Practicing What We Preach: An Investigation of the Work-Based Well-Being of Applied Sport Psychologists

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Research into the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists has been neglected in the past. While some papers have appeared that investigate their experiences, these have not looked specifically at how these experiences may affect the individual. This thesis intends to change that, by not only examining the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists in general, but also by investigating the potential effects a large international multi-sport event (e.g. Olympic and/or Paralympic Games) may have on the practitioners themselves. The first empirical study focuses on the burnout and work engagement of sport psychologists from both academic and applied backgrounds, qualitative interviews were utilised to examine their experiences and their use of social support as a resource. Workaholic tendencies and the use of optimism, and its potential negative effects rounded out this qualitative study. A mixed-methods approach was taken in the second study. A longitudinal survey over four time-points (between May and November of 2016), measured the burnout and work engagement of applied sport psychologists who worked with athletes competing at the Games, along with optimism, mood and passion. Daily diaries also assessed for fluctuations in burnout and work engagement of applied practitioners who were on site at the Summer Olympic and/or Paralympic Games in Rio 2016. The main themes emerging from the research were 1) Burnout is commonly experienced by applied sport psychologists, despite positive engagement with their work. Sources of social support have an impact on the level of burnout experienced, 2) Workaholic tendencies were also common among the same practitioners, as was high levels of optimism, posing the
question, can there be a dark side to the optimism reported by these applied sport psychologists, 3) Depersonalisation was the dimension of burnout that had the largest significance over time in the year of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games, it was also related to the optimism and obsessive passion reported by these individuals. 4) Tentative support for the JD-R model was shown in fluctuations in daily burnout and work engagement in relation to resources such as social support and self-efficacy whilst practitioners were in attendance at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games, 5) While resources were available to the practitioners onsite, not every attendee utilised them, which had negative consequences for their well-being, 6) Burnout was experienced in the post Games period, often requiring a month (or more) for participants to feel fully recovered from their experiences. Finally, this thesis shows that there is a need for greater reflection regarding the well-being of practitioners, who can benefit from education and training regarding the protection and maintenance of their own mental health and well-being.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis and the work presented is my own. Results and findings have been generated as a result of my own original work and I have made do acknowledgement to the contributions of others. This work has not been submitted for academic award elsewhere.

Chapter 3 and 5 formed the basis of an original research article accepted for publication in Frontiers in Psychology, in September 2018 and December 2015 respectively, and below is a more detailed list of where the findings of this thesis have been presented to national and international audiences.

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Finally, to my family; Kiaran, the best big brother a girl could ever have (you get name checked in this but I’m not telling you when, so you’ll have to read it!) Mum, thank you for supporting
me every way you can. I appreciate it more than you will ever know. You don’t always appreciate what I do “at work” but I know it comes from a place of Love, and for that I’m so very thankful. Dad, I miss you every day, you were always my biggest supporter, and I hope I’m making you proud. I’m glad you got to see me start this journey, I’ve thought of you every step of the way. This is for you. xXx

Dedication

In memory of you, Dad
Edward Aidan “Mac” McCormack

“Do what makes you happy…”

18th Jan 1927 – 25th Jan 2015
Always in my thoughts, forever in my heart.
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List of Abbreviations

AASP Association of Applied Sport Psychologists
AIS Australian Institute of Sport
APA American Psychological Association
ASPASP Asian-South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology
BASES British Association of Sport and Exercise Science
BPS British Psychological Society
CBI Copenhagen Burnout Inventory
CBI* Counsellor Burnout Inventory
EE Emotional Exhaustion
FEPSAC European Federation of Sport Psychology
DP Depersonalisation
IIS Irish Institute of Sport
ISSP International Society of Sport Psychology
LOT-R Life Orientation Test Revised
MAWS Motivation at Work Scale
MBI Maslach Burnout Inventory
MBI-GS Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey
MBI-HS Maslach Burnout Inventory – Health
NHS National Health Service
PANAS Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
UWES Utrecht Work Engagement Scale
<table>
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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation:</td>
<td>The professional benchmark which has been achieved by an individual and certified by a regulatory society or organisation.</td>
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<td>Academia:</td>
<td>Describes an environment through which research, scholarship and education is pursued. Also seen as an environment for employment.</td>
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<td>Applied Sport Psychologist:</td>
<td>An individual who provides psychological support to athletes and teams, usually focusing on increasing performance.</td>
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<td>Athlete:</td>
<td>Describes and individual who is proficient at sport and other forms of physical exercise.</td>
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<td>Burnout:</td>
<td>The end-state of chronic stress. Can be symptomized by exhaustion (both emotional and physical), a distancing of oneself from activities and a decrease in accomplishment related to that activity. Burnout has repercussions associated with both physical and emotional health. It is not included in DSM-5 but can be found in ICD-10. It can be considered an end state process of the JD-R.</td>
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<td>Dual/Multiple Role:</td>
<td>Having or working under more than one role at a time i.e., lecturer and applied sport psychologist, or applied sport psychologist and team management.</td>
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<td>High Performance Sport Environment:</td>
<td>This term refers to the top end of sport, encapsulating any team or athlete that competes at an international or national level. It includes both Olympic and non-Olympic sports, as well as professional and amateur sports.</td>
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<td>Job Demands:</td>
<td>These are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of an individual’s job, examples include, high work pressure, unfavourable physical environment and</td>
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interactions with emotionally draining clients

**Job Resources:**
These are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of an individual’s job that function towards realising work goals, reduce job demands and their associated cognitive and emotional costs, and are seen to stimulate personal growth, learning and development.

**Multi-Sport Competition:**
Describes a competitive event that includes multiple athletes and sports, usually held over multiple days in the one location. Athletes are housed in villages with restricted access allowed by personnel.

**National Governing Body:**
Describes a sporting organisation which govern sports through regulation and sanctioning of the sport which they oversee. National governing bodies will often try to align their practices with those of the international body in charge of their sport.

**Optimism:**
A personal resource which indicates a person holds the belief that good things will happen to them in the future. It is associated with hopefulness and confidence in future success.

**Personal Resources:**
These are any positive self-evaluation, which is linked to resiliency, referring to an individual’s perceived ability to impact and control their environment positively.

**Social Support:**
This is the belief that one is cared for, loved, esteemed and valued and that help is available from other people in different situations.

**Sport Psychology:**
Sport psychology is a proficiency that uses psychological knowledge and skills to address optimal performance and well-being of athletes, developmental and social aspects of sports participation, and systemic issues associated with sports settings and organizations.
Third Level Institution: This refers to an institution of education that follows on from typical first two levels of education primary and secondary. Can constitute a college or university.

Work and Organisational Psychology/Industrial and Organisational psychology: Industrial and organisational (I/O) psychology studies and assesses individual, group and organizational dynamics in the workplace. Research is used to identify solutions to problems that improve the well-being and performance of organizations and their employees.

Work Engagement: A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. It can also be considered a motivational process as part of JD-R.

Workaholism: A term that can be used to describe an addiction to working. It is characterised by an obsession or compulsion to work. It can also be considered a motivational process as part of JD-R.
Chapter 1

Introduction

*The beginning is the most important part of the work*

- Plato
1.1 Introduction Outline

This Chapter will briefly describe the background which influenced the initiation of this programme of research and how it is connected to applied sport psychology. The concept of the applied sport psychologists as a performer will be briefly introduced, as well as the unique environment in which those working within this field have to operate. There will be a brief introduction to the concept of mental health and wellbeing, which will be followed by a section which highlights the need for research among Sport Psychologists. (See also Chapter 3).

It will highlight how the field of positive psychology (stepping away from the focus of pathology to the enhancement of an individual and their life) shaped my own understanding and approach to sport psychology, specifically encompassing the well-being of the individual in the pursuit of thriving. Thriving in this industry rather than just surviving has a personal meaning to me, both as a graduate student and practitioner.

The theoretical background to the research question will be introduced, following which the methodological issues will then be considered and finally, the aims and objectives of this thesis will be described.

1.2 My Connection to applied sport psychology

The home I grew up is filled with medals and trophies that were earned when my brother and I were children and teenagers. Photos of sporting endeavours and success adorn the walls, and photo albums filled with pictures and newspaper clippings take up room on the bookcases. We were encouraged from a young age to pursue sport and luckily grew up in a community that provided ample opportunity for competition. My parents were our biggest fans, driving us to training, practices and competitions, joining committees and chaperoning club members all around the country. We took part in sport because we enjoyed it, and part of that enjoyment came from the fact that we were somewhat successful. Our mastery experiences and successes
encouraged our beliefs and fostered our interest (Bandura, 1997). However, there was a difference between my older brother and me. He was more successful than I ever was. How could someone who had the exact same upbringing as me, share similar familial traits, have received the same level of encouragement, yet reach a higher level of sporting success than I was able to achieve? Unbeknownst to me, this was my first foray into the field of sport psychology. As a teenager, I hypothesised that it came down to the fact that he believed he could win races, whereas I didn’t. I became more and more interested in what made a person tick and chose to pursue a career in psychology, specifically the psychology of sport. Having completed a degree in Sport Science and Health in Dublin City University, an MSc. in Applied Sport and Exercise Psychology at the University of Wales, Bangor, and initiated my own career as a practitioner, when the opportunity arose to commence a PhD investigating the well-being of the psychologists themselves. The teenager in me wanted to find out again, what could give me the competitive edge. After all, the results of this research will not only benefit the profession, but it would benefit me as a neophyte practitioner sport psychologist.

1.3 Background into Research Question

Applied sport psychology as a profession warrants investigation. Especially into the work-based wellbeing of those who take employment from this sport science services sector. Applied sport psychologists often find themselves in the middle, bridging the gap between humanities and sciences, between the individual athletes as a person and as a performer. The may also find themselves in the middle in terms of support staff, not wanting to be seen as too close to management etc. in order not to be viewed as “one of them” by athletes, whilst also not wanting to be seen as too close to athletes should that risk alienation by management and support staff (see Gould, 1989). Applied sport psychologists may also find themselves providing their services, whether officially or not, to fellow support staff on the sport science
services team, increasing their workload and job demands, leaving them in a position of being unable to step away from their role (McCann, 2008). Having the biggest potential impact on the work-based well-being and specifically on job demands placed on the individual, as will be clarified in the forthcoming sections, this author views sport psychologists as performers themselves, striving to thrive and be effective in a high-performance environment. An environment which is unique to their colleagues in other caring professions. This environment primes them to experience negative work-based well-being, with high job demands which could result in feelings of burnout, and negative motivational approaches to work such as workaholism.

1.3.1 Sport psychologists as performers

A consistent goal for neophyte practitioner sport psychologists is working within the elite sporting environment (Owton, Bond, & Tod, 2014; Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, 2014). However, high performance sport environments are no longer viewed simply as supportive environments for athletes to thrive in (Grey-Thompson, 2017) as evidenced in the following example. British Cycling, which was the most successful high-performance team from Great Britain and Northern Ireland at the Rio Olympics in 2016 (i.e. a total tally of 12 medals in 2016) was beset by allegations of sexism and abuse. An independent report funded by British Cycling used the terms, ‘culture of fear’ and ‘toxic environment’ to describe the state of the sport at the highest levels (full report can be found here http://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2017/06/14/british-cycling). Unfortunately, sport psychologists are not immune to the stressors from such environments and their work practice may involve boundary-less work settings. For example, they are often hired to provide psychological support to athletes and may have the additional workload of supporting other support staff, coaches, and stakeholders (McDougall, Nesti, & Richardson, 2015). The high
performance environment is also not a one size fits all, “Sport psychology delivery and its place, role, function and/or influence may vary, and indeed be tested, depending on the sport, sporting culture, and the athletes who exist within a particular environment” (McDougall et al., 2015, p. 268), leading to an inability to dictate what can be expected and how to deal with situations when they occur. There is an expectation of outcome-based success that comes with working in an elite sporting environment which does not pertain across many other disciplines of psychology (e.g. educational psychology) or exist in other professions (Swanson & Kent, 2016). It is not unusual for the applied sport psychologist to feel misaligned with the prevailing culture that they work in (McDougall et al., 2015). In this high-performance environment, an applied sport psychologist may be required to change their style, context and even type of intervention, especially during high pressure international competitions (Arnold & Sarkar, 2014; Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, 2014). For example, applied sport psychologists can be held accountable for athletes’ performance outcomes, or things outside of their control (see section 7.5.1.2). There may also be the pressure to remain dynamic throughout, without being seen to defy the sporting culture around them (McDougall et al., 2015). High performing environments are not always high performing (Cruikshank & Collins, 2012). Indeed, the push towards high performance can sometimes be detrimental to the athletes at the heart of the process (see Eubank, 2016; Males, 2016 for commentaries). The incongruence between caring for the athlete and engaging in the culture that may not put the athlete first may plausibly result in an inner conflict for the psychologist, such as masking true emotion for the sake of their athletes, a known contributor to burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). As such, this research attempts to broaden the understanding of explanations and reasons for this occurrence.

1.3.2 A unique environment within which they perform

Sport psychology consultants can face similar issues as psychologists in other domains e.g. acting ethically, ensuring work-life balance, money management, job security and
confidentiality (Koocher & Keith-Speigel, 2008). Whilst arguably most closely aligned with military psychology, where practitioners operate in extremis and can face ethical issues such as multiple relationships, multiple roles and limited confidentiality (Frey, 2017), military personnel can be wary of accessing psychological support, similar to performance athletes (see Martin, Lavallee, Kellman & Page, 2004). Nevertheless, there are issues that are unique to sport psychology practice. In general, the field of sport psychology itself is relatively new in comparison to other psychological disciples. It pivots on the betterment of an individual, acting as forerunners for the goals of “growth and psychological enhancement” (Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012, p. 32). It is gaining popularity and momentum (Moran, 2004), but comes with an idiosyncratic environment. For instance, often psychologists working in the high-performance sport context fulfil multiple roles (i.e. performance advisor, counsellor, team manager, etc.) causing potential boundary issues (Hays, 2006). Consultations may be conducted in informal settings rather than in an office (McCann, 2008) and many consultants find themselves travelling, eating and sharing accommodation with athletes or management staff (Stapleton, Hankes, Hays, & Parham, 2010). Often an applied sport psychologist is required to hold down an academic role or alternative form of income whilst seeking additional applied experience (Clark et al., 2016), which would reduce the amount of free time in their possession. Applied sport psychologists believe the more time spent with athletes the better as it provokes a feeling of effective service (Lindsay, 2014). As a result, consultation may require flexible meeting times and durations (Mazzetti et al., 2014) and non-traditional service provision (e.g. during travel journey) potentially blurring the line between roles as well as between work and non-work settings (Sharp & Hodge, 2014). Andersen, Van Raalte and Brewer (2001) note that sport psychology consultation has evolved to not only include performance enhancement but also counselling/clinical psychology issues. Multiple roles of applied sport psychologists could potentially blur the boundary between work and non-work
time (Moran & Toner, 2017). Effective consulting at major competitions requires an applied sport psychologist to behave consistently, often engaging in self-regulatory behaviours. This precipitates a prime environment for overworking with practitioners never turning off even if it means contributing to the team in ways outside of their role (Simons & Andersen, 1995). While this environment can be seen as positively challenging and indeed result in increased meaning and accomplishment, it may also place high job demands on the applied sport psychologist, which if not counterbalanced with effective resources could lead to increased job strain (such as burnout) or maladaptive work motivations (such as workaholism), which could overall lead to decreased organisational outcomes (such as negatively impacting their own well-being, leading to a decreased ability to perform, as well as the potential negative effect on the well-being of the athletes which these psychologists work).

Applied sport psychologists are in many ways fortunate in that there is a large amount of autonomy that can come from their role, especially when it comes to designing their daily schedule (see Lindsay, 2014). However, this level of self-regulation could have the potential to be too freeing. The boundaryless environment that applied sport psychologists work in, the multiple roles they often end up embodying (McDougall, Nesti & Richardson, 2015) as well as the highly pressurised success-oriented environment coupled with their enthusiasm could lead to maladaptive working habits (Swanson & Kent, 2017). Which in turn could present as increased job strain and resultant decrease in performance (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017)

1.3.3 The dawn of professionalisation in sport psychology

While it could be argued that sport psychology had its first iteration over a century ago, (Norman Triplett is credited with publishing the first sport psychology research article in 1898; Schinke et al., 2018) the professionalisation of this field is only now being standardised. With this dawn of professionalisation, it is important that the issues surrounding training and
certification are carefully considered (Winter & Collins, 2016). The accreditation process fosters the understanding of key competencies needed for effective practice within this field (see Silva, 1984). Epstein and Hundert (2002) define competency as “habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflections in daily practice” (p.226). Accreditation is a professional benchmark, achieved and maintained by a regulatory non-governmental organisation or group (i.e. a society; Rooney & van Ostenberg, 1999). By receiving accreditation, an individual will have met a reasonable standard of theoretical and practical competence (Schinke et al., 2018). Organisations such as the Asian-South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP), the European Federation of Sport Psychology (FEPSAC), the Association for Applied Sport Psychologists (AASP) and the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) have begun the process of formal credentialing of sport psychologists (encompassing both psychologists and sport scientists). There is now a shift towards the view of standardising this accreditation process internationally (Schinke et al., 2018). It is recommended that the accreditation received by the individual fall in line with standards for psychological professions within the geographical area that they practice (Schinke et al., 2018). The standardisation of accreditation internationally, coupled with the increased standard of the accreditation process will bring a level of professionalism that has been missed in the field of sport psychology before. With the expectation of a high level of professionalism should also come the necessity to develop a broad knowledge in order to make sound professional judgement (Gardner, 1991). This knowledge cannot ignore the self-awareness of personal well-being and mental health. Promotion and protection of the well-being and mental health of applied sport psychologists is vital to the continual standardisation of professionalism within this industry. Therefore, this research comes at a pivotal moment in the progression of our industry. If we aim to protect the athletes and performers we aspire to work with, we must also protect ourselves.
1.3.4 Positive Psychology

My research began with the proposition that practitioners should thrive not just survive in the professional world (Pope & Vasquez, 2005). Instead of working oneself to the point of exhaustion, there ideally should be some semblance of a boundary between work and personal life to ensure an adaptive, healthy and sustainable functioning. Due to agile work practices (i.e. the ability to bring work home through email which are delivered to personal computers or smartphones), work-home interference may occur, however, this constant connection to the workplace and ability to respond to work matters instantly, should not be expected, nor should it be the norm. Applied psychologists endeavour to safeguard the mental health and well-being of athletes; but research into the attention they pay to their own mental health and work-based well-being has only just begun to be published (see Quartiloli et al., 2018). Questions around the work practices of applied sport psychologists, and how these may impact their work-based well-being may arise: Do applied sport psychologists experience burnout? If so, how, and what resources do they employ in contrast? Do applied sport psychologists engage in workaholic tendencies, if so, how? What resources, such as optimism, do they employ in contrast? Specifically, how may working with athletes in the preparation for and during the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games affect the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists? What are their recovery strategies during and after this pinnacle event?

The field of positive psychology provides a telling backdrop to this research project. Concepts, constructs and theories from this field shaped the early stages of this dissertation. Seligman (2000; 2011) has been an advocate for psychology to distance itself from a model focused on pathology (e.g. Can we identify and treat affective disorders?) to a broader view of mental health and well-being (e.g. How can we enable people to flourish?). Arguably, this focus on the enhancement of the individual has been integral to sport and performance psychology
for decades (Ayogi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen & Statler, 2012), but the focus which initiated this discipline of sport science was with regards to the enhancement of the person for *performance*, rather than of the person for their *well-being*, the first laboratory and research which studied the psychological aspect of sport was run by Coleman Griffin in 1925, focusing on athletic performance in University of Illinois (Benjamin & Barker, 2004). Even today, the American Psychological Association (APA) do not explicitly list well-being as an area covered by the work of sport psychologists (https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/sport-psychologists.aspx).

Originally, Seligman (2002) proposed that happiness could be achieved by focusing on one or more of the following; positive emotion, engagement and meaning, if an individual was low on one (i.e. low on positive emotion), they would still be able to achieve happiness through the pursuit of another (i.e. finding engagement in their lives). However, this model was extended to include positive relationships and accomplishment, with the overall goal to achieve well-being (Seligman, 2011). This shift highlighted the multi-dimensional nature of human flourishing, positing that well-being consists of nurturing one or more of the five elements: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment (PERMA; Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern & Seligman, 2011). While examining PERMA or a specific model of positive psychology goes beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that the PERMA model and positive psychology had a strong influence on this research, especially in the beginning stages of this doctoral research. Indeed, the author concurs with the proposition that sport psychology and positive psychology can be beneficial to each other (see Gould, 2002), sport can be a prime environment to actualise the enhancement of all five pillars of the PERMA model. Thus, investigating the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists materialised. According to Gould (2002), sport psychologists focus on enabling athletes to achieve peak performance, what we are unsure of is whether the applied sport psychologists are
enabling themselves to achieve the same, thus thriving in a unique and highly pressurised performance environment. Optimism, relationships (social support) and, engagement are all concepts which are embedded in positive psychology research and theory which resonated with me in the early iterations of the research question which focused on the positive work practices of applied sport psychologists. They also align with the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) and the Job Demands- Resources model (JD-R; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) which both propose that resources (e.g. social support and optimism), play an integral role in promoting an individual’s well-being.

This doctoral research begun as an enquiry into work-based well-being, specifically work engagement and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Soon the research came to encompass the concepts of workaholism, burnout and work engagement, as these constructs comprise the positive as well as the negative ends of the job commitment spectrum. The understanding being, that there must be a comprehension of the whole concept of work-based well-being, for in understanding the negative, the positive can be appreciated. Therefore, the research lens expanded to focus more closely burnout levels and workaholic tendencies of applied sport psychologists.

1.3.5 Mental health and well-being

In order to investigate well-being, there needs to be an understanding of mental health. It has been previously suggested that mental health exists on a single continuum, with mental illness occupying the opposite end to mental health (Keyes, 2005). The Surgeon General (US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) defines mental health as “...a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with people and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity” (p.4). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO; 2013), mental health is an integral part of
health and well-being, and can be defined as “…a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p. 38). Mental health can be dynamic, changing over time in accordance to changing experiences and situations (Keyes, Dhungra, & Simoes, 2010). According to Keyes’ (2002) mental health is more than just the presence or absence of emotional states and encompasses subjective well-being. In turn, subjective well-being is the perception and evaluation an individual has on their own life in terms of their own affective states and their social and psychological functioning; it includes measures of the presence and absence of functioning in life (Keyes, 2002). Mental well-being reflects feeling capable and competent, being able to handle normal levels of stress and being able to recover from difficult situations (Mental Health in Ireland, 2007), or the flexibility to deal with ups and downs. When an individual has poor mental well-being, this ability to deal with ups and downs can diminish, which can, in some cases contribute to poor mental health. Poor mental health and well-being can, coupled with workplace stressors can contribute to a range of physical illnesses, i.e. hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular problems. As well as contributing to burnout in employees, significantly reducing their abilities to meaningfully contribute to both their personal and professional lives (WHO, 2005).

It is recommended that along with the treatment and risk reduction approach of mental illness, the promotion and protection of mental health is paramount to overall well-being (Keyes et al., 2010). Therefore, it is proposed that the findings from this thesis can contribute to interventions and recommendations to promote thriving, positive mental health and well-being by protecting individuals from, for example, burnout. These findings may be particularly relevant in the development of practitioner guidelines for those about to embark in, or who are at the beginning stage of, their career as a sport psychologist: neophyte practitioners.
1.3.6 The need for this research within sport psychology

Applied sport psychologists are unlike any other field of practicing psychologists. There is no requirement for continual peer or supervisory support as there is in clinical or counselling psychology (Schinke et al., 2018). Indeed, the infancy of the field of professional sport psychology has resulted in its training models and consulting modes having recently only achieved consensus (Schinke et al., 2018). Nor is there a requirement to receive personal counselling whilst training as a sport psychologist, or throughout the span of the psychologists’ practicing career, both of which are necessary in the duration of training and practice of clinical or counselling psychologists (Psychological Society of Ireland [PSI], 2017). Yet, the modern applied sport psychologist often wears more than one hat (Anderson, Brewer & Van Raalte, 2001), as evidenced in the work of McCann (2008) all issues at a high-performance event, become performance issues. Yet clarity around roles is not always black and white (Gould et al., 1989). Many psychologists find themselves in the role of supporting large numbers of athletes, their coaches, other support staff and management, and potentially supporting teams across multiple sport disciplines, which in the case of an underperforming practitioner can impact negatively across a large number of clients (MacIntyre et al., 2017). Evidence points to the fact that applied sport psychologists may work under extreme conditions, operating on minimal sleep, boundaryless work environments and uncertainty around their roles or standing within the performance set up. Applied sport psychologists may feel isolated from fellow support staff (Gould et al., 1989) and have to work harder to prove their worth, with the stigma of being a problem-fixer hanging over their heads.

Compared to other psychologists working in extremis (e.g. military psychologists working in combat theatre, Parker et al., 2017), sport psychologists are, for example, not typically trained in mental health diagnosis and may be vulnerable to over identification,
transference and countertransference, which exacerbate the risks to their personal mental health and well-being (Tod & Anderson, 2012).

Finally, there is a lack of theoretically driven research surrounding the working climate and resultant well-being of applied sport psychologists. This thesis along with the research from Quartiroli, Knight, Etzel and Zakrajsek (2018), Arnold and Sarkar (2015) contributes to this field. Applying the findings of deeper research in this field should allow both future and incumbent applied sport psychologists to thrive, not just survive in the modern high-performance arena.

1.4 Theoretical Background

1.4.1 The Job Demands-Resources Model

Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) is a theoretical framework that aims to integrate stress research and motivation research (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The JD-R model can be seen to be an instrument “developed from the realm of” positive psychology (Borst, Kryen & Lako, 2017 p. 2). At the core of the model is the concept that all aspects of work can either be categorised as job demands or job resources which will in turn contribute either positively or negatively to an individuals’ work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, Borst, Kryen & Lako, 2017). One such model is the Conservation of Resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989; 2002). The COR specifically states that an individual will endeavour to acquire, sustain and protect their personal resources, which by definition are “those entities that either are centrally valued in their own right, or act as means to obtain centrally valued end” (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 307). The COR holds assumptions which align closely with the JD-R, namely that an individual will invest their resources in order to manage difficult conditions, thus preventing negative outcomes; individuals will also strive to protect and accumulate these resources, which in turn will generate further resources (Hobfoll, 2002). These approaches to resources may lead an
individual to positive outcomes such as better coping strategies and well-being. The COR and JD-R are similar in that they believe that resources provide a mediating effect on stressors and negative outcomes, as well as the motivational process of resource gain. While the JD-R contributes to the framework of this research it would be remiss to ignore the influence of the COR.

The JD-R model contends with the search for and understanding of the processes that lead not only to employee burnout, but also to employee engagement. It looks for the positive organisational behaviours that enable an employee to become engaged with their work, whilst also examining the stress related processes that can lead to burnout (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). The model assumes that every profession has its own specific risk factors which relate to job-based stress and are divided into two categories; job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), and uses both job demands, and job resources along with personal resources, to investigate health-impairment and motivation processes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In simple terms, this model examines the factors which can lead to negative health (i.e. burnout, depressive symptoms, exhaustion and illness) and the employees’ motivational approach to work (e.g. the positive work engagement or the negative workaholism). These processes will either contribute to positive organisational outcomes such as improved efficiency, dedication etc., or may lead to negative organisation outcomes such as absenteeism or employee turnover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). A simplified illustration of the processes can be found in Figure 1.1.
Figure 1.1. *The Job Demands-Resources Model. This figure illustrates the JD-R model from the work of Bakker and Demerouti (2017)*

Job demands are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of an individual’s job. In order to cope with demands, sustained cognitive and emotional effort or skills are required, as demands are associated with physical and/or psychological costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands can be, but are not limited to, high work pressure, unfavourable physical environment and interactions with emotionally draining clients (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For example, applied sport psychologists who work with athletes in high performance environments and travel to large, high pressure sporting competitions, such as the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games may routinely face all these demands (e.g. Hodge, 2010; McCann, 2008). Job demands are not always perceived as negative by the individual; however, they may turn into job stressors if they require high effort from an individual who has not had
the opportunity to adequately recover (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Chronic job demands, such as work overload, or continual emotional demands, can exhaust an individual’s physical and mental resources, leading to exhaustion and other health complications (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). While job demands are par for the course, an individual may interpret their demands different to their fellow worker (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thus, there is suggestion that this interpretation could affect the impact job demands have on job strain. Should an individual interpret their demands as challenging, the likelihood is that their resultant job strain will not be as severe as someone who interprets the same demand as a threat (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). While the interpretation of challenge vs hindrance demands is an additional facet of the JD-R model and its surrounding research, it was beyond the scope of this research thesis. However, is an interesting caveat to consider when interpreting results.

On the other hand, job resources refer to the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of an individual’s job that function towards realising work goals, reduce job demands and their associated cognitive and emotional costs, and are seen to stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Whilst important in their own right, resources also play a large role in dealing with and, reducing job demands placed on an individual (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Social support is a job resource known for its role in alleviating burnout in the workplace and more specifically in applied sport psychologists (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; McCormack, MacIntyre, O’Shea, Campbell, & Igou, 2015). While originally concerned with only job resources, the JD-R model has been expanded to include personal resources within the model (Bakker et al., 2014). Resources can be personal (i.e. self-efficacy, resilience, recovery), or job based (i.e. social support, opportunities for development, interaction with mentors) (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). A personal resource is any positive self-evaluation, which is
linked to resiliency, referring to an individual’s perceived ability to impact and control their environment positively (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). Personal resources, such as optimism and self-efficacy can play a similar role as job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The more personal resources an individual possesses, the higher their positive self-regard, which results in greater agreement between self and intrinsic goal pursuit (Bakker et al., 2014). Goal attainment will in turn, trigger higher performance and greater satisfaction for the individual (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). The COR; (Hobfoll, 2001) states that a prime human motivator is towards the accumulation and maintenance of resources, therefore resources can be seen as a catalyst to achievement or protection of valued resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Possessing these resources buffers the ill effects of job demands on strain of an individual (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). There is a reciprocal relationship between both types of resources. That is “job resources can predict personal resources and work engagement; personal resources and work engagement in turn, predict job resources” (Bakker et al., 2014, p. 401).

