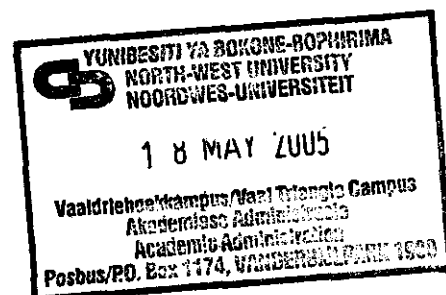


**JOB INSECURITY AND WELLNESS OF WORKERS  
IN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION**

Tiana van Greunen, B.Soc.Sc Hons, Industrial Psychology

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree,  
Magister Artium in Industrial Psychology  
at the Vaal Triangle Campus, North-West University

Supervisor: Prof. J.H. Buitendach  
Vanderbijl Park  
2004



## NOTE

- The reader must note that the publication and reference styles used in this mini-dissertation are in accordance with the instructions for publication (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This is in accordance with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University to use the APA style in all scientific documents since January 1999.
- In this mini-dissertation, the article option was chosen.

## **PREFACE**

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people, without whom this research project would not have been possible:

- My Creator and Lord, for giving me a talent
- Prof. J.H. Buitendach and Ms. J. Bosman, for their time, effort and sincere interest, as well as their help with the statistical analyses
- My fiancé, Barend, for his love, support and constant encouragement
- My father and mother, who never stopped believing
- Ms. A. Oosthuizen, for the statistical analyses
- Ms. L. Grobler, for editing the final text

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	ii
List of Tables	iv
Summary	vi
Opsomming	vii
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.2 RESEARCH AIM	11
1.2.1 General aim	11
1.2.2 Specific aim	11
1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	12
1.3.1 Research design	12
1.3.2 Sample	12
1.3.3 Measuring battery	12
1.3.4 Data analysis	14
1.3.5 Research procedure	16
1.4. CHAPTER DIVISION	16
1.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY	16
CHAPTER REFERENCES	
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
RESEARCH ARTICLE	24
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
3.1 CONCLUSIONS	73
3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH	75
3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	75
CHAPTER REFERENCES	

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table &amp; Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table 1</b> Compilation of the study population ( $N=83$ )	39
<b>Table 2</b> Pattern Matrix of the 11-item JISI for Employees in a Local Government Organisation ( $N=83$ )	45
<b>Table 3</b> Pattern Matrix of the 16-item OLBI for Employees in a Local Government Organisation ( $N=83$ )	46
<b>Table 4</b> Pattern Matrix of the 17-item UWES for Employees in a Local Government Organisation ( $N=83$ )	47
<b>Table 5</b> Pattern Matrix of the 53-item COPE for Employees in a Local Government Organisation ( $N=83$ )	48
<b>Table 6</b> Descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments of Employees in a Local Government Organisation ( $N=83$ )	50
<b>Table 7</b> MANOVAs – Differences in Job Insecurity Levels of Demographic Groups ( $N=83$ )	51
<b>Table 8</b> MANOVAs – Differences in Burnout Levels of Demographic Groups ( $N=83$ )	52
<b>Table 9</b> MANOVAs – Differences in Engagement Levels of Demographic Groups ( $N=83$ )	52
<b>Table 10</b> ANOVAs – Differences in Engagement Levels of Tenure ( $N=83$ )	53

**Table 11**

MANOVAs – Differences in Coping Levels of Demographic  
Groups ( $N=83$ )

54

**Table 12**

Correlation coefficient between the JISI, OLBI, UWES and  
COPE ( $N=83$ )

55

## SUMMARY

**Subject:** Job insecurity and wellness of workers in a local government organisation.

**Key terms:** Job insecurity, burnout, work engagement, coping and government organisation.

The industrialised world of today are characterised by transformation and concepts such as downsizing, rightsizing and restructuring have become a reality. South Africa is not excluded from this worldwide phenomenon and economic and political changes, as well as the shrinking labour market, lead to increased job insecurity.

After 1994 local governments were faced with the challenge of high demands for basic services in previously disadvantaged communities, while having limited resources. These organisations are also affected by the processes of restructuring and transformation, which, in turn, have led to understaffing in most departments and, as such, may contribute to job stress. In this study, job insecurity is regarded as a stressor, and its possible relationship with burnout, work engagement and coping is explored.

A cross-sectional survey design was used. The Job Insecurity Questionnaire, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and the COPE Questionnaire were administered together with biographical questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

Low levels of job insecurity and burnout and high levels of engagement were found in the study population. Results also indicated that job insecurity is related to burnout, that burnout has a negative correlation with work engagement and coping, and that a positive relationship exists between work engagement and coping. Finally, a regression analysis showed that nine percent of variance in burnout, as measured by the OLBI, is predicted by total job insecurity. Job insecurity can thus partially be used in the prediction of burnout. Limitations in the research are identified and recommendations for future research are made.

## OPSOMMING

**Onderwerp:** Werksonsekerheid en welstand van werkers in 'n plaaslike regeringsorganisasie.

**Sleutelterme:** Werksonsekerheid, uitbranding, werksbegeestering, "coping" en regeringsorganisasie.

Die geïndustrialiseerde wêreld van vandag word gekenmerk deur transformasie en begrippe soos "downsizing", "rightsizing" en herstrukturering het 'n realiteit geword. Suid-Afrika is nie uitgesluit van dié wêreldwye verskynsel nie en ekonomiese en politieke veranderinge, sowel as die krimpende arbeidsmark, lei tot verhoogde werksonsekerheid.

Na 1994 het plaaslike regerings voor die uitdaging te staan gekom van die hoë vraag na basiese dienste in voorheen agtergeblewe gemeenskappe met beperkte hulpbronne. Hierdie organisasies is ook geaffekteer deur die herstrukturerings- en transformasieproses wat gelei het tot 'n tekort aan personeel in die meeste afdelings, en wat op sy beurt weer tot werkstres mag bydra. In hierdie studie word werksonsekerheid as 'n stressor beskou en die moontlike verband met uitbranding, werksbegeestering en "coping" word ondersoek.

'n Eenmalige dwarsnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die Werksonsekerheidvraelys, die Oldenburg Uitbrandingsvraelys, die Utrecht Werksbegeesteringskaal en die COPE-vraelys is tesame met biografiese vraelyste afgeneem. Beskrywende en inferensiële statistiek is gebruik om data te analiseer.

Lae vlakke van werksonsekerheid en uitbranding en hoë vlakke van werksbegeestering is by die studiepopulasie gevind. Resultate het ook getoon dat werksonsekerheid verwant is aan uitbranding, dat uitbranding 'n negatiewe korrelasie het met werksbegeestering en "coping" en dat 'n positiewe verwantskap tussen begeestering en "coping" bestaan. Laastens het 'n regressie-analise aangedui dat nege persent van variansie in uitbranding, soos gemeet deur die OLBI, voorspel word deur totale werksonsekerheid.

Werksonsekerheid kan dus gedeeltelik gebruik kan word in die voorspelling van uitbranding. Beperkinge in die navorsing word geïdentifiseer en aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing word gemaak.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation deals with job insecurity and wellness of workers in a local government organisation. Wellness of workers includes aspects such as burnout, work engagement and coping.

In Chapter 1 the justification for the research is discussed in terms of the problem statement, the aims of the research and the research method. The chapter is concluded with a brief overview of chapters.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Economic changes in the world of work have initiated an industrialised world that is characterised by transformation (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). This transformation has set new challenges and expectations for organisations, forcing them to engage in “downsizing”, “rightsizing” or restructuring, or all three simultaneously, in an attempt to survive in difficult economic conditions. This almost inevitably implies the rationalisation of jobs. These terms are viewed as synonymous with retrenchment – a concept feared by so many workers. For many employees these changes in their working life cause feelings of insecurity about the nature and future existence of their jobs.

Although the individuals that loose their jobs are most affected by organisations implementing these actions, the unemployment problem is not limited to employees directly affected by it; but may also leave scars on the remaining employees (Makgetla, 2001). Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990) state that the anticipation of harm can have effects as potent as experiencing the harm itself and consequently hypothesise that job insecurity may be as traumatic as unemployment itself. This statement is collaborated by Jacobson (1991). Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) are of the opinion that the impact of the changing world of work is perhaps most evident in changes in the psychological contract. In the new psychological contract

employees are expected to give more in terms of time, effort, skills and flexibility, whereas they receive less in terms of career opportunities, lifetime employment and job security (Büssing, 1999; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1991).

South Africa is incorporated in this worldwide phenomenon; this country's economic environment having also changed dramatically over the past ten years. Globalisation has forced companies to compete with the best in the world, leading to fierce competition, cost savings and reduction of the labour force. The once stable, predictable and controlled environment has become complex, out of control and unpredictable. The industrial era is superseded by an era of information or knowledge and workers shifted from production to information (Moses, 1998). Changes in the South African labour market over the last decade have not only been limited to the economic environment, but have also been affected by political change. It is evident that the political change is still in the introduction phase as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is gaining momentum. Economic and political changes, as well as the shrinking labour market, aggravate job insecurity (Makgetla, 2001).

Job insecurity may be defined in different ways (De Witte, 1997, 1999; Hartley et al; 1991; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). In general, job insecurity refers to employees' negative response to the changes in their job situation. Job insecurity has been defined as an individual's expectations of continuity in a job situation (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997); overall concern about the future existence of the job (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996); perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job (Heaney, Israel & House, 1994) and powerlessness to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), to mention just a few.

Job insecurity is usually conceptualised from three general viewpoints, being (i) global, (ii) multi-dimensional and (iii) a job stressor. According to the *global view*, job insecurity may be considered as the first phase in the process of job loss, where the threat of job loss or job discontinuity exists (Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980; Ferrie, 1997; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987).

In the *multi-dimensional definition*, job insecurity refers not only to the degree of uncertainty, but also to the discontinuity of certain dimensions, such as the

opportunity for promotion (Ashford, Lee & Bolbko, 1989; Borg & Elizur, 1992, Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996). Two components of job insecurity are emphasised by Van Vuuren (1990), firstly where the subjective experience or perception of the event exists, and secondly the uncertainty about the future that creates doubts about the continuation of the job.

A mounting body of literature suggests that perceptions of job insecurity might have detrimental consequences for employee attitudes (Ashford et al; 1989; Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002), increase in job dissatisfaction (Davy et al.; 1997), an increase in negative health outcomes (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Mohren, Swaen, Van Amelsvoort, Borm & Galama, 2003) and higher reports of psychological distress (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Probst, 2000). Moreover, employees with perceptions of low job security are more likely to engage in work withdrawal behaviour (Q'Quin, 1998), report lower organisational commitment (Preuss & Lautsch, 2002), often leading to employee turnover (Ashford et al; 1989) and decreased safety motivation and compliance, which in turn, lead to higher levels of workplace injuries and accidents (Probst & Brubaker, 2001), that is detrimental to organisational viability (Kets De Vries & Balazs, 1997) and well-being (De Witte, 1999; Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti & Happonen, 2000; Mohr, 2000).

According to De Witte (1999) and Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity consistently presents itself as a *stressor*. In analysing its consequences, stress reactions can be recognised.

Two theories of stress, the person-environment fit theory of stress and the affective events theory of stress may be useful in an attempt to study the antecedents and consequences of job insecurity. Definitions of stress in the *person-environment fit theory of stress* emphasise the match between characteristics of the person and the environment. Stress value depends on the perceived imbalance between the individual's perceptions of the demands made by the environment and the individual's perceived ability and motivation to cope with those demands (Probst, 2002). Job insecurity will thus be perceived by the employee as a change or a precursor to change that will demand adaptation, which may be difficult to fulfil. Failure to cope with these new demands may have significant consequences (Probst,

2002). From an *affective events theory perspective*, characteristics of the work environment and events are subject to a cognitive appraisal of how these characteristics and events aid or obstruct the attainment of goals. Stress results if there is an identifiable goal obstruction, as well as a perceived imbalance between the environmental demands and the employee's ability to cope with those demands. The resultant strain may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level, or any combination of these (Probst, 2002).

With these theoretical frameworks in mind, Probst (2002) proposed and tested an integrated model of job insecurity. In this model, job insecurity occurs as a result of multiple antecedents that may serve to stimulate a person's perception that the future of his/her job is in jeopardy. Probst (2002) hypothesised that antecedents such as grievance filing, absenteeism, organisation tenure, education level and job technology changes are all subject to cognitive appraisal, involving an assessment of the relevance and importance of these factors to one's well-being. Resulting perceptions of job security generate an emotional or affective response to work events, such as anger or anxiety, and also influence job attitudes, such as promotion satisfaction or job security satisfaction. Cross-sectional and longitudinal research indicates that cognitive appraisal of job security predicts satisfaction with job security, but job security perceptions predict work attitudes to a lesser extent, while taking into account quotidian work stressors such as role ambiguity, time pressure and role conflict. Probst (2002) also reveals that numerous consequences of job insecurity are mediated by job attitudes and affective reactions. Negative consequences at individual and organisation levels, leading to increased organisational withdrawal; health conditions; psychological distress and lowered organisational commitment are all related to job insecurity.

With reference to the work – setting, considerable evidence exists that indicate that particular work stressors, like job insecurity, influence burnout (Burke, 1994). Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) state that burnout and stress are two distinct concepts. Stress could be seen as a temporary adaptation process that is accompanied by mental and physical symptoms. These authors consider burnout as a particular kind of prolonged job stress. Therefore, an individual who experiences stress must be able to return to his/her normal level of functioning (adaptation has been successfully

performed), while burnout refer to a breakdown in adaptation, accompanied by chronic malfunctioning at work.

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998, p. 36) define burnout as “a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind in 'normal' individuals that is primarily characterised by exhaustion, which is accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work”. This psychological condition develops gradually, but may remain unnoticed for a long time. It results from a misfit between intentions and reality in the job.

According to the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) normally used to measure burnout, three components of burnout can be identified, namely exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). *Exhaustion* refers to fatigue, which includes feelings of being over-extended and depleted of emotional and physical resources. This component relates to the basic individual stress aspect of burnout and, according to Lee and Ashforth (1996), this is the most important underlying aspect of burnout. The inter-personal context dimension of burnout, *cynicism*, reflects indifference or a distant attitude towards one’s work in general, rather than towards the recipients of one’s service or personal relationships at work. *Professional efficacy* encompasses both social and non-social accomplishments at work. This component of burnout is linked to the self-evaluation dimension of the concept (Maslach et al; 2001). Previous studies show that burnout results when a breach exists between individuals’ expectations to fulfil their professional roles and the structure in place within the organisation. When the workplace does not support professional goals, there is an increase in exhaustion and cynicism and a decrease in professional efficacy (Leiter & Harvie, 1998).

Shaufeli and Enzmann (1998) classified possible factors contributing tot burnout into four categories namely biographical characteristics, personality characteristics, work-related attitudes and work and organisation characteristics. For the purpose of the research the focus will be on job insecurity as an organisational stressor. Organisational stress refers to stress as a result of certain characteristics of the

organisation itself and includes stressors such as staff shortages, inadequate resources, lack of communication and work overload that is associated with job insecurity.

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) propose that organisational stressors can be divided into two groups, namely job demands and a lack of job resources. In order to understand how job demands and resources are related to burnout, the conservation of resources (COR) theory of stress (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993) is used as a frame of reference.

