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The Mediating Role of Work Engagement and Burnout in the Relationship between Job Characteristics and Psychological Distress among Lawyers

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Veronica Margaret Hopkins

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Abstract

Research to date has found that lawyers are disproportionately affected by psychological distress when compared to the general population and other occupations. In this study, the Job Demands-Resources Model was used to examine which job characteristics are associated with psychological distress among lawyers, and to confirm the mediating roles of burnout and work engagement. Graduates, solicitors and partners (N = 94) from a large New Zealand law firm completed a survey on job characteristics, burnout (work-related exhaustion), work engagement, and psychological distress. Regression analyses showed that both job demands and job resources were important influences for burnout, with work-family conflict, low role clarity, and work-role fit identified as predictors. Job resources were more influential for work engagement, with work-role fit and positive challenge identified as predictors, along with the position level of the lawyer. The dual impact of work-role fit on burnout and work engagement was an unexpected finding, and highlights the potential benefit of this variable for mental health. This study also found support for the strain and motivational pathways of the Job Demands-Resources Model. Work engagement mediated the relationship between job resources and psychological distress, and burnout mediated the relationship between job demands and psychological distress. Both burnout and work engagement were significant predictors of psychological distress. This study provides support for a dual focus on reducing job demands related to burnout, and increasing the availability of job resources that influence work engagement, to reduce psychological distress among lawyers.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Over the past few decades, the majority of psychological research undertaken with lawyers has studied negative outcomes such as depression and anxiety. This focus is consistent with psychological research in general, which has tended to investigate negative rather than positive psychological states (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Cumulative evidence suggests a high prevalence of psychological distress among lawyers compared to the general population (Daicoff, 2004; Nelk, Luscombe, Medlow, & Hickie, 2009) and other occupations (Eaton, Antony, Mandel, & Garrison, 1990). Research investigating why lawyers exhibit higher levels of distress has typically focused on the impact of law school, job characteristics that lead to dissatisfaction, and common personality factors among lawyers that may make them more susceptible to psychological distress. To date, the research findings suggest that both socialisation and self-selection processes may play a part in contributing to mental health problems among lawyers (Daicoff, 2004, Elwork, 2007). Chapter Two discusses the research on lawyers and psychological distress carried out to date.

In line with the positive psychology approach to research (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), this study aims to identify those aspects of lawyers' work that lead to both positive and negative psychological outcomes, in particular work engagement, burnout (work-related exhaustion) and psychological distress. High levels of burnout are associated with increased psychological distress (Shirom, Melamed, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2005), and high levels of work engagement are associated with reduced psychological distress (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). Investigating on-the-job characteristics that are associated with burnout and work engagement can provide insight into those aspects of work which can influence mental health outcomes for lawyers.

Burnout is commonly defined as the negative consequences of exposure to chronic job stress, and is closely related to, yet distinct from, depression (Shirom, et al. 2005). The dominant model in the literature defines burnout as a syndrome which consists of three main components: emotional exhaustion (depletion of emotional energy due to on-going pressures), cynicism (detachment from colleagues and clients, and increased indifference about work), and reduced personal accomplishment (feelings of incompetence) (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The exhaustion component of burnout in particular is related to a range of negative outcomes for individuals and organisations, such as poor physical and mental health, low organisational commitment, turnover, and poor performance. Demanding or stressful aspects of work such as a high workload, lack of control over important decisions relating to the job, lack of clarity around job tasks and responsibilities, lack of support from supervisors and colleagues, and competing work and personal demands are associated with high levels of burnout. This study investigates which of these job characteristics (i.e. job demands) are most likely to predict burnout (in particular, work-related exhaustion) among lawyers. Chapter Three discusses the concept of burnout, and its antecedents and outcomes in more detail.

In addition, this study investigates which positive and fulfilling aspects of work (i.e. job characteristics that assist to achieve work goals and stimulate personal development) are most likely to predict work engagement among lawyers. Work engagement can be defined as a positive work related state of mind, which consists of three components: vigor (high levels of energy and a resilient mental attitude), dedication (enthusiasm, challenge and significance) and absorption (a tendency to be fully engrossed in work) (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Work engagement has been linked to a range of positive outcomes for individuals and organisations such as physical and mental health, high job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, high performance, and lower turnover intentions. Positive aspects of work (or job resources) that can lead to work engagement

include social support and performance feedback from supervisors and colleagues, control over important work-related decisions, and work that is positively challenging and meaningful, and provides a positive sense of identity through a good match between personal values and work (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The concept of work engagement, and its antecedents and outcomes, are discussed further in chapter four.

This study also investigates the mediating role of burnout and work engagement in the relationship between job characteristics and psychological distress. The Job Demands-Resources Model, adapted by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) is used as a framework for this study as it encompasses both burnout and work engagement as potential mediators in the process by which work factors can influence mental health outcomes. Chapter five introduces the Job Demands-Resources Model and outlines how it can be used to investigate the hypothesised relationships in this study. Chapter six describes the data collection methods and procedures, and the measures included in the survey. The results of this study are reported in chapter seven. Chapter eight includes a discussion of the main findings, outlines the limitations of this study, and highlights implications for research and practice.

Chapter Two: Lawyers and Psychological Distress

Chapter two sets the stage for this thesis by reviewing the research on lawyers and psychological distress. Research findings showing a link between the legal profession and mental health problems are discussed. In addition, common law school experiences, lawyer work characteristics, and personality factors are identified as possible mitigating factors that may increase psychological distress among lawyers.

2.1 Background

Research carried out with lawyers to date indicates that they are disproportionately affected by psychological distress (e.g. symptoms of depression and anxiety) compared with the general population, and other occupations. Studies undertaken in the United States have consistently shown that lawyers are more than twice as likely as the general population to experience depression (Benjamin, Darling & Sales, 1990; Daicoff, 2004). In addition, lawyers report elevated levels of anxiety when compared to the general population (Beck, Sales & Benjamin, 1995; Daicoff, 2004). This trend does not appear limited to the United States, with recent research indicating that Australian lawyers also suffer from higher than average rates of psychological distress (Nelk et al., 2009). In particular, the Australian study found that 31% of solicitors reported high or very high levels of psychological distress (i.e. symptoms of depression and anxiety) compared with 13% of the general population in Australia (aged 17 years and over) (Nelk et al., 2009).

While some critics may argue that professional occupations in general are likely to be associated with higher psychological distress, there is evidence to suggest that lawyers are more likely to suffer from mental health problems than other occupations. Seminal research carried out by the John Hopkins University showed that lawyers in the

United States had one of the highest rates of major depressive disorder among 104 occupational groups in the study (Eaton et al., 1990). After adjusting for age, sex, race, education and current employment, lawyers were more than three times more likely than other occupations to suffer from depression (Eaton et al., 1990). Similarly, in Australia, the BeyondBlue and Beaton Consulting Annual Professions Survey of April 2007 found that professionals (including employees from legal, financial and architectural industries) had higher levels of depression than the general population. Within the professional group, the legal profession fared the worst, with lawyers being more than twice as likely to suffer from depression when compared to other professionals (Beaton Consulting, 2007).

The potential for significant consequences arising from psychological distress (including substance abuse, lawyer malpractice and suicide), has provided impetus for research that sheds light into why lawyers suffer from high levels of depression and anxiety. Clearly, the legal profession differs in some way from other occupations, in either the nature of people it attracts and / or the experiences that lawyers must go through to become a lawyer and work in this profession. As a result, the literature to date has focused on the degree to which both self selection and socialisation processes play a part in the development of psychological distress among lawyers (Dammeyer & Nunez, 1999). Three avenues of research have emerged: studies have been undertaken with law students to understand whether the experience of law school impacts on mental health; research has also investigated which aspects of lawyers' work contribute to lawyer dissatisfaction (a correlate of psychological distress) and, thirdly, research has focused on common personality traits among lawyers and whether these make lawyers more susceptible to psychological distress.

2.2 Impact of Law School

In one of the first well conducted studies on law student distress, Shanfield and Benjamin (1985) found that law students at the University of Arizona were significantly more likely to report high levels of depression and anxiety than the general population. This elevated level of distress reflected more than just mentally challenging work, as law students were significantly more likely to exhibit symptoms of psychological distress than medical students (Shanfield & Benjamin, 1985). A more recent Australian study undertaken by Nelk et al. (2009) also found high levels of psychological distress among law students when compared to the general population, and medical students. In this Australian study, 35% of law students reported high or very high levels of psychological distress, compared with 18% of medical students, and 13% of the general population of Australia aged between 18-34 years (Nelk et al., 2009).

In order to explore whether higher levels of psychological distress were present prior to law school, Benjamin, Kaszniak, Sales, and Shanfield (1986) conducted a quasi-longitudinal study that measured the mental health of law students before, during and after their law school experience. They found that prospective law students exhibited similar levels of psychological distress to the general population before they started law school. However, within the first one to three years of law school these students reported elevated psychological distress symptoms (including depression and anxiety) compared to the general population, and these symptoms did not abate two years after law school. As a result, Benjamin et al. (1986) concluded that law school has a pervasive socialising influence on law students. However, critics would argue that this study did not measure the same students over time, and as such the researchers were not able to distinguish individual student changes in psychological distress.

More recently, Reifman, McIntosh, and Ellsworth (2001) conducted a similar study in the United States which attempted to address this methodological issue by tracking individual law students over time. These researchers found that prior to law school, the potential law students' levels of depression were similar to the general population norms. However, when re-tested at the end of their first and third year of law school, approximately 50% of the students' scores were equal to or higher than the cut-off score used to identify cases of depression (compared to 5 - 20% expected in the general population, using the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies - Depression Scale) (Reifman et al., 2001). This study provides evidence for the assertion that the experience of law school contributes to psychological distress. Further, Reifman et al. (2001) argue that these results reflect more than just a life transition due to the stability of depression levels found among approximately half of law students during their law school experience.

Some researchers have argued that earlier studies on law student depression and anxiety suffer from methodological issues such as reliance on self-report data, potential for response bias, over reporting distress, differing cut-off scores (Dammeyer & Nunez, 1999). However, as more research has been undertaken over time and consistent results have been found, cumulative evidence suggests that the experience of law school may contribute to elevated psychological distress levels (Daicoff, 2004). Common causes of law student stress have been identified as excessive workloads and time pressures, lack of support from faculty, and failure to deal with interpersonal concerns (Benjamin et al., 1986). Also the competitive nature of law school, use of the Socratic method (which can lead to humiliation and embarrassment in front of peers), lack of clear and timely feedback (Sheehy & Horan, 2004), and lack of control and isolation may cause distress (Reifman et al., 2001).

One of the few studies to empirically investigate possible causes of increased psychological distress during law school focused on how changes in law student values

and motivation influenced well-being. Sheldon and Krieger (2004) argue that the intense pressures and competitive culture of law school begin a process where law students move “away from positive personal values and toward more superficial rewards and image-based values, leading to a loss of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and well-being” (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004, p. 263). In this longitudinal study, law students from Florida State University were surveyed three times over a three year period. Sheldon and Krieger (2004) found that law students exhibited similar levels of intrinsic motivation and values, and subjective well-being, as other advanced undergraduates at the beginning of law school. However, by the end of the first year, law students in the study were less likely to pursue law school goals through their own interest and enjoyment, and more likely to be motivated to achieve their goals in order to please or impress others (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004). In addition, these researchers found that law students were less likely to endorse intrinsic values (such as helping others, personal growth, and contributing to society) and more likely to endorse extrinsic values (such as fame, image and money). This decline in intrinsic motivation and values was significantly associated with a decrease in positive affect, life satisfaction and aggregate subjective well-being over the same time period (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004).

Sheldon and Krieger’s research findings are consistent with other research in this area which has found that a high relative emphasis on extrinsic goals and values, rather than intrinsic goals and values, is associated with lower subjective well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that the attainment of extrinsic goals is less likely to be associated with well-being because extrinsic goals are less able to directly satisfy basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (as proposed by Self Determination Theory), whereas attainment of intrinsic goals can enhance well-being through their ability to satisfy these basic psychological needs.

Overall, the research discussed above provides some support for the idea that the experience of law school may contribute to the high levels of psychological distress

identified among law students. Law students appear similar to other students in terms of mental health prior to law school, but exhibit higher levels of depression during law school when compared to other highly trained counterparts such as medical students (Reifman et al., 2001). A shift toward more materialistic (i.e. extrinsic) values and goals has been identified as one possible influencing factor for reduced well-being commonly reported among law students (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004). However, not all law students report high levels of psychological distress. This suggests that individual differences may make some law students more susceptible to negative mental health outcomes during law school than others.

2.3 Work Factors

Another environmental factor that has been researched as a possible contributor to elevated psychological distress among lawyers is their working conditions. Research in this area has tended to focus on job dissatisfaction, a correlate of psychological distress (Daicoff, 2004). Studies have typically investigated demographic variables and job characteristics that are correlated with job satisfaction among lawyers. To date, research investigating gender differences has resulted in inconsistent findings. An American Bar Association survey undertaken in 1994 and 1995 with 788 Chicago lawyers found no significant differences in overall job satisfaction between males and females, although females reported lower satisfaction for seven of the twelve specific aspects of work studied (Heinz, Hull & Harter, 1999). In this study, older lawyers and those with higher incomes reported higher job satisfaction (Heinz et al., 1999). However, this is consistent with research undertaken with other occupations, and does not appear specific to lawyers (Daicoff, 2004).

Research has found that the degree of conflict that lawyers experience between their work and home life can impact on job satisfaction. The results of an American Bar

Association study in 1994 and 1995 (Heinz et al., 1999) found evidence to suggest that lawyers who perceived less conflicting career and personal demands, and those who could balance these demands, were more likely to be satisfied with their job. In addition, lawyers who were willing to work overtime were more likely to report higher job satisfaction (Heinz et al., 1999). In this Chicago study, an interaction effect was found between gender and respondents with children. Lawyers without children displayed no gender effects on the work-life balance questions, whereas male lawyers with children were less likely to perceive a conflict between family duties and the demands of their job compared to female lawyers with children (Heinz et al., 1999).

Another job characteristic that has been studied in regard to lawyer job satisfaction is job autonomy, or the degree of control that lawyers have over important decisions at work. In the 1994 - 1995 study of Chicago lawyers, Heinz et al. (1999) found that job autonomy was positively related to job satisfaction, with those lawyers who indicated greater freedom in selecting clients, and more autonomy over the circumstances of their work, more likely to report high job satisfaction. Two additional areas of work that were associated with higher job satisfaction in the 1994 - 1995 study of Chicago lawyers related to the pace of changes in the law and the perceived technical expertise required for the role. Lawyers who perceived a high need to keep up to date with changes in the law, and those who thought their job required a high degree of specialist expertise, were more likely to report higher job satisfaction (Heinz et al., 1999).

The interpersonal context of a lawyers' job has also been studied in regard to lawyer satisfaction, in particular the availability of social support. Research has shown that lawyers who perceived a lack of social support available to them, or reported that their colleagues were unsupportive, were more likely to be dissatisfied with their job (McCann, Russo, & Benjamin, 1997). In addition, the availability and quality of mentoring (including career advice and psychosocial support) from supervisors and

colleagues can enhance job satisfaction among lawyers. In a study of 130 New York lawyers, Higgins and Thomas (2001) found that respondents who had a large number of supportive mentoring relationships also reported higher job satisfaction. Further, the quality of a lawyers' primary development relationship (in terms of amount of advice and support provided) was also positively associated with job satisfaction (Higgins & Thomas, 2001).

Other aspects of work commonly identified by researchers and lawyers themselves that may contribute to lawyer dissatisfaction include time pressures, work overload, increasing pressures from employers for more billable hours, lack of respect from superiors and client demands (Daicoff, 2004). In addition, the law firm culture may contribute to a sense of generalised anxiety, with internal politics and the adversarial system of law promoting an environment of hostility, suspicion and cynicism (Elwork & Benjamin, 1995).

Similar to the law school findings, the research outlined above suggests that elements of the working environment may contribute to higher levels of lawyer dissatisfaction, which is a correlate of psychological distress. To date there has been limited research on how work factors impact directly on mental health outcomes among lawyers. This study contributes to the research by providing insight into how aspects of lawyers' work can lead to negative psychological outcomes such as burnout and psychological distress, as well as positive outcomes such as work engagement. First, personality characteristics associated with psychological distress (that are relevant for lawyers) are discussed next.

2.4 Personality Traits

The third avenue of research in this area focuses on the possibility that some personality traits, common among lawyers, make them more susceptible to mental health problems. Characteristics which may increase the risk of developing psychological distress include pessimism, preference for rational analysis, perfectionism, justifiable paranoia and a high achievement motivation (Daicoff, 2004; Elwork, 2007).

One of the key personality characteristics associated with psychological distress is pessimism (Daicoff, 2004; Seligman, Verkuil, & Kang, 2005). A pessimistic explanatory style refers to the belief that negative events are likely to be stable (long lasting), internal (their fault) and global (affecting everything in their lives) (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). While pessimism appears to be a maladaptive trait for a wide range of activities such as sales, undergraduate grades, sporting success and leadership (Seligman et al., 2005) it has been correlated with success in law school (Satterfield, Monahan, & Seligman, 1997). Indeed, law students with a pessimistic explanatory style have been found to achieve higher law school grades than those with an optimistic explanatory style (Satterfield et al., 1997).

