study, that sense of coherence is negatively related to burnout. Counsellors with a strong sense of coherence will experience less burnout because stimuli from the environment are perceived as making cognitive sense, as under the control of both the individual and significant others and as motivationally relevant and meaningful. This finding confirms the results of Basson and Rothmann (2002) and Wissing, De Waal and De Beer (1992).

The results of the canonical analysis showed that a combination of weak sense of coherence, low job demands, low job-resources and low personal rewards are associated with higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and lower personal accomplishment. Job demands include potential stressors such as role overload, paperwork, time pressure and role ambiguity. Job resources include support of supervisors and colleagues, recognition, training, policies and guidelines, compensation and availability of debriefing services. Personal variables include the individual's attitude towards his/her organisation, support from the family, finding the role of counsellor rewarding (e.g. because of growth opportunities as well as opportunities to develop new knowledge and skills). It seems likely that a strong sense of coherence could moderate the effects of stress on burnout because it starts developing early in life, outside the work environment, and burnout develops only after an individual has been working for some length of time (Strümpfer, 2002).

According to Hobfoll (2001), burnout results when individuals fail to acquire sufficient resources. Individuals with better and more resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more inclined to gain better resources. Conversely, those with fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and are less able to gain resources.

Sense of coherence, job resources and personal consequences can be regarded as broad-band resources, while burnout could be the result of a lack of resources. A tentative conclusion is that sense of coherence, which is regarded as a "meaning-providing variable" (Strümpfer, 2002) may assist in the warding-off of burnout, in recovering from it, as well as in probably strengthening engagement inclinations.

The results of the canonical correlations showed that a combination of a weak sense of coherence, low job demands, low job resources and low personal consequences are associated with higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and lower personal accomplishment. Demographic variables did not significantly predict any of the three aspects of burnout,

namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. It would therefore seem to suggest that factors other than demographic factors might be more important in determining levels of burnout. This is supported by another South African study with community mental-health nurses. (Munnik & Simbayi, 2000).

The third objective of this study was to determine the construct validity and internal consistency of the UWES for non-professional trauma counsellors in a banking environment.

The results obtained using structural equation modelling supported a 1-factor structure. This is in contrast with findings confirming the 3-factor structure of the UWES, namely vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Martinez et al., 2002; Schaufeli, Salanova et al., 2002). The internal consistency of the scales was found to be satisfactory and in line with reported findings in the literature.

Although the deletion of items 13, 14 and 16 was part of the post-hoc analyses, this should be regarded as a model specification for the sole purpose of data fitting and validation of this is needed in future studies.

However, it can be expected that the results of this study could serve as a standard for measuring engagement levels of non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling in South Africa. The results show that the UWES is a suitable instrument (as a 1-factor structure) for measuring engagement of non-professional trauma counsellors in a financial environment in South Africa. Further possibilities in terms of research along similar lines are also made possible.

The fourth objective of the current research was to develop and test a causal model of work engagement for non-professional trauma counsellors in a banking environment, comprising of stressors caused by job demands and job resources, personal consequences and sense of coherence.

The analysis of correlations in this study showed that sense of coherence are highly (positively) related to personal consequences, personal accomplishment and engagement. Sense of coherence is also highly (negatively) related to emotional exhaustion and moderately (negatively) related to depersonalisation.

This study seems to emphasise that stress has a more negative effect on engagement when sense of coherence is low than when sense of coherence is high. Conversely, it is assumed that sense of coherence provides functions such as increased perception of coping capacity or minimised stress appraised, which decreases the effects of stress on an individual (Semmer, 1996). Therefore, effects of stress are stronger when sense of coherence is low. Most of the evidence for the stress-buffering effects of sense of coherence suggests that the psychological impact of the exposure to stress can be reduced by sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987).

Significant correlations between engagement and the Self-Report Questionnaire (SRQ) as well as between engagement and burnout showed that whether non-professional trauma-counsellors believe they have the resources available to meet the demands of their environment and the extent to which these demands are seen as contributing towards personal fulfilment, relate to whether or not they will be engaged in their counselling role. According to Antonovsky (1987) a strong sense of coherence enables one to mobilise coping resources in order to effectively deal with stress and avoid burnout.

