

The influence of perceived office politics on stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees in law firms

Elzabie Maré

10081933

B.Juris, LLB, LLM

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Supervisor: Mrs M.M. Heyns

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ABSTRACT

Title: The influence of perceived office politics on stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees in law firms.

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between office politics and selected performance outcomes namely stress, turnaround intent and work engagement, as perceived by employees working in law firms.

A literature study indicated the relationship between perceptions of office politics and these selected job outcomes. As an empirical analysis, a measuring instrument consisting of five structured questionnaires was distributed via a non-probability, convenience sampling technique. Spearman's correlation coefficient indicated the relationships between the variables.

The results indicated a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics, job stress, burnout and turnaround intent but a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement as well as its antecedents.

Key words:

Office politics, perceptions, stress, turnaround intent, work engagement, law firms.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Die invloed van gepersipieerde kantoorpolitiek op stress, omdraai-voornemens en werkbetrokkenheid van werknemers in regsfirmas.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die verhouding te bepaal tussen kantoorpolitiek en geselekteerde werkuitkomst, naamlik stress, omdraai-voornemens en werkbetrokkenheid soos gepersipieer deur werknemers in regsfirmas.

'n Literatuurstudie het die verhouding omlyn wat bestaan tussen kantoorpolitiek en hierdie geselekteerde werkuitkomst. Vir die empiriese ondersoek is 'n meetinstrument gebruik wat bestaan uit vyf gestruktureerde vraelyste wat versprei is volgens 'n nie-waarskynlike gerieflikheidstegniek. Spearman se korrelasie-koëffisiënt het die verhoudinge tussen die veranderlikes uitgewys.

Die resultate toon 'n positiewe verhouding aan tussen kantoorpolitiek, werkstres, uitbranding en omdraai-voornemens, maar 'n negatiewe verhouding tussen persepsies van kantoorpolitiek en werkbetrokkenheid sowel as die voorafgaande gebeure.

Sleutelwoorde:

Kantoorpolitiek, persepsies, stress, omdraai-voornemens, werkbetrokkenheid, regsfirmas.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
COR	Conservation of Resources
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (Latin for "that is")
POPS	Perceptions of Organisational Politics Scale
TIS	Turnaround Intent Scale

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the possible implications of negative office politics for selected job attitudes and performance outcomes as perceived by employees working in law firms in South Africa

This Chapter outlines the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives and the scope of the study. The Chapter further aims to give a bird's-eye view of the research methodology that was followed to fulfil the objectives of the study. Lastly, the value-add and limitations of this study are considered. An overview of the structure of the study is given by describing the contents of each Chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Office politics is alive and well in almost every organisation and can be positive or negative (Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992:93) and law offices are no exception (Oslén, 2013:1). The implications of such perceived politics by employees can affect performance outcomes at both the individual and the organisational levels of performance. Almost every person in the working environment has either participated in, been a victim of or a bystander watching such politics.

The perceptions by employees of negative or self-serving (destructive) office politics can have negative effects on employees' job outcomes (and indirectly for the employer), for example job stress and turnaround intent as office politics place psychological strain on employees (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47; Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:57; Vigoda, 2000a:326). It can also have an influence on the work engagement of employees (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:82).

The final result of such outcomes for employees who are victim to such circumstances might be that they might feel that they have no other choice but to resign from their employment (turnaround intent) (Miller *et al.*, 2008:210). This also

has negative implications for the organisation as they would then need to appoint new staff and give them training. Negative office politics can also go so far as to undermine the functionality of the organisation.

Various studies have been conducted by academics to investigate this problem and outcomes in various settings, as set out in Chapter 2, but no study could be found dealing with the unique setting in law firms. This leaves a void in practice that needs to be investigated.

In this study the perceptions of negative office politics and the correlation thereof with job stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees working in law firms are investigated.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Law firms are, due to the unique work setting and dynamics, subject to unique office politics and work-related stress as every organisation has its own unique working environment. No academic research could be found to have investigated this unique setting and the subsequent stress, turnover intent and work engagement of employees however, the researcher has been privy to such settings due to work experience.

Office politics may be positive or negative but in most instances it is more negative in nature (Bodla & Danish, 2009:46; Beaty *et al.*, 2007:69; Vigoda, 2000a:328). There are various definitions of negative office politics since the first description thereof by Burns in 1961 (p. 257). Various scholars have added to his definition (Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Chang *et al.*, 2009:779; Mintzberg, 1983:172; Tushman, 1977 as cited by Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Vigoda, 2000a:327; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2830). These various definitions by above authors all indicate that negative office politics is characterised by the use of either/or power, authority and influence by an individual (or groups) over others, with the desire either to advance or protect themselves, regardless as to whether it may be in the best interests of the organisation or their actions may not even be sanctioned by the organisation.

The relevance and the importance of office politics lie in their potential effect and consequences on certain work outcomes (Chinomona & Chinimona, 2013:57; Vigoda, 2000a:326) for example job performance, job satisfaction, job stress and organisational commitment (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47; Karadal & Arasli, 2009:176). The effects of negative office politics are largely adverse to employees (Miller *et al.*, 2008:209) and may result in a variety of negative job outcomes (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2669; Rosen *et al.*, 2006:21; Vigoda, 2000b:190; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2829). Some of the consequences are higher job stress, burnout as the resulting strain from ongoing work stress (Demerouti *et al.*, 2014: 97; Landy & Conte, 2010:458), turnover intention and lower work productivity (Miller *et al.*, 2008:209) and thus the organisation's profitability suffers as well as the organisation's ability to function efficiently (Vigoda, 2000b:190).

The perceptions of office politics are more important than the actual politics due to the fact that employees respond to what they perceive and not to what is necessarily objectively real (Treadway *et al.*, 2005:872). This is in relation to Lewin's (1936, in Vigoda, 2000a:328) argument that people (employees) respond to their perceptions of reality and not to reality in itself. What is thus most important for organisations, consequential wise, is the subjective perception of office politics, whether actual or not, that results in adverse reactions and behaviours by employees (Miller *et al.*, 2008:210).

Although work engagement, job stress and subsequent turnaround intent (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47; Karadal & Arasli, 2009:176; Miler *et al.*, 2008:211; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2829) are not the only job outcomes of employees that might be affected by negative office politics, the reasoning behind the research into these three factors is the fact that all employees working in law firms work under immensely stressful conditions and negative office politics may add to this stress.

Work engagement, the "focus of the degree of intensity with which employees approach their jobs" (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:82) might be influenced by perceived office politics. Work engagement is thus of the utmost importance as perceived office politics may have a negative influence on the degree to which an employee is engaged in his or her work (Kahn, 1990:694). Disengagement of employees is

central to the lack of employees' commitment and motivation for their work (Aktouf, 1992 cited by *May et al.*, 2004:13). Disengaged employees withdraw and defend themselves cognitively, emotionally and physically from their work performance (Kahn, 1990:694).

William Kahn was the first academic to explore the effects of these three aspects on employees' work engagement (*May et al.*, 2004:11) and also to shed some light on the antecedents of these psychological conditions of employees, namely meaningfulness, safety and availability (*May et al.*, 2004:14-19). These antecedents indicate how employees inhabit their work roles (Kahn, 1990:703) and can act as determinants or mediators on employees' work engagement (*May et al.*, 2004:11).

Office politics can thus influence work engagement of employees that can lead to job stress and turnover intent. Ferris *et al.* (1996a:237), one of the first scholars to investigate stress and turnover intent, identified organisational influences, job/work context influences and personal influences as the predictors of perceptions of office politics.

There are various definitions of stress as well as scholars and academics that are not in agreement as to the definition of the concept of stress (Miller *et al.*, 2008:211). Office politics has been identified as a stressor (Ferris *et al.*, 1996a:235). Ferris *et al.* (1996a:235) identified key features to integrate stress and office politics namely, "perceptual nature, uncertainty or ambiguity regarding processes and outcomes and threat or opportunity status of politics and stress".

As a result of perceived highly charged office political environment, employees might probably decide to withdraw physically or psychologically from their work (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2012:58). The higher the strain in the employee, the higher that employee's intention to quit his/her job (turnover) Ferris *et al.*, 1989 cited by Miller *et al.*, 2008:211; Parasuraman, 1992 cited by Harris *et al.*, 2005:28;).

According to Chang *et al.* (2009:794) the psychological strain of perceived office politics is associated with decreased morale (and strain) which relates to higher turnover intent. Chang *et al.* (2009:794) are of the opinion that the effects of

perceived office politics may take longer to unfold in turnaround intent. Furthermore, employees who feel that they have little control, in contrast to those employees who feel that they have high levels of control, are more inclined to quit and suffer from job stress (Poon, 2004, 2006 cited by Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2832). According to Chang *et al.* (2009:793) employees who are averse to the working environment might, in response thereto, withdraw from the organisation in order to avoid the political games.

The outcomes of this negative vibe for management are that they might affect employees' work performance, often then resulting in sub-standard client service. A further implication thereof for management is that employees, subject to such negative office politics, may resign. The result thereof is that management will need to appoint and train new staff and that will have further monetary implications for the business.

The main research questions that this study aims to address are:

- To what extent is office politics present in law firms?
and
- What is the relationship between perceived office politics and certain job outcomes?

In light of the above-mentioned research questions, specific research objectives and hypotheses are formulated.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into primary and secondary objectives.

1.4.1 Primary objectives

The primary objective is to investigate the relationship between office politics and selected performance outcomes as perceived by employees working in law firms. The performance outcomes of interest are job stress, work engagement and turnaround intent (intentions to leave the organisation).

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

To achieve the primary objectives, the following secondary objectives need to be considered:

- To conduct a literature study on the main concepts and their inter-relationship as determined by previous research in other contexts.
- To empirically assess employee perceptions regarding the levels of office politics prevalent in their work environments.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics, job stress, burnout and turnaround intent.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and the sub-group gender.
- To empirically assess the relationship between qualifications of the sub-groups and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent.
- To empirically assess the relationship between years working for the organisation of the sub-groups and turnaround intent.
- To make recommendations to management and for future research.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is the service industry and in the academic field of Organisational Behaviour. The primary focus of this study is on selected law firms in South Africa. The focus is mainly on the adverse effects of destructive office politics and how this influences three individual level performance outcomes, i.e. stress, work engagement and turnaround intent.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research approach

Welman *et al.* (2005:2) define research as “a process that involves obtaining scientific knowledge by means of various objective methods and procedures” whereby research methodology considers and explains the logic that is used behind the specific research method and technique (Welman *et al.*, 2005:2).

Two research approaches are identified, namely the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:3; Welman *et al.*, 2005:6). A quantitative research approach refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena by means of statistical, mathematical or even computational techniques and the data is thus in the form of numbers (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:3; Welman *et al.*, 2005:8). The purpose of this method lies in testing hypotheses, making predictions and looking at cause and effect (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:34; Lichtman, 2006:7-8). The objectives of this method are to describe, predict and to explain and make use of a validated measuring instrument (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:34; Lichtman, 2006:7-8).

A qualitative research approach, on the other hand, involves data in the form of words, expressed by the participants in research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:3; Welman *et al.*, 2005:8). The measuring instrument is flexible and makes use of semi-structured methods like interviews (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:34; Lichtman, 2006:7-8).

For the purpose of the study, a quantitative research method was chosen.

1.6.2 Phases of research methodology

The methodology that is used in this research is divided into two phases, namely a literature review (Phase 1) and an empirical study (Phase 2). In Phase 1 the main research constructs and variables of the constructs are discussed. Phase 2 focuses

on the research design, participants measuring instruments and the statistical analysis.

1.6.2.1 Phase 1: Literature review

The literature review was conducted by utilising articles published in scientific journals, academic books and presentations, the Internet and other research data sources namely:

- EbscoHost: International journals on Academic Search Premier, Business Source.
- Emerald: International journals.
- Internet: Google Scholar.
- JSTOR: International journals and books.
- Nexus: Database of current and completed research in South Africa.
- SACat: National catalogue of books and journals in South Africa.
- SAePublications: Database for South African journals.
- Scopus: Database for international journals.
- SAMedia: Newspaper articles.
- Nexus: Database of current and completed research in South Africa.

The literature review gives insight into the problem statement and the different constructs and their interrelatedness with each other and focuses on:

- The perceptions of negative office politics; and
- The effects thereof on certain job outcomes namely
 - stress,
 - turnaround intent; and
 - work engagement.

1.6.2.2 Phase 2: Empirical study

1.6.2.2.1 Participants

The target population consisted of staff employed in law firms in South Africa. The detail of the sample frame (law firms) was freely available in Hortor's Legal Diary, an annual attorney's directory and legal diary publication.

A non-probability, convenience sampling technique was used. This sampling technique involved selecting respondents who were the easiest/most convenient to obtain for the sample and responses were obtained until the required number of responses had been received (Welman *et al.*, 2005:69; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:252).

The required sample size that was used was determined by using the National Education Association formula $[(s=X^2NP(1-P)/d^2(n-10=X^2p(1-P))]$ (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970:607).

The participants and sample size are more fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.6.2.2.2 Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument was compiled from 5 structured questionnaires that were previously tested for their reliability, namely:

- Perceptions of office politics (POPS Scale) (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:651),
- Job Stress (Vigoda, 2002:11; Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:263) and burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory cited by Vigoda, 2002:11; Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:263),
- Turnaround intent (Sjoberg & Sverke, 2000:248), and
- Work engagement and antecedents of work engagement (May *et al.*, 2004:36).

Structured questions were utilised to obtain the demographic information of the respondents (Annexure B: Part 1). A 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree and 5- strongly agree) was used for the balance of the questionnaire to measure the constructs of interest for this study.

Due to the fact that this study involved law firms throughout South Africa, it was decided that the above questionnaire would be distributed electronically as it would ensure fast delivery, will be easy to administer and will not be expensive (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:148).

1.6.2.2.3 Research procedure

The sample as stated above was contacted over a period of five weeks. The cover letter (Annexure A) and the questionnaire (Annexure B) were forwarded to the respondents via e-mail or hand-delivered. The cover letter clearly explained the purpose and importance of the study. The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were guaranteed. The letter also contained instructions as to the process the respondents needed to follow to send the questionnaire back to the researcher as well as the date that the questionnaire had to reach the researcher. It also set out the approximate time it would take to complete the questionnaires. A list of all the respondents to which the questionnaires were sent has been kept to safeguard against possible replication of the process.

1.6.2.2.4 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis of the collected data was done by the Statistical Consultation Service of the North-West University, utilising the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) (2013, version 22) programme as set out in Chapter 4 of this study.

1.6.2.2.5 Ethical issues to be considered

Ethical behaviour by the researcher cannot be emphasised enough as it has intrinsic value in protecting the respondents and ensuring just results (Welman *et al.*, 2005:181). The ethical behaviour of the researcher is thus part and parcel of every step in the research process, including the way the respondents are treated as well as how the confidentiality of the respondents are safeguarded (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:13).

This research was also approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences of the North-West University.

1.7 VALUE-ADD AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The theoretical contribution of the study is that there will be more research yield on this topic in a South African setting albeit it was only done in law firms. More insight has also been gained via the analysis of the data gathered via the research design.

The practical contribution of the study will add value to every business and organisation as management will be made aware of what factors and or symptoms that constitute negative office politics and the detrimental effects thereof on employees' job outcomes. Managers will be able to obtain knowledge of and insight into how to eliminate such situations and take steps to address current situations in their businesses. A further contribution of this study is that it will enable managers to increase productivity by curbing office politics and increasing their employees' work engagement.

The outcomes of the study will further be advantageous to all law firms at large as management will not only be able to determine whether there is negative office politics in the organisation but also what their employees perceive as negative office politics and the symptoms thereof, should such perceptions indeed exist. Should such symptoms exist, management will be made aware of the implications thereof on their employees' work engagement, stress placed on employees and subsequent turnaround intent. Management can reduce/eliminate the same to prevent not only value-adding employees from leaving their employment but reducing the monetary implications thereof (appointing and training new staff). Management will also be able to safeguard their employees' well-being and thus keep productivity stable or increase the same.

The limitations of this study are that it does not take into account that various rituals exist in different organisations and that it further only takes into account the office politics and not the entire political environment of the organisation (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2684). The influence of perceived office politics on all job outcomes is not researched.

Further limitations involve that only one industry is researched and that negative office politics on the whole hierarchy in law firms [management (Directors/Partners), professional assistants (professional assistants/associates and article clerks)] and staff (staff here implies employees without a legal qualification including secretaries, messengers and administrative staff) are researched. It does not distinguish between office politics between management and management, management and staff and staff between staff as different positions in the organisation might have an influence on the job outcomes.

Lastly, a further limitation of this study is the sample size due to the anticipated participation rate. This research could also benefit from a longitudinal study. Should the outcome of this study not indicate symptoms and signs of negative office politics in an organisation, this research can at least be seen by management as an indicator of good governance of the organisation.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study is divided into 5 Chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the contents of the study and the reasons why this study was conducted. The chapter also sets out the problem statement, research objectives, research methods, limitations and value-add of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The concepts of perceived office politics, certain job outcomes namely job stress, turnaround intent and work engagement are discussed via a comprehensive literature review.