Researchers posit that this may be due to the positive qualities of pessimism such as prudence, which includes caution, scepticism, and a realistic outlook (Satterfield et al., 1997). These qualities are important for success as a lawyer as they lead to more careful attention to detail, considering both sides of an argument and identifying potential pitfalls (Satterfield et al., 1997). Pessimism may be indirectly reinforced throughout law school through better grades, and in the practice of law through the qualities of prudence (Daicoff, 2004). However, pessimistic lawyers may be at increased risk of depression, as research has shown an association between a

pessimistic explanatory style and depressive symptoms (Peterson & Seligman, 1984). While pessimism is not a sufficient or necessary condition for depression, this trait has been linked to an increase in the probability of depressive episodes (Satterfield et al., 1997).

Another personality trait found to be common among lawyers, with implications for psychological distress, is a preference for logical, analytical decision making (Daicoff, 2004). Research utilising the Myers-Briggs psychological assessment has consistently shown that lawyers are more likely to prefer a 'thinking' rather than 'feeling' decision making style (Daicoff, 2004). The thinking dimension of the Myers-Briggs is associated with logical analysis, cool and impersonal reasoning, and being tolerant of conflict and criticism, whereas the feeling dimension is associated with being attentive to the needs of others, making decisions based on their own preferences, focusing on building relationships, and being likely to avoid criticism and conflict (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

Law school typically has a strong focus on developing analytical and critical thinking skills, which may strengthen students' natural tendency toward rational analysis and lessen the importance of developing interpersonal skills (Daicoff, 2004). However, this strong analytical focus may increase stress among lawyers due to the lack of awareness and appreciation for the positive role that emotions can play and an inability to deal with emotions in a healthy way (Elwork, 2007). In addition, an over-reliance on analytical thinking may mean that law students are not sufficiently sensitive to the feelings of others which can lead to interpersonal difficulties, and in turn, isolation and distress (Elwork, 2007). Lawyers may also rely on rational analysis as a coping strategy and work harder in the face of stress, rather than utilise social support (Daicoff, 2004).

Elwork (2007) also notes that the law firm environment can encourage lawyers to become justifiably paranoid as a result of the adversarial legal system and competitive culture within law firms. Lawyers may be suspicious of others' intentions, suspect others

of ulterior motives and be sceptical, and these realistic responses to the law firm environment may lead to a sense of justified paranoia which can in turn result in generalised anxiety and fear, along with physical symptoms such as insomnia (Elwork, 2007). In addition, Elwork (2007) notes that anxiety about performance can lead to workaholic behaviour that can spill over into a lawyers' personal life and have a negative impact on relationships or lead to isolation, which has been identified as an additional source of stress for lawyers.

Perfectionism has also been identified by researchers as a common personality trait among lawyers that can make them more susceptible to stress, workaholism and depression (Daicoff, 2004). The nature of the law environment leaves little room for errors and may encourage perfectionist thinking. While an element of perfectionism is likely to be helpful for lawyers, whose role requires a focus on accuracy and details, it can also lead to indecision, being overly thorough, procrastinating, and working longer hours which can reduce time available for sleep, socialising and relaxation (Elwork, 2007). Indeed, lawyers with perfectionist tendencies may be prone to allow work to take over their lives which can lead to chronic discontent and job dissatisfaction (Elwork, 2007). Further, while perfectionism can be a driver for top performance, having such high standards of performance can increase the potential for disappointment and lead to stress (Elwork, 2007).

Another common personal characteristic identified among lawyers is a high need for achievement (Daicoff, 2004). The need for achievement refers to the tendency to be motivated to achieve high personal standards and strive for excellence (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). However, Elwork (2007) notes that this need can also lead to workaholism through an insatiable desire for success. Lawyers with a high need for achievement may prioritise professional achievement above personal goals and become preoccupied with work and financial achievement at the expense of fulfilling psychological needs (Elwork, 2007). In addition, while a high need for achievement

may result in obtaining desired extrinsic rewards in the short-term, Elwork (2007) notes it may lead to increased stress and interpersonal difficulties through neglect of other areas of life in the long-term.

The research on personality traits suggests some characteristics which can lead to higher performance in law school and as a practicing lawyer (pessimism, analytical decision making style, perfectionism, and need for achievement) may also place lawyers at greater risk for developing psychological distress (Seligman et al., 2005). People with the personality traits mentioned above may self-select into the profession, and when combined with the stressful environmental demands of law school and working as a lawyer, may be more susceptible to negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Shirom et al., 2005). This is consistent with Schneider's (1987) Attraction-Selection-Attrition Model, which proposes that people are attracted to (and selected by) organisations which suit their personal characteristics. This model proposes that over time an organisation can become homogenous in terms of the type of employees it retains, as individuals whose personal characteristics are not well suited to their environment are more inclined to leave (Schneider, 1987).

Overall, the research outlined above suggests that both self selection and socialisation processes may play a part in the high incidence of psychological distress apparent among lawyers. Various aspects of law school, law in practice and lawyer personality have been associated with increased psychological distress and dissatisfaction among lawyers. However, while law students and lawyers experience similar environmental pressures, not all develop psychological distress. As such, it is likely to be an interaction between environmental factors and certain characteristics inherent in lawyers themselves that may lead to psychological distress for some lawyers. Elwork (2007) proposes a dual-causation model for lawyer stress which takes into account both external stressors and individual differences. This model acknowledges common external stressors faced by lawyers (such as time pressure and

workload) and asserts that individual differences may interact with these stressors to make some lawyers more vulnerable to distress than others (Elwork, 2007).

While personality traits are largely fixed, the characteristics of law school and work may be more open to change and present a promising area of research. This study uses relevant theory and established models of stress and well-being to contribute to research on how work factors influence lawyers' mental health. In line with the positive psychology approach to research (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) this study focuses on both positive and negative outcomes of lawyers' work by investigating the impact of job characteristics on work engagement, burnout / work-related exhaustion and psychological distress. In the next chapter, the work characteristics that are relevant for burnout are outlined and the link between burnout and depression is discussed.

Chapter Three: Burnout

This chapter outlines three prominent models of burnout and provides rationale for the use of the work-related burnout / exhaustion measure in this study. In addition, personal and work-related characteristics associated with burnout are discussed to provide insight into factors that may place some people at more risk for developing burnout. Finally, the research findings on individual and organisational outcomes of burnout are presented and, in particular, the link between burnout and depression.

3.1 Theoretical Considerations

Burnout is commonly used to describe the negative consequences of exposure to chronic job stress (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Some researchers describe burnout as a metaphor for the draining of energy or liken it to the extinguishing of a candle that once shone brightly but no longer has the resources to keep replenished (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009b). The concept of burnout emerged in the 1970s and was originally used to describe the emotional depletion, loss of motivation and lack of commitment observed among those working in the human service professions (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1976). By the late 1980s, it was recognised that burnout was experienced by a wide range of occupations and the concept was expanded to reflect the experiences of managers, white and blue collar workers (Schaufeli et al., 2009b).

Over the past 35 years, research on burnout has steadily grown in popularity, with interest in this concept evident by the large number of studies undertaken worldwide. Schaufeli et al. (2009b) note that while definitions of burnout may differ between countries, they typically share the core element of exhaustion. Within psychology, burnout is usually conceptualised on a continuum where symptoms can range from mild

to severe, although there has been a recent move to 'medicalise' burnout in some European countries by using cut-off scores to identify cases of 'burned out' individuals (Schaufeli et al., 2009b). In Sweden and the Netherlands burnout has been recognised as a formal medical diagnosis, which recognises the impact of burnout on individual physical and mental health outcomes.

The main debates in the burnout literature concern the theoretical basis and scope of the concept. The dominant model of burnout, proposed by Maslach (1993), defines professional burnout as a multi-dimensional concept comprising three components: emotional exhaustion, cynicism (or de-personalisation for human service professionals) and reduced personal efficacy (originally defined as reduced personal accomplishment). According to this model, emotional exhaustion refers to the depletion of emotional energy and resources as a result of ongoing pressures, and cynicism is the process of detachment from colleagues and clients, and increased indifference about work. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to feelings of incompetence and lack of confidence in one's own ability to achieve goals (Maslach, 1993). The Maslach Burnout Inventory - General Survey (MBI-GS) was developed to measure the three components of burnout within a wide range of occupations (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been used in the vast majority of burnout research (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998) and as a result, this three dimensional model has been influential in the literature (Maslach et al., 2001).

However, critics point out that the model proposed by Maslach (1993) was not based on a *priori* theory, as the three components of burnout were derived from an arbitrary set of items (Shirom et al., 2005). In addition, researchers have argued that the three components of burnout are actually distinct and independent constructs (Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen, 2005a). Kristensen et al. (2005a) posit that the depersonalisation element of burnout is a coping response to extreme stress and reduced personal accomplishment is a consequence of long-term stress, and as

such they should be studied as separate concepts. However, Maslach and colleagues argue that reducing burnout to the one dimensional factor of exhaustion over simplifies the concept and results in little differentiation from an existing psychological concept of work-related fatigue (Schaufeli et al., 2009b). Although, this conflicts with guidance provided in the MBI-GS manual which recommends that scores for each sub-scale of the inventory should be considered separately and not pooled into a total burnout score (Maslach, et al., 1996).

Further support for treating the three burnout components separately is provided by meta-analytic studies which show that each component of the three-dimensional model is related to its own unique antecedents and consequences (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). In addition, some researchers argue that professional efficacy is a component of engagement rather than burnout, and this has been supported by confirmatory factor analyses (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Shirom et al. (2005) propose an alternative model of burnout, which is based on the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. COR theory proposes that stress occurs in one of the three following conditions: when people experience a loss of resources, when resources are threatened or when people do not receive an adequate rate of return from resources invested (Hobfoll, 1989). Shirom et al. (2005) posit that people experience burnout when they perceive a net loss of resources (defined as physical, emotional or cognitive energy) that cannot be replenished. According to this model, burnout is an affective reaction to ongoing exposure to demands at work that exceeds an individual's cognitive, physical and emotional resources. Shirom et al. (2005) claim that burnout consists of three factors: physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness. Physical fatigue refers to low levels of energy and tiredness, whereas emotional exhaustion is the lack of energy to invest in relationships at work. Cognitive weariness refers to slow thinking and lowered cognitive agility. These three components can be assessed using the Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure. Shirom et

al. (2005) have a strong research focus on the health consequences of burnout and have contributed to our understanding of the impact of burnout on both physical and mental health.

Another model of burnout proposed by Kristensen et al. (2005a) focuses solely on the exhaustion component of burnout and takes into account a wider range of contexts than other models. This model proposes three types of burnout: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005a). Personal burnout is a general measure of physical and psychological exhaustion that can be administered to people regardless of their occupational status (e.g. students, the unemployed, retirees). The personal burnout component allows researchers to identify exhaustion that is attributed to non-work factors such as family or health problems. Work-related burnout is defined as “the degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his / her work” (Kristensen et al., 2005a, p.197). The client-related burnout component is a more specific work-related measure of burnout that refers to the physical and psychological exhaustion that people attribute to working with clients (e.g. patients, inmates, children). Kristensen et al. (2005a) propose that this concept of burnout differs from general fatigue as it involves the attribution of fatigue and exhaustion to a specific area of a person’s life. The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) was developed to measure this model of burnout. The CBI consists of three scales (one for each of type of burnout) that can be used independently (Kristensen et al., 2005a).

The work-related burnout concept proposed by Kristensen et al. (2005a) is used in this study as a measure of burnout / work-related exhaustion. The CBI is a public domain instrument that has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Winwood & Winefield, 2004). In addition, this measure of burnout enables a targeted investigation of the exhaustion component of burnout, which has consistently been associated with

the work-related antecedents and poor mental health outcomes that are relevant for the current study.

3.2 Antecedents of Burnout

Research over the last 35 years has commonly sought to identify factors which predict burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) note that studies to date have provided evidence to suggest that burnout is more likely to occur among younger employees (below 40 years of age). Since age is confounded with work experience, this suggests that burnout is more likely in the earlier stages of one's career (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is also more common among those who are unmarried (particularly men), and those with a higher level of education (Maslach et al., 2001).

Individual Differences

While not the focus of this study, certain personality factors have also been associated with burnout, such as negative affectivity, Type A personality, and workaholism. In a meta-analytic review of 205 studies investigating the impact of both positive and negative affect on organisational outcomes, researchers found that negative affectivity was significantly related to the exhaustion component of burnout (Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003). Negative affectivity refers to the tendency to experience negative emotional states, such as anger, fear, nervousness, guilt, and stress, as well as low self-esteem (Watson & Clark, 1984). Individuals who score high on negative affectivity are more prone to stressors and report more strain than those who report low negative affectivity (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002). Negative affectivity has been shown to be strongly related to one of the 'Big Five' personality traits, neuroticism, which is another personality variable that has been associated with burnout (Langelaan, Bakker, Doornen, & Schaufeli, 2006). Neuroticism

refers to the tendency to experience distressing emotions such as frustration, fear and depression (Costa & McCrae, 1980).

Type A personality has also been linked to burnout (Jamal & Baba, 2001). Type A personality refers to a behavioural pattern consisting of ambition, competitiveness, time urgency, impatience, and hostility (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974). This pattern has been likened to an extrinsic orientation toward activity that is fuelled by a need to gain interpersonal superiority or prestige (Sturman, 1999). Two dimensions of the Type A behaviour pattern have been acknowledged in the research: achievement striving and irritability / impatience (Helmreich, Spence, & Pred, 1988). Accumulated evidence suggests that these two components have different effects on health and performance, with the achievement striving dimension related to positive outcomes and the irritability-impatience dimension related to negative outcomes (Barling & Charbonneau, 1992). For instance, in a recent cross-sectional study undertaken with 329 Swedish technology consultants, the achievement striving component of Type A behaviour was related to high performance and job satisfaction, whereas the irritability-impatience component was associated with burnout (Hallberg, Johannsson, & Schaufeli, 2007).

Workaholism was originally acknowledged as a possible root cause of burnout, as it is proposed that working excessively and frantically can lead to a depletion of mental resources, leaving employees 'burned out' (Maslach, 1986). Workaholism is commonly defined as having two core elements: the need to work excessively hard and possessing a strong inner drive (McMillan, O'Driscoll, & Burke, 2003). Researchers note it is a pervasive phenomenon that results in workaholics spending a high proportion of their time at work and frequently thinking about work when not working (Schaufeli, Taris & van Rhenen, 2008). A recent study with 845 middle managers and executives from a Dutch telecommunications company has shown that workaholism and burnout are positively correlated, and are both associated with negative outcomes for the individual such as poor social relations and health problems (Schaufeli et al., 2008). However,

they differed in regard to their impact on organisational outcomes. Workaholism was positively related to organisational commitment, whereas burnout was associated with low organisational commitment and job dissatisfaction (Schaufeli et. al., 2008).

Work Factors

The majority of research on burnout has focused on the impact of job characteristics on the development of burnout, which is consistent with the work-related nature of the concept. In addition, reviews of burnout have typically concluded that job characteristics are more strongly associated with burnout than demographic or personality factors (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

The majority of research in this area has tended to focus on the immediate context in which work occurs, investigating the impact of job characteristics rather than wider organisational factors (Maslach et al., 2001). Evidence to date provides support for the relationships between demanding aspects of the job, such as a high workload, role conflict, lack of role clarity, and burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Work-family conflict has also been linked to burnout (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). In addition, job characteristics which can reduce demands or act as resources have been associated with reduced burnout, such as control over work (task autonomy), social support, and performance feedback (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Researchers have also highlighted the importance of 'fit' between the person and the job, where a mismatch is proposed to lead to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Cumulative evidence suggests that a heavy workload is strongly and consistently related to the exhaustion component of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). Having a high workload can lead to exhaustion due to the subsequent increased demands on employees' time and depletion of energy required to meet the requirements of the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Researchers propose that where employees are

consistently overloaded, this may reduce their ability to recover and restore balance, and lead to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Individual differences may influence the impact of a high workload on burnout. For instance, in a study 141 Boston physicians (consisting of a higher proportion of females) Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan (1999) found that it was not the number of hours worked that had an impact on burnout, but the person's preference for number of working hours, and the relationship between the employees working hours and those of their spouse. In the Boston study, respondents who reported a better fit between their own working hours and their partner's working hours also reported lower burnout (Barnett et al., 1999).

Role conflict has also been commonly studied in regard to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Role conflict occurs when employees are faced with incompatible expectations from different sources (e.g. conflicting demands from supervisors and clients) (Kahn, 1978). Role theory posits that when conflicting expectations are placed on individuals, this can lead to stress, reduced satisfaction and lower performance (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Meta-analytic studies provide support for the positive relationship between role conflict and the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Also, in a more recent study of 259 mental health service providers, role conflict was found to be a significant predictor of the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (Acker, 2003).

