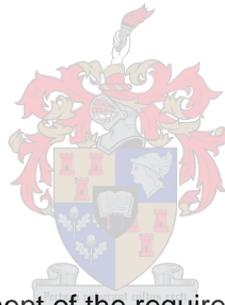


**THE IMPACT OF JOB DEMANDS AND JOB RESOURCES ON THE  
BURNOUT AND ENGAGEMENT OF TRADE UNION  
REPRESENTATIVES**

**Melissa Middleton**



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Commerce (Industrial Psychology) in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at  
Stellenbosch University

**Supervisor: Mr G.G. Cillié**

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## Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## Abstract

In South Africa, trade union representatives, more commonly known as shop stewards, face the difficulty of having to fulfil two roles. Currently trade union representatives are elected and expected to perform their trade union duties over and above their duties and responsibilities as full-time employees of the organisation for which they work. Bearing this in mind, the aim of this study was to investigate whether or not job demands, job resources and personal resources have an impact on the engagement and burnout of trade union representatives.

The primary objective of the study was to develop and empirically test a structural model that describes and explains the nature of the relationships between job demands, job resources and personal resources (exogenous latent variables), and the engagement and burnout (endogenous latent variables) of trade union representatives. For the purpose of this study, emotional intelligence was used as personal resource for trade union representatives.

The study made use of partial least squares (PLS) analyses to test the hypothesised relationships between the latent variables. Using an electronic questionnaire, quantitative data was collected from 60 trade union representatives from various South African trade unions. In order to qualify to participate in the study, trade union representatives had to be full-time employees of an organisation as well as elected trade union representatives actively playing the role of trade union representative. The data collected was collected specifically for this study and participation was voluntary. The questionnaire-link was distributed via email by the trade union correspondents to the qualifying trade union representatives. The data was kept confidential and the participants were anonymous.

The questionnaire consisted of six sections. The first was an informed consent template, in which participants were provided with information about the study and the implications of their participation were explained. There were no negative consequences from participation; however, the contact details of a professional clinical psychologist were provided should any of the participants have felt the need to talk to a professional after completing the survey.

The informed consent was followed by questions on the biographical details of the participant and four sections that contained the measurement tools used to measure the various latent variables. These instruments were the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), the Job Demands-Resources Scale (JDRS) (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005) and the Genos EI concise version (Gignac, 2008; Gignac & Ekermans 2010; Palmer, Stough, Harmer & Gignac, 2009). The data was subjected to a range of statistical analyses.

The study was able to identify a significant relationship between job resources and engagement for trade union representatives in South Africa. Through the proactive management of job resources, trade unions may be able to significantly increase the engagement of their trade union representatives and therefore increase the impact of the trade unions in the workplace on behalf of their members.

## Opsomming

Vakbondverteenwoordigers in Suid-Afrika, meer bekend as “shop stewards”, het die moeilike taak om twee rolle te moet vervul. Tans word vakbondverteenwoordigers tot hulle posisie verkies en daar word van hulle verwag om hulle vakbondverpligtinge tesame met hulle werksverpligtinge en verantwoordelikhede as voltydse werknemers van die maatskappy waarvoor hulle werk, na te kom. Die doel van hierdie studie was dus om vas te stel of werkseise (*job demands*), werks hulpbronne (*job resources*) en persoonlike hulpbronne (*personal resources*) ’n impak het op die werksbetrokkenheid (*job engagement*) en werksuitbranding (*job burnout*) van vakbondverteenwoordigers.

Die hoofdoelwit van hierdie studie was om ’n gestruktureerde model te ontwikkel en empiries te toets om te bepaal wat die verhouding is tussen werkseise, werks hulpbronne en persoonlike hulpbronne (eksogene latente veranderlikes) en die werksbetrokkenheid en werksuitbranding van vakbondverteenwoordigers (endogene latente veranderlikes). Vir die doel van hierdie studie is emosionele intelligensie gebruik as die persoonlike hulpbron van vakbondverteenwoordigers.

Die studie het gedeeltelike kleinste kwadrate (*partial least squares*, PLS) gebruik om die gehipotetiseerde verwantskappe tussen die latente veranderlikes te toets. ’n Elektroniese vraelys is gebruik om data vanaf 60 vakbondverteenwoordigers van verskeie vakbonde in Suid-Afrika te verkry. Elke deelnemer moes ’n voltydse werknemer van ’n organisasie wees asook ’n aktiewe vakbondverteenwoordiger. Deelname aan die navorsing was vrywillig en die data verkry is slegs vir hierdie studie aangewend. Die vraelys is deur vakbondkorrespondente elektronies aan kwalifiserende vakbondverteenwoordigers gestuur en alle data verkry, is as vertroulik hanteer. Deelnemers se anonimiteit is verseker.

Die vraelys het ses afdelings bevat. Die eerste afdeling het deelnemers ingelig oor die aard van die studie en hoe hulle deelname daaraan die studie affekteer. Alhoewel deelname aan die studie geen negatiewe gevolge vir die deelnemers behoort te gehad het nie, is die kontakbesonderhede van ’n professionele kliniese sielkundige ingesluit, sou deelnemers dit nodig ag om na voltooiing van die vraelys met ’n professionele kundige te praat.

Die ingeligte toestemming is gevolg deur vrae oor die biografiese besonderhede van die deelnemers; hierna het nog vier afdelings gevolg waarin daar van betroubare en geldige meetinstrumente gebruik gemaak is om spesifieke latente veranderlikes te meet wat op hierdie studie van toepassing was. Hierdie instrumente was die *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI) (Demerouti, Bekker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001), die *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), die *Job Demands-Resources Scale* (JD-RS) (Jackson &

Rothman, 2005) en die *Genos EI concise version* (Gignac, 2008; Gignac & Ekermans 2010; Palmer, Stough, Hamer & Gignac, 2009).

Die navorsing het bevind dat daar 'n beduidende verband bestaan tussen werkhulpbronne en die werksbetrokkenheid van vakbondverteenvoerders in Suid-Afrika is. Deur middel van die pro-aktiewe bestuur van hulpbronne binne die werksplek sal vakbonde die betrokkenheid van vakbondverteenvoerders aansienlik kan verhoog. Daardeur sal hulle ook die invloed wat vakbonde binne die werksplek vir elke vakbondlid het, kan verhoog.

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## Chapter 1

### Background, research-initiating question, research objectives and overview of the study

#### 1.1 Background

In South Africa, the government, trade unions and employer organisations all play an active role in the resolution of labour issues. Trade unions specifically play a very important role in South African organisations. Trade unions are responsible for ensuring that the employees whom they represent have their needs met by the organisations for which they work. To help the trade unions achieve this, unions make use of trade union representatives or shop stewards in the workplace. Trade union representatives are elected by the employees within the organisation who belong to the same union. The trade union representative is tasked with being the link between the organisation, the union and the employees.

The trade union representative is responsible for, amongst other things, the recruitment of trade union members within the organisation, assisting and representing members in grievance and disciplinary procedures, keeping members and union officials informed, consulting and negotiating with management, overseeing the employer's implementation of the relevant legislation, and participating in workplace forums (Finnemore, 2009). Most times, these are additional responsibilities over and above the representative's duties as an employee of the organisation. Some organisations have full-time trade union representatives, but this is relatively rare.

The trade union representative has responsibilities towards a number of different people. Consequently, the role expectations of each party, namely the union, workers, management and the shop steward himself/herself, often are complex and conflicting (Swanepoel, 1999). As mentioned by Swanepoel (1999), a trade union representative has many roles to fulfil. This individual is not only a representative, but also an employee, citizen and family member, with responsibilities to each one of these entities. Often, the needs and responsibilities of the various entities are conflicting, placing the representative in a position where he/she is required to choose between the responsibilities.

The attention, skills and resources of the representative therefore need to be distributed amongst the various tasks and responsibilities. The fact that their attention and resources are divided may result in shortcomings in the representatives' performance of their job as an employee of the organisation, in their role as a representative, or in both roles. Given the

number and varying nature of the roles they need to fulfil, it is not surprising that these individuals do not have sufficient resources to meet all the requirements at all times.

Burnout occurs when an individual does not have the resources to physically and/or psychologically fulfil their responsibilities and/or needs. This is often the result of prolonged stress and exhaustion. Burnout affects the ability of the individual to perform many of his/her tasks at an optimal level. Burnout has an effect on the individual's level of engagement, which is the opposite state to that of burnout, and which is characterised by high levels of energy and dedication to his/her work (Demerouti, Mostert & Bakker, 2010).

When considering burnout amongst trade union representatives, and given that burnout is due to a lack of resources and the presence of stress-causing factors, things like a lack of skills, physical resources, stress created by conflict amongst the various parties, and the high levels of accountability to the various parties, could all be classified as job demands and be seen as contributors to burnout. Responsibilities such as conflict management between the employer and employees would be aided by interpersonal skills and negotiation skills, which are important job resources. However, the representative may not always have such skills and therefore a lack of resources can also contribute towards burnout. This is an example of a physical resource that may be lacking.

The representative is responsible for the interaction between the employees (trade union members) and the employer and therefore is responsible for ensuring that both parties are satisfied; however, he/she is also held accountable when either one of the parties is dissatisfied. Often, these individuals bear the brunt of the dissatisfied employees or employer. The representative has to deal with at times being viewed as a traitor by the employees, and as the instigator by the employer. Without the needed psychological support, these individuals may start to feel overwhelmed, which can also contribute to burnout. Further, one of the main purposes of the trade union presence in an organisation is to ensure a more democratic approach to decision making. The trade union representative's job is further complicated when the employer uses an autocratic management style. These are examples of the negative impact that a shortfall of psychological resources can have on the individual.

As in the case of any other employee, the trade union representative would perform more optimally if engaged not only in his/her organisational work, but also in his/her representative duties. A state of engagement is more likely when these individuals have the necessary personal and job resources, and when an attempt is made to reduce the various job demands placed on them. When individuals are more engaged they also are more productive and more effective in performing their job tasks and meeting the various job demands placed on them.

Therefore there is merit in considering how these individuals can be assisted to become more engaged.

The engagement and optimal performance of the trade union representative does not only hold benefits for the union, but for the organisation as well. The trade union representative acts as the link between the union and its members as well as the link between the organisation and the union and all of the union members (employees). Therefore, the trade union representative plays a crucial role in ensuring that the interactions between these parties are successful. An engaged trade union representative with the necessary job and personal resources therefore will be more effective in managing his/her job demands, both as an employee and as a representative.

The effective performance of a trade union representative in respect of specific tasks like recruiting new members, representing members in disciplinary hearings, providing effective assistance to members in grievance procedures, consulting and negotiating with management, and participating in workplace forums (Finnemore, 2009) has advantages for both the union and the organisation. More effective trade union representatives lead to more satisfied trade unions and union members. The organisation also will be assisted in meeting the needs of the employees (union members) better and in enhancing the effectiveness of communication between the various parties.

The more efficient and effective performance of these duties can also have an indirect impact on the organisational bottom line. For example, effective communication, consultation and negotiation can result in the avoidance of costly labour actions like strikes. Strikes not only have a negative impact on the productivity of the organisation and its ability to generate revenue, but also have costly implications for union members, for whom engaging in these actions means losing their income for the period. This is by no means a comprehensive list of benefits that can be derived from a more engaged trade union representative, and only aims to demonstrate some of the advantages.

Gathering an understanding of the trade union representatives' position within the whole structure, their various role demands and available job resources, will help to gain a better understanding of the factors that affect their performance and to what extent a lack of resources can contribute to these individuals suffering from burnout.

## **1.2 Research-initiating question**

Given the background, the research-initiating question was based on the idea that trade union representatives do suffer from burnout, and therefore the question is:

*How do job demands, job resources and personal resources affect the burnout and engagement of trade union representatives?*

### **1.3 Research objectives**

As mentioned before, trade union representatives are inherently embroiled in conflict. The conflict does not come from the representative himself/herself, but arises from the different views of the various parties to which the trade union representative is accountable, as well as from the various job demands faced by these individuals. The conflict causes stress for the representative, and this stress could have a negative effect on the psychological and physical wellbeing of the trade union representative.

Burnout is associated with stress. It is caused either by job demands placed on these individuals, or by a lack of sufficient job resources. This limits their ability to meet the physical demands of the job as well as psychological needs of the individual. Trade union representatives often lack the necessary resources to meet both the job demands of their role as representative as well as the demands of being an employee. Paired with the lack of job resources for these individuals, they tend to have to suffer the brunt of the union's, employer's and employees' dissatisfaction with employment-related issues.

If it is true that trade union representatives suffer from burnout, then this will affect the representative's ability to perform his/her duties as both an employee as well as a representative.

The specific research objectives therefore are:

- 1.3.1. To determine the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the burnout of trade union representatives.
- 1.3.2. To determine the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the engagement of trade union representatives.
- 1.3.3. To determine whether engagement affects the burnout of trade union representatives.
- 1.3.4. As a consequence, to propose and test an explanatory burnout and engagement structural model.

The aim, through an explanatory study, therefore was to determine whether trade union representatives suffer from burnout and whether this burnout is associated with a decrease in the engagement of representatives.

## **1.4 Overview of the study**

Chapter 1 contains the background information on the research topic, the research-initiating question and the main objectives of the research. Chapter 2 entails a literature review, in which previous studies were evaluated and more information was gathered on the research topic. The literature review focussed on trade unions, trade union representatives, burnout, engagement, job demands and job and personal resources. Based on the information gathered, substantive research hypotheses were formulated. Chapter 3 outlines the proposed research methodology to test the research hypotheses. The research methodology focuses on the research design, sampling design, statistical hypotheses, statistical analysis of the information collected and the measurement instruments that were used to gather data for the analysis. Chapter 4 describes the data collected, the statistical measures and discusses the results. The findings are summarised before moving on to Chapter 5. Chapter 5 considers the limitations of the study, future implications of the findings for both management and the organisation, as well as suggestions for future studies.

## **1.5 Delimitations**

The aim of the research was to determine whether the hypothesised relationship between the latent variables, which was derived from the literature review, was in fact as anticipated. The research only considered the impact of the job demands and job resources on the burnout and engagement of trade union representatives in terms of their capacity or role as a representative. The study did not consider the impact of the job demands and job resources of the position that the representatives fulfil as employees of the organisation. Further, the sample was limited to trade union representatives that fulfil the role of both employee of the organisation and that of trade union representative. Lastly, no effort was made to improve the psychometric properties of the measures chosen for the purpose of the study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on previous bodies of work related to the topic. The aim of a literature review is to gather information that will allow for the development of plausible, substantive research hypotheses. The literature review focuses on three main areas, namely South African trade union representatives, burnout and engagement, and lastly job demands and job resources.

The investigation into South African trade union representatives adopts a holistic view of the trade union representative. This includes scanning the environment, both internal and external, within which these individuals have to function, the dynamics of trade unions as organisations in South Africa, and the role of trade union representatives. Burnout and engagement are then considered from both the point of view of the traditional role as employee as well as that of a trade union representative. Lastly, job demands, job resources and personal resources are investigated. The chapter concludes with a conceptual model that was derived from the literature, and the formulation of substantive hypotheses.

#### 2.2 South African trade union representatives

To better understand the role played by the trade union representative and the challenges faced by these individuals, an understanding of the environment within which trade unions operate, as well as their objectives, structure and methods of operations, must first be gained. By doing so, the role played by the trade union representative is not only placed in context, but the role can also be better understood in terms of its importance to the trade union and the purpose it serves.

##### 2.2.1 Trade union environment

A trade union does not operate in isolation. There are a number of factors that affect a trade union, both in its immediate and wider environments. The reason for discussing these factors is related to creating the context in which trade unions operate, the way in which they interact with organisations, and therefore the impact that these various factors can have on the job demands and job resources of the trade union representative – the central focus of the study.

Some factors that relate to the immediate environment in which the trade union operates include management and trade union perceptions of each other, frames of reference, quality

of the relationship between management and trade unions, power struggles, collective bargaining, and majority unions. These are just a few of the examples that will be discussed.

*2.2.1.1 Management and trade union perceptions of each other:* The relationship between trade unions and management is one marred by disagreement, anger and resentment, resulting in a breakdown of trust between the two parties. Despite the fact that the employer and employees have different end goals, both depend on the other to achieve their desired outcomes. Most of these issues are a result of the turbulent history of unions and employers. During the Apartheid era, trade unions were used by the oppressed as a tool for political change (Catchpowle, Stanworth & Winters, 1998; Wood & Mahabir, 2001). The efforts of unions during this period were characterised by violence and were destructive in nature. Although South Africa as a country has moved on, trade union methods used to achieve the desired outcomes are not always as sophisticated and labour disputes today continue to be handled in a violent and destructive way (Finnemore, 2009).

The employer, however, also contributes to this situation. The breakdown of negotiations or lack of follow-through on undertakings has resulted in little trust between the parties, therefore creating the impression that the only way unions can achieve their goal is through the use of their economic power, i.e. strikes, go-slows and protests.

Catchpowle et al. (1998) describes the new expectations placed on the trade union representative as highly demanding, as these individuals have to make a shift from confrontation and disruption to an approach focused on compliance and co-operation to bring about the desired changes. This requires more skilled, sophisticated and highly trained trade union representatives who are equipped to meet the needs of the employees within the new parameters and to work against the stereotypical perceptions of management held by unions and by unions of management.

*2.2.1.2 Frames of reference:* This refers to the ideology of the parties involved in the labour relationship. The ideology of each party will have an impact on how they interact with one another, as well as the extent to which they will be effective in achieving consensus.

There are three main frames of reference namely, unitarist, pluralist and radical. The viewpoints can be placed on a continuum, with unitarist and radical at the opposite ends of the continuum and pluralist in the middle. Each of these viewpoints is characterised by its own unique set of traits. Unitarism believes that all stakeholders share a common interest in the organisation's success and therefore denies that

there are conflicting interests between any of the stakeholders. Essentially, management does not recognise the need for trade unions due to the belief that there is no conflict about or differences in the desired end goals, and therefore unions are viewed as unnecessary and only as present to cause an unnecessary upset of the natural order (Ross & Bamber, 2009). Management uses a paternalistic management style when working with employees. Management prerogative allows it to act in what it believes to be the best interests of both the organisation and the employees (Bendix, 2010; Bluen, 1987).

On the opposite end of the continuum, the radicals believe that the organisation is a representation of the larger society and therefore aim to bring about change in the larger society by changing the way the organisation operates. This stance is predominately a trade union stance, and not the stance common among management. The focus moves from economic to political and social, very much like the stance taken by trade unions during the Apartheid era in South Africa. During this period, unions used their economic power within organisations to bring about political and societal change. With the radical approach, conflict is always present, there is little or no balance of power (the employer holds most of the power) and collective actions like negotiations are often unsuccessful, as the unions view the practice as management co-opting them into agreement for management's personal gain (Bendix, 2010; Bluen, 1987).

In between these two stances is pluralism. The pluralist recognises that there are various stakeholders in an organisation, each with their own unique set of interests. These differences result in conflict, as each stakeholder strives to achieve its goals and maintain its power. Pluralism recognises that collective action like collective bargaining is a necessity to facilitate the management of conflict and to reach compromises on which all parties can agree. Further, the reasons for the existence of unions are seen to be justifiable and as mechanisms to involve employees in the decision-making within the organisation (Bendix, 2010, Bluen, 1987; Ross & Bamber, 2009).

Different viewpoints held by labour and management can result in strain on and tension in the relationship between the two parties. Further, this has an impact on the role played by the trade union representative, who has to conform to the values of the union while trying to meet the objectives in the realm of management's viewpoints and values. For example, management, with a unitarist viewpoint, might not acknowledge the position of the union representative and therefore not engage with the representative to the full extent required to reach an agreement.

2.2.1.3 *Power struggles:* Trade unions and management never want it to come across as though the other side has the upper hand. In practice it is not uncommon for the two parties to use their sources of power to try to coerce the other party to give in to their demands. However the extent to which each party will be successful in enforcing its viewpoints and demands will depend on their power. Power, however, is not static and is subject to continuous change. Abuse of power can also have a negative impact on the relationship and result in a breakdown in actions (Bendix, 2010).

Each party has different sources of power that can be used at various stages of their interaction in order to try to pressure the other into giving in to their will. Power tends to be naturally skewed towards the employer, as the employer has the power to employ, reward and develop the employee. The power of the employees and the union lies in their ability to withhold labour and disrupt the production cycle of the organisation, which in turn has an indirect negative effect on the organisational market share and profitability (Bendix, 2010).

Von Holt and Webster (2008) refer to the different forms of employee power as structural and associational power. Structural power is derived from the employees' position within the economic system, and associational power is derived from collective groups such as unions. Structural power is further divided into marketplace bargaining power and workplace bargaining power. Marketplace bargaining power is the structural power of the employees within the labour market (sector organisations, size of union membership throughout industry), and workplace bargaining power is related to the position of the employees within the actual production process of the organisation (Von Holt & Webster, 2008). According to these explanations, sources of employee/union power essentially can be found on two levels – externally, on a larger scale in the market, and internally, within the organisation itself.

The effectiveness of strikes, go-slows and protests will be determined by the structural and associational power of a union. It is important to note, however, that employers also have lock-outs to respond to these actions of the employees/unions. Therefore, the challenge is for the trade union to reach an agreement, using these methods, within a limited time frame to ensure that members retain their jobs and source of income.

2.2.1.4 *Collective bargaining:* Collective bargaining is South Africa's attempt at creating what is termed democratic corporatism within the labour relations and employment relations realm (Donnelly, 2001). The purpose of collective bargaining is to create a platform for the discussion and negotiation of terms and conditions of employment,

including those relating to remuneration, procedural issues and other issues of mutual concern to employees and employers (Maree, 2011).

Collective bargaining can take place at one of two levels, either at the centralised or the decentralised level. There must be agreement between the union and the employer with regard to the level on which the bargaining takes place. Each has benefits and drawbacks. The extent to which the organisation and employees are either positively or negatively affected by the chosen level of bargaining is also dependent on a number of factors, such as the size of the organisation, union membership and organisational structure.

Donnelly (2001) investigated employer attitudes towards collective bargaining. Three factors were considered, namely autonomous capacity, conditional association and external threat. Autonomous capacity was found to have an alpha coefficient of 0.69, therefore most employers showed that they were confident in their own abilities to manage the employment relationship without the assistance of the bargaining council. Conditional association, with an alpha coefficient of 0.54, represented the attitude of employers who did not have a problem being with being associated with the council but who believed that the individual employer's circumstances should be taken into consideration when applying centralised determinations. In others words, the impact of certain regulations on smaller organisations should be taken into consideration to ensure that the smaller organisations also have a chance of survival. Lastly, external threat was found to have an alpha coefficient of 0.58. Employers belong to bargaining councils as they perceive membership as a form of protection should there be any repercussions in the future with regard to the labour movement (Donnelly, 2001).