Chapter 3: Empirical research

The research method that is used in this study is discussed as well as the research design, data-gathering method, data-analysis techniques as well as the ethical issues that need to be considered by the researcher.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion of empirical research

The results of the empirical research are discussed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

Chapter 5 consists of the conclusions reached from this study, recommendations for management as well as recommendations for future studies.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provides the background and motivation for the study as well as the problem statement, research objectives, scope of the study, research methodology and design, value-add, limitations and the layout of this study. Chapter 2 will focus on the relevant literature review for this study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate, describe and clarify the current literature on office politics. The effects of perceived negative office politics on organisational and individual level are discussed as well as what management can do to curb these negative effects. Leadership styles and the influence thereof on office politics are also discussed. An overview of the results of various studies conducted by scholars and academics are presented with a specific focus on the main effects of interest, namely job stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees. For the purposes of this study no distinction is drawn between managerial and non-managerial employees.

2.2 OFFICE POLITICS (ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS)

2.2.1 Office politics and the workplace

Office politics is and has always been a fact of every employee's workplace (Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Ferris *et al.*, 1996a:233; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992:93; Gull & Zaidi, 2012:156; Malik *et al.*, 2009:230; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005:252; Ferris) and is more often than not described in negative terms (Beaty *et al.*, 2007:69; Bodla & Danish, 2009:46; Vigoda, 2000a:328). Nearly every employee can recall an incident in his/her workplace that had a political undertone (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:627) and thus office politics is "simply a fact of life" (Clarke, 2012:5; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992:93).

The workforce of organisations is becoming less homogeneous in nature and is steadily reflecting a more diverse workforce (Ferris *et al.*, 1996b:23). As this diverse group of employees joins the organisation, each with their own cooperative and competitive relationships, they are able to achieve goals in the organisation that they would otherwise not be able to achieve on their own (Yao & Wang, 2011:49). Due to these relationships, goals and the possibility of forming groups to achieve these

goals, office politics is and will always be present in all organisations (Gull & Zaidi, 2012:156; Yao & Wang, 2011:49).

However, office politics is also necessary for the normal functioning of any organisation as it acts as a buffer against negative effects and power relationships between employees (Byrne, 2005:176; Vigoda, 2000b:190).

2.2.2 Definition of negative office politics

Definitions of office politics are getting broader as organisations become more sophisticated and employees broaden their perceptions thereof (Clarke, 2012:5, 6). According to Drory and Vigoda-Gadot (2010:195) there are various definitions of office politics, indicating that the concept of office politics is not only in transition but also under constant discussion.

The various definitions of negative office politics are characterised by the use of either/or power, authority and influence by an individual or groups over others, who would like to advance or protect themselves (self-interest), regardless of whether it may be in the best interest of the organisation or their actions (devious behaviour) and it may not even be sanctioned by the organisation or may even be at the cost of the goals set by the organisation (Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Burns, 1961:257; Chang *et al.*, 2009:779; Gull & Zaidi, 2012:156; Malik *et al.*, 2009:23; Mintzberg, 1983:172; Tushman, 1997 cited by Bodla & Danish, 2009:45; Vigoda, 2000a:327; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2830; Yao & Wang, 2011:49). The advancement of employees or group of employees is thus not based on either fortune or merit (Gull & Zaidi, 2012:157).

From the above definitions, it is evident that the use of power, outside formal organisational procedures and processes, is part and parcel of the definition of office politics. Power can be seen as the ability of a person, group or the organisation to influence others (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:300; Werner, 2009:262). Employees with high political skills will have more power than employees with lower political skills as they possess more effective influencing tactics (Treadway *et al.*,

2013:1545). When this power is converted into actions, office politics is the result (Robbins & Judge, 2013:458).

Limited resources and job opportunities/promotion seem to be the most common antecedents of office politics and are thus marked by the use of power and influence tactics by higher politically skilled employees as per the discussion of the literature below.

2.2.3 Antecedents of office politics

The antecedents of office politics include internal struggles over scarce resources, conflict in critical decision-making, ambiguity about expectations, procedures, roles in the organisation and different interests by employees (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316; Miller *et al.*, 2009:209; Robbins *et al.*, 2009:360; Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005:252; Yao & Wang, 2011:49). Lack of trust can also attract more political activity (Bedi & Schat, 2013:253; Bodla & Danish, 2009:47).

Due to the current economic climate in South Africa, the subsequent financial implications for organisations, the ongoing recession, retrenchments, diversity in the workplace, limited work opportunities and limited resources are in the forefront of antecedents.

Limited resources will inevitably attract more political behaviours (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316; Robbins & Judge, 2013:458), therefore some employees may be inclined to play different types of political games at different hierarchies within their organisations (Parker *et al.*, 1995, Poon, 2003 cited by Karadal & Arasli, 2009:178). Decisions to allocate resources can be interpreted in various ways by employees, and they try to use their influence to sway the decision-making in their favour (Robbins *et al.* 2009:358).

Any organisation is competitive due to the fact that there are limited job opportunities with incentives like pay increases and fringe benefits, promotion and limited career advancement (Karadal & Arasli, 2009:178). These limited opportunities might trigger office politics or lead to higher office politics (Karadal & Arasli, 2009:178).

2.2.4 Perception of office politics

Perceptions are the process whereby employees are able to manage and understand their sensory impressions of their environment in order to give meaning thereto (Robbins, 2008 cited by Gull & Zaidi, 2012:157). Employees' perceptions are thus their reality and they act accordingly (Gull & Zaidi, 2012:157).

Office politics is a subjective phenomenon (Buenger *et al.*, 2007:294; Grandz & Murray, 1980; Gropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992 cited by Malik *et al.*, 2009:24) and every experience is personal to every individual and differs from place to place (Bodla & Danish, 2009:45). It is this subjective perception of employees that counts in deciding whether it might be actual or not (Miller *et al.*, 2008:210). This is in line with Lewin's theory that employees will respond to their perceptions of reality rather than the actual reality itself (Miller *et al.*, 2008:210; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992:94). Employees thus rely on their perceptions in order to determine whether actions of other employees are self-serving or not (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670).

Although negative office politics is viewed subjectively by employees, not every employee will react to it in the same way (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47; Buenger *et al.*, 2007:294). The social skills of the employee may act as a buffer against potential negative effects (Vigodat-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2851), thus those employees who can control or understand political dynamics will respond less negatively (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47).

Perceptions of employees about the politics in the workplace will determine how political the environment will be (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:628) therefore the culture of the organisation is influenced by the degree of political activity found in that organisation and the way employees will react to this degree of perception (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:628).

According to Ferris *et al.* (1996a:237-240) the predictors that contribute to employees perceiving their organisation as political are influenced by:

- organisational influences (centralisation, hierarchical level, formalisation and span of control),
- job/work factors/environmental influences (time since the last promotion and last appraisal, advancement opportunity), and
- personal characteristics like age and gender (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316),

which in turn influence certain organisational outcomes like job stress and withdrawal from the organisation (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:628). The perceptions that employees have regarding the political nature of their workplace influence the way in which an employee does his/her job (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:628).

In organisations where there are high levels of politics, management will most likely reward employees who have engaged in strong influence tactics, taken credit for work done by other employees, formed powerful coalitions and connected to high-ranking employees (Chang *et al.*, 2009:782).

In light of the above literature reviews regarding the prevalence of office politics in organisations and the subjective nature of perceptions, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₁: There are above average levels of perceived office politics in the sample group.

2.2.5 The impact and effect of perceived negative office politics on employees and the organisation

“The importance of organisational politics lies in its potential consequences and effect on work outcomes” as it interferes with the normal processes like decision-making, rewards and promotion within the organisation (Vigoda, 2000a:326). This interference leads to less productivity and sub-standard performance both on organisational and individual levels (Vigoda, 2000a:326; Vigodat-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2831) and thus has an effect on the efficiency of the organisation (Gull & Zaidi, 2012:157; Vigoda, 2000b:190).

Perceived office politics has the most damaging effect on lower status employees but often no negative effect on employees with higher status (Vigoda, 2000a:329).

The higher the status the employee has in the organisation, the better the benefits that the employee gains from political decisions and thus there is a less severe impact on that employee (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47).

These perceptions of employees can have various consequences for the employees' attitudes and emotional states (Buenger *et al.*, 2007:294) and on certain job outcomes and performance (Bodla & Danish, 2009:46; Vigoda Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2829) as the psychological, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes of employee are influenced by office politics (Karadal & Arasli, 2009:176). The higher the perceptions of employees of politics in the organisation the lower they regard the levels of justice, equity and fairness (Bodla & Danish, 2009:46) and the lower the status of an employee in the organisation is the higher that employee will perceive office politics to be (Ferris & Kacmar, 1992:95). Negative effects of politics are weaker when employees regard distributive and procedural justice in the organisation as high (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2832).

Organisations with high political environments have harmful work conditions namely higher stress and turnover intentions (Ferris & Allen 1997, Mintzberg 1983, cited by Miller *et al.*, 2009:209).

Malik *et al.* (2009:25) and Bodla and Danish (2009:45) see organisations as a market-place. Due to this breach of implied social contracts between the employee and employer in this market-place there is a negative correlation between perceptions of office politics and job outcomes (Malik *et al.*, 2009:25). Pay and promotional policies, that are based on political decisions and not merit, are also factors that cause the marketplace to be perceived as negative (Witt, Andrews & Kacmar, 2000, cited by Malik *et al.*, 2009:25).

According to Bodla and Danish (2009:44) employees can react in three ways to an organisation where politics is abuse namely: they can form coalitions with other employees whereby organisational goals are neglected, they may not be part of the

coalition but in any case go along or lastly there can be bias regarding pay and promotion.

2.2.6 Political climate and power base

Landells and Albrecht (2013:358) define political climate as “the shared perceptions about the building and use of power in practice and workarounds regarding policies and procedures to influence decision-making, resource allocation and achievement of individual, team and organisational goals”.

Perception can thus be measured at the organisational climate level by applying four power bases, namely positional power (legitimate, coercive, reward), personal power (referent, expert, charisma), informational power (formal/informal access, output opportunity) and connection power (internal/external networks, network centrality) (Landells & Albrecht, 2013:359).

These power bases indicate not only how a political climate in an organisation emerges but also how it is maintained (Landells & Albrecht, 2013:360). The way employees build and use their power bases, based on their perceptions, can provide valuable insights into the political climate of an organisation (Landells & Albrecht, 2013:360).

2.2.7 Perception of office politics in South Africa

Research regarding office politics in South Africa is scarce. However, Beaty *et al.* (2007:72) investigated gender diversity regarding organisational perception between male and females in South African organisations. They (Beaty *et al.*, 2007:79) have found that both males and females relate in the same way to political behaviour in the workplace. They further concluded that both males and females do not affiliate with their own gender if they judge the political activity in their workplace (Beaty *et al.*, 2007:79).

The following hypothesis is formulated for the sub-group:

H_{G1}: There is no relationship between how males and females perceive office politics within the sub-groups.

The following segments will focus on selected job outcomes of perceived negative office politics namely job stress, subsequent turnaround intent and work engagement.

2.3 JOB STRESS

2.3.1 Definition of stress

There is no agreement between scholars and academics about the definition and conception of stress (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:114; Miller *et al.*, 2008:211; Vigoda, 2002:4; Vigoda-Gadot & Drory, 2006:139-146) however, it is most often described as “an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to that person’s well-being” (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:114). Job stress, on the other hand, can be defined as an uncomfortable feeling experienced by employees who need to change their desired behaviour due to opportunities, constraints or demands related to their work objectives (Beehr *et al.*, 2000:391).

2.3.2 Stress as a condition

Stress is a psychological and physiological condition that is most often described as a negative experience (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:114; Harris *et al.*, 2005:27; Robbins & Judge, 2013:630). This stress condition prepares an employee to either adapt or respond to conditions that the employee perceives to be hostile (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:114).

2.3.3 Perceptual nature of stress

Stress is perceptual in nature and is marked by ambiguity and uncertainty (Vigoda, 2002:4; Vigoda-Gadot & Drory, 2006:139) and creates situations where employees might lose or gain depending on how they react to situations (Gilmore *et al.*, 1996:483).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984:19) also suggest that stress is perceptual (Robbins & Judge, 2013:633; Werner, 2011:232) as it is perceived as an imbalance between objective demands and employees' response capabilities thereto, where demands are, for example, work pressures, obligations and responsibilities and resources are those things within an employees' control that is necessary to meet those demands (Robbins & Judge, 2013:630).

2.3.4 Stressors

Stressors are the predictors of strain, and strain is seen as the result of stressors (Harris *et al.*, 2005:27). Lepine *et al.* (2005:764) see stressors as stimuli that begin the stress process and strain is the result of the process.

The causes of stress (stressors) can be defined as any condition in the environment that places either an emotional demand or physical demand on an individual (Danna & Griffin, 1999:370) and office politics has been identified as a work stressor (Ferris *et al.*, 1996a:235; Kane-Frieder *et al.*, 2014:358; Vigoda, 2002:5) that can lead to job distress, as it is predominated by uncertainty (Vigoda, 2002:4). Treadway *et al.* (2005:874) explain stressors by means of the COR theory (Conservation of Resources theory) in that stress will occur when there is a loss of resources as resources are needed to meet demands (Treadway *et al.*, 2005:874). This depletion of an employee's resources can be caused by perceptions in the organisation (Treadway *et al.*, 2005:874).

2.3.4.1 Job burnout

Job burnout is a psychological consequence of stress (Landy & Conte, 2010:458) and is described as "a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (Maslach *et al.*, 2001:399) thus the resulting strain from ongoing work stress that an employee is not able to cope with (Demerouti *et al.*, 2014: 97; Landy & Conte, 2010:458) that drains employees' energetic resources (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008:10).

Burnout consists of three dimensions, namely emotional exhaustion, cynicism or feelings of depersonalisation and low personal efficacy (Landy & Conte, 2010:458; Morgan *et al.*, 2014:217). Emotional exhaustion occurs when employees are emotionally drained by their work and thus they experience feelings of lack of energy and the feeling of fatigue; cynicism (depersonalisation) which consist of negative or hardened feelings or attitudes either towards other people (work colleagues) or towards one's work and low personal efficacy refers to employees who are unable to deal effectively with their daily problems (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, cited by Morgan *et al.*, 2014: 217; Landy & Conte, 2010:458; Schaufeli, 2003).

According to Landy and Conte (2010:459) the deciding point as to whether employees become burned out at the workplace, depend on their perception of fairness in their workplace. According to Hayley *et al.* (2013:283) burnout is more prevalent in younger employees due to a lack of skills and uncertainty, thus during the early stages of an employee's career. Werner (2011:242) is of the opinion that burnout affects employees with high expectations of success and not usually easy-going employees.

Burnout is more prevalent among employees who work in conditions that are emotionally charged (Michael *et al.*, 2011:247).

2.3.5 Perception of office politics and stress

2.3.5.1 Employees' reactions to perceived office politics

How successfully an employee handles political and stress-related situations in the workplace is determined by that employee's gaining of benefits or losses in the working environment (Vigoda, 2002:5). Employees' response to stressors will thus differ depending on whether the employee regards this stressor as personally beneficial (a challenge) or as personally detrimental (a hindrance) (Kane-Frieder *et al.*, 2014:358).

According to Kane-Frieder *et al.* (2014:359) engaged employees can interpret perceived politics as a hindrance stressor as it constitutes a barrier to resources and

rewards however, engaged employees can also interpret politics as challenge stressors as it creates opportunities. This is regarded as opportunity stress as the employee stands to gain more from the situation thus increasing his/her job efforts to gain more (Chang *et al.*, 2009:780; Ferris *et al.*, 1996a:236). According to Kane-Frieder *et al.* (2014:373) perceptions of office politics cannot be automatically classified as a hindrance stressor.

However, some employees will be exposed to high risk of stress if they are unwilling or are unable to participate in the political games (Vigoda, 2002:5, 17). As most employees cannot adjust to such realities of office politics and perceive the organisation as unfair as they do not reap honest returns and benefits, and they turn their efforts into stress (Vigoda, 2002:6).

2.3.5.2 Employees' experience of stress

Due to each person's uniqueness, people experience stress differently and have different levels of resistance to stressors, and hence different coping strategies or have higher resilience levels (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:118). When the perception of office politics is high in an organisation, every situation is then more likely to be characterised as uncertain and ambiguous and that in turn relates to stress (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2671) and an increase in stress (Vigoda, 2002:6).

2.3.6 Moderators of stress

The moderators of stress includes variables such as the personality type of the employee, competence to deal with demands, the employees controlling ability of the situation, expectations that the event will occur again and the importance of the situation to the employee (Werner, 2011:233). Political skills of the employee will also determine how equip the employee is to function in a political environment (Vigoda-Gadot & Drory, 2006:191).