The first two empirical chapters, Chapters 5 and 6, seek to examine these relationships. Chapter 5 asks what role the job resources of social support may have on the experiences of burnout among a cohort of applied sport psychologists, especially those who may possess multiple working roles, such as applied practitioner and/or academic teacher and researcher. This chapter sought to gain clarity on how social support was utilised and from what sources it was received, as well as gaining clarity on the experiences and influences of burnout on the individuals in question.

Chapter 6 also aimed to investigate the role of optimism and how it may affect an individual’s experience of workaholic tendencies. In terms of the JD-R model, the personal resource of optimism should detract from negative motivational practices. Thus, workaholic
tendencies were examined among this cohort and examined alongside their levels of optimism. According to the JD-R, workaholic tendencies should be lowered due to the presence of a positive personal resource of optimism.

There is another construct which can contribute to work-based well-being, and that is recovery. The recovery strategies employed by the individual could have a positive effect on their well-being (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Recovery, in the form of psychological detachment, has been shown to have a mediatory role in the relationship between job demands and work fatigue, and mastery has been shown to partially mediate job resources and work engagement (Kinnunen et al., 2011). These relationships will be now expanded upon.

### 1.4.2 The Job Demands Resources Recovery Model

The Job Demands Resources Recovery (JD-R-R) Model was conceptualised by Kinnunen et al. (2011) as a revision to the original JD-R model. Parallel with the assumptions of the JD-R, the authors hypothesised that job demands are likely to inhibit recovery and therefore promote fatigue (i.e. the process of impairing health). While job resources will facilitate recovery which in turn will encourage work engagement (i.e. the process of motivation) (Kinnunen et al., 2011). Applied sport psychologists can find themselves working for periods of extensive duration whilst at the games (see Chapters 5 and 7). Therefore, it is pertinent to examine the ability of the applied sport psychologists who attended the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games in Rio 2016 to recover.

Recovery is seen as the process of returning to the previous level of functioning and decreasing the level of strain (Craig & Cooper, 1992). When considering the COR (Hobfoll, 1989), recovery can also be viewed as the process that allows an individual to replenish their resources (Kinnunen et al., 2011; Meijman & Mulder, 1998). If recovery is insufficient, the individual will have to put in extra effort at work in order to get through normal tasks. Which
in turn could lead to health deterioration and absence related to sickness in the future due to the added strain on that individual (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Recovery experiences have the ability to reduce the effect of threats related to well-being and the associated physiological and psychological cost of this additional strain, they are a process that can protect and foster personal resources (Kinnunen et al., 2011).

According to Sonnentag and Fritz (2007), recovery experiences are strategies through which individuals will attempt to restore their resources and maintain well-being in spite of stressful situations. Recovery experiences include psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery and, control during leisure time. These recovery experiences relate to various health and well-being benefits. Psychological detachment, where an individual disengages mentally from work during their non-work time, is negatively related to health complaints, emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms, need for recovery and sleep problems (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Psychological detachment is positively related to better mood and less fatigue at bedtime in the evening and the next morning (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008). Relaxation, which is a state distinguished by increased positive affect and decreased levels of sympathetic activation (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), can be achieved by purposefully engaging in meditation or progressive muscular relaxation, or less deliberately through reading a book, taking a walk or listening to music (Kinnunen et al., 2011). Relaxation is negatively related to health problems, emotional exhaustion, the need for recovery and sleep problems (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Moreover, it is positively related to mood in the morning (Sonnentag et al., 2008).

Mastery refers to the pursuit of non-work activities, specifically learning a new skill (e.g. language or sport) that provides the individual with a challenge or an opportunity to develop (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Mastery enables the individual
to build additional internal or personal resources, i.e. skills, competencies, self-efficacy, and positive mood (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Mastery is negatively related to emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms and the need for recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Individuals who engage in mastery in the evening, will have higher positive affect in the morning (Sonnentag et al., 2008). Finally, control is explained as the ability to have control over decisions, such as the choice of what activity to pursue, when to pursue it and how (Kinnunen et al., 2011). By exerting this control an individual has the ability to increase their self-efficacy and feelings of competence (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Therefore, it may be an external resource which can promote recovery from job strain and well-being (Kinnunen et al., 2011). Generally, well-being increases when individuals feel control over important life domains (Bandura, 1997). Control also negatively relates to health complaints, emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms, the need for recover, and sleep problems. It positively relates to life satisfaction (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007).

Job demands can be seen as inhibitory towards recovery, whereas job resources can be seen to facilitate an individual’s recovery (Demerouti, Bakker, Geurts, & Taris, 2009). Job demands (e.g. time pressure, role ambiguity, situational constraint and hours of overtime) were found to be negatively related to detachment and control during leisure time. Additionally, time constraints inhibit relaxation (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). High job demands can increase the risk of rumination about work during non-work times (see Cropley & Millward Purvis, 2003), which can lead to difficulty with psychological detachment, problems in relaxation and negative affect related to work (Kinnunen et al., 2011) and therefore, will maintain fatigue from work (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). It is also proposed that increased job demands (i.e. high workload) can decrease the opportunity for mastery experiences by exhausting energy and effort required to pursue them. They can also decrease the amount of control over leisure time by simply
decreasing leisure time or increasing cognitive occupancy with work. Therefore, resources such as self-esteem, competence and mood may not be restored, which can result in increased fatigue (Kinnunen et al., 2011). High job demands may also increase fatigue whilst at work, by depleting resources during the work (Sonnentag, Kuttler & Fritz., 2010). On the other hand, increased job resources can lead to an increase in personal or internal resources, aiding learning and decision-making. Thus, resulting in an increase in leisure time, where an individual will be able to pursue mastery with a perceived increase in control over leisure time. This will lead to the creation and restoration of resources, encouraging recovery and increasing motivation in the form of work engagement (Kinnunen et al., 2011).

Kinnunen et al. (2011) found that psychological detachment fully mediates the negative effects of job demands on fatigue. The proposed reasoning behind this is that an individual may first have to be able to detach from one’s job before they can fully engage in relaxation strategies during leisure time, or even be able to engage in restful sleep. An individual might be unable to do this due to increased rumination (see Cropley and Millward Purvis, 2003). Thus, disabling them to reap the positive effects on well-being, and increased fatigue. Kinnunen et al. (2011) also found mastery to be a partial mediator to the effect of job resources on work engagement. Resources such as job control, social and supervisor support can encourage mastery experiences and therefore increase work engagement. As the Olympic and Paralympic Games are known as a period of high workload (see Hodge, 2010; McCann, 2008) this research prompted the examination of the ability for applied sport psychologists to psychologically detach through sleep, and mastery through exercise.

Recovery contributes to work-based well-being by mediating the relationship between job strain and negative outcomes, such as fatigue and ultimately burnout. By psychologically detaching from work an individual can essentially leave their stressors behind and return feeling
psychologically refreshed the following day. Mastery (i.e. additional skill acquisition) can increase an individual’s work engagement through partial mediation by increasing resources, enabling the individual to access more tools in order to meet the demands of their jobs. The processes of the JD-R which recovery can mediate will be explored in the following sections.

1.5 Mixed-Methods

Chapter 4 provides a detailed background to the mixed-methods approach of this thesis. Qualitative methods were chosen in order to provide a rich contextual insight into the experiences of applied sport psychologists. Qualitative research is concerned with processes, rather than outcomes or products (Atieno, 2009), therefore this approach enables an interpretation of the lived experienced of these applied sport psychologists, without discounting any elements which may contribute to the research. Qualitative research also allows for ideographic enquiry, thus enabling the research to delve into the experiences of the individuals concerned. Applied sport psychologists are also encouraged to participate in self-reflection (see Anderson, Knowles & Gilbourne, 2004), therefore they provide ideal candidates for this style of research. The qualitative research comprised one-on-one semi-structured interviews with applied sport psychologists. A specific methodological tool, the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) enabled the exploration of lived experiences, with participants’ recalling pertinent events from throughout their careers.

Quantitative research can be viewed as confirmatory or deductive (Atieno, 2009). Another benefit of quantitative research is that it focuses on quantifying social behaviour, looking for patterns, rather than just finding them (Rahman, 2017). Thus, enabling to expand on the previous findings, and attempting to measure changes in the work-based well-being of this this cohort. Quantitative research comprised online survey inventories that measured work-based well-being over time in the year of an Olympics. A daily online diary study approach was
employed to capture daily variations in well-being for practitioners in situ at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games, which was complimented by semi-structured interviews, facilitating methodological triangulation.

1.6 Aims and Outline of the Thesis

The overall aim of this thesis was to assess the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. This was achieved through investigating the burnout, work engagement and workaholic tendencies among the professionals in this field, whilst also examining the role of optimism and use of social support as resources.

1.6.1 The Research Questions

The research contained within this thesis simply asks the following:

- What is the general state of work-based well-being among applied sport psychologists?
- What is the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout among applied psychologists?
- What impact does working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games have on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists?

1.6.2 Objectives

(i) To review work engagement and workaholism in the workplace, as well as the use of social support and optimism as resources (Chapter 2).

(ii) To systematically review the prevalence of burnout among applied psychologists (Chapter 3).

(iii) To conduct theoretically driven research into the phenomenon of applied sport psychologists work-based well-being.
(iv) To investigate the burnout, work engagement, and workaholic tendencies of applied sport psychologists through a qualitative methodology (Chapters 5 and 6).

(v) To qualitatively investigate the use of social support and optimism as resources by applied sport psychologists (Chapters 5 and 6).

(vi) To examine the impact of a large international multi-sport competition on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists (Chapter 7).

(vii) To provide recommendations for sport psychology practitioners focusing on augmenting strategies in order to protect work-based well-being through reflection, supervision and education (Chapter 8).

1.6.3 Chapter structure

Chapter 2:

This chapter will delve into the literature surrounding the key constructs of employee well-being. Outlines of work engagement and workaholism will be presented, concluding with the discussion of the resources of social support and optimism.

Chapter 3:

This chapter presents a systematic literature review pertaining to the prevalence and antecedents of burnout in applied psychologists which influences the research in this thesis. This review was accepted for publication in Frontiers in Psychology: Clinical and Health Psychology.

Chapter 4:

The methodological considerations encompass the research philosophy through which the investigations were conducted, as well as the various methodologies utilised. A mixed-method approach will be explained and data collection processes for both studies will be discussed.
Chapter 5:

This chapter showcases findings from the first empirical study of this research, Study 1, and was also accepted for publication as part of the research topic Better Together: A Joined-Up Psychological Approach to Health, Well-Being, and Rehabilitation. It outlines the influence of social support on applied support psychologists’ burnout and work engagement.

Chapter 6:

Chapter 6, also as a part of the empirical research of Study 1, focuses on the impact of high levels of optimism on workaholic tendencies. Exploring the dark side of optimism through optimism bias, planning fallacy, and unrealistic optimism.

Chapter 7:

Study 2 is presented in this final empirical research chapter. It employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the impact of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games on the well-being of applied sport psychologists through two parts. Part A is a longitudinal study spanning approximately six months of 2016. Part B contains retrospective qualitative interviews of a sample of applied sport psychology practitioners who attended the Games in Rio, in order to present rich in-depth findings.

Chapter 8:

Finally, this discussion chapter summaries the results of this thesis, presenting tentative recommendations on the self-care and well-being practices of applied sport psychologists as well as highlighting opportunities for further research in the area.
Chapter 2

Key Constructs of Employee Well-Being

“We are embedding health and well-being at the heart of our business strategy because our people are our greatest asset, and we recognize that a healthy, happy and committed workforce is vital to our business success.”

–Alex Gourlay, Co-Chief Operating Officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.
2.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight constructs which will enhance our understanding of what can contribute to an applied sport psychologist’s work-based well-being. The constructs which are focused on have been sought from general work and organisational psychology due to the shortage of literature specifically concerned with the work-based well-being of this particular cohort. The theoretical underpinning which informs the subsequent research questions has been explained in the previous chapter. Constructs which exemplify end-state processes of the jobs demands-resources model will be explained, such as workaholism and work engagement (as the motivational processes of the JD-R). This chapter will introduce burnout (the end state health process of the JD-R) which will be given a deeper focus of attention in Chapter 3. Resources that contribute to these models, such as optimism and social support will also be discussed, providing a sound conceptual and theoretical foundation for the studies in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

2.2 Work Engagement

2.2.1. What is work engagement?

Work engagement is considered the end-state of the motivational process of the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The JD-R model posits that the experience of work engagement is the antipode of burnout (e.g. Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Kahn (1990) first conceptualised work engagement as “the harnessing of organisational members’ selves to their work roles” (p.694). Work engagement occurs when an individual is fully connected physically, cognitively and emotionally to their job roles (Kahn, 1990). For Macey and Schneider (2008), work engagement can describe the extent to which an individual is committed to, involved with, enthusiastic, and passionate about their work. However, according to a large international survey, where data were collected from 85,000 employees from 16 different countries, only 14% of employees were considered highly engaged, 24% of employees
worldwide were found to be disengaged, and the remaining 62% made up the middle ground and were found to be moderately engaged. Work engagement has positive ramifications for the individual, their team and the organisation (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Therefore, there are benefits to be gained from understanding and promoting work engagement among all employees. Work engagement researchers most often use the *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) to measure levels of work engagement among employees, a self-report instrument which has been validated in multiple languages across multiple industries (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011).

For some researchers, work engagement is seen as the antithesis of burnout, insofar as if an individual exhibits low burnout as recorded by the MBI (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996), they can be considered engaged in their work (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Work engagement can be characterised by energy, involvement, and efficacy, and in this school of thought, low levels of exhaustion equate to high levels of vigour (energy), low levels of depersonalisation can equate to high levels of dedication (involvement), and low levels of personal accomplishment would equal low levels of efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Alternatively, work engagement has been defined as its own construct, which is negatively related to burnout (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Tarris, 2008). Work engagement represents a state of mind characterized by feelings of vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker., 2002). Vigour is characterized by high levels of energy and resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Finally, absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties in detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002).
Vigour and dedication are considered direct opposites of the exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout (Bakker et al., 2014). Exhaustion and vigour are thought to comprise the anchor points of the continuum which can be labelled *energy*, whereas cynicism and dedication compose the continuum which can be labelled *identification* (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006). This can explain why engagement is characterised by high levels of energy and strong identification with one’s work, whereas burnout is characterised as low levels of energy and poor identification with work (Demerouti & Bakker, 2008). The third dimension of work engagement, *absorption*, was included following in-depth interviews conducted by Schaufeli, Taris, Le Blanc, Peeters, Bakker, & De Jonge (2001) whilst investigating if work can make one happy.

### 2.2.2 Antecedents of work engagement

Work engagement can also be defined in terms of high levels of energy and high levels of work involvement (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008). Prior research has consistently supported the premise that job and personal resources are both important predictors of work engagement (Bakker Albrecht & Leiter, 2010). Moreover, work engagement is fostered when job and personal resources meet the demands faced in the job (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Job resources have been shown to have a strong positive relationship with work engagement (see meta-analysis by Halbesleben, 2010). Resources such as social support have been shown to consistently relate positively to increased work engagement (Bakker et al., 2011). Although high workload and multiple roles are associated with burnout as discussed above, there are situations when the negative effects of such job demands may be mitigated, and engagement can still be experienced. For example, Hakanen, Schaufeli and Ahola (2008) demonstrated that dentists’ engagement was not affected by high workload when they experienced high skill variety. However, when they experienced low skill variety, engagement decreased as a function of increasing qualitative workload. Thus, engagement may contribute the upward spirals of
resource gain (Salanova, Schaufeli., Xanthopoulou, & Bakker., 2010), which can buffer against the negative spiral of resource loss that can lead to burnout.

More specifically, work environments in which resources are in abundance will foster work engagement, these resources will become more salient and gain motivational potential when job demands are particularly high (Bakker, 2011; Bakker et al., 2011). During times of high challenge an individual is more likely to experience work engagement if they themselves possess sufficient job and personal resources which enable them to deal with these challenges (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013; Tadic et al., 2015). Social support fosters experiences of work engagement, whilst work engaged employees will also experience superior social relationships. Research has suggested that the work engagement of the employee is improved when job-related feedback from supervisors and managers focuses on strengths rather than weaknesses of employees (Altridge, 2009). A meta-analysis conducted by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) found that low levels of perceived organisational support predicted increased job strain in a review of 73 research studies. Among schoolteachers in Finland, work engagement increased when the organisation offered more support and increased job resources, such as supervisor support, positive appreciation and a collaborate organisational climate (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Providing employees with the relevant kinds of job resources can contribute to the protections of the individual from stressful job demands and inferior working conditions, which can also result in increased work engagement (Altridge, 2009). Personal resources also can independently predict work engagement (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Employees who are high in optimism and self-efficacy are able to mobilise their job resources and are generally more engaged in their work (Bakker, 2011), these personal resources also enable an individual to cope with the daily demands in organisational life (Bakker et al., 2011).
2.2.3 Consequences of work engagement

The positive consequences of work engagement influence factors across many levels. Those who are engaged in their work are more inclined to experience improved health, life satisfaction and job performance (Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kamiyama & Kawakami, 2015). There is a relatively strong relationship with both well-being and job performance, which contributes to the motivational role of work engagement (Shimazu, Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kubota & Kawakami, 2012). It is proposed that work engaged employees exhibit better performance due to the following reasons: they often experience positive emotions such as joy, happiness and enthusiasm; they experience better psychological and physiological health; they can create their own job and personal resources and; they may transfer their engagement to others (Bakker, et al, 2011). The positive emotions that an individual will exhibit broadens their thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson, 2003). The improved health of the individual will mean that they will have the capacity to use all of their mental and physical resources, the individuals who are able to create their own resources are consequently more able to deal with job demands and achieve their work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Work engagement has also been shown to coincide with increased creativity, task performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and client satisfaction (Bakker et al., 2014). Employees who are engaged with their work receive higher ratings from colleagues in terms of in-role and extra-role performance (Schaufeli, Taris & Bakker, 2006). These levels of work engagement are also thought to be contagious, as performance is often a group effort within an organisation, the engagement will crossover to other group members (Bakker et al., 2006; Gutermann, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Boer, Born & Voelpel, 2017; Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018). Unsurprisingly, engagement results in increased team performance (Costa, Passon & Bakker, 2015; Tims et al., 2013), and consequently engaged employees are also more inclined to help their colleagues (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). The dedication and focus displayed by engaged
employees is thought to result in increased task performance (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011) and better financial returns (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). The openness to new ideas results in more creative ideas, where an individual is more likely to be innovative and entrepreneurial (Gawke et al., Gorgievski, & Bakker, 2017; Orth & Volmer, 2017).

Accumulating evidence demonstrates strong support for the proposition that highly engaged employees are much less likely to experience burnout, and even experience fatigue in a different way (Schaufeli et al., 2006). “Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities, and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their jobs” (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702). Even though an engaged worker may feel tired after a day’s work, they will interpret this tiredness as pleasant because of its association with positive accomplishment (Bakker et al., 2011). Work engagement has been demonstrated to be positively related to subjective well-being (Bakker et al., 2011). Work engagement has been shown to be related to decreases in ill-health, and an increase in job performance and life-satisfaction (Shimazu et al., 2015).

2.2.4 Current research into work engagement

Research into work engagement traditionally took the between-persons approach, focusing on the antecedents, environmental influences and the consequences of work engagement for the employee (Bakker, 2011). Usually, this research incorporates the reasons as to why work engagement transpires, i.e. working conditions and the resources available to the individual (e.g. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). In the last decade, studies have turned to a within-person approach, choosing to study the potential fluctuations in measures of work engagement from day to day (Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). This research has shown that work engagement can fluctuate within persons across time and situations, be they days, weeks or months (Bakker, 2014; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Sonnentag
et al., 2010). Daily work engagement is isomorphic, meaning its manifestations are usually the same when it is a fluctuating phenomenon versus when it is a general phenomenon (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). As such, daily levels of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) may fluctuate as a function of daily demands, resources and proactive behaviours (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2009), when investigating the daily levels of work engagement among fast food restaurant workers, were able to make a compelling case for performance prediction based on the daily level of work engagement. Employees were also found to be more engaged on days characterised by increased job resources (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Employees cannot always be engaged; opportunities for recovery and moments of absence are needed (Bakker, 2011). Ultimately work engagement is a significant indicator of occupational well-being for the employee and organisation alike (Bakker, 2011).

2.3 Workaholism

2.3.1 What is workaholism

Workaholism is a term that can be used to describe an addiction to working (Ng et al., 2007; Porter & Kakabadse, 2006; Robinson, 2000), a behaviour pattern (Scott, Moore & Miceli, 1997) or a syndrome (Aziz & Zickar, 2006). First coined by Oates in 1971, a workaholic is someone whose need to work has become so excessive that it creates a tangible negative impact on an individual’s health and happiness, interpersonal relations and functioning (Clark, Michel, Zhdanova, Pui & Baltes, 2016). For many, workaholism is simply an addiction. Addiction involves a compulsion and preoccupation with a given behaviour, loss of self-control, and continual engagement in the behaviour despite the negative consequences that result in the engagement of this behaviour (Smith & Seymour, 2004; Sussman & Sussman, 2011). Previous research supports each of these characteristics of workaholism (e.g. Ng et al., 2007; Robinson, 1998; Scott et al., 1997). Workaholism and workaholic behaviours involve a preoccupation and compulsion regarding one's work (Ng et al., 2007; Spence & Robins, 1992; Sussman, 2012).
Workaholics are said to be obsessed with work which stems from an inner compulsion or a need to work that cannot be resisted or controlled (e.g. Oates, 1971; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Spence & Robins, 1992). Clark et al (2016), in their meta-analysis consolidated all of the views of workaholism and found that the commonality throughout was the concept of working compulsively and excessively, which confirm the two facets of workaholism as identified by Scaufeli et al. (2009).

Considered one of the most prevalent addictions in the Westernised countries, workaholism manifests itself in employees working hard, often into the evenings and during weekends (Molino, Cortese & Ghislieri, 2018). The scale of workaholism in Westernised culture could be explained by the value placed on success and accomplishment, where work is a central aspect of life, essential to being socially accepted (Molino et al., 2018). These societies often generally appreciate the characteristics of workaholics, to the extent that some authors believe that society itself facilitates and enhances these workaholic tendencies (Lavanco & Milio, 2006).

Several decades of research have investigated how this tendency to work excessively hard (e.g. over 11 hours per day) affects an individual’s well-being or ill-being (Balducci, Avanzi, & Fracaroli, 2016; Spence & Robins, 1992; Sussman, 2012; Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman 2007; van der Hulst, 2003). Workaholics work longer and harder than others, which can be measured in more than just the overall hours which the work (Clark et al., 2016). Workaholics may miss family events, work evenings and weekends and consistently bring work home with them (Clark et al., 2016). Even more tellingly, a workaholic may blur the line between work time and non-work time by choosing recreational activities that advance or compliment their work (Bonebright, Caly & Clay &Ankenmann, 2000; Ng et al., 2007). Another defining characteristic of workaholics are the feelings an individual will experience when they are not
working, specifically anxiety and guilt, which is thought to stem from their internal compulsion to work (Morris & Charney, 1983; Ng et al., 2007; Spence & Robbins, 1992).

### 2.3.2 Antecedents of workaholism

Environments that have permeable boundaries between life and work, have a lot of autonomy and allow individuals to experience high levels of passion for their work, can garner high involvement resulting in long working hours and strong commitment (Currie & Eveline, 2011; Hogan, Hogan, & Hodgins, 2016). This is dependent upon certain personal characteristics (Currie & Eveline, 2011). Research has shown that organisations will attract, select and retain certain types of individuals (Schneider, 1989), therefore it is proposed that workaholics are more likely to be attracted to organisations that complement and value workaholic tendencies, the organisation is in turn more likely to select and retain these individuals because of this fit (Clark et al., 2016). Workaholics may self-report a heavy involvement in work because of external demands (i.e. financial or familial) but according to Clark and colleagues (2016) it is entirely possible that they have chosen their profession for the precise reason that they support these behaviours. An environment which supports and encourages workaholism will reinforce these behaviours thus increase the tendency towards workaholism (Ng et al., 2007). Workaholics will show high levels of commitment to their careers which will in turn perpetuate their compulsion to work excessively hard (Aziz & Moyer, 2018). Despite this devotion, workaholics are not typically certain that they will achieve their career-oriented goals (Spurk, Hirschi & Kauffeld, 2016). Unfortunately, workaholism has been found to have a negative relationship with job resources (Clark et al., 2016; Spurk et al., 2016), as previously outlined job resources such as support from supervisors or colleagues are a known to have positive repercussions for the individual (see Section 2.2.1). However, it is thought that workaholics have a tendency to often make their work harder than necessary (Schaufeli, Bakker, van der Heijden & Prins, 2009). They often will be considered rigid and tend to be one-sided,
determined to go their own way (Clark et al., 2016). Ultimately, whether offered and not accepted, or not available, a perceived lower level of organisational support, the higher the likelihood that workaholic tendencies will be displayed (Spurk et al., 2016).

Individual factors such as perfectionism (Mazzetti, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2014), achievement motivation, conscientiousness and self-efficacy (Allen, Greenlees, & Jones, 2013; Bovornusvakool, Vodanovich, Ariyabuddhiphongs, & Ngamake, 2012) can all predispose an individual towards developing workaholism. Those who are achievement orientated are more prone to becoming addicted to work, as they may see working excessively as a dependable avenue to achieving work related goals (Ng et al., 2007). Work can be seen as the only avenue through which to strive, therefore the individual becomes dependent on work to fulfil their sense of self-efficacy and thus potentially ignoring activities or commitments outside of work (Mazzetti et al., 2014). In their meta-analysis Clark et al (2016) confirmed that workaholism is born from a compulsion and not from familial or financial needs. That is that an individual will work not due to the fact that it is required of them, nor will the amount they work be a reasonable expectation (Robin, 1998; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Scott et al., 1997). Working because of this internal compulsion or a feeling that one “should” is also distinguishable from working because of an internal passion or love of work (Graves, Ruderman, Ohlott & Weber, 2012; Snir & Harpaz, 2012). Working beyond nine to five, has actually been shown not to always incur negative health consequences (Brummelhuis, Rothbard & Uhrich. 2017). However, this excessive work practice is only not bad for your health if you are in fact engaged with your work, if there is not an inner compulsion or external pressure forcing you to work beyond the typical workday. While this excessive work practice may not negatively impact your physical health, there are still negative consequences which may arise.
2.3.3 Consequences of workaholism

Overworking also affects relationships and life satisfaction (Sussman, 2012). Results from the recent meta-analysis by Clark and colleagues (2016) show that workaholism and workaholic behaviours or tendencies are negatively related to job satisfaction, family satisfaction and functioning, physical health, life satisfaction and emotional or mental health. In contrast, workaholism has a positive relationship with job stress, counterproductive work behaviour, work-life conflict, marital disaffection, overall burnout and specifically the burnout dimensions of exhaustion and depersonalisation (Clark et al., 2016).

Schaufeli et al (2009) state that decreased life satisfaction indicates a general dissatisfaction with the lives of the workaholics, therefore the tendency is to be unhappy in general. Workaholism was found to be positively related to negative affect (Clark et al., 2016). Poor mental health has been linked to workaholism. This may be a result of the inability of these individuals to recover from work stress and the continual pressure they place themselves under (Aziz & Moyer, 2018; Clark et al., 2016). The relationship between workaholism and the exhaustion dimension of burnout (Clark et al., 2016; Moyer, Aziz & Wuensch, 2017), may be linked to the same pattern of behaviour, thus negatively affecting the emotional well-being of the individual. Similarly, their physical health is also more than likely affected because workaholics often find it hard to sleep, thus fatigue is experienced at work, and they struggle with waking in the morning (Andreassen, 2013; Aziz & Moyer, 2018). The cause of increased work-life balance challenges, including decreased family satisfaction, an increased marital dissatisfaction can be attributed to the amount of time that a workaholic dedicates to their work, thus sacrificing time spent on other aspects of their life (Aziz & Moyer, 2018; Clark et al., 2016). Work-life balance has been defined as “an even distribution of time, energy, and commitment across all life domains” (Aziz, Uhrich, Wuensch, & Swords, 2013, p.6). Choi (2013) also reports that social functioning and relationships outside of the workplace are
weakened for workaholics. Given that workaholics thoughts are incessantly preoccupied with work- or work-related activities, workaholics often have little time for any other obligations (Aziz & Moyer, 2018). One proposed explanation for why workaholics choose to work rather than engage in social obligations is that they are dissatisfied with their friends and family members (Burke, 2001). Indeed, it has also been found that the spouses of workaholics report higher levels of martial estrangement (Robinson, Carroll & Flowers, 2001). One could plausibly assume that this is a cyclical relationship, as workaholics often choose to sacrifice social engagements, which could be detrimental to personal relationships, leading to dissatisfaction for both parties.

