3.2 Measuring instruments

Burnout and engagement are indictors of employee wellness according to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) argue that both should be measured separately and suggest using the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Scale (MBI-GS) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to measure engagement effectively. Schaufeli and Taris (2014) note how engagement is assumed to mediate the relationship between job resources and organisational outcomes and refer to the JD-R model as it proposes that job resources reduce the negative effects of job demands on exhaustion. The JD-R model as mentioned in chapter two is a ‘jack of all trades’ model and a master of none, hence additional theoretical frameworks are needed to explore specific demands, resources and outcomes (Schaufeli and Taris, 2014). The use of the UWES, PsyCap, MBI-GS and a customised motivation questionnaire in this study seek to remedy the shortcomings of the JD-R model and provide an overall measurement of engagement and its antecedents. A quantitative approach was used to collect the data as per the structure of the instruments. Creswell (2003) suggested that quantitative research is best used when the research aims to identify factors influencing an outcome. Objectivist epistemology, according to Gray (2014) holds that reality exists independently of consciousness. As a former employee of the participant college, the objectivist approach was utilised to ensure that objectivity was held throughout the research. Gray further notes that the use of this method does not reject subjectivity elements and quantitative tools used in this study objectively measured the values, attitudes and beliefs of participants, whilst maintaining a distance between the researcher and respondents. The instruments used are described in detail below.

3.2.1 **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**

The UWES (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker, 2002), was applied to measure engagement amongst the participants. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) the UWES is the most often used scientific measurement of engagement and has been validated in several countries in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australia (Bakker, 2009). The UWES incorporates seventeen questions pertaining to vigour, dedication and absorption. The model is scored on a seven point Likert Scale, ranging from one (never) to seven (every day).

In accordance with the UWES manual (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003) vigour, dedication and absorption are measured as follows: vigour is assessed by six items which refer to high levels of energy and resilience, the willingness to invest effort, not being easily fatigued and persistence in the face of difficulties. The authors state that those who score high on vigour usually have high levels of energy, zest and stamina when working, whereas those who score low on vigour have less energy, zest and stamina as far as their work is concerned. Dedication is assessed by five items that measure the sense of significance from one’s work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one’s job and feeling inspired and challenged by it. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) those who score high on dedication strongly identify with their work because it is experienced as meaningful, inspiring and challenging. Whereas, those who score low do not identify with their work because they do not find it meaningful, inspiring, or challenging; moreover, they feel neither enthusiastic nor proud about their work. Finally, absorption is measured by six items that refer to being totally and happily immersed in one’s work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it so that time passes quickly and one forgets everything else that is around. Those who score high on absorption usually feel happily engrossed in their work, they feel immersed by their work and have difficulties detaching from it because it carries them away according to the authors. As a consequence, everything else around is forgotten and time seems to fly. Those who score low on absorption do not feel engrossed or immersed in their work, they do not have difficulties detaching from it, nor do they forget everything around them.

**3.2.2 The Maslach Burnout Inventory General Scale (MBI-GS)**

The MBI-GS (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach and Jackson, 1996) was used to measure burnout. The MBI-GS is an important tool as it incorporates positives and negatives which Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter (2011b) deem valuable. The authors argue that measuring what people can and want to do through positively worded questions alone (such as in the UWES) can result in ambiguous results, for example, a low score indicates no engagement but not necessarily high burnout. With this in mind, additional measurements are required to establish the real situation amongst the group.

The MBI-GS comprises of twenty-two questions pertaining to exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy and is scored on a seven point Likert Scale, ranging from one (never) to seven (every day). Participants were asked to rate; exhaustion questions (six in total) such as; ‘I feel emotionally drained by my work’, ‘I feel I work too hard at my job’ and ‘I feel I look after certain students impersonally, as if they are objects’, cynicism questions (eight in total) such as; ‘I have the impression that students and other staff make me responsible for some of their problems’, ‘I really don’t care about what happens to some of my students/colleagues’ and ‘I’m afraid that this job is making me uncaring’ and reduced professional efficacy questions (eight in total) such as; ‘I am easily able to understand what my students feel’, ‘through my work, I feel that I have a positive influence on people’ and ‘I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with my students’.

Exhaustion, the most obvious manifestation of burnout, reflects the stress dimension of burnout according to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001). The authors discuss how cynicism or depersonalisation is the reaction to exhaustion whereby coping mechanisms are prompted such as creating cognitive and emotional distance from one’s work and service users. This process supports Wollard’s (2011) and Kahn’s (1990) descriptions of disengagement (section 2.3).