2.3.7 Previous studies

According to Miller *et al.* (2008:211), as summarised by Vigoda: 2002:3 - Bozeman *et al.*,1996; Cropanzano, 1997; Ferris *et al.*, 1994, 1996; Kacmar *et al.*, 1999; Vigoda, 2002; Valle & Perrewe, 2000), correlations between perceptions of office politics and job stress range widely as various studies have found a positive relationship between perceived office politics and job stress/anxiety

Miller *et al.* (2008:211) found a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress and Malik *et al.* (2009:24) found that stress is positively correlated to office politics. Chang *et al.* (2009:792) also found a positive relationship with job strain. Several other studies also found that office politics relates to negative outcomes such as job stress. (Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999; Ferris *et al.*, 2002; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999; Vigoda, 2000 as cited by Harris *et al.*, 2009:2669). However, some studies found no correlation between perceptions of office politics and stress as per the studies of Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997 and Hochwater *et al.*, 1999 as summarised and cited by Miller *et al.* (2008:211).

The following hypothesis is formulated for the purpose of this study based on the majority of the literature reviews, namely:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress within the sample group.

Office politics is found to be positively related to burnout (Cropanzano *et al.*, 1997, cited by Vigoda, 2010:5; Ganster & Scaubroeck, 1991, cited by Vigoda-Gadot & Kapun, 2005:259).

The following hypothesis is formulated for the purposes of this study:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and burnout within the sample group.

2.3.8 Job stress, turnaround intent and work engagement

As derived from the above, employees perceptions of office politics can lead to stress and subsequent burnout in certain employees. This stress may lead to intentions to quit their employment and to seek alternative employment. In the next section these turnaround intentions and the implications thereof will be discussed.

2.4 TURNAROUND INTENT

2.4.1 What is turnaround intent?

Turnover can be defined as “the individual movement across membership boundary of an organisation” (Price, 2001:600).

Turnaround intent is withdrawn behaviour by employees and is related to a decrease in their morale and efforts (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670). Turnaround intent is a strong indicator of employees’ actual turnover (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670). According to Griffeth *et al.* (2000:480) employee’s intentions to stay or leave their organisation are the best predictors of their voluntary turnover.

2.4.2 Antecedents of turnaround intent

2.4.2.1 Importance of identifying predictors

It is important to determine what the predictors of turnaround intentions of employees are due to the fact that these intentions are withdrawal behaviour related to a decrease in morale and effort and is one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover of employees (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670). Chang *et al.* (2009:794) verified results from previous studies done by Podsakoff *et al.* (2007), in that stressors on turnover intentions of employees work first through strain and then through moral.

2.4.2.2 Antecedents

The strongest antecedent of turnover are increased job strain (Vigoda, 2002:5) which academics have found to be distal antecedents of actual turnover (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670). Harris *et al.* (2005:27) also found that stress is a major contributor to turnover. Further antecedents of turnover intentions are job demands, resources and psychological processes (Rothmann *et al.*, 2013:1).

2.4.3 Perceptions of justice and turnaround intent

Positive effects on perceptions of office politics and turnover intent are weaker when justice, namely distributive and procedural justice is high (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2832). The justice rule entails that employees believe that a distribution outcome or procedures for distribution outcomes will be fair and appropriate (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:151).

The justice rule has two sub-categories namely the distribution and procedural rule (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58). The distribution rule (distributive justice) perceive fairness in the outcomes that the employee receives in comparison to his/her contributions and the outcomes and contributions of other employees (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58; McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:151). The procedural rule (procedural justice) is what is perceived as fair when deciding on the distribution of resources, rewards and punishment (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58; McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:151).

Office politics is mostly against the spirit of the justice theory as the employees feel unfairly treated (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58). If employees perceive the politics as unjust or unfair, they will most likely choose to withdraw from the organisation (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58). However, not every employee has the option to quit his/her job immediately (Chinomona & Chinomona, 2013:58).

2.4.4 Previous studies

In contrast with findings from Chang *et al.* (2009:782), Ferris *et al.* (2002), found that perceptions of office politics have an indirect effect on employees' turnover intentions. They have also found, again in contrast with finding from Ferris *et al.* (1989) and Ferris and Kacmar (1992:103) that employees may respond to office politics by withdrawing (turnaround) from the organisation in order to avoid the politics and not by immersing themselves in their work to avoid the political games (Chang *et al.*, 2009:793).

Chinomona and Chinomona (2013:59) state that previous empirical studies done by Cropanzano, Howes, Grandly and Thoth, (1997) and Randall, Cropanzanno, Bormann and Birjulin (1999) have found that office politics is positively related to turnover intentions.

It thus seems that most researchers have found a positive relationship between office politics and turnover intentions of employees (Miller *et al.*, 2008:211) and the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and turnaround intent within the sample group.

2.4.4.1 Link between perceptions of office politics, stress and turnaround intent

Harris *et al.* (2009:2671, 2672) use the Conservation of Resources theory (COR) to explain the impact of perceived office politics on job outcomes and more so on turnover intentions. According to this theory, employees strive to protect, retain and accumulate valued resources. Stress occurs when these resources are threatened, lost or even an inadequate return on invested resources, therefore found that office politics are negatively associated with turnover intention (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2680).

Miller *et al.* (2008:209) found a moderately positive relationship between perceptions of organisational politics and turnaround intent. Higher perceived politics results in higher level of stress and subsequent intentions to quit (Bodla & Danish, 2009:47).

Turnover and stress have been found to be positively correlated (Malik *et al.*, 2009:24). It thus confirms the results of Beehr, 1995 and Jex, 1998 as cited by Harris *et al.* (2005:27) that work stressors and subsequent strain are the major contributors to voluntary turnover of employees. According to Vigoda-Gadot and Kapun, (2005:266) perceptions of office politics are related to job stress, burnout, and turnover intent.

From the above discussions it is evident that those subjective perceptions of office politics may lead to job stress in certain employees and that those employees who are not able to cope with the stress (burnout) may decide to look for alternative employment and thus the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sample group.

The following hypotheses for the sub-groups are formulated:

H_{G2}: There is a positive relationship between qualifications of the respondents and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sub-groups.

H_{G3}: There is a negative relationship between years working for the organisations and turnaround intend within the sub-groups.

In the next segment the implications of perceptions of office politics and job stress on employees work engagement are discussed.

2.5 WORK ENGAGEMENT

2.5.1 Definition of work engagement

William Kahn was the first scholar to define work engagement as the concept of how fully employees are physiologically present during their work performance as

employees use varying degrees of their selves, physically, cognitively and emotionally (holistically) in their work performance (Kahn, 1990:692; Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:83). Many scholars and academics have continued to build their research on his work (Christian *et al.*, 2011:91; Kane-Frieder *et al.*, 2014:358).

Kahn works from the assumption that the more employees draw on themselves to perform their roles (jobs) (between the boundaries of who they are and the boundaries of the roles that they play) the better they perform and fit into their work role (Kahn, 1990:692). He works further from the assumption that employees are constantly bringing in and leaving out various depths of their selves (ebb and flow) during their job performance (Kahn, 1990:693). Employees thus have dimensions of themselves that they prefer to use and express during their work (Kahn, 1990:700).

Kahn defines personal engagement as the “harnessing of organisational members selves to their work roles whereby the express themselves physically emotionally and cognitively during role performance behaviours by which people bring and leave out their personal selves during work performance” (Kahn, 1990:694).

By personally engaging oneself in one’s work, one becomes physically involved (either alone or with other employees), cognitively vigilant and empathically connected to other employees in such a way that it portrays what one thinks and feels, one’s creativity, beliefs and one’s values and one’s personal connections to other employees (Kahn, 1990:700). Engaged employees will have an effective connection and a sense of energy towards their work and they see themselves as able to deal with their job demands (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2006:702).

Engagement is thus not constant within and between employees and is a state of mind that is not only relatively enduring but may fluctuate over a period of time (Christian *et al.*, 2011:94). This has implications for employees’ jobs and experiences even if they stay between the boundaries of who they actually are and the roles that they occupy (Christian *et al.*, 2011:94). The more the employees draw on their selves, the more excellent is their work performance (Christian *et al.*, 2011:94). What is important to note is that engagement must not be confused with

job satisfaction, organisational commitment or job involvement (Christian *et al.*, 2011:97).

2.5.2 Work engagement and disengagement

The process whereby employees are either present or absent from their work (self-in-role) is shaped by their psychological experiences or conditions of work and work contexts and can be measures of personal engagement and personal disengagement (Kahn, 1990:694,695).

Engaged employees cope better with the stress of perceived politics as they have more personal and job resources, they invested their energy and selves in their work and may regard office politics as an additional burden on their resource investment (Kane-Frieder, 2014:358).

Based on the above literature review, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₆: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement within the sample group.

Disengagement, in contrast, is the “uncoupling of the selves from work roles and involves people withdrawing and defending themselves during role performance” (Kahn, 1990:694).

2.5.3 Antecedents and consequences

According to Christian *et al.* (2011:98) the antecedent of engagement is job characteristics, leadership and dispositional characteristics.

The consequences are twofold namely:

- i) task performance as employees who are engaged in their work will be more vigilant and more focused on the tasks that they perform, and

- ii) contextual in performance, in that engaged employees invest more energy into their roles at work and have a higher contextual performance (Christian *et al.*, 2011:100-101).

Kahn (1990:703) identified three antecedents of work engagement, namely safety, availability and meaningfulness. These three antecedents shape how employees inhabit their work performance roles and they will ask themselves three questions in order to determine how personally engaged or disengaged they will be in every work situation namely (Kahn, 1990:703; Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:83):

- “How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance”? (psychological meaningfulness),
- “How safe is it to do so?” (psychological safety),
- “How available am I to do so?” (psychological availability).

Employees vary in terms of their personal engagement according to their perceptions as to the benefits (meaningfulness), guarantees (safety) or resources they perceive to have in work situations (Kahn, 1990:703).

2.5.3.1 Psychological meaningfulness

Meaningfulness implies feelings of being worthwhile, valuable and having usefulness and feelings that they are appreciated (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:83). For the purposes of the study it is important to note the role characteristics of meaningfulness, as it exerts influence on when people can wield influence over others, occupy important positions in their workplace, as they will then experience meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990:706).

Factors that influence meaningfulness are job enrichment, work role fit and co-worker relations (May *et al.*, 2004:14-15). Meaningfulness can have a deeper meaning for employees when they form groups, coalitions and alliances with other employees (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:84). In these groups, employees can then feel that their work path is unclear and/or uncertain, or that there is office politics or conflict in these groups (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:84). Employees can, in these groups,

achieve meaningfulness by what they achieve, how they join the group, coalition forming or alliances (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:84). The groups thus reach their meaningfulness by becoming a political group in the organisation (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:84). A lack of meaningfulness can lead to disengagement from an employee's work (Kahn, 1990:14).

The following hypothesis is thus formulated:

H₇: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological meaningfulness within the sample group.

2.5.3.2 Psychological safety

Psychological safety is defined as “feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (Kahn, 1990:708). Employees will feel safe when they perceive that they will not suffer for expressing their selves at their workplace (May *et al.*, 2004:15). That will thus constitute situations at work that are predictable, unambiguous or non-threatening (May *et al.*, 2004:15). Employees withdraw more quickly from potential conflict if they are of a lower job status than of a higher job status (Kahn, 1990:709).

To establish whether employees feel safe in their workplace, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₈: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological safety within the sample group.

2.5.3.3 Psychological availability

Psychological availability is defined as the belief by employees that they have the physical, emotional or cognitive resources to personally engage him/herself at work (Kahn, 1990:714). It indicates how employees do their work amidst distractions and their engagement is affected by the nature of the relationships that the employees create in the workplace and the maintaining thereof (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:89). The relationships they have can reduce the slack (political) in their workplace (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014:89).

To ascertain the psychological availability of the respondents in the sample group, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₉: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological availability within the sample group.

2.5.4 Previous studies

Kane-Frieder *et al.* (2014:376-377) conducted a study to determine how engaged employees react to workplace stress namely perceptions of office politics. They found that non-engaged employees were unable to cope effectively with the political environment in their workplace whereas engaged employees saw stress as either a hindrance or a challenge in the political environment. They further found that engaged employees were more able to cope with the stress of the politics in the organisation as they have been found to have more personal and job resources.

2.6 LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leadership styles may influence office politics in organisations (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:6687-668). The two leadership styles that come into play are transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:667-668).

2.6.1 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership has the necessary characteristics to reduce perceptions of office politics among employees (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:667). Transformational leaders are leaders “that inspire employees to transcend their self-interest for the good of the organisation and can have an extraordinary effect on their followers” (Robbins & Judge, 2013:416). What is important in the concept of office politics is that a transformational leader provides the necessary vision and mission to employees and also instils pride and gains respect and trust (Robbins & Judge, 2013:417; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:667). Transformational leadership correlates strongly with reduced stress and turnover intentions of employees (Robbins & Judge, 2013:419).

2.6.2 Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership, on the other hand contributes to the strengthening of perceptions of office politics in employees (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:667). It encourages employees' self-interest especially where there are limited resources in an organisation (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:668). This leadership style is more suitable for political environments as it encourages interest-based relationships (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007:668). Transactional leadership implies exchange/promise rewards for efforts and performance and uses punishment if goals are not attained (Robbins & Judge, 2013:417; Vigoda-Gadot & Drory, 2006:13; Werner, 2011:365).

Leaders with political skills will reduce uncertainty in the organisation due to office politics and will regard such office politics as positive (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:37).

2.7 POLITICAL SKILLS

Political skills are important for leaders (and employees) as this arms them with adaptive capacities (Blass & Ferris, 2007:15). Employees who have political skills are more able to manage office politics as it enables them to reduce the uncertainty that comes with office politics (Blass & Ferris, 2007:15; Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:36, 37).

Political skills can be defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organisational objectives (Ferris *et al.*, 2005:127). An employee who possesses political skills is calm, self-confident and has personal security that can attract others, allowing them to maintain their perspective and balance (Ferris *et al.*, 2005:128). Such employees can disguise their self-serving and ulterior motives (Ferris *et al.*, 2005:128).

Political skills can be shaped by learning experiences and mentoring (Blass & Ferris, 2007:5) and organisations should strive to provide training opportunities in this field to their employees (Ferris *et al.*, 2008:765).

2.7.1 Political skills, tactics and ethical leadership

Organisations should provide ethical leadership, as a lack thereof may induce a political environment in the organisation (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:40). Ethical leaders make just decisions and allocate resources fairly (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:35).

Leaders may use political tactics to influence employees' perceptions and behaviours (Thiel *et al.*, 2014:427). These tactics can be in the form of sanctioned or non-sanctioned political tactics and are either used to benefit the leaders' followers (employees) or for self-gain (Thiel *et al.*, 2014:420).

Perceptions of unethical leadership can trigger or increase employees' perceptions of office politics (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:40). However, some employees may possess (high) levels of political skills (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:40). Those employees with high political skills do not necessarily view a politically charged workplace as a threat but as an opportunity to develop; use their skills to make uncertain working environment seem less uncertain (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:40). This ability is due to the fact that they understand and control their working environment (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:40).

2.8 IMPLICATIONS OF OFFICE POLITICS AND WHAT MANAGEMENT CAN DO TO CURB SAME

Although office politics may have negative effects on employees and organisations, there are many avenues that managers and leaders can follow to curb the effects of destructive office politics:

Due to the negative implications of office politics, that contradict the common good of the organisation and lead to decreasing performance at any level of the organisational hierarchy, it is important for management to understand the effects of negative office politics (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2831) as it breeds job stress and burnout among their employees (Vigoda, 2002:17). This can be done by understanding the perceptions of the employees. By doing so, management can deal with perceptions in the workplace and understand the meaning of the conflict, power and tactics (Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010:2831).

Management should try to understand the employees' motivation and attitudes towards office politics (Chang *et al.*, 2009:795).

According to Rosen *et al.* (2006:211) a positive feedback system will reduce employees' perceptions that the decisions that are made in the organisation are politically driven. This will boost not only the morale of employees but also their work performance (Rosen *et al.*, 2006:211).

Harris *et al.* (2009:2682) recommend that management must firstly take cognisance of office politics in their organisations and secondly make efforts to eliminate or minimize same. This can be done by not only defining office politics but also communicating and enforcing rules and policies to combat politics (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2682). By doing so, management is not only reducing uncertainty and ambiguity but also leave no room for alternative interpretations of organisational procedures (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2682). Therefore high levels of communication with employees will reduce the perceived level of office politics (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2682).

Key political players must be identified and targeted by management to reduce their political activities (Chang *et al.*, 2009:795). Should this tactic not be to management's advantage, the employee should be removed from the organisation, but the risks of such a tactic are high due to fair labour practices and legal implications (Chang *et al.*, 2009:795)? However, management should also reduce and monitor their own political activity (Chang *et al.*, 2009:795).