Shimazu and colleagues (2015) conducted research which suggested that workaholics are not superior performers when compared to other types of employees. Thus, while workaholism may lead to positive outcomes in the short term, the long-term effect of obsessive and compulsive working may be harmful to the individual and those they work with (Ng et al., 2007). Supported by the proposition that workaholics engage in counterproductive work behaviours (Clark et al., 2016). Strained relationships with colleagues can also produce subpar work, due to distrust of colleagues (Burke, 2001) and a competitive mind-set (Aziz & Moyer, 2018). Workaholics are also constantly busying themselves, in order to continue working (Aziz & Moyer, 2018). This busyness could inhibit the work they have already taken on, thereby leading to an overall decline in the quality of work they are able to produce (Clark et al., 2016). Ultimately highly demanding jobs can encourage an individual to engage in workaholic behaviour (Erden, Toplu & Yashoglu, 2013), workaholics are often attracted to companies or industries that have high job demands and may attribute their heavy work investment to various job demands due to a self-serving attribution bias (Snir & Harpaz, 2012).
2.3.4 Similarities to work engagement

Both workaholism and work engagement reflect a high commitment to one’s job (Shimazu et al., 2015). However, results of a study that spanned seven months shows that where work engagement can benefit the individual, workaholism can negatively impact future health, life satisfaction and does not lead to future job performance (Shimazu et al., 2015). While both types of employee exhibit heavy types of work investment, both in time and energy, the main difference can be found in the underlying motivational factors for both. It can be said that work engagement is intrinsically motivated (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) whereas workaholism is born from compulsion and potential externally driven factors (Clark et al., 2016). Similar to work engagement, workaholism or workaholic tendencies are typically investigated through cross-sectional analysis which aims to examine the difference between people and the antecedents of this phenomenon.

It is important to continue these investigations into workaholism as there are negative effects of this working behaviour on the individual (through decreased physical and mental health, work-home conflict and strained personal relationships) as well as to the organisation (through decreased performance, strained working relationships, absenteeism caused by reduced health) (Aziz & Moyer, 2018; Clark et al, 2016). As the world is becoming increasingly connected, through advancements in technology, workaholism will persist in this environment and may even increase (Aziz & Moyer, 2018). Expectations within the sporting industry around obsessive passion (see Swanson & Kent, 2016) could be the ideal environment for these types of behaviours to cultivate. Proposed best practice to combat these behaviours include the encouragement to detach and recover from highly demanding jobs, thus creating equilibrium in work-life balance (Andreassen, 2013).
The constructs covered so far are interesting in their own right, and while this research explores the constructs outlined in this chapter, they are also deeply engrained within COR, JDR-R and JD-R theories and models. Both work engagement and workaholism are considered to be different (albeit similar) processes which embody the motivational assumptions of the JDR (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Resources will have a positive effect on motivation, whereas job demands have a negative effect on motivation and can also affect the health of the individual. The health-impairment process of the JD-R is exemplified by burnout, which will be introduced in the next section, with a more detailed insight in Chapter 3.

2.4 Burnout

Burnout is defined as the end state of long-term chronic stress (Maslach, 2003), and is a syndrome represented by three dimensions; mental fatigue or emotional exhaustion, negative feelings and perceptions about the people one works with or depersonalisation, and a decrease in feelings of personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout is an endstate process of the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), it is through continual job strain, brought by high job demands that can lead to feelings of exhaustion, depersonalisation and a decreased sense of accomplishment in employees. Burnout has known links to depression and depressive symptoms (Hakanen et al, 2008). Worryingly according to a report conducted by the APA in 1994, 61% of psychologists in America are depressed, and a more recently the British Psychological Society (BPS) found that 46% of psychotherapists working for the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom suffer from depression (Mace, 2017). It is this staggering state of the wider industry of professional psychologists that prompted the deeper focus of investigation the burnout of applied psychologists as seen in Chapter 3. By understanding the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout among applied psychologists it enables
to draw down to the research of the same phenomena among those who work as applied sport psychologists. Resources are known to buffer the effect of burnout on the individual (McCormack et al., 2015) with the previous sections of this chapter highlighting in the invaluable nature of resources for both the individual and the organisation. The following sections focus on the resources that were included in the research that are encompassed this thesis.

2.5 Resources

While the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) give a list of examples of both job and personal resources, this research focuses on both social support (as a job resource) and optimism (as a personal resource). Both these resources appear prominently in positive psychology literature (see Forgeard et al., 2011; Seligman, 2006; Seligman, 2011). As known resources highlighted in the JD-R theory, where they are known to have an impact on the well-being of the employee, they are also two constructs which are intertwined in applied sport psychology (see DeFreese & Smith, 2014; Seligman, Nolen-Hoeksema, Thornton & Thornton, 1990). Therefore, it was decided that these two resources would be focused upon in more detail than any other.

2.5.1 Social Support

Social support, or the belief that one is cared for, loved, esteemed and valued, has been recognized as one of the most (if not the most) influential determinants of well-being regardless of age and culture (Reis & Gable, 2003). A wealth of research suggests that social support is one of the most important job resources in combating burnout and facilitating engagement, and this topic has been the most extensively studied job resource in buffering against burnout (Blanch & Aluja, 2012; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2006; Maslach et al., 2001). Indeed, most large-scale surveys examining well-being integrate questions on this topic (Forgeard,
Social support is considered so universal that the World Health Organization 100 survey (WHOQOL-100; Bonomi, Patrick, Bushnell, & Martin, 2000) asks an array of questions such as *How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?* and, *Do you feel happy about your relationships with your family members?* Similarly, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative’s Missing Dimensions of Poverty Relatedness module (Samman, 2007) asks participants to rate three statements pertaining to social support (e.g., *People in my life care about me*).

Social support can also refer to an individual’s belief that help is available from other people in different situations (Cobb, 1976; Mayo et al., 2012). It is this specific version of this invaluable resource which warranted further exploration in the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. Recent research on interpersonal strain has utilised the COR (Hobfoll, 1989) to account for the relationship between the social environment and burnout. The basis of this theory is that people have a drive to create, foster, conserve, and protect the quality and quantity of their resources (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). Negative outcomes such as burnout, from this perspective, is a stress outcome resulting from a process of the slow bleed out of resources without any counterbalancing resource gain or replenishment (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). Utilizing this perspective, social support has been found to be a job resource that buffers the effect of stress (Bakker et al., 2004; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Mayo et al., 2012) and thus should ameliorate the onset of burnout. Social support has also been shown to be inversely related to burnout in a sporting context (DeFreese & Smith, 2013). Experimental studies suggest that replenishment occurs given the occurrence of favourable conditions (Tyler & Burns, 2008). From this perspective, social support may be a mechanism through which burned out individuals try to create such favourable conditions.
Social support may operate in a more complex way than this, however. One key area of investigation lies in examining the sources of social support, which may be work-related (e.g., supervisor, co-workers) or non-work-related (e.g. family; Halbesleben, 2006), and vary in terms of whether it is formal (e.g. counselling service) or informal. A meta-analysis of sources of social support and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006) found that the existence of social support as a resource, did not demonstrate relationships across any of the three burnout dimensions. However, when considering the sources of social support, a different view emerged. Work-related sources of social support were more closely associated with exhaustion than depersonalisation or personal accomplishment, while the opposite pattern was found with non-work sources of support (Halbesleben, 2006).

2.5.2 Stigma of Support

As alluded to in section 1.3.6 there has not been enough research that focuses on applied sport psychologists themselves to base all assumptions on this specific cohort. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to draw from extant literature from other fields or disciplines of applied psychology. One area of concern which may have a similar impact within the field of applied sport psychology is the stigma surrounding receiving professional support. Hannigan, Eduard and Bernard (2004) found that not only do approximately 40% of UK based clinical psychologists experience worrying levels of distress, there are self-inflicted barriers that compound the stigma of seeking support. Such as, not wanting to be seen as a client and the negative connotations of being seen as unable to manage one’s own stress. Indeed, psychologists who experience distress or witness it in others are more likely to ignore the signs rather than confront or deal with the issues at hand (Barnett, Baker, Elman & Schoener, 2007). Barnett and colleagues believe that psychologists are at an increased risk of failing to or ignoring their own signs of distress due to the focus on others yet agree that reaching out to a supervisor for support can be a daunting and sometimes difficult task.
2.5.3 Optimism

*Optimism* is “an individual difference variable that reflects the extent to which people hold generalised favourable expectations for their future” (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010, p. 879). Optimistic individuals have greater levels of well-being, greater life satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Alarcon, Bowling, & Khazon, 2013). This higher level of well-being is accounted for by their approach to stressful situations and their characteristic coping styles (Solberg, Nes, & Segerstrom, 2006). Dispositional optimists (or those who possess optimism as a personality trait) have higher levels of personal resources, sufficient to result in positive physical and psychological well-being. Additionally, they are predicted to possess more psychological resources, which can be employed during times of high stress (Alarcon et al., 2013).

Optimism is considered a key personal characteristic within the positive psychology literature (Seligman, 2012) and has been consistently linked to resilience (Sergovia, Moore, Linnville, Hoyt, & Hain 2012; Souri & Hasanirad, 2011). Optimistic individuals are able to generate and maintain better relationships, both personally and professionally (Carver et al., 2010; Schaufele et al., 2009) and evidence suggest people react better to them (Srivastava, McGonigal, Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2006). Similarly, meta-analytic findings suggest that optimism is beneficial to sporting success (Montero et al., 2017). Therefore, it is unsurprising that optimism is a highly desirable trait to possess when working as an applied sport psychologist. Optimism can also protect an individual from the ill-effects of highly stressful situations, and is negatively related to workaholism (Shepperd, Klein, Waters, & Weinstein, 2013).

However, there is a possibility that an individual can have “too much of a good thing” (McNulty & Fincham, 2012). Research has warned of the darker side of over optimism, indeed,
at the extreme, high levels of optimism may have diminishing returns (Hmieleski & Baron, 2009). Unfortunately, those who exhibit unrealistic optimism are also unlikely to update their beliefs should their optimism be proved wrong (Sharot, Korn, & Dolan, 2011) which could lead to continual disruptive behaviour. Therefore, whilst optimism is generally seen to be a positive resource to possess (Carver, Scheier & Segerstrom, 2010) it comes with the caveat to remain realistic lest incur the potentially negative consequences.

2.6 Passion

Another positive disposition which has a negative side, is the construct of passion. Vallerand (2010) proposes that there are two types of passion, harmonious and obsessive. Harmonious passion, an autonomous internalisation of an activity, can positively predict recovery strategies such as relaxation or mastery, whilst negatively predicting emotional exhaustion (Donahue et al., 2012). Obsessive passion, on the other hand, is derived from a controlled internalisation, leading the individual to uncontrollably engage in the activity, and predicts fewer positive outcomes (Vallerand, 2010). Swanson and Kent (2016) have highlighted the potential risk working in a high-performance sport environment may have over and above other industries. In sport, passion and pride are expected if not revered. The passion that surrounds sport in general is likely to be reflected in the employees working within the industry (Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2008). Todd and Harris (2009) highlight that pride which contributes to organisational identification, is similar to passion, especially for those employed within sport. Pride is often seen as necessary within the sporting set-up; coaches will instil pride in the players in order to form a cohesive bond between stake holders, which can ultimately lead to the success of that team (e.g. Weinberg and Gould, 2011). Passion, especially in sport has positive connotations, there are a multitude of celebrated athletes, coaches and managers who have been described as passionate (e.g., Michale, 2008; Zisner, 2005). Vallerand and
colleagues (2008) recognise that individuals who are passionate for their sport dedicate themselves fully, pursuing their goals to excel even in the face of setbacks or resistance. Passion is seen as a required personal attribute for success and higher levels of accomplishment (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2008). The professional sport context is more conducive to positive outcomes from obsessive passion, an obsessive mentality in relation to working may be normalised within sporting organisations, therefore this form of passion can be internalised more easily (Swanson and Kent, 2016).

It is known that obsessive passion in the workplace can lead to negative work practices such as compulsive working (workaholism), exhaustion and burnout (Trépanier et al., 2014). Swanson and Kent (2016) believe that one explanation for obsessive passion having a positive impact on employees of the sport industry could be due to the normalisation of passion, indeed the “strong and uncontrollable urge” (Balenger et al., 2012, p.2) to take part in work activities is far more freely accepted within this field. The compelling urge and unbridled excitement to work in a sport setting, which could be portrayed through an obsessive passion, may even be the root cause associated with the desire to work in this industry (Vallerand et al., 2003; Swanson and Kent, 2016).

A warning against the acceptance of this obsessive passion, along with the compulsive working (workaholism) and potential exhaustion and burnout (Swanson and Kent, 2016), is the increased levels of work-family conflict found within the sport industry (Dixon and Bruening, 2007). While pride and passion can have positive repercussion for those within the sport industry, there is also the risk that individuals who may gain a sense of grandiosity may become overly preoccupied with their own status within the organisation which in turn could become unconducive for not only team work but also performance (Swanson and Kent, 2016).
passion, which is rife within the sports industry, could give cause or explanation to some of the incidences of negative work attitudes or outcomes.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the theoretical background which underpins the research in this thesis, whilst highlighting motivational processes that will be examined throughout this research, along with the resources which span positive psychology, organisational psychology and sport psychology. It also brought to attention the risk of burnout in this profession; the health impairment process associated with the JD-R. As such the following chapter will go into greater detail, exemplifying the potential root causes of burnout in applied psychologists which strongly influenced the empirical studies associated with this thesis.
Chapter 3

The Prevalence and Cause(s) of Burnout Among Applied Psychologists: A Systematic Review

Within elite sport there can at times be a blend of martyrdom and hyper-masculine pride about working seven days a week.

- Pete Lindsay, Sport Psychologist

A version of the following Chapter is published, what follows is an adapted version:
‘Frontiers in Psychology: Clinical and Health Psychology’
3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the background literature on burnout among applied psychologists. The systematic review contains papers, which were published between January 1988 – 1st January 2017. Burnout appears in the JD-R as resultant strain. If job demands deplete energy, increase cynicism and decrease feelings of personal accomplishment and the individual doesn’t have the requisite resources, they will experience burnout or job strain which can negatively affect organisational performance. It is important to understand this element of the JD-R as not only will it give an insight into the causes and antecedents of burnout in this cohort, it will give an indication of what is needed to prevent this phenomenon.

The original intention was to conduct a systematic review examining the prevalence and antecedents of burnout among applied sport psychologists. However, there is a dearth of literature examining this phenomenon among this cohort. The perceived stress and pressure of elite sporting environment (McDougall et al., 2015), multiple roles and potential role ambiguity, coupled with being a member of the caring profession (Henriksen, 2015), leaves sport psychologists as prime candidates for experiencing work-related burnout. Protecting sport psychology consultants from a potentially detrimental working climate is paramount, especially considering that the risks could extend to the clients (athletes) in their care. As a result, it is worthwhile to investigate the burnout of sport psychology consultants.

Previously, a systematic review was conducted into the prevalence of burnout among athletes and coaches (Goodger, Gorely, Lavallee, & Harwood, 2007). It was reported that coach burnout is caused by perceived stress, coaching issues, role conflict and, role ambiguity (Goodger et al., 2007). Sport psychologists working in these sporting environments are not immune to the pressures of sport, performance or outcome expectations as highlighted in section 1.3.3. Studies specifically targeting the burnout of applied sport psychologists have not
been the subject of research. Consequently, the focus of this systematic review shifted to the prevalence of burnout in the wider field of applied psychology. This will enhance the understanding of burnout in applied psychology in general and provide an appropriate comparison for future research in the sport context.

3.2 What is Burnout?

Burnout is considered by many as a ‘work-related mental-health impairment’ (Awa, Plaumann, & Walter, 2010, p. 184), and is often correlated with anxiety and depression (Morse, Salyers, Rollins, Monroe-DeVita, & Pfahler, 2012). Not only can burnout be personally distressing (Freudenberger, 1975), it may also manifest itself in many physical and mental health related issues (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Physical symptoms present as fatigue, exhaustion and somatisation, it is also linked to social withdrawal, the inability to regulate the expression of emotions (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008); absenteeism, (Ahola et al., 2008); lowered morale and reduced efficiency and performance (Taris, 2006). Some conceptualisations of burnout argue that it is unidimensional in nature, pertaining only to exhaustion (Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Christensen, 2005; Pines & Aronson, 1981; Shirom & Melamed, 2005) and thus there are measures of burnout that examine this dimension only. However, Maslach’s (1982, 1993) three-dimensional model of burnout and the Maslach Burnout Inventory are considered the ‘gold standard’ in burnout research (Schutte, Toppinen, Kalimo, & Schaufeli, 2000, p. 53).

Early research into the phenomenon of burnout focused on employees in health-care services, as these were the ‘occupations in which the goal is to provide aid and service to people in need and therefore can be characterized by emotional and interpersonal stressors’ (Bakker et al., 2014, p. 390). Burnout can negatively influence the quality of one’s work and therefore the standard of care provided to clients (Rupert et al., 2015), and is ‘hypothesized to produce a
generalised negative outlook towards self and others’ (Paris and Hoge, 2010, p. 521). Thus, burnout is not only harmful to the employee themselves (e.g. psychologists) but may also have a secondary harmful effect on clients and patients (Rupert et al., 2015). In particular, the depersonalisation dimension of burnout can lead to the emotional distancing or disengagement of a psychologist from their clients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). It is this duality of concern, for both the individual and those within their care, which justifies further investigation and review of burnout among applied psychologists.

Maslach and Leiter (2005) conducted surveys and interviews with over 10,000 participants from different industries across diverse cultures, which demonstrated that sources of burnout include one or more of the following; workload (too much work, not enough resources); control (micromanagement, lack of influence, accountability without power); reward (not enough pay, acknowledgment, or satisfaction); community (isolation, conflict, disrespect); fairness (discrimination, favouritism); and values (ethical conflicts, meaningless tasks). Burnout sometimes results from a mismatch between the individual and the work environment. High job demands without resources or personal factors to combat these are predicted to result in burnout. Tasks that require sustained physical, emotional, or cognitive effort equate to job demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), continual exposure to high job demands are associated with negative physiological and psychological repercussions (i.e. increased blood pressure and heart rate; thwarting of psychological needs and fatigue; Bakker et al., 2014). If job demands remain persistently high, an individual may become chronically fatigued and may distance themselves psychologically from their work, meaning they will suffer from burnout (Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld, & van Dierendonck, 2000).
Two of the main theories used in burnout research include the Jobs Demands-Resources Model (JD-R, Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Conservation of Resources model (COR, Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014; Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). Burnout predominantly occurs as a result of untreated or unresolved chronic stress and distress (Rupert et al., 2015). The JD-R and COR posit that both job and personal resources can contribute to the prevention or reduction of burnout (Rupert et al., 2015). By recognising the demands, resources, and work and personal characteristics that contribute to, or alleviate, burnout among applied psychologists we are able to better understand the process behind the development and synthesis of burnout among this population. Applying these theories, will not only reveal a clearer picture of the current research but will also pave the way for future investigation.

Resources are defined as, ‘anything perceived by the individual to help attain his or her goals’ (Halbesleben et al., 2014 p. 1338). Key job resources include opportunities for professional development, supervision and feedback (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Autonomy, another key job resource, has a positive impact on coping because employees are able to choose for themselves which tasks and demands require their utmost attention (Hobfoll, 1989). Having a supportive supervisor or supervisory team will also have a positive impact due to the continual emotional support in times of crisis (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). Receiving regular positive feedback can reduce levels of cynicism and prevent the onset of burnout by highlighting the positive impact of an individual’s work (Maslach & Leiter, 2005). Personal resources, which further buffer against burnout, can include self-efficacy, resilience and a comprehensive recovery process (Halbesleben et al., 2014). Both job and personal resources go directly toward influencing an individual’s motivation or engagement at work and can buffer the demands of a person’s job (Rupert et al., 2015). COR (Hobfoll, 1989) explains the advantage of seeking and
maintaining resources in times of stress and is based on the supposition that people will strive to retain, protect and build their resources. Once an individual possesses positive resources, it becomes easier for them to obtain more resources, resulting in a gain spiral (Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011; Hobfoll, 2001). Current research into burnout among psychologists does not utilize these theoretical frameworks (Rupert et al., 2015).

On the other hand, providing psychological support and the administration of psychotherapy are examples of job demands that are associated with feelings of responsibility toward the client, maintaining strong and healthy relationships with clients, dealing with other people’s problems and emotional concerns, and managing clients who are challenging or difficult (Deutsch, 1984; Farber & Heifetz, 1981; Hellman & Morrison, 1987; Stevanovic & Rupert, 2004). Psychologists and allied mental health professionals are subject to a number of work-related health impairments, including compassion fatigue (Figley, 2002) secondary traumatisation (Canfield, 2005) and vicarious traumatisation (Dunkley & Whelan, 2006). Burnout itself has been associated with depression both within the field of psychology (Gilroy, Carroll, & Murra, 2002; Pope & Tabachnick, 1994) and within other professions (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012). It has also been shown to mediate between stress and depression (Ahola et al., 2009) with clinicians also reporting lower feelings of safety with increased emotional exhaustion (Welp, Meier, & Manser, 2015).

While causing risk to themselves, high job demands, and potential consequential burnout could inadvertently affect the clients of the psychologist through impaired professional functioning, coupled with reduced competence (Rupert et al., 2015). When an individual withdraws from their role, they will not strive to do their best and may instead do the bare minimum to get by (Maslach, 2003), which could lead to obvious consequences when other people’s well-being is at stake. Burnout in psychologists can also raise ethical concerns (Rupert
et al., 2015), stemming from the inability to continue practicing competently. At some stage in their careers, psychologists will be faced with scenarios that push the boundaries, but it is imperative that they practice ethically throughout this time (Koocher & Keith-Speigel, 2008). According to the APA code of ethics (2016), a psychologist must practice within the boundaries of their competence (2.01) and they must continually engage in the development and maintenance of their competence, (2.03) they must be aware of any personal problems that may negatively affect competence and take appropriate action to deal with them (2.06). The Canadian code of ethics for psychologists explicitly states that psychologists would “engage in self-care activities that help avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgement and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others” (Koocher & Keith-Speigel, 2008, p. 574). Therefore, it is clear that burnout represents a potential personal problem that may negatively influence competence and it is one which psychologists are thus ethically bound to address.

### 3.2.1 Objectives

Evidence into the causes and effects of burnout in general working populations has accumulated over the years (Bakker, Van Emmerik, & Euwema, 2006; Borgogni, Consiglio, Alessandri, & Schaufeli, 2012); however, information regarding the burnout of applied psychologists does not match that of other professions. The purpose of this review was to synthesize research evidence for burnout among this cohort. To achieve this goal, we initiated a review of the extant literature. We focused our systematic review on the prevalence of burnout in the wider field of applied psychology, including psychologists from various disciplines. This will enhance our understanding of burnout in applied psychology in general and provide an appropriate comparison for future research within both specific and larger contexts.
3.2.2 Research Question

The aim of this study was to find the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout among applied psychologists and mental health service providers, focusing on resources and their influence on burnout. The knowledge gained from this review will initiate further investigation into the burnout amongst applied psychologists consulting in all disciplines.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Search Strategy

This systematic review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA statement guidelines (Moher et al. 2009). This review focused on the extant literature on stress and burnout of applied psychologists. Studies were restricted to those published in English. Articles published on the topic of the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout and stress in applied psychologists prior to 1st January 2017 were located using the following databases: Web of Knowledge, SCOPUS and Google Scholar. The search strategy included a combination of the following terms: ‘burnout’ AND (psychologist* OR ‘mental health professional’ *) AND (stress* OR ‘emotional exhaustion’* OR pressure OR cop* OR manage* OR ‘well-being’ OR ‘mental health’). Reference lists from the retrieved articles were manually reviewed to identify any additional potential inclusions.

3.3.2 Study Selection

The review included articles that met the following criteria: (i) peer-reviewed publication available in English (foreign language papers were excluded due to the cost and time it would take to translate them; Arksey & O’Malley, 2005); (ii) the sample had to include those offering psychological services, but who did not have medical training; (iii) measured burnout and/or its constituent dimensions; (iv) publications with original data (i.e. meta-
analytic reviews, narrative reviews, and unpublished theses etc. were not included). Studies were eliminated if they examined nurses, doctors, administrators or other health professionals as their main cohort, despite these professionals working in a mental health setting. Initial searches returned 308 non-duplicate articles. Abstracts and titles were scrutinised in order to assess whether these citations met inclusion criteria. Thirty-nine articles were excluded due to not being original research articles. Forty-five articles were examined in full, with 16 of these excluded during the full text screening. As a result, 29 articles were included in this review. See Figure 3.1 for the PRISMA flow diagram.

3.3.3. Data Extraction and Analysis

The characteristics of all of the papers included in the review were inputted into a table. Included papers were analysed under the following headings: (i) sample size and professional specialisation, (ii) research instruments used, (iii) theoretical framework, (iv) predictors studied, (v) the dimensions of burnout that were specifically examined, and (vi) the main findings and results of each paper. An inductive content analysis approach (Thomas, 2006) was employed in order to identify the themes emerging from the data. The majority of studies took a quantitative approach to their investigation. Two papers took a qualitative approach with a semi-structured interview methodology. Overall, burnout appeared to be a major concern for psychologists. Data from the review shows the most commonly cited dimension of burnout was emotional exhaustion (34.48% of papers).

3.4 Results

This review sought to examine relevant research regarding the burnout of applied psychologists. We now focus on the emergent themes from all the papers included in this review. Starting with emotional exhaustion as the most prevalent dimension of psychotherapist burnout and subsequently exploring other factors that influence burnout in this population.
3.4.1. Study selection and characteristics

Table 3.1 details the key characteristics of all studies used in the review. Participants included applied psychologists (specialisation unknown); clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, correctional psychologists, school psychologists, psychotherapists, mental health providers from the Veterans Association in the US, cognitive behaviour therapists and Gestalt therapists, and allied mental health professionals (when compared to psychologists). Nurses also made up part of the participant cohort but only when being compared to other professionals in a mental health setting. Study populations included both men and women; one study had a female sample only (Ben-Zur & Michael, 2007).
Theoretical frameworks were lacking in the research of burnout amongst this profession, of the job demands and factors that emerged in this review, workload and work setting contribute to the burnout experienced by applied psychologists. Age and experience, along with sex were the most common predominant personal characteristics focused on. We also discuss other resources of interest that emerged from this review. We delve more deeply...
into these results in the discussion section of the paper, and present implications for future research.

### 3.4.2 Characteristics of burnout measures

All studies sought to examine burnout in their respective professions, see Table 2 for a full list of burnout instruments used. *The Maslach Burnout Inventory–Human Service Scale* (MBI-HSS; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1981) was the most common form of burnout measurement employed with over a third (34.5%) of papers using this measure. The survey was designed for those who work in human services and the health care sector and covers all three dimensions of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1996) was also used by an additional third of the papers (31%). All studies examined all three dimensions of burnout, apart from Acker (2012) who utilized the emotional exhaustion subscale of the MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1996). Work-related burnout and client-related burnout were included in Di Benedetto and Swadling (2014) and D'Souza, Egan, and Rees (2011) studies.
Chapter Three
Burnout Among Applied Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pub</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acker.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>460</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI (EE only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ackerly, Burnell, Holder and Kurdek.</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>562</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballenger-Browning, Schmitz, Rothacker, Hammer, Webb-Murphy, and Johnson.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Zar and Michael.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>249</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI (abbreviated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boccio, Weisz and Lefkowitz.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrola, Olivarez and Karcher.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devilly, Wright and Varker.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di Benedetto and Swadling.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drieson, White, Bauer, Salyers, and McGuire.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>358</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Souza, Egan, and Rees.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emery, Wade, and McLean.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI - HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcia, McGeary, Finley, McGeary, Ketchum, and Peterson.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardiman and Graetz Simmonds.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI - HSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malinowski.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>133</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCormack, MacIntyre, O'Shea, Campbell and Igou.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills and Huebner.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>225</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proctor and Steadman.</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 items aligning with previous burnout research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puig, Baggs, Mixon, Min Park, Young Kim and, Min Lee.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBI*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg and Pace.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert and Kent.</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>595</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS , PBI-R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert and Morgan.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>571</td>
<td></td>
<td>PBI-R, MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert, Miller, Tuminello Hartman and Bryant.</td>
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<td>595</td>
<td></td>
<td>PBI-R,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert, Stevanovic and Hunley.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>487/421</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS, PBI-R</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senter, Morgan, Sern-McDonald, and Bewley.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI-HSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim, Zandarcelli, Loughran, Mannarino, and Hill.</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel, Macdonald, Schröder and Mellor-Clark.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viehl and Dispenza.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td>CBI*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vredenburgh, Carlozzi and Stein.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>521</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.3 Theoretical Framework

Only 12 papers (40%) explicitly stated the theoretical framework under which they conducted their research. Three papers used COR (Hobfoll, 1989); with five using the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001). There is a lack of comprehensive theory driven research into psychologists’ burnout (Rupert & Kent, 2007), especially that which is related to demands and resources. In other sectors, such as organisational psychology, investigations into the phenomenon of burnout utilise various models to explain its occurrence (see Chirico, 2016), see table in Appendix 1 for full information. Other theories utilized utilised include Maslach and Jackson’s (1996) model of burnout by Malinowski (2013), Rupert and Kent (2007) and, Vredenburgh, Carlozzi, and Stein (1999). Malinowski (2013) also employs the theory of multidimensional humour (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). Two papers employ stress models in their studies, Acker (2011) with the role stress theory and Ben-Zur and Michael (2007) who use cognitive model of stress and coping (Lazarus, 1999). Finally, Mills and Huebner (1998) use a transactional model of burnout, personality and situational stressors in which to frame their results.