Given that collective bargaining is a tool aimed at helping the employees and may not necessarily be an organisational initiative, the challenges faced by trade union representatives on the centralised and decentralised levels make their job more challenging. Should bargaining take place on a centralised level, the representative is responsible for ensuring that the collective agreements are implemented, which can result in tension, depending on the employer's attitude with regard to the bargaining council as well as their relationship with the representative. On a decentralised level, the trade union representatives need to have the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to negotiate effectively with management, given their respective attitudes and perspectives with regard to negotiation and the demands put forward. Throughout the process, the union/trade union representative needs to achieve the desired outcomes in the shortest possible time and in the most cost-

effective way for each party. Strikes cost the employees their income and employers their profits.

2.2.1.5 *Union representation*: It is possible for a number of unions to be present within an organisation. However, the Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995, provides certain organisational rights to those unions defined as majority unions within the workplace. This is of particular importance, as the rights awarded to these unions are not necessarily awarded to what are deemed sufficiently representative unions. Essentially, the difference between a majority and sufficiently representative union lies in the number of union members, either within a specific workplace or within the industry. A majority union is either a single union or two or more unions acting together and that have membership of 50% plus one of the employees who may belong to a union. A sufficiently representative union is a union, or two or more unions acting together, which has membership that meets the predetermined representation requirement determined by the employer and majority union/s (Kruger & Tshoose, 2013; South Africa, Juta Law (Firm), & In Juta's Statutes Editors, 2013; Tshoose, 2013).

This differentiation between a majority and sufficiently representative union restricts the rights of the sufficiently representative union to Sections 12, 13 and 15 of the Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995, and therefore does not award the right to elect trade union representatives within the workplace (Section 14) and to disclose information (Section 16) (Kruger & Tshoose, 2013; South Africa et al., 2013; Tshoose, 2013). The fundamental purpose of any trade union is to serve its members. The union cannot serve its members if the legislation limits its actions and if the majority union/s and employer set unattainable sufficiently representative thresholds.

The legislation itself is contradictory. Essentially, the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995 aims to promote pluralism. Pluralism aims to create a more democratic, fair and representative workplace by including all stakeholders in the industrial/ employment relations process. However, Section 18 of the legislation rewards “majoritarianism”, therefore defeating the spirit of the Act. Further, it has a negative impact on the sufficiently representative unions’ abilities to meet the needs of their members. The promotion of “majoritarianism” can be understood from the perspective that it aims to create a less complex and more cohesive and representative labour system by reducing the number of parties involved in the interaction between the employer and the employees/unions (Kruger & Tshoose, 2013).

Given these restrictions, sufficiently representative trade union representatives are faced with more challenges when trying to execute their duties of representing a union and in trying to meet the needs of the employees they represent. Their limited rights prevent them from being able to engage in collective bargaining and negotiations with the employer, and make it more difficult to recruit members for the union to meet the membership threshold; this also can result in inter-union rivalry and tension within the workplace. Furthermore, the sufficiently representative union members have to settle for the terms and conditions of employment negotiated for the employees of the majority union, and do not have the opportunity to voice and fight for the conditions of employment they desire.

Factors that extend beyond the immediate environment within which the trade union operates include legislation, the economic environment, the policies of the ruling party and socio-economic factors. Again, these are just some of the examples of larger, external environmental factors that will be discussed.

**2.2.1.6 Legislation:** Labour legislation has been defined in a number of different ways, but essentially it aims to meet three objectives, namely formalisation of the relationship between the employer and his/her employees, regulation of the interaction between the employer, organised labour and/or the government, and moderation of the interaction to promote the best interests of all or one of the parties in the market (employer, employee or public) (Vettori, 2005).

South Africa has a number of legislative measures in place to help manage the employment relationship and meet the objectives stated above. The legislation is underpinned by the Constitution and a pluralistic stance, trying to move away from the historical adversarial nature of the relationship between the employer and employee towards a more co-operative approach (Kruger & Tshoose, 2013; Raju & Stilwell, 2007; Tshoose, 2013). Four key Acts were either amended or developed, namely the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997, the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 and the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 (Raju & Stilwell, 2007).

Although the Acts noted above were developed to improve the relationship between the employer and employees/trade unions, the legislation can also hinder the relationship. An example is Section 18 of the Labour Relations Act, with regard to majority and sufficiently representative unions, as discussed earlier. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act stipulates the minimum conditions of employment, which sometimes can lead to additional costs being incurred by an employer that

could have been used to employ additional employees. Therefore, despite the good intentions of the legislation, it can create difficulties for the employer and employees/unions when trying to meet their objectives. The legislation can also be complex and difficult to comprehend, therefore trade union representatives need to not only understand the legislation and its implications, but also operate within its parameters, which create another set of unique challenges.

*2.2.1.7 Economic environment:* The economic environment is changing constantly and a number of factors within this environment have an impact on the relationship between employers and employees. Variables such as inflation, economic growth, job creation, black economic empowerment (BEE), productivity and competitiveness and technological advancement affect the rate at which the economy grows (Finnemore, 2009). Most of these factors are interrelated, and changes in one sphere have a knock-on effect in the other spheres.

After Apartheid, trade barriers that had previously been imposed on South Africa were lifted and opened South Africa up to international trade. With this, South Africa saw a dramatic shift in its labour demands, from unskilled/semi-skilled workers to more skilled workers, especially with the introduction of new technology (Rattsø & Stokke, 2013; Segal & Brawley, 2009;). After 1994 there was a sharp increase in the demand for employees with tertiary-level qualifications and a significant decrease in the number of unskilled workers required (Segal & Brawley, 2009). Given that most of South Africa's potential and actually working population falls into the unskilled and semi-skilled category, the demand for more skilled workers has had a dramatic effect on the unemployment rate, as well as on the wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers (Rattsø & Stokke, 2013).

Employees have to function and sustain themselves and their families within the same economy that the organisations for which they work operate. Therefore the actions of organisations that have an impact on inflation and the economic growth of the country have an indirect effect on their employees' standards of living. Wage increases are a common item on the negotiation agenda and tend to be a contentious issue, often resulting in strike action, which is costly for a developing economy such as that of South Africa. Furthermore, increased wages or the establishment of a minimum wage can result in unskilled workers being priced out of the labour market (Mmolaeng & Bussin, 2012). This again has an impact on the unemployment rate and could result in many union members becoming unemployed.

Increased wages also affect the inflation rate. The inflation rate is often used as the basis for wage demand calculations by both the employer and employees/trade unions. The importance of inflation in determining wages is twofold. Firstly, an increase in wages results in increased production costs and therefore increased consumer prices, which eventually lead to increased inflation. This is known as the wage price spiral, where unions negotiate wage increases to protect the real income of their members from the impact of inflation, but which essentially ends up increasing inflation in the long run (Finnemore, 2009; Kolsrud & Nymoer, 1998). However, if employee wages do not keep up with inflation, poverty and possible chances of unrest are increased (Finnemore, 2009).

The economic environment therefore poses a number of challenges to trade unions and their representatives when it comes to trying to improve the standard of living of their members. It therefore is important for trade union representatives to be conscious of the impact these demands will have, not only on the economy, but also on the long-term well-being of the members.

*2.2.1.8 Political policies:* South Africa has developed a labour structure that is made up of the state, employers/employer organisations and employees/employee organisations. The government plays a regulatory role in the relationship and acts in a secondary role, unless the government is the employer, in which case the government plays a primary role in the interaction between labour and the organisation (Ferreira, 2005). The new government has brought with it many growth plans, including the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth Employment and Redistribution plan (GEAR) and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (Asgi-SA). All of these initiatives have aimed to further the growth and development of the South African economy and people (Segal & Brawley, 2009).

The government also established the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). NEDLAC is made up of four chambers, namely the Labour Market Chamber, the Trade and Industry Chamber, the Public Finance and Monetary Policy Chamber and the Development Chamber. Employers (Business Unity South Africa), employees (trade union federations), government officials, politicians and community representatives are all present in NEDLAC. NEDLAC aims to create an inclusive environment involving all of the key role players in the development, decision making and implementation of policies (Bendix, 2010; Ferreira, 2005). This promotes societal corporatism in South Africa by involving business, labour and government in social and economic policy making (Ferreira, 2005).

The new government also saw the formation of an alliance between the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). This alliance could result in the decision-making power within NEDLAC being skewed towards these parties, as they are bound to support one another and to promote each other's agendas (Ferreira, 2005). Despite NEDLAC's best intentions, there still are sceptics who believe that continuous consensus seeking does not always result in optimal decisions being made, but rather "middle-of-the-road" decisions (Bendix, 2010).

The political environment therefore has an impact on the way in which things are done. The tripartite alliance between the ANC, COSATU and SACP could have a negative effect on the democracy that NEDLAC is trying to create for the development of policies. Again, employees are represented by union federations and the number of seats allocated to each federation is dependent on membership. Therefore there is a chance that employees who belong to unions that do not belong to the representative federations are not able to express their opinions and give their input, therefore defeating the democratic and inclusive spirit of NEDLAC.

*2.2.1.9 Socio-economic factors:* As mentioned earlier, a common goal of trade unions is to try to improve the standard of living of their members. Standard of living, however, goes beyond income; it includes a number of socio-economic factors like housing, education and training and HIV/AIDS (Finnemore, 2009). Employees are not eight-to-five people, and therefore it is unrealistic to expect them to come to work and forget about the struggles they face at home. These struggles then become a part of the workplace and workers look to the trade unions they belong to for help in overcoming these difficulties.

With the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), COSATU launched its Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in 1997. The aim of RPL was to gain recognition for employees' prior learning, knowledge and skills and to create a framework that would help with the future development of employees, providing them with a career path and potential salary increases. However, the union and management objectives differed in that management used it as an opportunity to perform a skills audit and to develop a multi-skilled workforce (Lugg, Mabilta, Louw & Angelis, 1998). Other examples of how unions have become involved in advocating for the education and training of their members include the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) and the Development Institute of Training, Support and Education (DITSELA) (Finnemore, 2009). These are examples of how unions have

to go beyond simply securing better pay for employees, but also securing a better future through education and training.

HIV/AIDS has had a notable impact on South African organisations. The high prevalence rate in South Africa has affected labour supply, with an increase in labour turnover as a result of illness and death. Labour costs, sourcing replacement employees, training new employees and temporary employees to replace absent workers, productivity costs, increased costs with decreased productivity as a result of work hours lost from absenteeism and sick leave, all have an impact on the organisation's bottom line (Bolton, 2008; Finnemore, 2009). COSATU's attendance of events such as the HIV/Aids Treatment Congress shows their support for a government plan of action with regard to HIV/Aids. Again, this demonstrates the need for unions to become involved in and show support for issues far beyond the normal employer-employee relationship (Khoza, 2002).

The complex nature of the environment, both on a micro- and a macro-level, in which trade unions have to operate brings with it various challenges, some easier to address than others. Union members expect their unions to address matters beyond the employment relationship and strive for a better standard of living. These challenges become a part of the trade union representative's job. The trade union representative has to be the voice of all members and on all levels. The next section investigates trade union dynamics, with specific reference to organisational structure and decision making.

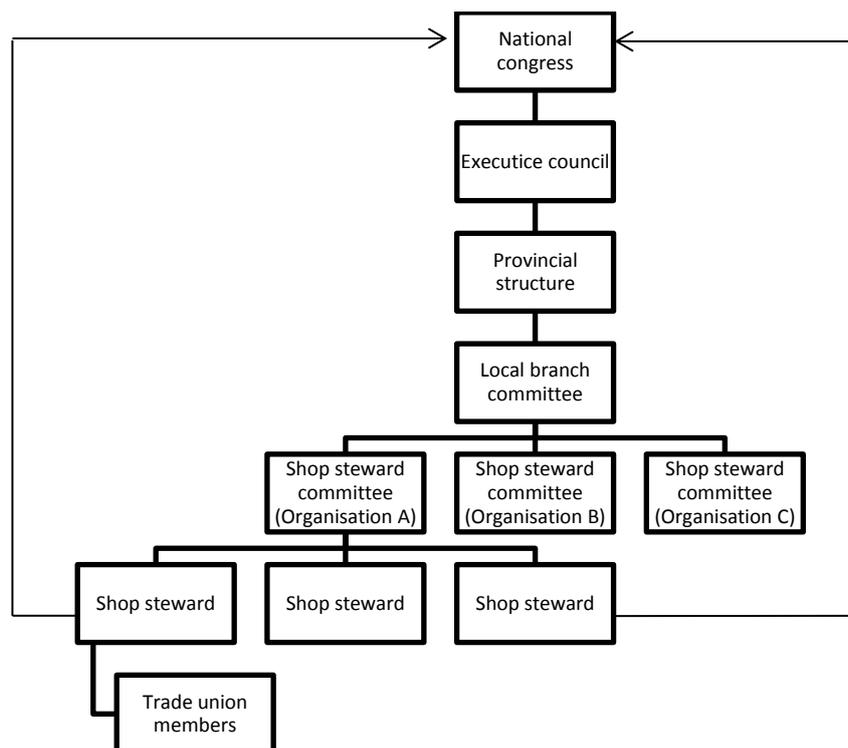
### **2.2.2 Trade union dynamics**

Trade unions are essentially organisations themselves. They too have to ensure the efficient and effective running of their organisation to meet the needs of their members, who in essence are their customers (Finnemore, 2009). Bendix (2010) also likens the trade union structure to that of an organisation, with trade unions making use of a hierarchical structure to distinguish between the various levels of authority and decision making within the organisation. Trade unions, however, differ from the traditional organisation. Technically, trade union officials, who are higher up in the hierarchical structure of the trade union, work for or have to ensure the satisfaction of their members. Therefore, although organisations, they differ slightly from the traditional understanding of an organisation in that the members not only form part of the trade union, but also technically are the clients of the trade union (Finnemore, 2009).

The nature of the relationship that exists between the union and its members therefore creates certain expectations from both parties of one another. Linde and Henderson (2010) aimed to explain the dynamics of the relationship between the union and its members by viewing the relationship as one that creates a psychological contract between the two parties. Each party

has expectations of the other and, when these expectations are not fulfilled, this affects the relationship (Linde & Henderson, 2010). Therefore, from this point of view, since the trade union representative is the link between the members and the union, the representative has an important role to play in preventing perceptions of psychological contract breach. A breach in the psychological contract means that one or both parties do not perceive the other party as having upheld the common understanding or agreement between them. This increases the responsibility placed on the representative by both the union and its members.

The following figure helps to describe the structure of the typical trade union. The foundation of the structure consists of the trade union members, who are all found within the workplace. Employees have the right to join a trade union and to elect trade union representatives amongst themselves. The trade union representative, like the union members, is an employee of the organisation but has the added responsibilities of representing their fellow members and serving as a link between management and the employees, as well as a link between the trade union and the members and the trade union and management.



**Figure 2.1** The typical structure of a national trade union (Finnemore, 2009, p. 113).

The shop steward forms part of the local branch committee of the trade union, which is the next level within the structure of the trade union. The local branch committee is set up in areas where the union has developed a sufficient following and is represented in several workplaces (Finnemore, 2009). The local branch consists of all the trade union representatives within the area.

The local trade union representatives will elect a secretary, treasurer, vice-chairperson and chairperson (Finnemore, 2009). If the local branch becomes sufficiently large, these office bearers will become full-time employees of the trade union and therefore will be paid by the trade union (Bendix, 2010). These office bearers perform mostly an administrative and supportive role by providing the shop stewards with assistance in fulfilling their duties, like recruiting new members, assistance in grievance procedures, as well as acting as a link between the shop stewards and union members and the provincial branch (Finnemore, 2009). Furthermore, the local branch acts as a link between the shop stewards and the provincial branch, not only informing either party of new policies and decisions, but also of any complaints or dissatisfaction (Finnemore, 2009).

The provincial office is the next level and second highest in the trade union structure. The provincial office plays a similar role to that of the local branch committee and acts as a link between the executive committee and the local committees, and therefore indirectly as the link between the members as well (Bendix, 2010). The provincial office also consists of elected officials who become full-time employees of the trade union and therefore are paid by the union. At the top of the hierarchical structure is the executive or national council of the trade union. This consists of the trade union president or chairperson, with the vice-chairperson, general secretary and treasurer (Finnemore, 2009). The national executive council is responsible for ensuring that the trade union policies are implemented, assisting with trade union activities on a much larger scale, and managing the trade union structure in such a way to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, not just in union activities, but also with regard to union finances (Finnemore, 2009).

Lastly, at the top of the structure is the national congress. This is not a level in the trade union structure, but rather a meeting held by the trade union annually or bi-annually to discuss trade union policies and activities and to elect the national executive council. This meeting is attended by all the trade union delegates (trade union representatives), and all decisions are voted on by the delegates in a democratic fashion. The delegates have the final say, and therefore the power does not lie with the national executive, but rather with those at the bottom of the trade union structure (Finnemore, 2009). This reiterates the point made earlier, that the members are the holders of the power within the trade union structure (Bendix, 2010).

Essentially the trade union representative is the voice of the union members and plays a crucial role in making sure that the wants and needs of the members are voiced and considered in the decision-making process. Decisions pertaining to the union members are not only made through the various channels discussed above, but also through other decision-making structures that can be implemented should the union and organisation so choose. Union representatives are also responsible for making sure that the union members are heard

in workplace forums and bargaining counsels. There are concerns that, as the unions grow, the decision-making power shifts from the union members and the trade union representatives to the more senior office bearers of the union.

The concerns are a result of the more centralised negotiation, which results in the distancing of decision making from the shop floor to more senior trade union officials, who at times have more knowledge and skills, and therefore trade union representatives may become more dependent on them for information and advice. As leaders in the union structure become further removed from the shop floor, it is less likely that their decisions will be representative of the members' feelings and beliefs (Finnemore, 2009). Despite these concerns, trade union members have the right to remove a union representative from office should they feel that the member is performing his/her tasks inadequately or in a way that does not represent their opinions (Finnemore, 2009).

### **2.2.3 The role of trade union representatives**

Now that the position of the trade union representative or shop steward has been placed in context with regard to the trade union, his/her position should also be viewed from an organisational perspective. The trade union representative is first and foremost an employee of the organisation. They work for and are remunerated by the organisation and therefore have a responsibility towards the organisation, and not just towards the trade union and its members. South Africa's Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995 clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of trade unions and trade union representatives, as well as the employer's responsibilities towards the unions, the union representatives and the employees within their organisation.

According to Section 14 (4) of the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 (1995), the duties of representatives include the following over and above their usual duties as employees of the organisation:

- should a worker request it, to either help and/or represent the worker in grievance and disciplinary hearings;
- to be mindful of and monitor the employer's compliance with the Labour Relations Act, any laws which aim to regulate terms and conditions of employment, and any collective agreement;
- report any failure by the employer to comply with the law or an agreement to –
  - the employer,
  - the representative trade union, and

- any responsible authority or agency; and
- to perform any other function agreed to between the trade union and the employer (South African Department of Labour, 2013).

Finnemore (2009) gives a more detailed description of these duties and includes activities such as recruiting new members, representing members at disciplinary hearings, keeping members and union officials informed, engaging in consultation and negotiations with management, getting mandates from members during the negotiation process, arranging and attending union meetings, and participation in workplace forums and various workplace committees. Trade union representatives therefore have to fulfil not only their duties and responsibilities as employees of the organisation, but also their duties and responsibilities as trade union representatives.

These roles of the representatives are reiterated by the themes according to which Linde and Henderson (2010) categorise the various expectations of the psychological contract that exists between the union and its members. The member expectations of the union include legislative obligations like negotiations, mediation, advising members, communication that refers to union assistance and sound legislative advice, informing members of and about union activities, providing feedback and consultation on union decisions, union conduct that requires speedy fulfilment of obligations, reliability and keeping members' best interest at heart. The last two themes include training and development, by helping secure such opportunities for members and supplementary services such as getting involved in recruitment and selection (Linde & Henderson, 2010).

A psychological contract implies, however, that both parties to the contract have responsibilities to fulfil towards one another, and therefore similar themes were identified to categorise the union's expectations of the union members, which include conduct like support, loyalty, high-quality work performance, participation in union activities, a contractual agreement whereby members pay their union fees and, lastly, communication about any concerns, providing feedback to the union and keeping personal information up to date (Linde & Henderson, 2010). All of these sources highlight the dynamic nature of the role of the trade union representative.

Trade union representatives can be elected in any workplace where there are ten or more trade union members of a registered trade union. The trade union representative is then elected by the members amongst themselves. Depending on the number of members within the organisation, the number of trade union representatives that may be elected varies. The following guidelines are provided by Section 14 (4) of the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995, as set out in Table 2.1.

From the table below it is evident that, as the size of the organisation grows, so does the responsibility of the trade union representative. The accountability of the trade union representative increases as the size of the trade union membership increases within the organisation. The increased accountability also creates increased pressure, time demands and responsibility.

**Table 2.1 Guidelines for the number of trade union representatives in an organisation (South African Department of Labour, 2013)**

<b>Trade union members</b>	<b>Number of trade union representatives</b>	<b>Maximum number of trade union representatives</b>
10	1	-
10 +	2	-
50 +	2, + 1 for every additional 50 members	7
300 +	7 for 1 <sup>st</sup> 300 members + 1 for every additional 100 members	10
600 +	10 for 1 <sup>st</sup> 600 + 1 for every additional 200 members	12
1 000 +	12 for 1 <sup>st</sup> 1000 + 1 for every additional 500 members	20

The election process for the trade union representative is also dependent on the union. Each union has its own election procedure, which is stipulated in the union constitution. For example, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) requires that members be nominated and their nomination seconded by other members for the role of trade union representative. In instances where there are more nominations than the number of trade union representatives allowed, as per the table above, the nominations have to be put to a vote. The local office must be informed of the vote and members must be given sufficient notice of the vote – a minimum three days – and the members must be informed about who the candidates are (NUMSA, 2013).