The best possible way for management to eliminate office politics in their organisation is to become role models of organisational citizenship (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316). Management can also introduce various intervening processes like stress management and conflict resolution (Chang *et al.*, 2009:796). Introducing these intervening processes, resources will be freed up and will enable employees to deal with the demands of office politics (Chang *et al.*, 2009:796). Stressors can be removed/eliminated in the workplace by identifying the areas of stress and the causes thereof (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:118) as stress can lead to aggressive behaviour in the organisation (Vigoda, 2002:17).

The Human Resources department can create competency models whereby the goals of discouraging office politics are set and also provide incentives where there are no political environments created (Landells & Albrecht, 2013:361).

They can furthermore give employees more control over the work that they do as well as informing them of organisational events (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316). Informed employees are found to be less stressful, have more job satisfaction and are less often absent from work (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316).

Management should further reward those employees whose behaviour and actions are in line with their policies but discipline those employees who engage in actions that are not in line with the set policies (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2682). They are also of the opinion that higher levels of supervisor communication, in accordance with the Conservation of Resources theory (COR), might minimize negative effects of organisational politics in the workplace (Harris *et al.*, 2009:2670).

Lower perceptions will result in higher employee morale as well as higher feedback (Bodla & Danish, 2009:46) and the higher the quality of feedback is, the lower the perception of office politics will be (Rosen *et al.*, 2006 cited by Bodla & Danish 2009:46).

Managers must take cognisance of engaged/disengaged employees as it is central to a lack of commitment and motivation (Aktouf, 1992 cited by May *et al.*, 2004:13). When appointing new staff, be it a manager/leader or employee, consideration must be given to the political skills of the individual (Kacmar *et al.*, 2013:42). Organisations should strive to provide training opportunities in this field to their employees (Ferris *et al.*, 2008:765).

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter has set out the definition of office politics, the perceptions of employees thereof and the influence of perceived negative office politics. It defined job stress, job burnout, turnaround intent and work engagement as well as the results of

previous studies of the influence of perceived negative office politics on same. Leadership styles and political skills were discussed.

Steps that management can implement to curb the effects of perceived negative office politics, in their organisation, have also been set out.

Chapter 3 will present empirical research as well as the research methodology and the results thereof.

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter focuses on the research method, research design and participants that were utilised to achieve the objectives of this study. The sample size and procedure to gather the information are discussed as well as the ethical considerations underpinning this study. Lastly, the statistical analysis methods and interpretation of the data are presented.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research can be broadly defined as the process of finding solutions to a specific problem after a comprehensive study and analysis of all the facts have been conducted (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:2). This results in valuable gathered information that enables management to make informed decisions to deal with specific problems (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:3). To find these solutions, objective methods and procedures are used to obtain scientific knowledge (Welman *et al.*, 2005:2). Research methodology goes a step further and explains and considers the logic that goes behind the research techniques and methods (Welman *et al.*, 2005:2).

To find these solutions information needs to be gathered via data collection that can be either quantitative (the positivist approach) that is in numerical form, or qualitative (the anti-positivist approach) that is in the form of words (Welman *et al.*, 2005:6, 8, 9).

The quantitative (or positivist approach) is based on seeking the objective truth, there is a cause and effect relationship that is scientific in nature (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:29). Deductive reasoning is used to test theories that are measurable by fixed predetermined research designs (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:29). The qualitative (or anti-positivist approach), on the other hand, resists scientific methods and holds that it is not suited for research in human behaviour but rather for the study of organisms

and molecules (Welman *et al.*, 2005:6). The analysis of qualitative data is aimed at making interferences regarding the collected data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:336).

The main differences between the quantitative (or positivist) approach and the qualitative (or anti-positivist) approach can be set out as follows (Welman *et al.*, 2005:8-9; Johnson & Christensen, 2008:34; Lichtman, 2006:7-8):

Table 3.1: Quantitative versus qualitative research approach

QUANTITATIVE (Positivist)	QUALITATIVE (Anti-Positivist)
Evaluate objective data	Evaluate subjective data
Follows as particularistic approach	Follows a holistic approach
Focus on reliability	Focus on validity
Suitable for large numbers	More suitable for small samples
Stable process	Dynamic
Gives the perspective of outsiders	Gives the view of insiders
Purpose is to work with abstraction of reality	Work with every day events
Methods are complex and structured	Methods are explorative and flexible
Test hypotheses, cause and effect, predictions	Interpret and understand social interactions
Statistics and numbers	Images, words, objects
Validated and structured measuring instruments	Interviews, field notes, observations
Predict, describe and explain	Discover, construct and explore
Generalizable results	Less generalizable results

Taking into considerations the above approaches, the quantitative method was used for the purposes of this study. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire, to ascertain whether there were correlations between office politics, work-related stress, work engagement and turnaround intent of employees working in law firms in South Africa.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be defined as the plan that a researcher has to obtain participants for his/her research and to collect information from them (Welman *et al.*, 2005:52). It is thus the blueprint for the study on which the collection, measurement and analysis of the data are based (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:50).

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study, meaning that the data were collected only once over a given period of time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:106). In this instance, the data were collected over a period of five weeks. The data collected are also primary data, meaning that it was collected first-hand by the researcher for this specific study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:113).

3.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE SIZE

The target population consisted of employees working in randomly selected law firms in South Africa. The targeted population had not been known beforehand.

The population can be described as the whole group of things, events or people that the researcher is researching (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:397). For the purpose of this study people were researched. A sample can be described as the sub-group of the chosen population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:398).

The population portion of the target population for this study was 280 ($N=280$) active employees working in law firms. The representation of this sample size was 162 ($S=162$) responses. This was determined by using the National Education Association formula $[(s=X^2NP(1-P)/d^2(n-10=X^2p(1-P))]$. N represents the population size and S represents the required sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970:607). All employees in the selected law firms were literate and had access to e-mail.

A non-probability, convenience sampling technique was used. This sampling technique involves selecting respondents that were the easiest to obtain for the sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:252; Welman *et al.*, 2005:70) and responses were obtained until the required number of responses had been received. However, convenience sampling restricts the generalizability of the results to the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:252,253).

The details of the sample frame were obtained from Hortor's Legal Diary, an attorney's directory and legal diary (annual publication). As previously stated, the

characteristics of the sample were employees working in randomly selected law firms.

3.5 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

3.5.1 Validity and reliability of measuring instruments

Measuring instruments are an efficient way to collect a wide variety of information from participants (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:147). For the measuring instrument to reflect just results pertaining to the information gathered and concepts tested, the measuring instrument must have an acceptable level of validity and reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:225).

3.5.1.1 Validity of the measuring instrument

Validity can be divided into in two designs namely internal and external validity, where internal validity refers to cause-and effect-relationships and external validity refers to generalisation to the external environment (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:225).

To ensure the validity of the measuring instrument, three tests are applicable, namely content validity, construct validity and criterion-related validity (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:225). Content validity refers to the fact that the measuring instrument has enough representative items (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:226). Construct validity indicates the fit of the obtained results in relation to the relevant theory. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:227; Welman *et al.*, 2005:142). Criterion-related validity occurs when the measuring instrument predicts the relevant criterion correctly (Welman *et al.*, 2005:144). For the purposes of this study construct validity via factor analysis was decided on. Provided that an adequate response rate is achieved, factor analysis can be performed on the data.

3.5.1.2 Reliability

For a measuring instrument to be reliable, it must be a valid instrument (Whitelaw, 2001:108) thus measuring what it claims to measure and thereby indicating the

stability and consistency of the measured concept (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:228). This is indicative of the extent to which the measurement instrument is error free or without bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:228).

Cronbach's coefficient alpha measures the reliability of the measuring instrument and the higher the coefficient, the better the instrument (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:293). The criteria for reliability are more fully discussed in section 3.8 below.

3.5.2 Measuring instrument

For the purposes of this study the measuring instrument was an electronic questionnaire that was developed to obtain, firstly, demographic information about the participants, for example their age, gender, home language, qualifications, level of employment, years of employment and position in the organisation. The participants completed their own coding of the measuring instrument by answering three coding questions.

Secondly, five questionnaires were utilised to obtain information regarding perceptions of office politics, job stress, job burnout and work engagement (Annexure B) as set out hereunder. These questionnaires were previously tested for their reliability as hereinafter stated.

A 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree) was used to measure the constructs of interest for this study. The 5-point Likert scale is not only easy to compile and conform to easy data analysis from the results but was also used in the original development of the above questionnaires.

3.5.2.1 Perceptions of office politics

Ferris, Russ and Fandt 1989, in their article "Politics in Organisations" were the first academics to conceptualise the concept of office politics. From this study various studies in this field followed.

Thus the measuring instrument for the perceptions of office politics was compiled from the following sources:

The Perceptions of Organisational Politics Scale (known as the POPS scale) of Kacmar & Carlson (1997:651) were utilised for this research. This 15-item scale is nowadays widely used by researchers (Yao & Wang, 2011:50). This scale identified three dimensions (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:651) namely:

1) General political behaviour (2 items):

This dimension referred to the self-serving causes of employees to achieve their goals (Ayobami & Ofoegbu, 2013:163; Gull & Zaidi, 2012:159). It is also described as an absence of rules, regulations and uncertainty in decision making and therefore employees make their own rules (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997:629). An example question of a general political behaviour dimension was “People in this organisation attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down”.

2) Go along to get ahead (7 items):

This dimension explained the silent or passive actions of employees to attain personal benefits (Ayobami & Ofoegbu, 2013:163; Gull & Zaidi, 2012:159). A example question in this dimension was “Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organisation”; and

3) Pay and promotion policies (6 items):

This dimension explained how organisations act in a politically-biased way on their policies, thus on how performances is evaluated (Gull & Zaidi, 2012:159). Pay and promotion questions concerned aspect such as “When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant” and “Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political”.

The reliability of this scale was tested by various scholars and academics:

Vigoda (2000a:334) and Vigoda (2000b:194) reported an overall Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.77. The reliability for each dimension was also tested for by Ayobani and Ofoegbu (2013:164) and the Cronbach's alphas were respectively 0.77, 0.78 and 0.73 for each dimension.

3.5.2.2 Job Stress

Vigoda (2002:11) and Vigoda and Kapun (2005:263) adapted the 17-item scale of House and Rizzo (1972)(cited by Vigoda, 2002:11; Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:263) to a 4-item scale measuring job-induced stress ("I work under a great deal of tension"), somatic stress ("I get irritated or annoyed over the way things are going here") and general fatigue and uneasiness ("I seem to tire quickly"). They obtained a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.75 (Vigoda, 2002:11) and 0.77 in the public sector and 0.80 in the private sector (Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:263).

3.5.2.2.1 Job burnout

Job burnouts of employees were measured with the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1996 as cited by Vigoda, 2002:11 and Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:263). This consisted of six items, for example "I feel emotionally drained by my work". Reliability of this scale was found to be 0.86 in the public sector and 0.87 in the private sector (Vigoda & Kapun, 2005:264).

3.5.2.3 Turnaround intent

Turnaround intent of employees was measured with the Turnaround Intention Scale (TIS) and consisted of three items like "I am actively looking for other jobs". This scale was originally developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg and Sverke (1996). The reliability was tested by Diedericks (2012)(cited by Rothmann *et al.*, 2013:5; Rothmann *et al.* (2013:5); Sjöberg and Sverke (2000:248). Cronbach's coefficient alphas of 0.83, 0.79 and 0.83 were confirmed respectively.

3.5.2.4 Work engagement

Work engagement is measured by the Work Engagement Scale as proposed by May *et al.* (2004:36).

The following dimensions of work engagement were utilised in the measuring instrument:

- Engagement, that consist of:
 - Cognitive dimension (4 items)(for example, “Time passes quickly when I perform my job”);
 - Emotional dimension (4 items)(for example “I really put my heart into my job”);
 - Physical dimension (5 items)(an example of this dimension is ” I avoid working too hard”).

Reliability was established with a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of 0.77 for the three dimensions (May *et al.*, 2004:20).

The following antecedents of work engagement were used in the measuring instrument:

- Psychological meaningfulness (6 items),
(items consist of questions such as “I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable” and “The work I do on this job is very important to me”);
- Psychological safety (3 items), and
(an example question is “I’m not afraid to by myself at work”)
- Psychological availability (5 items).
(for example, “I am confident in my ability to hand competing demands at work”).

Reliability was established with a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of 0.77 for psychological meaningfulness, 0.71 for psychological safety and 0.85 for psychological availability by May *et al.* (2004:21).

3.6 PROCEDURE

Contact information of law firms in South Africa was obtained from Hortor's Legal Diary. A total of 436, randomly selected law firms were contacted during a period of five weeks: the covering letter and questionnaire were hand delivered to three firms and the balance sent electronically. By checking the e-mail delivery notifications from the electronic system, successful delivery to 397 firms was ensured as the researcher only received notifications from the electronic sub-system for 36 e-mails indicating a "status notification failure" that delivery to these designated e-mails addresses of the law firms "failed permanently".

The covering letter (Annexure A), with the attached questionnaire (Annexure B) was forwarded to the managing partner, the head of Human Resources department, the office manager or designated e-mail address as per the published information, seeking permission for the law firm to participate in the research and to distribute the questionnaires to their staff willing to take part, should permission be granted. Permission was granted and indicated by signing and dating the cover letter by the authorised person.

Respondents were also thanked for their participation. To ensure participation, law firms were followed up via e-mail or telephone where possible.

The covering letter firstly introduced the researcher, the research institution, and the title of the dissertation. It further set out the purpose of the study and the value that the study would have for management in law firms. A timeframe for completion of the questionnaire was indicated on the covering letter as well as the return e-mail address to which the completed questionnaire and signed consent letter should be returned. The time it would take for staff to complete the questionnaire was also indicated on the letter. The questionnaire clearly indicated the way in which it should be completed.

Only 17 law firms were willing to participate in the research. Reasons for the low response to the participation might be due to a few factors namely: management has a rule of not participating in research, management is of the opinion that the firm is

either too small (in their opinion there is thus no office politics) or too big (time constraints to ensure participation/office politics might be problematic) to participate, confidentiality might not be properly contained, ten minutes to complete the questionnaire might be too long to not attend to their normal work and generate fees in that time, management is of the opinion that there is no office politics in their firm, management is reluctant to ensure participation due to the present political situation at the firm or management is simply not interested.

The percentage rate (%) of the respondents willing to participate was irrelevant for the purpose of this study as a non-probability convenience sample was utilised and the results thereof are only applicable to the sample group and cannot be generalised to the population.

The researchers also attended to all telephonic and electronic queries.

3.6.1 Data capturing

All completed questionnaires, together with the signed consent letter, were captured in a word document that also indicated the number of law firms participating and the number of questionnaires received from that particular firm.

3.6.2 Feedback

Certain law firms indicated that they would want either feedback on the result of this research study or anonymous and confidential feedback on the results of the particular firm. In both instances they were assured that written feedback would be given.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations pertaining to the research were addressed in the covering letter. Participants were assured of their privacy and confidentiality and the fact that the research was being conducted for purely academic purposes. No law firm or employee would be identified. Participation was voluntary and consent to participate

could have been withdrawn at any time without negative implications for the particular law firm or employees. All questionnaires were answered anonymously and were e-mailed back to the researcher. This research was also approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences of the North-West University.

3.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis was done by the Statistical Consultation Services of the North-West University to ensure unbiased and correct statistical analysis of the data. The Statistical Consultation Services utilised the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) (2013, version 22) program. The SPSS programme was designed to do statistical analysis including descriptive statistics, inferential and multivariate procedures (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013: 332).

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the mean or the average, percentage, cumulative percentage and standard deviation of the demographic information of the respondents. This gives a general overview of the data collected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:285). The frequency count of questions answered/not answered by the respondents was also indicated.

Mathematically, the 5-point Likert scale's mean scores were interpreted as set out in Table 3.2 (Mahmood *et al.*, 2014:73, 75):

Table 3.2: Mathematical interpretation of mean scores

Mean score of:	Licker scale items:	Interpretation of perception/question:*
1.00-1.49	Strongly disagree	<i>Very low</i>
1.50-2.49	Disagree	<i>Low</i>
2.50-3.49	Neutral	<i>Uncertain/Safe option</i>
3.50-4.49	Agree	<i>High</i>
4.50 -5.00	Strongly agree	<i>Very high</i>

* Researcher's interpretation

Koustoulas (2013:2) warns that a central tendency bias (score around the midpoint) (Neutral) plays a role when completing the questions as there might be respondents

who avoid making extreme decision or voice their opinions, therefore they might be making a “safe choice”.

Reliability of the constructs, sub-constructs and antecedents was tested with Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. A Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of 0.8 is deemed to be good, 0.7 acceptable and below 0.6 as poor (Sekara & Bougie, 2013:293). However, for the Social Sciences a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha above 0.5 is acceptable (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2010:4; Mahmood *et al.*, 2014:74), but interpretation thereof should be done with caution (Gadermann *et al.*, 2012:8). Should any construct, sub-construct or antecedent not meet the above requirements, the questions of the construct, sub-construct or antecedent will be analysed separately.