The remaining papers lacked an explicit reference to the model or theory underpinning their investigation. A theory-driven approach is required to enhance our ability to predict, prevent and understand burnout among psychologists (Rupert & Kent, 2007). A key recommendation from this review therefore is that we need to take a stronger theory driven approach to the study of burnout amongst applied psychologists.
3.4.4 Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion emerged as the most commonly reported dimension of burnout, over and above depersonalisation and lowered personal accomplishment. In terms of scores from the MBI, this dimension received the highest scores of burnout in over one-third of the papers (34.5%). Mills and Huebner (1998) found that 40% of the psychologists reported high to moderate levels of emotional exhaustion. This parallels the proportion of psychologists (39.9%) that reported feeling high levels of emotional exhaustion in the study conducted by Ackerly and colleagues (1988). Acker (2011), who only used the emotional exhaustion subscale to investigate burnout, established that more than half (56%) of participants ($N = 460$) reported moderate to high levels of emotional exhaustion, they also found that emotional exhaustion has a stronger relationship to the intent to quit than job stress. Psychologists also reported the highest level of emotional exhaustion in comparison to other mental health professionals (Dreison et al., 2016). Employing the development of severity levels approach of Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1986), Malinowski (2013) reported that those who experienced emotional exhaustion were on the borderline of low to moderate burnout, compared to those who experienced depersonalisation or those who had a decrease in personal accomplishment, both of which resulted in lower levels of burnout (Malinowski, 2013). Emotional exhaustion relates to the most basic interpretation of the stress response, and most commonly shows a positive correlation between work demands and stress related health outcomes (Acker, 2011). It most often leads an individual to seek an escape or distance themselves from their work both emotionally and cognitively and is thought to lead on to feelings of cynicism (Maslach, 2003). The sample in Rupert and Kent (2007) matched the average or middle range of emotional exhaustion found in psychologists. Furthermore, they credited the occurrence of emotional exhaustion to an individual’s total hours worked, administrative work (paperwork), negative
client behaviours and over involvement with clients, supporting the position that increased workload can have a significant impact on experiential burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

3.4.5 Job Demands and Job Factors

3.4.5.1 Workload
In line with past research, workload and perceived time pressure emerged as the most significant job demand contributing to burnout, repeatedly appearing as a cause of burnout in this review. The relationship between burnout (especially emotional exhaustion) and workload is strong and consistent. Workload contributes to emotional exhaustion by simply placing excessive demands on an individual, exhausting their energies (Maslach et al., 2001). It is not only the objective amount of work that increases workload, the perceived wrong type of work (e.g. administrative work) which is viewed as additional to an individual’s role, or if the individual lacks the necessary skills to execute the work, can increase workload.

Workload mismatch is also pertinent when an individual has to express emotions that do not match their own (Maslach et al., 2001). More recently, Ben-Zur and Michael (2007) found a positive correlation between high burnout and the appraisal of stress/load, contributing to the position that appraisal of workload is as impactful as actual load placed on an individual. School psychologists who served multiple schools experienced a higher level of burnout in comparison to those who served single schools (Proctor and Steadman, 2003). The number of hours worked (Rupert & Morgan, 2005), high work demands and a lack of autonomy (Steel, Macdonald, Schroder, & Mellor-Clark, 2015), and concerns over having more clinical work than could be accomplished (Garcia et al., 2016) can all lead to or predict higher levels of emotional exhaustion. More work hours per week can also lead to more extensive work-family conflict, which in turn, is related to increased emotional exhaustion at work (Rupert et al., 2009).
Some investigations found that workload also had an impact on other dimensions of burnout. For instance, Ballenger-Browning and Schmitz (2011), in a study of military mental health providers, reported that psychologists who had a greater number of patients per week, had decreased feelings of personal accomplishment. Increased time spent on administrative work, or paperwork can also lead to increased emotional exhaustion and decreased personal accomplishment (Rupert & Kent, 2007). Non-clinical tasks and crisis work can be credited as inducing burnout, supporting the concept that it might not only be the amount of work that contributes to burnout, but also work that is additional or external to the role of the psychologist (Sim et al., 2016).

3.4.5.2 Work setting differences.
Another job factor that emerged from this review was work-setting. The review found that work setting can have both a positive or negative impact on feelings of burnout when gender is taken into account. When gender is controlled for, work setting does not have as large an effect on burnout. For example, both Di Benedetto and Swaddling (2013) and Rosenberg and Pace (2006) found no significant effects for work setting on burnout. This is inconsistent with the research stating that working in a private setting can decrease feelings of general stress, emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, and increase feelings of accomplishment, overall decreasing feelings of burnout (Ackerley et al., 1988; Rupert et al., 2009; Vredenburg et al., 1999).

In the studies that looked at situational demographics, it was found that working in the private sector, having control over clients, hours worked, and case variability had a positive impact on levels of burnout experienced. Those in the private sector experienced lower levels of burnout than those working in the non-private sector (Ackerley et al., 1988; Rosenberg and Pace, 2006; Vredenburgh et al., 1999). Autonomy is thought to be one of the main contributors to this phenomenon, with those working in the private sector more likely to feel they are having
an impact on their own personal accomplishments by treating clients that add directly to their own income (Vredenburgh et al., 1999). Autonomy is also negatively related to burnout in therapists (Steel et al., 2016). Rosenberg and Pace (2006) found that those who worked in the private sector had greater feelings of personal accomplishment in comparison to those who worked in the medical sector and those who worked in academia. It is also thought that the decreased levels of work stress experienced by people in the private sector is due to the lack of administration that comes with working in larger organisations. However, Di Benedetto and Swadling (2014) have shown that despite a higher proportion of younger professionals found in non-private practice workplaces, there was no significant effect on any of the dimensions of burnout among Australian psychologists. Rosenberg and Pace (2006), as previously stated, found that those working in private practice settings fared better than their peers on levels of experienced burnout, however they also found a relationship between hours worked and experiential burnout. Such as that when hours worked increased, so did feelings of depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion, with feelings of personal accomplishment decreasing (Rosenberg & Pace, 2006). This lends itself to the possibility that at least for some of those working in private practice; they perceive greater control over hours worked, contributing to enhanced feelings of autonomy.

Somewhat counter intuitively, it has also been found that an increased number of cases or a larger amount of time spent on delivering psychotherapy or intervention can be related to increased feelings of personal accomplishment (Rupert& Kent, 2007). This comes with a caveat, as there is potential for the opposite to occur depending on the type of client and, on the psychologist themselves (Rupert et al., 2015). Ballenger-Browning et al. (2011) found that diagnosing patients with personality disorder is related to depersonalisation. Malingering clients also contributed to feelings of cynicism (Garcia et al., 2015). Depersonalisation has
potential to occur when dealing with clients who exhibit negative or stressful behaviours (Rupert & Kent, 2005). This is because dealing with negative behaviours (e.g., aggressive or threatening behaviours, suicidal threats or gestures, limit testing and psychotic behaviours) requires a larger commitment of emotional energy and time (Rupert et al., 2015).

A risk to burnout that is potentially unique to psychologists is over involvement with clients. For a therapeutic relationship to be successful, the psychologist has to be invested in the client; the risk comes when an over involved psychologist dedicates an increased amount of emotional energy, thus depleting a valuable resource. Studies have recognised that over involvement with clients is directly linked to both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Huebner, 1994; Raquepaw & Miller, 1989). However, other studies show that over involvement can lead to an increase in personal accomplishment (Rupert & Kent, 2007; Rupert & Morgan, 2005). Over involvement had the strongest relationship with emotional exhaustion ($r = .37, p .001$) in comparison to other antecedents of burnout (i.e., job stress, control, job support, and professional identity) (Lee, Lim, Yang & Lee, 2011).

### 3.4.6 Job Characteristics and Personal Characteristics

#### 3.4.6.1. Age and experience of psychologists.

Age emerged as a consistently studied factor in the research of burnout amongst applied psychologists. This review found that an increase in age is related to a decrease in reported burnout. Younger psychologists, in a study by Ackerley and colleagues (1988), reported higher levels of burnout than their older peers. They posited that with age, psychologists learn to conserve their emotional energy so that it is not depleted. The idea that younger individuals are more susceptible to burnout is supported in subsequent research. Age was able to account for 8.4% of reports of emotional exhaustion and 9.4% of the variance in depersonalisation in counselling psychologists conducted by Vredenburgh et al. (1999). Older psychologists also reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation of clients and experienced
significantly lower levels of client-related, work-related and personal-burnout in subsequent research by D’Souza et al. (2001) and, Rupert and Morgan (2005). For Hardiman and Simmonds (2013) age was found to be the only demographic that could distinguish between high and low burnout. Steel et al. (2015) concluded that it was age and not experience that protected from depersonalisation, meaning that it is life rather than years of practice, that mediates cynicism. Although there is a trend for younger psychologists to experience higher levels of burnout, it is believed that burnout can result in career termination. Therefore, one could speculate that as psychologists mature, not only are they more able to cope with work stressors, it could be that those more susceptible to burnout end up leaving the profession.

### 3.4.6.2 Sex differences.

Whilst commonly included in demographic variables of study samples encompassed in this review, there are mixed results for the relationship between sex or gender differences and burnout amongst applied psychologists. Sex or gender has been credited as a correlate for burnout and staff turnover (Paris & Hoge, 2009). Previous research showed that there were significant differences between males and females and their experienced burnout (see Freudenberger, 1986). However, Ackerly et al. (1988) found no support for women experiencing more burnout than their male peers and colleagues. The relationship between burnout and gender is not a simple one. For example, research has found that men experience more cynicism than women, but women experience more emotional exhaustion than men (Maslach et al., 2001). Results from a meta-analysis of 183 studies examining burnout conducted by Puranova and Muros (2010) which looked into gender differences in burnout, challenged the belief that women were more prone to burnout than men were. Their results did show that women experience more emotional exhaustion than men do ($\delta = .10$), whereas men experience more depersonalisation than women do (mean effect size = $-.19$). The finding that male psychologists experience greater depersonalisation than their female counterparts was
supported by papers included in this systematic review (Rosenberg & Pace, 2006; Rupert & Kent, 2007; Vredenburgh et al., 1999) and are more likely to depersonalise their clients (Rupert et al., 2009). Emotional exhaustion was more significantly related to being female, especially when consolidated with work setting, personal resources and therapists’ belief (Emery, Wade & McLean, 2009).

Work setting also has consequences for sex differences in burnout experienced. Women experience more emotional exhaustion in agency settings (i.e. working in public health care systems or hospitals), in comparison to those who work in private settings (Rupert & Kent, 2007; Rupert & Morgan, 2005). The results on males’ burnout and work setting is inconclusive, in some instances, males’ burnout did not differ significantly depending on work setting (Rupert & Kent, 2007). Other research found that male psychologists can experience a greater level of emotional exhaustion, especially in group settings (Rupert & Morgan, 2005). Within a military setting Ballenger-Browning and colleagues (2011) also found that hours worked, and sex resulted in different experiences of burnout, with female therapists experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Sexual minority males reported greater scores on the CBI than both heterosexual men and sexual minority women (Viehl & Dispenza, 2015). It is clear that there are conflicting views on the prevalence of burnout and its causes in relation to the sex of the individual. The findings among psychologists echo the review on burnout and gender conducted by Purvanova and Muros (2010). The authors state that this finding has important implications on how to manage and prevent burnout for different populations, potentially specifying interventions depending on sex (Puranova & Muros, 2010). This review shows that the prevention and management of burnout in psychologists should be approached differently not only depending on sex, but also in relation to work-setting, and sexual identity. One option for future interventions is that they could therefore be designed to fit the work setting, gender
identity and even sexual orientation. This could require further in-depth research into sex, work setting, sexuality and their combined effect on burnout.

3.4.6.3 Other resources.
Despite evidence pointing to the importance of resources in managing or maintaining work-based well-being, not a lot of research has gone into examining the resources of psychologists (Rupert et al., 2015). From this review, it was felt pertinent to highlight results of the influence other resources have shown on the burnout among applied psychologists. An increased level of personal resources has been shown to reduce emotional exhaustion and increase feelings of personal accomplishment (Emery et al., 2009). In the case of work-based resources, control has received the most attention (Ackerley et al., 1988; Rupert & Kent, 2007; Rupert and Morgan, 2005; Rupert, et al., 2009). These studies have shown that there is a significant relationship between all three dimensions of burnout and control, with a greater amount on control having a negative effect on burnout; this is supported by a meta-analysis conducted by Lee and colleagues (2011). However, the concept of control has not always been defined (Rupert et al., 2015) and therefore it is hard to make a definitive assumption on what is perceived as control in the context of burnout.

Workplace support has also been investigated in the research of burnout in psychologists and mental health professionals. Ben-Zur and Michael (2007) found that co-worker support had a negative effect on burnout, and was related to lower levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and higher levels of personal accomplishment. Rupert and Kent (2005) found that those who work in solo private practices experienced lower levels of social support. McCormack and colleagues (2015) found that work based social support was more effective at reducing burnout than external sources of social support. Although the support required or experienced by a psychologist may depend on their own work setting, experience and level of training, the consensus appears to be that support is a significant resource for those
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in the field of mental health (Rupert et al., 2015). Indeed, the results of a meta-analysis show that workplace support is the only resource that may have a significant relationship with personal accomplishment (Lee et al., 2011).

Drieson et al. (2016), who used the JD-R as their guiding theoretical framework, found that education was related to lower levels of depersonalisation and higher levels of personal accomplishment. Other resources such as supervisory autonomy support and self-efficacy predicted significantly lower emotional exhaustion. Self-efficacy also significantly predicted higher levels of personal accomplishment. Job resources (i.e. supervisor autonomy support, self-efficacy, and staff cohesion) were all negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. The qualitative study conducted by Sim et al. (2016), which also employed the JD-R found that the following resources: support from colleagues and the director; the sense that staff work well together; the presence of autonomy; respect for setting limits at work; and social activities with colleagues during the workday all contributed to decreased feelings of burnout. These studies contribute to the argument that the burnout and well-being of psychologists needs to be studied more rigorously using strong theoretical frameworks to guide the research.

One study examined the use of personal resources such as recreational activities, self-care activities, social support and cognitive coping skills and found that an increase in personal resources was related to lower levels of reported burnout, with decreased emotional exhaustion and increased personal accomplishment (Emery et al., 2009). Humour was also found to be a beneficial resource in decreasing feelings of burnout with adaptive forms of humour being more beneficial in decreasing feelings of burnout than maladaptive forms (Malinowski, 2013). Interestingly, Puig et al. (2012) found that burnout was negatively related to an individual’s exercise and nutrition; meaning that counsellors do not engage in regular or appropriate exercise.
and nutrition when they experience job stress induced exhaustion. The direction of this relationship is unclear, as Puig et al. (2012) posit that a lack of appropriate exercise and nutrition may in fact contribute to the manifestation of burnout in counsellors.

Cognitive strategies, such as problem solving and prioritizing work (Emery et al., 2009), gaining self-awareness, adjusting perspectives and even fantasising about leaving (Sim et al., 2016) are important for keeping a perspective on work, resulting in a reduction in emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. The practice of behavioural strategies (creating boundaries and adjusting work schedules) has been shown to have the same effect (Sim et al., 2016). Maintaining work-life balance may also be valuable for lower levels of emotional exhaustion (Rupert et al., 2015). The use of career-sustaining behaviours and self-care strategies may play a positive role on positive work attitude.

Another factor, work-family conflict can increase emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and decrease personal accomplishment (Rupert et al., 2009). Ultimately, research regarding the impact of job resources on burnout is more extensive than the impact of personal resources on burnout. From a personal resource perspective, there is a paucity of research on what precisely can assist in the treatment and prevention of burnout in psychologists. The knowledge gap, regarding other resources, that may reduce the risk of burnout in psychologists such as savouring, recovery, resilience, opportunities for development and, job crafting, can signpost future research directions.

### 3.5 Discussion

The intention of this review was to investigate the prevalence and cause(s) burnout of applied psychologists and allied mental health professionals. Burnout research began in the caring professions; despite this, there is a dearth of research which explicitly examines burnout
among applied psychologists. Therefore, the objective of this review was to scrutinise the research literature regarding burnout among this field.

One of the main findings of the review supported the idea that emotional exhaustion is the most commonly reported dimension of burnout. The studies that specifically looked at the distinct dimensions of burnout all found emotional exhaustion to come out on top, supporting a review of burnout in clinical psychologists in the UK (Hannigan, Edwards & Burnard 2004). The nature of a psychotherapists work requires them to provide a service and to care about the people they work with, this type of work is very demanding and requires high levels of involvement, it is not surprising that emotional exhaustion is such a common response to this kind of job overload (Maslach et al., 2001). A lack of energy, negative affect and the perception that emotional resources have been drained can all characterize the feelings of emotional exhaustion (Maslach& Leiter, 1984). According to the review by Hannigan et al. (2004), multiple sources contribute to stress of clinical psychologists in the UK. These included client characteristics, excessive workloads, professional self-doubt and poor management. By expanding the demographics this review added to these sources with private practice vs. public health providers, work hours, work-setting, age and length of experience, gender, sexual orientation, resources and other factors. By expanding the inclusion of studies from the US, Europe and Australia we are able to glimpse a larger international perspective on the prevalence of burnout among practicing psychologists. However, more extensive analysis needs to occur in order to examine the cultural differences or indeed to see if it is the demands of the profession that transcends culture.

The role of workload as a contributor to burnout was also supported in this review. The relationship between burnout (especially emotional exhaustion) and workload is strong and consistent. Workload contributes to emotional exhaustion by simply placing excessive demands
on an individual, exhausting their energies (Maslach et al., 2001). It is not only the objective amount of work that increases workload, the perceived wrong type of work (e.g. administrative work) which is viewed as additional to an individual’s role, or if the individual lacks the necessary skills to execute the work, can increase workload. Workload mismatch is also pertinent when an individual has to express emotions that do not match their own (Maslach et al., 2001). Previous research demonstrates workload is associated with burnout in nurses (Greenglass, Burke, & Fiksenbaum, 2001; Van Bogaert et al., 2013); Japanese physicians in stroke care (Nishimura et al., 2014); and Flemish teachers (Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014), thus exemplifying the diversity in research and populations showing that it is a prevalent cause of burnout irrespective of career specialism or nationality.

Another finding concerned the lack of theoretically driven research. The majority of papers included in this review did not explicitly employ a theoretical framework. The main theoretical frameworks used by papers in this review were COR theory or the JD-R theory. While research into psychological resources and their effect on burnout in psychologists has been conducted there is still insufficient research with this sample on burnout. In accordance with COR theory where an individual will strive to create, maintain and build on their resources (Hobfoll, 1989), burnout is the result of a slow loss of resources brought about by continual stress from the work environment. Therefore, despite emotional exhaustion being the most commonly experienced dimension of burnout, it would not be surprising if that trend continued for a practitioner, and the other dimensions of burnout should soon follow (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). A review by Rupert et al. (2015) sought to consolidate the research into what resources effect burnout amongst psychologists, yet they found that different resources were examined in different ways. Indeed, as suggested by the authors, in order to gain “a complete understanding of the emergence of burnout, it is important to investigate the multiplicative
impact of demands and resources” (Bakker et al., 2005, p. 178). Interestingly, Crawford, LePine and Rich (2010) suggest a ‘differentiated job demand-resource model’ (p. 843) that expands the JD-R to distinguish the interpretation of job demands as either challenging or as a hindrance, as this could have a differential effect on burnout. While certain demands can be viewed as debilitating for some, others may view them as an opportunity to expand their repertoire. In a similar way to personalising burnout interventions, research into the effect of resources on burnout could apply an idiographic approach the same way. Once this is achieved, a clearer and more concise understanding of burnout in applied psychologists can be realized.

Finally, the importance of social support in managing stress and burnout is well documented in the research literature (Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll, 1989). Social support, work-based support and supervisor support have all been credited as a resource for reducing burnout among clinical psychologists, for example (Hammond, Crowther & Drummond, 2017). Franco (2015) suggests that supervisors educate themselves and form open discussions with their clinicians, promoting self-awareness and self-care practices amongst those they supervise. However, it is not a requirement for all disciplines of applied psychologists to have specialist supervisory or peer-based support in all jurisdictions (e.g. applied sport psychologists in Ireland). Yet these professionals in high performance sport often face more than just performance issues (Elsborg et al., 2015; McCann, 2008), and can go through experiences that fluctuate from intense, almost euphoric, positive emotion to acute negative emotion, whilst having to maintain their role as a practitioner who provides a solid source of support for others, without expressing their own emotions. As previously stated in this review, burnout can often occur when an individual has to exhibit one emotion whilst experiencing another conflicting emotion (Maslach et al., 2001). Rupert and Morgan (2005) recognise that the cost of burnout to a psychologist can be high, the distress being experienced by the individual suffering from
burnout is only one consequence, there is also the potential harm to the client who is receiving services from a psychologist operating at a diminished capacity and not to mention the turnover costs for employees. It is also thought that those entering the profession of psychology, are more susceptible to suffering from mental health issues as the attraction to the industry lends itself to the practitioners need to understand their own problems (Bearse, McMinn, Seegobin, & Free, 2013). Psychologists are potentially predisposed to burnout through putting others needs before their own and despite the knowledge that social support can buffer against the negative effects of burnout, many psychologists themselves are reluctant to seek their own professional help (Bearse et al., 2013). Bearse and colleague’s investigation (2013) found that one of the barriers to psychologists seeking professional help is the idea that the professional help is hard to find. Worryingly, almost 60% of respondents claimed that they did not seek help even though they were aware that they could have benefitted from it at the time (Bearse et al., 2013). Despite the awareness of the importance of minding one’s own mental health and armed with the knowledge of how to do so, many applied psychologists appear not to practice what they preach. Progress in reducing the stigma surrounding the application of psychological interventions has been made; however, it may be time to ensure that those delivering psychological services are heeding the same message.

3.6 Limitations of Generalisability to Applied Sport Psychologists

While this review was conducted in order to build a foundation upon which research into the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout among applied sport psychologists could be made, there are limits to its generalisability to that specific cohort.

Firstly, the majority of participants in this review worked in a clinical or counselling setting, which differentiates from the role many applied sport psychologists are employed to conduct. Applied sport psychologists are primarily concerned with psychological techniques
that improve performance, however as stated in McCann (2008) all issues which may come up in the lead up to and during competition can be seen as performance issues.

Work setting for applied sport psychologists can be differ vastly to that of the participants in the studies included in this review. There are simply not enough institutions that employ multiple applied sport psychologists, who work under the same conditions as clinical or counselling psychologists. However, as referenced in Chapter (1/2), the working conditions an applied sport psychologist can find themselves in, can be so vastly different, that this alone may warrant investigation into the prevalence and causes of burnout among them. Unsociable hours, boundaryless work and unclear roles (Hays 2005; Gould, 1989) can all contribute to increased job demands and resultant job strain.

3.7 Future Research

General feelings of burnout, its causes and the resources which applied sport psychologists employ require a closer look. Applied sport psychologists will be prone to experiencing burnout as they are members of the caring profession. As explained in the introduction chapter, individuals in this specific specialisation also experience unique working environments and roles, which may contribute to burnout. Therefore, examining burnout in this group will contribute to future burnout literature. Longitudinal studies, which examine the temporal dimensions of burnout, have been utilised in research with other professions (see Hakenen and Schaufeli, 2012) and this approach will shed light on the long-term effects of burnout in applied psychologists. Feelings of burnout over a longer period of time will be examined in Chapter 7 of this thesis. There is an ethical imperative (see 2.3.1) to safeguard ourselves from the ill effects of burnout, not only for our personal well-being but for the well-being of those in our care.
3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this review was to synthesise research evidence for the prevalence and cause(s) of burnout among applied psychologists and allied health professionals. We found that the topic had not been widely studied with this specific sample. Evidence suggests applied psychologists are susceptible to burnout, especially to emotional exhaustion. However, whilst atheoretical approaches prevail, the limited number of studies using the COR, JD-R, and JD-RR theories do suggest that workload and work setting are positively related to the burnout experienced by applied psychologists but there remains a lack of theory driven research into this phenomenon. Age, experience and gender can have a negative relationship with burnout. Burnout among psychologists can have a detrimental effect not only on the individual but also to the people receiving their care which raises an ethical imperative for further study. Therefore, future research with this specific population has implications for the profession at large and the well-being of both practitioners and their clients.

This review strongly influenced the empirical research associated with this thesis. The following chapters will now exemplify the process under which the research was conducted and present the results in a coherent way.
Chapter 4

Methodological Approach

*I think you can have a ridiculously enormous and complex data set, but if you have the right tools and methodology then it's not a problem.*

- Aaron Kiblin, Data Visualist
4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodological considerations, detailing the process in which the data was collected and analysed, and include a rationale for the choices made whilst designing, conducting and analysing the research. The number of applied sport psychologists around the world has grown, and that number is continually on the rise (Kremer, Moran, Walker & Craig, 2012). Applied sport psychologists may bridge the gap between sport science and mental healthcare providers. As outlined previously (See Section 1.4) theoretically driven research on the impact of the profession on a psychologists’ well-being is lacking. Thus, a comprehensive insight into how applied sport psychologists deal with stressors is necessary for the ethical advancement of this growing profession. By applying a work and organisational psychology lens in the research there is potential to extrapolate best practice guidelines not only for existing practitioners, but also for future generations. While this is not a new combination, organisational psychology constructs have been examined in sport and performance in the past (see Arnold, Fletcher & Daniels, 2017; Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009), these papers were more concerned with the impact of organisational stressors on the performance of athletes and coaches, rather than how working in a sporting environment may affect the sport psychologist. After all, burnout and other negative work practices, such as workaholism, could have consequences not only for the individual but those close to them, i.e. their clients, and friends or family and supervisees (Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008).

4.2 Research Design

When planning a research study there is no “single blueprint”, rather a “fitness for purpose” must drive the study design (Cohen, Mannion & Morison, 2007). Research design provides an overall structure to all elements involved in the study, bringing them together to
form a cohesive piece of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This research is investigating the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. Searching for answers to what the work-based well-being of these individuals is like, and how certain incidences or events may shape or influence their well-being. The research seeks to identify both the potential positive and negative effects of working within this profession. Using a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys enables a rich, inclusive insight into the lived experiences of applied sport psychologists to emerge regarding the stressors they face and resources they employ to combat these. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the research philosophy driving these investigations as well as the rationale behind choosing these methods for this research.

4.3 Research aims and questions

The overall aim of this research was to investigate the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. Is was from this principal aim that the following research questions were developed, along with additional subsidiary questions. These questions formed the basis of the research and thus provided a pivotal role in shaping the analysis of the data.

The primary questions were:

- What is the state of work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists?
- What affect does a global quadrennial, multi-sport event have on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologist?

In order to fully answer these questions, and focus the research, the following six subsidiary questions were developed: They are:

- How and when do applied sport psychologists experience burnout and work engagement?
• How and when do applied sport psychologists utilise social support as a resource?

• How and when do applied sport psychologists experience workaholic tendencies?

• How and when do applied sport psychologists utilise optimism as a resource? Can it be detrimental?

• How does a quadrennial global multi-sport event impact upon practitioner burnout, work-engagement, access to social support and optimism?

Figure 4.1 illustrates the relationship of the research questions, along with their subsidiary questions to the overall research aim. It also includes the methodological approach employed for these questions. These questions guided the research, providing the basis of exploration for this thesis.
Figure 4.1 Relationship of research questions and methodological approach. This figure illustrates the relationship of the main research question to those of the two studies and their respective subsidiary questions.
4.4 Research Philosophy

A pragmatic approach (Robson & McCartan, 2015) was applied in the empirical work and mirrors the exploration of other contemporary topics within applied sport psychology. The resilience literature in sport psychology emanated from a grounded theory approach (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012) and thus it was thought to be pragmatic to combine qualitative exploration using thematic coding with research design and analytical techniques from organisational psychology, e.g. critical incident technique.

Critical realism has increased in popularity over the last few decades (Fletcher, 2017, p. 181). The realist ontology accepts that there is a real world that exists independently of the perceptions, theories and constructions that we may have (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Critical realism is a comprehensive philosophy of science due to its use of both positivist and constructivist approaches, therefore providing a detailed account of ontology (i.e. what is real, the nature of reality) and epistemology (i.e. our knowledge of reality) (Brown, Fleetwood, & Roberts, 2002).

Critical realism searches for causation, thus assisting researchers in the explanation of social events and suggests practical strategy to address social problems (Fletcher, 2017). In the realist approach, causality fundamentally refers to “the actual causal mechanisms and processes that are involved in particular events and situations” (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010, p. 155). There is an emphasis on context-dependence of causal explanation within realism research (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010).

Critical realism was born as a scientific alternative to both positivism (the limitation of reality to what can be empirically known) and constructivism (reality as constructed entirely...
through and within human knowledge and discourse) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The versatility of critical realism is that it is not associated with any particular set of methods, and instead functions as a general methodological framework for research (Fletcher, 2017). According to critical realism there is a real social world that we attempt to understand through philosophy and social science (Danermark, Ekstrom, & Jakobsen, 2005), but supporters of this philosophy also believe that some knowledge is closer to reality than other knowledge. More simply put, some theories can fit into and reflect reality better than others; just because there is scientific theory to explain a phenomenon does not mean it will explain every instance of that phenomenon. While this research was conducted under the organisational psychology framework employing theories such as JD-R (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) and COR (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), it is apparent that theories may be limited in their applicability in real life situations and the role of context is important in this research. It is with rational judgement of certain social events that theories that explain the causal mechanisms drive these social events (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 2013). Critical realists can gain knowledge “in terms of theories which can be more or less truth like” (Danermark et al., 2005, p. 10). A critical realist perspective provides a framework for understanding the relationship between an individual’s perspective and their actual situations (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010), meaning that this perspective allows for the researcher to attribute causality to both the individual and the context in which they are in.