Voting can be done by secret ballot or by show of hands. Each member has the same number of votes as the number of trade union representatives that are allowed according to Table 2.1. In other words, if two trade union representatives are required, then each member has two votes (NUMSA, 2013). It is also important to mention again that, in the same way that the members have the power to elect union members as trade union representatives and office bearers, they too have the power to remove any individual they feel is not living up to the requirements of the role, or who is not acting in a manner that promotes their best interests and opinions (Finnemore, 2009).

As labour relations are not a one-party relationship, the employer also plays a role and has certain obligations towards the trade union representative and union members. In terms of the Labour Relations Act for example, providing any relevant information to the trade union representative, to fulfil his/her duties. The duties of the trade union representatives include:

- grievance and disciplinary proceedings, in which the trade union representative may assist any member of his/her union through the process;
- monitoring of workplace-related provisions of the Act to ensure that the employer adheres to all of the relevant legislation and regulations;
- monitoring any law concerning working conditions;
- monitoring any collective agreement and its implementation by ensuring that the employer adheres to the agreement;
- reporting alleged breaches of collective agreements and labour laws, therefore allowing him/her to protect his/her members (South African Department of Labour, 2013).

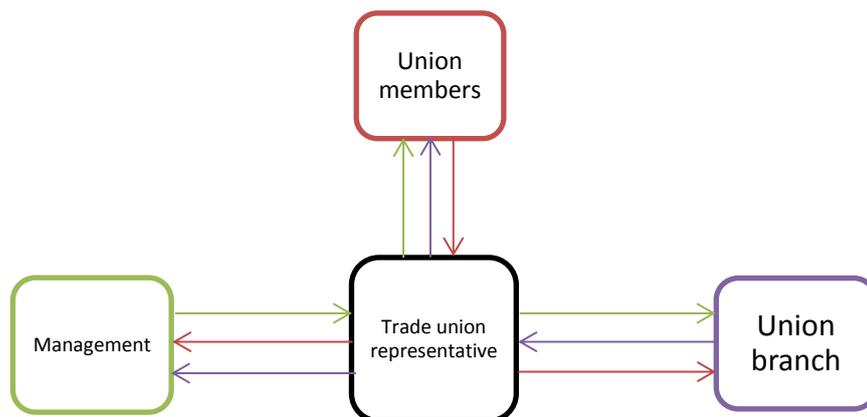
The information provided is essential for the trade union representatives to perform their duties in an efficient and effective way. The disclosed information pertains to the functions of a trade union representative as set out in Section 14 (4) of the Labour Relations Act, No. 66 of 1995. The Act aims to prevent the abuse of information by stipulating in Section 16 (5) that the employer may not or does not have to disclose any information that:

- is legally privileged;
- is prohibited by any law or court order;
- may harm a worker or the employer; and
- is personal about a worker, without the worker's consent (South African Department of Labour, 2013).

Section 16 therefore aims to promote effective and efficient interaction between the employer and the trade union by trying to ensure that all parties have access to all of the relevant information to make informed decisions and to take actions based on factual information. The sharing of relevant information can further help to assist in removing any false truths, rumours or uncertainty that can have a negative effect on the relationship and interaction between the two parties.

From the above it can be concluded that it is essential for the trade union representative not only to have a strong relationship with the union members whom they represent, but also with the employer. This places the representative between or in the middle of two parties who often have different views and objectives. The representative has to manage the relationship between the two parties and do his/her best to meet the needs and interests of both in the best possible way. However, from time to time one of the parties may not achieve the outcome that they had hoped for and, as a result, hold the trade union representative responsible. Therefore the representative is faced with having to manage dissatisfied parties and bear the brunt of the dissatisfaction.

Bendix (2010) depicts the position of the trade union representative in the following way:



**Figure 2.2 The role of the shop steward (Bendix, 2010, p. 181).**

Trade union representatives therefore hold two jobs at the same time, each with their own set of demands and resources. The added responsibility of their secondary role as trade union representative increases the overall workload faced by these trade union representative within the workplace. The trade union representative's ability to cope with and manage the additional stress will be affected by a number of factors that do not only pertain to the individual's union duties, but also his/her duties as an employee of the organisation.

The question therefore is twofold. Firstly, do these individual's suffer from burnout and, secondly, regardless of whether they do or do not suffer from burnout, what are the reasons for or lack of burnout? For example, if the trade union representative does suffer from burnout, is it as a result of the additional pressures and responsibilities of being a trade union representative, or is the burnout a result of the traditional factors that are associated with burnout amongst non-union representative employees? Further, how do job demands, job resources and personal resources impact the burnout of trade union representatives?

The following section investigates both burnout and work engagement. First, burnout will be investigated, and thereafter engagement.

## **2.3 Burnout and engagement**

Burnout does not only affect trade union representatives. It is a problem that can plague any employee in any role or capacity. Essentially, burnout in the workplace is a form of exhaustion. This can be psychologically, physically or both. There are a number of factors that play a role in employee burnout. Given that the focus of this study is on the burnout of trade union representatives, the aim of the following section will be to create an understanding of burnout, how burnout comes about, and to relate the information back to the specific role of the trade union representative. This will help gain an understanding of the various factors that can play a role in the burnout of trade union representatives that do not relate only to their role as employees, but also to their role as representatives.

### **2.3.1 Burnout**

Burnout has become a well-known concept within the workplace in recent years. It has been researched and defined in a number of different ways. A concise definition is given by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), "Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy" (p. 397). Burnout therefore is not only physical exhaustion, but includes emotional exhaustion. Maslach & Smith, (1997) described burnout as a condition that is more than just the physical exhaustion of an individual from being over worked but included stress and emotional fatigue. The key indicator of burnout in their option is the individual distancing themselves from those around them in response to suffering from burnout. Both these definitions make reference to the outcomes of burnout, but neither makes reference to specific causes of burnout.

When viewed in a simplistic way, burnout is a state of being that arises due to the individual not having sufficient emotional and physical resources to cope with the demands placed on

him/her. Demands require input from the individual in order to produce certain desired outcomes, and can be behavioural, cognitive or emotional.

Burnout is caused by a number of different factors and various researchers have highlighted factors that play a role in contributing to this state of being. Seven causes of burnout were highlighted in an earlier study by Cedoline (1982), which are discussed below and can be related to the role demands of a trade union representative:

*2.3.1.1 Lack of control over one's own destiny:* As organisations grow in size, the distance between the decision makers and those impacted by the decision becomes greater and therefore the impacts the decision making process of the employee. This results in employees' ability to make decisions quickly and exercise their own initiative becoming limited. It can also reduce the speed of decision making, as employees now have to wait on superiors before they can go ahead with their work (Cedoline, 1982). In terms of the trade union representative, this can be related to the need for any decisions and actions to be approved by the union members. Therefore, the trade union representative first has to refer back to the members and gain consensus and agreement from the members before moving forward to take action. This feeling of lost control can be exasperated because of the size of the larger unions.

*2.3.1.2 Lack of occupational feedback and communication:* Organisations need to provide consistent, open and honest feedback to their employees about performance. When feedback is given inconsistently or not often enough, stress and anxiety are caused in employees about their performance (Cedoline, 1982). For the trade union representatives, feedback is required on their performance as employees as well as their performance as trade union representatives. Feedback from the union itself may not occur as often as the representative would like and therefore it may lead to uncertainty in the trade union representative with regard to his/her role. Delayed feedback may also result in the trade union representative performing his/her tasks in an incorrect manner without knowing it.

*2.3.1.3 Work overload or underload:* Overload is when individuals are faced with excessive work demands that exceed their capacity or ability to meet all the demands. Work underload occurs when individuals are faced with performing tasks that do challenge them, are repetitive or boring. Although the latter is not as demanding, it can lead to frustration with one's work (Cedoline, 1982). Work overload is very likely for trade union representatives due to their dual role in the workplace. Their position as an employee of the organisation has certain requirements and so too does their position

as trade union representative. Therefore, these individuals may suffer from a work overload due to the demands of both roles.

**2.3.1.4** *Contact overload:* This refers to excessive and constant interaction with other individuals in particular interactions that are negative in nature or characterised by high levels of conflict. The unpleasant nature of such interaction makes it stressful for the individual. It has a negative impact on the individual's job satisfaction, as well as limits or reduces not only their time, but also their energy, which could be used for self-development and promotion (Cedoline, 1982). Contact overload is of particular relevance to the role of trade union representative. The role requires that the representative engage in negotiations, which, as mentioned earlier, are often adversarial in nature and unpleasant. Negotiations can go on for prolonged periods of time and therefore place a lot of contact overload on the individual.

**2.3.1.5** *Role conflict/ambiguity:* Role conflict occurs when two or more pressures are placed on the individual simultaneously, where compliance with the one will lead to the inability to comply with the other. Role conflict can occur between the individual's values and that of his/her superiors within the organisation, between personal life and work responsibilities and, lastly, between worker abilities and organisational expectations. Role ambiguity occurs when the information about what is expected of the individual by the organisation is limited or vague. This results in a lack of clarity and inhibits the individual's ability to produce satisfactory performance. Both role conflict and role ambiguity are sources of uncertainty for the individual (Cedoline, 1982).

Role conflict may occur between the demands of the trade union representative's union and those of the employee/organisation. The role of trade union representative requires that the representative goes against the organisation at times to achieve certain goals for the union and its members. However, this may harm the representative's position or standing with the organisation due to the conflicting nature of the relationship between the two parties.

**2.3.1.6** *Individual factors:* Personal characteristics of the individual will also have an impact on the individual's ability to manage and cope with stress. These characteristics include the individual's personality, and interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction (Cedoline, 1982). This will be discussed later, under personal resources, but, as with any other job, certain personality characteristics can be better suited to a certain role. According to Bendix (2010), trade union representatives should be respected and trusted as leaders by the union and its members. Further, they should be

independent, objective and decisive decision makers, be committed, diligent and fair minded. Not all representatives may possess the necessary characteristics to be effective trade union representatives, or the lack of certain characteristics may result in the role being too stressful for the individual.

*2.3.1.7 Training deficits:* Training plays an essential role in helping to prevent burnout. Training should not only include job training, which helps to reduce the individual's reliance on referent material and on others for assistance, and leads to improved confidence. Training should also include stress management and time management to better equip the individual to manage and fulfil his/her role responsibilities (Cedoline, 1982). Training would be essential to assist the trade union representative in performing his/her tasks optimally. The training policy of the union and the organisation would therefore have an effect on the trade union representative's ability to manage with the stress and demands of the dual roles.

Cedoline (1982) also notes other factors that should be taken into consideration and that may play a contributing role in the burnout of an individual. These factors include lack of job security, poor working conditions and lifestyle changes that do not directly influence burnout, but play a secondary role. These factors are similar to the hygiene factors in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. These factors are related to the job context, and not the job itself. The factors are seen to contribute to employee dissatisfaction (Quick & Nelson, 2013). Organisations should be sensitive to such factors and consider the impact they can have on the individual and on burnout levels.

Corey (1996) lists similar causes of burnout that could be placed under the seven categories of sources of burnout mentioned by Cedoline (1982). Corey (1996) refers to causes that include repetitive work that feels meaningless to the employee (work underload), who makes a large personal effort and receives little or no feedback/recognition (lack of occupational feedback and communication), unrealistic time and energy demands from the job (work overload), lack of opportunities for self-development and the use of own initiative (lack of control over one's own destiny) and other, similar factors.

Corey (1996) does make mention of one factor that does not seem to appear amongst those mentioned by Cedoline (1982), which refers to the support of co-workers and how the absence of such support can also contribute to the burnout of individuals. Support for the trade union representative from the other employees/trade union members is essential to the trade union representative believing in his/her ability to meet the needs of the members. Lack of support is likely to cause doubt in the individual and place additional strain on him/her. It can manifest in mistrust, unresolved conflict or a lack of support structures and assistance from fellow co-

workers, should these be needed. The manifestation of mistrust and unresolved conflict can hinder the trade union representative from performing his/her task effectively.

Burnout is a negative individual state and will have a negative impact on the employee's performance and therefore also on the organisation's performance or, in this specific instance, it will have a negative impact on the union's ability to deliver on the promises made to its members if the trade union representative suffers from burnout. There are three key characteristics of burnout, namely exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy. Exhaustion encompasses the individual's feelings of emotional and physical resource depletion; cynicism, sometimes also referred to as depersonalisation, is the detachment or distancing of the individual from his/her work, as well as from others; and, lastly, inefficacy refers to the individual's feelings of a lack of accomplishment, reduced productivity and lower self-confidence in his/her abilities (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), which is a well-known and popular measure of burnout, is based on the above three dimensions of burnout, viz. exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Demerouti et al., 2010). The measure is used worldwide on various populations. These dimensions are sometimes referred to as exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of achievement.

In Maslach and Leiter (2008), six key areas or causes of burnout are identified and explained on the basis of the MBI-GS, namely workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values. These causes are again similar to those identified by Cedoline (1982) and Corey (1996). Workload refers to the volume of work in relation to the individual's ability and capacity. Should workload exceed the individual's ability and capacity, the chance of burnout is increased (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Control refers to the extent to which the individual can manage his /her workload independently and his/her ability to do so. The more control the individual has, the lower the chances of burnout. Control also relates to role ambiguity and role conflict, which can both limit the control of the individual over his/her work (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Reward and the lack thereof tend to increase feelings of inefficacy. Reward and recognition provide not only external rewards, but add to the intrinsic value of the work for the individual (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Community refers to the social support, interpersonal interaction and ability to work within a team. Burnout tends to increase when the individual does not perceive their social system, which includes co-workers, supervisors and family, as being supportive and when interpersonal relationships are characterised by negativity and are emotionally taxing (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). This reiterates Corey's (1996) findings on the role that is played by social support in burnout. Fairness refers to procedural justice. Most individuals are more

concerned with the fairness of organisational procedures than with positive outcomes for themselves. Procedures need to be equitable by considering the inputs and the outputs of individuals in a fair and consistent manner (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

Lastly, the values of the individual must be aligned with the values of the organisation, as this aspect plays an important cognitive and emotional role. Incongruence or mismatch between values will place strain on the working relationship and will result in the individual being faced with having to make a decision between personal feelings and values and the work that has to be completed. This places emotional strain and stress on the individual (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

A study conducted in Germany by Rabe, Giacomuzzi and Nübling (2012) on psychosocial workload and stress among worker representatives aimed to discover the impact of the role on these individuals. Worker representatives in this instance were individuals who were responsible for organisational level negotiations, serving as a link between the employer and employees but separate from the trade unions. The function served by these individuals did not however interfere with that of trade unions, which functioned at a national level (Rabe et al., 2012). These individuals had similar role responsibilities to those of South African trade union representatives in a workplace forum.

The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) was used to measure the various stressors experienced by these individuals. It was found that burnout was higher among worker representatives when compared to a referent group that consisted of other employees. The worker representatives tended to show higher scores on emotional demands, work-privacy conflict, role conflicts and cognitive stress symptoms. Unfavourable results were also obtained for some of the aspects of their performance, including quality of leadership, social support, sense of community and general health (Rabe et al., 2012)

The areas of concern found in this study were again in line with the various sources of burnout identified by the MBI-GS. Not only does it highlight how these factors can result in burnout among normal employees, but it also highlights how the various sources of burnout can be applicable to trade union representatives and their role in their workplace. Trade union representatives play a role in workplace interactions between management, employees/trade union members and trade unions. Given the fact that these individuals have two roles in the same environment, which can result in the same type of stressors at the same time, it stands to reason that burnout seems to be a reality for trade union representatives, perhaps more so than for normal employees.

### 2.3.2 Engagement

Ideally, organisations would like their employees to display the opposite symptoms or behaviours to those associated with burnout. When placing burnout on a continuum, the opposite end would be characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy. Together, these characteristics encompass job engagement and refer to the positive state of being associated with the individual within the workplace. Job engagement is a positive state of being that allows the individual to engage in self-fulfilling activities and improve his/her professional efficacy in an energised way. Energy is the opposite of exhaustion, involvement the opposite of cynicism, and efficacy the opposite of inefficacy on the continuum of engagement and burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Therefore, individuals who tend to display these characteristics are less likely to actually suffer from burnout.

Maslach and Smith (1997) found burnout to be the erosion of work engagement, and therefore engagement is viewed as the opposite to burnout (Storm & Rothman, 2003). Burnout is characterised by high scores on exhaustion and cynicism and low scores on efficacy when measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Engagement therefore would be indicated by low exhaustion and cynicism scores and high efficacy scores, according to this view of the relationship between engagement and burnout (Storm & Rothman, 2003).

However, there are different views on the relationship that exists between burnout and engagement. One school of thought views engagement as an opposite construct to burnout, which stands on its own. Therefore the absence of burnout does not mean that employees are engaged (Storm & Rothman, 2003). Schaufeli, Salanova, Gozález-Romá and Bakker (2002) define the various components of engagement as vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour is a high energy state that is characterised by strong mental resilience, a willingness to invest oneself and one's energy into one's work, to be persistent despite difficulties faced and not tiring easily. Dedication is a sense of significance that the individual gets from their work. This generally increases feelings of enthusiasm and pride in work, because work is found to be challenging, which inspires the individual. Lastly, absorption by one's work refers to a state where one is totally immersed and happy in one's work. Individuals who experience engagement find it difficult to detach from their work and, when engaged, time passes quickly and they are inclined to forget about the world around them (Storm & Rothman, 2003).

From the perception of the trade union representative, an engaged representative would need certain job resources and personal resources to be in place to enhance the likelihood of engagement. Studies by Mauno, Kinnunen and Ruokolainen (2007) and Sarti (2014) investigated the relationship between job demands and resources as antecedents for work engagement. Both studies were set in the medical field, and both found a significant

relationship between job resources and work engagement, with job resources being a more effective predictor of engagement than job demands (Mauno et al., 2007).

Mauno et al. (2007) considered three specific job resources, namely job control – the extent to which the individual has decision-making control and choice in skills utilisation, organisational-based self-esteem (OBSE) – the extent to which the individual believes that he/she is meaningful to the organisation and the extent to which engaging in his/her role in the organisation will help fulfil his/her personal needs, and management quality – the extent to which management is perceived to support the individual. Of these three job resources, OBSE and job control showed the greatest correlation with work engagement.

Sarti (2014) investigated financial rewards (pay satisfaction), learning opportunities (the employer's willingness to invest in the employee and allowing him/her the opportunity to implement his/her skills), decision authority (perceived autonomy and control in the job), supervisor and co-worker support (perceived social support from co-workers and management) and performance feedback (clarity of communication and provision of information). Learning opportunities, supervisor and co-worker support proved to have the highest correlation with work engagement.

In many ways, when referring back to the job demands discussed earlier and their relation to the union representative and burnout, job resources can be linked to the role of a trade union representative. OBSE would be the extent to which the trade union representative felt that the work he/she was doing for the union and its members had value and was perceived as adding value by the other parties. Job control would mean that the union representative felt that he/she was trusted enough by the various parties to exercise his/her own discretion when making decisions. Learning opportunities would be the resources made available to the trade union representative, not only by the union, but by the organisation as well, which would enable him/her to perform his/her role more effectively. Lastly, co-worker and supervisory support would play a huge role in the OBSE of the trade union representative. The extent to which these individuals felt they had the support of all the relevant parties would have an impact of their willingness and engagement in their roles.

There are two options when measuring work engagement; the first is the method mentioned earlier, whereby the MBI was applied and the respondents' scores were opposite to that which usually characterises burnout, in other words the respondents scored low on exhaustion and cynicism and high on efficacy, instead of high on exhaustion and cynicism and low on efficacy, which usually indicates burnout. The alternative is to use a scale like the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The UWES measures engagement as a separate but opposite construct to that of burnout. UWES measures engagement by

obtaining the individual's relative standing on the three components of work engagement, namely vigour, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) definition of engagement will be used. Therefore engagement is seen as its own construct, which encompasses individual characteristics that are opposite to those of burnout. Burnout and engagement therefore are each placed on its own continuum. Hence, a negative relationship exists between engagement and burnout. This would imply that engagement influences levels of burnout. The first of the substantive hypotheses will highlight this proposed relationship between burnout and engagement.

Hypothesis 1: Engagement ( $\eta_2$ ) has a significant negative effect on the burnout ( $\eta_1$ ) of trade union representatives.

The nature of the expected relationship between engagement and burnout as stated in the hypothesis is due to the fact that, as engagement increases in the trade union representative, the likelihood of burnout decreases.

The next section will investigate job demands, job resources and personal resources in more detail. These factors will also be placed in the context of the role of the trade union representative. Further, the anticipated relationship between these antecedent factors will also be described in relation to burnout and engagement.

## **2.4 Job demands, job resources and personal resources**

A well-known and popular model of job demands and job resources is the Job Demands-Resources Model (Rothmann, Mostert & Strydom, 2006). It is used to explain the impact that job demands, job resources and personal resources can have on an individual and his/her performance in the workplace. The Job Demands-Resources Model was designed to evaluate the interaction between the job demands placed on an individual and the buffering effects job resources can have to help reduce the stress created by the demands. It focuses on how the individual's working conditions can affect his/her health and wellbeing (Hu, Schaufeli & Taris, 2011; Van Gyes, Liagre & De Spiegelaere, 2012).

The Job Demands-Resources Model is based on two main psychological processes, the first being health impairment and the second being motivational in nature. The first aspect refers to the impact of a poorly designed job and/or chronic-in-nature job pressures (i.e. job demands) on the individual. Such factors are likely to drain the individual's energy and therefore lead to physical and psychological exhaustion. The second aspect relates to positive aspects of the individual's job, namely the job resources that can help buffer and protect the

individual against the negative aspects and/or improve the situation, therefore making the individual more productive and satisfied (Buys & Rothmann, 2009).

Key to burnout is stress, which is elicited by various factors. Stress is defined as the disruption of an individual's cognitive, emotional and environmental equilibrium by factors external to the system. These factors are referred to as stressors, which can include factors that are categorised as both job demands and job resources. Stressors in this instance are simply external factors that can have both a positive and negative effect on the individual and his/her system. The word stress, however, tends to evoke negative connotations. Therefore the word stressor will be used only when reference is made to factors that have a negative impact on the individual to avoid confusion (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001).

In the same way that the Job Demands-Resources Model can be applied to an employee, the model also can be applied to a trade union representative. The role of trade union representative has its own unique set of job demands and job resources. Van Gyes et al. (2012) conducted a study on the impact of job demands and job resources on the psychological state of trade union representatives in Belgium. In the same way that a job would be analysed to identify the job demands and job resources, the role of the trade union representative was analysed to identify the relevant job demands placed on and job and personal resources available to these individuals.