A relationship between burnout and engagement could also be indicated. Low levels of burnout were related to high levels of engagement. Therefore the findings of Schaufeli, Martinez, Pinto, Salanova & Bakker, (2002) that burnout and engagement are related but distinct concepts were also confirmed in this study. Furthermore, the personal accomplishment subscale of burnout was found to be a constituting element of the engagement construct. This is in line with reports in the literature (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

## **6.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH**

Whilst the total volume of research into people-related occupations concerning burnout and work engagement is substantial, there are also notable limitations and shortcomings in this study. Firstly, since only self-report data were used, common-method variance may partly explain some of the results (Schaufeli, Enzmann & Girault, 1993). Little evidence of common-method variance among self-report measures of the sort of effective and perceptual constructs could be found. Similarly, other researches have demonstrated that even if interactions between the constructs are found, it poses no real threat with regard to the findings obtained (Dollard & Winefield, 1998; Wall, Jackson, Mullarkey & Parker, 1996).

The defensive reaction to this argument could be the use of self-report measures. Therefore, future research could focus on developing more objective means of measuring job characteristics, organisational aspects and the perceptions around it. To this end, Dolan (1995) proposes that a multivariate approach be taken in the study of burnout and work engagement. In this approach, numerous associated variables inherent to the environment (e.g. organisation), the job and the individual (e.g. personality traits) could be studied.

Secondly, since the design used in the present study was cross-sectional and not longitudinal, more complex forms of non-recursive linkages could not be examined. While the reciprocal relation between certain variances was examined, feedback loops involving other variables could not be considered. Several models of stress and burnout have suggested that coping responses are guided largely by feedback about the utility of initial responses to stress and strain (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980; Schaufeli & Buunk, 1992). In this research, the reference to causal relationships would therefore be incorrect. Independent variables in this study could be classified as symptoms of burnout and work engagement, rather than their antecedents. Consequently, future longitudinal designs are needed to validate hypothesised causal relationships between antecedents and possible consequences of constructs such as burnout and work engagement. It is further also necessary to gain more knowledge in terms of the inclusion of other variables (e.g. psychological hardiness, resilience and competence) in the study of human well-being.

A third limitation of the present study was the small sample size and relative homogenous sample. Results of this study may not generalise well across other occupational sectors and the sample size is inadequate to make judgements as to when generalisation is justified. The research concerns only non-professional trauma counsellors in a banking environment and whilst this is clearly important in its own right, one should be wary of generalising results to other non-professional counsellors (e.g. HIV/Aids counsellors, which involves is more long-term counselling) as well as non-professional counsellors in other, non-financial environments. This aspect became especially pertinent where analysis of variance could not include significant representation of subgroups (language, race and culture) in the different scoring groups of an item. Utilisation of a sampling method where adequate subgroup representation in the sample could be ensured, significantly increases the likelihood of describing the characteristics of a valid subsample of the total population. In this way, meaningful inferences could be made with regard to the characteristics of the total

population. Replication of this study in other occupational settings and heterogeneous samples are therefore a necessity.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.3.1 Recommendations for organisations**

It has been argued that workplace-based interventions aimed at reducing stress have little or no effect (Briner & Reynolds, 1999). Hardly any literature, based on a systematic audit of the structural sources of workplace burnout with the objectives of alleviating or eliminating the stressors leading to burnout, could be found. Most of the burnout interventions reported in the literature are individual-orientated and provide treatment, not prevention; much like other stress interventions (Nelson, Quick & Simmons, 2001). Therefore a process focussing on building resilience within individuals as well as groups is very important. This is also proactively investing in people rather than reactively dealing with stress and consequently burnout.

The non-professional counsellor has three levels of resources – individual, organisational and social – at his/her disposal with which to tackle demands. It is important to focus on all three levels in order to prevent burnout and to promote engagement. On an individual level, time management, physical training, diet and increasing one's social skills – particularly assertiveness – have been recommended to combat burnout. Utilising techniques such as a deep muscle relaxation, mental relaxation and mental imagery are considered to be effective for relieving stress (Maslach, 1982).

The ability to share the negative emotional impact of a traumatic event is seen as an important step in recovery, hence the need for the non-professional counsellor. Being able to share the horror of these critical incidents permits the victim to share the fear, understand the impact of the event and begin the process of independent functioning. However, counsellors could also potentially become affected by it.

Counsellors therefore need to be debriefed because they have spent several hours being exposed to the pain of the people who were traumatised. Through the process of debriefing the counsellor, three goals are accomplished:

- An attempt is made to prevent negative reactions such as secondary traumatisation, vicarious traumatisation and cumulative stress.
- It is used as an opportunity to teach and reinforce skills.
- The counsellor is “practicing what he/she preaches” to people in the debriefing.