Critical realism is thought to be “useful for analysing social problems and suggesting solutions for social change” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182). The purpose of this research was to shift the research lens to those who provide psychological support to athletes, analysing the situational context of their work environment, how it affects their well-being and creating suggestions and best practice guidelines for all within the industry. As stated by Fletcher (2017)
“critical realists typically begin with a particular problem or question, which has been guided by theory” (p. 184). Our questions were whether applied sport psychologists’ *practice what they preach* and prioritise their own mental health and work-based well-being, and if so, how exactly do they do this. Also, how do the demands and resources of applied sport psychologists, guided by the JD-R (Demerouti et al., 2001) and COR (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), affect their well-being. Critical realism operated under the process of finding an initial theory, using that theory to facilitate deeper analysis that can “support, elaborate, or deny that theory to help build a new and more accurate explanation of reality” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 184).

How applied sport psychologists experience burnout, work engagement, and workaholism was questioned first, specifically the critical incidences which caused these resultant behaviours. Secondly how the resources of optimism and social support can affect their well-being, whether these resources can positively or negatively affect their well-being, or indeed if they do both. For example, optimism and social support was also questioned in the following way; do you rely on this resource and if so, how and when? Subsequently, we decided to investigate how a large international multisport event (e.g. Olympic and/or Paralympic Games) may affect the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. By tracking certain indices of work-based well-being of practitioners who were working with athletes who were competing at the XXXI Olympiad in Rio, Brazil, 2016 we would be able to build a picture of how this event may impact the individual. In order to develop a richer picture of the lived experiences of those in attendance retrospective qualitative interviews were conducted with a sample of the practitioners who attended the Games. This enabled this research to answer the question of how this event impacts the well-being of those working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games.
4.5 Mixed Methods approach

The mixed methods approach can be defined as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). The subtle variations that exist in human experience cannot be captured with a single method of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Different data collection modes can be triangulated in order to increase the probability that the findings and interpretations of the research will be found credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Realism can provide a suitable philosophy for a mixed method approach to research, facilitating an efficient collaboration between both qualitative and quantitative researchers (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010) and allowing for communication and cooperation between both qualitative and quantitative research methodology (Greene, 2002; Mark, Henry, & Julnes, 2000). As highlighted by Teddie and Tashakkori (2011), researchers should be at liberty to take a pragmatic approach and combine methods by choosing what is believed to be the best tools for answering the question. Additionally, “When a single research method is inadequate, triangulation is used to ensure that the most comprehensive approach is taken to solve a problem” (Morse 1991, p. 120). In order to get true and easily interpreted findings, it can be of interest to use two more aspects of research (Denzin, 1970; Polit & Hungler, 1995).

By combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this research was able to provide a richer and more detailed insight into the lived experiences of applied sport psychologists. Both methodologies are designed towards gaining an understanding about a particular subject area, both hold their own strengths and weaknesses; by combining them there is a greater possibility of neutralizing flaws whilst simultaneously strengthening the benefits of each for better results (Hussein, 2009). This research employs methodological triangulation, a
form of triangulation which combines more than two methods in which to study the same phenomenon under investigation (Mitchell, 1986). Methodological triangulation was applied by combining standardised psychological inventories and the thematic analysis used on qualitative interviews. Investigator triangulation was used in the coding, member checking “devil’s advocate” role in the analysis of the qualitative transcripts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In this research, in order to gain a full understanding of the lived experiences of the participants, a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews was deemed to be the most effective data gathering tool. In order to gain an unobtrusive real time insight to the effect of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games on applied sport psychologists’ work-based well-being, quantitative surveys were the desired choice for data collection, this was then strengthened by further qualitative data-collection in the form of retrospective interviews. By employing triangulation, it is hoped that the credibility of this research can be increased, by improving both internal consistency and generalisability through the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study (Hussein, 2009). Although a mixed methodology approach was employed by this research, the majority of this thesis employs a qualitative approach. As the primary researcher it enabled me to truly immerse myself in the data which was collected. Drawing from my own experiences as well as those whom I have followed and learned from. By placing myself into the research and bringing my own knowledge with me, it allowed to me become a tool in the research process, which will be discussed further in the following section.

A systematic review into the burnout of applied psychologists was performed which informed the research conducted in Study 1, the results from which also influenced the research conducted in Study 2. The relationship of each study and its respective phases, to the overall aim of the thesis, and to each other is illustrated in Figure 4.2.
Figure 4.2 Relationship of the studies. This figure illustrates the relationship of the studies to the overall research aim and to each other.
4.6 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research seeks a deep understanding of the processes being studied. The researcher who takes a qualitative approach is interested in both the researchers and participants subjective experiences, using deep and rich data in order to discover these experiences (Johnson & Onweugbuzie, 2004). Studies which employ a qualitative approach want to understand the individual’s perceptions of the world, seeking insights rather than statistical assessments (Bell, 2005), remaining mindful of the individual’s subjectivity (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Qualitative research has become increasingly recognised and valued (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Thematic analysis is a method of analysis that has previously been widely used, yet poorly defined and rarely acknowledged (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). It is a method for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis involves the search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon in question (Daly, Kellehear, Gliksman, & Daly, 1997), and is a form of pattern recognition where the emerging themes become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The intention of qualitative research is after all, to realise that experiences are subjective, it is important to understand the phenomena from the participants’ point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). One of the advantages of thematic analysis is its usefulness at examining the perspectives of different individuals, highlighting both similarities and differences whilst also revealing unanticipated insights (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis and the techniques of Braun and Clarke (2006) are also widespread within sport psychology research (Culver, Gilbert & Sparkes, 2012).

One of the tenants of thematic analysis is that the importance of a theme can be based on whether is captures something important to the overall research question rather than being dependent on the theme being quantifiable (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The importance of this
research rests on capturing the lived experiences of applied sport psychologists. Participants varied in their experience, and in some cases, this experience carried with it a certain gravitas, so thematic analysis was considered more appropriate than other methods such as content analysis or grounded theory. Thematic analysis allows for a mixture of deductive and inductive analysis, meaning that themes can be created from a theoretical idea that is brought to the research (deductive) or can be extrapolated from the data itself (inductive) (Joffe, 2012). This allows for a certain latitude of involvement by the researcher. In qualitative analysis, the researcher becomes the instrument, making decisions about coding, theming and contextualising the data (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

A Critical Incident Technique (CIT; Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004), described as “a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in … developing broad psychological principles” (p.327), was employed. Specifically, this technique involves asking participants to recall extreme incidents that occurred in the past (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005; Flanagan, 1954). This technique uses an individual’s recollection of a specific event, or incident, rather than generalisations or opinions (Coetzer, Redmond & Sharafizad, 2012). It is designed to encourage the participant to recall in rich detail, their personal experience of a specific topic. Furthermore, it facilitates responses from those in the best position to give the required observation (Gremler, 2004). Using this technique enables the individual to mindfully scour their memories in order to provide an example that they witnessed or experienced, rather than giving an observational overview. Which provides a richer more detailed insight into their experiences.
4.7 Quantitative Inventories

The quantitative researcher is often concerned with the hard data, with finding the facts and the generalisability of results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative research seeks to measure and compare data through analysis in order to develop conclusions about the population, or in the case of this research, applied sport psychologists.

Both quantitative elements of the second study employed the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) as a framework to investigate the effects of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games on the well-being of the applied sport psychologists. Burnout was measured as the end state of high job demands and job strain while work engagement was measured as the end state of the motivation process (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017). Both job and personal resources were measured through social support, optimism, self-efficacy (Hobfoll, 1989) and mood. Passion was also included as a potential mediator for motivation (Vallerand, 2003).

4.7.1. Longitudinal Survey

The longitudinal online survey was used in order to observe and identify, without interference, how exactly the occurrence of the Games may affect both the health impairment process and motivational process of the JD-R, and to define these reactions in terms of timing, whilst following potential changes over the course of an Olympic year with these individuals (Caruana, Roman, Hernández-Sánchez, & Solli, 2015). The longitudinal survey examined the impact of working with athletes preparing to compete at the Rio Olympic and/or Paralympic Games in August and September 2016, on the mental health and work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. The survey was administered at four time points. The first time point occurred three to four months before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the second time point was two months before the Games, the third point was as the Games began
and the fourth time point was up to two months post completion of the Olympic Games. The following section will highlight the tools used to track the variables examined.

### 4.7.1.1 Maslach Burnout Inventory

Burnout is the result of untreated, chronic distress (Schaufeli Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). Burnout has a negative impact on the psychical and psychological well-being of the individual (Schaufeli et al. 2009). The *Maslach Burnout Inventory* (MBI; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1986; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) is one of the most widely used measures of burnout (Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, Schaap, & Kladler, 2001). Chapter 2 highlights the prevalence of the use of the MBI in assessing the burnout of psychologists and other mental health workers. The MBI contains three scales; emotional exhaustion (the draining of emotional resources); depersonalisation (the cynical and negative attitude that can be shown towards ones work); and personal accomplishment (the positive perception of ability to complete ones role especially in terms of the impact it has on the recipients of ones work). A high score in emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, along with a low score in personal accomplishment can indicate burnout among the participants. The MBI employs a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *Never* to *Everyday*.

### 4.7.1.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

With the emergence of positive occupational psychology came the desire to measure an individual’s positive relationship to their work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Sometimes considered to be the antipode of burnout, work engagement is concerned with how absorbed and enthusiastic an individual can be about their work, how much energy or vigour they display towards it and how absorbed or excited they are about it (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Employees who are engaged with their work “have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003, p. 4). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is a self-
report measure, which was developed to include the three constituting aspects of work
engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The UWES
employs a 7-point Likert score, ranging from Never to Always/Everyday.

4.7.1.3. Life Orientation Test, Revised
The Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R) is an updated version of the original life
orientation test and is used to measure optimism versus pessimism. The measure is a self-report
questionnaire containing 10-items, three that are related to optimism, three that relate to
pessimism and four fillers. Respondents rate each item on a 4-point Likert scale (Scheier,
Carver, & Bridges, 1994). The measure looks to separate the two-dimensional nature of high
optimism (i.e., items which support the belief that good things will happen) from low optimism
(i.e., items which support the belief that good things will not happen) which is preferable to the
one-dimensional overall dispositional optimism structure (Segerstrom, Evans, & Eisenlohr-
Moul, 2011). The LOT-R employs a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from I agree a lot to I
disagree a lot.

4.7.1.4. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
There are two dominant dimensions of emotional experience as identified by research;
they are typically labelled Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) (Watson, Clark, &
Tellegen, 1988). Both PA and NA generally account for most of the variance in self-rated affect
(see Watson, 1988). The PANAS was specifically designed to be brief and simple to administer,
and thus contains 10-items related to positive affect and negative affect respectively (Watson
et al., 1988). High negative effect, as a dispositional dimension, is thought to be characterised
by “subjective stress and unpleasurable engagement”, with the absence of these feelings
characterising low negative affect (Crawford & Henry, 2004, p. 246). Dispositional positive
affect is then characterised by the extent to which individuals will experience pleasurable
engagement with their environment, epitomised by enthusiasm and alertness, with those who
experience more lethargy and sadness thought to have low positive affect in contrast (Crawford & Henry, 2004, p. 246). The PANAS is a self-report measure containing 20 items, developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988). It is designed to assess both positive and negative affect. Positive affect “represents the extent to which an individual experiences pleasurable engagement with the environment” (Crawford & Henry, 2004, p. 246). Whereas a high negative affect is characterized by “subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement”, an absence of these feelings indicates low negative affect (Crawford & Henry, 2004, p. 246). The PANAS employs a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Very slightly, if at all to Extremely.

4.7.1.5 Passion Scale
Developed by Vallerand and colleagues (2003) the passion scale specifically measures an individual’s passion. It consists of two, seven-item subscales; one focusing on harmonious passion and, the other focusing on obsessive passion (Rousseau, Vallerand, Ratelle, Mageau, & Provencher, 2002). The scale is designed to be used in two alternative ways, one where the instructions can ask the participant to think of an activity that is most important to them or on the other hand, the researcher can predetermine the activity (Rousseau et al., 2002). In this case, we chose to predetermine the activity to be the work of the applied sport psychologist. The participants are instructed to indicate their agreement with each statement, an example of an item from the obsessive passion subscale is “I almost have an obsessive feeling for my job”, while an example of an item from the harmonious passion subscale is “My work is in harmony with other activities in my life”. The passion scale employs a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from Do not agree at all to completely agree.
4.8 Sample Recruitment

For both studies, participants were recruited from applied sport psychology organisations and associations. For the studies outlined in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, participants had be accredited by their relevant professional association (e.g. AASP) or public regulatory statutory agency (HCPC) and had to have worked in high performance sport i.e. with athletes who had competed at the highest level of competition such as the Olympic or Paralympic Games, the World Cup/Championships, European Cup/Championships, Pan-American or Commonwealth Games and/or work within an academic institution. Participants were recruited from Anglophone countries in order to make the research process manageable, i.e. interviewing, transcription and data coding.

For the study outlined in Chapter 7, participants had to be accredited by one of the aforementioned bodies and; be working with athletes or teams who were competing at the XXXI Olympiad in Rio, 2016. In the qualitative interview study, participants had to themselves be travelling to Rio to work with athletes competing at the games. Purposive target sampling was employed for both studies, emails were sent to applied sport psychologists and a recruitment email was sent to the SPORTPSY Listserv, maintained by Michael Sachs at Temple University. Chain sampling was also employed in the larger study in order to gain a comprehensively rich data set.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design, aims and objectives of this thesis. The philosophy which guided the researcher this was laid out along with the methodological approach taken for each study. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the applied sport psychologist’s general trait characteristics as related to burnout, work
engagement, workaholism, in addition to their use of social support and optimism as resources, thus enabling this research to seek an explanation as to how these constructs may affect the work-based well-being of the participants. By advancing this research in Study 2, it was possible to see how a large international multi-sport event may affect the work-based well-being of the applied sport psychologists by and further influencing burnout and work engagement of these individuals. The thesis will now progress to the research chapters, outlining the procedure, analysis and results and discussion from both Study 1 (Chapter 5 and 6) and Study 2 (Chapter 7). A general discussion will then conclude the thesis.
Chapter 5

Practicing what we preach: Investigating the role of social support in sports psychologists’ well-being.

_I get by with a little help from my friends_

- The Beatles

This chapter is based upon the following published work:
5.1 Preface

As explained in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1), a gap in the research literature has been identified with regard to burnout among applied sport psychologists. The main concern for this study was to explore the process under which an individual would find themselves when experiencing the negative effects of chronic job strain, as well as its proposed antipode work engagement, and how these constructs affect an individual’s work-based well-being.

5.2 Introduction

The application of psychology across a range of settings is increasingly coming under scrutiny. Applied psychology, comprising the fields of clinical, health, forensic, sport and exercise, occupational and educational psychology all have a common challenge of solving personal and social problems associated with human behaviour (Davey, 2011). This study investigated a specific aspect of applied psychology, namely sport or performance psychology, in order to elucidate practitioner well-being and the challenges therein. Firstly, it is worthwhile to explore the broader context in which our practitioners must operate; the nuances of the evolving field of applied sport psychology will be discussed later.

Among the reasons for accountability in our profession are the financial pressures on healthcare systems and the necessity to demonstrate positive client outcomes (APA, 2006), the emergence of clear educational pathways for practitioner psychologists (e.g., sport psychology; Fletcher & Maher, 2013) and the development of competency benchmarks across applied disciplines (Fouad et al., 2009). One step toward meeting the demands for the professionalisation of the discipline has been the development of statutory regulation, which, for example, has been in situ in the UK since 2009 (Health Care Professionals Council; HCPC). The role of this agency is to protect the public by ensuring that applied psychologists meet...
specified standards of training, behaviour and professional skills and as a consequence are “fit to practice.” Under this system practitioners have “a personal responsibility to maintain and manage [one’s] own fitness to practice and are required to engage in self-referral if changes to health and character may impede the ability to practice” (HPC, 2007). Critically, this approach focuses on an individual’s competencies without considering their social context (e.g., working as part of a multidisciplinary team). Furthermore, practitioner self-care is largely overlooked in the standards and the question remains: who will protect the practitioner? This is not a moot point given the potential for compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress (Figley, 2002), burnout and mental health challenges among practitioners (Malinowski, 2014). In addition to practitioner well-being issues, the client may be at risk and consequently self-care is an ethical imperative (Barnett et al., 2007).

### 5.2.1 The Social Context of Sport Psychology

Applied sport psychology is a rapidly growing profession (Arnold & Sarkar, 2014; Campbell & Moran, 2014) that addresses issues central to sport and physical performance, deals with sportsmen, sportswomen and associated professionals, and requires knowledge of factors that can facilitate and enhance sporting performance (Andersen et al., 2001). Andersen and Speed (2010) argued that the primary role of a sport psychologist was the welfare of the client rather than simply focusing on enhancing performance. Thus, the psychologist may share the collaborative goal of seeking performance enhancement, while recognizing the influence of goal achievement on the well-being and mental health of the client (MacIntyre, Barr & Butler, 2014).

This juxtaposition of meeting the goals of performance enhancement and well-being are not new to the field of sport psychology. Historically, sport psychology grew up in physical education departments, subsequently termed “sport-science” or “kinesiology” faculties
Consequently, client mental health and well-being was not typically at the forefront of the interventions, which instead focused upon performance enhancement using psychological skills training programs. This psycho-educational approach did not dilute the application of a more comprehensive psychological approach entirely as the field was still influenced by the 1965 Boulder scientist-practitioner model. In fact, one of the most common interventions in the early years of modern sport psychology was developed by a clinical psychologist for use in sport settings (e.g. Visuo-Motor Behavioural Rehearsal, Suinn, 1997).

In recent years, the commonality between clinicians and sport psychologists has gained precedence. Emerging evidence has suggested that the prevalence of mental health challenges among sporting populations are at least as common as among the non-sporting samples (Nixdorf et al., 2016; Schaal et al., 2011). This challenges the assumption of the prototypical model in the field, the mental health model for sport (Raglin, 2001), which simply linked training load to mental health challenges rather than the myriad of issues that may occur with the social context of a sporting sub-culture (e.g., risk of eating disorders in aesthetic sports; Brewer & Petrie, 2014). Consequently, the requirement for more comprehensive training in mental health for neophyte practitioners is now clearer than ever (MacIntyre et al., 2017).

Practitioner self-regulation is of particular interest to sports psychology because of the potential challenges with regard to managing multiple relationships (including boundaries and dual agency), the potential for isolation, overcoming clients protective nature (Brown et al., 2005) and disparate training routes that consultants have pursued that may not have provided training in specific competencies for self-care and peer support (Aoyagi & Portenga, 2010). One common example is how practitioners operate at the Olympic Games (Birrer et al., 2012). Over three weeks of the competition, they typically interact with athletes in non-traditional time
segments and locations, which may involve multiple roles, exhaustive time commitments, isolation from family and friends, and potential client goal conflict (Andersen et al., 2001). In this environment the burden of ethical behaviour often rests solely with the practitioner and it is essential that they remain self-aware and self-regulating in order to remain a benefit to their clients and ultimately themselves (Haberl & Peterson, 2006).

Some of the aforementioned challenges may resonate with clinical psychologists and a number of these issues have been highlighted by researchers in mental health and ethics (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2007). Service delivery in the sporting context can occur during both formal (e.g., at training) and informal settings (e.g., on the bus to the event) therefore practitioners can themselves feel under pressure to consistently perform (McCann, 2008). The expectation to consistently provide a service is arguably a case of applied psychology in extremis and provides a rationale for our current study, which focuses upon the practitioner as a performer as well as a service provider (Fletcher et al., 2011). This continual pressure on practitioners to perform, managing not only the performance goals of the athlete but their own performance too, may result in burnout.

5.2.2 Burnout as a Risk

Prevailing research in the domain of work and organisational psychology explains the psychological and social factors in determining mental health in the workplace. Building on Karasek’s (1979) job-demand’s control model, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) introduced the job demands-resources model (See Section 3.1.1), which incorporated psychological resources, job resources and job demands as considerations in understanding burnout and work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). This model posits two fairly independent processes, a health impairment process-associated with an end state of burnout-and a motivational process-associated with work engagement (Bakker et al., 2014). In this context, burnout refers a state
of exhaustion and cynicism toward work (Bakker et al., 2014), which is conceptualized as a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Maslach et al., 2001). It has three key dimensions: exhaustion refers to feelings of being overextended and depleted in one’s psychological resources, cynicism or depersonalisation represents the interpersonal context of burnout (See section 2.3.1). It refers to negative and detached responses to aspects of the job, and reduced efficacy or accomplishment is a self-evaluation referring to feelings of incompetence and reduced productivity (Maslach et al., 2001).

Longitudinal research conducted by Sonnentag et al. (2010) found that high demands matched with low psychological detachment, where the individual is unable to stop thinking about work during non-work times, were associated with increased reports of emotional exhaustion in the long term, as previously highlighted in Section 2.2.2. A lack of detachment can increase strain, which negatively affects resource attainment and management, and on a daily basis can negatively influence and individual’s approach to work the following day (Sonnentag, 2012). It has also been suggested that increased strain on individuals, fortified through low levels of psychological detachment, resulted in increased reports of psychosomatic complaints (Sonnentag, 2012).

We adopt the perspective that clinical settings are a specific type of work context, with specific demands and resources, and thus, it is appropriate to adopt work-based theories, rather than general clinical models, in seeking to explain burnout for those who work in clinical settings. From such a perspective, the type of work engaged in by sports psychologists working with athletes is very similar to the person-focused work of medical professions such as doctors and nurses. The job demands-resources model has been applied to such professions, demonstrating high levels of burnout due to the intensive demands imposed by caring for others in need, and particularly due to the high levels of emotional labour that are required
(Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Demerouti et al., 2000, 2009). For example, Dunford, Shipp, Boss and Angermeier (2012) examined burnout across career transitions. Their findings supported the contention that each of the three burnout dimensions differ in their pattern of change over time as a result of career transition type: organisational newcomers, internal job changers (e.g., promotions or lateral moves), and organisational insiders (i.e., job incumbents). Using a large sample of health care employees, over two years, they found that burnout was relatively stable for organisational insiders but slightly dynamic for organisational newcomers and internal job changers. In addition, they found that the dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation were more sensitive to career transition type than reduced personal accomplishment.

Dunford et al.’s (2012) findings are of particular relevance to sport psychologists, whom frequently operate across multiple organisational boundaries, and may hold multiple role identities (Andersen et al., 2001). Similarly, while they may form part of the support function with high performance teams or athletes, their role as a psychologist may mean that they remain somewhat of an “outsider” operating in a professional vacuum. Aoyagi and Portenga (2010) describe this as a role “in which the practitioner is the only person in the environment with knowledge of professional roles, responsibilities, and ethics” (p. 258). Ambiguity resulting from managing multiple role identities is a well-established cause of stress and burnout. For example, research has demonstrated that workers distinguish between organisational, workgroup and career foci of identification (Millward & Haslam, 2013), that there are circumstances when work identity is negatively associated with well-being (Avanzi et al., 2012), and that managing multiple roles is associated with stress and burnout (Rothbard et al., 2005). Critical outcomes of burnout are decreased job performance and increased absenteeism (see Bakker et al., 2014, for a review). Furthermore, burnout has been described as contagious
under certain conditions, with tentative evidence that experiences of burnout can be transferred to others in contact with the burned out individual (Bakker et al., 2005). For psychologists in applied settings, such outcomes will undoubtedly impact on their client interaction and capacity to support them.

Contemporary research has introduced interpersonal strain as an additional dimension of burnout (Consiglio, 2014). Interpersonal strain represents “the feeling of discomfort and disengagement in the relationships with people at work resulting from exceeding social requests and pressures” (Borgogni et al., 2011, p. 875). Research has established its distinctiveness from established burnout dimensions (Borgogni et al., 2011) and moreover, it has been shown to be related to emotional dissonance and health symptoms in hospital staff (Consiglio, 2014). As healthcare professionals, psychologists are also subject to the effects of high levels of interpersonal and emotional demands, which may result in high levels of experienced interpersonal strain. Thus, like any other healthcare professional, psychologists may be particularly susceptible to burnout. However, in contrast to other healthcare professionals, psychologists are acutely aware of self-care techniques for managing the psychological health and well-being of others. Interestingly, there may be expectations that practitioners are expected to be able to manage their mental health appropriately in themselves. Thus, there may be a degree of stigma associated with burnout for a psychologist and this could reduce their engagement with processes such as self-referral. Clients, employees, colleagues, and even family and friends may be perceived as questioning the abilities of a psychologist who is struggling with their own psychological distress (Barnett et al., 2007). However, Bearse et al. (2013) reported that although stigma is not rated highly as a barrier toward seeking personal psychotherapy, almost two thirds of respondents admitted to not seeking psychotherapy at a given time even though they recognized that it could have benefited them. Bearse et al. (2013)
suggest that this could be related to the perceived privacy issues associated with visiting another psychologist, such as being seen as a client of someone else which could deter an applied practitioner from seeking the desirable help.

5.2.3 Work Engagement as a Resource

The job demands-resources model posits that the experience of work engagement is an antidote to burnout (e.g. Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). In this case, work engagement represents a state of mind characterized by feelings of vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigour is characterized by high levels of energy and resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Finally, absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties in detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigour and dedication are considered direct opposites of the exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout (Bakker et al., 2014). Work engagement has been shown to be related to decreases in ill-health, and an increase in job performance and life-satisfaction (Shimazu et al., 2015).

Accumulating evidence demonstrates strong support for the proposition that highly engaged employees are much less likely to experience burnout, and even experience fatigue in a different way (Schaufeli et al., 2006). “Engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities, and they see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their jobs” (Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 702). Moreover, work engagement is fostered when job and personal resources meet the demands faced in the job (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Although high workload and multiple roles are associated with burnout as discussed above, there are situations when the negative effects of such job demands may be
mitigated and engagement can still be experienced. For example, Hakanen et al. (2008) demonstrated that dentists’ engagement was not affected by high workload when they experienced high skill variety. However, when they experienced low skill variety, engagement decreased as a function of increasing qualitative workload. Thus, engagement may contribute the upward spirals of resource gain (Salanova et al., 2010), which can buffer against the negative health impairment spiral of resource loss that can lead to burnout.

5.2.4 The Role of Social Support as a Resource

Social support was discussed earlier (See Section 2.5.1) as one of the most important job resources in combating burnout and facilitating engagement and has been the most extensively studied job resource in buffering against burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2006; Blanch & Aluja, 2012). “Social support” refers to an individual’s belief that help is available from other people in different situations (Cobb, 1976; Mayo et al., 2012). Recent research on interpersonal strain has utilized the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) to account for the relationship between the social environment and burnout. The basis of this theory is that people have a drive to create, foster, conserve, and protect the quality and quantity of their resources (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). Burnout, from this perspective, is a stress outcome resulting from a process of the slow bleed out of resources without any counterbalancing resource gain or replenishment or recovery (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). Utilizing this perspective, social support has been found to be a job resource that buffers the effect of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Bakker et al., 2004; Mayo et al., 2012) and thus should ameliorate the onset of burnout. Social support has also been shown to be inversely related to burnout in a sporting context (DeFreese & Smith, 2013). Experimental research suggests that replenishment or recovery occurs given the occurrence of favourable conditions (Tyler and Burns, 2008). Social support may be a mechanism through which individuals suffering from burnout attempt to create such favourable conditions.
The picture may be somewhat more complex than this, however. One key area of investigation lies in examining the source of social support, which may be work-related (e.g., supervisor, co-workers) or non-work-related (e.g., family; Halbesleben, 2006), and vary in terms of whether it is formal (e.g., counselling service) or informal. As previously mentioned in Section 2.6.1, a meta-analysis of sources of social support and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006) found that the existence of social support as a resource, did not demonstrate relationships across any of the three burnout dimensions. However, when considering the sources of social support, a different view emerged. Work-related sources of social support were more closely associated with exhaustion than depersonalisation or personal accomplishment, while the opposite pattern was found with non-work sources of support (Halbesleben, 2006).

5.3 The Present Study

Social support is encouraged by sport psychologists in the maintenance of an athlete’s well-being (DeFreese & Smith, 2014). Despite the extensive literature establishing that social support is an important job resource in combatting burnout, little research has examined the lived experience of burnout for those who are meant to be experts in its management. In this study, we aimed to explore the experience of burnout for sport psychologists using a qualitative approach. Specifically, we were interested in the lived experience of managing burnout in professionals who “should know better” and the cognitive dissonance associated with both managing athletes’ psychological health and well-being, while simultaneously experiencing burnout themselves.

Secondly, we aimed to encapsulate work engagement and its sources among sport psychologists, specifically examining the different aspects of work engagement and how these differed between those who were deemed to have experienced either low or high levels of burnout.
Finally, we captured critical incidents of burnout experienced by sport psychologists, and qualitatively examined whether those who experienced high or low levels of burnout cited different sources of social support, including formal versus informal, and work-related versus non work-related sources of social support.

5.5 Methods

5.3.1 Participants

Participants were recruited for this research as part of the original study from this doctorate. The participants in this chapter are the same data corpus as those in Chapter 6. A total of 51 participants provided informed consent to participate via an online survey, from a target sample of 80, from which 30 agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. Purposive sampling was employed to obtain a comprehensive exploration of the topics among an international sample of sport psychology practitioners (limited to Anglophone countries i.e. the USA, the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand). Inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) practitioners had to be currently accredited or certified as a sport psychologist by a relevant organisation (i.e. Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP), Health Care Professionals Council, Australian Psychological Society, or Irish Institute of Sport) and (b) they must also work within the high performance environment (have attended an international competition such as the Olympics or Paralympics, World Cup, European Cup, Pan-American or the Commonwealth Games in the role of sport psychologist or have worked with athletes who have competed at this level). Institutional ethical approval was granted for all aspects of this study. Attrition occurred for both the survey where 12 of the sample were excluded due to incomplete information (or because they did not fit criteria) and the interviews as 4 participants did not respond to the invitation to be interviewed and another 4 were unable to be scheduled appropriately. In sum, thirty practitioners (Males \( n = 18 \), Females \( n = 12 \)) completed the
qualitative study (See Table 4.1) which resulted in a 58% response rate for interview as this was based on the numbers that completed the initial survey.