According to the COR theory, people strive to obtain and maintain what they value (their resources). Burnout thus occurs when certain valued resources are lost, are inadequate to meet demands or do not yield the anticipated level of return. Job demands include aspects such as role ambiguity, role conflict, stressful events, heavy workload and work pressure. Resources, on the other hand, include social support from various sources; job enhancement opportunities, such as control, participation in decision making and autonomy; and reinforcement contingencies (Burke & Richardsen, 1993; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Both job demands and job resources are affected by job insecurity.

The above-mentioned relationship between burnout, job demands and resources is confirmed by various studies. In a proposed process model of burnout, it was found that job demands are more strongly related to exhaustion, while job resources are more strongly related to cynicism and professional efficacy (Leiter, 1991; 1993). Results by Lee and Ashforth (1996) reveal that job demands are strongly associated with exhaustion, that cynicism is associated with both resources and demands and that professional efficacy is largely uncorrelated to job demands and job resources. Various studies analysed by Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) found that job demands correlate most strongly with exhaustion and least with professional efficacy. Professional efficacy also showed a strong association with resources. In an analysis of the Maslach Burnout Inventory –General Survey (MBI-GS), Taris, Schreurs and Schaufeli (1999) found that job demands are more strongly related to exhaustion, that cynicism and professional efficacy are related to the resource variables and that organisational demands relate only to exhaustion (Peeters & Le Blanc, 2001). Based on these results, it might be expected that job demands be most strongly associated

with exhaustion, whereas a lack of job resources may be strongly associated with diminished professional efficacy.

From a psychometric point of view, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is an effective tool for assessing burnout, but, because of the absolute predominance of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the concept of burnout has gradually become equated with the way it is measured: *burnout is what the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) measures*. Hence the concept is narrowed down to the three dimensions included in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Schaufeli, 2003).

An alternative instrument for assessing burnout has recently been developed – the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) – which includes both core dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2002). The exhaustion scale includes items on the affective, physical and cognitive aspects of burnout, whereas the disengagement scale includes items that refer to distancing oneself from one's work.

Research on the antecedents of burnout indicates that burnout is related to job features that include overload, role conflict, role ambiguity and lack of social support, as well as occupational characteristics such as, *inter alia*, requirements to be emotionally sympathetic, but also to suppress emotions on the job (Maslach et al; 2001). Negative outcomes of burnout include aggravated absenteeism, intention to leave the job, actual turnover, lower productivity and effectiveness for those who remain at work, decreased job satisfaction and commitment, and a spill-over effect to other colleagues and family.

Empirical studies show that some individuals, regardless of high job demands and lack of job resources, do not develop burnout, but, in contrast to others, seem to find pleasure in hard work and dealing with job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). This gave rise to the concept of engagement, theoretically viewed as an antithesis of the burnout construct. Maslach and Leiter (1997) rephrased burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. Engagement, according to these authors, is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy, the direct opposites of burnout (measured by MBI-GS), namely exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy.

Engagement is can thus be identified as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind, characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. *Vigour* is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, as well as a willingness to exert effort and to persist, even through difficult times. *Dedication* is characterised by a sense of significance of one's work, feeling enthusiastic, inspired and proud, and by viewing work as a challenge. *Absorption* approximates the concept of "flow", an optimal state of experience where focused attention, a clear mind, accord between body and mind, effortless concentration, complete control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time and intrinsic enjoyment is experienced (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) propose the Comprehensive Burnout and Engagement (COBE) Model based on the Job-Demands-Job-Resources Model of Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) and include aspects such as engagement and adding indicators for health impairment and organisational withdrawal. The COBE model assumes two psychological processes, namely an energetic and a motivational process. The energetic process links job demands with health problems *via* burnout. The motivational process links job resources *via* engagement with organisational outcomes. Job resources may play either an intrinsic, motivational role by fostering the employee's growth, learning and development, or they may play an extrinsic, motivational role by being instrumental in achieving work goals. Job demands are associated with exhaustion, whereas job resources are associated with engagement. Burnout is related to health problems as well as to turnover intentions, and it mediates the relationship between job demands and health problems, while engagement mediates the relationship between job resources and turnover intentions.

One of the basic issues in the burnout domain is coping, i.e. actions that an individual implement in an attempt to deal with organisation stressors to ward off aversive strains (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995). Greenglass, Burke and Konarski (1998) state that an individual's burnout levels depend not only on stressful events in the work environment, but also on the availability of coping resources. Coping may be defined as "the person's cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage (reduce, minimise or tolerate) the internal and external demands of the person-environment transaction that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen & DeLongis, 1986, p. 572). Coping resources are factors that are in place before a stressor occurs – factors that can be used to minimize the costs of dealing with stress

(Wheaton, 1983). In literature on burnout certain coping strategies are associated with increased degrees of burnout, while other coping strategies are found to be effective in diminishing burnout. De Rijk, Le Blanc and Schaufeli (1998) argue that utilising active coping strategies buffers the effects of job stressors on negative job-related outcomes such as burnout. These results are confirmed by Duquette, Kerouac, Sandhu, Ducharme and Saulnier (1995) who find that active coping styles are associated with lower levels of burnout. More specifically, Anderson (2000) finds that when individuals use active coping strategies, feelings of cynicism decreased and the sense of professional efficacy increased.

However, coping does not save workers from exhaustion. In research on a sample of pharmacists, Storm and Rothmann (2003) found that professional efficacy was the only component of burnout associated with coping strategies. Active coping strategies are associated with higher levels of personal accomplishment.

Avoidance coping seems to be associated with higher levels of burnout. Thornton (1992) finds that a combination of escapist and avoidance coping is related to increased levels of burnout. Anderson (2000) finds that workers who apply more avoidance strategies show an increase in exhaustion. Results by Mitchell and Hastings (2001) indicate that the use of disengagement coping strategies predicted both exhaustion and less positive feelings of professional efficacy. Chan and Hui (1995) observe that the use of avoidance coping is associated with all three dimensions of burnout. According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), avoidance coping share about 5-10% in the variance of exhaustion and cynicism, where the relationship with personal accomplishment is weaker (less than 5%). Rohman (1987/1988) also finds a positive relationship between avoidance coping and exhaustion and cynicism.

Folkman and Lazarus (1991) indicate that social support seeking can simultaneously function as both a problem-focused coping strategy and an emotion-focused coping strategy. Although emotion-focused coping strategies are often considered as ineffective (Chwalisz, Altmaier & Russell, 1992; Patterson, 1999), Zellars and Perrewé (2001) argue that emotion-focused strategies are multi-dimensional and have suffered from a negative reputation, primarily as a result of their measurement. Their results provide empirical support for the valuable effect of emotional social support as

an aid against all three dimensions. Others also suggest that emotional support could alleviate work stress and psychological strain (Cherniss, 1980). On the other hand, there is evidence that emotional social support may not always be very adaptive (Billings & Moos, 1984; Constanza, Derlega & Winstead, 1988).

Turning to religion is also seen as a potential coping strategy (Beehr et al; 1995). However, it has largely been ignored in coping with occupational stress. It seems as if practising religion in stressful times is associated with lower burnout scores (Hammons, 2000; Luton, 2000; Shaddock, Hill & Van Limbeek, 1998; Turnipseed, 1994). Spiritual resources help people cope with stress, primarily through the appraisal process, by providing a perceptual framework that can help establish the meaning of a stressor in a larger context and also help to prescribe acceptable coping techniques (Zeidner & Hammer, 1992).

As can be seen from the problem statement, involuntary job loss has become an increasingly common experience for many employees in various private and public organisations. Local governments are faced with the challenge of high demands for basic services in previously disadvantaged communities, while they have limited resources. Transformation in local governments is evident in promotions being put on hold, managers having to reapply for their jobs and moratoriums placed on the appointment of new personnel, all of which has led to understaffing in most departments. These changes result in new demands on employees who often have to manage without having the necessary resources. This may all lead to increased stress in the individual (Rothmann, Jackson & Kruger, 2003).

Welsh (1996) reasons that this trend translates to more insecure work environments that have a wide range of effects on employees' mental and physical health, including aspects such as burnout or engagement of employees.

The rationale for this study is based on the assumption that job insecurity is an important concept that deals with the continuing existence or survival of members within an organisation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Loss of one's job also implies loss of one's organisational membership.

Despite the significance of the experience of job security and insecurity to both employers and employees, academicians have not yet paid these concepts adequate theoretical or empirical attention (Ashford et al; 1989). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) argue that the lack of a theoretical sound measure of the insecurity concept has deterred progress. Büssing (1999) mentions that studies of the employment process reveal the necessity of considering additional variables in the study of job insecurity. He mentions that beside socio-demographic variables such as gender, age and education, one must account for individual psychological differences such as coping, job/work orientation, organisational commitment and for resources.

Based on this discussion, the following research questions can be formulated:

- How are job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and coping formulated in the literature?
- What are the levels of job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and coping of employees in a local government organisation?
- What is the relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and coping in a local government organisation?
- What percentage of variance in burnout is explained by job insecurity?

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS**

### **1.2.1 General aim**

The general aim of this research is to determine whether there is a relationship between job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping in a local government organisation.

### **1.2.2 Specific aims**

The specific aims of this study are:

- To conceptualise job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and coping.
- To investigate the levels of job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and employees' mechanisms of coping in a local government organisation.

- To establish the relationship between job insecurity, burnout, work engagement and employees' coping in a local government organisation.
- To establish what percentage of variance in burnout is accounted for by job insecurity.

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **1.3.1 Research design**

A cross-sectional research design with a survey as data collecting technique will be used to reach the objectives of the study. The design is well suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correlation and validation research, whereby relationships between variables are examined (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

#### **1.3.2 Sample**

The entire population of 130 employees from a local government organisation in the Free State will be used in this research. Employees from various levels in the organisation, ranging from unskilled/semi-skilled to professional levels, will be included. A biographical questionnaire will also be used.

#### **1.3.3 Measuring battery**

The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ), the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the COPE Questionnaire (COPE) will be used for collecting data. Reliability and validity will be studied before using the results.

*The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)* (De Witte, 1997) consisting of 11 items, will be used to measure the perceived job insecurity of participants. Items encapsulate both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly agree, 3 = unsure and 5 = strongly disagree. Items on the cognitive dimension include ones phrased as follows,

“I think that I will continue working here”, whereas an item such as, “I feel uncertain about the future of my job” is an example on the affective dimension. De Witte (1997) reports a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 (total), for the affective scale 0,85 and for the cognitive, 0,90, using the same instrument. Elbert (2002) and Heymans (2002) respectively obtain alpha coefficients of 0,84 and 0,81 for total job insecurity. The average of 11 items indicates overall job insecurity of respondents. A high score indicates that the respondent experiences high job insecurity, while a low score indicates a low experience of job insecurity.

***The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)*** (Demerouti et al; 2003), is a recently developed alternative to the traditional Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), used as a measure of burnout. The OLBI includes both core dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion and disengagement (cynicism/depersonalisation). The OLBI consists of 16 items, measured on a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Eight items are phrased positively, for example, “I always find new and interesting aspects in my work.” The remaining eight are phrased negatively, for example, “There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.” The exhaustion subscale comprises 8 items that measure the affective, physical and cognitive aspects of burnout and include items like, “During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.” The disengagement subscale comprises 8 items that relate to distancing oneself from one’s work. An example of this scale is “I find my work to be a positive challenge.” In investigating the convergent validity of the MBI and the OLBI, using multitrait-multimethod analyses, Demerouti et al. (2003) find that the latent variables representing both instruments are highly correlated and that all exhaustion and distancing/disengagement items of both instruments load on a single factor. The researchers also obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 (exhaustion) and 0,84 (disengagement) respectively.

***The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)*** (Schaufel, Maslach & Marek, 1993) will be used to measure the levels of the participants’ engagement. The UWES includes three dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, which is conceptually seen as the opposite of burnout and is scored on a seven-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The questionnaire consists of seventeen items, including statements such as, “I am bursting with energy in my work

every day.”; “Time flies when I am at work.” and “My job inspires me.” The alpha coefficients of the three sub-scales vary between 0,68 and 0,91. The alpha coefficient may be improved (it varies between 0,78 and 0,89 for the three sub-scales) by eliminating a few items without substantially decreasing the scale’s internal consistency.

Storm (2002) obtains the following alpha coefficients for the UWES in a sample of 2 396 members of the South African Police Service: Vigour: 0,78; Dedication: 0,89; Absorption: 0,78.

*The COPE Questionnaire (COPE)* will be used to measure participants' coping strategies. The COPE is a multi-dimensional 53-item coping questionnaire that indicates the different ways people use to cope in various circumstances (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989). Although the original questionnaire measures 13 different coping strategies, Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) subjected the COPE to a principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation. Four internally consistent factors were extracted, namely Active Coping (16 items), Avoidance (13 items), Seeking Emotional Support (7 items) and Turning to Religion (3 items). Examples of items on each of these factors include, “I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.” (active coping), “I talked to someone about how I feel.” (seeking social support), “I say to myself, ‘This isn’t real’.” (avoidance) and “I put my trust in God.” (turning to religion). The alpha coefficients of the four scales are 0,92, 0,86, 0,80 and 0,83 respectively. All these values are acceptable ( $\alpha > 0,70$ , Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and thus indicate the internal consistency of the factors of the COPE. Test-retest reliability varies from 0,46 to 0,86 and from 0,42 to 0,89 (applied after two weeks).

#### **1.3.4 Data analysis**

The data analysis will be conducted with the help of the SAS Programme (SAS Institute, 2000). Cronbach alpha coefficients, inter-item correlation coefficients and confirmatory factor analysis will be used to assess the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics, e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis, will be used to analyse the data.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to determine the significance of differences in the job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping of various demographic groups. MANOVA tests measure whether mean differences among groups or a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA a new dependent variable that maximises group differences is created from the set of dependent variables. One-way analysis is then performed on the newly-created dependent variable. Wilk's lambda will be used to test the significance of the effects, being a likelihood ratio statistic that tests the likelihood of the data on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups against the likelihood of the assumption that the population mean vectors are identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different groups. When an effect is significant in MANOVA, ANOVA is used to discover which dependent variables are affected. Tukey HSD tests are done to indicate which groups differed significantly when ANOVAs are done. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 1999) will be used in addition to statistical significance to determine the practical significance of relationships. Effect sizes indicate whether obtained results are important (while statistical significance may often show results that are of little practical relevance).

A cut-off point of 0,50 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1988) will be set for the practical significance of differences between means.

Pearson correlation coefficients will be computed to determine the relationships among the variables. In the case where the distribution of scores is skew, Spearman correlation coefficients are computed. A cut-off point of  $p = 0,05$  will be set for the statistical significance of the results. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) will be used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) will be set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analysis will be used to describe the relationship between variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The multiple regressions are done with burnout, engagement and coping as independent variables, and with affective and cognitive job insecurity as dependent variables.

A regression analysis will be used to determine the proportion of the total variance of one variable that is explained by another variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this study, a multiple regression analysis will be conducted to determine the proportion of the total variance in burnout (dependent variable) due to job insecurity (independent variable).

### **1.3.5 Research Procedure**

The measuring battery will be compiled, including a letter justifying the research and requesting participation. With regard to the research, ethical aspects are discussed with the participants.

## **1.4 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS**

The chapters in this mini-dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives

Chapter 2: Research article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

## **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter the background to and justification for the research were discussed, followed by a description of the problem statement and the formulation of the general and specific objectives. The research design and method were discussed, followed by the chapter division.