Spearman’s correlation coefficient, also known as Spearman’s rho, was done to determine the correlation between pairs of variables that is ordinal (Welman *et al.*, 2005:229). It is a non-parametric method used when the data collected are violating parametric assumptions, for example non-normal distribution of data (Field, 2009:179). The practical and statistical significance indicators of these relationships are set out in Table 3.3.

Table: 3.3: Practical and statistical significance of relationship

Practical significance of relationship		Statistical significance of relationship	
~ 0.1	Small, no practical significant relationship	p< 0.05	Indicates a statistical significant relationship
~ 0.3	Medium, practical visible significance		
~ 0.5	Large practical significant relationship		

“Source: Field (2009:170)”

T-tests are utilised to determine the mean differences between certain groups in the sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013:314) and when comparing the mean of two groups, Cohen’s d-values are used as measurement (effect size) (Field, 2009:57).

In this study a t-test for gender was done to determine whether males and females think alike or not regarding the sub-constructs and questions. Furthermore

descriptive statistics and ANOVA were done for the qualifications, language and years working at the organisation of the respondents.

The guidelines for interpretation of the values obtained are indicated in Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Guidelines for interpretation

Effect size: d value- Indicates practical significant differences between the mean as well as the effect size		p- value: Indicates if there is statistical significant difference between the means (if equal variances are not assumed)	
~ 0.2	Small, no practically significant difference	p< 0.05	Indicates a statistical significant difference between the means
~ 0.5	Medium, practically visible difference		
~ 0.8	Large, practically significant difference		

“Source: Field (2009:58)”

However, in this study the p-value was not interpreted and was only reported for completeness’ sake since convenient sampling was done and not random sampling.

3.9 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses that were investigated are summarised as follows:

H₁: There are above average levels of perceived office politics in the sample group.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress within the sample group.

H₃: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and burnout within the sample group.

H₄: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and turnaround intent within the sample group.

H₅: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sample group.

H₆: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement within the sample group.

H₇: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological meaningfulness within the sample group.

H₈: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and

psychological safety within the sample group.

H₉: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological availability within the sample group.

The hypotheses for the sub groups are as follows:

H_{G1}: There is no relationship between how males and females perceive office politics within the sub-groups.

H_{G2}: There is a positive relationship between qualifications of the respondents and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sub-groups.

H_{G3}: There is a negative relationship between years working for the organisations and turnaround intent within the sub-groups.

3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter set out the methods used by the researcher to conduct the empirical research. The research design, research methods, participants and the statistical methods pertaining to the gathered data were discussed.

Lastly the research hypotheses were stated.

Chapter 4 sets out the results and discussion of the empirical research.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the statistical results of the empirical research are discussed and the results thereof reported and interpreted. Firstly the demographic information of the respondents is discussed. Thereafter the validity and reliability of the constructs and sub-constructs are discussed as well as correlations, ANOVA, t-test and effect sizes. Lastly, the results are discussed and overviews of this Chapter and Chapter 5 are given.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

In this section the demographic information of the respondents is discussed, which includes their age, gender, educational qualifications, home or first language, years of service, position and employment status in the organisation.

Furthermore, the total number of respondents who did not answer a particular question is also reported as a total number of 162 questionnaires were received but not all questions had been answered by all respondents.

4.2.1 Age of the respondents

The ages of the respondents ranged from 19 years to 68 years. Table 4.1 below sets out the minimum and maximum ages as well as the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' ages.

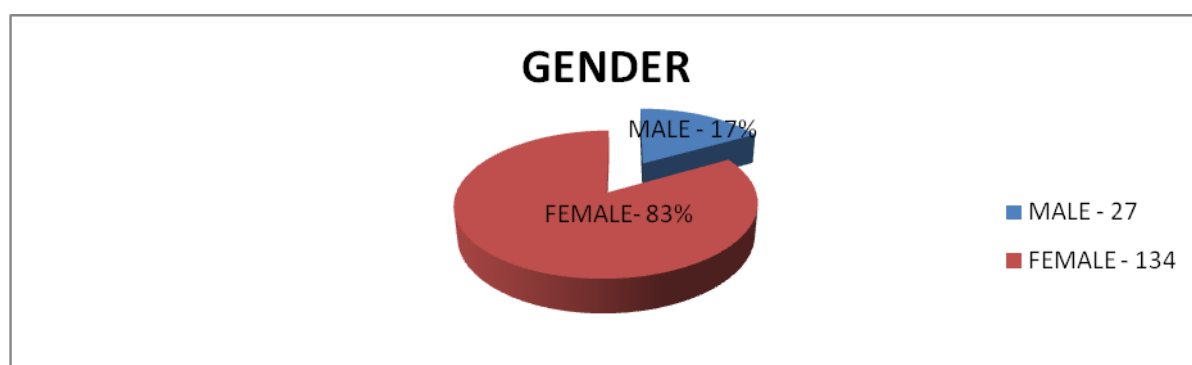
Table 4.1: Age distribution of the respondents

	N	Missing	Minimum age	Maximum age	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	160	2	19	68	37.54	12.58

4.2.2 Gender distribution of the respondents

The pie chart below sets out the gender distribution of the respondents. A total of 27 (17%) respondents were male and 134 (83%) respondents were female. Only one respondent did not complete this question.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of the respondents



4.2.3 Educational qualifications of the respondents

The table below sets out the educational qualifications of 158 respondents. A total number of 74 (46.8%) respondents were in possession of a Matric Certificate whereas 14 (8.9%) respondents had a Grade 11 and lower qualification.

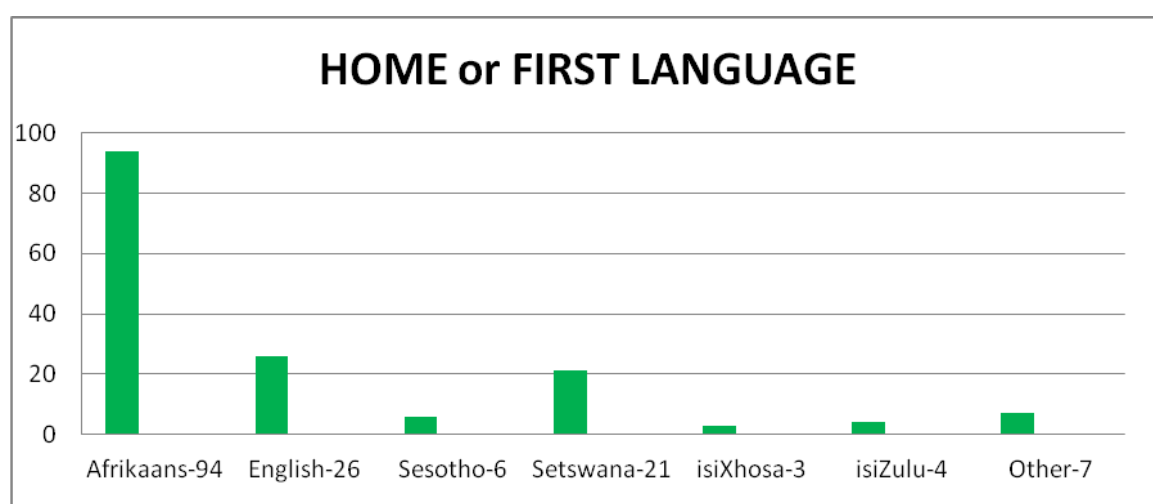
Table 4.2: Educational qualifications of respondents

Qualifications	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade 12	74	46.8	46.8
Post Matric (Diploma)	28	17.7	64.6
University degree	30	19.0	83.5
Postgraduate degree	12	7.6	91.1
Grade 11 and lower	14	8.9	100
Total	158	100	
Missing	4		
Total	162	100	

4.2.4 Home or first language

The home or first language of the respondents is shown by Figure 4.2. “Other” included languages such as Tshivenda, Swazi, Sepedi, Ndebele and Dutch.

Figure 4.2: Home or first language of respondents



4.2.5 Years of service in the organisation

Table 4.3 illustrates the respondents' years of service in the organisation.

Table 4.3: Years of service in the organisation

Year of service	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
1-4 years	93	58.5	58.5
5-9 years	27	17.0	75.5
10-14 years	20	12.6	88.1
Longer than 14 years	19	11.9	100.0
Total	153	100	
Missing	3		
Total	162		

A percentage of 58.5 of the employees had been working for four years or less for the organisation and 19 (11.9%) of the respondents had been working longer than 14 years for the organisation.

4.2.6 Position in the organisation

Respondents' answers pertaining to "Other" included positions like partner, candidate attorney, clerk, professional assistant, attorney, bookkeeper, associate and secretary. A total of 46 (30.1%) respondents filled in "Other". This might be due to the fact that they were unsure about the classification of their position in the

questionnaire or even in the organisation. Administrative staff made up for a total of 39.9% of the responds.

Frequency Table 4.4 sets out the position of the respondents in the organisation.

Table 4.4: Position in the organisation

Position in the organisation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Managerial	9	5.9	5.9
Non-managerial	15	9.8	15.7
Administrative	61	39.9	55.6
Support staff	22	14.4	69.9
Other	46	30.1	100
Total	153	100	
Missing	9		
Total	162		

4.2.7 Employment status of the respondents

The employment status of the respondents is set out in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Employment status of the respondents

Employment status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Permanent	140	86.4	86.4
Part time	6	3.7	90.1
Other	16	9.9	100.0
Total	162	100	

Respondents who completed “Other” (9.9%) indicated that they were either working for their employer on a contract basis or on a temporary basis.

4.2.8 Frequency of completion of questions

The frequency count of answered questions by the respondents is set out in Annexure C (Part 2 to Part 5 of the questionnaire). The frequency count of questions not answered by the respondents is also indicated.

From Annexure C the following is derived from the constructs and sub-constructs:

4.2.8.1 Perception of office politics

4.2.8.1.1 General political behaviour

The percentage of respondents who disagreed that co-employees build themselves up by tearing others down was 31 (50 respondents) whereas 8% (12) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement (Question 1).

4.2.8.1.2 Go along to get ahead

The statement that it is sometimes easier to keep quiet than to fight the system was agreed to by 47% (74) of the respondents (Question 7).

4.2.8.1.3 Pay and promotion

The percentage of respondents who were neutral towards the statement that pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotion are determined were 47 (75 respondents) (Question 13).

4.2.8.2 Job stress

It transpired that 38% (61) of the respondents disagreed that a different work would improve their health (Question 17).

4.2.8.2.1 Job burnout

Working with people all day is not a strain: 43% (69) of the respondents disagreed (Question 22), whereas 3% (4) of the respondents agreed strongly that it is a strain for them to work with people and 45% (70) of the respondents disagreed that they are feeling at the end of their tether (Question 25).

4.2.8.3 Turnaround intent

Only 4% (7) of the respondents strongly agreed that they were actively looking for other work (Question 26) and 37% (59) of the respondents disagreed that they could leave their current job (Question 27).

4.2.8.4 Work engagement and antecedents:

4.2.8.4.1 Cognitive dimension

It is evident that 64% (103) of the respondents agreed that time passes quickly when they are doing their job (Question 32).

4.2.8.4.2 Emotional dimension

Only 0.62% (1) of the respondent strongly disagreed that he/she did put his/her their heart into his/her job (Question 33) whereas 39% (63) of the respondents agreed that their own feelings were affected by how well they were doing their work (Question 36).

4.2.8.4.3 Physical dimension

The percentage of respondents who disagreed that they avoided working too hard was 52% (84) and 3% (5) of the respondents strongly agreed that they avoided working too hard (Question 41). Only 7% (11) of the respondents strongly agreed that they avoided working overtime (Question 39).

4.2.8.4.4 Psychological meaningfulness (Antecedent)

Work is worthwhile to 59% (95) of the respondents who agreed that their work was worthwhile to them (Question 44) and 55% (89) of the respondents agreed that their job activities were significant to them (Question 45).

4.2.8.4.5 Psychological safety (Antecedents)

Only 5% (8) of the respondents strongly agreed that their work environment was threatening to them (Question 50).

4.2.3.8.6 Psychological availability (Antecedent)

It transpired that 67% (109) of the respondents agreed that they were able to handle competing demands confidently in their workplace (Question 51) and 65% (106) of the respondents agreed that they were able to deal with work-related problems (Question 52).

4.2.9 Results of the means and standard deviations

The interpretation of the results, as set out in Chapter 3, of the means and standard deviations, suggested that the respondents' perceptions regarding office politics in their organisation were *Neutral/Safe option*. This finding is twofold in that they either did not perceive (high/low) levels of office politics, which constituted a feather in managements' cap, or they were players of the central tendency bias. However, it is ethically not acceptable to force an answer from respondents.

The outcomes of these perceptions on *Job stress* were also *Neutral/Safe option* and *Low* toward *Turnaround intent* and *Burnout*. However, the results suggested that respondents experienced *High* levels of *Work engagement*. Respondents also experienced *High* levels of *Psychological meaningfulness*, *Psychological safety* and *Psychological availability*.

Further analysis of the results will indicate the presence of either perceived office politics or the use of a central tendency bias.

4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALADITY

4.3.1 Validity

Factor analysis and more specifically confirmatory factor analysis (to test hypotheses) is the applicable method; however, due to an insufficient amount of data, construct validity by means of factor analysis was not possible.

4.3.2 Reliability

4.3.2.1 Reliability of the constructs

The reliability of the constructs is illustrated in Table 4.6 below. From Table 4.6 it is evident that the Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the constructs were reliable as they were all above 0.5.

Table 4.6: Cronbach's coefficient alpha for constructs

	Cronbach's coefficient alpha	Cronbach's coefficient alpha based on standardised items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items
Perceptions of office politics	.83	.83	2.84	.60	15
Job stress	.78	.78	2.78	.89	4
Turnaround intent	.90	.90	2.23	1.07	3
Work engagement	.59	.63	3.52	.41	13

4.3.2.2 Cronbach's coefficient alpha for sub-constructs

The results of the reliability of the sub-constructs are shown below. The reverse questions are indicated in Annexure D and their scores were taken into account in the statistical analysis. The reliability for the sub-constructs is set out in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Reliability of the sub-constructs

Construct	Sub-construct	Cronbach's coefficient alpha	Cronbach's coefficient alpha based on standardised items	Mean	Standard Deviation	No of items
Perception of office politics	General political behaviour	.81	.81	2.60	1.15	2
	Go along to get ahead	.77	.77	3.00	.72	7
	Pay and promotion	.65	.65	2.72	.63	6
Job stress	Burnout	.90	.90	2.39	.88	6
Work engagement	Cognitive*	.12	.17	-	-	4
	Emotional**	.74	.74	4.25	.65	2
	Physical	.52	.51	3.45	.60	5

From the above it is evident that all the sub-constructs (except the under-mentioned exceptions) were reliable.

- * The *Cognitive* sub-construct was not included as the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Questions 29-32) was 0.12.
- ** Questions 35 and 36 were not included in the *Emotional* sub-construct as it influenced the reliability negatively (Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.45). Thus going forward these questions are discussed separately.

The attached Annexure D sets out the breakdown of the questions and question sources for the constructs, sub-constructs and antecedents of in the measuring instrument.

4.3.2.3 Antecedents of work engagement

Table 4.8 below indicates that the Cronbach's coefficient alphas of the antecedents of *Work engagement* were all reliable.

Table 4.8: Cronbach's coefficient alphas for the antecedents of work engagement

	Cronbach's coefficient alpha	Cronbach's coefficient alpha based on standardised items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of items
Psychological meaningfulness	.92	.92	4.04	.65	6
Psychological safety	.68	.68	3.69	.81	3
Psychological availability	.84	.84	3.97	.53	5

4.4 SPEARMAN'S CORRELATION COEFFICIENT

The results of Spearman's correlation coefficient are discussed according to the guidelines as set out in Chapter 3.

4.4.1 Correlation of construct and sub-construct of office politics

Table 4.9 below indicates the relationship between the construct *Perceptions of office politics* and the sub-constructs for perceptions of office politics.

Table 4.9: Spearman's rho for office politics and sub-constructs of office politics

	Perceptions of office politics	General political behaviour	Go along to get ahead	Pay and promotion
Perceptions of office politics	1.00			
General political behaviour	.69**	1.00		
Go along to get ahead	.86**	.44**	1.00	
Pay and promotion	.69**	.35**	.35**	1.00

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From Table 4.9 it is evident that all three sub-constructs correlated highly with each other and thereby indicated that all three sub-constructs played an integral role in

measuring *Perceptions of office politics*. It is, however, noticeable that the sub-construct *Go along to get ahead* played a significant role in the overall perceptions of office politics in relation to the sub-constructs *General political behaviour* and *Pay and promotion*.