Homan (1994) proposed the following for staying healthy:

- Get a life apart from your job and attend to it.
- Develop, recognise and be able to rely upon a strong value base from which you can draw strength. (Find meaning and importance in what you do).
- Develop the skills to address the situation you routinely face.
- Do what you need to do to experience success (Get your work done).
- Look to colleagues and friends for support.

However, self-improvement alone is not enough. It is also necessary to focus on the organisational level and therefore the workplace as well. Because burnout leads to decreased effectiveness and higher turnover, it is wise to invest resources in keeping counsellors healthy and engaged. As counselling is only one part of the non-professional counsellor’s job description, it is also necessary to focus on the other job demands. Job enlargement, job rotation and job enrichment are useful tools to prevent burnout. Counsellors should feel they have a sustainable workload, choice and control and a sense of community. They should receive recognition and reward, feel they are being treated with fairness, respect and justice, and find meaning and value in their work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Research has also shown that pre-selection of counsellors contributes to the provision of good quality counselling services. Qualities and skills regarded as useful include self-confidence, warmth, well-being, general competence, enthusiasm and a genuine desire to help others, self-insight and attitudes towards trauma (Dryden & Thorne, 1991; Egan, 1982).

Training and accreditation may offer counsellors a long-term perspective to their volunteering commitment, with the benefits of expanding knowledge and gaining formal status for their skills. Supervision and mentoring are crucial in ensuring the long-term

sustainability of trauma counselling and wellness of counsellors. Good mentoring provide emotional support for counsellors and help them deal with personal issues that impact on their work and counselling. Beyond the obvious benefits to the client, it ensures a high standard of counselling services to the traumatised by providing counsellors that are supported, skilled and empowered in their work/counselling roles.

The management of non-professional counsellors is a complex set of tasks and processes and requires a range of skills and sensitivities on the part of management (Cohen, 1992; Cox, Kuk & Leiter, 1993; Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Counsellors' adequacy levels were also positively influenced by a combination of individual and group support. It is likely that individual support may be a primary source of role recognition for counsellors, whereas group support is seen as offering counsellors the opportunity not only to learn from one another but also to establish a social network and group identity. Support by the organisation may be experienced as a safe and containing mechanism by counsellors and as such may help to alleviate stress, dissatisfaction, and consequent burnout. (Maslach, 1986; Maslach & Leiter, 1997) Regular consultations and meetings between colleagues and superiors can provide much needed social support and the opportunity for communication about problematic issues. Also useful are mutual aid groups formed by the workers themselves (Schaufeli & Buunk, 1996).

Willingness to recognise and value counsellors' work seems to be effective in sustaining the long-term commitment of counsellors, as well as in enhancing attitudes. Counsellors who focus on positive achievements and receive recognition may be less prone to burnout. More focus on recognition and rewards may assist the promotion of a positive work environment and may prevent feelings of stress, helplessness and burnout (Bennett, 1995). It is important to seek out the positives of trauma counselling. If counsellors can receive more recognition, and if organisations can be encouraged to implement tools and strategies that recognise the work of the counsellors, buffers may be provided against burnout and engagement may be enhanced.

In the present study strong statistically significant inverse relationships emerged between sense of coherence and the indicators of burnout. In addition, strong statistically positive relationships were found between sense of coherence and work engagement. This is in line

with other research that found statistically positive correlations between sense of coherence and psychological well-being (Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Ortlepp, 1998).

The extent to which counsellors felt they have the resources available to meet the demands posed by the counselling process and that these demands are worthy challenges, would therefore contribute to their work engagement (Antonovsky, 1987; Semmer, 1996). More specifically, Antonovsky (1987) postulated that a strong sense of coherence enables a person to mobilise generalised resistance resources to combat stressors.

The importance of the counsellor in sustaining the well-being of the traumatised cannot be overstated. They provide crucial emotional support and provide a safe setting in which the traumatised can express fears and anger. Maslach (1982, p.147) provides an excellent explanation of this: “If all of the knowledge and advice about how to beat burnout could be summed up in one word, that word would be balance. Balance between giving and getting, balance between stress and calm, balance between work and home – these stand in clear contrast to the overload, understaffing, over commitment and other imbalances of burnout.”

### **6.3.2 Recommendations for future research**

Counsellor stress is a real phenomenon and is associated with problems of the recruitment, health and retention of non-professional trauma counsellors. Research has shown that counsellor stress is reliably associated with a number of variables, including those intrinsic to the job, individual cognitive vulnerability and systemic factors. There are, however, important gaps in our understanding of counsellor stress and burnout, most notably regarding effective interventions to alleviate burnout and support work engagement. Further research to allow the development of effective programmes to reduce counsellor stress and burnout and to promote work engagement is very important.