Chapter 2 consists of the research article.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, D.G. (2000). Coping strategies and burnout among veteran child protection workers. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24, 839-848.
- Ashford, S., Lee, C. & Bolbko, P. (1989). Content, causes and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 803-829.
- Beehr, T.A., Johnson, L.B. & Nieva, R. (1995). Occupational stress: Coping of police and their spouses. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 16, 3-25.
- Billings, A.G. & Moos, R.H. (1984). Coping, stress and social resources among adults with unipolar depression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 877-891.
- Borg, I. & Elizur, D. (1992). Job insecurity: Correlates, moderators and measurement. *International Journal of Manpower*, 13, 13 -26.
- Burke, R.J. & Richardsen, A.M. (1993). Psychological burnout in organizations. In R.T. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of Organizational Behaviour* (pp. 263-298). New York: Dekker.
- Büssing, A. (1999). Can control at work and social support moderate psychological consequences of job insecurity? Results from a quasi-experimental study in the Steel Industry. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 8, 219-242.
- Caplan, R.D., Cobb, S., French, J.R.P., Van Harrison, R.V. & Pinneau, S.R. (1980). *Job demands and worker health: Main effects and occupational differences*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.R. & Weintraub, J.K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 267-283.
- Chan, D.W. & Hui, E.K.P. (1995). Burnout and coping among Chinese secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 65, 15-25.
- Cherniss, C. (1980). *Staff burnout*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Chwalisz, K., Altmaier, E.M. & Russell, D.W. (1992). Causal attributions, self-efficacy, cognitions and coping with stress. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 11, 377-400.
- Clark, L.A. & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7, 309-319.

- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for behavioral sciences* (Rev. ed.). Orlando, FLA: Academic Press.
- Constanza, R.S., Derlega, V.J. & Winstead, B.A. (1988). Positive and negative forms of social support: Effects of conversational topics on coping with stress among same-sex friends. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 24, 182-193.
- Cordes, C.L. & Dougherty, T.W. (1993). A review and integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of Management Review*, 18, 621-656.
- Davy, J.A., Kinicki, A.J. & Scheck, C.L. (1997). A test of job insecurity's direct and mediated effects on withdrawal cognition. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 323-349.
- Dekker, S.W. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1995). The effects of job insecurity on psychological health and withdrawal: A longitudinal study. *Australian Psychologist*, 30, 57-103.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Vardakou, I. & Kantas, A. (2002). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19, 12-23.
- De Rijk, A.E., Le Blanc, P.M. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1998). Active coping and need for control as moderators of the job demand-control model: Effects on burnout. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 71, 1-18.
- De Witte, H. (1997, April). *Long term job insecurity as a stressor: Its impact on satisfaction and commitment*. Paper delivered at the 8<sup>th</sup> European Congress on Work and Organisational Psychology, Verona.
- De Witte, H. (1999). Job insecurity and psychological well-being: Review of the literature and exploration of some unresolved issues. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 8, 155-177.
- Duquette, A., Kerouac, S., Sandhu, B.K., Ducharme, F. & Saulnier, P. (1995). Psychosocial determinants of burnout in geriatric nursing. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 32, 443-456.
- Elbert, J. (2002). *Job insecurity and psychological strengths of service workers in a parastatal*. Unpublished Master's dissertation, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom.
- Ferrie, J.E. (1997). Labour market status, insecurity and health. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 2, 155 -170.

- Folkman, S. & Lazarus, R.S. (1991). Coping and emotion. In A. Monat & R.S. Lazarus (Eds.), *Stress and coping: An anthology* (pp. 207-227). New York: Columbia UniverPress.
- Folkman, S., Lazarus, R.S., Gruen, R.J. & DeLongis, A. (1986). Appraisal, coping, health status and psychological symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *50*, 571-579.
- Greenglass, E.R., Burke, F.J. & Konarski, R. (1998). The impact of social support on the development of burnout in teachers: Examination of a model. *Work and Stress*, *11*, 267-278.
- Greenhalgh, L. & Rosenblatt, Z. (1984). Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity. *Academy of Management Review*, *9*, 438-448.
- Hammons, K.H. (2000). An analysis of social factors which mitigate burnout in hospital social workers who work with terminally ill inpatient populations. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *60*(9-A), 3527.
- Hartley, J., Jacobson, D., Klandermans, B. & Van Vuuren, T. (1991). *Job insecurity: Coping with jobs at risk*. London: Sage Publishers.
- Heaney, C.A., Israel, B.A. & House, J.S. (1994). Chronic job insecurity among automobile workers: Effects on job satisfaction and health. *Social Science & Medicine*, *38*, 1431-1437.
- Hellgren, J. & Sverke, M. (2003). Does job insecurity lead to impaired well-being or vice versa? Estimation of cross-lagged effects using latent variable modeling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *24*, 215-236.
- Heymans, D.R. (2002). *Job insecurity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment*. Unpublished master's dissertation, Vaal Triangle Campus of the Potchefstroom University, Vander Bijl Park.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, *44*, 513-524.
- Hobfoll, S.E. & Freedy, J. (1993). Conservation of resources: A general stress theory applied to burnout. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 115-129). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Jacobson, D. (1991). The conceptual approach to job insecurity. In J. Hartley, D. Jacobson, B. Klandermans & T. Van Vuuren. *Job insecurity: Coping with jobs at risk*. London: Sage Publications.

- Joelson, L. & Wahlquist, L. (1987). The psychological meaning of job insecurity and job loss: The results of a longitudinal study. *Social Science and Medicine*, 25, 179- 182.
- Kets De Vries, M.F.R. & Balazs, K. (1997). The downside of downsizing. *Human Relations*, 50, 11-50.
- Kinnunen, U., Mauno, S., Nätti, J. & Happonen, M. (2000). Perceived job insecurity: A longitudinal study among employees. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8, 243-260.
- Lee, R.T. & Ashforth, B.E. (1996). A meta-analytical examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 123-133.
- Leiter, M.P. (1991). Coping patterns as predictors of burnout: The function of control and escapist coping patterns. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 12, 123-133.
- Leiter, M.P. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach & T. Marek (Eds.). *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp.237-250). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Leiter, M.P. & Harvie, P. (1998). Conditions for staff acceptance of organisational change: Burnout as a mediation construct. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping*, 11, 1-25.
- Luton, J.W. (2000). Effects of religious orientation and perceptions of communication competence and apprehension on burnout potential. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(2-A), 648.
- Makgetla, D. (2001). So how bad is unemployment really? *South African Labour Bulletin*, 25(2), 16-17.
- Maslach, C. & Jackson, S.E. (1986). *The Maslach Burnout Inventory* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Maslach, C. & Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The truth about burnout: How organisations cause personal stress and what to do about it*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B. & Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422.
- Mauno, S. & Kinnunen, U. (1999). Job insecurity and well-being: A longitudinal study among male and female employees in Finland. *Community, Work & Family*, 2, 147-171.
- Mitchell, G. & Hastings, R.P. (2001). Coping, burnout, and emotion in staff working in community services for people with challenging behaviors. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 106, 448-459.

- Mohr, G.B. (2000). The changing significance of different stressors after the announcement of bankruptcy: A longitudinal investigation with special emphasis on job insecurity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21, 337-359.
- Mohren, D.L., Swaen, G.M.H., Van Amelsvoort, L.G.P.M., Borm, P.J.A. & Galama, J.M.D. (2003). Job insecurity as a risk factor for common infections and health complaints. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(2), 123.
- Moses, B. (1998). *Career intelligence*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, I.H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Parker, D.F. & DeCotiis, T.A. (1983). Organisational determinantes of job stress. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32, 260-277.
- Patterson, G.T. (1999). Coping effectiveness and occupational stress in police officers. In J.M. Violanti and D. Paton (Eds.), *Police trauma: Psychological aftermath of civilian combat* (pp. 214-226). Springfield, IL: Thomas Publishers.
- Peeters, M.C.W. & Le Blanc, P.M. (2001). Towards a match between job demands and sources of social support: A study among oncology care providers. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10, 53-72.
- Pienaar, J. & Rothmann, S. (2003). Coping strategies in the South African Police Service. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29, 81-90.
- Preuss, G.L. & Lautsch, B.A. (2002). The effect of formal versus informal job security on employee involvement programs. *Industrial Relations*, 57, 517-539.
- Probst, T.M. (2000). Wedded to the job: Moderating effects of job involvement on the consequences of job insecurity. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5, 63-73.
- Probst, T. M. (2002). The impact of job insecurity on employee work attitudes, job adaptation, and organizational withdrawal behaviours. In J.M. Brett & F. Drasgow (Eds.), *The psychology of work: Theoretically based empirical research* (pp. 141 – 168). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Probst, T.M. & Brubaker, T.L. (2001). The effects of job insecurity on employee safety outcomes: Cross-sectional and longitudinal explorations. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 6, 139-158.
- Q'Quin, K. (1998). Job satisfaction and intentions to turnover in human services agencies perceived as stable or non-stable. *Perceptual & Motor Skills*, 88, 339-344.
- Rohman, C. (1987/1988). A study of burnout among psychologists. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 48, 2772.

- Rosenblatt, Z. & Ruvio, A. (1996). A test of a multidimensional model of job insecurity: The case of Israeli teachers. *Journal of Occupational Behavior, 17*, 587-605.
- Rosenblatt, Z., Talmud, I. & Ruvio A. (1999). A gender-based framework of the experience of job insecurity and its effects on work attitudes. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 8*, 197-217.
- Roskies, E. & Louis-Guerin, C. (1990). Job insecurity in managers: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 11*, 345-359.
- Rothmann, S., Jackson, L.T.B. & Kruger, M.M. (2003). Burnout and job stress in a local government: The moderating effects of sense of coherence. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*(4), 52-60.
- SAS Institute. (2000). *The SAS System for Windows: Release 8.01*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.
- Schaufeli, W.B. (2003). Past performance and future perspectives of burnout research. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*, 1-15.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Bakker, A.B. (2002). *Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study on the COBE-model*. Utrecht University: Psychology and Health.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Enzmann, D. (1998). *The burnout companion to study and practice: A critical analysis*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Schaufeli, W.B., Maslach, C. & Marek, T. (Eds.) (1993). *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Shaddock, A.J., Hill, M. & Van Limbeek, C.A.H. (1998). Factors associated with burnout in workers in residential facilities for people with an intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 23*, 309-318.
- Shaughnessy, J.J. & Zechmeister, E.B. (1997). *Research methods in psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Steyn, H.S. (1999). *Praktiese betekenisvolheid: Die gebruik van effekgroottes*. Wetenskaplike bydraes – Reeks B: Natuurwetenskappe Nr. 117, Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO.
- Storm, K. (2002). *Burnout and engagement in the South African Police Services*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, PU for CHE, Potchefstroom.
- Storm, K. & Rothmann, S. (2003). The relationship between burnout, personality traits and coping strategies in a corporate pharmaceutical group. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*(4), 35-42.

- Sverke, M. & Hellgren, J. (2002). The nature of job insecurity: Understanding employment on the brink of a new millennium. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 5, 23-42.
- Tabachnick, B.G. & Fidell, L.S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Taris, T.W., Schreurs, P.J.G. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1999). Construct validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey: A two-sample examination of its factor structure and correlates. *Work and Stress*, 13, 223-237.
- Thornton, P. (1992). The relation of coping, appraisal and burnout in mental health workers. *Journal of Psychology*, 126, 261-271.
- Turnipseed, D.L. (1994). An analysis of the influence of work environment variables and moderators on the burnout syndrome. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 24, 782 – 800.
- Van Vuuren, T. (1990). *Met ontslag bedreigd. Werknemers in onzekerheid over hun arbeidsplaats bij veranderingen in de organisatie*. Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij.
- Welsh, I.M. (1996). Job insecurity, a chronic psychological threat: Antecedents and consequences. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 56(9-B), 5210.
- Westman, M., Etzion, D., & Danon, E. (2001). Job insecurity and crossover of burnout in married couples. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 22, 467 – 481.
- Wheaton, B. (1983). Stress, personal coping resources, and psychiatric symptoms: An investigation of interactive models. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24, 208-229.
- Zeidner, M. & Hammer, A.L. (1992). Coping with missile attack: Resources, strategies, and outcomes. *Journal of Personality*, 60, 709 -746.
- Zellars, K.L. & Perrewé, P.L. (2001). Affective personality and the content of emotional social support: Coping in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 459-467.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# **JOB INSECURITY AND WELLNESS OF WORKERS IN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION<sup>1</sup>**

T VAN GREUNEN

JH BUITENDACH

*WorkWell: Research Unit for People, Policy and Performance,  
Vaal Triangle Campus, North-West University*

## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to establish the relationship between job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping of workers in a local government organisation. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The Job Insecurity Questionnaire, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and the COPE Questionnaire were administered together with a biographical questionnaire. Results indicate that participants experience low levels of job insecurity and burnout and high levels of engagement. The Pearson product correlation shows that job insecurity are related to burnout, that burnout has a negative correlation with engagement and coping and that a positive relationship exists between engagement and coping. Finally, regression analysis shows that nine percent of variance in burnout, as measured by the OLBI, can be predicted by total job insecurity and job insecurity can thus partially be used in the prediction of burnout.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die doelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om die verwantskap tussen werksonsekerheid, uitbranding, begeestering en "coping" van werknemers 'n plaaslike regeringsorganisasie te bepaal. 'n Eenmalige dwarsnee opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die

---

<sup>1</sup> The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) toward this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and not necessarily attributable to the National Research Foundation.

Werksonsekerheidvraelys, die Oldenburg Uitbrandingsvraelys (OLBI), die Utrecht Werksbegeesteringskaal en die COPE-vraelys is tesame met 'n biografiese vraelys afgeneem. Resultate dui aan dat deelnemers lae vlakke van werksonsekerheid en uitbranding en hoë vlakke van begeestering ervaar. Pearson-produkmomentkorrelasies toon dat werksonsekerheid verwant is aan uitbranding, dat uitbranding 'n negatiewe verwantskap met begeestering en "coping" het en dat 'n positiewe verwantskap tussen begeestering en "coping" bestaan. Laastens toon regressie-analise dat nege persent van variansie in uitbranding, soos deur die OLBI gemeet, deur werksonsekerheid voorspel word, en dus kan werksonsekerheid gedeeltelik gebruik word in die voorspelling van uitbranding.

Economic changes in the world of work have set in motion an industrialised world that is characterised by transformation (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). Transformation has raised new challenges and expectations for organisations, forcing them to engage in “downsizing”, “rightsizing” or restructuring, or all three simultaneously, in an attempt to survive in difficult economic conditions. For many employees these changes in their working life cause feelings of insecurity about the nature and future existence of their jobs.

Although the individuals that loose their jobs are most affected by the above-mentioned actions of organisations, the effects of the unemployment problem are not limited to those employees directly affected, but may also leave scars on the remaining employees (Makgetla, 2001). Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990) state that the anticipation of harm can have effects as potent as experiencing the harm itself and consequently hypothesise that job insecurity may be as traumatic as unemployment itself.

Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) are of the opinion that the impact of the changing world of work is perhaps most evident in changes in the psychological contract whereby employees are expected to give more in terms of time, effort, skills and flexibility, but they receive less in terms of career opportunities, lifetime employment and job security (Büssing, 1999; Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans & Van Vuuren, 1991). Jacobson (1991) believes that job insecurity can potentially become more stressful than job loss itself, as the coping process may be inhibited by a pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty.