Role ambiguity, where employees lack adequate information about what is expected of them (Jackson & Schuler, 1985), is another job characteristic that has been associated with burnout in the literature. Role theory posits that role ambiguity results in dissatisfaction, anxiety and lower performance (Kahn et al., 1964). Role ambiguity is typically caused by a lack of clarity around the procedures for completing tasks and job performance criteria e.g. where employees do not have clear planned objectives for their job and when they are uncertain about their responsibilities (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993).

The related job characteristic of role clarity (the opposite of role ambiguity) has also been linked to burnout and evidence suggests that the measure of role clarity is more consistently associated with burnout than role ambiguity (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). For instance, in a review of the literature Lee and Ashforth (1996) reported a significant negative meta-correlation between the exhaustion component of burnout and role clarity, whereas no significant correlation was found between burnout and role ambiguity.

Another factor that has been linked with burnout is work-family conflict (WFC), which is when demands from the work domain conflict with personal demands (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985). WFC can be time or strain based conflict. For instance, excessive time spent at work may make it difficult to undertake family commitments and associated work strain may interfere with the performance of family responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Research suggests that WFC can have a negative impact on a range of outcomes such as job satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and life satisfaction, and has been positively linked to burnout (Netemeyer et al., 1996). In a meta-analytic review of 67 studies which investigated the link between WFC and a range of work related factors (e.g. job satisfaction and intention to quit), non-work elements (e.g. family and life satisfaction) and stress related outcomes (e.g. burnout, work-related stress and depression), one of the strongest and most consistent relationships was found between WFC and burnout (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000).

In addition to studying the impact of job demands on burnout, researchers have also investigated the impact of low levels of job resources. For instance, lack of job control has been associated with increased burnout. Job control refers to the ability to make decisions about the work role and opportunities to exercise discretion over the work that is accomplished (Karasek, 1979). A recent study of 101 volunteer fire fighters found that job control was negatively associated with the emotional exhaustion

component of burnout (Lourel, Abdellaoui, Chevaleyre, Paltrier, & Gana, 2008). A closely related concept of task autonomy has also been linked to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). For instance, a recent study found that the exhaustion component of burnout was significantly and negatively related to task autonomy (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008).

Job control has also been studied as a potential buffer between high job demands and burnout, as predicted by the Job Demands-Control Model (Karasek, 1979). Where employees are able to exercise control over aspects of their work (such as pace, process, and when they complete tasks), this is thought to lessen the impact of job demands such as workload (Karasek, 1979). To date, support for the moderator effect of job control on burnout has been mixed and researchers suggest a clearer definition of control would assist with standardising research efforts (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002). The moderator effect may be more apparent when the perceived job control is suited to the particular demands of the job at hand (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 2002).

The interpersonal domain of work has also been investigated as a possible contributor to burnout, with a lack of social support from colleagues and supervisors found to be consistently associated with burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). In a review of the literature, Lee and Ashforth (1996) found a significant negative meta-correlation between the exhaustion component of burnout and social support and, in particular, supervisor support. Further evidence demonstrating the importance of supervisor support on burnout has been provided in a longitudinal study of 668 Dutch employees from 34 companies (De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2004). The Dutch study found that an increase in social support from supervisors was related to a decrease in the emotional exhaustion component of burnout over time (De Lange, et al., 2004). However, some researchers have shown that when job demands are taken into account, the impact of social support on burnout decreases, indicating that a lack of job resources may be less important for burnout than the impact of high job demands

(Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo, & Mutanen, 2002). Social support has also been studied as a potential moderator of the relationship between job demands and burnout, although, there has been inconsistent support for this theory (Maslach et al., 2001).

Another job resource that may influence burnout is the availability of performance feedback (Maslach et al., 2001). In a study of 745 Dutch workers from a variety of occupations, results showed a significant, negative relationship between positive feedback and the exhaustion component of burnout, with those who did not receive positive feedback more likely to report higher emotional exhaustion (Van den Broeck et al., 2008).

Researchers have also highlighted the importance of fit between the person and the job for preventing burnout. In line with the Person-Environment Fit Model, Maslach and Leiter (1997) have proposed a conceptual framework that encompasses a wide range of work factors that have commonly been investigated in the burnout literature. Maslach and Leiter (1997) propose that burnout arises from a chronic mismatch in one or more of the following six areas of work-life: workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values. This model posits that the greater the incongruity between the person and the job in these six areas, the higher the likelihood of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

3.3 Outcomes of Burnout

Burnout has been associated with a wide range of negative effects for individuals and organisations (Maslach et al., 2001). The emotional exhaustion component of burnout in particular is generally regarded as more predictive of stress-related health outcomes than the cynicism and inefficacy components of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Individual-level outcomes of burnout

Research to date has provided evidence for the link between burnout and ill health. Burnout has been associated with poor self-rated health, which is considered a valid proxy measure for health status (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006a). Research also indicates that people suffering from burnout are more likely to experience sleep disturbances. For instance, Melamed et al. (1999) found burnout to be associated with tension, restlessness at work, irritability after work, and waking up exhausted. Similarly, in a study of 137 female white-collar employees, researchers found significant differences between a group of women reporting high burnout versus women reporting low burnout in regard to their quality of sleep (Grossi, Perski, Evengard, Blomkvist, & Orth-Gomer, 2003). Those women who reported high burnout also reported poor quality of sleep, a sensation of not feeling refreshed on awakening, and feeling fatigued throughout the day (Grossi et al., 2003).

In addition, burnout has been linked to more serious health concerns such as increased risk of musculoskeletal pain (Armon, Melamed, Shirom, & Shapira, 2010), cardiovascular disease (Melamed et al., 2006a), type 2 diabetes (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, & Shapira, 2006b) and mortality (Ahola, Vaananen, Koskinen, Kouvonen, & Shirom, 2010). Researchers propose that burnout increases the risk of ill-health through the extra pressure that is placed on body tissues and organs as a result of over-activation of the stress response system (Melamed et al., 2006a).

Some of the most compelling evidence for the negative effects of burnout on health has been provided by longitudinal studies. In a 10-year study of 7897 forestry employees in Finland, researchers found that the exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout were associated with an increased risk of future hospitalisation for cardiovascular disorders among employees with no prior medication or hospitalisation for this disorder (Toppinen-Tanner, Ahola, Koskinen, & Vaananen, 2009). Using the same sample, a more recent study of 7396 Finnish forestry workers found that burnout

(in particular the exhaustion component of burnout) was significantly associated with a higher risk of mortality among younger workers (under 45 years of age), after socio-demographic factors and existing health problems were taken into account (Ahola et al., 2010). Although the sample of this Finnish study included a higher proportion of males than females which may limit generalisability to women, it still highlights the potential for burnout to have detrimental long-term consequences for employees.

Burnout has also been associated with poor mental health outcomes, such as depression. A meta-analysis undertaken by Schaufeli & Enzmann (1998) found that the emotional exhaustion component of burnout and depression share on average 26% of their variance. Shirom et al. (2005) propose that the link between burnout and depression may be partly explained by the fact that they share common symptoms, such as fatigue, low energy and difficulty concentrating. In addition, both variables share similar antecedents such as chronic stress, and personality traits of neuroticism and pessimism (Shirom et al., 2005).

However, while burnout and depression appear to be related constructs, researchers argue that they are conceptually distinct. Burnout is commonly defined as a context specific affective state (i.e. work related) whereas depression is seen as a context-free affective state that encompasses all life domains (Shirom et al., 2005). Bakker et al. (2000) highlighted the importance of context in their study on the development of burnout and depression, which found that a lack of reciprocity in the work domain was related to burnout, whereas lack of reciprocity in intimate relationships was associated with depressive symptoms.

In addition, longitudinal studies have found evidence to suggest that burnout predicts depression, not vice versa. For instance, the Finnish Health 2000 study (which included 3276 employees aged 30 - 64) found that the probability of having a depressive disorder increased with the severity of burnout, suggesting that burnout may be a phase

in the development of depression (Ahola et al., 2005). In addition, a recent study with 2555 Finnish dentists found that burnout predicted depression over time, whereas depression did not predict burnout (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008). As such, there is evidence to suggest that burnout may be a risk factor for depression.

Organisational-level outcomes of burnout

Not surprisingly, the effects of burnout on individuals' physical and mental health can also impact on organisations. Research has shown that burnout is related to increased employee sick leave and turnover intentions (Kristensen et al., 2005a). In addition, the exhaustion element of burnout has been associated with lower organisational commitment (Lee & Ashforth, 1996) and increased turnover (Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986). Further, a meta-analysis of research on the impact of burnout on work performance, found that burnout was associated with low levels of in-role performance, organisational citizenship behaviour and customer satisfaction (Taris, 2006).

Overall, cumulative evidence suggests that burnout has the potential to lead to negative physical and mental consequences for employees, and associated costs for organisations. This highlights the importance for organisations to address signs of burnout and to take preventative measures to ensure employees' safety. The link between stressful work characteristics, the development of burnout and its association with depression presents one pathway to explain the high levels of psychological distress apparent among lawyers. This will be discussed further in chapter five, but first, research on work engagement is presented in the following chapter, which highlights an alternative pathway by which the characteristics of a lawyer's job can lead to well-being.

Chapter Four: Work Engagement

This chapter introduces the concept of work engagement and differentiates it from existing work-related psychological concepts. In addition, four main models of engagement are discussed, as well as the benefits of studying work engagement as a separate construct from burnout. Finally, the individual differences and job characteristics associated with work engagement are outlined, along with research on the consequences of high work engagement for individuals and organisations.

4.1 Theoretical Considerations

Work engagement is a relatively new psychological concept, which has grown in popularity alongside the emerging positive psychology movement. The growth in positive psychology refers to a shift away from the traditional focus of psychology on weaknesses and negative psychological states, to a focus on human strengths and positive psychological states (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive organisational behaviour (POB) has emerged as a work-related field of positive psychology, which focuses on psychological conditions and strengths related to employee well-being (Luthans, 2002). Researchers in the POB field are interested in the conditions and personal resources such as self-efficacy, hope and resilience, which assist employees in coping with intense work demands and achieving peak performance (Luthans, 2002).

A similar concept that emerged alongside POB is positive organisational scholarship (POS), which also focuses on the workplace and investigates positive aspects of the organisational context that influence employee thriving (Cameron, 2005). To date, the research on POB and POS has overlapped, as studies tend to include both the individual and organisational perspective (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Employee

engagement has been described as a promising new avenue of research in this emerging work-related field of positive psychology (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

Engagement as been defined in different ways in the literature, and some researchers have pointed out the potential overlap of this relatively new concept with existing psychological concepts such as organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (Saks, 2006). This has led to some confusion about the meaning and scope of engagement (Saks, 2006). As a result, researchers have sought to differentiate work engagement from related concepts of job involvement, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

Work engagement is proposed to differ from job involvement in that job involvement is a cognitive evaluation of the degree to which the job satisfies an employee's needs, whereas work engagement is concerned with how employees perform in their job and encompasses emotions, cognitions, and behaviours (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). As such, work engagement is thought to be a potential antecedent of job involvement (May et al., 2004). Researchers also posit that work engagement and organisational commitment are conceptually distinct, due to a different level of analysis - job level versus organisation level (Saks, 2006). Organisational commitment refers to an attachment and attitude toward an organisation, whereas work engagement is proposed to be the degree to which employees are attentive and absorbed in role performance (Saks, 2006). Finally, work engagement can be differentiated from OCB in that the focus of engagement is on the performance of one's assigned role rather than extra-role behaviour (Saks, 2006).

Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) found evidence to show that job involvement and job commitment differed from work engagement. In Hallberg and Schaufeli's (2006) study, while these psychological concepts were positively related, confirmatory factor analysis showed that they were empirically distinct and reflected different aspects of

work attachment. Also, work engagement showed strong and consistent associations with a variety of health outcomes, indicating that work engagement was more closely associated with good physical and mental health than other related psychological concepts (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). This finding highlights the usefulness of studying engagement as a separate concept.

Four main theories of engagement have emerged over the past couple of decades, including: personal engagement (Kahn, 1990), engagement which is conceptualised as the polar opposite of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997), employee engagement (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) and work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002). These theories define and measure engagement differently and have collectively led to a wide array of research in this area.

One of the earliest conceptualisations of engagement was introduced by Kahn (1990). Kahn's Model of Personal Engagement is one of the broadest models and allows for individual, work related and outside of work antecedents (Kahn, 1990). Kahn's definition of personal engagement includes physical, cognitive and emotional connections with work. Engaged employees are thought to be physically involved, cognitively attentive, and emotionally connected to their work whereas disengaged workers tend to withdraw physically, cognitively, and emotionally (Kahn, 1990).

Kahn's model of engagement was developed as a result of qualitative studies, which identified factors that influenced a person's propensity to engage or disengage at work. Based on this research, Kahn identified three psychological conditions that have the potential to influence personal engagement: psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. This model defines psychological meaningfulness as the belief that the resources invested in one's job are providing a 'return on investment' in the sense that a person feels worthwhile, valued, and useful. Psychological safety refers to the experience of "feeling able to show and employ one's

self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (Kahn, 1990, p.708). Psychological availability encompasses an individual’s belief that they possess the necessary physical, emotional, and psychological resources to personally engage at work. To date, research suggests that psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety are significantly and positively related to engagement, whereas less support has been found for psychological availability (May et al., 2004). Kahn’s model of engagement has informed some of the early research into the area of engagement and provided insight into potential antecedents and consequences of engagement (May et al., 2004; Saks, 2006).

Another model of engagement has been put forward by Maslach and Leiter (1997). These researchers expanded on their conceptualisation of burnout and proposed that engagement was the antithesis of burnout i.e. that burnout and engagement sit at opposite ends of the same continuum. According to this model, engagement consists of three components that are in direct opposition to the burnout components as proposed by Maslach et al. (1996), namely: energy (as opposed to exhaustion), involvement (in contrast to cynicism) and a sense of efficacy (opposite of reduced professional efficacy). Maslach and Leiter (1997) measure engagement using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, with low scores being indicative of engagement. This model assumes that low levels of burnout equal high levels of engagement.

Research to date has provided mixed support for Maslach and Leiter’s (1997) conceptualisation of burnout. While there is some evidence to suggest that the identification elements of burnout (cynicism) and engagement (dedication) are opposites, the energy components of burnout (exhaustion) and engagement (vigor) appear to be two separate, but related, constructs (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010; Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). Further evidence is provided in a study by Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) who found that when burnout and work engagement were measured by two different instruments, these constructs loaded onto two separate,

negatively correlating, dimensions rather than one general well-being dimension. More recently, Crawford, LePine, and Rich (2010) have provided meta-analytic evidence to show that these two constructs are not empirical opposites. These results lend support to critics of this model who argue that burnout and engagement should be measured separately, as independent constructs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Maslach & Leiter (1997) have integrated their concepts of engagement and burnout into the Worklife Model. This model is based on the Person-Environment Fit Model and posits that there are six areas of 'worklife' that influence the fit between a person and their job, including workload, job control, rewards and recognition, a sense of community, fairness, and values. The Areas of Worklife Scale was developed to measure individuals' perceived incongruities in these six areas (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). Congruencies between a person and the six areas of worklife are proposed to predict engagement, whereas a mismatch can lead to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Evidence to date suggests that these six areas are a useful framework for categorising the research on the antecedents of burnout and engagement, and research support exists for the hypothesised links between the six areas of worklife, burnout and engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

An alternative model of engagement is the Employment Engagement Model (Harter et al., 2002; Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003). This model defines employee engagement as being cognitively vigilant and emotionally connected, as well as "the individual's involvement and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for work" (Harter et al., 2002, p.269). Harter et al. (2003) identified four antecedents within the workplace that are required for employees to engage at work: clear expectations and provision of basic material and equipment, a sense of contributing to the organisation, a sense of belonging to something bigger than oneself, and the opportunity for progress and growth. These components are incorporated into the Gallup Workplace Audit (GWA), which is used to measure this concept of employee engagement.

The GWA includes one item on job satisfaction and twelve items that measure employee perceptions of various work characteristics, such as opportunities for learning and growth, provision of social support and clear role expectations (Harter et al., 2002). The GWA items are referred to as measures of employee engagement and are proposed to be antecedents of personal job satisfaction and other affective concepts (Harter et al., 2002). However critics argue that this instrument does not measure work engagement as such, but its antecedents and related concepts such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and organisational commitment (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Researchers have pointed out that by measuring engagement in this way, the factors that precede the construct are the same as those that define the construct, which limits our understanding (Simpson, 2009). One of the strengths of this measure is that the items are readily actionable by organisations, making it appealing to practitioners. The popularity of this measure is evident by the wide use of the GWA by organisations worldwide, which has enabled researchers to conduct meta-analyses that provide insight into various organisational outcomes related to employee engagement (Harter et al., 2002).