Table 5.1 Participant Demographics and Accreditation Characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Accrediting/Licensing Body</th>
<th>Total Accredited</th>
<th>% of Total (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Association of Applied Sport Psychology (Certified Consultant)</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>3.89 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Health Care Professionals Council (Practitioner Psychologist, Sport Psychology)</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>3.72 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australian Psychological Society (College of Sport and Exercise Psychology)</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>2.26 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Irish Institute of Sport (Registered Member)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.2 Methodology

Institutional ethical approval was granted for this study and subsequently, 80 practitioners who met the inclusion criteria for the study were identified, emailed, and invited to participate. The recruitment email detailed the process of participation, with individuals invited to complete an online questionnaire to glean basic demographic information and confirmation that they were accredited as practitioners, this also served as informed consent for all participants. After they completed the questionnaire, participants received a personal email thanking them for completing it and then they were sent an email outlining the next phase of the study.

Semi-structured interviews were organised, taking into account international time zones and the availability of both the participant and researcher, and conducted via Skype™. The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 to 100 minutes and all were audio-recorded with
consent from the participant. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were sent to each participant for approval.

5.3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through NVivo V.10 software. The qualitative data analysis utilised a thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and proceeded in a number of steps. The researcher became familiar with the data through transcription and spent some time re-reading the script and re-listening to the audio recordings. Open coding determined the separation of the data initially; as the interviews were semi-structured, answers from different sections were able to be coded under the same heading at this point. Following the guidelines from Braun and Clarke (2006) initial codes were generated and line-by-line analysis was conducted in order to gather relevant data for each potential theme. The coded themes were isolated and more specific themes within each section were identified. By subjecting the data to a deductive analysis, the classification of the information and further reduction of the information into manageable units served to reflect both the reality of the participants and to shed light on their interpretation of their reality from their interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Each interview script was scrutinised for examples of burnout as defined by Maslach (2003, 2011) and subjectively assigned the attribute of either moderate to high levels of experienced burnout (high burnout), moderate to low levels of experienced burnout (low burnout) or experiencing no burnout (not-applicable). Examples of burnout coded under the burnout node were examined to determine the different levels of burnout as experienced by the participants.

Work engagement experiences were examined in all participants comparing level of experienced burnout. Inter-rater reliability was achieved through sharing access to the project
via NVivo. This allowed my supervisors to examine the coding process throughout the analysis work and contribute their own coding suggestions to the research project. All themes were verified by the supervisory team in accordance to guideline set out in Elliot, Fischer and Rennie (1999). This is consistent with qualitative investigations within sport psychology (Culver et al., 2012) and among recent examples (see Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Any disagreements in the coding structure or nodes generated were discussed in depth at organised supervisory meetings.

All interviews received both a semantic and latent level of interpretation. Where possible, content was organised based on appearance (i.e. the words used or questions under which the answers were given) this semantic level of interpretation allowed for initial organisation of answers into recognisable themes. However, all content was also subjected to a latent level of interpretation, where possible, content was assigned a code based on the underlying connotation of what was being said (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, a frequency analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which those with high burnout versus low burnout recalled the use of social support and specifically where that support was sourced. The process of qualitative analysis employed was not rigid but was instead fluid and flexible in nature, so these steps followed in an interactive fashion. This was based on the approach of Braun and Clarke (2006) who stated that “analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing” (p.86).

5.4 Results

The findings are discussed under the primary themes of burnout, work engagement, and social support, followed by discussions, conclusions and suggestions for future research.
5.4.1 Burnout

Each participant was subjectively categorised as either ‘high burnout’ or ‘low burnout’ or ‘non-applicable.’ However, examples of burnout were readily reported by almost all participants. Similar to the findings of Dunford et al. (2012) emotional exhaustion was the most frequently cited dimension of burnout reported, as exemplified by P02/P12:

...And when we talk about depression and things, I actually think looking back on it now, and having had a year’s distance from it; it was not a positive experience in my life, I contemplated giving up, I was so unhappy in my position.

And it can cause emotional exhaustion because sometimes there aren’t things that you can do about it. If I’m frustrated with a coach or two ...and then you get frustrated and then you question why do I even do this? ...I don’t take it personally, but you know it’s frustrating because they don’t allow you to do your job the way it needs to be done and it creates emotional exhaustion and frustration and gets you to question whether or not you want to even be here anymore.

Feelings of emotional exhaustion were not limited to those who had experienced high levels of burnout. Even those in the low burnout group had episodic experiences of exhaustion, with one participant (P04) stating:

But at that time I do remember vividly having that feeling of...it was more the exhaustion mentally and physical and I just thought “I’ve nothing there, I can’t give you anything.”

In contrast to those who had experienced high levels of burnout, these latter reports related to less sustained experiences and a single case load. Once the competitive season finished, these feelings of exhaustion dissipated. For some participants, especially those who had declared that they held a dual role in academia, while choosing to take on additional applied work, the
balancing of existing workload and their willingness to take on extra work to satisfy their own desires took a toll on their resources; P14 highlights this issue by saying:

*I still loved doing the applied work [but] it was at that point just another thing that I had to get done versus something I really enjoyed and looked forward to because I was just trying to cram it in along with anything else. And so I’ve been really trying to work towards trying to chunk off time periods which are specifically devoted to my applied work, that way it sorts of stays in that box and then my academic stuff stays within a different box ...*

Although instances of the following were less readily reported, participants from both high and low burnout out groups had also purportedly suffered from decreased feelings of efficacy, the dimension highlighted by Maslach et al. (2001) as being self-evaluative. It is highly plausible that the work being conducted was to a required standard, however feelings of incompetence and reduced productivity can negatively affect an individual’s sense of well-being. P21 highlights this issue in the following excerpt:

*...well let's see my, my performance was not good, I stopped doing things to the best that I could I started doing things just to get them done. So that was pretty difficult until another option was available. So I stopped being really proud of the work I was doing, which is never a good thing I always would be proud of what I'm doing rather than not.*

As with work engagement, experiences of burnout were common and varied amongst the sport psychologists. What appears to differ between participants is the resources employed to combat the negative impact of burnout on their well-being. Two appear prevalent, the experience of work engagement as a buffer against burnout, and the utilisation of social support as a social resource.
### 5.4.2 Work Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-Theme</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Engagement</td>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td>Individuals are fully concentrated and engrossed in their activities, time passes quickly and they find it hard to detach themselves from work (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Strong involvement in one's work accompanied by feelings of enthusiasm and significance and by a sense of pride and inspiration (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vigour</td>
<td>High levels of energy and mental resilience while working. The willingness to invest effort in one's work and the ability to avoid being easily fatigued. Persistence in the face of difficulties (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flow</td>
<td>A sense that one's skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, in a goal-directed, rule bound action system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing. Concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems. Self-consciousness disappears and the sense of time becomes distorted. People are willing to do an activity for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The practitioners were all able to recall instances of work engagement and verbalise what work engagement meant to them. Using a matrix coding query, we found that those who had not experienced high levels of burnout recalled instances of all three dimensions of work engagement at a different intensity than those who had experienced high levels of burnout. Statements regarding work engagement were coded as whether they represented vigour, absorption or dedication (see Table 4.2 for an explanation for each code). These subthemes were deductively driven from the work engagement definition by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004).
Dedication was identified most readily irrespective of their reported levels of burnout. As stated by P04:

> Without question it’s when you see that light bulb moment in somebody’s eyes. When they have come to you wanting to be somewhere in their life in terms of their sports performance, or other areas in their life, because it wouldn’t be only sport that I deal with an athlete, there would be other issues that would come up. You’ll see somebody and you’ll know in their mind they want to be able to achieve something when they come to you but they usually are away from that, they’re not getting it for whatever reason, and then when I can identify what are the obstacles, and the barriers and the gaps that are in the way, and help them realise that they actually already have the tools to deal with it, and all I’m going to do is facilitate them in bringing them out. That Ping! Moment when they go “Ooooh I can do this!” … It’s just – I love that, I love that! It’s such a kick.

Both vigour and absorption were commonly reported, but more frequently by those who had not experienced high levels of burnout, compared to those who had experienced high levels of burnout. An example of absorption is as follows (P07):

> I can relate to that especially when you’re working with people it’s difficult to have a concept of time because you’re so engaged. You have to be so in the moment to actually be present with the individual. You almost forget how much time has passed definitely when I’m working one-on-one with people and also when researching and reading I would feel the same thing for a lot of time has passed and not really conscious of that because I am very engaged in what I’m doing.
Similarly, P17 shares their experience of vigour during an episode of high engagement as having:

...High energy levels, kind of really excited about the challenge of doing what I was doing. I felt really motivated, which made me be really organised and plan out what I was doing and think about things thoroughly.

Although these quotes are only a small extract from the sample of recorded quotes, they clearly convey the different areas within which sport psychologists experience work engagement. Furthermore, they also reflect the degree to which practitioners are passionate about their work, how they garner meaning from working with athletes; seeing them grow as both performers and individuals.

5.4.3 Social Support

A matrix coding query was conducted, looking at the frequency of each social support source for those who had experienced high and low levels of burnout. Our findings indicated that there appeared to be some differences in the magnitude with which individuals with low versus high experienced burnout utilised different sources of social support (See Table 4.3).

The analysis revealed that participants identified several sources of social support, and for the purposes of our analysis, these were categorised and themed into work based versus non-work based. Firstly, work based sources of social support were divided into formal and informal sources of support. Examples of formal work support included support received from work-provided counselling, supervisors and superordinates, and formalised peer groups. Informal work support sources included informal mentors and informal peer groups. Non-work based sources of support included, for example, family and friends, personal counselling (e.g., if sought by the individual independently to their place of work) and peer support, which
included colleagues who were explicitly identified as part of their organisation but who did not bear the role of sport psychologist (e.g., other sport science and medical personnel).
Table 5.3 Explanation of coding categories for Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Child Node (i)</th>
<th>Child Node (ii)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>Any quotes that encapsulate the idea/ benefits of social support.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Work</td>
<td>Social support from outside the field of sport psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends</td>
<td>Family and friends unrelated to sport psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>This is where a participant has sought professional counselling or guidance outside of their organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>Alternatively, people who work in their organisation but are not within the same field i.e. other service providers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Social support from within the field of sport psychology or formally from within the academic organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Where a participant cites using services provided by their organisation i.e., an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational</td>
<td>A formalised peer group within the organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>A person or person(s) who has been formally assigned to the participant to provide guidance in a managerial capacity. Their direct line manager, HOD, director of performance etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Someone within the organisation who acts as an informal mentor to the participant.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Or a previous mentor who the participant continues to seek for advice and guidance i.e., previous PhD supervisor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>Friends or colleagues within the organisation who the participant turns to in order to vent, etc. Or other Sport Psychologists who they collaborate with but who do not work in their organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the findings, work based sources of social support were cited most frequently. Work based social support can contribute to an individual’s identification with an organisation, especially for those who work virtually (i.e. working from home or on the road and outside the traditional centralised office; Weisenfield, et al., 2001). The most notable source of formalised social support was support from a supervisor when one participant (P15) stated that:

“It’s nice to be able to run things by somebody. I also have a supervisor who lives in a city interstate, and I can always just pick up the phone and ring him there and say: hey, I’ve got this problem what do you think?”

Meta-analytic reviews have concluded that social support from a supervisor has been shown to decrease the perceived workload of an individual (Bowling et al., 2015). Their meta-analysis also showed a similar relationship between support from one’s co-workers and work stress. Participants reported using this source of social support in both formal and informal ways as P02 commented:

“If you’re talking about peer support within an academic situation I’ve got people I turn to, [in the] research situation again, I’ve got people to turn to…. I’ve had a number of, kind of formalised peer supervision groups for my applied work and I find them invaluable.

This quote is supported by another participant, P07, who states:

“[another practitioner] was in London during the games and like I didn't meet up with him but we were in pretty regular contact we were - and it was informal but it was helpful because I knew, he knew what I was feeling you know and I remember that he sent me a couple of messages that were really kind of spot on and that was a very informal thing but it was, it was an outlet, and I knew, I think I did ring him once and we had a pretty long conversation yeah.”
Both types of peer related social support were cited as being instrumental to managing work stress, however informal peer support was more commonly cited. Those who had not experienced high levels of burnout reported both sources more readily than those who had experienced high levels of burnout.

Another form of social support commonly reported by the practitioners was that obtained from friends and/or family. Lapierre and Allen (2006) believe that both emotional support and instrumental sustenance (relieving family members of home-based tasks or responsibilities) can alleviate work-family strain and contribute to employee well-being. One participant, P21 stated:

*I always say that my wife is fantastic and very supportive, and she knows when I get busy I'm going to do a little bit less of the work around the house, she's going to help out with that...I would also say that socially on top of my wife, I have a group of friends, a very, very fond group of friends that are just a fantastic social support network. To the extent that if I ever say I need something, I will tell them I need something, and they will do everything that they can to help."

The above quote shows the influence of both friends and family on relieving work-family strain, which ultimately reduces an individual’s perceived work load thus reducing his or her work-related stress enhancing their well-being.

However, the most common sources of social support accessed by our sample seem to be informal in nature. Participant did not indicate that the support was organised or formalised and was frequently sought on an ad hoc basis. Informal peer support was the second most highly cited form of support after family support. Those who had not experienced high burnout cited informal peer support more often than those who had experienced high levels of burnout. An example of informal support is provided by another participant, P24 who states:
I have been pretty fortunate for the eight years that I have been at the (organisation) because I have had a great group of sports psychologists and clinical psychologists that have been part of, that I have shared my work with. And that group has change quite significantly over the 8 years, but it has always been a big source of professional support for me.

Interestingly, those who were deemed to have experienced high levels of burnout cite family and friends more frequently than those who had experienced lower levels of burnout, with a 3:2 citation ratio for those who have experienced high levels versus those who had not. Family support often comes in the form of the ability to vent or detach from work. As one participant P05 states:

So I think that of course there is my family, my brother, my father, my mother – I know I can always talk to them if there’s something annoying me or pissing me off about something, or that I’m stressed out about something.

And another practitioner, P21, comments:

But my wife and my friends, we escape work I mean when we're together we very rarely talk about the work that we're doing. But we're doing fun activities you know whether it's related to a youth sporting contest or you know I have a group of friends that one of us holds a get-together maybe once every second week, so we're always together. So, like we vacation together so you know it allows us to escape really.

Those who cited “friends” in the field of sport psychology were coded under “Work/informal/peer”. In sum, participants used social support as a resource, indicating the important role that this resource plays in these lives. However, support seemed rather unorganised, heavily based on family and friend support systems, with greater focus on short-term relief rather than long-term coping.
5.5 Discussion

_Burnout_. Participants in this study who combined their work in academic institutions as well as practicing applied sport psychology, often cited bringing work home, working from home, staying in the office late, or attending sporting events out of office hours, indicating that there might be little true psychological detachment from work. From a purely applied perspective, there were instances cited where the participants reported they were unable to detach from their work, especially when on site at camp or competition, which echoes the sentiment by Schein (1999) that a consultant is always consulting. Despite the fulfilment of their job, all participants reported experiencing incidents of exhaustion at some point in their career, but only some reported full-blown experiences of burnout.

_Work engagement_. Engagement was frequently cited by our participants. When people are engaged in what they do, their well-being (both physical and psychological) will increase (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Hakanen and Schaufeli (2012) found that even though burnout can predict a person’s level of depression in the long term, the positive effect of work engagement on life satisfaction outweighs the negative effects of burnout. Those who had experienced high levels of burnout cited less frequently all dimensions of work engagement but were still able to recall times of work engagement and passion regarding their work. Therefore, it is invaluable to an individual’s work-related well-being to reduce instances of burnout and to support long-term work engagement.

_Social support_. Burnout was experienced by the participants in this study. However, a resource that can both buffer the individual from burnout and foster work engagement is social support. According to Hobfoll’s (1989) conservation of resources theory, social support is a key resource that can preserve valued resources. In our study, we concluded that social support
often facilitates recovery or can be the source of recovery i.e., when an individual’s loved ones will encourage them to take time off and detach from work.

Support from supervisors has also been found not only to protect work engagement during times of high stress, but to be a key resource in encouraging work engagement in employees (Bakker et al., 2007). Furthermore, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also found evidence for a positive relationship between social support (both support from colleagues and supervisory coaching) and work engagement. On the other hand, job resources had a negative effect on burnout, meaning that the greater the resources, the less likely an individual is to burn out.

Notably, our sample highlighted the frequent use of informal forms of social support and rarely reported using formal forms of social support. Prior research has suggested that a main reason for not seeking professional help in terms of personal psychotherapy is the perceived difficulty in finding an acceptable therapist (Bearse et al., 2013). While this may be a contributing factor to the more commonly reported reliance on informal social support, it is also possible that due to individualised nature of the work of many practitioners, having formalised social support is less available. Rhodius (2014) recommends establishing peer support groups to combat this potential isolation but notes that it is not required by an accrediting body other than during supervised training, with the exception of the Australian accreditation process for practicing psychologists. Interestingly, Cogan, Flowers, Haberl, McCann, and Borlabi (2012) highlighted the benefits of working in teams during the provision of psychological support to athletes at the Olympic Games. This formal peer-support structure was unique, and it may be a useful way to manage risk among practitioners during periods of intensive workload.
Future research could investigate the challenges of practitioners staving off burnout by targeting the formal peer support networks and exploring the role of social support, boundary issues and specific self-care behaviours, which may include what Walsh (2011) has termed ‘therapeutic lifestyle changes.’ These lifestyle changes proposed by Walsh are each linked to mental health benefits and include (effective nutrition, exercise and physical activity). Other possibilities for future research include mindfulness interventions for practitioners. They could be implemented into practitioners’ daily life for self-care in addition to their use to enhance the consultation preparation process. A recent study reported that sport psychology practitioners tend to use mindfulness activities within consultation sessions, but not for their own self-care as practitioners (McAlarnen, 2015). Another interesting and fruitful avenue for future research would be to specifically longitudinally investigate well-being in a select cohort of applied sport psychologists over a concerted block of time. This block of time optimally would coincide with a major sporting event (e.g. Olympic Games, world championships) which would see this group of practitioners work prior to, during, and after this major event with teams and individuals. The benefits of investigating sport psychologist’s well-being in the lead-up to, during and after a major sporting event will shed light on the unique demands placed on applied sport psychologists. Ultimately this type of research may lead to practitioner specific guidelines and recommendations regarding the promotion of appropriate self-care.

5.6 Contribution to JD-R Model

This research contributes to the JD-R Model through highlighting the job resource of social support does in fact detract from job demands and thus results in lower feelings of job strain, manifesting as burnout. It expands on the model by indicating that source of social support may have an impact on the effect this resource has on the resultant job strain an individual may experience.
The participants were also able to recall and cite times of work engagement. Indeed, those who experienced higher burnout, cited experiences of work engagement less frequently, which supports the above model showing that job strain (burnout) has a negative effect on motivation, manifesting as work engagement. This result further supports the idea that one cannot only strive to experience less burnout but must also protect their motivation through cultivating resources.

5.7 Conclusion

This study has provided tentative evidence for the role of social support in ameliorating burnout and other challenges to mental health in a sample of applied psychology practitioners. Specifically, the role that peer and supervisor based social support has on the alleviation of subjectively reported burnout of applied sport psychologists. Instead, positive work engagement was integral to the practitioners’ experiences and the role of formal support networks may be a key feature to consider (Cogan et al., 2012). Indeed, it may be imperative for applied sport psychologists to build and maintain formal support through peer and mentor networks in order to protect and enhance their work-based well-being. As a profession, this is not required, unlike our clinical or counselling brethren, and it may be time to reconsider this stance as the industry moves forward into more standardised accreditation. It is arguable that the social context rather than individual competencies was a key consideration in the development of psychological resources. Applied sport psychologists act as support to many athletes and sports professionals, often instructing them to live balanced lifestyles and encouraging them to build a strong and supportive network around them, yet according to our study this is not always the case with the practitioners themselves. Burnout appears to creep into this profession regardless of the high rate of work engagement. Hakanen and Schaufeli (2012) found that even though burnout can predict a person’s level of depression in the long
term, the positive effect of work engagement on life satisfaction outweighs the negative effects of burnout. Indeed, this research shows that applied sport psychologists can experience periods of burnout, whilst also experiencing work engagement. This contributes to the idea that burnout and work engagement are separate, yet correlated, kinds of employee well-being (Schaufeli et al., 2007). Therefore, it is valuable to not only reduce instances of burnout but to support and encourage long-term work engagement.

This research adds to the accumulating evidence and notion that mental health and indeed the viability of applied psychology rests not just on the achievement of successful outcomes for clients but – also – on the ongoing mental health of practitioners. Furthermore, future research can build on our findings in exploring the optimal use of psychological and social resources in reducing chances of burnout of applied psychologists.
Chapter 6
The Dark Side of Optimism in Applied Sport Psychologists

Optimism is the madness of insisting that all is well when we are miserable.

- Voltaire
6.1 Introduction

As part of the same data collection process as Chapter 5 this chapter concludes the results of the first study, the participants in this research study are the same as those in Chapter 5. The focus turns to the applied sport psychologists’ use of optimism. Optimism is noted as a personal resource which protects the individual from the strain of job demands, and directly influencing the motivational process of the JD-R and result in work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, the research shows that despite the participants identifying with the construct of work engagement, they often concurrently identified with the construct of workaholism. In this study, participants were able to recall incidences of working compulsively and even being obsessed with their work (Sussman, 2012). They recalled taking work home and sacrificing recovery, often referring to environmental influences as a catalyst to this working style. Yet, the participants also identified with being either highly or realistically optimistic. Therefore, it is proposed that their optimism may induce workaholic tendencies through planning fallacy (Buehler, Griffin & Ross, 1994) and unrealistic optimism (Shepperd, Waters, Weinstein, & Klein, 2015). This chapter using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) presents the findings of the first study and the implications for practitioners.

6.1.1 Unrealistic Optimism

Optimism is a cognitive construct which also related to motivation, meaning that optimism is related to overall positive expectancies as well as the exertion of effort (Carver & Scheier, 2014). Optimistic expectations can positively influence health and well-being by lowering an individual’s stress and anxiety (Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower & Gruenewald, 2000). Yet people continually make unrealistically positive assumptions about their future (c.f. Sharot, Korn & Dolan, 2011). These unrealistic positive assumptions can actually have a negative effect on the individual, lowering caution when it comes to health, financial and
emotional costs (Sharot et al., 2011). Therefore, while optimism can be seen as positive, there may be a risk associated with this resource. A risk which must be recognised.

This risk can be in the form of unrealistic optimism or optimism bias (Sharot, 2011). A person is “unrealistically optimistic if they predict a personal future outcome will be more favourable than that suggested by relevant, subjective standard” (Shepperd, Waters, Weinstein, & Klein, 2015, p. 1). Having high levels of optimism or unrealistic optimism can be maladaptive. Unrealistic optimism is linked to negative consequences for both physical and psychological health (Dillard, Midboe, & Klein, 2009; Innanen, Tolvanen, & Salmela-Aro, 2014; McNulty & Fincham, 2012). Tentative findings have even identified the potential dark side of over-optimism (Coelho, 2010; Seligman, et al., 1990). Indeed, Hmieleski and Baron (2009) suggest that the effects of optimism may be curvilinear and high levels of optimism may not be a beneficial resource for the individual. In the case of a highly optimistic individual they may often falsely underestimate their own personal risk in comparison to their peers for developing illness or disease. Moreover, they will often class themselves as below average in likelihood to suffering ill health (Carver & Scheier, 2014; Peterson, 2000).

Eid, Meland, Matthews and Johnsen (2005) demonstrated that dispositional optimism was negatively related to situational awareness in a sample of naval and army cadets. In organisational settings, planning fallacy is a prediction phenomenon whereby an individual will optimistically, and even unrealistically, underestimate the amount of time needed to complete task, even though individuals may have had previous experiences of the task taking longer in the past (Buehler & Griffin, 2015; Buehler, Griffin, & Ross, 1994). Individuals may be aware that their previous predictions were overly optimistic, yet they believe that their current prediction is realistic, thus holding two contradictory beliefs (Buehler, et al., 1994). It is time
to consider that high levels of optimism could lead to working excessively hard, and that the individuals who do so may exhibit workaholic tendencies.

6.1.2 Workaholism

Workaholism is defined as “the compulsion or uncontrollable need to work incessantly” (Oates, 1971, p. 11). Several decades of research have investigated how this tendency to work excessively hard (e.g. over 11 hours per day) affects an individual’s well-being or ill-being (Balducci et al., 2016; Spence & Robins, 1992; Sussman, 2012; Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007; van der Hulst, 2003). The consequences can move further than the individual with overworking affecting relationships and life satisfaction (Sussman, 2012). Working environments with permeable boundaries between life and work, greater levels of autonomy and the experience of high levels of passion can garner high involvement resulting in long working hours and strong commitment (Currie & Eveline, 2011; Hogan, Hogan, & Hodgins, 2016). This is especially the case when particular characteristics are displayed by an individual (Currie & Eveline, 2011), characteristics which are also present and exhibited by sport performers and within the sporting industry, by both athletes and support staff. For example, perfectionism (Mazzetti, Schaufeli, & Guglielmi, 2014), achievement motivation, conscientiousness and self-efficacy (Allen, Geenlees, & Jones, 2013; Bovornusvakool, Vodanovich, Ariyabuddhiphongs, & Ngamake, 2012) can all predispose an individual toward developing workaholism. Achievement orientated people are more prone to becoming addicted to work, as they may see working excessively as a dependable avenue to achieving work related goals (Ng et al., 2007). Work can be seen as the only avenue through which to strive. Therefore, the individual becomes dependent on work to fulfil their sense of self-efficacy and thus potentially ignoring activities or commitments outside of work (Mazzetti et al., 2014). Unfortunately, the sporting industry, which is rife with achievement-oriented individuals, is not immune to developing workaholic tendencies. It is also an industry which does not follow a
normal nine to five working schedule, but the passion and pride which comes hand in hand with this industry can also carry its own risks, specifically overworking (Swanson & Kent, 2016).

### 6.1.3 The Relationship between Optimism and Workaholism

There is research and theory to support the contention that resources are beneficial to maintaining well-being in the workplace (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009) and to overcoming workaholic tendencies or environments (Schaufeli et al., 2009). On the other hand, research also suggests that we can sometimes have ‘too much of a good thing’ (McNulty & Fincham, 2012). High levels, unrealistic, or biased optimism can have a negative effect, by leading individuals to routinely assume that bad things will not happen to them (Spence & Robbins, 1992). Coupled with the inability to learn from previous negative outcomes (Sharot et al., 2011), it may result in individuals taking on too much work as they are too optimistic about how quickly they can complete tasks or about the amount of involvement that will be required (Shepperd et al, 2015). This can result in overbooked schedules and heavy workloads, and work encroaching on personal and free time, which may affect an individual’s well-being and life satisfaction (Newby-Clark et al., 2000).

Sport psychology consultants face the same issues as psychologists in other domains e.g. acting ethically, ensuring work-life balance, money management, job security and confidentiality (Koocher & Keith-Speigel, 2008). Nevertheless, there are issues that are unique to sport psychology practice. In general, the field of sport psychology itself is relatively new, pivoting on the betterment of an individual, acting as forerunners for the goals of “growth and psychological enhancement” (Aoyagi, Portenga, Poczwardowski, Cohen, & Statler, 2012, p. 32). It is gaining popularity and momentum (Moran, 2004), but comes with an idiosyncratic environment. For instance, often psychologists working in the high-performance sport context fulfil multiple roles (i.e., performance advisor, counsellor, team manager etc) causing potential
boundary issues (Hays, 2006). Consultations may be conducted in informal settings rather than in an office (McCann, 2008) and many consultants find themselves travelling, eating and sharing accommodation with athletes or management staff (Stapleton, Hankes, Hays, & Parham, 2010).

Often an applied sport psychologist is required to hold down an academic role or alternative form of income whilst seeking additional applied experience (Clark et al., 2016), which would reduce the amount of free time in their possession. Applied sport psychologists believe the more time spent with athletes the better as it provokes a feeling of effective service (Lindsay, 2014). As a result, consultation may require flexible meeting times and durations (Mazzetti et al., 2014) and non-traditional service provision (e.g. during travel journey) potentially blurring the line between roles as well as between work and non-work settings (Sharp & Hodge, 2014). Andersen, Van Raalte and Brewer (2001) note that sport psychology consultation has evolved to not only include performance enhancement but also counselling/clinical psychology issues. Multiple roles of applied sport psychologists could potentially blur the boundary between work and non-work time (Moran & Toner, 2017). Effective consulting at major competitions requires an applied sport psychologist to behave consistently. This precipitates a prime environment for overworking with practitioners never turning off even if it means contributing to the team in ways outside of their role (Simons & Andersen, 1995).

6.2 Aims

This study aimed to explore the optimism levels of applied sport psychologists through a qualitative lens. Additionally, this study sought to to gain a unique insight into the experiences of applied sport psychologists working in both the academic and applied practitioner sector,
examining their self-reported incidences of workaholic tendencies. Finally, the role that optimism plays in the manifestation of workaholic tendencies was investigated.