South Africa is incorporated in this worldwide phenomenon; this country’s economic environment having also changed dramatically over the past ten years. Globalisation has forced companies to compete with the best in the world, leading to fierce rivalry, cost savings and reduction of the labour force. The once stable, predictable and controlled environment has become complex, out of control and unpredictable. Changes in the South African labour market over the last decade have not only been limited to the economic environment, but also included political change which is evident as Black

Economic Empowerment gains momentum. Economic and political changes, as well as the shrinking labour market, aggravate job insecurity (Makgetla, 2001).

The justification for this research is that there is consensus on job insecurity possibly being perceived as a stressor (Van Vuuren, 1990; Parker & DeCotiis, 1983). In analysing its consequences, stress reactions are identifiable. In this study the researcher wants to focus on the possible relationship between job insecurity and wellness of workers as manifested in burnout, engagement and coping.

### **Job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping**

Job insecurity may be defined in different ways (De Witte, 1997, 1999; Hartley et al; 1991; Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). In general, job insecurity refers to employees' negative responses to changes in their jobs. Job insecurity has been defined as an individual's expectations of continuity in a job situation (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997), overall concern about the future existence of the job (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996), perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job (Heaney, Israel & House, 1994) and powerlessness to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984), to give only a few definitions.

Job insecurity is usually conceptualised from three general viewpoints, being (i) global, (ii) multi-dimensional and (iii) a job stressor. According to the *global view*, job insecurity may be considered as the first phase in the process of job loss, where the threat of job loss or job discontinuity exists (Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980; Ferrie, 1997; Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987). Job insecurity thus relates to people in their work context who fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999).

Van Vuuren (1990) describes job insecurity as the concern a person feels about the continued existence of his/her job. He identifies three components that are central to job insecurity. The first component refers to a subjective experience or perception; the second to uncertainty about the future and the third component includes doubts about the continuation of the job. Within this framework of the *multi-dimensional view* of job insecurity, the concept refers not only to the amount of uncertainty employees feel about their job continuity, but also about the permanence of certain dimensions of the job, such as organisational benefits and promotion opportunities (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996).

A mounting body of literature suggests that perceptions of job insecurity might have detrimental effects on employee attitudes (Ashford, Lee & Bolbko, 1989; Rosenblatt, Talmud & Ruvio, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002), may increase job dissatisfaction (Davy et al; 1997), may increase negative health outcomes (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003; Mohren, Swaen, Van Amelsvoort, Borm & Galama, 2003) and higher reports of psychological distress (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Probst, 2000). Moreover, employees with perceptions of low job security are more likely to engage in work withdrawal behaviour (Q'Quin, 1998), report lower organisational commitment (Preuss & Lautsch, 2002), which often leads to employee turnover (Asford et al; 1989) and decreased safety motivation and compliance, which in turn, lead to higher levels of workplace injuries and accidents (Probst & Brubaker, 2001), detrimental to organisational viability (Kets De Vries & Balazs, 1997) and well-being (De Witte, 1999; Kinnunen, Mauno, Nätti & Happonen, 2000; Mohr, 2000). A downward spiral is created where productivity decreases and absenteeism increases, which might result in the competitive strength of the company being undermined (Hartley et al; 1991).

According to De Witte (1999) and Van Vuuren (1990), job insecurity consistently presents itself as a *stressor*. With regard to consequences, a distinction is made between stress reactions and coping behaviour. Stress reactions refer to the consequences of the

stressor for psychological well-being, while coping refers to the way in which the person deals with stress (De Witte, 1997).

Two theories of stress, the person-environment fit theory of stress and the affective events theory of stress may facilitate the study of the antecedents and consequences of job insecurity. Definitions of stress in the *person-environment fit theory of stress* emphasise the match between characteristics of the person and the environment. Stress value depends on the perceived imbalance between the individual's perceptions of the demands made by the environment and the individual's perceived ability and motivation to cope with those demands (Probst, 2002). Job insecurity will thus be perceived by the employee as a change or a precursor to change that will demand adaptation, which may be difficult to meet and failure to cope with these new demands may have significant consequences (Probst, 2002). From an *affective events theory perspective*, characteristics of the work environment and events are subject to cognitive appraisal of how they promote or obstruct the attainment of goals. Stress will result if there is an identifiable goal obstruction, as well as a perceived imbalance between environmental demands and the employee's ability to cope with those demands. The resultant strain may become evident at a physiological, behavioural or psychological level, or any combination of these (Probst, 2002).

With the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks in mind, Probst (2002) proposed and tested an integrated model of job insecurity. In this model, job insecurity occurs as a result of multiple antecedents, which may serve to stimulate a person's perception that the future of his/her job is in jeopardy. Probst (2002) hypothesised that antecedents such as grievance filing, absenteeism, organisation tenure, educational level and job technology change, are all subject to cognitive appraisal, involving an assessment of the relevance and importance of these factors to one's well-being. Resulting perceptions of job security generate an emotional or affective response to work events, e.g. anger or anxiety, and also influence job attitudes, e.g. promotion satisfaction or job security satisfaction. Cross-sectional and longitudinal research indicates that cognitive appraisal

of job security predicts satisfaction with job security, but job security perceptions predict work attitudes to a lesser extent, while taking into account quotidian work stressors such as role ambiguity, time pressure and role conflict. Probst (2002) also shows that numerous consequences of job insecurity are mediated by job attitudes and affective reactions. Negative consequences at individual and organisation levels, leading to increased organisational withdrawal; deteriorating health conditions; psychological distress and lowered organisational commitment are all related to job insecurity.

Maslach et al. (2001), note that the difficulties that can arise when the person-work relationship becomes imbalanced, have long been acknowledged as a phenomenon of the modern age. The term, burnout, was traditionally only used with reference to people working in the human services (Maslach et al; 2001; Van Dierendonck, Schaufeli & Buunk, 1998). However, the concept of burnout has recently been extended to all other professions and occupational groups (Maslach et al; 2001).

Burnout can be viewed as a psychological syndrome that develops in response to chronic inter-personal stressors on the job (Maslach et al; 2001) and may thus develop after prolonged exposure to job insecurity (Westman, Etzion & Danon, 2001; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995). It is primarily characterised by exhaustion accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), stress should not be confused with burnout, while burnout may be regarded as a particular kind of prolonged job stress.

An individual experiences job stress when the demands of the workplace exceed his or her adaptive responses. It can thus be seen as a particular, multi-dimensional, chronic stress reaction that transcends the experience of mere exhaustion; it is the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions (Rothmann, Jacobson & Kruger; 2003).

Three components of burnout can be identified and are included in the MBI-GS that is normally used to measure burnout, namely exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy (Wiese, Rothmann & Storm, 2003). *Exhaustion* refers to fatigue, which includes feelings of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources. This component relates to the basic individual stress aspect of burnout and, according to Lee and Ashforth (1996), this is the most significant underlying aspect of burnout. The interpersonal context dimension of burnout, *cynicism*, reflects indifference or a distant attitude towards one's work in general, rather than towards the recipients of one's service or personal relationships at work. *Professional efficacy* encompasses both social and non-social accomplishments at work. This component of burnout is linked to the self-evaluation dimension of this concept (Maslach et al; 2001). Previous studies show that burnout results when a breach exists between individuals' expectations to fulfil their professional roles and the structure in place within the organisation. When the workplace does not support professional goals, there is an increase in exhaustion and cynicism and professional efficacy decreases (Leiter & Harvie, 1998).

Shaufeli and Enzmann (1998) classified possible factors contributing to burnout into four categories namely biographical characteristics, personality characteristics, work-related attitudes and work and organisation characteristics. For the purpose of the research the focus will be on job insecurity as an organisational stressor. Organisational stress refers to stress as a result of certain characteristics of the organisation itself and includes stressors such as staff shortages, inadequate resources, lack of communication and work overload that is associated with job insecurity.

Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) propose that organisational stressors can be divided into two groups, namely job demands and a lack of job resources. In order to understand how job demand and resources are related to burnout, the conservation of resources (COR) theory of stress is used as a frame of reference (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). According to the COR theory, people strive to obtain and maintain what they value (their resources). Burnout thus occurs when certain valued resources are lost, are inadequate to

meet demands or do not yield the anticipated level of return. Job demands include aspects such as role ambiguity, role conflict, stressful events, heavy workload and work pressure.

Resources, on the other hand, include social support from various sources, job enhancement opportunities, such as control, participation in decision making and autonomy; and reinforcement contingencies (Burke & Richardsen, 1993; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

The above-mentioned relationship between burnout, job demands and resources is confirmed by various studies. In a proposed process model of burnout, it was found that job demands are more strongly related to exhaustion, while job resources are more strongly related to cynicism and professional efficacy (Leiter, 1991, 1993). Results by Lee and Ashforth (1996) reveal that job demands are strongly associated with exhaustion; cynicism is associated with both resources and demands; and professional efficacy is largely uncorrelated to job demands and job resources. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) analysed various studies and found that job demands correlate most strongly with exhaustion and the least with professional efficacy. Professional efficacy also showed a strong association with resources. In analysing the Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey (MBI-GS), Taris, Schreurs and Schaufeli (1999) find that job demands are more strongly related to exhaustion, while cynicism and professional efficacy are related to the resource variables; organisational demand relates only to exhaustion (Peeters & Le Blanc, 2001). Based on the above-mentioned results, it is to be expected that job demands are most strongly associated with exhaustion, while a lack of job resources is strongly associated with lower professional efficacy.

From a psychometric point of view, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is an effective instrument for assessing burnout, but because of the absolute predominance of the MBI, the concept of burnout has been gradually equated with the way it is measured: *burnout is what the MBI measures*. Hence the concept has been narrowed to the three dimensions

included in the MBI (Schaufeli, 2003). An alternative instrument for assessing burnout has recently been developed – the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) – which includes both core dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion and disengagement (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2002). The exhaustion scale includes items on the affective, physical and cognitive aspects of burnout, whereas the disengagement scale includes items that refer to distancing oneself from one's work. A study on the convergent validity of the MBI and the OLBI, using multitrait-multimethod analyses, indicates that a high positive correlation exists between the latent variables representing both instruments and all exhaustion and distancing/disengagement items of both instruments load on the same single factor (Demerouti et al; 2002). Bearing this in mind, the OLBI may be considered as an alternative for the MBI-GS (Schaufeli, 2003).

Research over the last twenty years indicates that burnout is not only related to negative outcomes for the individual - including depression, a sense of failure, fatigue and loss of motivation - but also to negative outcomes for the organisation - including absenteeism, turnover rates and lowered productivity (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Research also indicates outcomes such as a lack of commitment and diminished capacity to render a service, especially along dimensions of decision making, and initiating involvement with clients (Levert, Lucas & Ortlepp, 2000). Burnout workers are also too depleted to give of themselves in a creative, co-operative fashion (Sammut, 1997).

Empirical studies reveal that some individuals, regardless of high job demands and a lack of job resources, do not develop burnout, but seem to find pleasure in hard work and dealing with job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). This gave rise to the concept of engagement, theoretically viewed as an antithesis of the burnout construct as set forth by the MBI-GS. Maslach and Leiter (1997) redefine burnout as an erosion of engagement with the job. Engagement, according to these authors, is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy, the direct opposites of burnout as measured by the MBI-GS, namely exhaustion, cynicism and lack of professional efficacy.

Engagement can thus be identified as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. *Vigour* is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, as well as a willingness to exert effort and to persist even through difficult times. *Dedication* is characterised by a sense of significance of one's work, feeling enthusiastic, inspired and proud, and by viewing the work as a challenge. *Absorption* approximates the concept of "flow", an optimal state of experience where focused attention, a clear mind, accord in body and mind, effortless concentration, complete control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time and intrinsic enjoyment is experienced (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) have extended the Job-Demands-Job-Resources Model (JD-JR model) to include aspects such as engagement and added indicators for health impairment and organisational withdrawal in the Comprehensive Burnout and Engagement (COBE) Model. The COBE model assumes two psychological processes, namely an energetic and a motivational process. The energetic process links job demands with health problems *via* burnout. The motivational process links job resources *via* engagement with organisational outcomes. Job resources may play either an intrinsic motivational role by fostering the employee's growth, learning and development, or it may play an extrinsic motivational role by being instrumental in achieving work goals. Job demands are associated with exhaustion, whereas job resources are associated with engagement. Burnout is related to health problems as well as to turnover intentions, and mediates the relationship between job demands and health problems, while engagement mediates the relationship between job resources and turnover intentions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002).

Research suggests that individual coping strategies may be significant in either ameliorating or exacerbating psychological burnout (Alsoofi, Al-Heeti & Alwashli, 2000; Anshel, 2000; Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1988). Coping may be defined as "the person's cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage (reduce, minimize or tolerate) the internal and external demands of the person-environment transaction that is appraised as

taxing or exceeding the person's resources" (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen and DeLongis, 1986, p. 572).

In the literature on burnout certain coping strategies are associated with increased degrees of burnout, while other coping strategies have been found effective in diminishing burnout. De Rijk, Le Blanc and Schaufeli (1998) argue that utilising active coping strategies, such as confronting the problem, buffers the effects of job stressors on negative job-related outcomes (burnout), while inactive efforts such as avoidance and drinking are associated with higher levels of burnout (Pines, Aronson & Kafry, 1981). These results are confirmed by Duquette, Kerouac, Sandhu, Ducharme and Saulnier (1995), who found that active coping styles are associated with lower levels of burnout. More specifically, Anderson (2000) finds that when individuals used active coping strategies, feelings of cynicism decreased and their sense of professional efficacy increased. However, it did not save them from exhaustion. In research on a sample of pharmacists, Storm and Rothmann (2003) found that professional efficacy was the only component of burnout associated with coping strategies. Active coping strategies are associated with higher levels of personal accomplishment. Rohman (1987/1988) does not support the finding that active coping moderates the relation between the stressor and burnout.

Passive or avoidance coping appears to be associated with higher levels of burnout. Thornton (1992) finds that a combination of escapist and avoidance coping is related to increased levels of burnout. Anderson (2000) finds that workers who apply more avoidance strategies, show an increase in exhaustion. The results of Mitchell and Hastings (2001) show that the use of disengagement coping strategies predict both exhaustion and less positive feelings of professional efficacy. Chan and Hui (1995) observe that the use of avoidance coping is associated with all three dimensions of burnout. According to Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998), avoidance coping shares about 5-10% of the variance of exhaustion and cynicism, whereas the relationship with personal accomplishment is weaker (less than 5%). Rohman (1987/1988) also finds a positive relationship between avoidance coping and exhaustion and cynicism. Folkman and

Lazarus (1991) indicate that seeking social support coping responses can simultaneously function as both a problem-focused coping strategy and an emotion-focused coping strategy.

Although emotion-focused coping strategies are often considered ineffective (Chwalisz, Altmaier & Russell, 1992; Patterson, 1999), Zellars and Perrewé (2001) argue that emotion focused strategies are multi-dimensional and have unjustly suffered from a negative reputation primarily as a result of their measurement. Their results provide empirical support for the valuable effect of emotional social support as an aid against all three dimensions. Others also suggest that emotional support could alleviate work stress and psychological strain (Cherniss, 1980). On the other hand, there is evidence that emotional social support may not always be very adaptive (Billings & Moos, 1984; Constanza, Derlega & Winstead, 1988).