4.4.2 Correlation of constructs and sub-construct burnout

Spearman's rho illustrated the following practical correlations:

Table 4.10: Spearman's rho for constructs and sub-construct burnout

	Perceptions of office politics	Job stress	Burnout	Turnaround intent	Work engagement
Perceptions of office politics	1.00				
Job stress	.36**	1.00			
Burnout	.35**	.78**	1.00		
Turnaround intent	.39**	.61**	.69**	1.00	
Work engagement	-.19*	.09	0.01	-.29**	1.00

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Indicating that:

- There was a positive, medium, practically visible significant relationship between *Perceptions of office politics*, *Job stress*, *Burnout* and *Turnaround intent* of the employees, thus confirming the results of previous studies as mentioned in Chapter 2 (section 2.3.7, 2.4.4 and 2.4.4.1) that perceptions of office politics lead to job stress, subsequent burnout and turnaround intent of employees.
- *Job stress* and *Burnout* indicated a large, practically significant relationship (positive) between job stress and burnout. This is consistent with literature that employees experienced burnout as they were unable to cope with stress (Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.1).

- There was a (positive) large practically significant relationship between *Job stress* and *Turnaround intent* (0.69). This once again confirms the results of previous studies as indicated in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.4 and section 2.4.4.1) that the more job stress an employee experienced the more it can lead to turnaround intent.
- *Work engagement* and *Turnaround intent* were leaning strongly towards a negative, medium practical visible significant relationship (-0.29). Respondents who felt engaged were thus less inclined to quit while those who were not physically nor cognitively and emotionally involved in their work were more likely to quit. This is in line with previous findings as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.
- The small, negative not practically significant relationship between *Perceptions of office politics* and *Work engagement* confirms literature studies that the more employees perceived the presence of office politics, the less engaged employees will be (Chapter 2, section 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). However, in this instance it did not have any practical significance.

Table 4.11: Spearman's rho for perceptions of office politics and antecedents of work engagement

	Perceptions of office politics	Psychological meaningfulness	Psychological safety	Psychological availability
Perceptions of office politics	1.00			
Psychological meaningfulness	-.20*	1.00		
Psychological safety	-.43**	.34**	1.00	
Psychological availability	-.23**	.38**	.44**	1.00

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.11 above indicates that there was a negative, small not practically significant relationship between *Perceptions of office politics* and *Psychological meaningfulness*

and *Psychological availability*. The results also indicated that there was a medium, practical (negative) visible significant relationship between *Perceptions of office politics* and *Psychological safety*. These findings are in line with literature, although the visibility thereof in practice is not noticeable - that if employees are less engaged (by implication due to perceptions of office politics) in their work performance, they have low levels of psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability in their work performance as set out in Chapter 2, section 2.5.3.

4.4.3 Correlation of sub-constructs, independent questions and antecedents of work engagement

Annexure E sets out the relationships between the sub-constructs, independent questions and antecedents of work engagement that are discussed separately as previously mentioned.

The Spearman's rho' indicated the following correlations in practice:

- *General political behaviour* and *Go along to get ahead* showed a medium positive practical significant relationship with each other.
- *Pay and promotion* and *Go along to get ahead* indicated a medium practical visible significant relationship with each other.
- *Job stress and Burnout* indicated a large positive practical significant relationship with each other.
- *Turnaround intent and Burnout* indicated a large positive practical significant relationship with each other
- The *Emotional* sub-construct and *Question 32 (Time passes quickly when I perform my job)* correlated positively with a large positive practical significant relationship.
- *Emotional* and *Meaningfulness* (antecedent of work engagement) indicated a large positive practically significant relationship with each other. This indicates that if employees feel valuable or worthwhile they connect emotionally with their work and other employees.

- *Safety and Availability* correlated positively (large, practical significant relationship). This indicated that employees should not only feel safe to express themselves at work (fearless of consequences/expressing themselves) but also have the ability to be physically, emotionally and cognitively engaged in their work.
- *Meaningfulness and Safety* correlated positively (medium, practically visible significant relationship). This indicated that should employees feel worthwhile, useful and valuable in their work setting and feel thus that they can express themselves at their workplace without fearing for any negative consequences (Safety).
- *Turnaround intent, Safety and Meaningfulness* indicated a negative, medium practically significant relationship. This indicated that if an employee felt valuable or worthwhile and safe (for example free to express himself/herself in the workplace) that employee's turnaround intentions were low.
- *Job stress, Burnout, and Turnaround intent and Safety* also indicated a negative, medium practically visible significant relationship that indicates that the less stress and burnout an employee experienced the safer that employee felt in his/her workplace about expressing him/herself and the fewer turnover intentions the employee had.

4.5 ANOVA AND T-TEST

4.5.1 Gender

A t-test for gender was done to determine whether males and females felt differently regarding the sub-constructs, questions and antecedents.

Table 4.12: T-test for gender

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	p-value	Effect Size (d)
General political behaviour	Male	27	2.50	.93	.57	.10
	Female	134	2.61	1.19		
Go along to get ahead	Male	27	3.07	.69	.54	.13
	Female	134	2.98	.72		
Pay and promotion	Male	27	2.50	.66	.05	.41
	Female	133	2.77	.62		
Job stress	Male	27	2.84	.99	.68	.08
	Female	134	2.75	.88		
Burnout	Male	27	2.54	.95	.34	.20
	Female	134	2.35	.87		
Turnaround intent	Male	27	2.44	1.08	.27	.24
	Female	133	2.19	1.07		
Question 29	Male	27	2.89	1.16	.42	.17
	Female	134	3.08	1.08		
Question 30	Male	27	2.78	1.05	.33	.21
	Female	132	2.56	1.00		
Question 31	Male	27	3.30	.99	.08	.36
	Female	131	2.92	1.05		
Question 32	Male	27	4.07	.73	.95	.01
	Female	133	4.08	.68		
Emotional	Male	27	4.31	.70	.61	.11
	Female	133	4.24	.64		
Question 35	Male	27	3.07	.96	.06	.41
	Female	130	2.68	.93		
Question 36	Male	27	3.44	1.05	.72	.07
	Female	134	3.37	1.07		
Physical	Male	27	3.55	.67	.36	.19
	Female	134	3.42	.59		
Meaningfulness	Male	27	3.89	.64	.18	.28
	Female	134	4.07	.65		
Safety	Male	27	3.88	.83	.20	.27
	Female	134	3.65	.80		
Availability	Male	27	4.07	.44	.25	.20
	Female	134	3.95	.55		

The small effect size indicates that there are no practical differences between genders towards these sub-constructs, questions and antecedents, indicating that males and females feel the same about it. This corresponded with the findings of the research done by Beaty *et al.* (2007:79) that males and females relate the same to political behaviour in the workplace (Chapter 2, section 2.2.7).

It is noticeable that the effect sizes of *Pay and promotion* and Question 35 (*I often feel emotionally detached from my job*) are the highest at 0.41 for both, leaning towards a 0.50 (medium, practically visible difference). Although the means for both fall within the *Neutral/Safe option*, the p-value indicated almost a medium significant difference that is visible in practice. With regards to the means and standard deviations for jobs stress, burnout and turnover intentions it is interesting to note that males experienced more job stress, burnout and turnover intentions than females.

4.5.2 Qualifications

For the purpose hereof the following qualifications have been grouped together as one group:

- i) Grade 12 and Grade 11 and lower,
- and
- ii) University degree and postgraduate degree.

The homogeneity of variance has been violated (variance of the groups is unequal) and Welch's F- ratio was done indicating the p-value.

Table 4.13: Qualifications of respondents

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	ANOVA		Welch	Effect Size	
					p-value	F	p-value	Grade 12 and lower with	Diploma with
General political behaviour	Grade 12 and lower	88	2.57	1.11	.59	.52	.64		
	Diploma	28	2.75	1.34				0.13	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.46	1.08				0.10	0.21
Go along to get ahead	Grade 12 and lower	88	2.95	.69	.47	.77	.50		
	Diploma	28	2.95	.74				0.01	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.10	.76				0.21	0.21
Pay and promotion	Grade 12 and lower	87	2.77	.59	.08	2.58	.13		
	Diploma	28	2.83	.49				0.12	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.53	.76				0.30	0.40

Table 4.13 continued

Job stress	Grade 12 and lower	88	2.57	.84	.00	5.67	.01		
	Diploma	28	3.00	.96				0.44	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.07	.84				0.58	0.08
Burnout	Grade 12 and lower	88	2.12	.77	.00	9.22	.00		
	Diploma	28	2.76	.93				0.68	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.63	.83				0.61	0.14
Turnaround Intent	Grade 12 and lower	87	1.91	.91	.00	8.99	.00		
	Diploma	28	2.54	1.16				0.55	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.62	1.07				0.66	0.07
Question 29	Grade 12 and lower	88	2.94	1.18	.38	.98	.37		
	Diploma	28	3.21	.96				0.23	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.17	.97				0.19	0.05
Question 30	Grade 12 and lower	86	2.51	.99	.11	2.21	.11		
	Diploma	28	2.43	1.03				0.08	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.86	.93				0.35	0.41
Question 31	Grade 12 and lower	87	2.89	1.06	.06	2.87	.04		
	Diploma	27	2.78	1.05				0.10	
	University and Postgraduate degree	41	3.29	.87				0.38	0.49
Question 32	Grade 12 and lower	88	4.17	.57	.08	2.61	.18		
	Diploma	28	4.11	.57				0.11	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.88	.92				0.32	0.25
Emotional	Grade 12 and lower	87	4.33	.52	.23	1.47	.27		
	Diploma	28	4.13	.75				0.27	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	4.17	.81				0.20	0.05
Question 35	Grade 12 and lower	85	2.69	.94	.62	.48	.67		
	Diploma	27	2.89	1.05				0.19	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	2.69	.87				0.00	0.19

Table 4.13 continued

Question 36	Grade 12 and lower	88	3.26	1.11	.03	3.52	.02		
	Diploma	28	3.29	.98				0.02	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.76	.91				0.45	0.49
Physical	Grade 12 and lower	88	3.42	.55	.43	.83	.49		
	Diploma	28	3.36	.45				0.11	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.54	.79				0.15	0.23
Meaningfulness	Grade 12 and lower	88	4.10	.59	.15	1.91	.23		
	Diploma	28	4.07	6.00				0.06	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.87	.77				0.30	0.26
Safety	Grade 12 and lower	88	3.77	.79	.24	1.43	.25		
	Diploma	28	3.73	.87				0.04	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.51	.81				0.31	0.26
Availability	Grade 12 and lower	88	4.03	.51	.43	.83	.46		
	Diploma	28	3.99	.48				0.09	
	University and Postgraduate degree	42	3.90	.53				0.23	0.14

From Table 4.13 it is evident that the p-values for *Job stress*, *Burnout*, *Turnaround intent* and Question 36 (*My own feelings are affected by how well I perform my job*) were below 0.05 indicating that there was a statistical significant difference in the way respondents responded to the constructs, sub-construct and question.

The effect size indicated that there were large, practically significant differences in the way respondents responded to *Job stress*, *Burnout* and *Turnaround intent*. Respondents who have Grade 12 or lower are less stressed than respondents with a University and postgraduate degree (medium, practically visible difference). Although respondents with a Grade 12 or lower experience less stress than respondents with a Diploma it does not indicate a significant difference in practice although it is leaning towards a medium, practically visible difference.

They also experience less burnout than respondents with a Diploma or University and postgraduate degree. Furthermore this group had fewer turnaround intentions

than those respondents with a Diploma or University and postgraduate degree (positive, medium practical visible difference). The lower the qualification of the respondent, the less they experience stress, burnout and turnaround intentions. It can thus be argued that the higher the qualification of the respondents, the higher their work demands are. Burnout and stress are therefore contributors to respondents' turnaround intentions (Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.1 and 2.4.2).

4.5.3 Years working at the organisation

The homogeneity of variance has also been violated (variance of the groups is unequal) and Welch's F- ratio was done indicating the p-value.

The results of the p-values and effect size are illustrated by Table 4.14

Table 4.14: Years working

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	ANOVA		Welch	Effect Size		
					p- value	F	p- value	1-4 years with	5-9 years with	10-14 years with
General political behaviour	1-4 years	93	2.66	1.16	.37	1.05	.39			
	5-9 years	27	2.74	1.10				0.07		
	10-14 years	20	2.20	1.14				0.40	0.47	
	> than 14 years	19	2.55	1.14				0.09	0.16	0.31
Go along to get ahead	1-4 years	93	3.05	.71	.60	.62	.62			
	5-9 years	27	2.88	.73				0.24		
	10-14 years	20	2.92	.60				0.18	0.06	
	> than 14 years	19	2.90	.86				0.18	0.03	0.03
Pay and promotion	1-4 years	93	2.72	.69	.68	.50	.60			
	5-9 years	27	2.61	.50				0.16		
	10-14 years	20	2.84	.62				0.17	0.37	
	> than 14 years	18	2.71	.56				0.02	0.16	0.22
Job stress	1-4 years	93	2.93	.89	.07	2.42	.09			
	5-9 years	27	2.76	.80				0.19		
	10-14 years	20	2.47	.87				0.51	0.34	
	> than 14 years	19	2.49	.93				0.48	0.30	0.01

Table 4.14 continued

Burnout	1-4 years	93	2.44	.85	.89	.22	.91			
	5-9 years	27	2.42	.86				0.02		
	10-14 years	20	2.28	.99				0.16	0.14	
	> than 14 years	19	2.33	.99				0.10	0.09	0.05
Turnaround intent	1-4 years	92	2.44	1.20	.02	3.2	.00			
	5-9 years	27	2.14	.72				0.24		
	10-14 years	20	2.01	.98				0.35	0.13	
	> than 14 years	19	1.68	.63				0.63	0.65	0.34
Question 29	1-4 years	93	3.14	1.07	.55	.70	.55			
	5-9 years	27	3.04	1.19				0.09		
	10-14 years	20	2.75	1.07				0.36	0.24	
	> than 14 years	19	3.05	1.13				0.08	0.01	0.27
Question 30	1-4 years	93	2.71	1.00	.22	1.49	.27			
	5-9 years	26	2.69	.93				0.02		
	10-14 years	20	2.30	1.08				0.38	0.36	
	> than 14 years	18	2.33	.97				0.38	0.37	0.03
Question 31	1-4 years	91	3.03	.97	.52	.75	.60			
	5-9 years	26	3.12	.91				0.08		
	10-14 years	20	2.95	1.28				0.07	0.13	
	> than 14 years	19	2.68	1.16				0.30	0.37	0.21
Question 32	1-4 years	93	4.01	.79	.39	1.01	.24			
	5-9 years	27	4.11	.58				0.13		
	10-14 years	19	4.21	.42				0.25	0.17	
	> than 14 years	19	4.2	.45				0.32	0.26	0.12
Emotional	1-4 years	93	4.19	.74	.50	.79	.35			
	5-9 years	27	4.30	.56				0.15		
	10-14 years	20	4.33	.52				0.19	0.05	
	> than 14 years	18	4.41	.42				0.31	0.22	0.18
Question 35	1-4 years	92	2.84	.98	.63	.57	.64			
	5-9 years	27	2.70	.91				0.14		
	10-14 years	18	2.67	.91				0.17	0.04	
	> than 14 years	18	2.56	.92				0.29	0.16	0.12
Question 36	1-4 years	93	3.52	1.04	.24	1.44	.24			
	5-9 years	27	3.15	.95				0.35		
	10-14 years	20	3.10	1.16				0.36	0.04	
	> than 14 years	19	3.47	1.22				0.03	0.27	0.31

Table 4.14 continued

Physical	1-4 years	93	3.42	.64	.00	4.04	.00			
	5-9 years	27	3.76	.54				0.52		
	10-14 years	20	3.17	.37				0.40	1.09	
	> than 14 years	19	3.42	.61				0.01	0.56	0.41
Meaningful ness	1-4 years	93	3.95	.72	.14	1.86	.10			
	5-9 years	27	4.10	.52				0.21		
	10-14 years	20	4.29	.50				0.48	0.37	
	> than 14 years	19	4.14	.55				0.27	0.08	0.27
Safety	1-4 years	93	3.60	.86	.38	1.03	.35			
	5-9 years	27	3.83	.75				0.27		
	10-14 years	20	3.88	.71				0.32	0.06	
	> than 14 years	19	3.63	.69				0.04	0.26	0.34
Availability	1-4 years	93	3.94	.54	.54	.73	.54			
	5-9 years	27	4.00	.40				0.12		
	10-14 years	20	3.93	.68				0.02	0.11	
	> than 14 years	19	4.13	.53				0.35	0.24	0.30

From the above Table 4.14 it transpired that the p-value for *Turnaround intent* and the *Physical* sub-construct was smaller than 0.05 indicating a statistical difference between the means.

With regards to effect size it is interesting to note that respondents who had worked for the organisation for 1-4 years and 5-9 years had turnaround intentions that showed a medium, practically visible difference in contrast to respondents who had worked for longer than 14 years for the organisation (0.63 and 0.65 respectively). This indicated that they were more inclined to search for other jobs/quit their jobs than respondents working for longer than those periods for the organisation.

The effect size of *Job stress* indicated that respondents who worked 1-4 years for the organisation were more prone to job stress than respondents who had worked for 10-14 (0.51) years and respondents who had worked for longer than 14 years (0.48) for the organisation (medium practically visible difference).