A different approach to engagement has been proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) who define work engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” (p.295) that consists of three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. According to this model, vigor is defined as high levels of energy and a resilient mental attitude while working and the willingness to invest time and effort into work. Dedication refers to enthusiasm, challenge, and significance, whereas absorption refers to a tendency to be fully engrossed in work and having difficulty detaching from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor and dedication are considered to be the core elements of work engagement and are in direct contrast with the exhaustion and cynicism elements of burnout, whereas absorption is not considered to be the opposite of reduced professional efficacy (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Absorption has been likened to the concept of ‘flow’ which is also characterised by a state of effortless concentration, focused attention, intrinsic

enjoyment and distortion of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). However the difference lies in the fact that flow is considered to be a short-term peak experience, whereas absorption is proposed to be a more pervasive, stable, and long-lasting state of mind (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Schaufeli et al. (2002) agree with the idea that work engagement is the antithesis of job burnout. However, they argue that work engagement and burnout are independent constructs that require separate measures. These researchers propose that work engagement and burnout are negatively, but not perfectly, correlated. In this way, Schaufeli et al. (2002) recognise the relationship between burnout and engagement while acknowledging their unique characteristics, and allow for the fact that an employee experiencing high work engagement does not necessarily also experience low burnout. This line of thinking is consistent with research on affect, which has shown that positive and negative affect are negatively correlated, independent states rather than opposite ends of the same dimension (Russell & Carroll, 1999). In addition, the notion that work engagement and burnout have unique defining characteristics and are independent from each other has received support in the literature (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed to measure the vigor, dedication and absorption components of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). More recently a short version of the UWES was developed to provide a reliable and valid measure of engagement and encourage higher response rates (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). The framework utilised by these researchers is the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model), which proposes two pathways whereby work characteristics can lead to both engagement and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Accumulated evidence suggests that this model is a useful framework for research investigating work characteristics that can lead to engagement and burnout in a variety

of industries (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R Model is utilised in this study and is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Finally, a more recent framework of engagement has been proposed from a practitioner perspective. Macey and Schneider (2008) argue that divergent theories on engagement to date have led to a confused state of affairs with employee engagement commonly used to refer to an affective state as well as in-role performance, and encompass both attitudes and behaviours. In order to clarify the conceptual space of engagement, Macey and Schneider have proposed a framework that differentiates between three types of engagement: trait, state, and behavioural engagement. Within this framework, trait engagement refers to the personality characteristics and other individual differences that make people more inclined to be engaged at work. State engagement refers to feelings of energy and absorption derived from work, which are influenced by conditions of the workplace. State engagement is considered to be an antecedent to behavioural engagement, which refers to the discretionary effort and extra-role behaviours exhibited by engaged employees (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Critics of Macey and Schneider's (2008) framework argue that by defining engagement as a multidimensional concept consisting of trait, state and behavioural engagement, it may be seen as merely a repacking of well-established psychological concepts (Saks, 2008). Also, some researchers argue that behavioural engagement (discretionary or extra-role behaviours) as defined by Macey and Schneider, is an outcome of engagement, rather than part of engagement itself (Saks, 2008). This framework has yet to be empirically validated and studied.

4.2 Antecedents of Work Engagement

The majority of research on potential antecedents of work engagement has focused on work factors, rather than individual characteristics, which is consistent with the work-related nature of this concept. The evidence to date suggests that organisational factors such as job resources and work-life experiences are more likely to predict work engagement than personal factors or demographics (Simpson, 2009). However, certain individual characteristics have been linked to work engagement and these are discussed below.

Personality factors

While not a focus of the present study, there is evidence to suggest that three of the Big Five personality traits - neuroticism, extroversion, and conscientiousness are related to work engagement. In a study of 572 Dutch employees, Langalaan, Bakker, Doornen, and Schaufeli (2006) compared engaged employees with non-engaged employees and found that those experiencing work engagement were characterised by low neuroticism and high extroversion. In another study which investigated the link between the Big Five model of personality and work engagement, Kim, Shin, and Swanger (2009) found that conscientious individuals were more likely to experience work engagement, whereas neurotic individuals were less likely to be engaged at work.

Type A behaviour has also been studied in regard to work engagement. Hallberg et al. (2007) found that the achievement striving component of Type A behaviour was a predictor of work engagement among 329 Swedish information technology consultants. Further evidence has been provided by Richardsen, Burke, and Martinussen (2006) who found that the achievement striving component of Type A behaviour predicted engagement among police officers, whereas high ratings on the irritability-impatience component of Type A behaviour correlated with diminished work engagement.

Researchers have also examined the role of personal resources as possible mediators between job resources and work engagement. In a study of 714 Dutch employees, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli (2007a) found that the personal resources of self-efficacy, organisation-based self-esteem and optimism partially mediated the relationship between job resources (including autonomy, social support, and opportunities for development) and work engagement. These researchers concluded that job resources can activate an employees' self-efficacy, organisation-based self-esteem and optimism, which in turn can promote work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007a).

Work factors

Kahn's (1990) Model of Engagement influenced early research on work-related antecedents of engagement. Kahn (1990) identified the experience of psychological meaningfulness at work as a key differentiator between engaged and disengaged workers, which has spurred research into possible work factors that contribute to meaningful work. Kahn proposed that job characteristics that provide incentives to personally engage, such as the presence of variety, autonomy, challenge, and clear goals can influence meaningfulness. This is consistent with the Job Characteristics Model proposed by Hackman and Oldman (1980) which proposes that five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identity, feedback, autonomy, and task significance are associated with enriched jobs. Research to date has provided support for this theory. In a study of 213 insurance employees in the US, May et al. (2004) found that job enrichment (indicated by high scores on the five job-related dimensions proposed by Hackman & Oldman, 1980) was positively associated with meaningfulness. In addition, the relationship between job enrichment and engagement was fully mediated by meaningfulness (May et al., 2004). Further, a study of 102 Canadian employees from a variety of occupations found that job characteristics associated with enriched jobs were significant predictors of job engagement (Saks, 2006).

Another element that has been hypothesised to influence engagement through its association with psychological meaningfulness is the extent to which a person's work role fits with a preferred self-identity (Kahn, 1990). Kahn's (1990) concept of personal engagement considered the interaction between the person and the organisation as central to personal engagement. Kahn (1992) also found that when a person can use their preferred selves in their work (i.e. there is a good match between the role and their own interests, skills and values) they experienced engagement with their work and performed to their full capacity. In a study undertaken by May et al. (2004), work role fit (a measure of perceived 'fit' between an individual's view of themselves and their job) was found to be strongly related to psychological meaningfulness. In addition, the relationship between work role fit and engagement was fully mediated by psychological meaningfulness (May et al., 2004). Further, in a recent meta-analysis, work-role fit was found to have consistent, positive associations with work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). These results suggest that a good match between a person's identity and the role is an important factor for work engagement.

Kahn (1990) also identified psychological safety as an important antecedent for engagement, and this has received some empirical support in the literature (May et al., 2004). Work factors which are hypothesised to influence psychological safety at work include the degree to which personal interactions at work (e.g. with supervisors and co-workers) are characterised by trust, support, and openness (Kahn, 1990). Social situations that are non-threatening, predictable and consistent were found to promote trust and create contexts where people were more likely to feel safe expressing themselves (Kahn, 1990). In a study conducted by May et al. (2004), significant, positive relationships were found between rewarding co-worker relations, supervisor support, and psychological safety.

The impact of job resources such as job control, feedback, opportunities for development, and social support on work engagement has also received support from

researchers utilising the JD-R Model. Studies have consistently shown that job resources, or those aspects of the job which assist in accomplishing work roles and reducing job demands, are predictors of work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In a study of four different occupational groups (N = 1698), Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that the three job resources of feedback, social support, and supervisory coaching were associated with higher engagement. In a longitudinal study with 201 Dutch telecom managers, Schaufeli, Bakker and Van Rhenen (2009a) found that increases in autonomy, opportunities to learn and develop, performance feedback, and social support were positive predictors of work engagement over time, after controlling for baseline engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2009a). Also, in a longitudinal study of 409 Finnish health care employees, Mauno, Kinnunen, and Ruokolainen (2007) found that job control was one of the best predictors of work engagement over time.

4.3 Outcomes of Work Engagement

Kahn's (1992) seminal work on engagement predicted that it was likely to lead to a range of positive outcomes for individuals (such as quality of work and experiences of work) and organisations (including growth and productivity). Accumulated evidence suggests that work engagement is related to a variety of positive outcomes for organisations and individuals. Consistent with practitioner interest in the benefits of work engagement for organisations, the majority of research on work engagement has focused on organisational outcomes.

Individual-level outcomes of engagement

While less research has been undertaken on the individual consequences of engagement, studies indicate a positive relationship between work engagement and physical and mental health. In a study of 186 information communication technology

consultants, Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) found that work engagement was strongly and negatively related to the burnout components of emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). In addition, work engagement exhibited moderate, negative associations with health complaints such as depressive symptoms, somatic complaints and sleep disturbances (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006). More recently, Schaufeli et al. (2008) found that the work engagement elements of vigor and dedication were significantly and negatively related to distress and depression.

Organisational-level outcomes of engagement

The framework proposed by Macey and Schneider (2008) differentiates between state and behavioural engagement, with behavioural engagement seen as a consequence of state engagement. The researchers propose that behavioural engagement consists of positive work related behaviours such as extra-role behaviour, organisational citizenship behaviours, role expansion and personal initiative (Macey & Schneider, 2008). These behaviours are directly observable and have positive consequences for an organisation. However, there is some debate as to whether this should be seen as a separate element of engagement (i.e. behavioural engagement) or as a consequence of engagement. To date, research has more commonly treated engagement as a state, and separated the experience of engagement from the consequences of engagement.

Cumulative evidence has provided support for the relationship between work engagement and a variety of positive organisational outcomes such as low turnover intention, high job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and OCB. Work engagement has commonly been studied as a mediator between job resources and positive work outcomes. For instance, in a study of four different occupations, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that work engagement fully mediated the relationship between job resources and low turnover intention. Further, in a study of 102 employees working in a variety of occupations, Saks (2006) found that engagement was a significant predictor of

job satisfaction, organisational commitment, lower intention to quit, and organisational citizenship behaviour. In this study, engagement acted as a partial mediator between job resources (including job characteristics, organisational and supervisor support, rewards and recognition, and procedural and distributive justice) and positive organisational outcomes (Saks, 2006). Another recent study confirmed the predictive power of engagement on job satisfaction and organisational commitment among a group of 587 Dutch telecom managers (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

Research also suggests that engaged workers may perform their role better and exert more discretionary effort in terms of going above and beyond what is expected in the role. For instance, the results of a study by Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004) showed that engaged employees received higher in-role and extra-role performance ratings from their colleagues, indicating that these employees were likely to perform their role well and do more than was required. In addition, Salanova, Agut, and Peiro (2005) conducted a large study in which they surveyed 342 hospitality staff about organisational resources, engagement and service climate. These researchers also surveyed 1140 customers to gain data on employee performance and customer loyalty. The results of the study showed that organisation resources and engagement predicted service climate, which in turn predicted employee performance and customer loyalty (Salanova et al., 2005).

High levels of employee engagement have also been found to impact on the bottom line. Harter et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis on the GWA results of 42 studies, from 36 countries. These researchers compared the composite performance of different business units (an aggregate of employee turnover, customer satisfaction-loyalty, productivity, and profitability outcomes) and found evidence to suggest that business units which scored above the company median for employee satisfaction-engagement (as measured by the GWA) achieved higher performance than those business units that scored below median (Harter et al., 2002). In addition, the results

provided further evidence for a strong positive relationship between employee engagement and low employee turnover and high customer satisfaction-loyalty (Harter et al., 2002). To a lesser extent, employee engagement was also related to higher productivity and profitability (Harter et al., 2002). However, it is possible that working in a profitable department may increase employee engagement as causal relationships were not established.

In conclusion, research to date has identified a range of job characteristics that can influence work engagement and provided support for the association between high work engagement and positive outcomes for individuals and organisations. Work engagement, as conceptualised by Schaufeli et al. (2002), and burnout have been integrated into the Job Demands-Resources Model. This model is utilised in this study to explore the impact of job characteristics on both work engagement and burnout among lawyers, and is discussed next in chapter five.

Chapter Five: The Job Demands-Resources Model

This chapter outlines the components of the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model). Evidence is provided for the proposed relationships between job characteristics, work-related burnout, work engagement and psychological distress, as predicted by the model. In addition, the hypotheses of this study are presented.

5.1 Background

Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli (2001) first introduced the JD-R Model as a framework for burnout and disengagement, as measured by the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. This model was extended by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) to include work engagement as an independent concept, measured separately from burnout. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) the JD-R Model proposes two different, yet related pathways to work-related well-being. The first process involves burnout as a mediator between job demands, ill health and associated negative organisational outcomes such as sick leave and turnover intentions. The second process is a motivational process in which engagement is a mediator between job resources, well-being and positive organisational outcomes such as job satisfaction and retention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Research to date has provided support for the mediating relationships proposed by the model, with burnout and engagement found to play similar roles in the two separate processes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). See Figure 1 for a depiction of the JD-R Model utilised in this study, which has been adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) proposed JD-R Model.

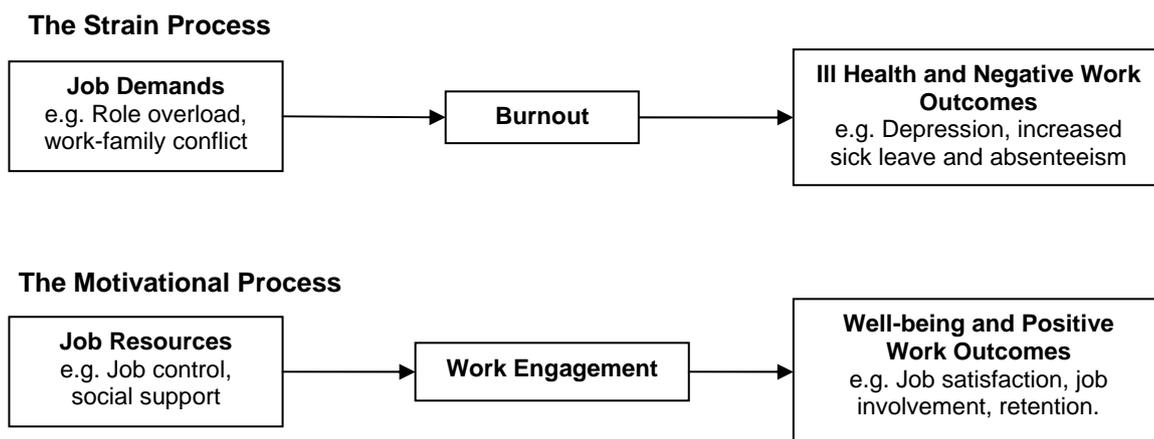


Figure 1: The Job Demands-Resources Model (adapted from Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The JD-R Model was developed to overcome some of the drawbacks of Karasek's (1979) Demands-Control Model, which proposes that it is the combination of high job demands (specifically work overload and time pressure) and low job control that leads to job stress. While there has been empirical support for Karasek's model, particularly the link between job demands and stress, less support has been found for the buffer hypothesis whereby control moderates the negative impact of job demands on well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Critics argue that the Demands-Control model assumes that the most important job resource for employees in all work situations is autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), whereas research suggests that there is a wide range of variables that can impact on job stress and well-being (Lee & Ashforth, 1996).

Schaufeli & Bakker's (2004) updated JD-R Model provides a more comprehensive approach to studying employee well-being. This model aims to capture the full complexity of work environments by taking into account a broad range of work factors that can impact on both positive psychological outcomes (such as work engagement) and negative psychological outcomes (such as burnout). The JD-R Model provides a parsimonious framework for research on engagement and burnout and has been widely

used by researchers, with over half of the studies investigating engagement and its antecedents grounded in this perspective (Crawford et al., 2010).

The popularity of this model may be due to the fact that this framework can be used in all occupational settings. The JD-R Model assumes that every occupation has its own specific risk factors that lead to job stress and these factors can be classified into two categories: job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands are those aspects of the job (physical, psychological, social, or organisational) which can turn into job stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources are defined as the physical, psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job that assist employees in achieving work goals, reducing job demands, and stimulating personal development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R Model, as proposed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) is a balanced model of stress and well-being that takes into account both the health-impairing and health-enhancing aspects of work, and is a useful framework for the current study as it can be applied to the legal environment.

5.2 Job Demands

Within the JD-R Model, job demands have been defined as those aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort or skills (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands are not always negative, but may become stressors when they require a high degree of effort, in which case they can be associated with costs such as burnout or depression (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The process by which job demands are related to burnout can be explained by Hockey's (1997) State Regulation Model of Compensatory Control. Hockey's model posits that as job demands increase, employees are required to exert more effort to maintain current levels of performance, which has psychological and physiological costs such as fatigue and increased cortisol levels. An alternative response predicted by this model is passive coping in which

employees reduce performance targets, accuracy, and speed. The resulting effects of energy depletion, disengagement, and diminished performance predicted by Hockey's model are compatible with the definition of burnout and the energetic process of the JD-R Model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Research to date has provided evidence for the first pathway of the strain process within the JD-R Model, in which job demands are predicted to lead to burnout. Cross sectional studies have consistently identified a positive relationship between job demands and burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). Further evidence is provided by longitudinal studies that show that an increase in job demands can predict burnout over time (Hakanen et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2009a).

Among lawyers, the job demand most likely to lead to burnout is excessive workload (role overload), which has been consistently associated with the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). The law profession is well known for the pressure on lawyers to bill more hours to meet targets, which suggests that role overload is likely to be a common occurrence (Daicoff, 2004).