Turning to religion has also been seen as a potential coping strategy (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995), but has largely been ignored in coping with occupational stress. It seems that the practice of religion in stressful times is associated with lower burnout scores (Hammons, 2000; Luton, 2000; Shaddock, Hill & Van Limbeek, 1998; Turnipseed, 1994). Spiritual resources help people cope with stress, primarily through the appraisal process that provide a perceptual framework that can help place the meaning of a stressor into a larger context and can also help prescribe acceptable coping techniques (Zeidner & Hammer, 1992).

As may be seen from the problem statement, involuntary job loss has become an increasingly common experience for many employees in various private and public organisations. The election in 1994 ushered in an era where the majority of South Africans no longer had to be passive recipients of poor or non-existent government services. As the most important instrument to improve the quality of lives of all South Africans, a reformed civil service remains the single most critical element of government policy. Local governments are faced with the challenge of high demands for basic services in previously disadvantaged communities, while their resources are limited.

Transformation in local governments is evident from promotions being put on hold, managers having to re-apply for their jobs, and moratoria being placed on appointing new personnel, all which has led to understaffing in most departments. These changes result in new demands on employees, who often have to manage without having the necessary resources (Rothmann, Jackson & Kruger, 2003). Welsh (1996) reasons that this trend translates to more insecure work environments, with a wide range of effects on the employee's mental and physical health, which may include aspects such as burnout or engagement of employees.

Despite the significance of the experience of job security and insecurity to both employers and employees, academicians have not yet given these concepts adequate theoretical or empirical attention (Ashford et al; 1989). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) argue that a lack of a theoretical sound measure of the insecurity concept has deterred progress. Büssing (1999) mentions that studies of the employment process reveal the necessity of considering additional variables in the study of job insecurity. He mentions that, beside socio-demographic variables such as gender, age and education, one must account for individual psychological differences such as coping, job/work orientation, organisational commitment and for resources.

The discussion above leads to the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Employees in a local government organisation experience high levels of job insecurity.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Employees in a local government organisation experience high levels of burnout.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Employees in a local government organisation experience low levels of engagement.
- H<sub>4</sub>: A relationship exists between job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping in a local government organisation.
- H<sub>5</sub>: Job insecurity predicts burnout in a local government organisation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research design

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

### Sample

Although all 130 employees of a local government organisation were included in the research, only 83 questionnaires were returned ( $N=83$ ), giving a response rate of 63,85%. Table 1 provides a summary of the compilation of the study population used in this study.

**Table 1**

*Compilation of the study population (N=83)*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male (1)	42	50,60
	Female (2)	38	45,78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>96,38</b>
<b>Cultural Group</b>	Black (1)	34	40,96
	White (2)	47	56,63
	Other (3)	2	2,41
	<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100,00</b>
<b>Age</b>	24 years and younger (1)	9	10,84
	25 - 35 years (2)	44	53,01
	36 - 45 years (3)	22	26,51
	46 - 55 years (4)	6	7,23
	56 years and older (5)	2	2,41

	<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100,00</b>
<b>Qualification</b>	Gr 10 - 12 (1)	81	97,59
	Diploma (2)	0	0,00
	Degree (3)	0	0,00
	Post-graduate Degree (4)	1	1,20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>98,79</b>
<b>Tenure</b>	Less than 1 year (1)	11	13,25
	2 - 5 years (2)	22	26,51
	6 - 10 years (3)	31	37,35
	11 - 20 years (4)	14	16,87
	Longer than 20 years (5)	5	6,02
	<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100,00</b>
<b>Union</b>	Union member (1)	81	97,59
	Non-union member (2)	1	1,20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>98,79</b>

As can be seen from Table 1, the study population was relatively balanced in terms of gender, but white participants (56,63%) dominated the study population. Most of the participants fell in the 25 - 35 year (53,01 %) and 36 - 45 year (26,51 %) age groups; had a Grade 10 – 12 qualification (97,59 %) and belonged to a union (97,59 %). The majority of participants have been working at the organisation for 2 - 5 (25,51%) and 6 - 10 years (37,35 %).

### Measuring instruments

*The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)* (De Witte, 1997) consisting of 11 items, was used to measure participants' perceived job insecurity. Items encapsulate both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly agree, 3 = unsure and 5 = strongly disagree. Items on the cognitive dimension include those phrased as follows: "I think that I will continue working here." "I feel uncertain about the future of my job." is an example of an item on the affective dimension. De Witte (1997) reports a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 for total job insecurity, 0,85 for the affective and 0,90 for the cognitive scale, using the same

instrument. Elbert (2002) and Heymans (2002) respectively obtained alpha coefficients of 0,84 and 0,81 for total job insecurity. The average of 11 items indicates respondents' overall job insecurity. A low score indicates that the respondent experiences low levels of job insecurity, while a high score indicates high experience of job insecurity.

***The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)*** (Demerouti et al; 2003), is a recently developed alternative to the traditionally used Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) that was used as a measure of burnout. The OLBI includes both core dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion and disengagement (cynicism/depersonalisation). The OLBI consists of 16 items, measured on a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Eight items are phrased positively, for example, "I always find new and interesting aspects in my work." and the remaining eight are phrased negatively, for example, "There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work." The exhaustion subscale comprises 8 items that measure the affective, physical and cognitive aspects of burnout and includes items such as, "During my work, I often feel emotionally drained." The disengagement subscale comprises 8 items that relate to distancing oneself from one's work, for example, "I find my work to be a positive challenge." In investigating the convergent validity of the MBI and the OLBI, using multitrait-multimethod analyses, Demerouti et al. (2003) found that the latent variables representing both instruments are highly correlated and that all exhaustion and distancing/disengagement items of both instruments load on a single factor. The researchers also obtained Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0, 85 (exhaustion) and 0, 84 (disengagement) respectively.

***The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)*** (Schaufeli, Maslach & Marek, 1993) was used to measure the participants' levels of engagement. The UWES includes three dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, which are conceptually seen as the antithesis of burnout as measured by the MBI-GS. Scoring is a 7-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The questionnaire consists of 17 questions such as, "I am bursting with energy every day in my work."; "Time flies when I am at work" and "My job inspires me." The alpha coefficients of the three subscales vary between 0,68 and 0, 91. The alpha coefficients (varying between 0,78 and 0,89 for

the three subscales) could be improved by eliminating a few items without substantially decreasing the internal consistency of the scales. Storm (2002) obtained the following alpha coefficients for the UWES in a sample of 2 396 members of the South African Police Service: Vigour: 0,78; Dedication: 0,89; Absorption: 0,78.

The *COPE Questionnaire (COPE)* was used to measure participants' coping strategies. The COPE is a multi-dimensional 53-item coping questionnaire that indicates the different ways people cope in various circumstances (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989). Although the original questionnaire measures 13 different coping strategies, Pienaar and Rothmann (2003) subjected the COPE to a principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation. Four internally consistent factors were extracted, namely active coping (16 items), avoidance (13 items), seeking emotional support (7 items) and turning to religion (3 items). Examples of items in each of these factors include, "I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem." (active coping); "I talked to someone about how I feel." (seeking social support); "I say to myself, 'This isn't real'" (avoidance); and "I put my trust in God." (turning to religion). The alpha coefficients of the four scales are 0,92, 0,86, 0,80 and 0,83 respectively. All these values are acceptable ( $\alpha > 0,70$ , Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and thus indicate the internal consistency of the factors of the COPE. Test-retest reliability varies from 0,46 to 0,86 and from 0,42 to 0,89 (applied after two weeks).

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out by means of the SAS Programme (SAS Institute, 2000). Cronbach alpha coefficients, inter-item correlation coefficients and confirmatory factor analysis were used to assess the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics, e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis, were used to analyse the data.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the significance of differences between the job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping of various demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether mean differences among groups on a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences is created from the set of dependent variables. One-way analysis is then performed on the newly created dependent variable.

Wilk's lambda was used to test the significance of the effects, being a likelihood ratio statistic that tests the likelihood of the data on the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups against the likelihood on the assumption that the population mean vectors are identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different groups. When an effect was significant in MANOVA, ANOVA was used to discover the dependent variables affected. Tukey HSD tests were done to indicate the groups that differed significantly when ANOVAs were done. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 1999) were used in addition to statistical significance to determine the practical significance of relationships. Effect sizes indicate whether obtained results are important (while statistical significance may often show results which are of little practical relevance). The use of only statistical significance testing in a routine manner has been criticised and the editors of some periodicals have appealed for placing more emphasis on effect sizes (Steyn, 1999).

The following formula was used to determine the practical significance of the difference between the means of more than two groups (Steyn, 1999):

$$d = \frac{\text{Mean A} - \text{Mean B}}{\text{Root MSE}}$$

where

*Mean A* = Mean of the first group

*Mean B* = Mean of the second group

Root MSE = Root Mean Square Error

A cut-off point of 0,50 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of differences between means.

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationships between the variables. In the case where the distribution of scores was skew, Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. A cut-off point of  $p = 0,05$  was set for the statistical significance of the results. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analysis was used to describe the relationship between variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The multiple regressions were done with burnout, engagement and coping as independent variables, and with affective, cognitive and total job insecurity as dependant variables.

According to Cohen (1988) a correlation ( $r$ ) can only be properly understood by determining its square ( $r^2$ ). A regression analysis is used to determine the proportion of the total variance in one variable that is explained by another variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this study, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of the total variance of burnout (independent variable) on job insecurity.

## **RESULTS**

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 11 items of the JIQ on the total sample of employees at a local government organisation. Based on analyses of the eigen values (greater than 1) and scree plot, it was indicated that two factors could be extracted, explaining 52,98% of the variance. The first factor deals with the affective

component and the second factor with the cognitive component of job insecurity. An oblique rotation showed that the factors were not strongly correlated, and it was subsequently decided to use principal factor analysis with varimax rotation.

**Table 2**

***Pattern Matrix of the 11-item JIQ for Employees in a Local Government Organisation (N=83)***

Items	Component	
	1	2
1. I think that I will continue working here	-0,27	<b>0,76</b>
2. There is only a small chance that I will become unemployed.	<b>0,43</b>	-0,14
3. I am certain/sure of my job environment.	0,24	<b>0,59</b>
4. I am very sure that I will be able to keep my job.	0,36	<b>0,59</b>
5. It makes me anxious that I might become unemployed.	<b>0,46</b>	0,37
6. I feel uncertain about the future of my job.	0,21	<b>0,73</b>
7. I worry about the continuation of my career.	<b>0,56</b>	0,50
8. I fear that I might lose my job.	<b>0,67</b>	0,50
9. I fear that I might get fired.	<b>0,67</b>	0,28
10. There is a possibility that I might lose my job in the near future.	<b>0,78</b>	0,34
11. I think that I might be dismissed in the near future.	<b>0,80</b>	0,10

After scrutinising the individual item loadings indicated in Table 2, it appeared that items 1, 3 and 4 loaded correctly on the cognitive subscale and items 2, 10 and 11, which are supposed to load on the cognitive subscale, loaded heavily on the affective job insecurity subscale. Item 6 loaded incorrectly on the cognitive subscale. The rest of the affective items loaded correctly. Possible explanations for factor loadings on the JIQ are given in the discussion.

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 16 items of the OLBI on the total sample of employees in a local government organisation. Four factors could be extracted, based on analysis of eigen values (greater than 1) and scree plot. The obtained pattern matrices for a 4-factor solution did not make sense and Demerouti et al. (2002) found that burnout as measured by the OLBI has a two-factor structure, with exhaustion

and disengagement as separate but correlated dimensions; consequently, it was decided to specify two factors. An oblique rotation showed that factors were not strongly correlated and thus a principal factor analysis with varimax rotation was used.

**Table 3**

***Pattern Matrix of the 16-item OLBI for Employees in a Local Government Organisation (N=83)***

Items	Component	
	1	2
1. I always find new and interesting aspects in my work.	<b>0,48</b>	0,07
2. There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.	<b>0,63</b>	0,37
3. It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way.	0,54	0,54
4. After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.	0,42	0,40
5. I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well.	<b>0,65</b>	-0,12
6. Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.	<b>0,19</b>	-0,74
7. I find my work to be a positive challenge.	0,43	<b>0,55</b>
8. During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.	<b>-0,34</b>	-0,61
9. Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work.	-0,12	<b>0,77</b>
10. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.	<b>-0,54</b>	-0,16
11. Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks.	0,25	<b>0,55</b>
12. After work I usually feel worn out and weary.	0,44	<b>0,63</b>
13. This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing.	<b>0,22</b>	0,14
14. Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well.	<b>0,67</b>	-0,30
15. I feel more and more engaged in my work.	<b>0,65</b>	0,32
16. When I work, I usually feel energised.	<b>0,73</b>	0,34

An inspection of Table 3 indicates that items 3 and 4 were problematic and did not load on either component. On the disengagement subscale items 1, 6, 13 and 15 loaded correctly and on the exhaustion subscale only item 12. With the above in mind, the construct validity of the questionnaire for this study population could be questioned.

Regarding the UWES, a simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 17 items of the UWES on the total sample of employees in a local government organisation. Analysis of eigen values (greater than 1) and scree plot indicated that 2 factors could be

extracted, explaining 61,28% of the total variance. An oblique rotation showed that factors were not strongly correlated and thus a principal factor analysis with varimax rotation was used. The results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Pattern Matrix of the 17 items UWES for Employees in a Local Government Organisation (N=83)*

Items	Component	
	1	2
1. I am bursting with energy in my work.	<b>0,66</b>	0,34
2. I find my work full of meaning and purpose.	<b>0,81</b>	0,26
3. Time flies when I'm working.	0,40	<b>0,44</b>
4. I feel strong and vigorous in my job.	<b>0,85</b>	0,30
5. I am enthusiastic about my job.	<b>0,77</b>	0,40
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.	<b>0,62</b>	0,43
7. My job inspires me.	<b>0,89</b>	0,33
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	<b>0,82</b>	0,26
9. I feel happy when I am engrossed in my work.	<b>0,61</b>	0,48
10. I am proud of the work that I do.	<b>0,57</b>	0,55
11. I am immersed in my work.	0,33	<b>0,76</b>
12. In my job, I can continue working for very long periods of time.	0,41	<b>0,72</b>
13. To me, my work is challenging.	<b>0,81</b>	0,40
14. I get carried away by my work.	<b>0,75</b>	0,35
15. I am very resilient, mentally, in my job.	0,19	<b>0,86</b>
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.	<b>0,64</b>	0,43
17. I always persevere at work, even when things do not go well.	0,35	<b>0,77</b>

Research by Naudé and Rothmann (2004) pointed toward a two-factor model for work engagement, namely vigour/dedication and absorption, contradicting studies in Spain and the Netherlands that indicate a three-factor structure. Absorption however showed poor internal consistency, leading to the researchers' recommending that the absorption scale not be used and items regarding this scale was excluded (Naudé & Rothmann, 2004). Results indicated in Table 3 show no resemblance with either of these models, with no

consistent factor loadings on any of the subscales. Further investigation into the use of this questionnaire is thus recommended.

The 14 scales of the COPE were subjected to principal components analysis, and analysis of eigen values (greater than 1) and scree plot indicated that 4 factors could be extracted, explaining 42,67% of the total variance. An oblique rotation showed that factors were not strongly correlated and thus a principal factor analysis with varimax rotation was used. The results are given in Table 5.