4.6 DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was firstly to ascertain:

- 1) whether above average levels of perceived office politics were prevalent within the sample group.

Secondly, to ascertain whether there was a relationship between:

- 2) Perceptions of office politics and jobs stress within the sample group.
- 3) Perceptions of office politics and burnout within the sample group.
- 4) Perceptions of office politics and turnaround intent within the sample group.
- 5) Perceptions of office politics, job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sample group.
- 6) Perceptions of office politics and work engagement within the sample group.
- 7) Perceptions of office politics and psychological meaningfulness within the sample group.
- 8) Perceptions of office politics and psychological safety within the sample group.
- 9) Perceptions of office politics and psychological availability within the sample group.

It was also the objective of this study to ascertain whether there was a relationship between:

- 10) How males and females perceive office politics within the sub-groups.
- 11) Qualifications of the respondents and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sub-groups.
- 12) Years working at the organisation and turnaround intent within the sub-groups.

Once there was a relationship found, the next step was to ascertain the significance of this relationship.

To obtain answers to these hypotheses, the validity and reliability of the constructs and sub-constructs were determined. However, not enough data were available to test for the validity of the measuring instrument via factor analysis. The reliability of the constructs, via Cronbach's coefficient alpha and sub-constructs was determined:

The construct was found to be reliable. The reliability of the sub-constructs, except the sub-constructs *Cognitive for Work engagement*, was found to be reliable. Questions 35 and 35 of the *Emotional* sub-construct were discussed independently.

Furthermore, the correlations between the constructs, sub-constructs, independent questions and antecedents of work engagement were determined.

ANOVA and a t-test were done to determine whether gender plays a role in how the respondents think about these constructs and sub-constructs. Effect sizes and p-values indicated that with the qualifications and years working for the organisation the respondents of the various groups did not think about or experience job stress, burnout, turnaround intent the same as others in the various groups.

The demographic information of the respondents was also analysed and illustrated.

In the light of the above objectives of the study, the results indicated that the following hypothesis can be rejected:

H₁: There are above average levels of perceived office politics in the sample group.

- The results indicated a *Neutral/Safe option*, indicating neither *Low* nor *High* levels of perceptions of office politics. As previously stated this interpretation must be done with caution due to the effects of the central tendency bias, as previously stated. However, should the *Neutral/Safe option* be correct, it is an indication of good governance by managements.

The following hypotheses are accepted:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient (0.36) confirmed a positive, medium practically visible relationship between perceived prevalence of office politics and job stress. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that

there was a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress (Chapter 2, section 2.3.7).

H₃: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and burnout within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient (0.35) confirmed a positive, medium practically visible significant relationship between perceived prevalence of office politics and burnout. This finding is in line with the majority of previous literature reviews and findings (Chapter 2, section 2.3.7).

H₄: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and turnaround intent within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient (0.39) confirmed a positive, medium practically visible significant relationship between perceived prevalence of office politics and turnaround intent. This result is consistent with previous research that a positive relationship existed between perceptions of office politics and turnover intent (Chapter 2, section 2.4.4).

H₅: There is a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient confirmed a positive, medium practically visible significant relationship between perceived prevalence of office politics, job stress (0.36), burnout (0.35) and turnaround intent (0.39). This confirms the results of previous studies that there was a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics, job stress subsequent burnout and turnaround intent (Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.1).

Furthermore, the following hypotheses can be accepted:

H₆: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient confirmed a small, negative (-0.19) but not a practically significant relationship. This negative result indicated that the more employees perceived the working environment to be politically driven

the less they were engaged in their work. This is in line with literature studies regarding work engagement (Chapter 2, section 2.5.1 and 2.5.2) but further research is needed to examine the relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement.

H₇: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological meaningfulness within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient confirmed a small, negative (-.20) but not a practically significant relationship between perceived prevalence of office politics and psychological meaningfulness. Literature indicated that the respondents were not fully engaged in their work as they did not feel worthwhile and valuable (due to the levels of office politics) (Chapter 2, section 2.5.3 and 2.5.3.1). More research is needed to assess the relationship between perceived office politics and psychological meaningfulness.

H₈: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological safety within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient (-0.43) confirmed a small, practical but negative medium visible significant relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological safety. Literature indicated that the respondents were not fully engaged in their work if they did not feel safe to express themselves without consequences (due to the prevalence of perceptions of office politics) (Chapter 2, section 2.5.3 and 2.5.3.2). More research is needed to assess the relationship between perceived office politics and psychological safety.

H₉: There is a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological availability within the sample group.

- The correlation coefficient (-0.23) confirmed a small, negative, not practically significant relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological availability. As indicated by literature the respondents were not fully engaged in their work as they did not feel available (due to the prevalence of perceptions of office politics). Further research is also needed

to assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological availability.

The results of the hypotheses between sub-groups can be accepted:

H_{G1}: There is no relationship between how males and females perceive office politics within the sub-groups.

- This result was found within the sub-groups and correlated with previous studies as the effect size (~ 0.2) was small without a significant difference in practice. This is in line with previous a previous studies that indicated that males and females relate in the same way to office politics (Chapter 2, section 2.7.7).

H_{G2}: There is a positive relationship between qualifications of the respondents and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent within the sub groups.

- This was confirmed by the results. It seems that the lesser qualified a respondent was, the less job stress, burnout and turnaround intentions they had. More research regarding this finding is needed.

H_{G3}: There is a negative relationship between years working for the organisations and turnaround intent with the sub-groups.

- This result indicated that the fewer years the respondents had been working at their organisation, the more they seem to have turnaround intentions. It is suggested that this result needs to be further researched.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this Chapter the results of the data as collected via the measuring instrument and the analysis thereof by the Statistical Consultation Services were presented and illustrated. The results have been interpreted and conclusions drawn on the basis of the analysis.

Conclusions with regard to the research hypotheses and recommendations for management are given in Chapter 5. Lastly, recommendations for future research are made.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter provides an overview of this study and provides conclusions regarding the set objectives. Recommendations are made for management and opportunities for future research are suggested.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The main research questions of this study were firstly to investigate to what extent office politics was present in law firms and secondly what the relationship was between perceived office politics and certain job outcomes namely stress, burnout, turnaround intent and work engagement, together with its antecedents, of employees working in law firms. To obtain answers to these research questions, objectives were set. The outcomes of this study will add practical value to managers and organisations.

A literature review was done in Chapter 2 regarding perceptions of office politics, job stress and subsequent burnout, turnaround intent and work engagement as well as the influence thereof on these selected job outcomes.

A quantitative research approach was followed. The research design, participants, sample group, measuring instrument, and procedures and guidelines to interpret the results were discussed in Chapter 3.

The results of the data collected were presented and interpreted in Chapter 4. The results were indicative of whether the objectives of this study had been reached.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this study and results thereof are summarised as follows:

- To conduct a literature study on the main concepts and their inter-relationship as determined by previous research in other contexts:

- an extensive literature study was done regarding the main concepts of interest, namely perceptions of office politics, stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees working in law firms. The literature review indicated that perceptions of office politics can lead to job stress and subsequent burnout and turnaround intent by employees. It can also influence employees' work engagement.
- To empirically assess employees' perceptions regarding the levels of office politics prevalent in their work environment:
 - employees' perceptions regarding the levels of perceived office politics in their working environment seemed to be neither here nor there as results indicated neither High nor Low levels as the Neutral/Safe option was prevalent. It was noted that such results needed to be interpreted with caution due to the central tendency bias.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics, job stress, burnout and turnaround intent:
 - results indicated that there was not only a positive relationship between perceptions of office politics and each of the outcomes measured separately but also between perceptions of office politics and all of the outcomes combined.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement:
 - the assessment of the relationship indicated that there was a negative relationship between office politics and work engagement.
- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological safety, psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness:
 - the results of the research indicated that there was a negative relationship between perceptions of office politics and each of the antecedents of work engagement.

- To empirically assess the relationship between perceptions of office politics and the sub-group gender:
 - males and females did not relate differently regarding perceptions of office politics.
- To empirically assess the relationship between qualifications of the sub-groups and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent:
 - the more qualified respondents were, the more it seems that they experienced more stress, burnout and turnaround intent than their counterparts with lower qualifications.
- To empirically assess the relationship between years working for the organisation of the sub-groups and turnaround intent:
 - the results indicated that the fewer years a respondent had worked for the organisation, the more turnaround intent that respondent had.

In the light of the above the following recommendations are made.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are suggested for management as well as for future research.

5.4.1 Recommendations for management

Recommendations for management regarding each of the objectives are as follows:

- Employee perceptions regarding the levels of office politics are prevalent in their work environment:
 - the age-old saying that perception is reality must be taken note of by management. Although the results indicated a neither here nor there level of perceptions of office politics, this result is specifically important to management as it did not indicate whether there were indeed high or low levels of perceptions. The implication is twofold, either management applies good governance and that employees did not perceive their

working environment as (highly) political or they might have been players of the central tendency bias in that they either did not want to make a choice or were too afraid to make a choice, although confidentiality was assured. Whatever the case might be, it will be to management's advantage to take note of the recommendations to curb or eliminate perceptions of office politics.

As indicated in Chapter 2, section 2.7 and 2.8, ethical leadership is paramount and management should take note of the presence of political activities in their organisation and make efforts to eliminate/eradicate same: this is achievable by trying to understanding their employees motivation for such activities and to implement a two way communication (positive feedback initiative) system (Rosen *et al.*, 2006:211; Harris *et al.*, 2009:2682) and thus to ensure that employees know that decisions made are not politically driven but made for the good and the survival of the organisation.

Key political players should be identified and persuaded to reduce their activities (Chang *et al.*, 2009:795). However, the best way to eliminate office politics might be for management itself to be excellent models of organisational citizenship (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316). More control over their work can be given to employees but only if those employees' work performance lends it toward such an initiative (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010:316).

Management can introduce training opportunities, not only for themselves but also for all their employees in political skills (Ferris *et al.*, 2008:756).

- The relationship between perceptions of office politics, job stress, burnout and turnaround intent:
 - to address the levels of perceptions of office politics as set out above and introduce wellness programmes, management should implement conflict resolution courses and stress management programmes (Chang *et al.*, 2009:796). If possible, increase resources specific to the needs of

employees. Be transparent about the value and long-term prospects of the employee for and at the firm and implement clear pay and promotion policies. Implement and maintain equal opportunities for employees.

- The relationship between perceptions of office politics and work engagement:
 - if management decreased/eradicated the levels of perceptions of office politics in the organisation, employees will be more engaged in their daily tasks and they will concomitantly connect more and have more energy to expend on their daily tasks.
- The relationship between perceptions of office politics and psychological safety, psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness:
 - by decreasing the perceptions of office politics in the organisation, the safer, available and meaningful employees will feel and thereby increase their engagement in their daily tasks and simultaneously reduce their job stress, subsequent burnout and turnover intentions.
- The relationship between perceptions of office politics and the sub-group gender:
 - management is advised to maintain equal pay and promotion and equal opportunity policies.
- The relationship between qualifications of the sub-groups and job stress, burnout and turnaround intent:
 - management is advised to reduce stress by allocating more resources to higher-qualified employees; however, in these economic times it might not be easy to do this. Management can also introduce wellness programmes, stress management programmes and conflict resolution mechanisms to address this issue.
- The relationship between years working for the organisation of the sub-groups and turnaround intent:
 - this issue can be addressed by educating employees and thus enabling

them to read the internal rules and culture of the organisation when it comes to long-term prospects and the value of each employee for the organisation: most importantly the pay and promoting policies of the particular organisation must be aligned. They must also have a clear understanding of the industry and its unique demands.

5.4.2 Recommendations for future research

This study lends itself to various opportunities for future research.

The difference between how males and females related to the sub-construct *Pay and promotion* and Question 35 (*I often feel detached from my job*) as well as the differences how they relate to job stress, burnout and turnaround intent is worth exploring in a larger sample to ascertain more specific reasons for those differences.

The influence of perceptions of office politics on work engagement as well as the influence thereof on the antecedents of work engagement, namely psychological safety, psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness, suggests a fruitful avenue for further research not only in this chosen sector but it will also be advantageous in all business sectors due to the impact thereof on the workforce and organisation itself.

This aim of this study was not to address how the impact of perceptions of office politics on work engagement is mitigated through psychological safety, psychological availability and psychological meaningfulness, but it does suggest an avenue for future research that can be pursued.

Lastly, future research is needed to ascertain the effects of perceptions of office politics at different levels in the organisation.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This Chapter gave an overview of the study and conclusions regarding the objectives. Lastly recommendations for management and future research were made.

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ANNEXURE A: APPROVAL LETTER

LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

9 June 2014

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH WITH EMPLOYEES OF YOUR ORGANISATION

My name is Elzabie Maré and I am currently a registered final year MBA student at the Potchefstroom Business School at the North-West University. As partial fulfilment of my MBA degree, I am conducting a research project for my dissertation. The title of my research dissertation is "The influence of perceived office politics on stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees in law firms".

The purpose of this research is to ascertain the influence of perceived office politics on job stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees. The value of this research will be advantageous to all law firms - management will be able to determine if there are negative office politics within the organisation, and what the consequences thereof are on the productivity of their employees.

I hereby request permission to conduct the research by approaching your firm's employees. The research will be done using the attached questionnaire. Please take note that the confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured, and that the research will be conducted purely for academic purposes. It will take about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. With your kind approval, I would appreciate your department arranging the distribution of the attached questionnaire to all your employees. The completed questionnaires, with the signed permission letter must be returned to me at elzabie.mare@gmail.com on or before the 20th of June 2014.

Permission is granted (please tick appropriate box)

YES	NO
-----	----

Signature: _____ Designation: _____ Date: _____

I thank you for your time and effort to conduct this research.

Yours faithfully

Elzabie Maré

Email: elzabie.mare@gmail.com Mobile: +(27)73-170-7854

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

“The influence of perceived office politics on stress, turnaround intent and work engagement of employees in law firms”

You are requested to construct your own personal code. This code will only be known to the researcher and to you. This will not place your anonymity or the confidentiality of the information herein in jeopardy. Should there be future data gathering you will be asked the same questions, in order to reconstruct your code. This code enables the researcher to study the development of office politics, job stress, job turnaround intent and work engagement over a period of time while you will remain anonymous.

	Example	Your code
1. Give the first and last letter of the town or city you were born in	Durban = DN	
2. Give the first and last letter of your mother's maiden name (her surname before she got married)	Ackerman = AN	
3. Give the first and last letter of your mother's name	Cindy = CY	

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **AGE:** _____

Please tick the appropriate box:

2. **GENDER:** ☐ 1. Male ☐ 2. Female

3. **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS** (Mark only the highest level of education)

- ☐ 1. Grade 12 (Matric) ☐ 2. Post Matric qualification (diploma) ☐ 3. University degree
☐ 4. Postgraduate degree ☐ 5. Grade 11 or lower

4. **WHAT IS YOUR HOME / FIRST LANGUAGE?**

- ☐ 1. Afrikaans ☐ 2. English ☐ 3. Sesotho ☐ 4. Setswana ☐ 5. isiXhosa
☐ 6. isiZulu ☐ 7. Other (please specify) _____

5. **HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING FOR THE ORGANISATION?**

- ☐ 1. 1-4 years; ☐ 2. 5-9 years; ☐ 3. 10-14 years; 4. ☐ longer than 14 years

6. **POSITION IN THE ORGANISATION**

- ☐ 1. Managerial; ☐ 2. Non Managerial; ☐ 3. Administrative; ☐ 4. Support staff
☐ 5. Other (please specify) _____

7. **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

- ☐ 1. Permanent; ☐ 2. Part time; ☐ 3. Other (please specify) _____

PART 2: PERCEPTIONS OF OFFICE POLITICS

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.
Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. People in this organisation attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down	1	2	3	4	5
2. There has always been an influential group in this department that no one ever crosses	1	2	3	4	5
3. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas	1	2	3	4	5
4. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors	1	2	3	4	5
5. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
6. It is best not to rock the boat in this organisation	1	2	3	4	5
7. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system	1	2	3	4	5
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind	1	2	3	4	5
10. Since I have worked in this department, I have seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically	1	2	3	4	5
11. I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or a promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies	1	2	3	4	5
12. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined	1	2	3	4	5
13. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined	1	2	3	4	5
14. When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5
15. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political	1	2	3	4	5

PART 3: JOB STRESS

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.
Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I work under a great deal of tension	1	2	3	4	5
17. If I have a different job, my health would probably improve	1	2	3	4	5
18. I get irritated or annoyed over the way things are going here	1	2	3	4	5
19. I seem to tire quickly	1	2	3	4	5
20. I feel emotionally drained by my work	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel used up at the end of the workday	1	2	3	4	5
22. Working with people all day is really a strain for me	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: JOB STRESS continued

