

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Testing the Job Demands-Resources Model of Work Engagement with a sample of Corrections Officers working within New Zealand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Psychology

at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Melissa Renee Burney

2011

Abstract

The aim of the research was to test the motivational process of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model of Work Engagement using a sample of 157 Corrections Officers working within the central region of New Zealand. The JD-R model assumes that a variety of important job resources are positively related to work engagement, especially when job demands are high, and that the relationship between job resources and organisational outcomes is mediated by work engagement.

Results of a two-way ANOVA revealed a significant relationship between job resources and work engagement, regardless of whether demands were high or low. Additionally, mediated regression analyses revealed the positive association between job resources and organisational outcomes was partially mediated by work engagement. Results provide partial support for the JD-R model of work engagement using a sample of Corrections Officers. In addition, results provide support for the importance of job resources in the workplace and the central concept of work engagement. Not only is this a valuable area of research for employee well-being, it also has positive implications for organisational success. Practical implications and limitations of the research are discussed.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisors Dianne Gardner and Steve Humphries for all of the guidance and advice they have given me throughout this project - your patience and understanding was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to everyone at the Department of Corrections for showing interest in my research, particularly Laura Gillan - your willingness to listen and advise me in my journey has been invaluable. I also want to thank Vince Arbuckle and Jeanette Burns for assisting the process and ensuring it all went to plan – having your backing made all the difference.

Thank you to my friends, for their support throughout the process and taking their precious time to proofread. I particularly thank Jess Glen, for her willingness to help in any way she could - your sense of humour and encouragement was just what I needed.

Most importantly, I thank my parents, Leigh and Diane Burney, for their continuous and unwavering support in all facets of my life - I could never have achieved my goals without your love and support and I appreciate it beyond words.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Abstract..... | i |
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| List of Tables and Figures | v |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Definition of Work Engagement | 1 |
| The Importance of Work Engagement..... | 2 |
| Aims of the Study..... | 3 |
| The History of Work Engagement..... | 4 |
| Burnout..... | 4 |
| Components of Burnout | 4 |
| Precursors of Burnout..... | 5 |
| Individual and Organisational Consequences of Burnout..... | 6 |
| The Emergence of Work Engagement..... | 6 |
| Work Engagement – Opposite to Burnout | 7 |
| Work Engagement – Parallel and Separate from Burnout..... | 8 |
| Factors Giving Rise to Work Engagement | 9 |
| Job Demands and Resources | 10 |
| The Job Demands-Resources Model..... | 12 |
| The Buffer Effect of Job Resources | 13 |
| The Salience of Job Resources in the Presence of High Job Demands | 14 |
| The Job Demands-Resources Model of Work Engagement..... | 15 |
| Sample Group – Corrections Officers..... | 16 |
| Hypotheses..... | 19 |
| Job Resources..... | 19 |
| Autonomy..... | 19 |
| Development Opportunities..... | 19 |
| Skill Variety | 19 |
| Supervisor Support..... | 20 |
| Performance Feedback..... | 20 |
| Hypothesis 1 | 21 |
| Hypothesis 2 | 21 |
| Organisational Outcomes..... | 21 |
| Intent to Leave | 21 |
| Job Satisfaction..... | 21 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Organisational Commitment..... | 22 |
| Hypothesis 3 | 22 |
| Hypothesis 4 | 23 |
| Hypothesis 5 | 23 |
| Hypothesis 6 | 23 |
| Method | 24 |
| Procedure | 24 |
| Participants..... | 24 |
| Measures..... | 25 |
| <i>Work Engagement</i> | 25 |
| <i>Job Resources</i> | 25 |
| <i>Job Demands</i> | 26 |
| <i>Organisational Outcomes</i> | 26 |
| Data Analysis..... | 27 |
| <i>ANOVA Assumptions</i> | 27 |
| <i>Regression Assumptions</i> | 28 |
| <i>Inductive Content Analysis</i> | 28 |
| Results..... | 30 |
| Themes Generated from the Inductive Content Analysis | 38 |
| <i>Safety Concerns</i> | 38 |
| <i>Relationship with Management</i> | 38 |
| <i>Lack of Resources</i> | 39 |
| <i>Role Conflict</i> | 39 |
| <i>Lack of Development Opportunities</i> | 39 |
| <i>The Focus on Compliance Over and Above Offender Rehabilitation</i> | 39 |
| <i>Team work/Camaraderie</i> | 40 |
| <i>Successful Rehabilitation of Offenders</i> | 40 |
| <i>Opportunity to do Meaningful Work</i> | 40 |
| <i>Skill Variety</i> | 40 |
| Discussion..... | 42 |
| The Major Findings of the Study and their Importance | 42 |
| Theoretical Relevance /Practical Implications | 46 |
| Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research..... | 47 |
| Conclusion..... | 49 |
| References | 50 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet..... | 57 |
| Appendix B: Survey | 58 |

List of Tables and Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Predictions of the Job Demands-Resources model based on all possible combinations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2006)..... | 13 |
| Figure 2. Job Demands-Resources model of work engagement based on Bakker and Demerouti (2008) | 15 |
| Figure 3. The influence job demands have on the relationship between job resources and work engagement | 32 |
| Table 1. Correlations Between Job Resources and Work Engagement and Regression Weights for Work Engagement Regressed on Resources..... | 30 |
| Table 2. Assessing the Moderating Effect of Job Resources on the Relationship between Job Demands and Work Engagement | 31 |
| Table 3. Correlations Between Organisational Outcomes and Work Engagement | 33 |
| Table 4. Work Engagement as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Job Resources and Job Satisfaction..... | 34 |
| Table 5. Work Engagement as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Job Resources and Organisational Commitment..... | 36 |
| Table 6. Work Engagement as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Job Resources and Turnover Intent | 37 |