**Table 5**

***Pattern Matrix of the 53-item COPE for Employees in a Local Government Organisation (N=83)***

Items	Components			
	1	2	3	4
3. I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.	<b>0,40</b>	-0,10	0,05	0,01
4. I force myself to wait for the right time to do something	<b>0,42</b>	-0,12	-0,13	0,33
6. I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.	<b>0,68</b>	-0,20	0,20	-0,05
8. I talked to someone about how I feel.	0,20	0,01	<b>0,75</b>	0,04
9. I think about how I might best handle the problem.	<b>0,67</b>	-0,10	0,26	0,00
10. I put my trust in God	0,02	-0,05	-0,04	<b>0,83</b>
12. I drink alcohol or take drugs, in order to think about it less.	-0,13	<b>0,46</b>	-0,06	-0,22
13. I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying.	-0,20	<b>0,40</b>	0,16	-0,11
14. I let my feelings out.	0,26	0,06	<b>0,48</b>	0,03
15. I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.	0,13	-0,07	<b>0,81</b>	-0,01
16. I say to myself: This isn't real.	0,13	<b>0,73</b>	0,07	0,22
18. I make sure not to make matters worse by acting to soon.	<b>0,55</b>	-0,08	-0,05	0,17

19. I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.	<b>0,74</b>	-0,07	-0,06	0,14
20. I make a plan of action.	<b>0,76</b>	-0,18	0,13	0,10
22. I try to get advice from someone about what to do.	0,25	-0,06	<b>0,54</b>	0,17
23. I do what has to be done, one step at a time.	<b>0,66</b>	-0,02	0,27	0,06
24. I pray more than usual.	0,08	0,10	0,07	<b>0,68</b>
26. I give up the attempt to get what I want.	-0,18	<b>0,48</b>	0,29	-0,09
29. I pretend that it hasn't really happened.	0,09	<b>0,70</b>	-0,01	0,02
30. I look for something good in what's happening.	<b>0,54</b>	0,17	-0,07	0,22
31. I restrain myself from doing something too quickly.	<b>0,66</b>	-0,04	-0,09	0,29
32. I take direct action to get around the problem.	<b>0,69</b>	0,09	0,07	0,05
34. I talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.	0,48	-0,06	0,48	-0,03
35. I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.	<b>0,80</b>	-0,11	0,19	-0,02
37. I try to find comfort in my religion.	0,21	0,20	0,13	<b>0,65</b>
40. I feel a lot of emotional distress and find myself expressing those feelings a lot.	<b>-0,36</b>	0,33	0,32	0,12
41. I talk to someone to find out more about the situation.	0,39	0,00	<b>0,59</b>	0,17
42. I act as though it hasn't even happened	-0,12	<b>0,71</b>	-0,09	0,18
43. I learn something from the experience.	<b>0,65</b>	0,06	0,14	0,03
45. I concentrate on my efforts on doing something about it.	<b>0,71</b>	-0,03	0,11	-0,10
46. I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.	<b>0,29</b>	0,26	0,08	0,20
47. I think hard about what steps to take.	<b>0,70</b>	-0,13	0,22	-0,06
48. I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.	<b>0,64</b>	0,01	0,10	-0,01
49. I discuss my feelings with someone.	0,15	-0,11	<b>0,78</b>	0,11
50. I just give up trying to reach my goal.	-0,10	<b>0,51</b>	-0,21	0,26

51. I seek God's help.	0.06	-0.03	0.07	<b>0.81</b>
52. I daydream about things other than this.	-0.08	<b>0.47</b>	0.03	0.18

Two factors loaded incorrectly. Item 34 didn't load on component 3, and item 40 loaded incorrectly on component 1. Items that are not reported may be discarded as filler items.

The results above confirms the four-component structure of coping. Component 1 is representative of the active coping subscale and dealt with approaching the problem, redefining it as something positive or a learning experience, and accepting that it has happened. Component 2 includes aspects like daydreaming and items related to ignoring the facts that could be labelled as passive coping. The third component was made up by the items measuring seeking social support for emotional reasons (Carver et al; 1989), and was labelled, seeking emotional support. The turning to religion (Carver et al; 1989) items made up the fourth factor.

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and the inter-item correlation coefficients of the JIQ, OBLI, UWES and COPE for employees ( $N=83$ ) working in a local government organisation are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments for Employees working in a Local Government Organisation (N=83)*

<i>Test and subscales</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>Inter-item r</i>	<i><math>\alpha</math></i>
JIQ Cognitive job insecurity	83	2,26	0,62	0,20	0,25	0,25	0,65
JIQ Affective job insecurity	83	2,46	0,81	0,61	1,09	0,47	0,81
JIQ Total job insecurity	83	2,35	0,64	0,33	0,15	0,33	0,84
OLBI Exhaustion	83	2,37	0,32	-0,08	0,70	<b>0,74</b>	<b>0,37</b>

OLBI Dedication	83	2,41	0,36	0,63	1,29	<b>0,13</b>	<b>0,53</b>
OLBI Total	83	2,39	0,29	0,21	0,75	0,18	0,66
UWES Vigour	83	4,29	1,37	-1,15	1,05	<b>0,56</b>	0,88
UWES Dedication	83	4,46	1,59	-1,07	0,20	<b>0,75</b>	0,94
UWES Absorption	83	4,19	1,47	-0,87	-0,07	<b>0,52</b>	0,86
UWES Total	83	4,30	1,41	-1,06	0,49	<b>0,59</b>	0,96
COPE Active	81	2,99	0,58	-0,76	1,03	0,34	0,86
COPE Seeking social support	81	2,87	0,71	-0,60	-0,35	0,24	<b>0,55</b>
COPE Passive	81	2,13	0,49	0,54	0,53	0,16	<b>0,59</b>
COPE Turning to religion	81	3,17	0,81	-1,09	0,58	<b>0,58</b>	0,85

The Cronbach alpha coefficients of the subscales of burnout, as well as the seeking emotional support and passive coping subscales are considered as unacceptable, compared to the guideline of a  $\alpha > 0.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The alpha coefficients of the rest of the tests and subscales are acceptable. Furthermore, the inter-item correlations for OLBI Exhaustion and Dedication, all the subscales on the UWES and Turning to Religion subscale on the COPE are considered unacceptable compared to the guideline of  $0.15 < r < 0.50$  (Clark & Watson, 1995). It therefore appears that the internal consistency of the OLBI and UWES for the study population could be questioned. The skewness and kurtosis of all the scales are relatively normal.

MANOVA analyses followed to determine the relationship between scores on the JIQ and various demographic characteristics, such as culture, age and tenure. The results are reported in Table 7.

**Table 7**

***MANOVAs – Differences in Job Insecurity Levels of Demographic Groups (N=83)***

Variable	Value	F	Df	Den Df	P
Culture	0,90	0,94	9,00	187,55	0,49
Age	0,85	1,07	12,00	201,37	0,39
Tenure	0,77	1,73	12,00	201,37	0,06

No statistically significant differences were obtained in analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ( $p < 0, 01$ ).

Next, the relationship between scores on the OLBI and various demographic characteristics, such as culture, age and tenure, were examined by means of MANOVA analysis. The results are reported in Table 8.

**Table 8**

***MANOVAs – Differences in Burnout Levels of Demographic Groups (N=83)***

Variable	Value	F	Df	Den Df	P
Culture	0,91	0,82	9,00	187,55	0,60
Age	0,91	0,62	12,00	201,37	0,83
Tenure	0,87	0,88	12,00	201,37	0,57

In an analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ( $p < 0, 01$ ), no statistical differences could be detected between burnout and any of these demographic variables.

Table 9 reports results of the MANOVA analysis, performed to determine the possible relationship between scores of the UWES and demographic characteristics (culture, age and tenure).

**Table 9**

***MANOVAs – Differences in engagement levels of demographic groups (N=83)***

Variable	Value	F	Df	Den Df	P
Culture	0,85	1,39	9,00	187,55	0,20
Age	0,74	2,00	12,00	201,37	0,03
Tenure	0,69	2,50	12,00	201,37	0,00*

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ( $p < 0, 01$ ), statistically significant differences were obtained for tenure, but not for culture and age. The relationship between engagement and tenure was further analysed to determine practical significance, using ANOVA, followed by Tukey HSD tests.

The ANOVA of differences in engagement levels of different tenure are reported in Table 10.

**Table 10**

***ANOVA'S – Differences in Engagement Levels of Tenure (N=83)***

Variable	Less than 1 year	2 - 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 - 20 years	Longer than 20 years	P	Root MSE
UWES Vigour	4,35	4,43	4,75 <sup>c</sup>	3,67	2,43 <sup>a</sup>	0,00*	1,26
UWES Dedication	4,85	4,61	4,75	3,94	2,60	0,03	1,52
UWES Absorption	4,32	4,35	4,42	3,80	2,80	0,00*	1,44
UWES Total	4,49	4,45	4,64	3,79	2,61	0,02	1,34

• Statistically significant difference:  $p < 0,01$

a Practically significant differences from type (in row) where b (medium effect,  $d \geq 0,5$ ) or c (large effect,  $d \geq 0,8$ ) are indicated

Table 10 demonstrates that there are practical, significant differences between the levels of vigour (as measured by the UWES), between employees working in the organisation for between 6 to 10 years and employees working for longer than 20 years. The employees working for 6 to 10 years displayed more vigour than those working for more than 20 years (large effect). A statistically significant difference was also found between absorption (as measured by the UWES) and tenure. No statistically significant relationship was found between dedication and total engagement for various tenure groups.

Regarding the COPE, a MANOVA analysis was performed to determine the possible relationship between coping and various demographic variables, including culture, age and tenure. The results of this analysis are given in Table 11.

**Table 11*****MANOVAs – Differences in Coping Levels of Demographic Groups (N=83)***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Den Df</b>	<b>p</b>
Gender	0,85	2,60	5,00	72,00	0,03
Culture	0,81	1,06	15,00	201,92	0,40
Age	0,75	1,07	20,00	239,75	0,38
Tenure	0,72	1,26	20,00	239,75	0,21

In analysis of Wilk's Lambda values ( $p < 0, 01$ ), no statistically significant differences were obtained for any of the demographic variables, including gender, culture, age and tenure, as regards coping levels.

The correlation coefficients between the JISI and the OLBI, UWES and COPE for employees ( $N=83$ ) working in a local government organisation are reported in Table 12.

**Table 12**

***Correlation coefficient between the JIQ, OLBI, UWES and COPE (N=83)***

	JIQ C	JIQ A	JIQ T	OLBI Ex	OLBI Dis	OLBI Total	UWES V	UWES D	UWES A	UWES T	COPE Total	COPE Act	COPE SSS	COPE Pas	COPE TTR
JIQ C	1,00														
JIQ A	0,63++	1,00													
JIQ T	0,89++	0,92	1,00												
OBLI Ex	0,29	0,30+	0,32+	1,00											
OBLI Dis	0,26	0,16	0,23	0,46	1,00										
OBLI Total	0,32+	0,26	0,32+	0,84	0,87++	1,00									
UWES V	-0,29	-0,18	-0,26	-0,43	-	-	1,00								
					0,56++	0,59++									
UWES D	-0,27	-0,22	-0,27	-0,42	-	-	0,84++	1,00							
					0,71++	0,67++									
UWES A	-0,25	-0,17	-0,23	-0,33	-	-	0,88++	0,83++	1,00						
					0,58++	0,54++									
UW Total	-0,28	-0,20	-0,26	-0,41	-	-	0,96++	0,94++	0,95++	1,00					
					0,65++	0,63++									
COPE Total	-0,16	-0,17	-0,19	0,02	-0,31+	-0,18	0,31+	0,31+	0,31+	0,32+	1,00				
COPE Act	-0,14	-0,28	-0,24	-0,13	-0,28	-0,24	0,41+	0,35+	0,35+	0,39+	0,77++	1,00			
COPE SSS	-0,30+	-0,26	-	0,02	-0,29	-0,16	0,22	0,26	0,19	0,24	0,70++	0,50++	1,00		
			0,31+												
COPE Pas	0,10	0,25	0,20	0,25	-0,07	0,09	0,01*	0,01*	0,09	0,04	0,50++	-0,02	0,11	1,00	
COPE TTR	-0,12	-0,08	-0,11	0,07	-0,10	-0,02	-0,09	-0,06	-0,08	-0,08	0,45+	0,20	0,19	0,24	1,00

\* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0.01$

+ Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,30$  (medium effect)

++ Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,50$  (large effect)

As can be seen from Table 12, statistically significant correlations were found between Passive Coping and two subscales of the UWES, namely vigour and dedication.

The OLBI Exhaustion subscale and total burnout show practically significant correlation (medium effect) with affective and total components of job insecurity. Therefore it could be said that high levels of exhaustion and burnout as measured by the OLBI, could be associated with high levels of job insecurity.

All subscales of the UWES, as well as total engagement, have a negative practical significance correlation with large effect, with disengagement as measured by the OLBI and total burnout. High levels of vigour, dedication, absorption and total engagement, will therefore be accompanied by lower levels of disengagement and total burnout.

A negative practically significant correlation (medium effect) is found between total coping and disengagement on the OLBI questionnaire. A further practically significant correlation (medium effect) is found between total and active coping and all scales of the UWES. Coping and active coping would therefore be associated with low levels of disengagement, and high levels of vigour, dedication and absorption. Coping in the form of seeking social support shows a negative practically significant correlation (medium effect) with cognitive and total job insecurity.

The regression analysis of total job insecurity and the OLBI, indicates that the adjusted  $r^2 = 0,9$  which implies that 9% of the variance in burnout as measured by the OLBI is predicted by total job insecurity. The multiple correlation coefficient of 0,32 are practically significant with medium effect. The regression analysis  $r^2 = 0,10$  of job insecurity (cognitive and affective) and the UWES scale implies that 10% of the variance in engagement as measured by the UWES is predicted by the two job insecurity scales. The multiple correlation coefficient of 0,35 is practically significant with medium effect. The regression analysis of total job insecurity and the COPE indicates that  $r^2 = 0,15$  which

implies that 15% of the variance in engagement as measured by the COPE is predicted by total job insecurity. The multiple correlation coefficient of 0,17 is neither statistically nor practically significant.

## **DISCUSSION**

The general aim of this research was to determine whether there is a relationship between job insecurity and as manifested in burnout, engagement and coping among employees in a local government organisation.

Factor analysis confirmed a two-factor structure for the JIQ. This two-factor structure is consistent with literature findings across various samples, groups and countries (Borg & Elizur, 1992; De Witte, 1997; Van Vuuren, 1990). Items 2, 10 and 11 loaded incorrectly on the affective dimension and item 6 on the cognitive dimension. This is in line with the findings of De Witte (1997) which indicated that item 6 (“The competence of my supervisor in making decisions.”) is related to the supervisor and is cognitive by nature. Buitendach & Rothmann (in press) confirmed the two-factor structure of the JISI after removal of items 10 and 11. The researchers dismissed these items both on conceptual and theoretical grounds, or with the alternative explanation that if only one factor was found, the possibility exists that it was unnecessary to remove them. Further research into the construct equivalence of this instrument is therefore recommended.