A related job demand that is hypothesised to be associated with burnout is work-family conflict. As a consequence of having a high workload, lawyers typically work long hours. This is likely to reduce the time and energy they can invest in their personal life and may lead to conflict between work and home demands, especially among those who have perfectionist tendencies and a high achievement orientation (Elwork, 2007). Work-family conflict is related to job dissatisfaction among lawyers (Heinz et al., 1999) and has been identified as a predictor of burnout (Netemeyer, et al., 1996).

Role conflict and lack of role clarity are also related to burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). Lawyers are likely to experience conflicting demands as they typically work for

more than one client at a time and for different senior members of the team. In addition, lawyers are required to be very accurate and have a strong focus on details, which highlights the importance of clarity of expectations and instructions for their work, to ensure they can meet expectations.

Hypothesis 1: Role overload, work-family conflict, role conflict, and low role clarity will predict burnout among lawyers.

The relationship between job demands and work engagement is less clear, due to inconsistent findings (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Some studies report positive relationships between work engagement and job demands (Schaufeli et al., 2008). In contrast, a recent longitudinal study found that job demands did not impact on future levels of engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2009a)

Crawford et al. (2010) have noted a tendency for researchers to ignore or dismiss the unexpected and inconsistent findings between job demands and engagement, rather than account for them using theory. Crawford et al. (2010) argue that inconsistent findings in this area can be explained using the Transactional Model of Stress. This model proposes that people appraise stressful situations such as job demands as either challenging or threatening according to the perceived significance of the situation for their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). More recently, Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau (2000) have provided support for this model by identifying two factors underlying popular measures of work-related stress which they labelled challenge stressors and hindrance stressors. Challenge stressors are those situations which are appraised as stressful but have the potential to promote mastery, personal growth or lead to future gains, whereas hindrance stressors have the potential to prevent growth, learning, and goal attainment (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Crawford et al. (2010) posit that some types of job demands are more likely to be seen as hindrances (such as role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity), whereas others are more likely

to be appraised as challenges (such as workload, job complexity, and time pressure). Crawford et al. (2010) propose that both types of job demands are likely to be related to burnout due to the effort required to deal with them (consistent with the JD-R Model). However, these researchers also argue that job demands which are appraised as challenges are likely to be positively related to engagement, whereas hindrance demands are likely to be negatively related to engagement (Crawford et al., 2010).

Crawford et al. (2010) recently conducted a meta-analysis to test this theory and analysed the results of 55 studies on engagement and burnout. These researchers found positive associations between work engagement and the challenge demands of workload, time urgency and job responsibility, whereas negative relationships were found between hindrance demands and engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). These findings provide support for differentiating between challenge and hindrance demands, so that the impact of different types of demands on engagement can be accounted for. In this study, hindrance job demands are predicted to be negatively related to work engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Role overload, work-family conflict, role conflict, and low role clarity are negatively related to work engagement among lawyers.

5.3 Job Resources

Job resources are predicted to enhance employee well-being by increasing work engagement through a motivational process (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job resources can be related to the organisation at large (e.g. pay and career advancement), social interactions (e.g. supervisor and co-worker support), organisation of work (e.g. clear expectations and participation in decision making) or task (e.g. autonomy, skill variety, task significance, and performance feedback) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job

resources are not only important in their own right in order to achieve tasks and contribute to personal growth, but they can also reduce job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Within the JD-R model, job resources are proposed to have a direct effect on engagement through their ability to act as either intrinsic or extrinsic motivators (Hakanen et al., 2006). The extrinsic motivational potential of job resources comes from their ability to enhance goal achievement (Hakanen et al., 2006). For instance, where employees are provided with information or instrumental support, this can enhance their ability to successfully complete work tasks and lead to engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Job resources can also act as intrinsic motivators through their ability to fulfil basic human needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, in line with Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to SDT, the need for autonomy is the desire to act out of choice and retain ownership for one's own behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This need can be satisfied through having the opportunity to choose how to act and can be facilitated through the job resource of autonomy or job control. The need for belonging refers to the desire for close relationships (Deci & Ryan, 1985). At work, this need can be satisfied through feeling part of a team and the ability to share personal or work related problems or concerns with co-workers. Finally, the need for competence refers to current and general feelings of effectiveness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Performance feedback can assist employees in meeting their need for competence through providing learning experiences which increase their skill level. In a recent study, Van den Broeck et al. (2008) found evidence to suggest that psychological need satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between job resources and the vigor component of work engagement.

Research support for the motivational potential of job resources as predicted by the JD-R Model has been provided by numerous studies (Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). A recent meta-analysis reported consistent positive relationships between job resources and work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010). Further evidence is provided by the results of a longitudinal study that showed that an increase in job resources predicted work engagement over time (Schaufeli et al., 2009a).

The job resources that are predicted to be associated with work engagement in this study include job control, whereby employees exercise greater discretion over decisions relating to their work. Increased control over work can assist with meeting the basic psychological need for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In addition, a positive interpersonal context is predicted to influence work engagement among lawyers. Social support from co-workers and supervisors has been associated with higher work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In addition, research on lawyers suggests that law can be a competitive environment and may promote isolation, which further reinforces the importance of the social aspect of work as a way for lawyers to meet basic psychological needs for relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Performance feedback from colleagues and supervisors is also proposed to be important for work engagement among lawyers. Feedback enables lawyers to track performance against their own goals, and in relation to others, which may assist them in meeting their need for competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In addition, positive challenge, which encompasses the degree to which lawyers utilise their skills and knowledge, find the work meaningful, and are positively challenged, is also hypothesised to be a predictor of engagement. This job resource is also likely to assist lawyers in meeting the basic psychological need of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The perceived fit between employees and their job has been shown to be an important correlate of engagement (May et al., 2004). This aspect of work may be particularly important for lawyers due to the sacrifices (in terms of personal time and energetic resources) that are required to sustain a career in law. Research on work-role fit suggests that the better the perceived fit between the person and the role, the more likely that the person will experience meaning as they will be able to express their values and beliefs (Shamir, 1991). As such, this job resource is also hypothesised to predict work engagement among lawyers.

Hypothesis 3: Job control, social support, performance feedback, positive challenge, and work-role fit will predict work engagement among lawyers.

One of the main premises of the JD-R Model is that burnout is more likely in a work situation which is characterised by high job demands and low job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). Research to date indicates that there is a relationship between low levels of job resources and burnout, although job resources tend to have a weaker association with burnout than job demands (Schaufeli et al., 2009a). Evidence for this relationship has been found in cross sectional studies (Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and in a recent longitudinal study which found that an increase in job demands and a decrease in job resources was predictive of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009a).

One job resource that may influence burnout among lawyers is the degree of influence over decisions relating to work. Low job control has been associated with burnout (Lourel et al., 2008). As such, job control is hypothesised to be negatively related to burnout among lawyers. In addition, availability of social support and, in particular, low levels of supervisor support, has been commonly linked to burnout in the literature (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). A lack of supportive relationships at work has also been associated with lawyer dissatisfaction (McCann et al., 1997). As such, social

support is proposed to be negatively correlated with burnout among lawyers. Feedback from colleagues and supervisors about performance is also proposed to be an influential job resource for lawyers that may impact on burnout. In a recent study, a lack of positive feedback was associated with higher levels of burnout (Van den Broeck et al., 2008). As such, in this study, availability of feedback is likely to be negatively related to burnout.

Hypothesis 4: Job control, social support, and performance feedback are negatively related to burnout among lawyers.

5.4 The Buffering Role of Job Resources

The JD-R Model also proposes that job resources can buffer the impact of job demands on burnout, and that employees with high levels of job resources are more likely to be capable of dealing with demanding work conditions (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007b). Job resources can act as a buffer through their ability to reduce the psychological and physical costs associated with job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This assumption builds on the predictions of Karasek's (1979) Demand-Control model by claiming that different job resources can buffer different job demands (Bakker, et al., 2005).

A recent study has provided empirical support for the buffering effects of job resources in the relationship between job demands and burnout (Bakker et al., 2005). This study of 1000 higher education employees revealed that the job demands of work overload, physical and emotional demands, and work-home interference did not lead to high burnout where employees experienced a good quality relationship with their supervisor, had adequate levels of autonomy, and received social support and feedback (Bakker et al., 2005). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggest that different processes

may be at play for these interaction effects. For instance, job control may impact on workload as employees could decide for themselves when and how to respond to demands, and feedback may provide employees with the necessary information to maintain performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Xanthopoulou et al. (2007b) also tested the buffer hypothesis among a sample of home care employees and found that autonomy, social support, and professional development opportunities were the most important buffers in the relationship between job demands and burnout. In this study, the effects of job demands on burnout were stronger when job resources were low (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007b).

Based on the research to date, it is hypothesised that in addition to having direct negative relationships with burnout, job control and social support may also have a buffering effect on the relationship between job demands and burnout. High job control is proposed to reduce the demands of a high workload by providing more latitude in how work is completed. Social support from peers and supervisors is proposed to buffer job demands as it may alleviate the pressures of a high workload through providing instrumental support (direct help with work in terms of relevant advice and direction), and emotional support.

Hypothesis 5: Job control will moderate the relationship between job demands (role overload, work-family conflict, role conflict, and lack of role clarity) and burnout.

Hypothesis 6: Social support will moderate the relationship between job demands (role overload, work-family conflict, role conflict, and lack of role clarity) and burnout.

5.5 Burnout as a Mediator

The strain process of the JD-R Model also predicts that burnout acts as a mediator between job demands and negative individual and organisational outcomes. Research to date has found support for this process, particularly in regard to individual health outcomes. For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that burnout fully mediated the relationships between job demands and health problems. In Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) study, the energetic process involving burnout as a mediator was more pervasive than the motivation process involving job engagement. Hakanen et al. (2006) also found support for the mediating role of burnout in the relationship between job demands and ill-health in a study of Finnish teachers. In addition, burnout has been identified as a potential mediator between job demands and mental health problems. A recent longitudinal study of 2555 Finnish dentists found evidence to suggest that burnout can mediate the relationship between job demands and depression (Hakanen et al., 2008).

The relationship between burnout and psychological distress has been well-established (refer to Chapter Three). In addition, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies have provided evidence for the negative impact of job demands on psychological distress. For instance, role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity have been associated with higher psychological strain (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). These job demands are proposed to lead to strain through their ability to create uncertainty among employees about whether their efforts will result in satisfactory job performance (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). Further, in a review of the work-family conflict literature, Allen et al. (2000) noted a consistent relationship between work-family conflict and increased depression. Further evidence is provided by a longitudinal study of more than 10,000 London based civil servants aged between 35 and 55 from a range of industries, which showed that high job demands (work pace and conflicting demands) were

associated with an increased risk of psychological distress (Stansfeld, Fuhrer, Shipley, & Marmont, 1999).

As discussed in chapter two, lawyers appear to suffer from higher than average levels of psychological distress. In the current study, burnout is proposed to be a significant predictor of psychological distress, and to mediate the effects of job demands on psychological distress.

Hypothesis 7: Burnout will predict psychological distress among lawyers.

Hypothesis 8: Burnout will mediate the relationship between job demands and psychological distress among lawyers.

5.6 Work Engagement as a Mediator

Another proposition of the JD-R Model is that work engagement can act as a mediator between job resources and positive individual and organisational outcomes. Research to date has provided support for the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between job resources and organisational outcomes such as low turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and organisational commitment (Hakanen et al., 2006).

Although research on the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between job resources and individual well-being has been less prevalent, the rationale for this pathway has been well established in theory. The underlying psychological mechanisms for the link between job resources, work engagement and employee well-being can be illustrated by SDT, which proposes that a social context which fulfils three basic human needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence can enhance well-being

(Deci & Ryan, 2000). As discussed earlier, the provision of job resources can enhance employees' ability to meet basic psychological needs, leading to work engagement and well-being.

The JD-R Model also predicts that the process of gaining resources can increase an individual's resource pool that can begin a 'gain cycle' which leads to greater well-being over time (Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2007). Accumulating resources can lead to higher levels of well-being as resources are valued in their own right and to the achievement of other valued resources (Hobfoll, 2001). This is consistent with the Conservation of Resources model which proposes that people seek to gain things that they value (social, personal, material or energetic resources) and that resource accumulation is a basic human motivation (Hobfoll, 2001). Schaufeli et al. (2009a) have recently found empirical support for the existence of a gain cycle in a longitudinal study of telecommunications managers. In Schaufeli et al.'s (2009a) study, high initial levels of engagement were associated with an increase in job resources over the following year, which resulted in higher levels of engagement at the end of that year. As such, it appears that work engagement and job resources may reinforce each other in a reciprocal manner (Schaufeli et al., 2009a).

The link between work engagement and positive individual outcomes such as health and well-being was discussed in chapter four. In addition, studies have also established a direct link between job resources and mental health. In particular, social support and decision authority (i.e. job control, where employees can make decisions relating to their job and influence their work) have been shown to be protective of mental health (Mausner-Dorsch & Eaton, 2000; Stansfeld et al., 1999). In this study, work engagement is proposed to be negatively related to psychological distress, and to mediate the negative relationship between job resources and psychological distress.

Hypothesis 9: Work engagement will be negatively associated with psychological distress among lawyers.

Hypothesis 10: Work engagement will mediate the relationship between job resources and psychological distress among lawyers.

5.7 The Present Study

The aim of this study is to identify aspects of work that influence burnout and work engagement among lawyers, and to provide evidence for the mediating roles of burnout and work engagement in the relationship between job characteristics and mental health. The JD-R Model provides the theoretical basis for the hypotheses tested in this study, as shown below in Figure 2.

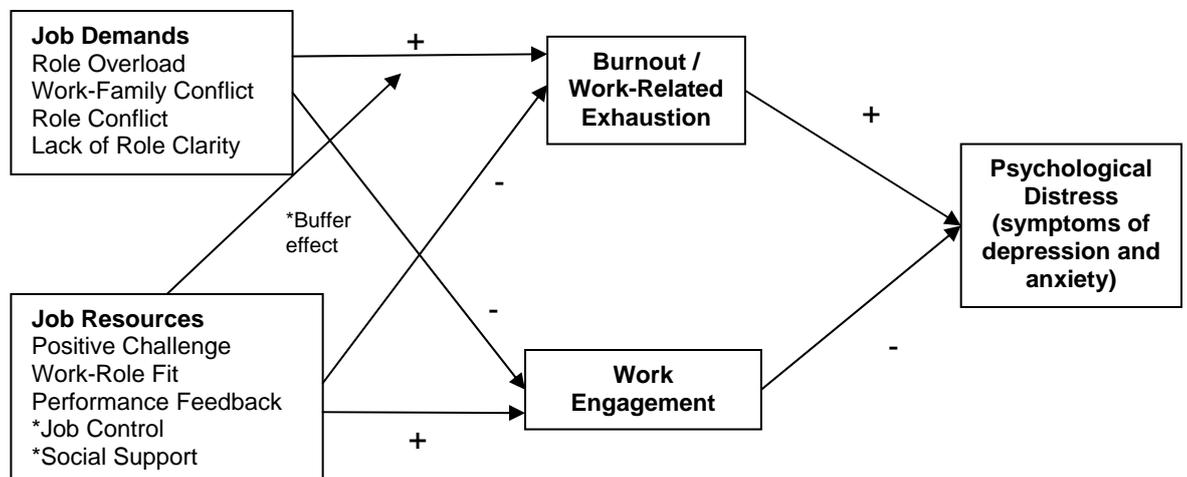


Figure 2: Proposed relationships between job characteristics, burnout / work-related exhaustion, work engagement, and psychological distress.

Chapter Six: Method

This chapter outlines the data collection methods and procedures, and participant characteristics. In addition, the measures contained in the survey instrument and data analysis techniques utilised in this study are discussed.

6.1 Data Collection

The method of data collection employed in this study was a short (5 - 10 minute) self-report survey. A total of 261 legal staff and partners working in a large New Zealand law firm were invited to participate in this study. Potential participants were first contacted by email to notify them that they would have the opportunity to participate in this study the following week (see Appendix A). One week later, another email was sent to potential participants with the invitation to participate in the study and a link to the online questionnaire (refer to Appendix B). A reminder email was sent one week later, which advised legal staff and partners of the closing date and thanked those who had already participated. A final email was sent on the closing date which reminded participants of the cut-off time that day.

This survey was made available to participants through a secure online survey provider commonly used for research purposes (www.surveymonkey.com). The Web Link Collector function of Survey Monkey was used to collect data to ensure that responses were anonymous (no names or email addresses were attached to the responses). In addition, participants were offered the option to complete a hardcopy of the survey. This study received approval from the Massey University Ethics Committee: Northern branch (MUHECN 10/021).

6.2 Participants

Of the 261 legal staff and partners at a large New Zealand law firm who were invited to participate in the research, one hundred people partially completed the online survey. This represents a response rate of 38%. Of the 100 people who started the survey, 94 participants completed all questions, and 96 people provided demographic data. Chi-square analysis confirms that the sample was representative in regard to gender $\chi^2 (1, N = 96) = 1.91, p = .17$. In the following analysis, position level consists of two groups: junior legal staff, who had less than three years experience at the firm (made up of Graduates and Group 1 and 2 solicitors) and senior lawyers, who had three or more years experience at the firm (consisting of Intermediate, Senior Solicitors / Associates and Partners). Chi-square analysis indicates that there were no differences between the proportion of junior legal staff and senior lawyers in the sample from what was expected $\chi^2 (1, N = 96) = 0.38, p = .54$. See Table 1 for the demographic breakdown of the sample. When gender among position level was investigated, it appears that female partners were not represented in the sample. See Table 2 for a breakdown of position level by gender.