6.3 Methods

6.3.1 Participants

Participants in this study were recruited as part of the original research conducted in this thesis, they make up the same data corpus as the participants in Chapter 5. A total of 51 participants logged onto the online survey, which gathered general demographic information, educational attainment, work experience, and information on professional affiliation and accreditation. Of the over 50 respondents to the online survey, 12 did not complete the questionnaire in full or did not fit the inclusion criteria. Four did not respond to the invitation to be interviewed and 4 were unable to be scheduled for interview due to time differences or lack of availability and schedule clashes between participant and researcher. As a result, 30 applied sport psychologists (18 males; 12 females; 58% response rate for interview; see Table 6.1 for more detailed demographic information) were included in the analyses from an original pool of 51 who consented to participate in the study. Inclusion criteria were as follows:

(a) practitioners had to be a certified sport psychologist or a member of a relevant national organisation (i.e. Association of Applied Sport Psychology, Health Care Professionals Council, Australian Psychological Society, or Sport Ireland Institute);

(b) practitioners must also work within the high-performance environment, with experience attending a high-level international competition such as the Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Cup or Championship, European Cup or Championship, Pan-American or Commonwealth Games, or have worked with athletes who have attended these competitions; or

(c) work within an academic institution.
The purposeful international sample was limited to Anglophone countries, and comprised 13 based in North America, 8 based in the UK, 5 in Australasia and 4 based in the Republic of Ireland. An international sample was recruited to capture potentially diverse opinions on work environment, cross-cultural differences in optimism and other factors relating to diversity.

6.3.2 Procedure

The EHS Faculty ethics committee granted ethical approval (Approval No. 2013-03-48 EHS; See Appendix 3). Participants were recruited via email to the sport psychology listserv (url: https://listserv.temple.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=SPORTPSY). The recruitment email (see Appendix 3) explained the process of participation, included a link to the online survey, and details of the second phase of the study. Respondents who met the inclusion criteria were contacted via email in order to schedule the semi-structured interview phase of testing. Twenty-nine of the thirty interviews were conducted via Skype™, with one interview conducted in person.

A semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix 4) ensured that the same topics were covered in a systematic manner with each participant, while allowing for flexibility in the lines of enquiry ensuring a continual flow of conversation throughout (a copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 4). The interviews began by asking general open-ended questions pertaining to the participants’ experiences of applied sport psychology, including asking how the participants got into the field of sport psychology as part of a rapport building process. Next, the participants’ experiences of burnout, workaholism and work engagement or flow were discussed. A series of prompts and probes were used to elicit further responses during the interview. Finally, the participants questioned on their experiences of resources, such as optimism. CIT (Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004), was employed. This technique uses an individual’s recollection of a specific event, or incident, rather than generalisations or opinions.
(Coetzer, Redmond & Sharafizad, 2012). It is designed to encourage the participant to recall in rich detail, their personal experience of a specific topic. Furthermore, it facilitates responses from those in the best position to give the required observation (Gremler, 2004). If they had not experienced the topic in question directly themselves, they were prompted to recall a time when they witnessed a colleague embodying the characteristic. Participants were encouraged to recall their own experiences over anyone else’s. Workaholic tendencies were examined (e.g. Was there a time in your career where you felt you were working excessively hard?), as well as their use of optimism as a personal resource (e.g. Was there a time that you can recall where you remained confident or positive in your approach despite those around you being negative or pessimistic?/ Can you tell me about a specific time when you felt that good things were going to result from your work/ when you persevered in the face of adversity?). The interviews ranged from 38-100 mins. in duration (Mean duration = of 63 mins; SD = 16.6 mins.). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and subsequently approved by participants via email for accuracy.

6.3.3 Analytic Strategy

Data analysis was conducted using NVivo™ V.10 software and a thematic analysis framework was employed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The aim of the research was to examine the participants own perceptions of workaholism and optimism, therefore a combination of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was utilised to find relevant themes. Firstly, open coding determined the initial division of the data. The semi-structured interviews enabled answers from different sections to be coded under the same heading. Workaholism was coded deductively, driven by the work of Ng et al. (2007), with instances of workaholism separated into affective, behavioural and cognitive dimensions.
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After initial codes were generated, line-by-line analysis was conducted in order to gather relevant data for each potential theme. The coded themes were isolated and the more specific themes within each section were identified deductively. Through this deductive analysis, the classification of the information and further reduction of the information served to reflect the reality of the participants and its interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Inter-rater reliability was achieved through sharing access to the project via NVivo. This allowed my supervisors to examine the coding process throughout the analysis work. Themes were verified by all supervisors in accordance with guideline from Elliot et al. (1999). Any disagreements in the coding structure or nodes generated were discussed in depth at organised supervisory meetings. Finally, matrix coding analysis was conducted to investigate the prevalence of workaholic tendencies.

6.4 Results and Discussion

The findings from this study compare realistically optimistic with highly optimistic individuals. Additionally, themes in relation to the subjectively identified levels of optimism are discussed, e.g. the compulsion to work; obsession with work and sport; how multiple roles can influence over working; the influence of the environment and sacrificing recovery. Finally, results and the implications of workaholism and the influence of optimism on workaholic tendencies are presented.
### 6.4.1 Participant Demographics

**Table 6.1 Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51-54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Work</td>
<td>&lt;35%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≥60%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 shows the demographic information for all participants. The majority of participants were between the ages of 35 and 54 ($n = 9$). One participant did not declare their age. All participants engaged in applied work, with four declaring that 100% of their time was dedicated to this, other work that the participants identified with included academic teaching, research or administration.
6.4.2 Optimism

Each interviewee was classified subjectively as either realistically optimistic or highly optimistic (for an example see Figure 1). Individuals who are optimistic will have a generalised belief of favourable experiences in their future and will persevere in the face of adversity (Carver et al., 2010; Peterson, 2000). Participants were given a definition of optimism and asked whether they agree with the sentiment of it. Participants had to recall a specific time when they were optimistic in the face of adversity. The answers to were interpreted in order to identify if they were either realistically optimistic or highly optimistic. No one was classified to a low optimism category. All participants referred to themselves as being optimistic. This view is supported by Peterson (2000) who highlighted that most people hold higher opinions of themselves and consider themselves optimistic.

6.4.3 Workaholism

The deductive thematic analysis revealed that the participants in the study were indeed driven by a compulsion to work and that their tendency to engage in overworking was not specifically due to high workload. It also shows that increased workload was often taken on by choice. Moreover, participants would create multiple roles for themselves specifically designing their working schedule to involve other commitments outside of their primary working role. Finally, the environment also created a negative influence on workaholism as well as an obsession in work and sport along with sacrificing recovery playing a role in normalising the overworking environment. See table 6.1 for workaholism codes. All themes are discussed below.
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The Dark Side of Optimism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Node</th>
<th>Child Node</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workaholism</td>
<td>Any quotes that encapsulate the idea of Workaholism</td>
<td>“…the compulsion or the uncontrollable need to work incessantly” (Oates, 1971, p.11).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Any evidence that implies that the participant has experience of an overwork climate where workaholic tendencies are encouraged. Either objectively or subjectively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness</td>
<td>Strive through addictive working for more positive self-evaluation.</td>
<td>Any examples of participants exhibiting low self-esteem of feelings of worthlessness resulting in the striving for more positive self-evaluation through addictive working.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relationships</td>
<td>Workaholics can have poor social relationships and experience more work-to-family conflict.</td>
<td>Examples of poor social relationships and any experiences of work-to-family conflict.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifice Recovery</td>
<td>Sacrifice time with friends, family or on their own recovery from work.</td>
<td>Examples of where recovery is negatively affected by work. Any examples of neglecting life outside of work i.e. sacrificing time with friends, family or on their own recovery.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Compulsively</td>
<td>Strong inner drive to work hard.</td>
<td>Cognitive component indicates that employees are obsessed with their work and persistently think about work, even when they are not working.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsessed with Work</td>
<td>The participant exemplifies persistently and frequently thinking about work, even when not working.</td>
<td>Examples of the participant being unable to detach from work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectionistic tendencies</td>
<td>Perfectionistic tendencies lead to an inability to delegate and therefore a lack of support. They may check over other people’s work and set high standards for themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When a participant presents as being a perfectionist. They may be unable to delegate and therefore lack support. They may exhibit signs of not trusting that someone else can do the same work or will check over someone else’s work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Excessively</th>
<th>High effort expenditure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The behavioural component, indicating that workaholics dedicate an exceptional amount of their time and energy to work and work beyond what would be necessary to fulfil organisation or economic requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any example of the participant putting in high effort expenditure. An example of where the participant dedicates an exceptional amount of their time and energy to work and work beyond what would be necessary to fulfil organisation or economic requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary-less working</td>
<td>Participants exhibit the inability to create boundaries to work, i.e. using their “time off” to do work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking work home or continually working during their time off examples of where the individual will check emails/messages even when they are supposed to be off work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically or psychologically exhausted</td>
<td>Affects relationships inside and outside of the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples of physical or psychological exhaustion which affects relationships inside and outside of the workplace. Could also include examples of how excess work leaves them exhausted/ unable to perform their job properly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>Participant feels an external pressure from boss/supervisor etc. to put work in and/or work excessively hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Pressure</td>
<td>When the participant indicates that they worked through illness rather than taking time off to recover. Or if the participant alludes to the fact that their work was the root cause of their illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>Doing excess work at the weekend or not taking weekends off from work (outside of the required sport attendance of applied work).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working weekends</td>
<td>Doing excess work at the weekend or not taking weekends off from work (outside of the required sport attendance of applied work).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Workaholism Codebook
6.4.4 Compulsion to Work

Compulsive working was identified and highlighted by various participants, exemplifying the innate inner drive to be consistently working.

... where you might wake up at 2 o’clock in the morning and you might go: Oooh, oh if I get up and I work on that, I could go to work really early and I could get so much done and then I go: right, that’s really crazy – that’s really not helpful, you need to get to sleep! (P05)

Relentless compulsive working can contribute to an inability to fully recover from the normal working day. When overworking interferes with sleep and recovery patterns, it can be detrimental to physical and psychological health.

6.4.5 Multiple roles

The propensity of the applied sport psychologists to hold multiple roles also seems to contribute to the instances of overworking. Many of the participants choose to take on extra work or additional roles to their primary employment.

...there is absolutely times in which it is just an extension of the working week or for me it goes from what my day job is during to the week to when I do all my applied work, with the Olympic teams or things like that. That I then have to attempt to – all the other stuff that I have on, outside of time. (P05)

These multiple roles or the additional work that they take on, can contribute to the participants working outside of their designated hours.

The other situation occurs that I am full-time employed by the [institution], I also do private consulting work as well outside of my full-time job, and I do some conference presentations, workshops, and working with athletes. (P24)
6.4.6 Environmental Influence

Even if the participants were working within the guidelines of their roles, the environment they worked in lent to excessive working. Hogan et al. (2016) argue that working in an academic institution can lead very easily to excessive working, coupled with the relentless nature of sport - many of the participants pointed to their environment as a cause for overworking:

_“I think sport psychology is much the same. It’s unsocial hours but also the nature of work now…sport happens 7 days a week, there’s no breaks in seasons in sport, you just go from one to the other. And I also think it’s the nature of working patterns now.” (P22)_

Indeed, the physical and social work environment can induce a sense of guilt in employees, meaning that if they do decide to leave the workplace, the influence of the environment can delay or hinder the ability to detach.

_And I’m certainly aware when I’m not in the office, I think should I be in the office more in terms of my work hours and I compare myself to other colleagues and things like that so yeah, I certainly think about it a lot._ (P08)

One participant credits their work location as a direct influence on their inability to detach from work. In this case, the participant was working from home. Often the physical transition of leaving the office in order to go home can trigger a detachment from work, without this, some may struggle as is exemplified in the following quote.

_Make sure you’re switching off and being with family and that’s hard though when you’re working from home. It's easier when you have an office because then you leave the office to clear transition._ (P25)
6.4.7 Obsession with work and sport

Vallerand and colleagues (2006; 2010) have noted, an obsessive passion can be detrimental to an individual’s well-being. Sonnentag, Kuttler and Fritz (2010) also relate a lack of detachment from work with psychological ill health. Some participants identified this as an occupational hazard.

...the trouble is with psychology, because it’s a thinking job, when you work with people for an hour and you develop relationships with people, after that hour’s gone you don’t just stop thinking about them. (P22)

Obsession with work and its parallels with the perceived necessity of obsession in the sporting world is exemplified in the following quote.

I work with very high-level athletes. There have been many discussions over the years in sport science about to be successful in sport you need to be obsessive. It might come across as a mental health issue but actually in terms of performance, that obsession is sometimes needed for success. And I was looking back at my career and thinking I may have been obsessive at times, but you know without that I probably wouldn’t have been successful. There’s a personal cost in terms of health to that. (P22)

The acceptance of having an obsession with what you do could be detrimental for the attitude given to over working. Applied sport psychologists may start to believe that in order to become successful in their field, they must emulate the obsession shown by athletes towards their sport.
6.4.8 Sacrificing Recovery

Workaholic characteristics is can be the sacrifice of own recovery and the neglect of life outside of work (Clark, et al., 2016; Sussman, 2012). For applied sport psychologists, this is in part due to an inability to completely detach from work but also due to the feelings of guilt around not working. Examples from this study include working when ill or sacrificing leisure time (e.g., time with friends or family) in order to work.

_I suppose I didn't sleep much I would have been going to bed later waking up earlier. I can remember being unwell. But certainly, things that I would regularly have done, I stopped doing. Like exercise I didn't have a regular exercise routine, I would have stopped going out and things… would have been exercising socialising._ (P07)

_I made a conscious decision in the last six months [of a PhD] to say no to all social engagements or events unless it was essential that I go to them. I didn't go out, I didn't go out with friends I decided to cut myself off and become obsessed with it…_ (P17)

Matrix coding queries revealed that all themes identified were more likely to be recalled by those classified as highly optimistic in comparison to their realistically optimistic counterparts.

Another aim of the study was to explore the experiences of applied sport psychologists and examining their self-reported incidences of workaholic tendencies. Deductive thematic analysis showed that workaholic tendencies were common among the sample. The work of Ng and colleagues (2007) guided the following themes: the affective dimension, the behavioural dimension the cognitive dimension of workaholism. Affective workaholism is the enjoyment of work and the non-enjoyment of not working. Individuals will be passionate about their work and find pleasure in it.
a bit like doing a hobby. It is a bit excessive, but it is an opportunity. It’s the sort of thing that I would think that you would have to do. And you want to do and it’s an opportunity lost if you don’t do it. (P03)

Behavioural workaholism refers to the physical act of over-working, the melding together of work and recreation, which can manifest in the inability to detach completely from work.

...I went to the beach on Saturday I didn’t do any work at all, but yesterday (Sunday) I was reading for several hours just during the day. And when I go home at night it’s usually: eat dinner, watch TV and you try and do your best to switch off. (P08)

Thirdly, cognitive workaholism is an obsession with work, an individual who constantly and consistently thinks about work.

…it’s a bit of an occupational hazard that at times I’ll be thinking about something or it’ll just pop in to my head and then it would be hard to get me back on to whatever I should be doing because there’ll be a little problem and then the penny will drop and I’ll figure it out. (P13)

The behavioural dimension of workaholism is the most frequently cited dimension for both highly optimistic and realistically optimistic individuals. However, those in the highly optimistic group were more readily able to cite instances within this dimension.

The weekend obviously I try and get work done so I don’t have too much on the weekend but ...the reality is, you’ve always got something ... but yesterday (Sunday) I was reading for several hours just during the day. (P08)

The next largest discrepancy between the groups was in regard to the cognitive dimension of workaholism. According to the results of the matrix coding query, those who were identified as highly optimistic were three times more likely to recall instances of being unable to stop thinking about work. Moreover, the cognitive dimension can be seen as the inability to
fully detach even during supposed “down time” from work. This is exemplified in the following quote:

*I would say however that I do not emotionally detach from my work. In the sense that I can be mowing my lawn and I’m still thinking about a teaching point an upcoming presentation that I might be making, a way of organising points that uhm, I never step away from that.* (P26)

There was a much smaller discrepancy between the two types of optimists in relation to the affective dimension of workaholism. This could be due to the fact that previous research has shown that sport psychologists are highly engaged people (see Chapter 5; McCormack et al., 2015). Therefore, they will take a lot of enjoyment from their work and are often highly passionate in their work engagement (McCormack et al., 2015).

Workaholics can also be viewed as having certain characteristics in common with those who are highly engaged, such as dedicating a lot of time and energy into their work (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). Despite this similarity, the difference lies in where this drive to work comes from. However, when an individual works compulsively, they will often work harder than required, due to an inner compulsion.

*Yeah, I would probably use the word obsessive… I try and do the best job I can and be perfectionistic about what I do… Yeah, it's a compulsion, that you have to do not because you want to… I enjoy my job and some people would say I am a little obsessed and work very long hours and seemed to do a lot of work, but I don't find it a chore for the most part, and I want to do it.* (P24)

Working excessively is related to an increased commitment or effort expenditure (Clark et al., 2016; Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012). Participants were able to recall many instances of
working excessively, yet, there was still a marked qualitative distinction in instances reported by those who were identified as highly optimistic. High commitment to a certain task can result in a lack of effort available for other activities or commitments (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012). This over commitment to work leading to less engagement in other activities is represented by the following quote:

*I think just a lot of time and energy put into work with ... a lot less put into other aspects of my life... getting to a new place... it’s easy to get caught up in trying to establish yourself, not getting connected... so you end up working more, and the more you end up working, the less you’re accepted into the community... the less options you have to go do something social, so the more you end up doing work. (P20)*

The results show that those who were identified as being highly optimistic were more readily able to give examples in all dimensions of workaholism.

**6.5 Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the self-identified levels of optimism in applied sport psychologists, their self-reported workaholic tendencies and the potential role this optimism plays in the manifestation of these workaholic tendencies. We specifically focused on those working within the high-performance sport environment with multiple athletes and teams. Another focus were practitioners who work within an academic institution and often take on additional applied work either privately or with student athletes from their institution.

All participants in this study self-identified as being either realistically or highly optimistic. Optimistic people are more successful than pessimistic people as they are more likely to continue pursuing goals even through facing adversity (Clark et al., 2016). Optimism can have a positive effect on a certain expectancy as long as the individual has the resources to
execute this (McNulty & Fincham, 2012). Based on the findings in this study, one could surmise that a sport psychologist who does not have the ability to completely detach or withdraw from work may in fact, have an increase in workaholic tendencies. Nearly all participants reported excessive work practices, showing that both neophyte practitioners and those who are more established in their career are prone to workaholic tendencies.

High optimism levels may have a negative consequence in the over commitment to taking on new tasks (Newby-Clark et al., 2000). This finding is explained on the basis that optimistic people can underestimate the time it will take to complete a task (Newby-Clark et al., 2000). Despite previous experience to the contrary, an optimistic person may struggle to update their beliefs following negative experiences (Kuzmanovic, Jefferson, & Vogeley, 2015; Sharot et al., 2011; Shepperd et al., 2015). The participants in our study who identified as being highly optimistic gave more examples from their own experiences of workaholism.

Rewards and recognition received from working long hours can entice an individual into working excessively hard. This leads individuals to choose working anytime and anywhere and putting their work above leisure time activities (Ylijoki, 2013). It is believed that workaholics place a strong value on the importance of achieving success (Mudrack, 2006), and are unable to resist the compulsion to work (Taris, Schaufeli, & Shimazu, 2010). In some instances, athletes requested sessions when the participant sport psychologists were not scheduled for work. By taking on more work, they are satisfying their desire to work in an alternative setting (i.e. an applied setting rather than an academic setting) or with additional clients (i.e. seeing individual athletes or performers alongside working with teams), however they are potentially sacrificing their time at home, with family or friends. It also means they may not truly have any down time and might not have an avenue in which to “switch-off” or detach. Creating work-home boundaries in order to fully detach has been shown to aid
psychological detachment and recovery (see Sonnentag, Kutler & Fritz, 2010). Rather than this being a leisurely endeavour, such as attending a sporting event for recreational reasons, this is work. Therefore, the sport psychologist is potentially required to be “on” at all times. Sonnentag and colleagues (2010) have shown that a lack of psychological detachment from work is negatively related to well-being through emotional exhaustion and the need for recovery. This inability to completely detach from work can be viewed as a core characteristic of workaholism or workaholic tendencies (Burke & Cooper, 2008; Ng et al., 2007; Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012). According to Hogan and colleagues (2016) enthusiastic workaholics may be buffered from the negative affect of working excessively hard, due to the fact that they enjoy their work. However, these researchers warn that work enjoyment could be fragile and susceptible to distribution due to increased work demands and intensity and decreased levels of control. Therefore, it is pertinent to monitor and modify the practices of those who engage in activities which display workaholic tendencies (Hogan et al., 2016).

Having an obsession can have negative consequences on your physical and mental health (Vallerand et al., 2010; Vallerand et al., 2006) and our participants reflected on a tendency towards over-commitment. An obsessive passion towards work will result in an internal pressure to work which in turn can result in burnout, rumination, role conflict and work/family conflict (Birkeland & Buch, 2015). Cantarow (1979) suggests that those who derive passionate involvement and gratification from their work are more likely to be workaholics. Obsessive passion can in fact resemble workaholism due to the fact that the individual will work excessively and obsessively (Birkeland & Buch, 2015). Those who have an obsessive passion in sport will experience more negative effect than those who possess harmonious passion (Vallerand et al., 2006). Applied sport psychologists are also aware of the prevalence of mental health issues within sport. Athletes are more at risk of mental health issues
than the general population with confounding events (e.g. injury, retirement and performance failure) increasing that risk (MacIntyre et al., 2017). In fact, student-athletes have been found to experience a greater number of stressors than their non-athlete peers (Van Raalte, Cornelius, Andrews, Diehl, & Brewer, 2015). Many sport psychologists are former athletes (Andersen, Van Raalte & Brewer, 2000) with prior experiences of stressors which are known to be risk factors for mental health disorders. Therefore, there is a risk that maladaptive habits from an individual’s athletic experiences could be detrimental to their well-being as a professional psychologist.

6.6 Contribution to JDR Model

This study shows that there is a potential dark side to positive resource, contributing to the idiom that there may be too much of a good thing (McNulty & Fincham, 2012), with the personal resource of optimism in our sample showing a contribution to job demands, by adding more work to the applied sport psychologists’ plates. Perhaps the model requires a caveat, and may benefit further research into the overabundance of other resources, or resources which present themselves in negative manners such as the anti-mentor or the negative effects of social support on this cohort (see Buunk & Hoores, 1992; Herada, Sugisawa, Sugihara, Yanagisawa & Shimmei, 2017).

6.7 Limitations

This study relies on qualitative interviews where a subjective opinion was sought from the participant, which relies on a subjective process – subjectivity and potential bias of the interviewer and the range of biases from the interviewee e.g. recall biases – in a context whereby the interviewer has established skills, competencies and the main specific expertise e.g. trainee practitioner sport psychologist. Whilst the use of psychological inventories may support a
mixed method approach a note of caution should be applied. Practitioner sport psychologists trained using the Boulder Model (Schinke et al, 2018), will be experienced both in the use and interpretation of questionnaire-based research, thus they are not naive participants but are perhaps more appropriately described as sophisticated subjects.

6.8 Implications and Future Research

The main issue of concern is that sport psychologists are aware of the consequences of over committing to their work. Despite possessing a combination of sporting experience and knowledge of mental health and well-being, the findings suggest that the participants are not immune to workaholic tendencies. A recent duty of care report conducted in the UK concluded that the psychological well-being of athletes as well as sport science support personnel needs to be prioritised by the national governing bodies of sport (Grey-Thompson, 2017). This recommendation extends to the sport psychologists whose remit arguably includes the mental health of athletes and coaches. It has been noted that “commitment and full engagement are a necessary pre-requisite for Olympic success, and we think this also applies to the sport psychologist” (Cogan, Flowers, Haberl, McCann, & Borlabi, 2012, p. 83). Carver et al. (2010) suggest that positive organisational psychology in sport is adopted by the organisations in which applied sport psychologists work. This approach not only promotes the flourishing and excellence of athletes but also protects those support personnel who work with the athletes. It is also recommended that leaders and managers protect the individuals who are managing and supporting elite sport and that a healthy work-life balance is promoted (Wagstaff, Fletcher, & Hanton, 2012).

Workaholism has negative effects on well-being. Those who are categorised as workaholics are said to be obsessed with work. So, what is it about applied psychologists that leaves them unable to separate their work from their home, to detach completely? Research has
shown that optimism is negatively correlated with workaholism (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2012), our study shows that those who regard themselves as highly optimistic also exhibit more instances of workaholic behaviours. Innanen et al. (2014) highlights that in order to focus on some teams, applied sport psychologists are required to say no to others. In line with the aforementioned planning fallacy, they may underestimate the amount of “free time” they have to dedicate to other commitments. Their workaholic tendencies are therefore unintentional and due to their “obsession” with work, an obsession which is borne in an engaged and meaningful way; is this enough to detract from the negative effects of workaholic tendencies? The APA offer resources surrounding the self-care of practitioners (see www.apapracticecentral.org) which are ideally implemented in a top-down approach. Senior practitioners, line managers and mentors have a significant role in discouraging workaholic tendencies.

Future research calls for further investigation into the relationship between optimism and workaholism. Research that employs quantitative measures or longitudinal studies can not only illuminate our understanding of this topic, but it can also shed light on the interactions between both constructs.

6.9 Conclusions

The well-being of applied sport psychologists needs to be closely examined. There are no specific guidelines for those working within the applied sport, exercise and performance arena. In an ideal scenario, sport psychology students would receive instruction on how to manage their working life and the commensurate demands of high-performance sport and/or academia. The implementation of evidence-based guidelines, the provision of sufficient time for self-care and the support of healthy workplaces strategies (Wagner et al., 2016), is critical for sport psychologists who are tasked with protecting and maintaining the mental health of others.
Chapter 7

On the world stage: The effects of the Olympics on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists
The Olympics are a completely different beast. It's the most magical moment of your career.

- Hilary Knight, Ice Hockey Player, Olympian

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to utilise the JD-R (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017) and the JD-RR (Kinnuen, Feldt, Siltaloppi, & Sonnentag, 2011, 2011) to examine the effects a large international multi-sport competition may have on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. Previous evidence from Birrer et al (2012), MacIntyre (2012) and McCormack et al (2015) shows that job demands during this time will be high. Thus, this research study seeks to explore both models within this specific high-performance environment, focusing on the resources applied sport psychologists employ and the recovery they practice. This chapter will also attempt to expand on the research literature that exists surrounding burnout and its various causes. Results from McCormack, MacIntyre, O’Shea, Herring and Campbell (2018) show that both workload and work setting can influence experiential burnout (see Chapter 3). Thus, the unique workload and setting that is a large international multi-sport event will provide the backdrop for this research chapter. For many sport science support personnel, the ultimate goal is to work within the elite sport environment. Just like the athletes who dream of becoming regional, national, and international representatives, those who embark on the study of sport science and its related fields, may dream of reaching the same level, albeit in a supportive rather than performance role. An elite performer is an athlete who trains and competes as a member of the national squad and performs at the highest level of their sport (Sharp, Hodge, & Danish, 2014). Those in sport science support will endeavour to work closely with these elite athletes, in the build-up and preparation phase as well as during sporting competitions.

7.1.1 A Unique environment for the applied sport psychologists.

There has been a limited focus by researchers on the work of sport psychologists, and how they cope in elite and professional teams (McDougall, Nesti, & Richardson, 2015).
Applied sport psychologists will often operate in a unique environment in comparison to their clinical or counselling counterparts, which will add to their burgeoning job demands. For instance, psychologists working in the high-performance sport context often fulfil multiple roles causing potential boundary issues (Hays, 2006), which may result in longer work hours with less ability to detach and recover. Many consultants find themselves travelling, eating and sharing accommodation with athletes or management staff (Stapleton, Hankes, Hays, & Parham, 2010), therefore, consultations may be conducted in informal settings rather than in an office (McCann, 2008). Consequently, boundaries become blurred and consultants must be aware that their potential multiple roles can be a risk around athlete-confidentiality (Stapleton et al., 2010), leading to increased effort to protect this confidentiality during this time. Typically, consultants are considered managerial or support staff and should ideally work alongside the coaches. However, Gould and colleagues (1989) found that there could be a lack of cooperation from coaches, with a lack of interest shown in the service offered. Therefore, in addition to other responsibilities, sport psychology practitioners must also work on building trust and respect with coaches, developing and constantly proving their “effectiveness and worthiness” (Haberl & McCann, 2012, p. 73), this could lead to feelings of isolation or a lack of perceived social support in addition to the extra effort being paid to integrate into the team. Additionally, the Olympic and Paralympic Games brings with them unique issues that practitioners do not often face at any other major competition (Elsborg et al., 2015; McCann, 2008), or throughout their daily tasks and challenges, such as; unexpected issues which will affect the performance of the athlete; living in close proximity to athletes and other support personnel and therefore being constantly available to these individuals for support; or unable to gain access to athletes due to carding or accreditation issues. As such, there is little that is known about how exactly this environment can affect the sport psychologists themselves (Elsborg et al., 2015). Applied sport psychologists will need to prepare in the lead up to the Olympic Games
for this wide range of issues they may face whilst they are at the competition (McCann, 2008), without being able to fully predict what they will actually encounter.