The following section explains the various job demands and job and personal resources that are factors in the role of a trade union representative. Further, the factors that can be linked to the burnout and/or engagement of trade union representatives are discussed, using the Job Demands-Resources Model as guide. Reference is also made to personal resources and how these factors play a role in the individual burnout and engagement of trade union representatives.

#### **2.4.1 Job demands**

Job demands are any physical, social or organisational requirements that elicit sustained physical and/or mental energy. Demands are often associated with physical or psychological cost for the individual (Demerouti et al., 2001). The impact of the demands will be moderated or determined by the individual's ability and capacity. According to the control model of demand, when an individual feels stressed as a result of demands, he/she will activate their performance-protection strategy (Demerouti et al., 2001). The individual does this to protect him/herself against the negative effects of the stressor. The activation of this system will have different psychological and physiological costs for individual, depending on the amount of effort an individual has to exert to protect him/herself (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job demands include factors such as work overload, time and work pressures, poor conditions in the working environment, and emotional demands (Rothmann et al., 2006). Using these broad categories of the Job Demands-Resources Model, the job demands of the trade union representative can be explained more specifically. Three specific job demands faced by union representative were identified by Van Gyes et al. (2012) in their study of the engagement and burnout of union representatives, namely role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload.

Union representatives often do not have sufficient or clear information about what exactly is expected of them within the workplace by both the organisation and the union. This ambiguity creates uncertainty and stress for the individual. Role conflict occurs when it becomes difficult for the representative to fulfil both his/her union and organisational responsibilities simultaneously. Role conflict can also include conflict between personal and job-related roles that the union representative is expected to fulfil. Often, role conflict is accompanied by role overload, where the representative has responsibilities that exceed the time and energy he/she has to fulfil them (Van Gyes et al., 2012).

The job demands identified all coincide with those identified by Cedoline (1982), Corey (1996) and Maslach and Leiter (2008) as being associated with burnout. These excessive job demands can eventually lead to exhaustion or burnout amongst trade union representatives. Trade union representatives are expected to maintain performance while exerting energy they do not have (Brough et al., 2013), as they have not had an opportunity to recover from their previous energy exertion (Rothmann et al., 2006).

In other research, job demands and the stress they elicit have also been proven to act as a source of motivational power. However, for this situation to be true it requires that the individuals have sufficient job resources to help them cope with the job demands (Hu et al., 2011).

Given the negative nature of job demands, it can be expected that job demands will have a negative impact on trade union representative engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Job demands ( $\xi_1$ ) have a significant negative impact on the engagement ( $\eta_2$ ) of trade union representatives.

As a result there will be a positive relationship between job demands and burnout, in other words, as demands increase, so will the likelihood of burnout amongst trade union representatives.

Hypothesis 3: Job demands ( $\xi_1$ ) have a significant positive impact on the burnout ( $\eta_1$ ) of trade union representatives.

## 2.4.2 Job resources

Job resources are any physical, psychological, social or organisational components of the job that help the individual to manage job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources help the individual in three different ways, namely to achieve work objectives, lessen the impact of job demands on a psychological and/or physiological level, and to achieve personal growth and development (Bakker, 2011; Hopkins & Gardner, 2012). Resources can be divided into two broad categories, namely internal (psychological and behavioural patterns) and external (social and organisational environment). When resources are lacking in either of these categories, it becomes more difficult for the individual to deal with and manage job demands. However, resources, when sufficient, can help buffer or protect the individual from the negative impact of job demands by reducing the strain caused by the stressors (Hopkins & Gardner, 2012).

Internal resources include factors such as self-efficacy, learning and development opportunities, autonomy and so forth (Bakker, 2011). These factors can be classified as personal resources and therefore will be elaborated on in the next section. External resources refer to those factors within the work environment that assist the individual in completing his/her job effectively. They include physical resources, and job-related factors like remuneration level, job security and career advancement opportunities (Rothmann et al., 2006).

Referring again to the study conducted by Van Gyes et al. (2012), specific job resources were identified that seemed to exert the greatest influence on trade union representatives. Resources that played an important role for the representatives were found to be social support, efficacy, job security, paid time off work to fulfil union obligations, and a strong sense of union commitment. These factors were also identified in studies conducted by Mauno et al. (2007) and Sarti (2014), which were discussed earlier. The relevant job resources can help buffer against the impact of job demands and help to increase engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker & Fishbach, 2013).

Social support is the most essential job resource for a trade union representative. Support should not be perceived as coming only from the organisation, but more importantly, it should also come from the representatives' co-workers and fellow union members whom they aim to help within the organisation (Van Gyes et al., 2012). Perceived social support enhances feelings of belonging and therefore provides the necessary support to meet demands (Bakker, 2011). This would be important for trade union representatives, as a sense of belonging would serve as motivation to engage in their role. Efficacy is the extent to which the trade union representative is able to successfully influence decisions which are made within the

organisation. If the trade union representatives do not view themselves as having any sort of influence, it is likely that their feelings of inefficacy will increase and affect their performance (Van Gyes et al., 2012). Feelings of inefficacy would result in lower engagement by the trade union representative in the role.

Job security and time off to fulfil union responsibilities are both legal provisions made for trade union representatives in South Africa. The representatives must feel that, when acting in their capacity as a union representative, they are not placing their job at the organisations at risk. This is important, as the organisation pays the representative and the union does not. The representative is simply a volunteer for the union. This is linked to the trade union representatives' perception of social support. Strong perceived social support plays an important role in the motivation for the engagement of workers in their roles (Mauno et al., 2007; Sarti, 2014). Lastly, commitment to the union is important. Believing in what the union does and stands for acts as a strong motivational force for the representative and helps to buffer against the impact of the stress induced by the job demands of the role of trade union representative (Van Gyes et al., 2012).

In order to achieve job engagement given the job demands, organisations should strive to help provide the individual with adequate job resources to buffer against the negative psychological and physiological effects of job demands. In this case, the trade union, as well as the employer, is responsible for providing the trade union representative with the necessary resources to be able to perform effectively in both roles – as a trade union representative and as an employee of the organisation. In instances where demands cannot be reduced, organisations should strive to provide sufficient resources, as high job demands accompanied by adequate job resources can have a motivational effect on the individual and therefore lead to increased job engagement (Hu et al., 2011). Job resources therefore have a positive impact on trade union representative work engagement.

Hypothesis 4: Job resources ( $\xi_2$ ) have a significant positive impact on the engagement ( $\eta_2$ ) of trade union representatives.

Job resources act as a buffer against job demands and therefore, given that high job demands can result in burnout, it can be expected that a negative relationship will exist between job resources and the burnout of trade union representatives.

Hypothesis 5: Job resources ( $\xi_2$ ) have a significant negative impact on the burnout ( $\eta_1$ ) of trade union representatives.

### 2.4.3 Personal resources

Personal resources refer to the individual's belief that he/she has the capacity to control and exert an influence on his/her environment. This is influenced by the individual's self-perception of his/her ability and resilience (Bakker, 2011). Personal resources are the positive aspects of the individual that help him/her cope (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). Personal resources help to shield or protect the employee from the strain that is caused by his/her job role (Liu & Ferris, 2008).

Personal resources are used to explain the relationship that exists between job resources and the positive psychological and organisational outcomes associated with them (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009a). The greater the trade union representative's personal resources, the greater the likelihood of work engagement, as the individual will experience greater positive self-regard when personal resources are high. These resources include factors such as self-efficacy, which is a trade union representative's belief that he/she can meet work demands despite barriers to success (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013), self-esteem, one's ability to control one's emotions, the ability to remain optimistic and perceived locus of control (Bakker, 2011).

Therefore, personal resources are the intrinsic resources required by the individual in order to be successful within the work role and act as a buffer against negative stressors in the individual's environment (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). Personal resources supplement job resources, which are resources that are external to the individual, and help the individual to cope better with job demands and increase engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009a). However, these personal resources are subject to fluctuations due to changes in the daily work environment (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009a), since they are not fixed personality characteristics. As mentioned earlier, personality can also have an effect on the individual's engagement or burnout.

Personality would be considered as a form of personal resources. It has also been found that personal resources can be used independently to predict work engagement, and that individuals with greater personal resources are more likely to be engaged – despite less job resources – because of their higher/better self-perception (Bakker, 2011).

The Big Five model of personality uses five constructs to define an individual's personality, namely extraversion, which is characterised by sociability, assertiveness, activity and adventurousness; neuroticism, which is characterised by irritability, security and emotionality; agreeableness, which is characterised by warmth, affection, gentleness, generosity and modesty; conscientiousness, which is characterised by orderliness, decisiveness, consistency, reliability and industriousness; and, lastly, openness to experience, which is

characterised by intellect, imagination, creativity and perceptiveness (Wefald, Reichard & Serrana, 2011). The studies conducted by Wefald et al. (2011) and Kim, Shin and Swanger (2009) investigated the relationship between personality, engagement and burnout. Strong positive correlations were found to exist between neuroticism and burnout, as well as between engagement and conscientiousness. Strong negative correlations were found between neuroticism and engagement (Kim et al., 2009; Wefald et al., 2011).

Therefore, it could be argued that trade union representatives with lower neuroticism scores and higher conscientiousness scores would be better equipped in terms of their personal resources to buffer against the impact of burnout and to improve their likelihood of engagement. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009b) argued in their study for the reciprocal nature of job resources, personal resources and work engagement, namely that personal resources act in a similar way to job resources in that they help the individual in three ways. The first way is that they help the individual protect him/herself against demanding situations and the costs associated with such situations; secondly, they assist the individual in achieving his/her goals; and lastly, they serve as means for stimulating growth and development in the individual.

Personality is one variable that can be considered when evaluating personal resources. Jobs have different types of personal stressors. Emotional labour is thought to be a form of stressor and is defined as displaying socially desirable emotions in one's work role (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Othman, Abdullah & Ahmad, 2008). Williams (2013) further defines emotional labour as the process of creating the desired emotion in another individual, which requires active work on behalf of the employee if he/she does not spontaneously feel the desired emotion. In other words, more work is required when the individual has to actively work on modifying his/her own emotions to display the desired emotions and create the desired emotion in others. When there is a difference between the displayed emotions of an individual and the real, felt emotions it results in dissonance (Liu & Ferris, 2008).

Emotional labour is a form of stressor and can be conceptualised in two ways. According to Brotheridge and Grandey (2002), the first form of emotional labour that can be experienced is job-focused emotional labour. Job-focused emotional labour is often associated with what are deemed to be service jobs. Service jobs are roles in which the employee is expected to portray certain emotions when interacting with customers or clients, and in which the frequency of interactions also is considered. The second form of emotional labour is termed employee-focused emotional labour. Employee-focused emotional labour refers to the process in which the employee has to manage his/her emotional expression based on work demands (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Townsend, 2008).

Townsend (2008) investigated whether non-customer-facing employees also can suffer from emotional labour. The study evaluated factory workers who had to work in teams to achieve certain key performance indicators (KPIs). It was found that the employees had to manage their emotions in order to engage with team members in an appropriate manner to ensure that the KPIs were met. In other words, employees used employee-focused emotional labour. Further, the organisational culture created by management required that certain emotions be evoked in co-workers when interacting to create the prescribed culture, for example trusting one another, sharing a vision and being proud to be part of the team. Organisational display rules, in terms of which the individual either has to hide negative emotions or express positive emotions not truly felt, were positively associated with burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Similarly, Iszatt-White's (2009) study of emotional labour and leadership uncovered that, to some degree, leaders also experience emotional labour. Regardless of the type of leader the individual is classed as, such as a charismatic or transformational leader, the role requires that followers are persuaded to follow, often using emotional appeals. This means that the leader may have to engage in surface acting, in terms of which the individual changes his/her displayed emotions but does not alter his/her real or felt emotions, or deep-level acting, whereby the individual aims to modify his/her true or felt emotions to match his/her displayed emotions (Liu & Ferris, 2008; Ozcelik, 2013). Essentially, the individual still has to do some form of emotional work to ensure that the displayed emotions create the desired emotions in the followers and create leader support.

It stands to reason, based on the above, that trade union representatives are likely to be faced with some form of emotional labour. A trade union representative is elected by the trade union members to be their leader and voice in the workplace. The trade union itself requires that the trade union representative manages the union members and works to best meet their needs. Furthermore, the trade union representative needs to engage with management to achieve the objectives of the union and the members, either through negotiations, forums or any other form of interaction. The trade union representative may be required to use persuasion through emotional appeals to get buy-in from the members or management, such as the leaders in Iszatt-White's (2009) study, or to adhere to certain emotional display rules that are set by the organisational culture (either the culture of the trade union or the employer organisation).

The trade union representative's ability to manage the emotional labour demands placed on him/her will be governed by aspects such as personality or emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the individual's ability to understand and respond to the emotions of others as well as his/her own. It involves the recognition and management of emotional information (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008; Gunderman, 2011; Karimi, Leggat, Donohue, Farrell & Couper, 2013; Santos, Mustafa & Gwi, 2015). Emotional intelligence allows the individual to solve

emotional problems and use emotion in the rationalisation process. Highly emotionally intelligent individuals are able to accurately perceive emotional information, use emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions and regulate and manage emotions (Santos et al., 2015).

Various studies have found a link between emotional intelligence, emotional labour and job stress. Generally, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to manage the emotional demands of emotional labour, as higher levels of emotional intelligence act as a buffer against the negative impact of emotional labour (Karimi et al., 2013; Liu & Ferris, 2008; Newman & Smith, 2014; Santos et al., 2015). Individuals who feel more negative emotions are likely to be preoccupied with trivial matters, which therefore will have a negative effect on their ability to see the bigger picture. These individuals experience more job stress. When compared to the latter, individuals who have higher levels of emotional intelligence and who experience more positive emotions are more effective and productive in the workplace (Gunderman, 2011). It could therefore be argued that trade union representatives with higher emotional intelligence would be better equipped to handle the emotional labour associated with the role, as discussed earlier.

A trade union representative's personal resources, which may include his/her level of perceived self-efficacy, self-esteem, certain personality traits like low neuroticism and high conscientiousness, and emotional intelligence will have an impact on his/her ability to cope with and manage the demands of his/her various roles. For the purpose of this study, the impact of the trade union representative's emotional intelligence will be considered. Given that personal resources act in a similar way to job resources, it can be expected that they will have a similar impact on work engagement.

Hypothesis 6: Personal resources ( $\xi_3$ ) have a significant positive impact on the engagement ( $\eta_2$ ) of trade union representatives.

Given this relationship between personal resources and work engagement, it stands to reason that personal resources will help to buffer the effects and protect the trade union representative from the negative influences of job demands, and therefore a negative relationship will exist between personal resources and burnout.

Hypothesis 7: Personal resources ( $\xi_3$ ) have a significant negative impact on the burnout ( $\eta_1$ ) of trade union representatives.

Therefore, the Job Demands-Resources Model identifies two different causes of burnout. The first is burnout as a result of job demands that become taxing and overwhelming for the individual, and the second is a lack of job resources to assist the individual in managing job demands (Demerouti et al., 2001).

## 2.5 Conceptual model

In conclusion, given the above information about the nature of the relationship that may exist between the various factors, and using the substantive hypotheses stated at various points, the following conceptual model can be used to summarise the above section and graphically depict the hypothesised relationships between the variables.

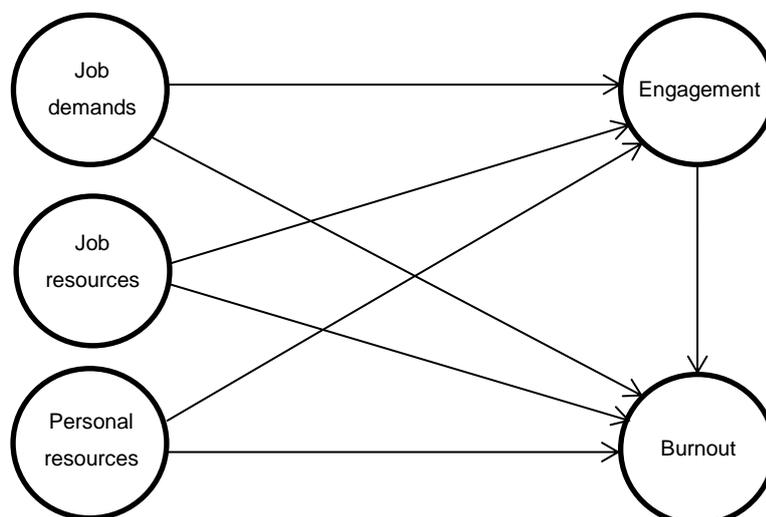


Figure 2.3 Conceptual model of the relationship between job demands, job resources, personal resources and burnout in trade union representatives.

## 2.6 Summary

Chapter 2 has examined at the nature of South African trade unions by evaluating the environment affecting unions and trade union representatives from an internal and external perspective. The structure of South African trade unions was discussed, and how the trade union representative fits into the structure. Further, the role of the trade union representative, including duties and responsibilities, were discussed.

Burnout and engagement were investigated from a traditional employee role and then from the perspective of a trade union representative. The characteristics of burnout, namely exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of achievement, as well as the characteristics of engagement, namely vigour, absorption and dedication, were explored. Lastly, job demands, job resources and personal resources were discussed. The role and impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources were discussed and related to burnout and engagement, from the perspective of both an employee and a trade union representative. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used to explore the research hypotheses.

## Chapter 3

### Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insight into and explain the research methodology used. The research process explained below was the method used to attempt to answer the research-initiating question. The tools and procedures that were selected and used for the research are explained in the research methodology.

In this chapter the research design of the study is explained. The participants and sampling design are discussed. The selected measurement instruments for the purpose of the study are discussed, including the validity and reliability of each measurement tool. The data collection procedure and data capturing process are discussed, followed by a discussion of the statistical analysis that was applied. Lastly, the ethical considerations of the study are discussed.

#### 3.2 Research objectives

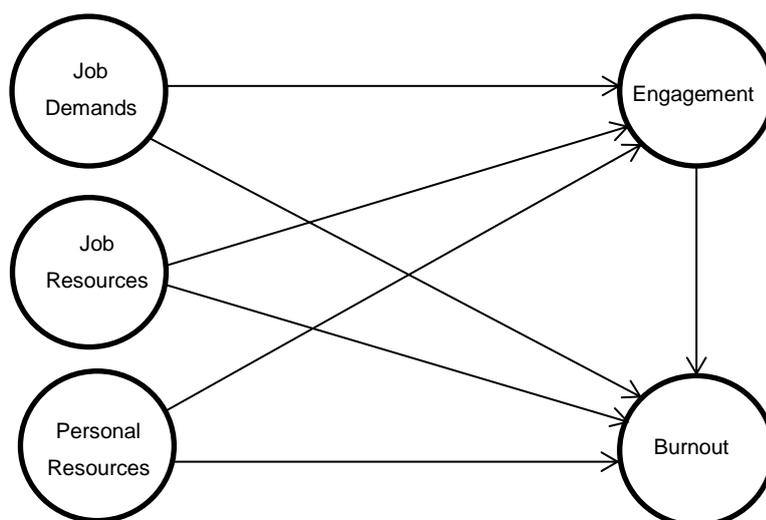
As stated in Chapter 1, the study aimed to meet the following objectives:

- 3.2.1. To determine the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the burnout of trade union representatives.
- 3.2.2. To determine the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the engagement of trade union representatives.
- 3.2.3. To determine whether engagement affects the burnout of trade union representatives.
- 3.2.4. As a consequence, to propose and test an explanatory burnout and engagement structural model.

By revisiting these objectives, the substantive hypotheses are placed in context again. The objectives also help to evaluate the hypotheses in order to determine whether or not they were in line with the purpose of this study.

#### 3.3 Substantive research hypotheses

Figure 3.1 below explains the hypothesised relationships that were believed to exist between the endogenous latent variables (engagement and burnout) and the exogenous latent variables (job demands, job resources and personal resources).



**Figure 3.1 Conceptual model of the relationship between job demands, job resources, personal resources and burnout of trade union representatives**

The substantive research hypotheses are as follows:

The first of the hypotheses predicts the relationship that is expected to exist between engagement and burnout.

**Hypothesis 1:** Engagement has a significant negative effect on the burnout of trade union representatives

The next two hypotheses predict the expected relationship between job demands, engagement and burnout.

**Hypothesis 2:** Job demands have a significant negative impact on the engagement of trade union representatives

**Hypothesis 3:** Job demands have a significant positive impact on the burnout of trade union representatives

The next two hypotheses predict the expected relationship between job resources, engagement and burnout.

**Hypothesis 4:** Job resources have a significant positive impact on the engagement of trade union representatives

**Hypothesis 5:** Job resources have a significant negative impact on the burnout of trade union representatives

The last two hypotheses predict the expected relationship between personal resources, engagement and burnout.

**Hypothesis 6:** Personal resources have a significant positive impact on the engagement of trade union representatives

**Hypothesis 7:** Personal resources have a significant negative impact on the burnout of trade union representatives

### 3.4 Statistical hypotheses

Chapter 2 introduced and discussed the five latent variables, namely job demands, job resources, personal resources, engagement and burnout, in detail. The latent variables were discussed broadly and then in terms of how each one may relate to one or more of the other latent variables. Based on the literature and the conceptual model, the overarching substantive research hypothesis can be concluded to be a valid and reliable explanation of the relationship that exists between trade union representatives' job demands, job resources, personal resources, burnout and engagement. Below are the statistical hypotheses that were derived from the substantive research hypotheses formulated in Chapter 2.