Table 1

Demographic data

Demographics	Lawyers in sample	% in sample	% in firm (June 2010)
Male	49	51	58
Female	47	49	42
Graduate	12	13	17
Group 1 and 2 Solicitor	39	41	33
Intermediate Solicitor	10	10	13
Senior Solicitor / Associate	27	28	20
Partners	8	8	17
<i>Total</i>	96	100	100

Table 2

Position level breakdown by gender

Position Level	% of Males	% of Females
Graduate	12	13
Group 1 or 2 Solicitor	37	44
Intermediate Solicitor	6	15
Senior Solicitor / Associate	29	28
Partner	16	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

6.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix C) comprised five sections: job demands, job resources, work engagement, burnout / work-related exhaustion, and psychological distress, as well as questions on gender and position level in the firm.

Job demands

Three job demands were measured using the General Nordic Questionnaire for Psychological and Social Factors at Work (QPSNordic) (Dallner, Elo, Gamberale, Hottinen, Knardahl, & Lindstom et al., 2000). Scales ranged from 1 = very seldom to 5 = very often / always. Role overload was measured using four items (e.g. “Do you have too much to do?” Cronbach alpha = .71). Role conflict was measured using three items (e.g. “Do you receive incompatible requests from two or more people?” Cronbach alpha = .43). Because of the very low reliability of this scale, role conflict was not included in the analysis. Role clarity was measured using three items (e.g. “Do you know what your responsibilities are?” Cronbach alpha = .73).

Work-family conflict was measured using three items from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) (Kristensen, Hannerz, Hogh, & Borg, 2005b). Each item was scored using a four point scale (4 = Yes, certainly, 3 = Yes, to a certain

degree, 2 = Yes, but only very little, 1 = No, not at all). An example item includes “Do you feel that your work drains so much of your energy that it has a negative effect on your private life?” (Cronbach alpha = .86).

Job resources

Four job resources were measured using items from the QPSNordic questionnaire (Dallner et al., 2000). Scales ranged from 1 = very seldom / never to 5 = very often / always. Support from superiors was measured with three items (e.g. “If needed, can you get support and help with your work from your immediate superior?” Cronbach alpha = .79). Support from co-workers was measured using two items (e.g. “If needed, are your co-workers willing to listen to your work-related problems?” Cronbach alpha = .47). These two scales were combined into an overall social support scale which achieved higher reliability (Cronbach alpha = .80). Job control was measured using five items (e.g. “Can you influence the amount of work assigned to you?” Cronbach alpha = .75). Positive challenge at work was measured using three items (e.g. “Is your work challenging in a positive way?” Cronbach alpha = .84).

Performance feedback was measured using two items from the short version of the COPSOQ (Kristensen et. al., 2005b). Scales ranged from 1 = very seldom / never to 5 = very often / always. Items included “How often does your immediate supervisor talk with you about how well you carry out your work?” (Cronbach alpha = .65). Because of the low reliability of this measure, results should be treated with caution.

Perceived work role fit was measured using four items from May et al (2004). (e.g. “My job ‘fits’ how I see myself” Cronbach alpha = .91). Responses were rated on a five point scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Burnout / work-related exhaustion

Burnout was measured using the seven work-related items of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) (Kristensen et al., 2005a). Researchers have confirmed that the three CBI scales can be used independently to accommodate the population at hand and theoretical underpinnings of the study (Kristensen et al. 2005a). A sample item includes “Is your work emotionally exhausting?” (Cronbach alpha = .85). Three items were scored using a scale of 0 = to a very low degree to 100 = to a very high degree. Four items were scored using a scale of 0 = very seldom / never to 100 = very often / always.

Work engagement

Work engagement was measured using the short, nine item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). Example items include “At my work I feel bursting with energy” and “I feel happy when I am working intensely” (Cronbach alpha = .92). Scales ranged from 0 = never to 6 = always.

Psychological distress

Psychological distress was measured by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Kessler et al., 2002). This scale is a 10 item public domain measure that can be used to screen for anxiety and depression in the general population (Kessler et al., 2002). Respondents were asked to report how many times they experienced various symptoms of anxiety and depression in the last 30 days. Sample items include “Did you feel nervous?” and “Did you feel depressed?” (Cronbach alpha = .87). Responses ranged from 1 = none of the time to 5 = all of the time.

6.4 Data Analysis

The results from the questionnaire were downloaded from Survey Monkey and saved into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 18. SPSS 18 was used to analyse the data. Comparisons between groups were tested using t-tests. Bivariate correlations were assessed using one-tailed Pearson's correlation coefficients.

Regression analyses were undertaken for three dependent variables in the study. The sample size of 94 was considered sufficient to run regression analyses, and there was a good ratio of cases to independent variables (18.8:1) so that the analysis did not over fit the data. Histograms were checked to ensure that variables were sufficiently normally distributed. In addition, scatter plots of the residuals were checked for normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

Chapter Seven: Results

This chapter presents the results of the study and outlines the treatment of missing data and outliers. Between-group comparisons were undertaken to identify any differences in burnout, work engagement and psychological distress between males and females, and junior legal staff and senior lawyers. Bivariate correlations and regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses of this study.

Missing data

Out of the total sample of 100 people, only six people did not finish the survey. Their responses were retained. No variables contained more than 6% missing data.

Outliers

Three outliers were detected in the analysis. They were retained in the analysis as they did not significantly change the results of the analysis when removed.

Between-group comparisons

There were no significant gender differences in burnout / work-related exhaustion, work engagement or psychological distress. In addition, there were no significant differences in work engagement or burnout / exhaustion between position levels. However, a significant difference in psychological distress was found among position level, with junior legal staff reporting significantly higher levels of psychological distress than senior lawyers ($t(92) = 3.177, p < .01$).

With regard to the job demands, junior legal staff reported significantly lower levels of role clarity ($t(91) = -2.88, p < .01$) and role overload ($t(93) = -2.21, p < .05$) compared to senior lawyers.

Junior legal staff also reported significantly lower levels of positive challenge ($t(93) = -4.29, p < .01$) work-role fit ($t(94) = -3.46, p < .01$) and job control ($t(90) = -7.33, p < .01$) when compared to senior lawyers.

7.1 Bivariate Relationships

Table 3 presents the correlations among study variables (role conflict has been excluded due to low reliability).

Table 3

Bivariate correlations

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Role Overload											
2. Role Clarity	.04										
3. Work-Family Conflict	.50**	-.14									
4. Job Control	.09	.40**	-.02								
5. Positive Challenge	.22*	.48**	-.16	.68**							
6. Work-Role Fit	-.10	.35**	-.26**	.48**	.61**						
7. Social Support	-.19*	.22*	-.17*	.25**	.24**	.15					
8. Performance Feedback	-.09	.15	-.19*	.20*	.20*	-.05	.62**				
9. Burnout	.37**	-.36**	.63**	-.32**	-.43**	-.57**	-.28**	-.14			
10. Work Engagement	.11	.34**	-.16	.49**	.73**	.62**	.19*	.21*	-.47**		
11. Psychological Distress	.13	-.37**	.36**	-.36**	-.53**	-.48**	-.24*	-.13	.67**	-.57**	
Mean	14.48	11.04	8.52	14.68	11.52	13.20	18.80	5.58	325.53	34.45	18.81
Standard Deviation	2.18	1.90	2.35	3.36	2.23	3.61	3.38	1.53	116.29	8.54	5.49
Range	9-20	7-15	3-12	6-22	4-15	4-20	7-25	2-9	75-600	4-53	10-36

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Hypothesised findings

The bivariate correlations in Table 3 provide support for the relationships expected in Hypothesis 1, with significant positive associations found between role overload and work-family conflict, with burnout. In addition, role clarity was significantly and negatively related to burnout.

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that work-family conflict and role overload would be significantly and negatively related to work engagement, was not fully supported. While work-family conflict was negatively related to work engagement, this relationship was not significant. Also, role overload was slightly positively related to work engagement. However, high levels of role clarity were associated with higher levels of work engagement, as expected in Hypothesis 2.

The bivariate results provide support for the relationships expected under Hypothesis 3, with job control, social support, performance feedback, positive challenge, and work-role fit all positively related to work engagement.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that burnout would be negatively associated with the job resources of job control, social support, and performance feedback. The bivariate correlations provide support for this hypothesis, although the relationship between burnout and performance feedback was weaker than other job resources in the study, and not significant.

The bivariate correlations also support the hypothesised relationships between burnout, work engagement and psychological distress according to the JD-R Model. Burnout was negatively related to work engagement, and positively related to psychological distress. In addition, work engagement was negatively related to burnout and psychological distress, which provides support for Hypothesis 9.

Non-hypothesised findings

Burnout had moderate to strong negative relationships with the job resources of positive challenge and work-role fit. Interestingly, the negative relationships between these job resources and burnout were stronger than the positive relationships between the job demands of role overload and role clarity with burnout. Only the relationship between burnout and work-family conflict was stronger.

Psychological distress exhibited significant correlations with nearly all of the job demand and job resource variables in this study, except role overload and performance feedback.

Role overload had the fewest significant relationships with other variables in this study. This variable was positively related to work-family conflict, which can be expected as having too much work to do can reduce the amount of time available for family responsibilities. Also, it was negatively related to social support, which may be due to the fact that a high workload reduced the time available to build positive working relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Another non-hypothesised finding was the small but significant correlation between role overload and positive challenge. This could be due to the fact that positively challenging work may require more time to complete. Alternatively, lawyers who report having positively challenging work may have elected to take on this work in addition to their normal responsibilities, which may increase their workload.

Among the job resources, job control also had a strong association with positive challenge. This may reflect the overlap between challenging work and work that allows more control in the way it can be completed. This suggests that the type of work that lawyers find positively challenging and meaningful also allows them a higher degree of control over work decisions. Work-role fit was also significantly and moderately correlated with positive challenge, indicating that lawyers may be more likely to identify

with the role where they can utilise their skills, experience meaning and positive challenge.

Social support and performance feedback were also correlated to a moderate degree, which may reflect that the type of social support available to lawyers was more likely to be advice and feedback on work rather than purely emotional support. This could also suggest that lawyers who had good availability to social support were more likely to receive performance feedback.

7.2 Regression Analyses

Correlations among variables were checked for multicollinearity. None of the correlations between variables were .80 or higher, suggesting that the variables are suitable for regression analysis (Licht, 1995). A dummy variable was included to account for significant differences between junior legal staff and senior lawyers in psychological distress, role overload, role clarity, job control, work-role fit, and positive challenge. Junior legal staff (Graduates and Group 1 and 2 solicitors) were coded 1, and senior lawyers (Intermediate solicitors, Senior Solicitors, Associates and Partners) were coded 0. Since junior legal staff are the referent group, the position level variable included in the following analyses is referred to as 'Junior Legal Staff'.

Burnout

Regression analysis was used to test Hypothesis 1, which predicted that role overload, low role clarity, and work-family conflict would predict burnout / exhaustion. The results in Table 4 show that this hypothesis was partially supported. Work-family conflict positively predicted, and role clarity negatively predicted, burnout / work-related exhaustion among lawyers in the study. However, role overload was not a predictor of

burnout. This regression model accounted for 48% of the variability in burnout scores (Table 4).

Further regression analysis was undertaken with all job demands and job resources in the study to provide more insight into the relationships between job characteristics and burnout / work-related exhaustion. When all variables were included in the regression model, work-family conflict was still the most important predictor of burnout among lawyers in the study, whereas low role clarity was no longer significant (Table 4). Instead, the job resource of work-role fit added significant predictive power over and above that of work-family conflict, and this led to a higher percentage of variability in burnout scores being accounted for by the model (59%).

Table 4

Relationships of job demands and job resources to burnout

IV	Block 1	Block 2
Junior Legal Staff	.16	.05
Work-Family Conflict	.53**	.42**
Role Clarity	-.21*	-.07
Role Overload	.16	.16
Work-Role Fit		-.29**
Positive Challenge		-.17
Performance Feedback		-.08
Social Support		-.03
Job Control		-.01
Adj. R ²	.48	.59
F	20.43	14.26

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Note. Values in table are standardised beta coefficients

Work engagement

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the job resources of job control, social support, performance feedback, positive challenge, and work-role fit would predict work engagement among lawyers. This hypothesis was partially supported, with positive challenge and work-role fit found to be positive predictors of work engagement among lawyers in the study. In addition, being a junior legal staff member predicted higher levels of work engagement. This model accounted for 61% of the variance in work engagement scores (Table 5). In the second step of the regression analysis, job demands were also added to the model to provide more insight into the relationships between job characteristics and work engagement (Table 5). The results show that when all variables are included, the job resources of positive challenge and work-role fit, as well as position level, remained the only significant predictors of work engagement. The inclusion of job demands did not lead to any additional explained variance in work engagement scores.

Table 5

Relationships of job resources and job demands to work engagement

IV	Block 1	Block 2
Junior Legal Staff	.37**	.38**
Positive Challenge	.54**	.52**
Work-Role Fit	.30**	.33**
Job Control	.23	.22
Social Support	-.14	-.12
Performance Feedback	.10	.10
Role Overload		.05
Work-Family Conflict		.03
Role Clarity		.00
Adj. R ²	.61	.60
F	22.31	14.53

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Note. Values in table are standardised beta coefficients

Psychological distress

Regression analysis was also undertaken to identify the unique predictors of psychological distress. Support was provided for Hypothesis 7 which predicted that burnout would be a predictor of psychological distress. Unexpectedly, work engagement and position level were also found to be significant predictors of psychological distress among lawyers in the study. High work engagement predicted lower levels of psychological distress, and being a junior lawyer predicted higher levels of psychological distress. The combination of variables in the study accounted for 63% of variance in psychological distress scores (Table 6).

Table 6

Work-related drivers of psychological distress

DV	IV	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Beta	Adj. R^2
Psychological Distress	Junior Legal Staff	4.52	1.14	.41**	.63
	Burnout	.02	.01	.49**	
	Work Engagement	-.29	.08	-.44**	
	Control	.32	.19	.19	
	Work-Role Fit	.16	.16	.10	
	Positive Challenge	-.20	.31	-.08	
	Work-Family Conflict	-.21	.24	-.08	
	Role Overload	.16	.23	.06	
	Social Support	-.10	.15	-.06	
	Role Clarity	-.08	.23	-.03	
	Performance Feedback	-.03	.37	-.01	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

7.3 Moderation Analyses

Moderation analyses were conducted to test Hypotheses 5 and 6, which predicted that job control and social support would moderate the relationship between individual job demands (role overload, work-family conflict, role conflict, and lack of role clarity) and burnout. The first step involved centring the independent and moderator variables before the analysis, to reduce the impact of multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991). In line with Baron and Kenny's (1986) recommendations for moderation analysis, the next step was to test for linear effects. The independent variable, moderator variable, and dependent variable were entered into a hierarchical regression analysis. The second step involved adding the interaction term in the second block of the hierarchical regression to test for moderation. These steps were undertaken for both job control and social support. In both instances, the interaction term was not found to be a significant predictor, indicating that neither social support nor job control were moderators of the relationship between individual job demands and burnout.

7.4 Mediation Analyses

In order to test the strain and motivational pathways of the JD-R Model, mediation analyses were undertaken. The steps recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) were followed to establish mediation. First, a regression analysis was undertaken to ensure that the independent variables (job demands or job resources) were significantly related to the mediator (burnout or work engagement). Second, a regression analysis was undertaken to establish that the mediator (burnout or work engagement) was significantly related to the dependent variable (psychological distress). The third step involved controlling for the mediator, to establish whether the significant relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable was reduced (indicating partial mediation) or no longer significant (indicating full mediation).

Burnout

Hypothesis 8 predicted that burnout would mediate the relationship between job demands and psychological distress. Two job demands (work-family conflict and role clarity) exhibited significant relationships with both burnout (the mediator) and psychological distress (the dependent variable). The results in Table 7 indicate that burnout fully mediated the relationships between work-family conflict (WFC) and role clarity with psychological distress. As such, Hypothesis 8 was supported for work-family conflict and role clarity.

Table 7

Mediation by burnout of the positive relationships between job demands (work-family conflict and low role clarity) and psychological distress

DV	IV	B	SE B	Beta	Adj. R ²	Sobel Test
Psychological Distress	WFC	.83	.22	.36**	.12	5.59**
Burnout	WFC	31.50	4.02	.63**	.39	
Psychological Distress	WFC	-.22	.24	-.09	.44	
	Burnout	.03	.00	.73**		
Psychological Distress	Role Clarity	-1.08	.28	-.37**	.13	-3.32**
Burnout	Role Clarity	-21.40	5.86	-.36**	.12	
Psychological Distress	Role Clarity	-.45	.24	-.16	.46	
	Burnout	.03	.00	.62**		

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Work engagement

Hypothesis 10 predicted that work engagement would mediate the relationship between job resources and psychological distress. Positive challenge, work-role fit, social support, and job control all exhibited significant relationships with both work engagement and psychological distress, and were included in the analysis. The results in Table 8 indicate that work engagement fully mediated the relationships between positive challenge, work-role fit, social support, and job control with psychological distress. These results provide support for Hypothesis 10 for all job resources in the study, except performance feedback.