Factor analysis of the OLBI could not confirm the two-factor structure proposed by Demerouti *et al.* (2003). Only items 1, 6, 13 and 15 on the disengagement scale and item 12 on the exhaustion subscale loaded correctly. Bearing this in mind, the construct validity of this measuring instrument on the study population can be questioned. The OLBI is a recently constructed measuring instrument and relatively few studies have critically reviewed its psychometric properties. In order to study the construct validity of the OLBI, further theory-driven research is necessary.

Although eigen values (greater than 1) and scree plot analysis pointed towards a two-factor structure for the UWES, it is consistent with findings by Naudé and Rothmann (2004). Factor analysis with varimax rotation showed no consistent factor loadings on any of the subscales and could therefore not confirm this structure. A possible explanation for this is given by Van de Vijver and Leung (1997) who found that if this instrument measures different constructs in different cultures, they recommend that item bias should be calculated, if construct equivalence is not found. Storm and Rothmann (2003) indicate that problems regarding factor structure of the UWES could be related to ambiguity of items, or that they are sample or country specific. Problems may also be related to the wording of the questionnaire, where difficult words were used (for example, vigorous, immersed and resilient) that some of the participants could not master. This is highly likely, because 97,59 % of the participants had only a Grade 10 – 12 education.

Two factors loaded incorrectly on the COPE. Item 34 did not load on component 3, and item 40 loaded incorrectly on component 1. Factor analysis of the COPE confirmed the four-component structure of coping found by Pienaar and Rothmann (2003). Component 1 was labelled active coping subscale and dealt with approaching the problem, redefining it as something positive or a learning experience, and accepting that it has happened. Component 2 included aspects like daydreaming and items related to ignoring the facts that could be labelled passive coping. The third component was made up by the items measuring seeking social support for emotional reasons (Carver et al; 1989), and was labelled seeking emotional support. The turning to religion (Carver et al., 1989) items made up the fourth factor. This strongly supports the conclusion by Kallasma and Pulver (2000) that a minimum of three factors is needed to explain coping data adequately.

Job insecurity with all its subscales presented acceptable alpha coefficients and inter-term correlation. This, together with the two-factor structure of job insecurity, would be proof of the JIQ as a suitable instrument for measuring job insecurity in selected organisations

in South Africa. The JIQ therefore paves the way for future measure of job insecurity in South Africa (Buitendach & Rothmann, in press)'

The Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlation of the subscales of burnout (Exhaustion and Disengagement), were found to be unacceptable. This is in line with the no construct equivalence that was also reported for this instrument. It therefore appears that the internal consistency of this measuring instrument in this study population could be questioned. More research in this regard is recommended.

As regards the UWES, all the subscales on this measuring instrument presented with unacceptable inter-item correlations. Construct equivalence of this instrument for this study could not be proved, and results given for this low construct equivalence could also be related to the internal consistency of the UWES. Further investigation into the qualities of this measuring instrument is recommended.

Alpha coefficients of seeking emotional support and passive coping subscales were found to be unacceptable. Furthermore, the turning to religion subscale on the COPE showed unacceptable inter-item correlations. Cultural differences and item bias should be taken into account, and further research on the use of this instrument in South African organisations should be explored.

A slightly below average score was obtained for job insecurity and burnout, but a relatively high score was obtained for engagement. As regards the hypotheses set out earlier, it could be concluded that employees in a local government organisation experience low levels of job insecurity and burnout, and high levels of engagement. Hypotheses one, two and three, regarding levels of job insecurity, burnout and engagement, are therefore rejected. Findings are contrary to those by Rothmann et al., (2003) who found transformation in local governments as a major stressor that contributes to burnout.

Practically significant differences could only be obtained between engagement levels of employees and tenure. Regarding the vigour subscale, employees working for 6 to 10 years in the organisation displayed more vigour than those working in the organisation for more than 20 years. According to Roberts and Davenport (2002), career development is an area that could be targeted to increase engagement. Career development includes providing opportunities to acquire new skills and to develop workers, as well as opportunities to advance in the organisation and helping them manage their careers. With this in mind, employees working for 6 - 10 years may be motivated by career development factors, such as promotions, to higher levels of vigour; where employees working at the organisation for more than 20 years, may be near retirement and no longer motivated by these factors. No research could be found to support this conclusion.

No further statistical or practically significant differences could be found between biographical groups regarding their scores on the various scales employed in this study.

Exhaustion and total burnout demonstrated a relationship with affective and total components of job insecurity. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) perceive job insecurity as a stressor in organisations and emphasise that the relationship existing between this stressor and burnout is in line with previous research by Burke (1994). High levels of job insecurity may therefore be associated with high levels of exhaustion and burnout.

Vigour, dedication and absorption, as well as total engagement, showed a negative relationship with disengagement and total burnout. This is in line with findings by Maslach and Leiter (1997); Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) and Storm (2002) who found strong negative correlations between burnout and engagement. An association could thus be made between high levels of engagement and low levels of burnout.

A negative relationship was found between total coping and disengagement. These results confirm findings from earlier research (Rowe, 1997) where high levels of burnout were associated with ineffective coping strategies.

A further positive relationship is found between total and active coping and engagement and all its subscales. This result could be interpreted in the light of findings by Maslach and Leiter (1997) and Schaufeli and Bakker (2002) that engagement can be seen as the opposite pole of burnout and therefore engagement would be associated with more effective coping strategies. Total coping and active coping would therefore be associated with low levels of disengagement, and high levels of vigour, dedication and absorption. Rothmann (2003) sees coping as a possible moderator or mediator between burnout and engagement, but recommends further studies. No direction in terms of correlation was implied in this study, and therefore this conclusion could not be made.

Coping in the form of seeking social support shows a negative relationship with cognitive and total job insecurity. A possible interpretation for this may be that people with high levels of job insecurity may be so insecure and ashamed of their fate, that they isolate themselves. Although no research findings to support this statement could be found, the correlation between job insecurity and burnout further explains the phenomenon where burnout is often associated with withdrawal behavior and an experience of the fate of the individual by him/herself (Cilliers, 2003).

The relationship between coping and burnout should be interpreted carefully, based on two reasons. Firstly, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argue that coping is a state (a situation-specific response) rather than a personality trait. Therefore, correlations between ways of coping and burnout could indicate that burnout is related to particular situations that are perceived as stressful, which in turn stimulate a person to cope in a particular way. Secondly, withdrawal from work or from clients, which closely resembles avoidance coping, is regarded as a core symptom of burnout (Cherniss, 1980). Accordingly, avoidance coping and burnout overlap conceptually (Storm & Rothmann, 2003). In brief, job insecurity shows a relationship with burnout; burnout shows a negative relationship with engagement and coping; and a positive relationship exists between engagement and coping. Hypothesis 4, stated at the beginning of the chapter, can therefore be accepted.

Regression analyses could completely confirm that job insecurity (total) holds predictive value with regard to burnout (9% of variance in burnout can be explained by job insecurity) and the cognitive and affective dimension of job insecurity with engagement, but the predictive value with regard to coping could not be established. In the light of the last hypothesis stated for this study, the conclusion could partially be drawn that job insecurity predicts burnout; Hypothesis 5 would therefore be accepted only partially.. A possible explanation for this prediction in burnout by job insecurity is given by Hellgren (2004) who associates job insecurity with higher levels of job stress. Job stress caused by job demands (such as the transformation process in local governments) has been found to contribute strongly to burnout (Rothmann et al; 2003). These researchers indicate that factors in the transformation process, such as insufficient personnel to handle assignments, performing tasks not in the job description and covering tasks for others, were the most severe stressors associated with burnout.

A limitation of this research is that the research design does not allow one to determine the direction of the relationship between the variables. It must also be remembered that these results were obtained from a sample of employees in a local government organisation with specific paper and pencil measures - which could probably limit the generalisability of the findings. These findings therefore need to be replicated with other samples and measuring instruments before drawing conclusions about the relationships between the variables. The results of this study provide some data on the relationship between job insecurity and the wellness of workers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Various research issues flow from this study that require attention to understanding job insecurity and its impact on the wellness of employees.

Firstly, further research is needed to establish more fully the validity, reliability and usefulness of the Job Insecurity Questionnaire, the OLBI questionnaire, UWES and

COPE. Research on the OLBI as a measuring instrument for burnout is needed especially urgently.

Research is also needed on other occupations to establish norms for job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping. Larger sample sizes might provide increased confidence that study findings would be consistent across other similar groups. Longitudinal research is recommended to establish the levels of job insecurity over a period of time.

Recommendations for the local government organisation include better communication structures that clearly indicate the transformation process and expectations of employees.

The organisation must therefore investigate the effects that the transformation process have on the organisation structure and functioning and try to develop strategies that minimize employee overload and stress. Support systems, for example an Employee Assistance Program, should be made available not only for employees leaving, but especially for remaining employees.

## REFERENCES

- Alsoofi, M.A., Al-Heeti, K.N. & Alwashli, A. (2000, July). *Burnout and its relationship with job stress and coping with stress for Yemeni teachers*. Paper presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Psychology, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Anderson, D.G. (2000). Coping strategies and burnout among veteran child protection workers. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24, 839-848.
- Anshel, M.H. (2000). A conceptual model of and implications for coping with stressful events in police work. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 19, 240-259.
- Ashford, S., Lee, C. & Bolbko, P. (1989). Content, causes and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 803-829.
- Beehr, T.A., Johnson, L.B. & Nieva, R. (1995). Occupational stress: Coping of police and their spouses, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 16, 3-25.
- Billings, A.G. & Moos, R.H. (1984). Coping, stress, and social resources among adults with unipolar depression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 877-891.
- Borg, I. & Elizur, D. (1992). Job insecurity: Correlates, moderators and measurement. *International Journal of Manpower*, 13, 13 -26.
- Buitendach, J.H. & Rothmann, S. (In press). Job insecurity in South Africa: Towards conceptual clarity.
- Burke, R.J. (1994). Stressful events, work-family conflict, coping, psychological burnout and well-being among police officers. *Psychological Reports*, 75, 787-800.
- Burke, R.J. & Richardsen, A.M. (1993). Psychological burnout in organizations. In R.T.Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior* (pp. 263-298). New York: Dekker.
- Büssing, A. (1999). Can control at work and social support moderate psychological consequences of job insecurity? Results from a Quasi-experimental study in the Steel Industry. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 8, 219-242.

- Caplan, R.D., Cobb, S., French, J.R.P., Van Harrison, R.V. & Pinneau, S.R. (1980). *Job demands and worker health: Main effects and occupational differences*. Ann Arbor MI: Survey Research Centre, Institute of Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.R. & Weintraub, J.K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*, 267-283.
- Chan, D.W. & Hui, E.K.P. (1995). Burnout and coping among Chinese secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *65*, 15-25.
- Cherniss, C. (1980). *Staff burnout*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Chwalisz, K., Altmaier, E.M. & Russell, D.W. (1992). Causal attributions, self-efficacy, cognitions and coping with stress. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *11*, 377-400.
- Cilliers, F. (2003). A systems psycho-dynamic perspective on burnout, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *29*(4), 26-23.
- Clark, L.A. & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development, *Psychological Assessment*, *7*, 309-319.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for behavioral sciences* (Rev. ed.). Orlando, FLA: Academic Press
- Constanza, R.S., Derlega, V.J. & Winstead, B.A. (1988). Positive and negative forms of social support: Effects of conversational topics on coping with stress among same-sex friends. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *24*, 182-193.
- Cordes, C.L. & Dougherty, T.W. (1993). A review and integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of Management Review*, *18*, 621-656.
- Davy, J.A., Kinicki, A.J. & Scheck, C.L. (1997). A test of job insecurity's direct and mediated effects on withdrawal cognition. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *18*, 323-349.
- Dekker, S.W. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1995). The effects of job insecurity on psychological health and withdrawal: A longitudinal study. *Australian Psychologist*, *30*, 57-103.

- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Vardakou, I. & Kantas, A. (2002). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 19*(1), 12-23.
- De Rijk, A.E., Le Blanc, P.M. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1998). Active coping and need for control as moderators of the job demand-control model: Effects on burnout. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, 71*, 1-18.
- De Witte, J. (1997, April). *Long term job insecurity as a stressor: Its impact on satisfaction and commitment*. Paper delivered at the 8<sup>th</sup> European Congress on Work and Organisational Psychology, Verona.
- De Witte, H. (1999). Job insecurity and psychological well-being. Review of the literature and exploration of some unresolved issues. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 8*, 155-177.
- Duquette, A., Kerouac, S., Sandhu, B.K., Ducharme, F. & Saulnier, P. (1995). Psychosocial determinants of burnout in geriatric nursing. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 32*, 443-456.
- Elbert, J. (2002). *Job insecurity and psychological strength of service workers in a parastatal*. Unpublished Master's dissertation, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchestroom.
- Ferrie, J.E. (1997). Labour market status, insecurity and health. *Journal of Health Psychology, 2*, 155 -170.
- Folkman, S. & Lazarus, R.S. (1991). Coping and emotion. In A. Monat & R.S. Lazarus (Eds.), *Stress and coping: An anthology* (pp. 207-227). New York: Columbia UniverPress.
- Folkman, S., Lazarus, R.S., Gruen, R.J. & DeLongis, A. (1986). Appraisal, coping, health status, and psychological symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*, 571-579.
- Golembiewski, R.T. & Munzenrider, R.F. (1988). Phases of burnout: Development in concepts and applications. New York: Praeger.
- Greenhalgh, L. & Rosenblatt, Z. (1984). Job insecurity: Toward conceptual clarity. *Academy of Management Review, 9*, 438-448.

- Hammons, K.H. (2000). An analysis of social factors which mitigate burnout in hospital social workers who work with terminally ill inpatient populations. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 60(9-A), 3527.
- Hartley, J., Jacobson, D., Klandermans, B. & Van Vuuren, T. (1991). *Job insecurity: Coping with jobs at risk*. London: Sage Publishers.
- Heaney, C.A., Isreal, B.A. & House, J.S. (1994). Chronic job insecurity among automobile workers: Effects on job satisfaction and health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 38, 1431-1437.
- Hellgren, J. (2004). *How are employee attitudes and well-being affected by downsizing*. Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Work Wellness Congress, Potchefstroom, South Africa.
- Hellgren, J. & Sverke, M. (2003). Does job insecurity lead to impaired well-being or vice versa? Estimation of cross-lagged effects using latent variable modeling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24, 215-236.
- Heymans, D.R. (2002). *Job insecurity, job satisfaction and organisational commitment*. Unpublished master's dissertation, Vaal Triangle Campus of the Potchefstroom University, Vanderbijlpark.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44, 513-524.
- Hobfoll, S.E. & Freedy, J. (1993). Conservation of resources: A general stress theory applied to burnout. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 115-129). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Jacobson, D. (1991). The conceptual approach to job insecurity. In J. Hartley, D. Jacobson, B. Klandermans & T. Van Vuuren. *Job insecurity: Coping with jobs at risk*. London: Sage Publications.
- Joelson, L. & Wahlquist, L. (1987). The psychological meaning of job insecurity and job loss: The results of a longitudinal study. *Social Science and Medicine*, 25, 179-182.
- Kallasma, T. & Pulver, A. (2000). The structure and properties of the Estonian COPE inventory. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29, 881-894.