The overarching substantive research hypotheses are translated into the following path-specific statistical hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** Engagement has a significant negative effect on burnout

$$H_{01}: \beta_{21} = 0$$

$$H_{A01}: \beta_{21} < 0$$

**Hypothesis 2:** Job demands have a significant negative impact on engagement

$$H_{02}: \gamma_{11} = 0$$

$$H_{02}: \gamma_{11} < 0$$

**Hypothesis 3:** Job demands have a significant positive impact on burnout

$$H_{03}: \gamma_{21} = 0$$

$$H_{A3}: \gamma_{21} > 0$$

**Hypothesis 4:** Job resources have a significant positive impact on engagement

$$H_{04}: \gamma_{12} = 0$$

$$H_{A4}: \gamma_{12} > 0$$

**Hypothesis 5:** Job resources have a significant negative impact on burnout

$$H_{05}: \gamma_{22} = 0$$

$$H_{A05}: \gamma_{22} < 0$$

**Hypothesis 6:** Personal resources have a significant positive impact on engagement

$$H_{06}: \gamma_{13} = 0$$

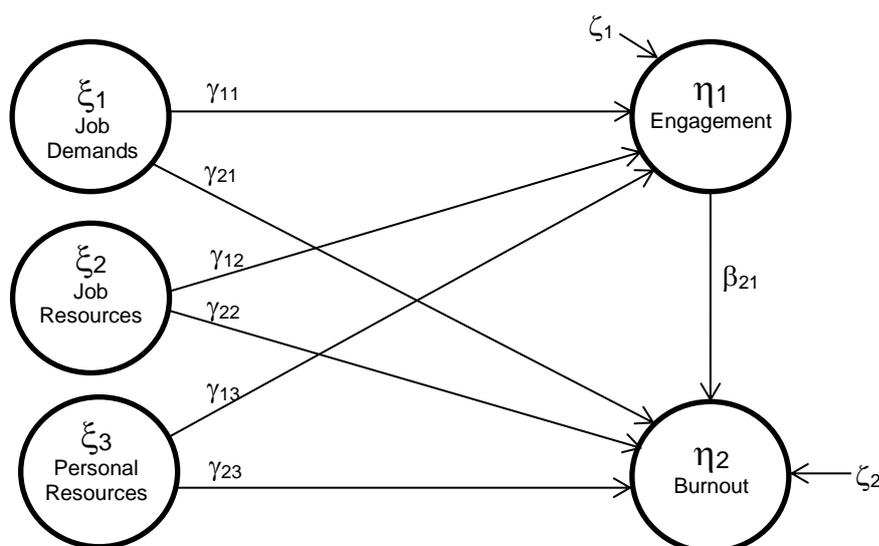
$$H_{A6}: \gamma_{13} > 0$$

**Hypothesis 7:** Personal resources have a significant negative impact on burnout

$$H_{07}: \gamma_{23} = 0$$

$$H_{A7}: \gamma_{23} < 0$$

The structural model is illustrated in Figure 3.2 using LISREL notation. The formulation of the structural model is explained, and the exogenous latent variables, namely job demands, job resources and personal resources, are represented by  $\xi_1$ ,  $\xi_2$  and  $\xi_3$ , respectively. The endogenous latent variables, namely engagement and burnout, are represented by  $\eta_1$  and  $\eta_2$  respectively.



**Figure 3.2** Structural model of the relationship between job demands, job resources, personal resources and burnout of trade union representatives.

### 3.5 Research design

The research design is the methods and procedures that were used to seek answers to the research-initiating question. The research design is simply the method that was used to investigate the various hypotheses that are stated above about the relationship that exists between the variables, as well as how the data was gathered. Given that an attempt was made to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the latent variables as hypothesised and the impact that these relationships have on the potential burnout of trade union representatives, the research can be described as an explanatory research study. An

explanatory research study seeks to understand the hypothesised relationship by investigating cause-and-effect relationships between the variables.

Cause-and-effect relationships are better understood by investigating the extent of covariance between the various exogenous latent variables and the endogenous latent variables, and the extent of covariance between the various endogenous latent variables. Therefore, the study followed a correlational design. A correlational design does not only explain the extent to which the variables co-vary with one another, but also the nature of the relationship between the variables. It therefore helped to determine whether the predicted positive or negative nature of the relationships were in fact so, as well as whether there was a significant relationship between the variables at all.

The variables that were measured were already present and therefore simply required observation with no need for manipulation. This means that an ex post facto correlational design was used. Ex post facto simply means that the variables were measured as they stood at that point in time and that they were not be manipulated. There was also no random assignment of participants to any form of manipulation or treatment. The study was cross-sectional as the data was collected at a specific point in time.

Explanatory research has certain drawbacks which have to be borne in mind during the research process and, more specifically, when the findings and conclusions of the research are considered. Firstly, it is difficult to determine causal relationships when using a correlational design. This means that, although two variables are related, it does not necessarily mean that the one causes the other (Price & Oswald, 2008).

Secondly, and related to causal relationships, is the problem with directionality. It is possible for two or more variables to be related, but that a correlational design cannot help to identify the direction of the influence. In other words, it cannot be determined whether A causes B or whether B causes A; we can only see that they are related. This can sometimes be overcome by the fact that, for one variable to exist (B), it had to have been preceded by the other (A) and therefore it can be concluded, for example, that A causes B. This is a weak argument, however, and is not always accepted (Price & Oswald, 2008).

The third issue lies with what is known as the third variable problem. Sometimes the relationship that exists between two variables is not because they are directly related, but rather that there is a third variable that affects both of the variables at the same time, therefore creating the impression that the variables are caused by or related to one another. Such a variable creates a false correlation between the two variables (Price & Oswald, 2008).

A fourth problem found with the correlational design is that, when the variables are not linearly related, the analysis techniques will reduce the correlation coefficient between the variables,

therefore making the relationship closer to zero when it cannot fit a perfect linear regression line (Lomax & Li, 2013).

An attempt can be made to try to manage or reduce the impact of these drawbacks by using more sophisticated analysis techniques, such as factor analysis, path analysis and structural equation modelling. These methods are able to provide more detailed information about the relationship that exists between the variables than simply using the bivariate correlation coefficient, and will help with the relational issues (Lomax & Li, 2013). To help overcome the problem with the linear relationship, a scatterplot was drawn up and evaluated to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables and to analyse the impact outliers may have on the linear relationship (Lomax & Li, 2013).

Below, the correlation (Table 3.1) between the various latent variables were produced. Each of the variables in the model was plotted against the other to analyse the relationship and the nature of the relationship. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the relationship between the factors and provides a measure of the linear dependence of the two variables on one another. A positive Pearson's *r* value means that a positive relationship exists between the variables, with 1 being the maximum and a strong positive linear correlation. A Pearson's *r* value of 0 means that there is no linear correlation between the two factors. Lastly, a negative Pearson's *r* value means that the variables are negatively correlated. The maximum value is -1 and indicates a strong negative linear correlation.

**Table 3.1 Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients**

<b>Latent variable</b>	<b>Pearson's product-momentum correlation coefficients</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Job demands → Job resources	0.2305	0.0765
Job demands → Personal resources	-0.1143	0.3846
Job demands → Engagement	0.2200	0.0912
Job demands → Burnout	0.3278	0.0106
Job resources → Personal resources	0.1601	0.2216
Job resources → Engagement	0.4329	0.0006
Job resources → Burnout	-0.3555	0.0053
Personal resources → Engagement	0.1062	0.4191
Personal resources → Burnout	-0.2406	0.0641
Burnout → Engagement	-0.4735	0.0001

Only the relationships between job demands and burnout, job resources and engagement and engagement and burnout were found to be significantly correlated. Job demands and burnout demonstrated a weak positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.3278$ ) with one another. The correlation was significant, as the p-value ( $p = 0.05$ ) was less than 0.05. Therefore, as job demands increase, so too does burnout. Job resources and engagement demonstrated a moderate positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.4329$ ) with one another. The correlation was significant as the p-value ( $p = 0.0006$ ) was less than 0.05. Therefore, as job resources increase, so too does engagement. Engagement and burnout demonstrated a moderate negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.4735$ ) with one another. The correlation was significant as the p-value ( $p = 0.0001$ ) was less than 0.05.

The correlations between job demands and job resources, job demands and personal resources, job demands and engagement, job resources and personal resources, job resources and burnout, personal resources and engagement, and personal resources and burnout proved to be not significant.

Job demands and job resources demonstrated a weak positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.2305$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the p-value ( $p = 0.0765$ ) was greater than 0.05. Job demands and personal resources demonstrated a weak negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.1143$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the p-value ( $p = 0.3846$ ) was greater than 0.05.

Job demands and engagement demonstrated a weak positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.2200$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the p-value ( $p = 0.0912$ ) was greater than 0.05. Job resources and personal resources demonstrated a very weak positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.1601$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the p-value ( $p = 0.2216$ ) was greater than 0.05.

Job resources and burnout demonstrated a moderate negative linear correlation ( $r = 0.2305$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the alpha ( $p = 0.0765$ ) was greater than 0.05. Personal resources and engagement demonstrated a weak positive linear correlation ( $r = 0.1062$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the alpha ( $p = 0.4191$ ) was greater than 0.05. Personal resources and burnout demonstrated a weak negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.2406$ ) with one another. The correlation was not significant, however, as the p-value ( $p = 0.0641$ ) was greater than 0.05.

The schematic design below demonstrates the various relationships between the variables.

$$\begin{pmatrix} \eta_1 \\ \eta_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ \beta_{21} & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \eta_1 \\ \eta_2 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_{11} & \gamma_{12} & \gamma_{13} \\ \gamma_{21} & \gamma_{22} & \gamma_{23} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \xi_1 \\ \xi_2 \\ \xi_3 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \zeta_1 \\ \zeta_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

### 3.6 Sampling design

For the purpose of this study a non-probability convenience sampling procedure was used. The planned process called for multiple trade union organisations to be approached and asked if they would be willing to participate in the study. Multiple trade unions with active trade union representatives were approached and asked whether they would assist with participation in the study. Of the trade unions approached, five national trade union organisations were willing to assist with the data collection process.

The initial plan was to gain access to the potential participants using a mailing list obtained from the trade unions. The list would have been inputted into the web-based electronic survey program. The program would then assign random numbers to the participants and the response rate would be monitored via the program. However, due to the trade union organisations' concerns with regard to providing access to their trade union representatives' email addresses, the invitation email containing the questionnaire was sent to the trade union correspondents. The trade union correspondents then distributed the email to all full-time trade union representatives. Due to the challenges of obtaining willing trade unions to participate, the trade unions were accommodated. However, this made it more difficult to manage the response rate and send out reminders to the potential trade union representative participants.

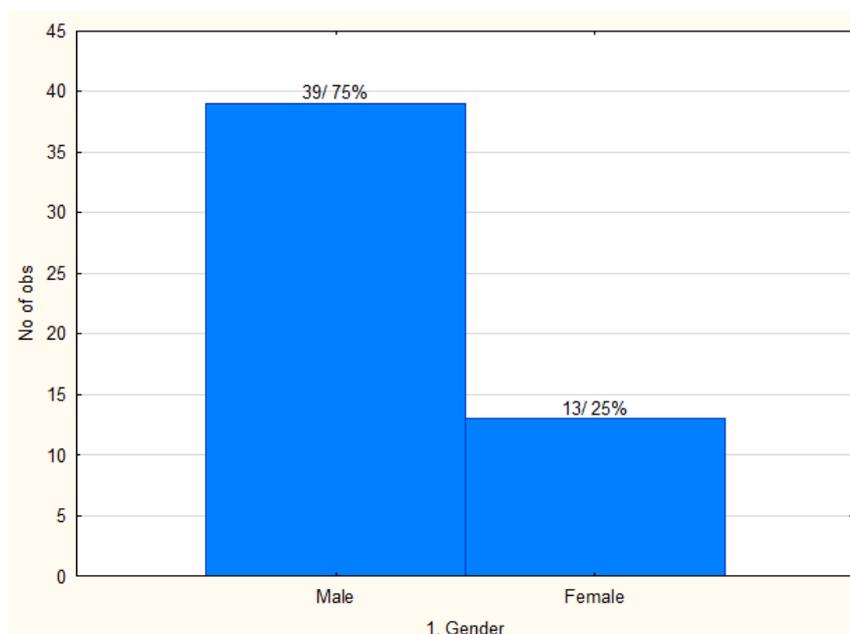
To conduct full structural equation modelling, given the number of items of all the measurement instruments and using at least five parameter estimates for each subscale, a sample of 850 to 900 participants would have been required.

The sample size of 850 to 900 participants was not achieved in a period of 12 months. A number of factors contributed to the limited sample size. Firstly, in order to ask trade union representatives to participate, permission from the trade union head office first had to be obtained. The general response rate of the trade unions contacted was slow and limited. Therefore, very few trade unions responded and agreed to allow access to their trade union representatives.

A second constraint was the data collection method, which required trade union representatives to have access the internet, to have a valid email address and to be computer literate. This limited the number of trade unions that could participate in the study. This problem was compounded by a third factor, which was the conditions imposed by the unions with regard to sharing the email addresses of their trade union representatives. This meant that sending out reminders to the potential participants had to be done through the contact person at the respective trade union. An eventual sample size of only 60 participants completed the questionnaire in full, in other words responded to every question in all four sections of the survey. There were a number of incomplete responses, where participants dropped off before the end of the survey.

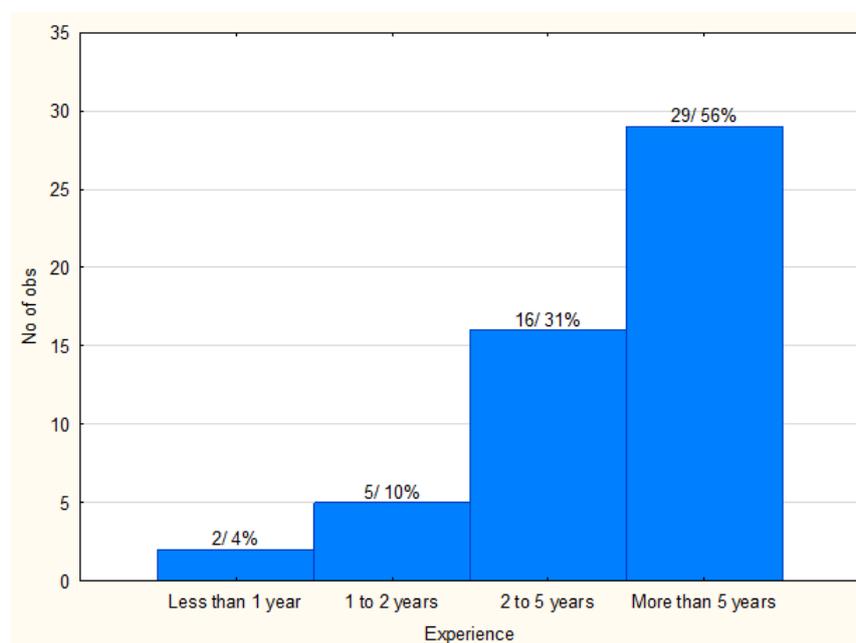
The biographical information of the participants was collected using five questions that preceded the various sections of the questionnaire pertaining to burnout, engagement, job demands and job resources, and personal resources. The biographical information included age, gender, race, years of experience as a trade union representative and educational qualification. No relationship was hypothesised between the biographical characteristics of the trade union representatives and the variables considered in the study. However, the information may assist in identifying organisational implications and recommendations.

The intention was to be able to generalise the research findings to the population of trade union representatives, but this depended on the representativeness and statistical power of the sample. The following are summary bar charts of the biographical information of the participants in the study.



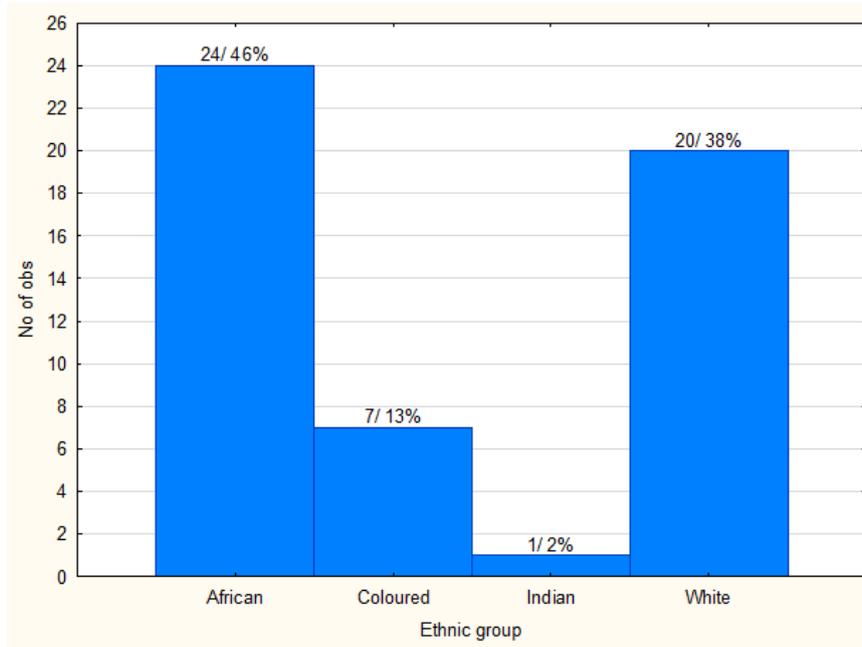
**Figure 3.3 Gender of participants in study**

Of the 60 participants, only 52 completed the biographical information pertaining to their gender (see Figure 3.3). The 52 participants were made up of 39 males and 13 females. There were more male participants than female participants in the sample.



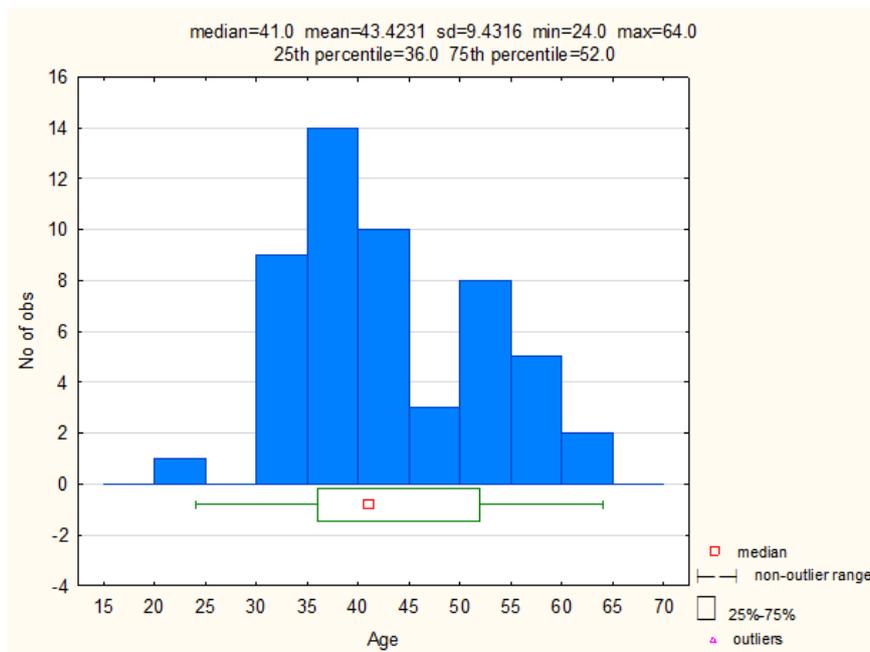
**Figure 3.4 Experience as a trade union representative**

Of the 60 participants, only 52 completed the biographical information pertaining to their experience as a trade union representative (see Figure 3.4). Experience as a trade union representative was split into four categories, namely less than one year, one to two years, two to five years and more than five years. The largest portion of the sample – 29 of the 52 respondents – had more than five years' experience as a trade union representative, and only two respondents had less than one year's experience as a trade union representative. The rest of the sample had between one and five years' experience as a trade union representative.



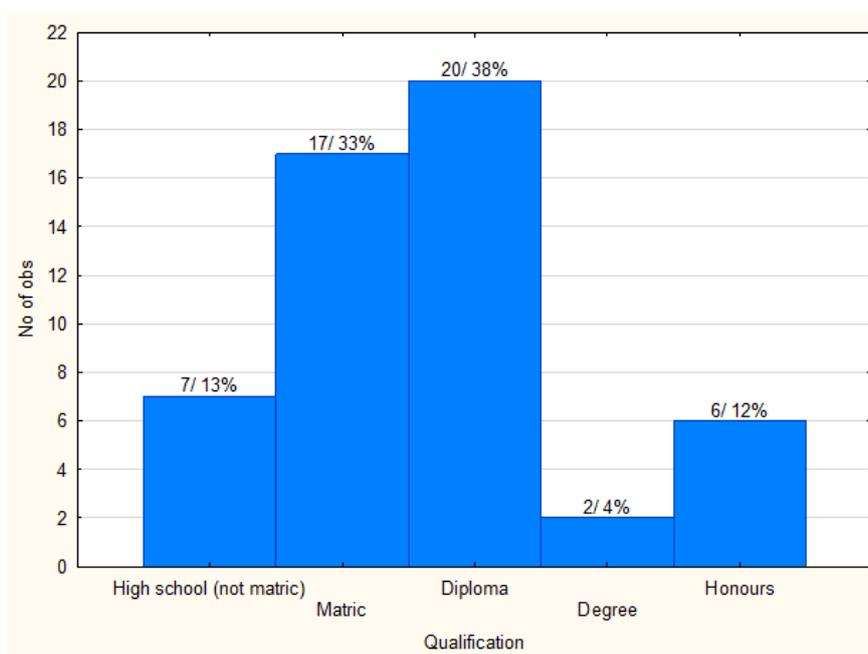
**Figure 3.5 Ethnic groups of participants**

Of the 60 participants, only 52 completed the biographical information pertaining to their ethnicity (see Figure 3.5). The ethnic groups from which the participants could select were African, coloured, Indian and white. The largest portion of the participants, 24 of the 52, were African. The second largest group was white, namely 20 of the 52 participants. A small portion of the sample was coloured (seven of the 52 respondents) and only one of the respondents was Indian.



**Figure 3.6 Age distribution of the participants**

Of the 60 participants, only 52 completed the biographical information pertaining to their age (see Figure 3.6). The age was not specific, but rather a free text field in which the respondents could place their age. The youngest participant was 24 and the oldest was 64 years old. The ages of the participants were grouped into five-year intervals from the information obtained. The youngest participant was between the ages 20 and 25. The largest portion of the respondents were aged between 30 and 45, with the largest number of participants being between 35 and 40. Just under half of the participants, namely 20 of the 52 who completed the biographical information, fell between the ages of 45 and 65.



**Figure 3.7 Highest educational qualification of participants**

Of the 60 participants, only 52 completed the biographical information pertaining to their educational qualifications (see Figure 3.7). Of the 52 respondents, 20 – the largest number of the respondents – had a diploma. The qualification held second most was matric, with 17 of the 52 having obtained matric. The number of participants who had not completed their high schooling was seven. University qualifications were held by eight of the 52 respondents, two of whom had a degree and six who had an honours degree.