23. I feel burned out by my work	1	2	3	4	5
24. I feel I'm working too hard on my job	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	1	2	3	4	5

PART 4: TURNAROUND INTENT

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.
Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. I am actively looking for other jobs	1	2	3	4	5
27. I feel that I could leave this job	1	2	3	4	5
28. If I was completely free to choose I would leave this job	1	2	3	4	5

PART 5: WORK ENGAGEMENT

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.
Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else	1	2	3	4	5
30. I often think about other things when performing my job	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am rarely distracted when performing my job	1	2	3	4	5
32. Time passes quickly when I perform my job	1	2	3	4	5
33. I really put my heart into my job	1	2	3	4	5
34. I get excited when I perform well on my job	1	2	3	4	5
35. I often feel emotionally detached from my job	1	2	3	4	5
36. My own feelings are affected by how well I perform my job	1	2	3	4	5
37. I exert a lot of energy performing my job	1	2	3	4	5
38. I stay until the job is done	1	2	3	4	5
39. I avoid working overtime whenever possible	1	2	3	4	5
40. I take work home to do	1	2	3	4	5
41. I avoid working too hard	1	2	3	4	5
42. The work I do on this job is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5
43. My job activities are personally meaningful to me	1	2	3	4	5
44. The work I do on this job is worthwhile	1	2	3	4	5
45. My job activities are significant to me	1	2	3	4	5
46. The work I do on this job is meaningful to me	1	2	3	4	5
47. I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable	1	2	3	4	5
48. I'm not afraid to be myself at work	1	2	3	4	5
49. I am afraid to express my opinions at work	1	2	3	4	5
50. There is a threatening environment at work	1	2	3	4	5

PART 5: WORK ENGAGEMENT continued

51. I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work	1	2	3	4	5
52. I am confident in my ability to deal with problems that come up at work	1	2	3	4	5
53. I am confident in my ability to think clearly at work	1	2	3	4	5
54. I am confident in my ability to display the appropriate emotions at work	1	2	3	4	5
55. I am confident that I can handle the physical demands at work	1	2	3	4	5

ANNEXURE C: FREQUENCY OF COMPLETION OF QUESTIONS BY PARTICIPANTS: PART 2 TO PART 5

PART 2: PERCEPTIONS OF OFFICE POLITICS

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.
Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Missing	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. People in this organisation attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down	38	50	31	31	12	0	2.56	1.25
2. There has always been an influential group in this department that no one ever crosses	35	48	28	38	11	2	2.64	1.25
3. Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas	12	37	48	48	13	4	3.08	1.08
4. There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors	11	37	58	43	9	4	3.01	1.01
5. Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organisation	10	43	53	45	8	3	2.99	1.01
6. It is best not to rock the boat in this organisation	12	44	33	52	19	2	3.14	1.17
7. Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system	9	31	24	74	21	3	3.42	1.12
8. Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth	28	55	26	42	11	0	2.71	1.22
9. It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind	21	50	38	44	9	0	2.81	1.12
10. Since I have worked in this department, I have seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically	23	54	51	25	8	1	2.63	1.07
11. I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or a promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies	20	32	67	27	14	2	2.89	1.10
12. None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined	35	41	60	16	6	4	2.47	1.06
13. The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined	20	27	75	31	8	1	2.88	1.02
14. When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant	20	41	61	30	8	2	2.78	1.05
15. Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political	34	48	58	13	8	1	2.46	1.07

PART 3: JOB STRESS

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.

Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Missing	Mean	Standard Deviation
16. I work under a great deal of tension	14	35	30	55	26	2	3.28	1.22
17. If I have a different job, my health would probably improve	30	61	33	27	11	0	2.56	1.17
18. I get irritated or annoyed over the way things are going here	23	42	45	40	11	1	2.84	1.16
19. I seem to tire quickly	31	60	40	27	3	1	2.45	1.04
20. I feel emotionally drained by my work	32	51	39	32	8	0	2.59	1.16
21. I feel used up at the end of the workday	29	47	39	39	7	1	2.68	1.15
22. Working with people all day is really a strain for me	44	69	31	12	4	2	2.14	.99
23. I feel burned out by my work	35	65	40	16	6	0	2.34	1.04
24. I feel I'm working too hard on my job	29	58	45	20	9	1	2.52	1.10
25. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	50	70	31	3	8	0	2.07	1.01

PART 4: TURNAROUND INTENT

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.

Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Missing	Mean	Standard Deviation
26. I am actively looking for other jobs	61	55	23	15	7	1	2.08	1.14
27. I feel that I could leave this job	46	59	33	15	8	1	2.25	1.12
28. If I was completely free to choose I would leave this job	48	51	31	18	13	1	2.36	1.24

PART 5: WORK ENGAGEMENT

Please read the statements below carefully before rating.

Please indicate your answer by circling the chosen number.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Missing	Mean	Standard Deviation
29. Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else	14	40	44	53	11	0	3.04	1.10
30. I often think about other things when performing my job	19	64	45	27	5	2	2.59	1.00
31. I am rarely distracted when performing my job	11	47	44	49	8	3	2.97	1.04
32. Time passes quickly when I perform my job	1	3	16	103	38	1	4.08	.68
33. I really put my heart into my job	1	3	16	89	52	1	4.17	.73
34. I get excited when I perform well on my job	1	4	7	75	72	3	4.34	.74
35. I often feel emotionally detached from my job	10	60	53	30	5	4	2.75	.94

PART 5: WORK ENGAGEMENT continued

36. My own feelings are affected by how well I perform my job	8	27	43	63	21	0	3.38	1.07
37. I exert a lot of energy performing my job	2	13	42	78	23	4	3.68	.87
38. I stay until the job is done	3	19	46	71	23	0	3.57	.934
39. I avoid working overtime whenever possible	26	58	28	36	11	3	2.67	1.19
40. I take work home to do	25	53	31	43	10	0	2.75	1.19
41. I avoid working too hard	43	84	20	9	5	1	2.06	.95
42. The work I do on this job is very important to me	1	4	16	77	63	1	4.22	.77
43. My job activities are personally meaningful to me	2	3	35	81	41	0	3.96	.81
44. The work I do on this job is worthwhile	2	7	20	95	38	0	3.99	.80
45. My job activities are significant to me	2	2	34	89	34	1	3.94	.76
46. The work I do on this job is meaningful to me	1	5	26	88	42	0	4.02	.78
47. I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable	0	3	22	90	47	0	4.12	.70
48. I'm not afraid to be myself at work	2	10	18	90	42	0	3.99	.86
49. I am afraid to express my opinions at work	24	58	49	20	9	2	2.58	1.07
50. There is a threatening environment at work	44	53	33	22	8	2	2.36	1.17
51. I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work	1	1	21	109	30	0	4.02	.63
52. I am confident in my ability to deal with problems that come up at work	1	3	19	106	33	0	4.03	.67
53. I am confident in my ability to think clearly at work	1	1	18	106	35	1	4.07	.64
54. I am confident in my ability to display the appropriate emotions at work	2	7	42	88	23	0	3.76	.80
55. I am confident that I can handle the physical demands at work	1	3	22	106	29	1	3.99	.67

ANNEXURE D: QUESTION TYPE, SOURCES OF CONSTRUCTS, SUB-CONSTRUCTS AND ANTECEDENTS

Part 2: Perceptions of office politics

No	Question type*	Questions	MAIN CONSTRUCT: PERCEPTIONS OF OFFICE POLITICS			Question source
			Sub-constructs			
			General political behaviour	Go along to get ahead	Pay and promotion	
1	N	People in this organisation attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down	X			Kacmar & Carlson
2	N	There has always been an influential group in this department that no one ever crosses	X			Kacmar & Carlson
3	R	Employees are encouraged to speak out frankly even when they are critical of well-established ideas		X		Kacmar & Carlson
4	R	There is no place for yes-men around here; good ideas are desired even if it means disagreeing with superiors		X		Kacmar & Carlson
5	N	Agreeing with powerful others is the best alternative in this organisation		X		Kacmar & Carlson
6	N	It is best not to rock the boat in this organisation		X		Kacmar & Carlson
7	N	Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system		X		Kacmar & Carlson
8	N	Telling others what they want to hear is sometimes better than telling the truth		X		Kacmar & Carlson
9	N	It is safer to think what you are told than to make up your own mind		X		Kacmar & Carlson
10**	N	Since I have worked in this department, I have seen the pay and promotion policies applied politically			X	Kacmar & Carlson
11	R	I can't remember when a person received a pay increase or a promotion that was inconsistent with the published policies			X	Kacmar & Carlson
12	N	None of the raises I have received are consistent with the policies on how raises should be determined			X	Kacmar & Carlson
13	N	The stated pay and promotion policies have nothing to do with how pay raises and promotions are determined			X	Kacmar & Carlson
14	N	When it comes to pay raise and promotion decisions, policies are irrelevant			X	Kacmar & Carlson
15	N	Promotions around here are not valued much because how they are determined is so political			X	Kacmar & Carlson

Part 3: Job stress

No	Question type*	Question	MAIN CONSTRUCT: JOB STRESS		Question source
			Main construct	Sub-construct	
			Job stress	Burnout	
16	N	I work under a great deal of tension	X		Vigoda; Vigoda & Kapun
17	N	If I have a different job, my health would probably improve	X		Vigoda; Vigoda & Kapun
18	N	I get irritated or annoyed over the way things are going here	X		Vigoda; Vigoda & Kapun
19	N	I seem to tire quickly	X		Vigoda; Vigoda & Kapun
20	N	I feel emotionally drained by my work		X	Maslach & Jackson
21	N	I feel used up at the end of the workday		X	Maslach & Jackson
22	N	Working with people all day is really a strain for me		X	Maslach & Jackson
23	N	I feel burned out by my work		X	Maslach & Jackson
24	N	I feel I'm working too hard on my job		X	Maslach & Jackson
25	N	I feel like I'm at the end of my rope		X	Maslach & Jackson

Part 4: Turnaround intent

No	Question type	Question	MAIN CONSTRUCT: TURNAROUND INTENT	Question source
26	N	I am actively looking for other jobs	X	Sjoberg & Sverke
27	N	I feel that I could leave this job	X	Sjoberg & Sverke
28	N	If I was completely free to choose I would leave this job	X	Sjoberg & Sverke

Part 5: Work engagement

No	Question type*	Question	MAIN CONSTRUCT: WORK ENGAGEMENT			Question source
			Sub-constructs			
			Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	
29	N	Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
30	R	I often think about other things when performing my job	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
31	N	I am rarely distracted when performing my job	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
32	N	Time passes quickly when I perform my job	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
33	N	I really put my heart into my job		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
34	N	I get excited when I perform well on my job		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
35	R	I often feel emotionally detached from my job		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
36	N	My own feelings are affected by how well I perform my job		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
37	N	I exert a lot of energy performing my job			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,

38	N	I stay until the job is done			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
39	R	I avoid working overtime whenever possible			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
40	N	I take work home to do			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
41	R	I avoid working too hard			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,

Antecedents of work engagement

No	Question type*	Question	ANTECEDENTS			Question source
			Meaning Fullness	Safety	Availability	
42	N	The work I do on this job is very important to me	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
43	N	My job activities are personally meaningful to me	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
44	N	The work I do on this job is worthwhile	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
45	N	My job activities are significant to me	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
46	N	The work I do on this job is meaningful to me	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
47	N	I feel that the work I do on my job is valuable	X			May <i>et al.</i> ,
48	N	I'm not afraid to be myself at work		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
49	R	I am afraid to express my opinions at work		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
50	R	There is a threatening environment at work		X		May <i>et al.</i> ,
51	N	I am confident in my ability to handle competing demands at work			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
52	N	I am confident in my ability to deal with problems that come up at work			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
53	N	I am confident in my ability to think clearly at work			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
54	N	I am confident in my ability to display the appropriate emotions at work			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,
55	N	I am confident that I can handle the physical demands at work			X	May <i>et al.</i> ,

* R- Reversed phrase questions

* N- Normal phrased questions

** It must be noted that Question10 has not been treated as a reversed question as per the questionnaire by Kacmar & Carlson, 1997, however, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha, should the question be deleted from the sub-construct *Pay and promotion*, decreased from 0.65 to 0.63 and did not influence reliability in any substantial way.

ANNEXURE E: SPEARMAN'S CORELLATION COEFFICIENT

	General political behaviour	Go along to get ahead	Pay and promotion	Job stress	Burnout	Turnaround intent	Question 29	Question 30	Question 31	Question 32	Emotional	Question 35	Question 36	Physical	Meaningfulness	Safety	Availability
General political behaviour	1.00	.444 [*]	.352 [*]	.340 [*]	.207 [*]	.301 [*]	.010	.092	.106	.154 ⁻	.136 ⁻	.260 [*]	.042	.059	-.144	.369 [*]	.107 ⁻
Go along to get ahead	.444 ^{**}	1.00	.352 [*]	.298 [*]	.336 [*]	.366 [*]	.033	.120	.062 ⁻	.181 ⁻	.176 ⁻	.261 [*]	.024	.120 ⁻	.184 ⁻	.374 [*]	.271 [*]
Pay and promotion	.352 ^{**}	.352 [*]	1.00	.193 [*]	.208 [*]	.256 [*]	.075 ⁻	.080	.187 ⁻	.187 ⁻	.191 ⁻	.145 ⁻	.005 ⁻	.026 ⁻	.167 ⁻	.206 [*]	.064 ⁻
Job stress	.340 ^{**}	.298 [*]	.193 [*]	1.00	.776 [*]	.614 [*]	.271 [*]	.173 [*]	.142	.130 ⁻	.162 ⁻	.217 [*]	.115	.180 [*]	.258 [*]	.426 [*]	.109 ⁻
Burnout	.207 ^{**}	.336 [*]	.208 [*]	.776 [*]	1.00	.678 [*]	.255 [*]	.161 [*]	.103	.231 [*]	.224 [*]	.237 [*]	.104	.096	.332 [*]	.406 [*]	.179 ⁻
Turn-around-intent	.301 ^{**}	.366 [*]	.256 [*]	.614 [*]	.678 [*]	1.00	.065	.304 [*]	.092	.329 [*]	.366 [*]	.297 [*]	.015 ⁻	.073 ⁻	.437 [*]	.428 [*]	.227 [*]
Question 29	.010	.033	.075 ⁻	.271 [*]	.255 [*]	.065	1.00	.032 ⁻	.015	.042	.087	.065	.030	.067	-.059	.095 ⁻	.042 ⁻
Question 30	.092	.120	.080	.173 [*]	.161 [*]	.304 [*]	.032 ⁻	1.00	.037	.218 [*]	.191 ⁻	.189 [*]	.077	.025 ⁻	-.135	.255 [*]	.131 ⁻
Question 31	.106	.062 ⁻	.187 ⁻	.142	.103	.092	.015	.037	1.00	.063	.054 ⁻	.030	.023	.177 [*]	.009	.070 ⁻	.030
Question 32	-.154	.181 ⁻	.187 ⁻	.130	.231 [*]	.329 [*]	.042	.218 [*]	.063	1.00	.542 [*]	.196 ⁻	.095	.272 ^{**}	.359 [*]	.237 [*]	.342 [*]
Emotional	-.136	.176 ⁻	.191 ⁻	.162 ⁻	.224 [*]	.366 [*]	.087	.191 ⁻	.054 ⁻	.542 [*]	1.00	.264 [*]	.196 [*]	.277 ^{**}	.629 [*]	.326 [*]	.379 [*]
Question 35	.260 ^{**}	.261 [*]	.145 ⁻	.217 [*]	.237 [*]	.297 [*]	.065	.189 [*]	.030	.196 ⁻	.264 [*]	1.00	.023	.086 ⁻	.231 [*]	.220 [*]	.194 ⁻
Question 36	.042	.024	.005 ⁻	.115	.104	.015 ⁻	.030	.077	.023	.095	.196 [*]	.023	1.00	.233 ^{**}	.145	.066 ⁻	.079
Physical	.059	.120 ⁻	.026 ⁻	.180 [*]	.096	.073 ⁻	.067	.025 ⁻	.177 [*]	.272 [*]	.277 [*]	.086 ⁻	.233 ^{**}	1.00	.251 [*]	.047 ⁻	.240 [*]
Meaningfulness	-.144	.184 ⁻	.167 ⁻	.258 [*]	.332 [*]	.437 [*]	.059	.135 ⁻	.009	.359 [*]	.629 [*]	.231 [*]	.145	.251 [*]	1.00	.340 [*]	.384 [*]
Safety	.369 [*]	.374 [*]	.206 [*]	.426 [*]	.406 [*]	.428 [*]	.095	.255 [*]	.070	.237 [*]	.326 [*]	.220 [*]	.066	.047 ⁻	.340 [*]	1.00	.441 [*]
Availability	-.107	.271 [*]	.064 ⁻	.109	.179 ⁻	.227 [*]	.042	.131 ⁻	.030	.342 [*]	.379 [*]	.194 ⁻	.079	.240 ^{**}	.384 [*]	.441 [*]	1.00

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)