- Kerlinger, F.N. & Lee, H.B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Kets De Vries, M.F.R. & Balazs, K. (1997). The downside of downsizing. *Human Relations, 50*, 11-50.
- Kinnunen, U., Mauno, S., Nätti, J. & Happonen, M. (2000). Perceived job insecurity: A longitudinal study among employees. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 8*, 243-260.
- Lazarus, R.S. & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.
- Lee, R.T. & Ashforth, B.E. (1996). A meta-analytical examination of the correlates of the three dimensions of job burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 123-133.
- Leiter, M.P. (1991). Coping patterns as predictors of burnout: The function of control and escapist coping patterns. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 12*, 123-133.
- Leiter, M.P. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach & T. Marek (Eds.). *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 237-250). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Leiter, M.P. & Harvie, P. (1998). Conditions for staff acceptance of organisational change: Burnout as a mediation construct. *Anxiety, Stress and Coping, 11* (1), 1-25.
- Levert, T. Lucas, M. & Ortlepp, K. (2000). Burnout in psychiatric nurses: Contributions of the work environment and a sense of coherence. *South African Journal of Psychology, 30*, 36-43.
- Luton, J.W. (2000). Effects of religious orientation and perceptions of communication competence and apprehension on burnout potential. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 61*(2-A), 648.
- Makgetla, D. (2001). So how bad is unemployment really? *South African Labour Bulletin, 25*(2), 16-17.
- Maslach, C. & Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The truth about burnout: How organisations cause personal stress and what to do about it*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B. & Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 397-422.

- Mauno, S. & Kinnunen, U. (1999). Job insecurity and well-being: A longitudinal study among male and female employees in Finland. *Community, Work & Family*, 2(2), 147-171.
- Mitchell, G. & Hastings, R.P. (2001). Coping, burnout, and emotion in staff working in community services for people with challenging behaviors. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 106, 448-459.
- Mohr, G.B. (2000). The changing significance of different stressors after the announcement of bankruptcy: A longitudinal investigation with special emphasis on job insecurity. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21, 337-359.
- Mohren, D.L., Swaen, G.M.H., Van Amelsvoort, L.G.P.M., Borm, P.J.A. & Galama, J.M.D. (2003). Job insecurity as a risk factor for common infections and health complaints. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(2), 123.
- Naudé, J.L.P & Rothmann, S. (2004) Burnout of emergency workers in South Africa. Paper presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Work Well Congres, Potchefstroom, South Africa.
- Nunnally, J.C. & Bernstein, I.H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Parker, D.F. & DeCotiis, T.A. (1983). Organisational determinates of job stress. *Organisational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32, 260-277.
- Patterson, G.T. (1999). Coping effectiveness and occupational stress in police officers. In J.M. Violanti and D. Paton, *Police trauma: Psychological aftermath of civilian combat* (pp. 214-226). Springfield, IL: Charles, C. Thomas.
- Peeters, M.C.W. & Le Blanc, P.M. (2001). Towards a match between job demands and sources of social support: A study among oncology care providers. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 10, 53-72.
- Pienaar, J. & Rothmann, S. (2003). Coping strategies in the South African Police Service. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 81-90.
- Pines, A.M., Aronson, E. & Kafry, D. (1981). *Burnout: From tedium to personal growth*. New York: Macmillan.
- Preuss, G.L. & Lautsch, B.A. (2002). The effect of formal versus informal job security on employee involvement programs. *Industrial Relations*. 57, 517-539.

- Probst, T.M. (2000). Wedded to the job: Moderating effects of job involvement on the consequences of job insecurity. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*, 63-73.
- Probst, T. M. (2002). The of impact of job insecurity on employee work attitudes, job adaptation, and organizational withdrawal behaviors. In J.M. Brett & F. Drasgow (Eds.). *The psychology of work: theoretically based empirical research* (pp. 141 – 168). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Probst, T.M. & Brubaker, T.L. (2001). The effects of job insecurity on employee safety outcomes: Cross-sectional and longitudinal explorations. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6*, 139-158.
- Q'Quin, K. (1998). Job satisfaction and intentions to turnover in human services agencies perceived as stable or non-stable. *Perceptual & Motor Skills, 88*(1), 339-344.
- Roberts, D.R. & Davenport, T.O. (2002). Job engagement: Why it is important and how to improve it. *Employment Relations Today, 29*(3), 21-29.
- Rohman, C. (1987/1988). A study of burnout among psychologists. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 48*, 2772.
- Rosenblatt, Z. & Ruvio, A. (1996). A test of a multidimensional model of job insecurity: The case of Israeli teachers. *Journal of Occupational Behavior, 17*, 587-605.
- Rosenblatt, Z., Talmud, I. & Ruvio A. (1999). A gender-based framework of the experience of job insecurity and its effects on work attitudes. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, 8*, 197-217.
- Roskies, E. & Louis-Guerin, C. 1990. Job insecurity in managers: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 11*, 345-359.
- Rothmann, S. (2003). Burnout and Engagement: A South African perspective. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*(4), 16-25.
- Rothmann, S., Jackson, L.T.B. & Kruger, M.M. (2003). Burnout and job stress in a local government: The moderating effects of sense of coherence. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29*(4), 52-60.
- Rowe, M.M. (1997). Hardiness, stress, temperament, coping and burnout in health professionals. *American Journal fo Health Behavior, 21*, 163-171.

- Sammut, R.G. (1997). Psychiatric nurses' satisfaction: The effect of closure of a hospital. *Journal of Advance Nursing*, 26, 20-24.
- SAS Institute. (2000). *The SAS System for Windows: Release 8.01*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.
- Schaufeli, W.B. (2003). Past performance and future perspectives of burnout research. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 1-15.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Bakker, A.B. (2002). *Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study on the COBE-model*. Utrecht University: Psychology and Health.
- Schaufeli, W.B., & Enzmann, D. (1998). *The burnout companion to study and practice: A critical analysis*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Schaufeli, W.B., Maslach, C. & Marek, T. (Eds.) (1993). *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Shaddock, A.J., Hill, M. & Van Limbeek, C.A.H. (1998). Factors associated with burnout in workers in residential facilities for people with an intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 23, 309-318.
- Shaughnessy, J.J. & Zechmeister, E.B. (1997). *Research methods in psychology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Steyn, H.S. (1999). *Praktiese betekenisvolheid: Die gebruik van effekgroottes*. Wetenskaplike bydraes – Reeks B: Natuurwetenskappe Nr. 117, Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO.
- Storm, K. (2002). *Burnout and engagement in the South African Police Services*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom.
- Storm, K. & Rothmann, S. (2003). The relationship between burnout, personality traits and coping strategies in a corporate pharmaceutical group. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 35-42.
- Sverke, M. & Hellgren, J. (2002). The nature of job insecurity: Understanding employment on the brink of a new millennium. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 5(1), 23-42.

- Tabachnick, B.G. & Fidell, L.S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Taris, T.W., Schreurs, P.J.G. & Schaufeli, W.B. (1999). Construct validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey: A two-sample examination of its factor structure and correlates. *Work and Stress, 13*, 223-237.
- Thornton, P. (1992). The relation of coping, appraisal and burnout in mental health workers. *Journal of Psychology, 126*, 261-271.
- Turnipseed, D.L. (1994). An analysis of the influence of work environment variables and moderators on the burnout syndrome. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24*, 782 – 800.
- Van de Vijver, F. & Leung, K. (1997). *Methods and data-analysis for cross-cultural research*. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE.
- Van Dierendonck, D., Schaufeli, W. B. & Buunk, A.P. (1998). The evaluation of an individual burnout intervention program: The role of inequity and social support. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*, 392-407.
- Van Vuuren, T. (1990). *Met ontslag bedreigd. Werknemers in onzekerheid over hun arbeidsplaats bij veranderingen in de organisati*. Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij.
- Welsh, I.M. (1996). Job insecurity, a chronic psychological threat: Antecedents and consequences. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B, 56(9B)*, 5210.
- Westman, M., Etzion, D., & Danon, E. (2001). Job insecurity and crossover of burnout in married couples. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 22*, 467 – 481.
- Wiese, L., Rothmann, S. & Storm, K. (2003). Coping, stress and burnout in the South African Police Service in Kwazulu-Natal. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology, 29(4)*, 71-80.
- Zeidner, M. & Hammer, A.L. (1992). Coping with missile attacks: Resources, strategies, and outcomes. *Journal of Personality, 60*, 709 -746.
- Zellars, K.L. & Perrewé, P.L. (2001). Affective personality and the content of emotional social support: Coping in organisations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 459-467.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the conclusions drawn, based on the results of the empirical study, limitations are pointed out and recommendations for future research are made.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are drawn with regard to the specific objectives set out at the beginning of the study:

- **Job insecurity and the wellness of employees in a local government organisation.**

In the literature an overview is given on the increase in job insecurity, globally as well as in South Africa and the organisation. Job insecurity is perceived as a stressor and its relation with burnout, engagement and coping mechanisms are explored (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983; Van Vuuren, 1990). Job insecurity is conceptualised from global, multi-dimensional and job stressor perspectives, with the emphasis on job insecurity as a stressor (Borg & Elizur, 1992; Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison & Pinneau, 1980; De Witte, 1999; Ferrie, 1997, Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987, Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996; Van Vuuren, 1990). The person-environment fit theory of stress and the affective event theory of stress were used and integrated in an attempt to study the antecedents and consequences of job insecurity (Probst, 2002).

Burnout is defined and components of this phenomenon identified according to the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Wiese, Rothmann & Storm, 2003). The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) of burnout, where burnout is related to job demands and job resources, is examined and linked with various components of burnout (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) is described as an

alternative measuring instrument for burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou & Kantas, 2002; Schaufeli, 2003).

Engagement is theoretically viewed as an antithesis of burnout as set out by the MBI-GS, and is accordingly defined and its components identified (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002). The job demands-job resources model is extended in the Comprehensive Burnout and Engagement Model (COBE), where energetic and motivational processes are linked to burnout and engagement.

Coping strategies were theoretically studied for their relevance to ameliorating or exacerbating psychological burnout (Alsoofi, Al-Heeti & Alwashli, 2000; Anshel, 2000, Golembiewski & Munzenrider, 1988). Four components of coping, namely active coping strategies, passive or avoidance coping, seeking social support and turning to religion, was related to burnout by various researchers (Carver, Scheier. & Weintraub; 1989; Pienaar & Rothmann, 2003).

- **Levels of job insecurity, burnout and engagement among employees in a local government organisation.** The research clearly indicates that employees in a local government organisation experience low levels of job insecurity and burnout, and high levels of engagement.
- **The relationship between job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping.** Job insecurity (affective and total components) shows a relationship with burnout (exhaustion and total burnout). A relationship between burnout (disengagement and total burnout) and total engagement and its sub-scales was established. Furthermore, a negative relationship between disengagement and total coping was found. Although no relationship between job insecurity and engagement could be established, a relationship between all scales of the UWES (vigour, dedication and absorption, as well total engagement) and active and total coping, was established. Job insecurity (cognitive and total components) showed a negative relationship with seeking social support coping mechanisms.

- **The prediction validity of burnout related to job insecurity.** Regression analysis indicated that 9% of the variance in burnout as measured by the OLBI is predicted by total job insecurity. The multiple correlation coefficient of 0,32 is practically significant with medium effect.

### **3.2.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The following limitations regarding this research were identified:

- The research design does not allow for determining the direction of the relationship between the variables (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).
- Results were obtained from a relative small sample of employees in a local government organisation and with specific paper and pencil measures, which might probably have limited the generalisability of the findings.
- Measuring instruments are only available in English and they are not culture sensitive or sensitive to problems related to language proficiency.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations regarding the research are offered:

- Further research is needed to establish more fully the validity, reliability and usefulness of the Job Insecurity Questionnaire, the OLBI Questionnaire, UWES and COPE. Research on the OLBI as a measuring instrument for burnout is needed especially urgently.

- Research is also needed in other occupations to establish norms for job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping. Larger sample sizes might provide increased confidence that study findings would be consistent across other similar groups.
- It is recommended that future studies validate findings with regard to the equal comparison of the job insecurity, burnout, coping and engagement across cultural groups. Cross-cultural comparisons would greatly enhance the validity of findings in terms of the multi-cultural South African context.
- Longitudinal research is recommended to establish the levels of job insecurity, burnout, engagement and coping over a period of time.
- Recommendations for the local government organisation include better communication structures that clearly indicate the transformation process and expectations of employees.
- The organisation must investigate the effects that the transformation process have on the organisation structure and functioning and try to develop strategies that minimize employee overload and stress.
- Support systems, for example an Employee Assistance Program, should be made available not only for employees leaving, but especially for remaining employees.

## REFERENCES

- Alsoofi, M.A., Al-Heeti, K.N. & Alwashli, A. (2000, July). *Burnout and its relationship with job stress and coping with stress for Yemeni teachers*. Paper presented at the 28<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Psychology, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Anshel, M.H. (2000). A conceptual model and implications for coping with stressful events in police work. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 19, 240-259.
- Borg, I. & Elizur, D. (1992). Job insecurity: Correlates, moderators and measurement. *International Journal of Manpower*, 13, 13 -26.
- Caplan, R.D., Cobb, S., French, J.R.P., Van Harrison, R.V. & Pinneau, S.R. (1980). *Job demands and worker health: Main effects and occupational differences*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Carver, C.S., Scheier, M.R. & Weintraub, J.K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 267-283.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Vardakou, I. & Kantas, A. (2002). The convergent validity of two burnout instruments: A multitrait-multimethod analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 19, 12-23.
- De Witte, H. (1999). Job insecurity and psychological well-being. Review of the literature and exploration of some unresolved issues. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 8, 155-177.
- Ferrie, J.E. (1997). Labour market status, insecurity and health. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 2, 155 -170.
- Golembiewski, R.T. & Munzenrider, R.F. (1988). *Phases of burnout: Development in concepts and applications*. New York: Praeger.
- Hobfoll, S.E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44, 513-524.
- Hobfoll, S.E. & Freedy, J. (1993). Conservation of resources: A general stress theory applied to burnout. In W.B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 115-129). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

- Joelson, L. & Wahlquist, L. (1987). The psychological meaning of job insecurity and job loss: The results of a longitudinal study. *Social Science and Medicine*, 25, 179-182.
- Kerlinger, F.N. & Lee, H.B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Orlando, FL: Harcourt.
- Maslach, C. & Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The truth about burnout: How organizations cause personal stress and what to do about it*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B. & Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 397-422.
- Parker, D.F. & DeCotiis, T.A. (1983). Organisational determinates of job stress. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32, 260-277.
- Pienaar, J. & Rothmann, S. (2003). Coping strategies in the South African Police Service. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 81-90.
- Probst, T. M. (2002). The impact of job insecurity on employee work attitudes, job adaptation, and organizational withdrawal behaviors. In J.M. Brett & F. Drasgow (Eds.), *The psychology of work: Theoretically based empirical research* (pp. 141 – 168). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rosenblatt, Z. & Ruvio, A. (1996). A test of a multidimensional model of job insecurity: The case of Israeli teachers. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 17, 587-605.
- Schaufeli, W.B. (2003). Past performance and future perspectives of burnout research. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 1-15.
- Schaufeli, W.B. & Bakker, A.B. (2002). *Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study on the COBE-model*. Utrecht: Utrecht University Publishers.
- Van Vuuren, T. (1990). *Met ontslag bedreigd. Werknemers in onzekerheid over hum arbeidsplaat bij veranderingen in de organisati*. Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij.
- Wiese, L., Rothmann, S. & Storm, K. (2003). Coping, stress and burnout in the South African Police Service in Kwazulu-Natal. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 29(4), 71-80.