### 3.7 Measuring instruments

The measures for the biographical information of the participants, and for job demands, job resources, personal resources, engagement and burnout, were selected to be administered to gather the required data for the research. The questionnaire was preceded by a letter requesting informed consent. The purpose of this letter was to provide participants with the relevant information about the study. The information provided allowed the participants to make an informed choice about whether or not they would like to participate in the study, as

participation was voluntary. The participants who chose to participate confirmed their willingness to participate and their understanding of what participation entailed on the informed consent form. The next section of the questionnaire comprised the biographical information.

The various measures, as well as the informed consent form, were converted into an electronic questionnaire. The following section explains the measures used to evaluate the various variables. It is important to note that these measures were adapted to better suit the needs of the study. The following section describes the reliability and validity of each questionnaire, the nature of the questionnaires and their application in the study. The electronic questionnaire containing the measures can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.7.1 Job Demands-Resources (JDRS)**

One measure was administered to measure the variables of job demands and job resources. Jackson and Rothmann developed a South Africa-based job demands and resources questionnaire called the JDRS – Job Demands-Resources Scale (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005; Rothmann et al., 2006). The scale consists of 48 items, each being a statement about various job demands or job resources and requiring the respondent to rate how frequently they experience the statement on a four-point Likert scale (1 = never; 4 = always) (Rothmann et al., 2006). The JDRS (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005) consists of seven factors, namely organisational support, growth opportunities, overload, job insecurity, relationship with colleagues, control, and rewards (Rothmann et al., 2006).

Overload refers to the amount of work an individual has, and the emotional and mental load placed on him/her; and job insecurity refers to current feelings of insecurity with regard to job level and position as well as future job prospects. Growth opportunities refer to opportunities for future, further development for the individual within the job. Advancement is the forward movement that is available to the individual within the job. Organisational support is the support the individual receives from his/her manager/supervisor as well the nature and quality of information to which they have access (Rothmann et al., 2006). Control refers to the extent to which the individual is able to exercise his/her own discretion in the work; and rewards refer to factors like benefits and remuneration linked to the job or position. Each of the factors has a reliability coefficient ranging from 0.75 to 0.9 (Rothmann et al., 2006). The questionnaire was adapted slightly to meet the needs of the trade union representative-specific job demands and resources.

The questions of the JDRS (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005) were adapted for the purpose of this study. The adaptation of the questions was to allow for the nature of the study. The questions were posed from a trade union representative point of view, therefore allowing the participants to answer with the correct frame of reference. An example of an adapted question is: "Does

your work as a trade union representative put you in emotionally upsetting situations?”, which was derived from the original question, “Does your work put you in emotionally upsetting situations?” The questionnaire was further adapted to exclude the questions related to reward, as the role of a trade union representative is not one for which the individuals are incentivised. Further, the item “Does your job give you the opportunity to be promoted?” was removed due to the fact that the role as trade union representative will not necessarily provide promotional opportunities within the organisational structure. Therefore, the JDRS (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005) was reduced from 48 items, as mentioned earlier, to 43. As a result, only six of the seven subscales were considered for the role of a trade union representative. The adapted JDRS (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005) can be found in Appendix A, Section C.

Work overload was tested in questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. All ten questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of work overload with regard to job demands and resources as a trade union representative.

Growth opportunity was tested in questions 11, 12, 13, 14 and 43. All five questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of growth opportunity with regard to job demands and resources.

Control was tested in questions 15, 16, 17 and 18. All four questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of control with regard to job demands and resources as a trade union representative.

Relationship with colleagues was tested in questions 19, 20, 21, 37, 38 and 39. All six questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a strong relationship with colleagues and union members with regard to job demands and resources as a trade union representative.

Organisational support was tested in questions 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36. All fifteen questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of organisational support with regard to job demands and resources as a trade union representative.

Job insecurity is tested in questions 40, 41 and 42. All three questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of job insecurity with regard to job demands and resources as a trade union representative.

### **3.7.2 Genos Emotional Intelligence (EI) Inventory**

For personal resources, emotional resources were measured to determine whether the trade union representative has the necessary personal resources to be able to manage the job stress that is associated with the role. The aim was to identify whether there was a relationship

between emotional intelligence and the engagement and burnout of trade union representatives.

The Genos Emotional Intelligence (EI) Inventory was developed by Dr Gignac and three versions currently exist, namely the full version, consisting of 40 items; the concise version, which has 31 items; and the short version, which consists of 14 items. All three of the Genos EI versions consist of seven subscales, namely Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Emotional Awareness of Others, Emotional Reasoning, Emotional Self-Management, Emotional Management of Others and Emotional Self-Control. Combined, these subscales also result in an overall emotional intelligence score. Individuals are asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = almost never, 5 = almost always) (Gignac, 2008; Gignac & Ekermans 2010; Palmer, Stough, Harmer & Gignac, 2009).

Due to the fact that the study required that participants complete three other questionnaires, it was recommended to use the concise version of the Genos EI due to time constraints. Further, the Genos EI concise version is still able to provide reliable subscale data, whereas the short version, which consists of only 14 items, is unable to provide reliable subscale information, but rather only a measure of overall emotional intelligence (Gignac, 2008; Palmer et al., 2009). The Genos EI concise version demonstrated lower subscale reliability, but still of an acceptable level above 0.7, with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.71 to 0.75 and an overall emotional intelligence reliability coefficient of 0.93 (Palmer et al., 2009).

The Genos EI concise version was adapted for the purpose of this study. The items were changed to allow participants to use their experience as a trade union representative as their frame of reference when answering the questionnaire. An example of a question that has been adapted is: "I respond to events that frustrate me as a trade union representative appropriately", which was adapted from "I respond to events that frustrate me appropriately". The adapted questionnaire can be found in Appendix A, Section D.

Emotional self-awareness was tested in questions 2, 4, 24 and 28. Questions 2 and 4 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these would indicate a high level of emotional self-awareness in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 24 and 28 were scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional self-awareness with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For the purpose of analysis questions 2 and 4 were reverse scored.

Emotional expression was tested in questions 5, 7, 9, 18 and 29. Questions 5 and 29 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these would indicate a high level of emotional expression in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 7, 9 and 18 are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level

of emotional expression with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 5 and 29 were reverse scored.

Emotional awareness of others was tested in questions 11, 12, 19 and 22. Questions 11 and 22 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these indicates a high level of emotional awareness of others in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 12 and 19 are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional awareness of others with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 11 and 22 were reverse scored.

Emotional reasoning was tested in questions 1, 8, 15, 16 and 17. All of the questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional reasoning with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative.

Emotional self-management was tested in questions 3, 6, 13, 20 and 21. Questions 6 and 13 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these indicates a high level of emotional self-management in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 3, 20 and 21 are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional self-management with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 6 and 13 were reverse scored.

Emotional management of others was tested in questions 14, 25, 27 and 31. Questions 27 and 31 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these indicates a high level of emotional management of others in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 14 and 25 are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional management of others with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 27 and 31 were reversed scored.

Emotional self-control was tested in questions 10, 23, 26 and 30. Questions 10 and 23 are scored negatively and therefore a low score on these indicates a high level of emotional self-control in terms of emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. Questions 26 and 30 are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of emotional self-control with regard to emotional intelligence as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 10 and 23 were reversed scored.

### **3.7.3 Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS)**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI-GS) is the third version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), developed by Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli and Schwab

(Demerouti et al., 2001). It was developed for use with workers outside the service industry and measures the three dimensions of burnout, namely exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced professional efficacy (Wheeler, Vassar, Worley & Barnes, 2011).

Exhaustion can be defined as the individual feeling as though he/she is overextended and that his/her physical and emotional resources are depleted (Pugh, Groth & Henning-Thurau, 2011). Depersonalisation is a state in which the individual becomes unfeeling and has an impersonal response to his/her clients. Reduced self-efficacy refers to the individual's feelings of achievement and self-worth.

The MBI-GS is a 22-item self-report questionnaire that asks respondents to rate each statement on a seven-point Likert scale (0 = never; 6 = every day). The subscale's internal consistency is 0.9, 0.79 and 0.71 for exhaustion, depersonalisation and professional achievement respectively (Becksted, 2002).

The MBI was adapted for the purpose of this study. The adaptation of the questions was to allow for the nature of the study. The questions were posed from a trade union representative point of view, therefore allowing the participants to answer with the correct frame of reference. An example of an adapted question is: "I feel emotionally drained by my work as a trade union representative", which was derived from the original question, "I feel emotionally drained by my work". The adapted questionnaire consists of 22 items, as mentioned earlier. All three subscales are also measured by the adapted questionnaire. The adapted version of the MBI can be found in Appendix A, Section A.

Exhaustion was tested in questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. All seven questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of exhaustion and therefore a high level of burnout as a trade union representative.

Depersonalisation was tested in questions 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. All seven questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of depersonalisation and therefore high levels of burnout as a trade union representative.

Personal achievement was tested in questions 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22. All eight questions are scored negatively and therefore scoring low on these items indicates a low level of personal achievement and therefore high levels of burnout as a trade union representative. For analysis purposes, questions 15 to 22 were reverse scored.

### **3.7.4 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**

The English version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), also known as the Work and Well-being Survey, measures three specific constructs of engagement, namely vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Vigour refers to the energy an individual

has in his/her work, dedication is the level of commitment the person shows because of the significance found in his/her work, and absorption the extent to which the individual is submersed in his/her work (Storm & Rothman, 2003).

The UWES is a self-administered questionnaire that takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The respondents are presented with seventeen statements (17 items) about their work and then have to rate how often they feel that way in their job. This is done using a seven-point Likert scale (0 = never; 6 = every day) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The reliability of each subscale exceeds the expected standard of 0.7, with vigour at 0.82, absorption at 0.83 and dedication at 0.89. The overall reliability coefficient of the measure is 0.93 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

Once again, the UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) was adapted to meet the requirements of the study. The questionnaire consists of 17 items, as mentioned above. The statements were adapted to ensure that the participants answered using their trade union representative role as their frame of reference. An example of a question that was adapted is: "At my work as a trade union representative, I feel bursting with energy", which was adapted from "At my work, I feel bursting with energy". The adapted version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A, Section B.

Vigour was tested in questions 1, 4, 8, 12, 15 and 17. All six questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of vigour and therefore high levels of engagement as a trade union representative.

Dedication was tested in questions 2, 5, 7, 10 and 13. All five questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of dedication and therefore high levels of engagement as a trade union representative.

Absorption was tested in questions 3, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 16. All six questions are scored positively and therefore scoring highly on these items indicates a high level of absorption and therefore high levels of engagement as a trade union representative.

### **3.8 Statistical analysis**

Due to the sampling limitation, partial least squares (PLS) path regression analysis was used. PLS path regression breaks the structural model into the various paths to gather data on the path-specific relationships (Abrahams, 2013). The original research plan aimed to use structural equation modelling (SEM) for the statistical analysis of the data collected. Due to the limited sample size, SEM could not be used to evaluate the data. Partial least squares (PLS) path regression was used instead. PLS is an alternative to SEM when samples sizes are too small to perform SEM. SEM is regarded as a hard modelling approach that makes use

of maximum likelihood. PLS is viewed as a soft modelling approach and makes use of partial least squares (de Villiers, 2015; Riou, Guyon & Falissard, 2015).

PLS analysis makes use of two sets of linear equations. The first is the inner model, which seeks to explain the relationship between the unobserved or latent variables. In SEM terms this can be compared to the structural model. The second analysis is known as the outer model and seeks to explain the relationship between the latent variables and their manifest variables. When compared to SEM, this is similar to the measurement model (de Villiers, 2015; Riou et al., 2015).

PLS is similar to regression but, because it is a components-based structural equation modelling technique, it is also able to model the paths between the indicator variables and their latent variables, as well as the relationships between the latent variables (Chin, Marcolin & Newsted, 2003; de Villiers, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, PLS is a preferred statistical method for studies with small sample sizes. This is due to the fact that PLS is able to assist researchers in the early stages of their study to test a theoretical model and allows for testing and validating the exploratory models (de Villiers 2015; Riou et al., 2015). A further advantage of using a method that is effective with a smaller sample is that the researcher can make an informed choice about whether or not the time and effort required for gathering data to perform more advanced statistical analysis would be warranted. If the model is disproved on the smaller sample it can help to refine the research (Chin et al., 2003).

PLS also has the advantage of being able to estimate and analyse complex models that contain many latent and manifest variables. When comparing PLS to SEM, it should not be assumed that PLS is not as reliable or trustworthy as SEM. PLS is a valid method that can be used on smaller samples (Chin et al., 2003; de Villiers, 2015; Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015; Riou et al, 2015).

When making use of PLS, researchers must adhere to three rules to ensure the reliability of the results. First, there may be no recursive loops in the hypothesised model; second, each of the indicator variables used to measure the latent variables must appear only once and can only be linked to one construct/latent variable; and, lastly, there may be no unmeasured constructs (Riou et al., 2015). All of these conditions were adhered to in order for the PLS analysis to be applied.

Given the small sample size, a nonparametric bootstrap procedure was used in the PLS modelling. Bootstrapping treats the observed sample as if it represents the population. By employing a large number of repetitive computations, the researcher is able to estimate the sampling distribution shape, spread and bias (de Villiers, 2015; Mooney & Duval, 1993).

Bootstrapping requires the “resampling” of the data with replacement. In other words, a selected number of data points are randomly selected from the dataset. These observations are then placed back in the sample instead of being removed. The process is then repeated a large number of times (Mooney & Duval, 1993). Nonparametric bootstrapping provides the confidence intervals for all parameter estimates. This is interpreted by evaluating the mean value and standard error for each of the path model coefficients. If the selected confidence interval does not contain zero, the null hypothesis will be rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the hypothesised variables (de Villiers, 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

The study did not result in any ethical issues, as initially anticipated. The anticipated challenges with regard to finding willing trade unions to participate in the study were experienced. The challenges were overcome by assuring the anonymity of the participants as well as the organisation. Anonymity was achieved by opening the link to the public via the survey settings. This meant that any trade union representative with access to the link could complete the questionnaire without having to share his/her email address with the researcher. Further, accommodating the unions and allowing the correspondents to distribute the questionnaire provided comfort to the unions. Feedback on the study was provided to the specific trade unions that requested it.

The data collected through the questionnaire on the electronic platform is safeguarded by password protection. Only the researcher, statistical analyst and research supervisor had access to the information. Through the application for ethical clearance, the researcher was made aware of ethical codes and guidelines pertaining to responsible research. The data collection procedure was approved by the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) and ethical clearance for the research methodology was obtained.

The research was not expected to have any negative impact on the well-being of the participants and participation was voluntary. The informed consent letter, which was read and agreed to by that participants before commencing with the questionnaire, contained the contact information of a registered clinical psychologist. Participants therefore were able to speak to a trained professional should they have had any concerns after completing the questionnaire. As the questionnaire was completed anonymously, this was the only possible way to allow participants access to help should they feel that they need it.

The data collection excluded what are deemed to be vulnerable populations. Therefore, individuals who are minors (individuals under the age of 18), people with disabilities, prisoners or any other group deemed as vulnerable were excluded from the research. Further, the

researcher was solely responsible for the data collection process. Both the researcher and the statistical analyst worked on the statistical analysis of the data. The whole research process was overseen and guided by the research supervisor.

### **3.10 Summary**

Chapter 3 has discussed the research methodology. This included revisiting the research objectives, and the substantive and statistical research hypotheses. The study followed an explanatory research methodology to identify the nature of the relationships between the variables. The statistical analysis of the data included linear regression analysis of the various variables. The biographical details of the sample were captured and outlined. Although no relationship was hypothesised between the elements of the biographical information, it could provide valuable insight for future studies.

The various measurement instruments were discussed in detail, highlighting the reliability of the various measurement scales. All of the negatively scored items were reverse scored for analysis purposes. This was done for the complete responses. The ethical considerations were reviewed and no major ethical concerns were identified.

In Chapter 4, the statistical results of the PLS statistical analysis will be evaluated in relation to the hypothesised relationships between the exogenous and endogenous latent variables. The reliability and validity of the various measurement instruments are examined, as well as the path-specific relationships between the variables, by reviewing the results of the inner and outer model.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 focuses on the results of the statistical analysis performed on the data set obtained from the sample. The results from the PLS path analysis are discussed by evaluating both the inner and outer model. Item analysis was performed on each of the measurement tools to determine the psychometric integrity of the tools used to represent the variables. Each of the measurement tools is discussed, along with the structural model and the graphic model. Finally, the hypotheses are discussed using the data obtained.

#### 4.2 Partial least squares (PLS) path analyses

Statistical analysis was done on two levels. The first was to evaluate the validity and reliability of each of the measurement tools using partial least squares path analysis. PLS is a commonly used multivariate technique that is able to cope with a large number of variables and is able to correlate the variables despite a small sample size (Chin et al., 2003; de Villers, 2015; Riou et al., 2015). A two-stage approach was used. First, the outer model (measurement model) was analysed for the reliability and validity of the measures. Then the inner model (structural model) was analysed to determine the nature of the relationships between the latent variables. The significance of the path coefficients and loadings were evaluated using nonparametric bootstrapping.

##### 4.2.1 Measurement model

The measurement model was used to determine the quality of the items contained in each of the measurements tools for the various variables. It is a way of determining whether or not the items contained in the measures actually measure what they are supposed to, as well as their relationship with the latent variables. In Table 4.1 below the composite reliability of each measure and the average variance extracted (AVE) scores are provided, while Table 4.2 shows the discriminant validity. The composite reliability is an indication of the reliability of the latent variable scales. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 or more is an indication of good reliability (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

**Table 4.1 Reliability and AVE scores for the PLS measurement model**

<i>Latent variable</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Average inter-item correlation</i>	<i>Composite reliability (outer model)</i>	<i>Average variance distracted (AVE)</i>		
<i>Burnout</i>		0.470	0.297	0.756	0.509		
	Exhaustion	0.800	0.408				
	Depersonalisation	0.710	0.303				
	Personal achievement	0.860	0.479				
<i>Engagement</i>		0.850	0.680	0.913	0.779		
	Vigour	0.750	0.370				
	Dedication	0.810	0.587				
	Absorption	0.760	0.369				
<i>Job demands</i>		0.790	0.287	0.830	0.345		
	Work overload	0.790	0.287				
<i>Job resources</i>		0.690	0.422	0.836	0.543		
	Organisational support	0.900	0.384				
	Job insecurity	0.940	0.838				
	Growth opportunities	0.710	0.349				
	Control	0.760	0.446				
	Relationships	0.540	0.172				
		0.860	0.501			0.867	0.554
	Emotional reasoning	0.780	0.444				
Emotional self-awareness	0.580	0.254					
Emotional self-management	0.640	0.259					
Emotional expression	0.390	0.149					
Emotional self-control	0.600	0.308					
Emotional awareness	0.660	0.338					
Emotional management of others	0.640	0.361					

The AVE score provides an indication of the amount of variance in the indicator variables that can be explained by common factors. It also is a stricter test of reliability and can be used to

confirm the findings of other reliability measures. An AVE score of greater than 0.5 is satisfactory and indicates that the indicator variables do in fact measure the relevant construct (Henseler et al., 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

Discriminant validity is used to compare the measures with one another and to determine whether or not the measures actually measure different things. This is calculated using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio. The guideline used for interpreting the score is a 95% confidence interval (CI). If the CI includes 1 it is an indication that the two scales measure different things. “No” means that there is a strong correlation between the variables and thus no discriminant validity (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

**Table 4.2 Discriminant validity**

	Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio			Discriminate
	Original Sample (O)	2.5%	97.5%	
<b>Engagement → Burnout</b>	0.715	0.581	0.912	Yes
<b>Job demands → Burnout</b>	0.754	0.565	1.011	No
<b>Job demands → Engagement</b>	0.397	0.285	0.657	Yes
<b>Job resources → Burnout</b>	0.611	0.418	0.871	Yes
<b>Job resources → Engagement</b>	0.546	0.250	0.789	Yes
<b>Job resources → Job demands</b>	0.364	0.343	0.661	Yes
<b>Personal resources → Burnout</b>	0.442	0.330	0.766	Yes
<b>Personal resources → Engagement</b>	0.229	0.164	0.477	Yes
<b>Personal resources → Job demands</b>	0.326	0.301	0.572	Yes
<b>Personal resources → Job resources</b>	0.298	0.233	0.630	Yes

Each of the measures will be discussed. The discussion will include all of the above, as they pertain to the relevant measure as well as the inter-item correlation. Inter-item correlation determines the extent to which the items of the various subscales measure the same construct. A higher correlation is viewed positively, as it is an indication that the items measure the same construct to some degree.

#### **4.2.1.1 Job demands and job resources**

Job demands and job resources were measured using the JDRS questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of six subscales, namely work overload, control, relationships, job insecurity, growth opportunities and organisational support. Work overload loaded onto job demands. Control, relationships, organisational support, job insecurity and growth opportunities loaded onto job resources (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005; Rothmann et al., 2006).

Job demands consist of one subscale, namely work overload. Work overload therefore is equivalent to job demands. Work overload demonstrated reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha

of 0.7929, which is above the critical value of 0.7. This means that the items did in fact measure the latent variable job demands. The average inter-item correlation was low, at 0.2865. However, when analysing the item total correlation, the correlations were higher with the exception of one item, which may have affected the average item correlation. Despite the item causing challenges it was not removed. This demonstrates that, to some degree, the items measure the same thing, although not very highly. The AVE score of 0.345 is below the desired minimum of 0.5. When analysing the discriminant validity of job demands and burnout, there seems to be an overlap. The confidence interval of job demands and burnout contains 1. In other words, the measures for burnout and job demands overlap to some degree and therefore may be measuring the same thing.

In their paper, Schaufeli, Taris and van Rhenen (2008) cite similar findings to those of other studies. Burnout consists of three subscales, namely exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal achievement. There is a significant overlap with the measure of exhaustion in the burnout questionnaire and work overload from the job demands questionnaire (Schaufeli et al., 2008). This may explain the lack of discriminant validity of job demands with burnout, as the indicator variable on the burnout scale, exhaustion, may be measuring the same thing as the job demands indicator variable, work overload, to some degree.