**3.2.3 Job Demands- Resources (JD-R) model**

The JD-R model was utilised to capture the sentiment regarding job resources and job demands within the college. Schaufeli and Taris (2014) describe how the JD-R model appeals to different groups such as human resources professionals and employees as it incorporates the negative and the positive. Furthermore, Bakker and Demerouti (2014) highlight its flexibility and applicability to an array of workplaces and occupations.

The JD-R questionnaire used in the study is an adaptation of the survey tailored by Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) to measure job demands and job resources of academic staff in a South African university. The questionnaire encompasses forty-five items which can be subdivided into six factors and is scored on a seven-point Likert Scale, ranging from one (never) to seven (every day).

* A set of fifteen questions analyse organisational support by measuring relationships with supervisors, communication, role clarity, information needed to do the job and participation in decision-making. Another factor (seven items) measures growth opportunities such as job variety, learning opportunities in the job and autonomy.
* Overload is measured by a further eight items incorporating pace and amount of work, the work load and emotional demands.
* Six items analyse social support by assessing contact opportunities with others and social support from colleagues.
* Advancement is measured through six items pertaining to pay, financial progress in the job and promotion opportunities.
* The final factor measures job insecurity in a three-item scale. The scale measures the respondents’ feelings relating to job insecurity.

Bakker and Demerouti (2014) note how job demands and job resources are the initiators of health impairment and motivational processes, describing how demands and resources can affect employee health, motivation and employee well-being. In addition, they emphasise the role that personal resources play in the process (personal resources will be analysed using a separate tool). Without the use of additional tools, it would be difficult to conclude if resources and demands are optimal since desired resources or perceived demands are naturally subjective. Notwithstanding that, it would appear based on the studies reviewed for this dissertation that occupational groups desire similar resources. The JD-R’s structure does not lend itself to understanding what resources and demands are important for individuals, but rather presents us with a resource and demands health check from an employee’s perspective. The extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and personal resources questionnaires coupled with the JD-R results will aim to present a more in-depth review of the demands and resources situation in the college.

**3.2.4 Personal resources/PsyCap**

A twelve item PsyCap questionnaire provided by the University of California, Irvine School of Social Sciences based on Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) was used to measure efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism. The questionnaire encompasses twelve items and is scored on a six-point frequency scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree).

* Questions one to three measure efficacy with questions such as ‘I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management’.
* Questions four to seven measure hope with questions such as ‘right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work’.
* Questions eight to ten analyse resilience with questions such as ‘I usually take stressful things at work in stride’.
* The final set of questions, eleven and twelve, measure optimism such as ‘I’m optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work’.

**3.2.5 Motivation**

Questions fourteen and fifteen consist of motivational questions which measure the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the participants.

* Participants are requested to rank motivators in order of preference with one being the most important. **Eleven intrinsic motivators** were selected based on the literature reviewed for this dissertation. The list includes praise and recognition, autonomy, colleagues, communication, meaningful work, rapport with people, health, acceptance, love, compassion/caring, admiration and altruism.
* **Six extrinsic motivators** were provided within the areas of payment, career progression, facilities in the work environment, flexible working hours and benefits such as health insurance and funding for further study.

The motivators were carefully selected to complement the JD-R model in an attempt to analyse what job resources and job demands are important for this specific group.

**3.2.6 Turnover intention**

Participants were asked if they had considered looking for another job in the last twelve months. Turnover intention is the final event in the disengagement process, whereby employees have presumably already distanced themselves physically and psychologically from the role and the company. Turnover intention is deemed extremely important for the purposes of this study as engagement requires commitment on behalf of the employee. A high attrition rate, coupled with a sentiment to leave the college would pose many difficulties when attempting to implement strategic policies.

* The hypotheses:

H1: A lack of growth and advancement opportunities will influence turnover intention

H2: Communication challenges and workload will be the biggest hindrance demands

H3: Non-management operational staff will have lower perceived participation in organisational

decision making

H4: Personal resources/PsyCap scores will be higher than job resources and job demands scores

H5: Employees’ with high PsyCap scores will score higher on engagement than those with below

average scores

H6: Participants with turnover intentions will have lower UWES, JD-R and PsyCap scores and higher

MBI-GS scores