Still absent from the literature is the definitive objective criteria that identify a scale and the point on the scale when behaviour in social interactions can be diagnosed as burnout. Golembiewski, Boudreua, Sun and Luo (1998), using Maslach and Jackson’s MBI inventory, are moving towards scale development with the eight-phase model of burnout, but have yet to develop the values for comparison across global populations. Further research in South Africa should focus on determining a clinical profile for burnout to determine validated cut-

off points and distinguish burnout from other clinical conditions. Furthermore, there is a lack of validated cut-off points with regard to the measurement of burnout and work engagement, due to insufficient South African norms for the MBI and the UWES. Therefore, research in other occupational settings, cultural groups and work environments in South Africa is urgently needed to serve as norm-group reference groups in terms of measurement levels of both burnout and work engagement.

Stress and burnout are not the same, but they are related. Burnout is addressed as a multidimensional process (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). The stress of burnout arises from the social interaction between the traumatised and the counsellor or other demands of an interpersonal nature (Maslach, 1982). Other stressors may contribute to burnout of counsellors, such as work load and role stress that combine conflict and ambiguity. Very little is also known with regard to the prevalence and dynamics of work engagement, in stark contrast to the development of negative work-related attitudes and behaviours such as burnout. It is thus recommended that future research should focus on possible causes, outcomes and underlying processes on burnout and work engagement.

In line with the findings from the research literature, a focus on the job environment, as well as the person in it, is essential for interventions to deal with burnout and work engagement. Neither changing the setting alone, nor changing the individual alone is enough; effective change occurs when both develop in an integrated fashion (Leiter & Maslach, 2000; Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). The recognition of the six areas of work life expands the range for options for organisational intervention. For example, rather than concentrating on the area of work overload for an intervention (such as teaching counsellors how to cope with overload, how to cut back on work, or how to relax), a focus on some of the other mismatches may be more effective. Counsellors may be able to tolerate greater workload if they value their work and feel they are doing something important, or if they feel well rewarded for their efforts. Initial work in this area is encouraging but incomplete. Therefore, research in this field in a South African environment would be of great value.

Factor analysis has confirmed Maslach and Jackson's (1986) 3-factor structure of burnout for human service workers. The three MBI subscales have been shown to have different correlates and relationships with various outcome variables (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Burke, 1994; Leiter, 1993). Combining the three components of the UWES, as was done in

the present research, may be of limited value. Important relationships between components of work engagement, antecedents and consequences may not be evident when the UWES subscales are combined. Therefore, internal consistency, test-retest reliability and construct validity should be expanded to include equivalence and bias, especially in a South African environment. Research design selection significantly influences the robustness of findings and it is recommended that large, stratified, random samples should be considered, facilitating the use of advanced statistical methods such as exploratory factor analyses with target rotations (equivalence), analysis of variance to detect bias, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling. Future studies should also take cognisance of the inherent problems of measurement in multicultural settings, as found in South Africa.

As non-professional counsellors are volunteers, research in this field is also necessary. People volunteer to be non-professional counsellors for a whole range of reasons; including personal satisfaction, social interaction, or change in their life situation. However, non-professional counsellors doing trauma counselling share some unique characteristics. Some people volunteer in this area because they have experienced the loss of friends, partners or family and they may be seeking to come to terms with that loss. Others have received personal support from peer counsellors and they want to offer that support to someone else. The fact should also be acknowledged that certain people will volunteer because they want to give before they potentially receive from a service. Others volunteer simply because they want to “do something” about trauma, without necessarily having been directly affected. No matter what the reason for the non-professional counsellor to be involved in trauma counselling, it is important to recognise that certain personality traits can also be a determining effect in the development of burnout or resistance to burnout, and therefore work engagement (Schaufeli, & Buunk, 1992). Research on specific personality traits of non-professional counsellors that could contribute to their work engagement and minimise their chances to develop burnout is therefore important.

More research using the Sense of Coherence construct is needed (Semmer, 1996; Strümpfer, 1995). Despite the implications in the literature that sense of coherence has a moderating effect on burnout (Levert, Lucas & Ortlepp, 2000), more research on its effect on engagement should be done.

In addition, positive constructs such as engagement should be further investigated in other highly stressful occupations in South Africa and should be included in causal models. The results of including personal accomplishment in extending the engagement construct should also form part of future studies on work engagement.

Finally, in studying the construct of work engagement, researches should consider making use of positively phrased items to measure job resources, rather than negatively phrased items. Future studies should also use large sample groups and adequate statistical techniques.

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