The reliability subscale for job resources was all above 0.7 (organisational support – 0.8969, job insecurity – 0.9379, control – 0.7611, and growth opportunity – 0.7118), with the exception of relationships, which was 0.5397. This means that the items did in fact measure the latent variable, job resources. Job resources demonstrated reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.687, which is below the critical value of 0.7. This may have been affected by the low Cronbach's alpha relationships. Given that the Cronbach's alpha is very close to 0.7, it was still accepted that job resources was what the sub-dimensions were measuring. The average inter-item correlation for job demands was good, at 0.4215, which demonstrates that the items do correlate with one another when measuring the same construct. The AVE score of 0.543 is above the critical value of 0.5, and therefore the job resources construct can be seen as reliable. The AVE score indicates that variance in the items can be explained by the construct job resources (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

#### **4.2.1.2 Personal resources**

Personal resources have been theorised to be linked to emotional intelligence (EQ). Based on this, EQ was measured using the Genos Emotional Intelligence (EI) Inventory, which consists of seven subscales, namely emotional reasoning, emotional self-awareness, emotional self-management, emotional expression, emotional self-control, emotional awareness and emotional management of others (Gignac, 2008; Gignac & Ekermans, 2010;

Palmer et al., 2009). All of the subscales are considered together to make up the emotional intelligence construct.

The reliability of all the subscales was below the critical value of 0.7 (emotional self-awareness – 0.5767, emotional self-management – 0.6352, emotional expression – 0.3929, emotional self-control – 0.6023, emotional awareness – 0.6609, and emotional management of others – 0.6501), with the exception of emotional reasoning, which was 0.7831. This means that the subscales did not satisfactorily measure their applicable sub-dimension of the latent variable personal resources. Emotional expression, however, was very low, at 0.3929, and this may indicate that it does not reliably measure the subscale. Personal resources demonstrated reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8626, which is above critical value of 0.7. This means that the subscales were measuring personal resources.

The average inter-item correlation for personal resources was good, at 0.5005, which demonstrates that the items of the subscales did correlate with one another when measuring the latent variable personal resources. The AVE score of 0.554 was above the critical value of 0.5. The AVE means that the measure for personal resources is reliable and variance in the items can be explained by personal resources (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

#### **4.2.1.3 Engagement**

Engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The UWES consists of three subscales, namely vigour, absorption and dedication. All of the subscales are considered together to make up engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

The reliability of all the subscales was above the critical value of 0.7 (vigour – 0.7479, absorption – 0.7614, and dedication – 0.8128). This means that the subscales do in fact measure the latent variable engagement. Engagement demonstrated reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8475, which is above the critical value 0.7. This means engagement is what the subscales were measuring. The average inter-item correlation for engagement was good, at 0.6803, which demonstrates that the subscales correlated with one another when measuring the latent variable engagement. The AVE score of 0.779 was very good and is above the critical value of 0.5. This means that the measure for engagement is reliable and that a large portion of variance in the items can be explained by engagement (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

#### 4.2.1.4 Burnout

Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI-GS) (Becksted, 2002; Demerouti et al., 2001; Pugh et al., 2011; Wheeler et al., 2011). The MBI-GS consists of three subscales, namely exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal achievement. All of the subscales are considered together to make up burnout (Becksted, 2002; Demerouti et al., 2001; Pugh et al., 2011; Wheeler et al., 2011).

The reliability of all the subscales was above the critical value of 0.7 (exhaustion – 0.8017, depersonalisation – 0.7118, and personal achievement – 0.8611). This means that the subscales do measure the latent variable burnout. Burnout demonstrated reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.4717, which is below 0.7. The low Cronbach's alpha for burnout is cause for concern. The average inter-item correlation for burnout was low, at 0.2967. When analysing the inter-item correlation, the correlation of the items from the subscale personal achievement was 0.11. This means that there was very little correlation between personal achievement and exhaustion and depersonalisation. This may mean that the measure is not able to reliably predict burnout, and could be linked to the low discriminant validity between burnout and job demands. When analysing the AVE score, a stricter measure of reliability, an AVE score of 0.509 was found, which is above the critical value of 0.5. This means that the measure for burnout is reliable and that a portion of variance in the items can be explained by burnout (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

#### 4.2.1.5 Outer loadings

Table 4.3 illustrates the strength of the relationships between the latent variables and the relevant items from the questionnaire that were used to measure them. This is where the nonparametric bootstrapping technique was applied, using a confidence interval of 95%.

It can be concluded that the paths between the indicator variables for engagement and job resources were all significant. For the latent variables burnout and job demands all of the paths between these latent variables and their respective indicator variables were not significant. Therefore the paths between the indicator variables depersonalisation, exhaustion and personal achievement and the latent variable burnout were not significant. The paths for the indicator variable work overload and the latent variable job demands were therefore also not significant. For personal resources, all of the paths between the latent variable and the indicator variables were significant, with the exception of two, namely emotional expression and emotional management of others.

**Table 4.3 Outer loadings**

	1 Original Sample (O)	2 Sample Mean (M)	3 2.5%	4 97.5%	5 Significant from CI	6 p-value from T-test
Burnout->Burnout Depersonalisation	0.759	0.608	-0.358	0.906	no	0.02
Burnout->Burnout Exhaustion	0.717	0.536	-0.533	0.917	no	0.06
Burnout->Burnout Personal Achievement(reversed)	0.66	0.674	-0.535	0.997	no	0.06
Engagement->Engagement Absorption	0.8	0.787	0.424	0.906	yes	0.00
Engagement->Engagement Dedication	0.926	0.902	0.72	0.96	yes	0.00
Engagement->Engagement Vigour	0.917	0.904	0.815	0.956	yes	0.00
Job demands->JDRS 1	0.591	0.407	-0.719	0.848	no	0.21
Job demands->JDRS 10	0.588	0.393	-0.251	0.78	no	0.04
Job demands->JDRS 2	0.615	0.429	-0.405	0.789	no	0.05
Job demands->JDRS 3	0.299	0.199	-0.461	0.675	no	0.31
Job demands->JDRS 4	0.422	0.299	-0.668	0.763	no	0.32
Job demands->JDRS 5	0.362	0.267	-0.74	0.828	no	0.46
Job demands->JDRS 6	0.519	0.355	-0.673	0.81	no	0.26
Job demands->JDRS 7	0.737	0.509	-0.272	0.838	no	0.02
Job demands->JDRS 8	0.769	0.541	-0.299	0.841	no	0.01
Job demands->JDRS 9	0.755	0.519	-0.218	0.856	no	0.02
Job resources->JDRS Control	0.761	0.738	0.481	0.869	yes	0.00
Job resources->JDRS Growth opportunities	0.806	0.775	0.577	0.885	yes	0.00
Job resources->JDRS Job insecurity	0.359	0.374	0.02	0.669	yes	0.05
Job resources->JDRS Organisational support	0.9	0.887	0.799	0.943	yes	0.00
Job resources->JDRS Relationship	0.74	0.713	0.454	0.856	yes	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional awareness	0.805	0.751	0.157	0.883	yes	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional expression	0.519	0.489	-0.009	0.792	no	0.01
Personal resources->EQ Emotional management of others	0.837	0.785	-0.007	0.922	no	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional reasoning	0.874	0.817	0.216	0.936	yes	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional self-awareness	0.713	0.658	0.183	0.869	yes	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional self-control	0.834	0.783	0.032	0.924	yes	0.00
Personal resources->EQ Emotional self-management	0.542	0.512	0.011	0.814	yes	0.01

## 4.2.2 Structural Model

The structural model was used to determine the nature of the relationship between the latent variables that were measured using the questionnaires. This is known as the inner model, as it seeks to explain the variables in the structural model. The aim was to determine the extent to which the latent variables are related, and the nature of the relationship if they are. The relationship and the impact of the exogenous latent variables on the endogenous latent variables were considered, as well as the relationship and impact of the endogenous variables on one another. This was done using PLS structural modelling (de Villiers, 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

### 4.2.2.1 Multicollinearity

An assumption is made that, when regression analysis is conducted, all of the predictor variables correlate with one another. When the correlation between the predictor variables is too high, it can result in an unstable regression determined by estimated coefficients. To ensure that the correlations are not too high, multicollinearity is used. A score of 10 or more is an indication of potential areas for concern. Table 4.4 illustrates the multicollinearity between

the variables. Based on the scores obtained it can be concluded that none of the variables are problematic (de Villiers, 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

**Table 4.4 Multicollinearity**

	1	2	3	4	5
	Burnout	Engagement	Job demands	Job resources	Personal resources
Burnout					
Engagement	1.278				
Job demands	1.062	1.056			
Job resources	1.337	1.125			
Personal resources	1.152	1.133			

#### 4.2.2.2 R square

The R square value represents the amount variance in the endogenous variables (burnout and engagement) that can be explained by the exogenous variables (job demands, job resources and personal resources). Table 4.5 illustrates the R square values obtained for the endogenous variables. The score for burnout was 0.586. This means that 58.6% of the variance in burnout can be explained by the effect of the exogenous latent variables on burnout. The score for engagement was 0.218. This means that 21.8% of the variance in engagement can be explained by the exogenous latent variables (M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

**Table 4.5 R square**

	1	2
	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Burnout	0.586	0.556
Engagement	0.218	0.176

#### 4.2.2.3 Path coefficients

When evaluating the strength of the relationships between the latent variables as hypothesised, the PLS path coefficients are used. PLS path coefficients generally range between -1.00 and +1.00. When the value obtained is closer to zero, it indicates that there may be an absence of a relationship between the latent variables. Table 4.6 illustrates the factor loadings obtained for the hypothesised relationships. Confidence intervals of 95% were used to determine the significance of the path coefficients (de Villiers 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016).

**Table 4.6 Path coefficients**

	1	2	3	4	5	p-value from
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%	Significant from CI	
Engagement -> Burnout	-0.463	-0.433	-0.736	0.138	no	0.02
Job demands -> Burnout	0.493	0.329	-0.308	0.703	no	0.08
Job demands -> Engagement	0.069	0.013	-0.546	0.522	no	0.83
Job resources -> Burnout	-0.267	-0.209	-0.474	0.11	no	0.07
Job resources -> Engagement	0.407	0.34	0.095	0.59	yes	0.00
Personal resources -> Burnout	-0.046	-0.126	-0.443	0.379	no	0.82
Personal resources -> Engagement	0.121	0.073	-0.334	0.349	no	0.49

There are various ways to determine the significance of the path. When using 95% confidence intervals, the significance of the hypothesised relationship is determined by whether the value zero (0) falls between the upper and lower control limits (de Villiers, 2015; M. Kidd, personal communication, October 5, 2016). In Table 4.6 above, only one of the relationships, job resources and engagement, did not contain zero between the upper and lower control limit. The relationship (PLS path coefficient = 0.407) was therefore statistically significant.

For all of the other hypothesised paths, the value zero was contained between the upper and lower control limits at the 95% confidence interval. These hypothesised relationships therefore were all not significant. The relationships found to be not significant were engagement and burnout (PLS path coefficient = -0.463), job demands and burnout (PLS path coefficient = 0.493), job demands and engagement (PLS path coefficient = 0.069), job resources and burnout (PLS path coefficient = -0.263), personal resources and burnout (PLS path coefficient = -0.046) and personal resources and engagement (PLS path coefficient = 0.121).

#### 4.2.2.4 Interpreting the proposed hypotheses

The following section evaluates the hypotheses in relation to the path coefficient data collected. The path coefficient indicates the strength, direction and significance of each of the hypothesised relationships. A path or relationship was determined to be significant if the upper and lower control limits did not contain the value zero. This means that, where the upper and lower control limit did not contain zero for the hypothesised relationship, the relationship would be significant and therefore the null hypotheses would be rejected. Where the confidence interval does contain zero, the hypothesised relationship is considered to be not significant and therefore the null hypothesis will not be rejected. The data used to evaluate the hypotheses is contained in Table 4.6. A confidence interval of 95% was used

Given that PLS path regression analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between the variables, it was not possible to attempt to determine whether the model has statistical relevance within the population. The overarching substantive research hypotheses were translated into the following path-specific statistical hypotheses and the findings were as follows for the hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 1:** Engagement ( $\eta_1$ ) has a significant negative effect on burnout ( $\eta_2$ )

$$H_{01}: \beta_{21} = 0$$

$$H_{A1}: \beta_{21} < 0$$

The hypothesised negative relationship between engagement and burnout was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = -0.463). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between engagement and burnout was negative as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience less job burnout as they experience more work engagement.

**Hypothesis 2:** Job demands ( $\xi_1$ ) have a significant negative impact on engagement ( $\eta_1$ )

$$H_{02}: \gamma_{11} = 0$$

$$H_{A2}: \gamma_{11} < 0$$

The hypothesised negative relationship between job demands and engagement was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = 0.069). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between job demands and engagement was found to be positive. This may be as a result of increased job demands requiring additional effort on behalf of the trade union representative and therefore increased engagement with the work of the role. However, this does not mean that the trade union representative does not experience fatigue as a result (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2013). It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience more engagement as they experience more job demands.

**Hypothesis 3:** Job demands ( $\xi_1$ ) have a significant positive impact on burnout ( $\eta_2$ )

$$H_{03}: \gamma_{21} = 0$$

$$H_{A3}: \gamma_{21} > 0$$

The hypothesised positive relationship between job demands and burnout was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = 0.493). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between job demands and burnout was positive, as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience more job burnout as they experience more job demands.

**Hypothesis 4:** Job resources ( $\xi_2$ ) have a significant positive impact on engagement ( $\eta_1$ )

$$H_{04}: \gamma_{12} = 0$$

$$H_{A4}: \gamma_{12} > 0$$

The hypothesised positive relationship between job resources and engagement was found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = 0.407). This means that zero was not found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and the null hypothesis was rejected. The relationship between job resources and engagement was positive, as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience more engagement as they experience more job resources.

**Hypothesis 5:** Job resources ( $\xi_2$ ) have a significant negative impact on burnout ( $\eta_2$ )

$$H_{05}: \gamma_{22} = 0$$

$$H_{A5}: \gamma_{22} < 0$$

The hypothesised negative relationship between job resources and burnout was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = -0.267). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between job resources and burnout was negative, as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience less job burnout as they experience more job resources.

**Hypothesis 6:** Personal resources ( $\xi_3$ ) have a significant positive impact on engagement ( $\eta_1$ )

$$H_{06}: \gamma_{13} = 0$$

$$H_{A6}: \gamma_{13} > 0$$

The hypothesised positive relationship between personal resources and engagement was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = 0.121). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between personal resources and engagement was positive, as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience more engagement as they experience more personal resources.

**Hypothesis 7:** Personal resources ( $\xi_3$ ) have a significant negative impact on burnout ( $\eta_2$ )

$$H_{07}: \gamma_{23} = 0$$

$$H_{07}: \gamma_{23} < 0$$

The hypothesised negative relationship between personal resources and burnout was found to be statistically not significant (PLS path coefficient = -0.046). This means that zero was found between the upper and lower control limit using a 95% confidence interval and that the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationship between personal resources and burnout was negative, as hypothesised and as shown in previous research. It therefore can be concluded that trade union representatives will experience less job burnout as they experience more personal resources.

### 4.3 Graphic model

Figure 4.1 is a graphical representation of the statistical results. The graphical model is similar to a structural model, which would have been generated if SEM was used. The image depicts the hypothesised relationships between the exogenous latent variables and the endogenous latent variables. The numerical values indicated on the lines are the path coefficients. The scores also indicate the nature of the relationship between the latent variables (positive or negative). The only path determined to be significant using a 95% confidence interval was the relationship between job resources and engagement.

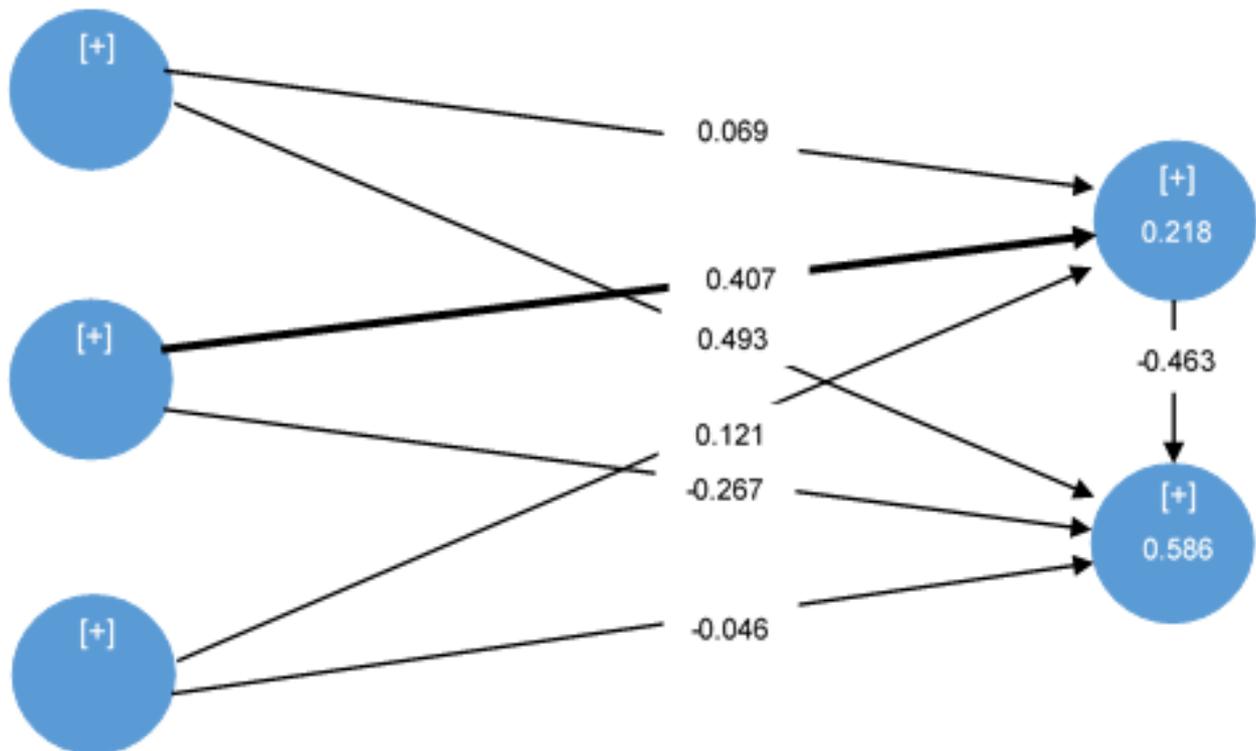


Figure 4.1 Graphic model

#### 4.4 Summary

In conclusion, Chapter 4 has reviewed the various statistical methods used to evaluate the sample data collected. PLS regression analysis and bootstrapping were used to evaluate the data. These methods were used instead of SEM due to the small sample size; SEM was the initial statistical analysis technique intended for use. The reliability of the measurement tools was evaluated and reported on, as well as the nature of the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous latent variables. All of the measures were valid and reliable, with the exception of the measure for burnout, which proved to be problematic. Lastly, the hypotheses were revisited to determine whether or not to reject the null hypothesis based on the significance of the PLS path regression analysis, using a 95% confidence interval. Of the hypothesised relationships between the latent variables, only one, that between job resources and engagement, was found to be significant. In the next chapter, limitations of the study will be discussed as well as recommendations for future studies of this nature. Chapter 5 considers the impact of the data analysis for trade unions and discusses potential interventions which can be implemented based.

## Chapter 5

### Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the implications of the study based on the statistical findings are discussed. Specific attention is paid to the implications of the statistically significant findings. Previous research is reviewed to determine possible actions for trade unions, and then interventions are discussed based on these findings. Further consideration is given to the challenges faced during the study, which may have resulted in limitations to the study and for the findings. Lastly, recommendations are discussed before concluding.

#### 5.2 Implications for trade unions

The following section is aimed at identifying the implications for trade unions based on the findings of the research. The implications of the two endogenous latent variables are considered (engagement and burnout). The R square values for engagement and burnout were 0.218 and 0.586 respectively. This means that 21.8% of the variance in engagement can be explained by the latent variables and 58.6% of the variance in burnout can be explained by the latent variables. It must be noted, however, that only one of the paths between the exogenous latent variables and endogenous latent variables was found to be statistically significant.

##### 5.2.1 Considerations for engagement and burnout

The hypothesised negative relationship between engagement and burnout was found to be not significant using a 95% confidence interval (PLS path regression = -0.463). However, the nature of the relationship was negative, as anticipated. When considering the p-value (p-value = 0.02), it was less than 0.05 and therefore may indicate significance. This is supported by the literature, which indicates a negative relationship between engagement and burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2008; Tims et al., 2013).

The only path that was significant was the relationship between job resources and engagement (PLS path regression = 0.407). Job resources were measured using the JDRS (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005). Job resources include growth opportunities, which refer to opportunities for future, further development for the individual within the job. Organisational support is the support the individual receives from his/her manager/supervisor, as well the nature and quality of information to which he/she has access. Control refers to the extent to which the individual is able to exercise his/her own discretion in his/her work, and rewards

refer to factors like benefits and remuneration linked to the job or position. Job insecurity refers to current feelings of insecurity with regard to job level and position, as well as future job prospects, and relationships refer to the extent to which the individual feels that he/she has supportive and connected relationships with peers and managers (Rothmann et al., 2006).

Given that the relationship between engagement and job resources was statistically significant, and that engagement is influenced positively by job resources, interventions should focus on the enhancement of this relationship. The enhancement of these factors would be the responsibility of the trade unions. These findings are supported by the literature, which shows that an increase in job resources results in an increase in engagement (Altunel, Kocak & Cankir, 2015; Schaufeli, Bakker & van Rhenen, 2009).

Job crafting is an intervention that is used by organisations to enable employees to redesign their work. In job crafting, the employee works independently to make the necessary changes to his/her role. Job crafting speaks to the element of control contained in job resources. This would allow trade union representatives to obtain a better fit between the job role and their own needs, abilities and preferences. Job crafting has been found to improve employee well-being, job satisfaction and engagement (Tims et al., 2013).

In order for something like job crafting to be effective, trade unions should also consider the impact of organisational support. Organisational support is essential, because by ensuring the quality of the relationship between the trade union representatives and the trade unions, and the quality of the information that trade union representatives are provided with, it can influence their ability to be engaged with their work as a trade union representative (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Trade unions need to consider how the role adds value to the trade union representatives by providing them with growth opportunities. By providing growth opportunities, the trade unions assist in fostering independence, which will reduce the trade union representatives' dependence on the trade union for help and guidance. This will create a greater sense of fulfilment and provide the trade union representatives with something in return for their service, as the union does not pay the representatives for their time and effort (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007).

Job insecurity is a difficult element to address, as a trade union representative is elected by the trade union members. Therefore the trade union does not have a direct influence in providing the trade union representative with job security. The likelihood of the trade union representative being re-elected is dependent on the trade union members' perception of the job done by the elected trade union representative during his/her term of office.