Table 8

Mediation by work engagement of the negative relationships between job resources (positive challenge, work-role fit, social support, and job control) and psychological distress

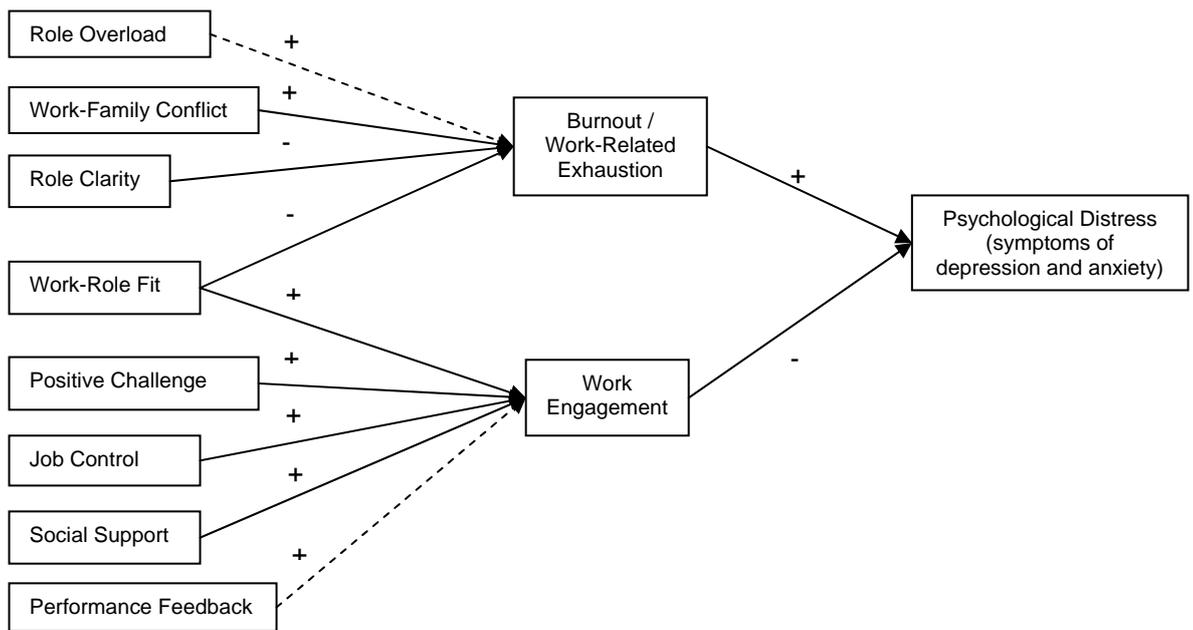
DV	IV	B	SE B	Beta	Adj. R ²	Sobel Test
Psychological Distress	Positive Challenge	-1.31	.22	-.53**	.28	-5.48**
Engagement	Positive Challenge	2.79	.27	.73**	.53	
Psychological Distress	Positive Challenge	-.64	.31	-.26	.34	
	Engagement	-.24	.08	-.37**		
Psychological Distress	Work-Role Fit	-.73	.14	-.48**	.22	-4.93**
Engagement	Work-Role Fit	1.45	.19	.62**	.37	
Psychological Distress	Work-Role Fit	-.31	.17	-.20	.33	
	Engagement	-.28	.07	-.44**		
Psychological Distress	Social Support	-.37	.16	-.24*	.05	-1.78*
Engagement	Social Support	.48	.26	.19*	.03	
Psychological Distress	Social Support	-.20	.13	-.13	.34	
	Engagement	-.35	.05	-.56**		
Psychological Distress	Job Control	-.60	.17	-.36**	.12	-4.10**
Engagement	Job Control	1.24	.23	.49**	.23	
Psychological Distress	Job Control	-.19	.17	-.11	.31	
	Engagement	-.33	.07	-.51**		

* p < .05, ** p < .01

Chapter Eight: Discussion

Chapter eight summarises the findings of this study and discusses the results in the context of previous research. In addition, the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are discussed. Finally, the practical implications of the results are outlined, and work practices that may enhance work engagement and reduce burnout and psychological distress among lawyers are identified.

This study utilised the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R Model) as a framework to investigate the relationships between job demands, job resources, work engagement, burnout / work-related exhaustion and psychological distress. The results of this study provide support for the mediating role of burnout / work-related exhaustion and work engagement in the strain and motivational processes respectively, as predicted by the JD-R Model. A further aim of this study was to identify which job characteristics were important for the development of burnout, work engagement and psychological distress among lawyers. The JD-R Model was considered a useful framework to explore these relationships, as it allows relevant antecedent and outcome variables for the occupation at hand to be included in the model. The results indicate that each job characteristic was associated with the outcome variables in different ways. These relationships are discussed in more detail in the following section, and are depicted below in Figure 3.



Solid lines indicate mediated relationship.
Dashed line indicates no mediation.

Figure 3: Model showing direct and mediated relationships between job demands, job resources and burnout / work-related exhaustion, work engagement, and psychological distress.

Job characteristics

Role overload was not a significant predictor of burnout in this study, which is in contrast to the hypothesis which had predicted it to be an important driver of burnout / work-related exhaustion among lawyers. This was based on previous research which has identified role overload as a common precursor to burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Maslach et al., 2001). In addition, role overload was one of only two variables in the study that did not have a significant relationship with psychological distress. Consistent with this finding, senior lawyers reported significantly higher levels of role overload than junior lawyers, but were less likely to report symptoms of psychological distress. As such, a high workload does not appear to be associated with negative mental health outcomes for senior lawyers.

The negligible impact of a high workload on negative outcomes for lawyers in this study may be due to the remuneration practices of large law firms, which typically have a direct link between workload and financial rewards. As such, a high workload may enhance a lawyers' ability to meet fee earning targets and receive financial rewards, which could reduce stress. In addition, a high workload may be seen as a challenge demand rather than a hindrance demand among lawyers, particularly those who have a high need for achievement. This is supported by the fact that role overload was slightly positively related to work engagement in this study (although this association was not significant), which is consistent with research that has shown a positive relationship between challenge demands and work engagement (Crawford et al., 2010).

While role overload does not appear to have a direct impact on burnout in this study, the results suggest that this variable may have an indirect effect on burnout through its association with work-family conflict. The results showed a strong positive correlation between role overload and work-family conflict, which suggests that role overload may impact on burnout / work-related exhaustion through its effect on increased work-family conflict. Having a high workload is likely to reduce time and energy available for a lawyer's personal life, and may lead to conflicts between work and family demands.

Work-family conflict was the strongest predictor of burnout / work-related exhaustion among lawyers in the sample, with respondents who reported that their work drained so much of their time and energy that it had a negative effect on their personal life reporting more frequent symptoms of burnout. Indeed, this variable was the strongest predictor of burnout among all job demands, and also remained a strong predictor when the effects of job resources were taken into account. This is consistent with the research which shows that work-family conflict has a strong impact on stress-related outcomes such as burnout (Allen et al., 2000). Work-family conflict was also significantly related to psychological distress, with those lawyers who reported a high

degree of conflict between work and personal demands more likely to report high levels of psychological distress. This relationship was fully mediated by burnout / work-related exhaustion, which provides support for the strain process of the JD-R Model. Work-family conflict also exhibited a negative relationship with work engagement, although this was not significant.

Low levels of role clarity were also related to burnout / work-related exhaustion in this study. Role clarity was found to provide unique predictive power over and above that of work-family conflict when the impact of job demands on burnout was investigated. Respondents who reported less clarity around instructions and expectations for their role were more likely to experience burnout. However, when job resources were added to the analysis, role clarity no longer provided any unique predictive power. Role clarity was negatively related to psychological distress and this relationship was fully mediated by burnout. Role clarity also had a significant, positive relationship with work engagement, indicating that higher levels of role clarity are associated with reduced burnout / exhaustion and, to a lesser extent, with increased work engagement.

Another predictor of burnout / exhaustion was work-role fit. This job resource contributed unique predictive power over and above the impact of work-family conflict on burnout when job resources were added to the regression analysis. This suggests that those lawyers who identified positively with the role of lawyer and saw it as a future career option were less likely to experience burnout than those who did not identify positively with being a lawyer. This relationship between work-role fit and burnout was not hypothesised in the study. Work-role fit was also found to be a significant, unique predictor of work engagement. As such, lawyers who perceived a good fit between their values and the role of lawyer were not only less likely to exhibit symptoms of burnout / exhaustion but were also more likely to be engaged at work. In addition, work-role fit

displayed a significant negative relationship with psychological distress, which was fully mediated by work engagement.

The perceived fit between employees' values and their job has previously been identified as an important predictor of work engagement (May et al., 2004). Indeed, early conceptualisations of engagement highlighted the importance of being able to use preferred selves in work to ensure a good match between a person's interests, skills, and values and their job (Kahn, 1992). However, the dual role of work-role fit (i.e. acting as a negative predictor of burnout and a positive predictor of work engagement) was not expected and is an important finding for the study. Interventions that target this variable could have a stronger impact on mental health than other variables, as a result of its dual effect. This finding also provides some support for Maslach and Leiter's (1997) Areas of Work-life Model which highlights the importance of fit between six areas of work-life for the development of burnout and work engagement.

Another unique predictor of work engagement among lawyers in this study was positive challenge. Lawyers who perceived their role as making good use of their skills, and being positively challenging and meaningful were more likely to report high levels of work engagement. This is consistent with the research which shows that meaningfulness is an important precursor of work engagement (Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004). A negative relationship was found between positive challenge and psychological distress, and this was fully mediated by work engagement. Positive challenge was also related to burnout / exhaustion, with higher levels of positive challenge associated with lower burnout. As such, meaningful and challenging work which utilises lawyers' skills and knowledge appears to be an important work characteristic for their well-being.

A lawyer's position in the firm was also a significant predictor of work engagement, with being a junior legal staff member predicting higher work engagement. While between-group comparisons indicated that there were no significant differences in

work engagement levels between junior legal staff and senior lawyers, the regression analyses show that being a junior legal staff member provided unique predictive power for work engagement over and above the work characteristics included in this study.

Bivariate correlations showed that job control was positively associated with work engagement, but this variable was not a significant predictor of work engagement when other work characteristics were taken into account. This finding is in contrast to longitudinal research that has identified job control as an important predictor of work engagement (Mauno et al., 2007). Job control also exhibited a negative relationship with burnout / exhaustion, but did not moderate the relationship between job demands and burnout. Job control was negatively associated with psychological distress, with lower levels of control over important decisions relating to the job associated with poorer mental health. This relationship was fully mediated by work engagement.

While social support was positively related to work engagement as indicated by the bivariate correlations, this variable was not a unique predictor of work engagement among lawyers in the study. This suggests that the availability of social support from co-workers and supervisors was not an important driver of work engagement when other job resources were taken into account. Social support was weakly correlated with psychological distress, indicating that higher levels of social support were associated with fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, and this relationship was fully mediated by work engagement. Social support was also hypothesised to moderate the relationship between job demands and burnout, but no support for this was found. These results add to the inconsistent findings in the literature regarding social support as a moderator between job demands and burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Performance feedback was also found to be significantly related to work engagement, with lawyers who were provided with feedback from colleagues and supervisors on how well they were doing their job, more likely to report high levels of

work engagement. However, as with social support, this job resource was not identified as a unique predictor of work engagement among lawyers when other job resources were taken into account. In addition, this variable was one of two job characteristics in this study that was not related to psychological distress.

The results of this study also found support for the hypothesised relationships between the dependent variables. Respondents who reported high levels of work engagement reported lower levels of burnout and psychological distress. In addition, respondents who reported high levels of burnout were more likely to report high levels of psychological distress and less likely to report high levels of work engagement.

Burnout, work engagement and psychological distress

The job demands that predicted burnout in this study were work-family conflict and low role clarity, and these factors explained 46% of variance in burnout scores among lawyers. When job resources were added to the analysis, the predictive power of the regression model increased to 60%, with work-role fit identified as a unique predictor of burnout in addition to work-family conflict. Overall, the prediction of burnout in this study was enhanced by including job resources in the model. This finding is similar to research that shows both job demands and lack of job resources can play an important part in predicting burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009a).

The two job resources found to be most important for work engagement among lawyers in this study were positive challenge and work-role fit. In addition, the position level of a lawyer added further unique predictive power over and above these job resources. Overall, these three variables accounted for 61% of the variance in work engagement scores. When job demands were added to the model, there were no changes to the predictors of work engagement, with positive challenge, work-role fit and position level remaining the only unique, significant predictors of work engagement. As such, job resources were identified as key determinants for work engagement among

lawyers in the study. These results are similar to other studies that have shown that job resources are more important for work engagement than job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Regression analysis was also undertaken to identify unique predictors of psychological distress. As hypothesised, burnout was identified as a unique predictor of psychological distress, with high levels of burnout predicting high levels of psychological distress. The link between burnout and negative health outcomes such as poor physical and mental health has been well-established (Ahola et al., 2005; Melamed et al., 2006a). These findings provide additional support for this link and suggest that lawyers who are experiencing signs of burnout may be at higher risk for psychological distress. In addition, the mediating role of burnout was confirmed. The relationships between the job demands of work-family conflict and role clarity, with psychological distress, were fully mediated by burnout / work-related exhaustion.

The results also indicated that work engagement provided unique predictive power over and above the effects of burnout, with high levels of work engagement predicting lower psychological distress. The impact of work engagement on psychological distress was of similar magnitude to that of burnout, but in the opposite direction. This finding is consistent with research in this area which has shown negative relationships between work engagement and mental health problems (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). In addition, this finding highlights the importance of work engagement for mental health at work, and provides evidence for an alternative pathway where work characteristics reduce the likelihood of psychological distress.

The third predictor of psychological distress among lawyers in the study was position level. Being a junior legal staff member predicted higher psychological distress. This is consistent with the findings that junior legal staff were significantly less likely to

experience positive challenge, work-role fit, job control, and role clarity than senior lawyers, as these job characteristics were negatively related to psychological distress. In addition, the results indicated that the effects of these job characteristics on psychological distress were fully mediated by burnout / exhaustion or work engagement. The work-related variables included in this study accounted for over 60% of the variance in psychological distress scores. This result highlights the potential for work factors to impact on mental health.

Overall, the results of this study provide support for the health impairing and health enhancing processes predicted by the JD-R Model. The findings suggest there are two pathways which can lead to better mental health among lawyers - reducing the job demands associated with burnout / work-related exhaustion, and increasing the availability of job resources associated with work engagement. In addition, this study has identified specific job demands and job resources that are likely to influence burnout / exhaustion and work engagement among lawyers. A dual focus on reducing burnout and increasing work engagement appears likely to have the strongest impact on reducing psychological distress. This study highlights the benefit of the positive psychology approach to research, which investigates both negative and positive outcomes to provide a more comprehensive account of the relationships between work and mental health.

8.1 Limitations

The results of this research should be considered alongside the following limitations. The main limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study, which limits the degree to which causal claims can be made. For instance, we cannot be certain that job resources cause work engagement, as it is possible that employers who are highly engaged have better access to job resources. While the relationships identified are

largely consistent with those found in the literature, longitudinal designs are required to establish causality. Future studies should examine the effects of job demands and job resources on burnout, work engagement and psychological distress over time.

Another limitation of this study is the reliance on self report data and the associated issues with common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The measurements of predictor and criterion variables were collected from the same source (i.e. the lawyers themselves) and could reflect common rater effects (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Also, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, respondents may have responded in socially desirable ways rather than reporting their situation accurately. However, results were collected anonymously through a secure external internet survey provider and participants were assured of confidentiality. Another limitation arises from the fact that all constructs in the current study were measured using self report questionnaires. As such, there is the potential for the relationships between variables to reflect method variance, rather than the true intended construct variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), although this is less likely to be a problem when well-validated instruments with sound psychometric properties are used (Spector, 1987).

The sample of this study was relatively small and came from a single large law firm in New Zealand, which limits the degree to which these findings can be generalised to other New Zealand lawyers (particularly female partners, given that no female partners appeared to have participated in this study). In addition, the selection procedures employed by the law firm in the study may have impacted on the characteristics of the sample. For instance, lawyers employed by large firms are subject to extensive selection procedures to ensure that employees possess the necessary ability and personality characteristics required for success in a large firm environment. This could impact on the generalisability of these findings to other New Zealand law firms that have different selection procedures in place, and different cultures. While the sample size was sufficient for the analysis techniques utilised in this study, it would be

beneficial to investigate the antecedents of burnout and work engagement with a larger sample that includes a larger range of firms (e.g. different sizes and cultures) and different types of lawyers (e.g. barristers and solicitors).