This study was unable to prove a significant relationship between engagement and burnout. Therefore by reviewing previous research, an impact can be made on burnout by enhancing job resources which in turn impacts engagement. Job resources may act as a buffer to the effects of job demands and therefore limit the impact of job demands on burnout (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007).

Despite the paths between the other variables being determined to be not significant, possible interventions can also be considered for these elements. In the literature, burnout is shown to be affected by job demands. An increase in burnout typically is associated with an increase in job demands. Job demands are the elements of the job that require a level of sustained social, cognitive and physical effort on behalf of the individual. However, even with high job demands, employees with sufficient job resources experience less burnout and more engagement (Bakker et al., 2007).

This study evaluated job demands, which were measured with the subscale overload. Overload refers to the amount of work an individual has, and the emotional and mental load placed on him/her (Jackson & Rothmann, 2005). Job demands therefore act as stressors for employees. Interventions to address job demands may include helping trade union representatives identify the stressors and teaching them techniques to manage job demands (Van Wingerden, Bakker & Derks, 2016). Van Wingerden et al. (2016) make use of an intervention lasting a day and a half that includes teaching employees how to manage job demands by declining work requests that they are not in a position to fulfil. This helps the employees feel more in control of their work (job resource), has a positive impact on engagement and reduces burnout.

Bakker (2015) conducted a study on the impact of motivation on public servants in their work role using a job demands-resources model. It was found that motivated employees are better able to cope with job demands and are more engaged (Bakker, 2015). For individuals who allow them to be nominated as trade union representatives, understanding the motivation for wanting to play that role may be important. The role of a trade union representative is voluntary and in most cases not remunerated. By understanding what motivates these individuals, trade unions could use interventions that address motivation. Addressing motivation may act as a buffer against the negative impact of job demands on burnout and enhance job resources and engagement.

Much like job resources, personal resources act as a buffer against the negative impact of job demands. This means that personal resources can limit feelings of burnout and increase engagement (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton, 2012; Görgens-Ekermans & Brand, 2012). Working to enhance emotional intelligence therefore may have a positive impact on the

burnout and engagement of trade union representatives. Group or individual interventions may be used to help develop the various forms of emotional intelligence, such as emotional management of others, emotional self-management, emotional expression, emotional awareness, emotional reasoning, emotional self-awareness and emotional self-control (Görgens-Ekermans & Brand, 2012). This can be done with existing trade union representatives, or be built into an orientation programme when the trade union representatives are elected (Görgens-Ekermans & Brand, 2012). Group intervention may be better suited to emotional intelligence relating to the ability to identify and manage emotions in others. Individual interventions may be better suited to helping people to develop an understanding of their own emotions and the management thereof.

### **5.2.2 Suggested interventions for trade unions**

Trade unions are confronted with having to maximise their resources on the ground, namely trade union representatives, in order to best serve their trade union members. This requires that their trade union representatives should perform at their best. Given that these individuals fulfil two roles, they would need the support of the union to be able fulfil their role effectively. This can be done by assisting the trade union representatives in a number of ways.

Trade unions should identify the resources required by the trade union representatives that would enable the latter to engage fully in their role. By identifying the necessary job resources, the trade unions will be able to better equip their representatives with the resources required to fulfil their role. This can be done by shadowing trade union representatives or conducting a survey that asks trade union representatives what their needs are in order to fulfil their role.

Trade unions may wish to allow the trade union representatives more latitude in the role by allowing them to engage in job crafting. This would mean that the trade union representatives have more control over how they go about doing things to achieve the required outcomes. This may even require the engagement of the trade union representatives' organisation and working with the organisation to provide the trade union representative with the latitude to manage his/her work for the organisation and union accordingly.

Organisational support may require an analysis of the quality of information (e.g. information pertaining to a disciplinary hearing in which the trade union representative must represent a member) provided to trade union representatives. The quality of the information will be determined by the user of the information (i.e. trade union representative). Therefore trade unions may want to consider surveying trade union representatives to determine how useful they find the current information shared with them and how the information is disseminated to them. By identifying the gaps in the information provided, trade unions can ensure such gaps

are filled in the future. The preferred method of communication and presentation of information may also affect the usefulness of the information.

Performing a skills audit on trade union representatives based on the required skills for the role can help inform the trade union of potential avenues where growth opportunities can be created for the trade union representatives. Unions may also consider connecting with the learning and development departments of the organisations for which the trade union representatives work. The existing infrastructure within the organisations may help the trade unions reach more of their representatives. The organisations will also benefit from having better equipped trade union representatives to engage with during negotiations and other interactions with the trade union via the trade union representative.

Workshops could be conducted with the trade union representatives to help them identify the various job demands with which they are faced, both as a trade union representative and as an employee of the organisation. Using the identified job demands, work overload management skills could be developed. Teaching the union representatives to say “no” to work that they are unable to manage and that deplete their resources would help them to avoid overcommitting and suffering from burnout.

Trade unions could consider reducing the number of job demands placed on the trade union representatives by the trade union. Finding ways to balance the job demands of the trade union with those of the organisation may assist the trade union representatives in managing the various demands. These could include negotiating time-off with the organisation for trade union representatives to attend to union matters during their usual hours of work, and therefore not demanding extra time from these employees as trade union representatives after hours.

Emotional intelligence interventions should seek to help the trade union representatives identify and manage their own emotions, as well as the emotions of the trade union members and of the management of the organisation with whom they interact. Role-plays, questionnaires and coaching are methods that can be used at both a group and individual level to enhance emotional intelligence.

All of the above interventions can be measured for impact and effectiveness. Trade unions could make use of baseline measures before the interventions and then repeat the exercise again after the intervention to determine whether or not the interventions have the intended effect.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

The first limitation discussed pertains to the sample population. The sample population for the study, namely trade union representatives, proved difficult to access. This was due to the

requirement of the trade union offices to first give permission for the researcher to access their members before the questionnaire could be distributed. Many trade unions were contacted, but very few responded. Of those that did respond, some declined the invitation to participate due to concerns about sharing their trade union representatives' details.

Furthermore, the number of trade unions that have trade union representatives with access to the internet is limited. Such trade unions are typically found in white collar environments. This reduced the number of trade union representatives to whom the researcher had access to conduct the study.

Of the unions that did participate, most requested to be in control of the questionnaire distribution. Therefore the questionnaire link was sent to the trade union correspondents, who were then responsible for the distribution of the link to their trade union representatives. This affected the researcher's ability to manage the process of sending reminders to the applicable trade union representatives. The typical trend was to experience a spike in the number of responses after a reminder was sent out via the trade union correspondent. There were a large number of "click-throughs" on the questionnaire link when compared to the total number completed. There were also a number of incomplete responses, with most participants dropping off after section B or C. This may indicate that the questionnaire was too long.

Another challenge was the limitations from the perspective of statistical analysis. Due to the small sample size, SEM could not be used to analyse the data and perform the relevant fit statistics. PLS path regression and bootstrapping were used to analyse the data instead. PLS cannot be used for fit statistics, however, and therefore the model has not yet been tested to determine the fit on the population.

A lack of discriminant validity was shown between the measure for burnout and job demands. This may be due to the fact that job demands only consisted of one indicator variable, namely work overload, which was also measured by the subscale exhaustion in the burnout questionnaire. This had an impact on the validity and reliability of the burnout and job demands scales.

Lastly, there is only limited literature on the burnout and engagement of trade union representatives. The literature is even more limited in the South African context. Most trade union studies focus on the evolution of trade unions in South Africa and the nature of the union presence in the workplace. Little attention is given to the role from a psychological perspective. The research on burnout and engagement in other occupations is far more extensive and provides a wider base for theorising. Trade unions as organisations, and the role of trade union representatives, are different from the typical research performed on the latent variables. Typically, the available research pertains to occupations and traditional work roles. The

generalisation of findings from other studies is therefore difficult due to the unique nature of the role and organisation.

#### **5.4 Recommendations and considerations for future studies**

Studies that consider the impact of job demands, job resources and personal resources on the engagement and burnout of trade union representatives may want to consider the following to try to overcome some the challenges faced.

The current study did not consider all the factors from a personal resources perspective that may have an impact on the engagement and burnout of trade union representatives as personality was not explored in the study. Given that there often is a link between personality traits and job roles/professions, personality may be a worthwhile area to explore in relation to trade union representatives.

Given the challenges experienced in contacting and connecting with trade unions, future studies may wish to involve unions in the proposed research before commencing with the study. This may help to overcome some of the challenges faced in relation to communication and access to willing participants.

Identifying potential participating trade unions before commencing with the study may also enable the researcher to gain access to a population of trade union representatives large enough to increase the chances of obtaining sufficient responses to be able to conduct SEM analysis on the data collected. Identifying and approaching national trade unions may be best.

The electronic questionnaire proved challenging. This was due to the lack of trade union representatives who met the criteria (viz. access to the internet and a valid email address). Paper and pencil questionnaires may work better. This would require the trade union's involvement in the data collection process. As trade union representatives are full-time employees, it might help to explore, with the union, the option of using their meetings to conduct the questionnaire and hence ensure a better response rate. This will give the trade union representatives time to complete the questionnaire.

The literature on personal resources is vast and there may be alternatives worth exploring in future studies. Personality may play a role in the ability of trade union representatives to handle the various factors that have an impact on their levels of engagement and burnout as trade union representatives. Most occupations have personality traits associated with them that enable the incumbents to perform better and cope better. In other words, the personality traits act as personal resources.

An alternative measurement tool may need to be considered for job demands due to the low discriminant validity shown between the measure for job demands and burnout in this study.

The current study does not consider the impact of biographical information, such as age, gender, ethnic group, experience as a trade union representative and highest educational qualification. Future studies may want to consider the impact of these factors on the burnout and engagement of trade union representatives.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Chapter 5 has considered the implications of the study for trade unions. By reviewing previous studies on job demands, job resources, personal resources (emotional intelligence), engagement and burnout, possible interventions were considered for trade unions in the future. These interventions may enable trade unions to enhance engagement by attending to job resources. Consideration was also given to the impact of the recommended interventions on burnout. The challenges experienced while conducting the study were discussed, as well the limitations of the study. Based on the identified challenges and the limitations, recommendations were made for future research on the same or similar subject matter.

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## Appendix A

### **The Impact of Job Demands and Job Resources on the Burnout and Engagement of Trade Union Representatives (Shop Stewards)**

#### **CONSENT FORM**

##### **What is this research project all about?**

The objective of the study is to determine whether the job demands and job resources of a trade union representative have an impact on the burnout and engagement of trade union representatives.

##### **Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?**

You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you currently fulfil the role of both a trade union representative as well as being a full time employee of your organisation.

##### **Who is doing the research?**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Melissa Middleton (MComm) from the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of the study will be contributing to my master's thesis.

##### **What will happen to me in this study?**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and your data will be collected anonymously. All data collected will be treated confidentially.

##### **Are there any negative consequences for me if I participate?**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this research study. The results of the study will be treated as confidential and respective employer and trade union will not have access to your questionnaire.

##### **Does this study hold any benefits for me?**

Your participation in the research will not directly benefit you. The results of the study may however assist unions and organisations alike in future to understand the complexities of the role of trade union representative and allow each of the respective parties to make informed decisions with regards to the role of trade union representative.

##### **Will anyone know I am in the study?**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with

you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of restricting access to the data to me and my supervisor, by storing the data on a password-protected computer and by only reporting aggregate statistics for the sample. The results of the study will be disseminated by means of an unrestricted electronic thesis and by means of an article published in an accredited scientific journal. Only aggregated statistics reflecting the proposed structural model's fit will be reported. The identity of the trade union and the participants will not be revealed in any of the publications.

**Who can I talk to about the study?**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Melissa Middleton (telephone number: 084 626 6944 or email: 16126858@sun.ac.za) and/or Mr Gawie Cillié (telephone number: 082 414 5712 or email: ggc@sun.ac.za) both from the Department of Industrial Psychology of Stellenbosch University.

Should you feel that you would like to talk a professional after completing the questionnaire you may contact Mrs Annerie Joubert, a registered clinical psychologist (telephone number: 021 976 4764 or email: ahjoubert@mweb.co.za).

**What if I do not want to do this?**

You may refuse to take part in the study. You may withdraw your consent at any time and stop participation without any negative consequences. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

**Do you understand what participating in this research study entails and are you willing to take part in it?**

Yes                      No

**Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?**

Yes                      No

**Biographical information**

Please complete the following:

**Gender**

	Male
	Female

**Age**

**Ethnic Group**

	African
	Coloured
	Indian
	White
	Other

**Highest level of education completed**

	Primary School
	High School (not matric)
	Matric
	Diploma
	Degree
	Honours

**Experience as a trade union representative**

	Less than 1 year
	1 to 2 years
	2 to 5 years
	More than 5 years

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Instructions:** Listed below is a set of statements. You are required to rate each statement on a scale. When rating the statements, please use your role as trade union representative as your frame of reference. Please react to each statement as honestly and truthfully as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Read each statement carefully and choose only ONE answer!**

**Please respond to all questions as follows:**

### Section A:

Please rate each of the following statements on the scale according to how often you experience or feel like the statement in your role as a trade union representative (shop steward). Please mark your response with an 'x' in the appropriate block (1= Never; 6 = Every day).

	0 Never	1 A few times per year	2 Once a month	3 A few times per month	4 Once a week	5 A few times per week	6 Every day
1. I feel emotionally drained by my work as a trade union representative.							
2. As a trade union representative, working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort.							
3. I feel like my work as a trade union representative is breaking me down.							
4. I feel frustrated by my work as a trade union representative.							
5. I feel I work too hard at my job as a trade union representative.							
6. It stresses me too much to work in direct contact with people in my role as trade union representative.							
7. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope in my role as a trade union representative.							

	0 Never	1 A few times per year	2 Once a month	3 A few times per month	4 Once a week	5 A few times per week	6 Every day
8. I feel I look after certain trade union members impersonally, as if they are objects.							
9. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day of work as a trade union representative.							
10. I have the impression that the trade union members make me responsible for some of their problems.							
11. I am at the end of my patience at the end of my work as a trade union representative.							
12. I really don't care about what happens to some of the trade union members.							
13. I have become more insensitive to people since I've been working as a trade union representative.							
14. I'm afraid that this job as a trade union representative is making me uncaring.							
15. I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job as a trade union representative.							
16. I feel full of energy as a trade union representative.							
17. I am easily able to understand what the trade union members feel.							
18. I look after the trade union members' problems very effectively.							
19. In my work as a trade union representative, I handle emotional problems very calmly.							

	0 Never	1 A few times per year	2 Once a month	3 A few times per month	4 Once a week	5 A few times per week	6 Every day
20. Through my work as a trade union representative, I feel that I have a positive influence on people.							
21. I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with the trade union members.							
22. I feel refreshed when I have been close to the trade union members while doing trade union representative work.							

**Section B:**

Please rate each of the following statements on the scale according to how often you experience or feel like the statement in your role as a trade union representative (shop steward). Please mark your response with an 'x' in the appropriate block (0 = Never; 6 = Every day).

	0 Never	1 A few times a year or less	2 Once a month or less	3 A few times a month	4 Once a week	5 A few times a week	6 Every day
1. At my work as a trade union representative, I feel bursting with energy.							
2. I find the work that I do as a trade union representative full of meaning and purpose.							
3. Time flies when I'm working as a trade union representative.							
4. At my job as a trade union representative, I feel strong and vigorous.							
5. I am enthusiastic about my job as a trade union representative.							
6. When I am working as a trade union representative, I forget everything else around me.							

	0 Never	1 A few times a year or less	2 Once a month or less	3 A few times a month	4 Once a week	5 A few times a week	6 Every day
7. My job as a trade union representative inspires me.							
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work as a trade union representative.							
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely as a trade union representative.							
10. I am proud of the work that I do as a trade union representative.							
11. I am immersed in my work as a trade union representative.							
12. I can continue working as a trade union representative for very long periods at a time.							
13. To me, my job as a trade union representative is challenging.							
14. I get carried away when I'm working as a trade union representative.							
15. At my job as a trade union representative I am very resilient, mentally.							
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job as a trade union representative.							
17. At my work as a trade union representative I always persevere, even when things do not go well.							

### Section C:

Please rate each of the following statements on the scale according to how often you experience or feel like the statement in your role as a trade union representative (shop steward). Please mark your response with an 'x' in the appropriate block (1 = Never; 4 = Always).

	<b>1 Never</b>	<b>2 Sometimes</b>	<b>3 Often</b>	<b>4 Always</b>
1. Do you have too much work to do as a trade union representative?				
2. Do you work under time pressure as a trade union representative?				
3. Do you find that you do not have enough work as a trade union representative?				
4. Do you have to be attentive to many things at the same time as a trade union representative?				
5. Do you have to give continuous attention to your work as a trade union representative?				
6. Do you have to remember many things in your work as a trade union representative?				
7. Are you confronted in your work as a trade union representative with things that affect you personally?				
8. Do you have contact with difficult people in your work as a trade union representative?				
9. Does your work as a trade union representative put you in emotionally upsetting situations?				
10. In your work as a trade union representative, do you repeatedly have to do the same things?				
11. Does your work as a trade union representative make sufficient demands on all your skills and capacities?				
12. Do you have enough variety in your work as a trade union representative?				
13. Does your job as a trade union representative offer you opportunities for personal growth and development?				
14. Does your work as a trade union representative give you the feeling that you can achieve something?				
15. Does your job as a trade union representative offer you the possibility of independent thought and action?				
16. Do you have freedom in carrying out your work activities as a trade union representative?				

	<b>1 Never</b>	<b>2 Sometimes</b>	<b>3 Often</b>	<b>4 Always</b>
17. Do you have influence in the planning of your work activities as a trade union representative?				
18. Can you participate in the decision about when a piece of work as a trade union representative must be completed?				
19. Can you count on your fellow trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers when you come across difficulties in your work as a trade union representative?				
20. If necessary, can you ask your fellow trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers for help?				
21. Do you get on well with your fellow trade union members?				
22. Can you count on your fellow trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers when you come across difficulties in your work as a trade union representative?				
23. Do you get on well with your local trade union officials/office bearers?				
24. In your work, do you feel appreciated by your fellow trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers?				
25. Do you know exactly what other trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers expect of you in your work as a trade union representative?				
26. Do you know exactly for what you are responsible as a trade union representative and which areas is not your responsibility?				
27. Do you know exactly what the local trade union officials/office bearers think of your performance as a trade union representative?				
28. Do you receive sufficient information on the purpose of your work as a trade union representative?				
29. Do you receive sufficient information on the results of your work as a trade union representative?				
30. Do the local trade union officials/office bearers inform you about how well you are doing your work as a trade union representative?				

	1 Never	2 Sometimes	3 Often	4 Always
31. Are you kept adequately up to-date about important issues within your trade union?				
32. Is the decision-making process of your trade union clear to you?				
33. Is it clear to you whom you should address within the trade union for specific problems?				
34. Can you discuss work problems as a trade union representative with your local trade union officials/office bearers?				
35. Can you participate in decisions about the nature of your work as a trade union representative?				
36. Do you have a direct influence on your trade union's decisions?				
37. Do you have contact with other trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers as part of your work as a trade union representative?				
38. Can you have a chat with trade union members during working hours?				
39. Do you find that you have enough contact with trade union members during working hours?				
40. Do you need to be more secure that you will still be working as a trade union representative in one year's time?				
41. Do you need to be more secure that you will keep your current job as a trade union representative in the next year?				
42. Do you need to be more secure that next year you will keep the same function level as currently?				
43. Does your trade union give you opportunities to attend training courses?				

### Section D:

Please rate each of the following statements on the scale according to how often you experience or feel like the statement in your role as a trade union representative (shop steward). Please mark your response with an 'x' in the appropriate block (1 = Almost never; 5 = Almost always).

	<b>1 Almost never</b>	<b>2 Seldom</b>	<b>3 Sometimes</b>	<b>4 Usually</b>	<b>5 Almost always</b>
1. I demonstrate to trade union members that I have considered their feelings in decisions I make in my work as a trade union representative.					
2. I fail to recognise how my feelings drive my behaviour in my work as a trade union representative.					
3. I respond to events that frustrate me as a trade union representative appropriately.					
4. I find it difficult to identify my feelings on issues in my work as a trade union representative.					
5. I express how I feel to the wrong people in my work as a trade union representative.					
6. I fail to handle stressful situations in my work as a trade union representative effectively.					
7. When someone upsets me in my work as a trade union representative I express how I feel effectively.					
8. As a trade union representative I consider the way trade union members may react to decisions when communicating them.					
9. When I get frustrated with something in my work as a trade union representative I discuss my frustration appropriately.					
10. As a trade union representative, when I am under stress I become impulsive.					
11. As a trade union representative I fail to identify the way people respond to me when building rapport.					
12. As a trade union representative I understand the things that make trade union members feel optimistic.					
13. I take criticism from trade union members and local trade union officials/offices bearers personally.					
14. As a trade union representative I am effective in helping trade union members feel positive at work.					
15. As a trade union representative I communicate decisions in a way that captures trade union members' attention.					

	1 Almost never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Usually	5 Almost always
16. I gain trade union members' and local trade union officials'/offices bearers' commitment to decisions I make in my work as a trade union representative.					
17. I appropriately communicate decisions to fellow trade union members and local trade union officials/office bearers.					
18. As a trade union representative I express how I feel at the appropriate time.					
19. As a trade union representative I understand what makes trade union members feel valued at work.					
20. I effectively deal with things that annoy me in my work as a trade union representative.					
21. I appropriately respond to fellow trade union members who frustrate me in my work as a trade union representative.					
22. As a trade union representative I find it difficult to identify the things that motivate trade union members at work.					
23. I fail to keep calm in difficult situations in my work as a trade union representative.					
24. I am aware of my mood state in my work as a trade union representative.					
25. I help trade union members deal with issues that cause them frustration at work.					
26. I remain focused when anxious about something in my work as a trade union representative.					
27. I fail to resolve emotional situations in my work as a trade union representative effectively.					
28. I am aware of how my feelings influence the decisions I make in my work as a trade union representative.					
29. I have trouble finding the right words to express how I feel in my work as a trade union representative.					
30. When upset at work as a trade union representative I still think clearly.					

	<b>1</b> <b>Almost</b> <b>never</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Seldom</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Sometimes</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Usually</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Almost</b> <b>always</b>
31. I don't know what to do or say when trade union members get upset.					

**Thank you for your participation.**

**END**