Further, only a limited number of work factors that influence burnout, work engagement and psychological distress were included in this study. The job characteristics in this study were considered to be relevant for lawyers and have been associated with work engagement and burnout. However, there are likely to be other work variables that impact on these outcomes for lawyers. In addition, this study focused solely on the impact of work characteristics rather than personal characteristics. This focus on work factors is consistent with previous research that has utilised the JD-R Model to investigate antecedents of burnout and work engagement. However, while evidence suggests that work factors are most important for the development of work engagement and burnout, some personal characteristics have also been implicated in the process (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007a). Further, symptoms of anxiety and depression are likely to be influenced by a wider array of potential antecedents that include non-work factors, as they are context-free affective states (Shirom et al., 2005). For instance, demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status and educational level have shown to be related to poor mental health outcomes (Alonso et al., 2004).

Finally, the results of this study should be considered in light of the fact that New Zealand was in recession at the time of data collection. The prevailing economic conditions may have had an impact on levels of job characteristics, burnout, work engagement and psychological distress experienced by lawyers in the sample. For instance, many lawyers may not have been working at full capacity in this environment due to lower client demand. While workloads may have been lower than previous years, reduced demand for legal services may have led to other pressures such as increased difficulty in meeting fee targets which may have increased anxiety about performance. In addition, there may have been fewer opportunities for junior legal staff to receive

feedback on performance as a result of the reduced number of work assignments on offer.

8.2 Implications for Research

This study has contributed to the research on the JD-R Model by investigating the relationships among job characteristics, burnout / work-related exhaustion, work engagement and psychological distress among a sample of New Zealand lawyers. The results of this study have provided support for the strain and motivational pathways predicted by the JD-R Model. In particular, the results have confirmed the mediating roles of burnout and work engagement in the relationship between work characteristics and psychological distress. Burnout played a mediating role between job demands and psychological distress, providing evidence for the stress process. In addition, work engagement mediated the relationship between job resources and lower psychological distress, providing evidence for the motivation process.

This study also identified work characteristics that predicted burnout and work engagement among a sample of lawyers. Work-family conflict and role clarity were identified as the key job demands that predicted burnout. When job resources were also considered, work-role fit was found to predict burnout. The two job resources that predicted work engagement among lawyers in the sample were positive challenge and work-role fit, as well as the position level of the lawyer. The dual role of work-role fit was an unexpected finding and presents an important variable for future research. It would be useful to undertake this study with a larger sample of lawyers from different firms in New Zealand to see whether work-role fit is similarly influential for other lawyers.

The fact that role overload was not a significant predictor of burnout among lawyers was inconsistent with previous research on the impact of a high workload (Lee

& Ashforth, 1996). One possible explanation is that a high workload may be seen as a challenge demand among lawyers (Crawford et al., 2010). The impact of role overload on positive and negative outcomes for lawyers could be explored further in a larger sample of lawyers from a range of law firms, and in a more positive economic climate (i.e. not a recession).

The social support variable in this study combined co-worker and supervisor support. This may have diluted the impact of social support on positive outcomes, and as a moderator between job demands and negative psychological outcomes. Future research could focus solely on supervisor support, as this variable has received most support in the literature (Lee & Ashforth, 1996). In addition, the high correlation between performance feedback and social support suggests there is an overlap between these two variables. As such, future research could separate the effects of instrumental support and emotional support to provide more insight into which type of social support is most important for psychological outcomes among lawyers.

This study focused on a range of work characteristics considered important for burnout and work engagement among lawyers. While the regression results show that these factors explained more than half the variance in burnout and work engagement scores, future research could expand on these findings by investigating a wider range of variables. For instance, researchers have shown that individual differences are also important for burnout (Jamal & Baba, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Thoresen et al., 2003) and work engagement (Langalaan et al., 2006; Richardsen et al., 2006; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007a). In addition, researchers have argued that transformational leadership is a key variable for promoting work engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In line with Elwork's (2007) dual-causation model, future research may benefit from exploring the interactions between various personality traits and work factors in the development of work engagement, burnout and psychological distress.

This may be particularly important for junior legal staff, as this group was more likely to experience psychological distress. Future research could examine junior legal staff in more depth, and identify which personal characteristics buffer some junior legal staff from negative mental health outcomes. In addition, a longitudinal study could be undertaken to track junior legal staff over time to see whether changes in working conditions associated with gaining seniority lead to enhanced mental health over time, or if attrition explains the lower psychological distress apparent at higher levels of the firm. Further, research could be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing psychological distress at this early stage of a lawyers' career.

8.3 Implications for Practice

The results of this study also have practical implications for law firms. Psychological distress has increasingly been identified by researchers and the legal profession as an important issue based on cumulative evidence that suggests lawyers suffer from higher rates of depression than the general population and other occupations (Eaton et al., 1990; Nelk et al., 2009). This study provides evidence to show that New Zealand lawyers may also experience psychological distress, particularly junior legal staff.

This study has also contributed to our understanding of how work characteristics may be related to increased psychological distress among lawyers. High levels of burnout were associated with more psychological distress, and high work engagement was associated with less psychological distress. Although we cannot establish causality with the cross-sectional design of the research, the results confirm many of the expected relationships between variables. Initiatives that increase work engagement and reduce burnout may reduce psychological distress. This is relevant for law firms in New

Zealand (particularly large law firms) as it provides some insight into work factors that may have an impact on lawyers' mental health.

This study identified two job demands that predicted burnout among lawyers (in the absence of job resources): work-family conflict (where work demands conflict with demands at home) and low role clarity (ambiguity around instructions and expectations). Implications for law firms include the importance of having work-life balance initiatives (such as flexible work hours and childcare assistance) and policies to assist with juggling competing work and personal demands. With regard to increasing role clarity, this can be achieved through good delegation and coaching practices, which provide sufficient clarity around objectives and communicate limits of responsibility. Junior legal staff reported lower levels of role clarity and may benefit the most from better practices in this area.

The focus on job redesign to reduce burnout and psychological distress at work is consistent with the distress focused interventions endorsed by preventative stress management (Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997). According to this framework, primary prevention measures include job re-design efforts to reduce, change or eliminate stressors. Also included in this category of prevention strategies are methods to alter an individual's perception of the stressor, such as cognitive restructuring and learned optimism (Quick et al., 1997). Organisations that are committed to reducing psychological distress among employees may also benefit from secondary and tertiary stress prevention techniques. Secondary prevention strategies target individual and organisational responses to stress, such as regular exercise, good nutrition and relaxation practices, whereas tertiary stress prevention strategies enable individuals to seek professional help for symptoms of distress and can be facilitated by employee assistance programmes (Quick et al., 1997).

In line with the positive psychology approach to research, this study has also focused on aspects of work which can lead to positive experiences and, in particular, work engagement. Two job resources were found to predict work engagement: positive challenge (providing meaningful work that utilises skills) and work-role fit (where lawyers perceived a good fit between the role and themselves). Initiatives that are likely to increase a sense of positive challenge at work include providing challenging and meaningful work to legal staff, which utilises their skills and knowledge. This can be achieved through delegators being aware of staff development needs to match opportunities to their level of competence, and by communicating the context for the work to ensure lawyers understand how their tasks fit into the bigger picture for meeting clients' objectives.

Further, there may be other roles in the firm where lawyers can utilise their skills to gain a sense of meaning. Seligman et al. (2005) recommend that lawyers actively consider how they can utilise their signature strengths outside the core lawyer role. For instance, lawyers who have a flair for organising social activities may benefit from joining the social committee, and lawyers with strongly developed coaching skills may enjoy being part of the firms' training programmes. Further, legal staff that possess leadership capabilities may enjoy taking an active role in organising team activities. Partners and senior lawyers can assist in this process by providing opportunities and supporting junior legal staff in their efforts to use their strengths in wider team and firm activities.

The degree of work-role fit perceived by the lawyer (i.e. the degree to which the lawyer felt their role fitted with their personal values and provided them with a positive sense of identity) was not only a key predictor of work engagement, but also an important predictor of burnout. As such, it may be a key influencing factor for mental health among lawyers. A practical implication of this finding for large law firms is the importance of selecting law graduates whose values, aptitude and skills are congruent with being a commercial lawyer, to increase the likelihood that will positively identify with

the role and see it as a long-term career goal. In addition, realistic job previews can reduce the likelihood of unrealistic expectations by providing an accurate representation of the role and culture of the firm, and allow applicants to evaluate for themselves whether there is a good fit between their skills and values (Wanous, 1989). Further, a positive sense of identity with the role can be influenced by ensuring there are positive role models at senior levels in the firm. One way in which positive role models can work closely with junior members of the firm is through mentoring, where senior lawyers provide career development advice and contribute to the personal development of more junior lawyers. Indeed, mentoring has been associated with higher job satisfaction among lawyers (Higgins & Thomas, 2001).

Job control was also associated with positive outcomes for lawyers, although it does not appear to be as influential as other work characteristics in this study. Job control was not a significant unique predictor of work engagement or burnout. However, this work characteristic was positively related to work engagement and negatively related to burnout and psychological distress. In addition, this variable was strongly correlated with positive challenge, indicating an overlap between control over decisions at work and positively challenging work. This could indicate that positively challenging work for lawyers involves more autonomy in how it is completed. The finding that junior legal staff reported lower job control and positive challenge may reflect the fact that this type of work is more commonly available to lawyers as they gain experience and seniority. However, higher levels of job control can be provided to legal staff through better consultation and communication between delegators and more junior staff about current workloads to ensure work is distributed evenly. In addition, job control can be enhanced by equipping legal staff with effective delegation skills. For instance, while delegators may need to provide direction on the desired results, they can allow some latitude for how the task is completed. This needs to be balanced with the level of experience of the lawyer involved.

Although social support and feedback on performance from co-workers and supervisors were not unique predictors of work engagement when other job resources were taken into account, they were significantly and positively related to work engagement. In addition, social support and performance feedback were strongly correlated, suggesting that lawyers who had a stronger network of support within the firm were more likely to receive feedback on their performance. This may also suggest that the type of social support associated with work engagement among lawyers may tend to be instrumental support, where lawyers receive advice and feedback on work assignments, rather than emotional support. Work initiatives such as on-the-job coaching, and regular, timely, specific, and constructive feedback on performance may contribute to higher work engagement among staff.

While this study shows a link between certain job resources and work engagement, any changes to the job resources in the workplace should be considered alongside employee preferences. Individual differences are likely to moderate the degree to which an increase in job resources will lead to positive outcomes. For instance, while some lawyers may appreciate a high level of autonomy, others may find it stressful if autonomy is provided before reaching a desired level of competence and in the absence sufficient support. The importance of individual differences on the impact of job resources has been highlighted in a study by Schaubroeck and Merritt (1997), which found that job control reduced the effect of high demands on stress among individuals with high self-efficacy, but for those with low job self-efficacy an increase in job control was associated with higher stress.

In conclusion, despite its limitations, this study adds to our understanding of how lawyers' work can influence their mental health. Work factors that may increase work engagement and reduce burnout among lawyers have been identified. Within large law firms many of these factors can be influenced by senior lawyers in the firm, which highlights the importance of leadership development to enhance competence in

delegation, coaching and mentoring skills. Further, the results of this study provide evidence for two separate pathways by which work characteristics are related to psychological distress: through the mediating roles of burnout and work engagement. By taking a positive psychological approach to research, and including both positive and negative outcomes, this study has provided a more complete picture of the relationships between work characteristics and mental health. In addition, a wider range of initiatives have been identified that may enhance work engagement levels, and reduce burnout and psychological distress, among lawyers. Law firms should also be mindful of individual differences and contextual factors when considering initiatives to reduce psychological distress among legal staff.

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Appendix A: Initial email to the firm outlining research opportunity



School of Psychology
Massey University
Private Bag 102-904
North Shore Mail Centre
Auckland 0745

Hi everyone

As some of you may know, I am completing my Master of Arts in Industrial / Organisational Psychology. My thesis topic looks at the impact that various aspects of lawyers' work have on the potential for both positive outcomes (work engagement) and negative outcomes (burnout and depressive symptoms).

I would be interested to include your experiences in this research.

How you can contribute:

This research will involve completing a short 5 - 10 minute online (or hardcopy) survey. Your participation is voluntary. Responses will be collected anonymously through a secure external online survey provider.

Benefits for you:

You can benefit from this research in several ways:

- You will be provided with a summary of the research results and recommendations.
- Gain a better understanding of work engagement and burnout amongst lawyers.
- Become more aware of the support and resources available to you both in-house and externally.

You will receive an email next Tuesday with more details, including a link to the online survey.

Please contact me if you have any queries or concerns.

Many thanks

Veronica Hopkins

Appendix B: Information sheet for participants



School of Psychology
Massey University
Private Bag 102-904
North Shore Mail Centre
Auckland 0745

Hi everyone

As mentioned in my email last week, please see below for more details about how to participate in the research on engagement, burnout and depressive symptoms among lawyers.

If you would like to take part in the research, all you need to do is complete a short 5 - 10 minute survey (either online or hardcopy). Your participation is voluntary. Your responses will be completely anonymous. The online survey is hosted by a secure external survey provider that will not collect any data that could identify you.

To complete the online survey, please click on this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZMYBGCD>

Alternatively, please let me know if you would prefer to complete a hard copy of the survey (which can be returned anonymously in the internal mail in a plain envelope).

After the data has been collected and analysed, you will be provided with a summary of the research results and recommendations.

Please contact me or my supervisor (details below) if you have any queries or concerns.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Veronica Hopkins

Dianne Gardner
Ph: 09 414 0800 ext 41225
d.h.gardner@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 10/025. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Ralph Bathurst, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x41225, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz

Appendix C: Questionnaire



Thank you for taking part in this research

This survey looks at the impact that various aspects of your work have on the potential for both positive outcomes (work engagement) and negative outcomes (such as burnout and depressive symptoms).

The survey should take no more than 5 - 10 minutes to complete. You are not required to answer every question if you don't want to, and you can choose to stop the survey at anytime. By completing this survey, you provide consent for results to be included in the research findings, which will be reported in aggregate.

Please remember that your responses will be anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers, please just indicate the response that is most relevant for you.

Thank you for taking part in this research

This survey looks at the impact that various aspects of your work have on the potential for both positive outcomes (work engagement) and negative outcomes (such as burnout and depressive symptoms).

The survey should take no more than 5 - 10 minutes to complete. You are not required to answer every question if you don't want to, and you can choose to stop the survey at anytime. By completing this survey, you provide consent for results to be included in the research findings, which will be reported in aggregate.

Please remember that your responses will be anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers, please just indicate the response that is most relevant for you.

Please indicate how often (if ever) the following statements are true for you:

	Very seldom / never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often / always
Are you given assignments without adequate resources to complete them?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your work load irregular so that the work piles up?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have clear, planned goals and objectives been defined for your job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know what your responsibilities are?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have things to do which you feel should be done differently?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have to work overtime?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you know exactly what is expected of you at work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is it necessary to work at a rapid pace?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you receive incompatible requests from two or more people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have too much to do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Yes, certainly	Yes, to a certain degree	Yes, but only very little	No, not at all
Do you feel that your work drains so much of your energy that it has a negative effect on your private life?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that your work takes so much of your time that it has a negative effect on your private life?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your friends or family tell you that you work too much?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how often (if ever) the following statements are true for you:

	Very seldom / never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often / always
If there are alternative methods for doing your work, can you choose which method to use?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you influence the amount of work assigned to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are your skills and knowledge useful in your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you influence decisions concerning the people you need to collaborate with?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your work challenging in a positive way?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you decide when to be in contact with clients?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you consider your work meaningful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can you influence decisions that are important for your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how often (if ever) the following statements are true for you:

	Very seldom / never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often / always
If needed, can you get support and help with your work from your immediate superior?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If needed, can you get support and help with your work from your co-workers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often does your immediate superior talk with you about how well you carry out your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If needed, is your immediate superior willing to listen to your work-related problems?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are your work achievements appreciated by your immediate superior?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If needed, are your co-workers willing to listen to your work-related problems?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often do your colleagues talk with you about how well you carry out your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My job 'fits' how I see myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the identity my job gives me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The work I do on my job helps me satisfy who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job fits how I see myself in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how often (if ever) you experience the following at work:

	Never	Almost Never	Rarely (once a month or less)	Sometimes (few times a month)	Often (once a week)	Very often (few times a week)	Always (every day)
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am immersed in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get carried away when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate to what extent the following statements are true for you:

	To a very low degree	To a low degree	Somewhat	To a high degree	To a very high degree
Is your work emotionally exhausting?	<input type="radio"/>				
Do you feel burnt out because of your work?	<input type="radio"/>				
Does your work frustrate you?	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate how often (if ever) the following statements are true for you:

	Very seldom / never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often / always
Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

During the past 30 days, about how often:

	None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Did you feel tired out for no good reason?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel nervous?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel hopeless?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel restless or fidgety?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel so restless you could not sit still?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel depressed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel that everything was an effort?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you feel worthless?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

Your responses are anonymous. The following questions are included for the purpose of comparing results across demographic groups (e.g. comparing males with females, junior solicitors with senior solicitors).

Please indicate your gender:

Male

Female

Please indicate your position level in the firm:

Graduate

Junior Solicitor (Group 1 or 2)

Intermediate Solicitor

Senior Solicitor or Associate

Partner