One study that was concerned with how sport psychologists cope in elite sport was conducted by Elsborg and colleagues (2015). They investigated the perception of the challenges which are faced by applied sport psychologists whilst immersed in an Olympic Games environment. Their results showed various challenges both before and during the games; applied sport psychologists also faced self-care issues and often differed in the type of roles they were tasked with. These findings were consistent with the research literature (Birrer et al., 2012; Haberl & Peterson, 2006; McCann, 2008; Pensgaard, 2008). Furthermore, Elsborg et al. (2015) reported that depending on the role which an applied sport psychologist has, the challenges the individual will face will differ in kind and importance. Practitioners often face novel and diverse challenges at the Olympic Games. For example, they are needed to assist the performers in coping with “…stress, logistics, size, spectacle and resources at these pinnacle competitions” (Sharp et al., 2014, p. 76). Arguably, there can be as much pressure on the applied sport psychologist as there is on the athlete (Elsborg et al., 2015). According to the head of psychology services for the USOC, Sean McCann (McCann, 2008), the success of a sport psychologist at an Olympic Games is not about prevention of challenges or issues for the athletes; instead, it is about curtailing these problems so that they do not become critical.

Whilst there are a few studies which investigate the experiences of applied sport psychologists at the Olympics, these studies are often retrospective in nature and involve mainly qualitative research methodology. Ambiguities or double meanings of words which are inherent in language may arise from qualitative research rendering the researcher as unaware of the true meaning behind the words chosen or shared by the individual, or simple misinterpretation of the terms. Where possible follow up questions are asked, but in some cases, where a participant
is not using their first language, some meaning may be misinterpreted. In this study, all transcribed interviews were sent to participants for verification. However, the main limitation with qualitative research is the lack of generalisability, due to the lack of statistical analysis that determines whether results occur by chance or are simply unique to the individuals involved (Atieno, 2009). The research surrounding the experiences of applied sport psychologists also lacks theoretical underpinning. This study sought to address the aforementioned limitations in the research literature by drawing on both JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011) and the extended JD-RR (Kinnunen et al., 2011), by investigating the dynamic well-being of sport psychologists in the lead up to and duration of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, using a mixed-method approach. By including an online survey, questions can be studied by participants should anything be lost in translation, answers are given on a universal numerical scale, which leaves less room for misinterpretation by the researcher.

7.2 Aims of the research study

This study took place in 2016 to coincide with the Games of the XXXI Olympiad, and Paralympics which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Olympic Games which featured 306 events, spanning 28 different sports were the biggest iteration of the modern Olympics. These historical Games hosted 11,238 athletes from 207 teams (https://www.olympic.org/rio-2016). The Summer Olympics in 2016 were hosted from 5th of August until the 21st of August. The Paralympic Games occurred between the 7th of September until the 18th of September, and comprised 528 events in 22 different sports, with 4,342 athletes from 159 teams.

Overall, the aim of this study was to assess the impact of working at a large international multi-sport competition on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists.
The study was split into two parts:

A. A longitudinal study, which spanned the time before and after the Games.

B. Qualitative interviews conducted post Games.

A breakdown of the participants from both the Longitudinal Study and the Qualitative interviews can be seen in Table 7.1 below. All participants were accredited by relevant national governing bodies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Representative Country</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP01*</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP02*</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>MA/MSc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP03*</td>
<td>Great Britain &amp; Northern Ireland</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>MA/MSc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP04* †</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP05*</td>
<td>Great Britain &amp; Northern Ireland</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>MA/MSc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP06*</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP07</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>MA/MSc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP08</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP09</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP10</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Participated in qualitative interview
† Did not complete longitudinal study due to insufficient data entry.
7.3 The Longitudinal Study

There is a meaning attached to being an Olympian that is not present with other sports competitions (McCann, 2008). Greater media attention is paid in both the lead up to and at the Games, especially for sports which receive little to no attention within that four-year period outside of the Games (McCann, 2008). There is also the long duration of the Games to contend with (Greenleaf, Gould, & Dieffenbach, 2001), which can be seen as the culmination of a four-year cycle. These unique features and the fact that the Games occur once every four years bring equally unique challenges for applied sport psychology practitioners (Elsborg et al., 2015). The additional scrutiny placed upon the athletes in the lead up to and for the duration of the Games can bring an enormous pressure for athletes and their supportive network. Only those who can cope with this stress will likely be successful (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). During major competitions, such as the Olympics, the more undesirable sport culture traits (e.g. a disregard for welfare, aggressive behaviour, ruthless pursuit of performance etc.) can become more prominent and may even be accepted (McDougall et al., 2015). The focus will be on medal tables or ensuring that this pinnacle of a lifetime event coincides with a once in a lifetime performance. Pressure will run high for all involved, including the applied sport psychologists working with the athletes who attend the Games. Job demands will rise, resources that individuals possess will be called upon, utilised and may even diminish. The potential magnitude of demands and resource use inspired this research study.

7.3.1 Aims of the Longitudinal Study

The aim of the longitudinal study was to examine the work-based well-being of the applied sport psychologists who are working with Olympic and/or Paralympic Games bound athletes. Informed by the JD-R model (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017), it is proposed the following may occur:
(i) Increased job demands leading up to the Games will result in higher resultant job strain, presenting as burnout.

(ii) Work engagement will remain constant despite increased job strain. This aligns with work engagement and burnout being converging yet independent constructs.

(iii) Optimism will stay constant over time.

(iv) Harmonious passion will decrease to reflect increased job strain. Obsessive passion will increase to reflect increased job strain.

(v) Positive affect will decrease to reflect increased job strain. Negative affect will increase to reflect increased job strain.

7.4 Methods for the Longitudinal Study

7.4.1 Participants of the Longitudinal Study

Eighteen applied sport psychologists initially completed the online survey at Time 1. All were accredited applied sport psychologists who were working with athletes in preparation for the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games in Rio, Brazil 2016. Despite regular reminders to complete questionnaires at all four time points, there was drop out throughout the data collection process. This drop out was seemingly random with both female ($n = 5$) and male ($n = 4$) dropping out at various time points. The aim of this research study was to measure work-based well-being in a longitudinal manner. While a low $n$ was anticipated, numbers completing the online based questionnaires was already low. Therefore, it was decided that descriptive statistics would be reported only.

The psychologists ($n = 9$) who completed the questionnaire at all four time points were representative of seven countries: Ireland (1), Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2), Germany (1), New Zealand (1), Switzerland (1), Australia (1) and the USA (2). Both male ($n = 6$) and female ($n = 3$) participants completed all questionnaires. See Table 7.1 for demographics and information on educational attainment and accreditation).
7.4.2 Procedures of the Longitudinal Study

Participants were recruited via email through the SportPsy Listserv (see Appendix 5 for recruitment email). The questionnaires were presented using Qualtrics™ Survey Software. An email containing a link to the questionnaire, which included the online informed consent, was also sent to the participants who completed Study 1 of this doctoral research, to invite them to participate in this follow up study. Purposeful sampling was employed, as we specifically wanted to examine the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists who were working with athletes who were competing in Rio. Recruiting applied sport psychologists who were working with Games bound athletes at the culmination of a four-year cycle was not straightforward. Snowball recruitment was also employed; however, it was also expected that this would be the busiest time of their year. Therefore, a small $n$ was predicted.

Participants who completed the survey at each time-point were sent emails inviting them to continue participating in the research. Each email contained a link to the survey related to period of data collection. Results from Time 1 were recorded between May and June of 2016, for Time 2 were recorded in July 2016, Time 3 were recorded in August 2016 and Time 4 were recorded in October and November 2016. Participants completed online questionnaires regarding their work-based well-being and resources during each period of data collection.

This portion of the research examined the changes in work-based well-being over a period covering seven months. Study A was conducted at the culmination of a four-year cycle leading up to the Games and chose to focus on the potential changes in those critical months surrounding the final build up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, when it was known that workload (job demands) would increase. As the job demands of these individuals was expected to be at their highest, neither job demands nor workaholism was tested through the duration of this study to eliminate the chance of false positives being received. The variables and corresponding measurement tools are listed in Table 7.2.
Table 7.2 Measurement tools used to assess JD-R in the longitudinal study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurement Tool</th>
<th>Element Measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>MBI-GS (Maslach et al., 1996)</td>
<td>End State Job Demands (Job Strain)/Health impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Engagement</td>
<td>UWES (Schaufeli &amp; Bakker, 2003)</td>
<td>End State Motivation Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>LOT-R (Scheier et al., 1994)</td>
<td>Personal Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td>PANAS (Watson et al., 1998)</td>
<td>Personal/Internal Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>MAWS (Gagné et al., 2010)</td>
<td>Motivation Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Passion Scale (Vallerand et al, 2003)</td>
<td>Motivation Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.3 Analysis for the Longitudinal Study Part A

Questionnaire data from the online surveys related to the longitudinal portion of this study were collated through Microsoft Excel™ then transferred and analysed using IBM® SPSS Statistics 25. Descriptive statistics were extrapolated for all variables. Mean responses were calculated (as well as standard deviations) and where possible compared to normative data.

7.5 Descriptive Results of the Longitudinal Study

7.5.1 Descriptive statistics and Normative Data Comparison

This research aimed to measure the concepts of work-based well-being among applied sport psychologists across four time points during the year of the XXXI Olympiad. The points of data collection included Time 1 (four to five months before the start of the Games), Time 2
(three months before the start of the Games), Time 3 (the month leading up to the start of the Games) and Time 4 (up to 3 months after the completion of the Games). Scores on each of the following scales were compared across the four time points; all three of the dimensional measures of MBI; UWES; LOT-R; Passion and PANAS.

7.5.1.1 Burnout
The means and standard deviations for the all dimensions of the MBI scale are presented in Table 7.6 and include the mean and standard deviation scores for all participants across all four time-points. When compared to cut off scores as outlined by Maslach et al (1996), seen in Table 7.5 the participants of this study only exhibit average levels of burnout in one dimension at Time 1, which will be discussed in further detail later in this section. At all other times for all dimensions, low levels of burnout are exhibited.

Table 7.5. Cut off scores for the MBI (Maslach et al., 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low (lower third)</th>
<th>Average (middle third)</th>
<th>High (upper third)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>17-26</td>
<td>&gt;27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>&lt;6</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>&gt;13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>&gt;39</td>
<td>32-38</td>
<td>&lt;31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MBI results shows that the applied sport psychologists in this study reported a mean score of 10.56 ($SD = 6.43$) for emotional exhaustion (EE), 7.00 ($SD = 4.82$) for depersonalisation (DP) and 40.81 ($SD = 4.57$) for personal accomplishment (PA) over the course of the four time-points (from May to Nov 2016).
Table 7.6 Mean Burnout Scores (n = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional Exhaustion</th>
<th>Depersonalisation</th>
<th>Personal Accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-point 1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>10.44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-point 2</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>6.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-point 3</td>
<td>11.78</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-point 4</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Burnout</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes an average/moderate score of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996)

Reported mean scores for emotional exhaustion were highest at Time 3, with a mean score of 11.78 (SD = 7.38) indicating that while emotional exhaustion scores for the participants did not exceed low levels of exhaustion, nor was there a significant change in these scores across time, emotional exhaustion still peaked at Time 3, which was closest to the start of the Games. For the personal accomplishment scale, mean scores were at their lowest at Time 1 (40.22, SD = 4.24), indicating that the participants experienced more feelings of accomplishment as time went on (although not in a linear fashion). Depersonalisation received the highest mean score, peaking at Time 1 and indicating moderate levels of burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Three participants recorded high levels of depersonalisation, at either Time 1 or Time 3. Individual scores show that when compared to normative values, depersonalisation is the only dimension where high scores were reported by any of the
participants. Both exhaustion and personal accomplishment scores remained low or moderate for all individuals across all time points (See Appendix 8 for individual scores table).

7.5.1.2 Work Engagement

Results from the UWES showed that the participants in this study were averagely to highly engaged workers, see table 7.7 for normative scores for work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Means and standard deviations for all dimensions of work engagement along with total scores for each time point are presented in table 7.8. Mean work engagement across all four time points for all participants was 4.67 ($SD = .12$) which equates to an average level of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Total absorption ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .67$) for all nine participants was the only dimension of work engagement score that equated to a high level. Scores for both vigour ($M = 4.70$, $SD = .76$) and dedication ($M = 4.81$, $SD = .85$) equated to average for these dimensions. These scores indicate that the applied sport psychologists maintained an average to high level of work engagement throughout the Olympic year 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vigour</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Absorption</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>≤ 2.00</td>
<td>≤ 1.60</td>
<td>≤ 1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.01 – 3.20</td>
<td>1.61 – 3.00</td>
<td>1.61 – 2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.21 – 4.80</td>
<td>3.01 – 4.90</td>
<td>2.76 – 4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.81 – 5.65</td>
<td>4.91 – 5.79</td>
<td>4.41 – 5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>≥ 5.66</td>
<td>≥ 5.80</td>
<td>≥ 5.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, while levels of work engagement remained constant throughout the year, the lowest mean score for work engagement was Time 3 with 4.57 ($SD = .94$) (See table 7.7). All
individual scores at Time 3 are the lowest out of all four time points recorded, with high scores recorded in Time 1 and Time 2 for all three dimensions. Indeed, the lowest individual score of 2.92 signalling a low level of engagement was experienced at Time 3 prior to the start of the Olympic Games. Overall, individual scores report that this cohort all experienced average to very high levels of work engagement throughout the duration of the study. Only one participant reported a low level of work engagement and this was only once in the duration of the study (see Appendix 8 for individual scores of UWES).

Table 7.8 Mean Work Engagement Scores (n = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time-point</th>
<th>Vigour</th>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Absorption</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.93*</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.83*</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>5.09*</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>4.96*</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes high scores

7.5.1.3 Optimism as a resource

Overall, participants reported a mean score of 12.14 (SD = 4.85) on the LOT-R across all four time points (see table 7.9 for means and standard deviations). Mean optimism scores peaked at Time 1, with a score of 15.67 (SD = 1.73), mean scores then dropped to their lowest at Time 3, with a score of 10.11 (SD = 5.52).
Table 7.9 Mean Optimism Scores (n = 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time point</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>5.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, mean optimism appears to have been at its highest during Time 1. There appears to be a decrease in levels of reported optimism over time. However, this is not conclusive due to a lack of statistical analysis.

When examined from an individual standpoint, 77.78% (n = 7) reported lower levels of optimism at T4 compared to Time 1. One of the two participants (SP02) who reported higher optimism at T4 vs Time 1, reported consistent levels of optimism throughout until T4 when an upward shift in score was reported. Another participant (SP05) reported even changes throughout, starting lower, then reporting a higher score, with this pattern repeated. Reported optimism scores at Time 1 decreased at T2 for 77.78% (n = 7) of participants, of the remainder, one participant reported no change, with the other participant reporting an increase in score. When comparing T3 optimism to T4 optimism, over 50% (n = 5) of the participants reported an increase in optimism from T3 to T4. According to populations based normative data an average score in a German sample was 15.2 (Glaesmer et al., 2012). In a Norwegian study an average score of 17.2 was found (Schou-Bredal et al., 2017). The applied sport psychologists who completed this portion of the research reported a mean score equal to the average level of optimism, when compared to the German population at Time 1. However, they reported lower
mean optimism scores than average for all other time points. All mean scores indicate a lower level of optimism in comparison to a Norwegian population across all time-points.

### 7.5.1.4 Passion

The dualistic model of passion was developed by (Vallerand et al., 2003) to reflect both the positive and negative effects of passion in an individual’s life. People will develop passion toward activities that are internalized in their identity (Vallerand et al., 2003). Either harmonious or obsessive passion will develop in result to the type of internalisation that takes place (controlled internalisation vs autonomous internalisation, Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 2010). The participants in this study exhibited higher levels of harmonious passion ($M = 5.15$, $SD = .36$) compared to levels of obsessive passion ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.07$). See table 7.10 for all mean and standard deviation scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time-point</th>
<th>Harmonious Passion</th>
<th>Obsessive Passion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results do show that harmonious passion changed between each time point of this study, and when means are examined, highest reported scores of harmonious passion occur at Time 3. Reported harmonious passion was lower for all participants at T4 compared to Time 1. Apart from two applied sport psychologists who reported higher scores of harmonious passion from Time 1 to Time 4.
When examining means, obsessive passion did fluctuate, two participants reported lower levels of obsessive passion at Time 4 compared to Time 1. Mean scores indicate that the applied sport psychologists experienced their peak levels of harmonious passion ($M = 5.55, SD = .46$) at Time 3. However, this is also when the participants experienced their peak levels of obsessive passion ($M = 2.90, SD = 1.39$).

### 7.5.1.5 Mood as a resource

The applied sport psychologists exhibited a mean score of $36.00 (SD = 8.20)$ for positive affect and, $15.45 (SD = 2.53)$ for negative affect, across all time points. See table 7.11 for all mean and standard deviation scores.

Table 7.11 Mean and standard deviation for Mood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time-point</th>
<th>Positive Affect</th>
<th>Negative Affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>7.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37.11</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>34.11</td>
<td>12.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>34.77</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>8.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining the mean scores for both positive and negative affect, there is a variety in reported scores, but it is possible that this is by chance. The differences in scores may not be significant. When examining the means both positive and negative affect were at their lowest at different times for the sport psychologists.
At Time 1, reported means scores for positive affect ($M = 38.00$, $SD = 7.81$) and negative affect ($M = 15.89$, $SD = 3.37$) were highest. Positive affect was reported at its lowest at T3, closest to the start of the Games with a mean score of 34.11 ($SD = 12.73$). Negative affect received its lowest score at T4, up to three months post Games completion, with a mean score of 14.33 ($SD = 3.81$). Interestingly, both affect scores decrease over time, with positive affect increasing slightly post Games.

7.6 Qualitative Interview Study

The Olympics is the largest and most well-known sporting competition and is often considered as the pinnacle event in an athletes’ sporting career (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). There is no denying that competing at the Olympic and Paralympic Games is a significant achievement for any athlete and can be a “career defining event” for all involved, including coaches and service providers (Elsborg, Diment, & Elbe, 2015, p. 183). This multisport event is the largest in the world, bringing with it, unique characteristics and stressors (Elsborg et al., 2015; Sharp et al., 2014). The roles and services that are provided by applied sport psychology consultants, can be wide and varied, from performance enhancement, mental skills training, counselling or a combination of all for athletes (Singer & Anshel, 2006). These services can also be provided for coaches and other support personnel (Birrer, Wetzel, Schmid, & Morgan, 2012).

This portion of the research sought to examine the well-being of practitioners who were working in Rio as applied sport psychologists. Utilising the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and attempting to expand the JDR-R (Kinnunen et al., 2011) in a qualitative manner in order to capture the resources and recovery used by those who were in attendance at the Games in a consultancy capacity.
7.6.1 Aims of the Qualitative Interviews

Retrospective qualitative interviews were conducted on participants who declared they were attending the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games at Time 1 of the longitudinal study. This portion of the research sought to examine the effects of the Games on the work-based well-being of the applied sport psychologists. The aim of the semi-structured qualitative interviews was to question the participants on their experiences, stressors, social support and recovery both during and after the Games (see Appendix 7 for interview script).

7.6.2 Methods of the Qualitative Interviews

Institutional ethical approval was granted by the EHS Research Ethics Committee (Approval No. 2016_02_16_EHS). Ethical approval was also granted for a diary study which sought to capture potential fluctuations in the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists whilst at the Games. Due to an insufficient n, the data gathered was excluded from this thesis due to lack of reliability and validity.

7.6.3 Participants of the Qualitative Interviews

Eleven of the original eighteen participants from the Longitudinal Study had declared that they were travelling to Rio to work at the Games. Thus, they were contacted in request to participate in this portion of the research study. Six participants volunteered to participate and were interviewed after the Games. Of these six participants, three had prior consulting experience at previous Olympics and three were consulting there for the first time. According to the chairperson of the AASP special interest group for Olympic Games, P. Haberl (personal communication, Sept 2018), approximately 70 sport psychologists worked at the Olympic Games and/or Paralympic Games in Rio 2016. The sample in this portion of the study comprised an approximate representation of 8.57% (n = 6) of the applied sport psychologists working at the Games. All of the participants who contributed in this portion of the study also
completed the Longitudinal Study, apart from Participant 4 who did not answer the questionnaires at all time points, and therefore whose data had to be excluded from the analysis.

7.6.4 Procedure and Analysis for the Qualitative Interviews

The majority of interviews (n = 5) were conducted via Skype™, with one interview conducted in person and followed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 7). The mean interview time was 56 mins 11sec. All of the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. These semi-structured interviews probed the participants on their experience at the Games, what they found enjoyable and, what was the most stressful experience. They were also asked about their support structures and recovery strategies. As discussed previously (See Section 4.6), qualitative interviews were deemed integral to the data collection in this portion of the study.

Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcriptions to suggest amendments, which assured the trustworthiness of the data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Transcriptions were then imported into the NVivo© software for qualitative analysis. Thematic analysis was employed following guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006). This type of analysis allowed for both inductive (data driven) and deductive (theory driven) identification of themes (Joffe, 2012). Inter-rater reliability was achieved through sharing access to the project via NVivo. This allowed the research supervisors to examine the coding process throughout the analysis work. All themes were verified by the supervisory team in accordance to guideline set out by Elliot and colleagues (1999). Any disagreements in the coding structure or nodes generated were discussed in depth at organised supervisory meetings. All interviews received both a semantic and latent level of interpretation. Where possible, content was organised based on appearance (i.e. the words used or questions under which the answers were given), this semantic level of interpretation allowed for initial organisation of answers into recognisable themes. However, all content was also subjected to a latent level of interpretation, where
possible, content was assigned a code based on the underlying connotation of what was being said (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

7.7 Results Qualitative Interviews

The sections will be presented as such; burnout and its supporting themes of *high job demands* and *managing expectations*; work engagement and it’s supporting theme of *meaning*; resources encompassing self-efficacy, social support and sleep as recovery with supplementing themes of *social support on site* and *social support off site*, and *exercise as mastery*.

7.7.1 Burnout

7.7.1.1 High Job Demands

The Olympic and Paralympic Games resulted in increased job demands. This theme and its subthemes corroborate the antecedents of the perceived burnout felt by the participants. The applied sport psychologists spoke often about the need to *constantly remain ‘on’*. Many of the participants mentioned feeling drained, SP01: “there were days during the Games where it felt like you were kind of draining.” Moreover, SP03 confirming, “I expected to go there, and I expected to go there and be exhausted”.

Along with feelings of constantly being ‘on’, the theme of *guilt* developed from the data. Examples of this occurred when participants managed to turn ‘off’ but felt a sense of obligation to continue working. SP01 exemplifies this by saying “the reluctance to take a break because it feels like, you know you feel guilty if you're not around doing what you need to do”. SP04 confirmed that there was a general feeling of guilt from all support staff: “…you should never say ‘oh, I’ve got to give my time to the athletes because it’s so important’, and I always say that’s crazy you need to be at your best”. However, they continued to say that while there was a desire to take time away from the athletes, it was not always followed up on.
Besides the experience of physical exhaustion, managing emotions revealed to be a key aspect within the data as well. This contributed to participants feelings of emotional exhaustion and was often experienced in relation to hiding their real or true emotions from others. SP03 highlighted “you have to really manage your own emotions first. So, the way you respond in certain moments has to be what’s best for the athletes”. SP05 supports this sentiment with a more specific example:

...halfway through the Games, we got a gold medal, and it’s the first gold medal [the sport] has had in about... 25-30 years, so that was obviously a massive, massive peak of emotions for everyone in the team. Uhm...the knock on effect on that to staff, and how very short the window to that ... and then kind of the strange experience of going from being with the team, celebrating that success to only half an hour, 45 minutes later to be sat down with an athlete who is absolutely in pieces. Trying to provide support there and that was interesting.

There was also a strong desire to go home. A theme that was surprising, given that the Olympic and Paralympic Games is often considered the “pinnacle” of their careers. SP04 “Yeah I was essentially counting down the days to get back home and spend some time with my family.”

7.7.1.2 Managing expectations

The theme of managing expectations shows a certain vulnerability that was held by the participants whilst at the Games. SP01 highlights this:

... one of the things was that the people that you work with, it’s hard to know sometimes what their expectations are, of you...with the coaches and the athletes your expectations are to perform at the top level and hopefully you know, you get a clear tangible
indication of how what you’ve gone but that can be misleading at times as well, because
expectations then get driven around stuff which aren’t always in your control.

This links in with professional doubt or doubt over their own effectiveness. It is known
that cynicism or questioning the effectiveness of your work coupled with decreased feelings of
competency can add to feelings of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). SP01 exemplifies their
feelings of doubt:

And there were some things that I could see were starting to, you know, be problematic
like, I would, I’m just not deep enough in with the team, I don’t have enough of the
coaches’ trust, I don’t have enough of the athletes’ trust and like, you know – They just
don’t know how it could be helpful, and how could I have communicated that, how could
I have changed that – changed the culture to be a little bit to be able to get access and
so, those sorts of things. When things didn’t go well.

Participants also experienced an emotional contagion with athletes influencing their
mood. This can be a positive experience with the athletes buoying up the applied sport
psychologists. Moreover, it can provide a sense of meaning by showing a direct impact on the
performers in their care. SP02 explains that sometimes being faced with athletes’ problems can
create a sense of meaning, if you feel useful: “Also if there are problems, and I see that I am
used so that I can make, so that I can support them that gives me a good feeling.”

The applied sport psychologists also recognised the need to be more impartial. SP06
explains:

...in our field, on the one hand you’re told, you’re trained, you’re taught that you need
to distance yourself from your clients, from your - from your athletes. That to do this
job well, you need to be impartial and all those kind of things. But I personally believe,
that you can’t really be good at doing the applied work, with these people if you’re not emotionally connected to their experience, they recognise that, they feed off of it. So, I think that’s one of the things that actually helps make you a better consultant, but the double-edged sword of that, is that when you are emotionally connected to their experience, in a healthy way you’re impacted by their experience. So, when they have a great performance, you’re jubilant and excited and wanting to celebrate with them. When they have a terrible performance, you feel it, so uhm helping people, sort of navigate the let-down, you obviously put your own emotional needs on the back burner and you do what you need to, to help them.

The themes in this section could also fit well as supplementary to self-efficacy. Managing expectations and the emotional contagion of others’ joys or sorrows could contribute to an individual’s sense of effectiveness and thus their feelings of self-efficacy. The link between these will be extrapolated in the discussion section of this chapter.

7.7.2 Work Engagement

According to JD-R, meaning can be interpreted as work engagement and the end state motivation process of the model. Meaning was identified from answers participants gave to questions regarding the most enjoyable experience at the Games or, from what gave them the most energy whilst there. Participants spoke of rewarding moments, enjoyable moments and even the privilege of being present when the athletes are performing. SP01 explains:

I always regard it as a privilege to be involved in those situations where ... you’re working with some of the nation's...best- and well-known athletes as well. So, there’s kind of a layer of, of satisfaction and, and enthusiasm around that.
Moments that enhanced participants’ mood were also included in the theme meaning. These reflect the positive emotions that participants experienced from working with the athletes.

…it’s enhancing a lot if I work with athletes and coaches to work a lot with athletes and coaches enhances my mood. Also, if there are problems, and I see that I am used so that I can make, so that I can support them, that gives me a good feeling. (SP02)

Finally, examples of enjoyment given by participants were also included under the same theme. Witnessing the success of their athletes brings joy and meaning to their work as represented by the following:

...so for me the enjoyment was all just the...seeing athletes compete, you know athletes I worked with. Uhm and there were for sure some disappointments. But we were, we had a terrific Games results, and so I had a lot of really fun moments to witness. (SP04)

These sentiments from the qualitative interviews contribute to the overall theme of work engagement, which according to the JD-R (Demerouti and Bakker, 2017), is representative of positive work motivation and should be contributed to by the presence of both job and personal resources.

7.7.3 Resources

The resources that were included in the interview questions were the job resource of social support, social support can include both peer and supervisor support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017); we also included recovery as a resource, from the JDR-R model (Kinnunen et al., 2011), which states that recovery has the same impact on job demands as resources.
7.7.3.1 Social Support

Previous research by McCormack et al. (2015) found that having peer-support was beneficial in combating burnout and its negative effects. To examine what support was utilised whilst in Rio, two subthemes were generated: *support on-site* and *support off-site*.

*Support on-site* fell into two categories with support coming from either other applied sport psychologists or other support personnel. Sport psychologists from both within their team or national Olympic council were used as support, as well as sport psychologists from outside of their national Olympic council. This differentiation was often due to the participant being the only applied sport psychologist from their country in attendance at the Games. One participant (P02), who was the only sport psychologist from their Olympic Council had created a support structure with people whom they had met through AASP. Other practitioners were sometimes able to utilise the presence of other applied sport psychologists who worked for their national Olympic council. One participant made a point of creating time to utilise that support:

> *I had my colleague there, we- every morning, as soon as we found a space... we would meet in a kind of private space and talk about the day before, and talk about the day ahead as we could see it... Uhm, those check-in debriefs were very valuable because they invited a, kind of a, an anchor point around what we were doing and what we’d been doing* (SP01).

However, whilst some participants were not the only applied sport psychologists on site from their national Olympic council, this did not mean that they automatically were able to utilise the support in place:

> *We were all over the place, so we had a WhatsApp group that we could send messages on but we tried to arrange times to get together, but it was impossible really because of all our different- our conflicting schedules for different sports. Uhm, I bumped into a*...
few in the village and we grabbed a coffee, like when I was in there on day passes and
things like that but generally, it was really hard. (SP03)

Support that came from other members of support staff and not applied sport
psychologists was also utilised but appeared to be less specific and more in regards of checking
in to make sure all stakeholders were satisfied, e.g. showing support for their role in general,
keeping them in the loop of the overall mission or appreciating the challenges that they were
faced with. One participant, SP04, exemplifies this by saying the following about the chef de
mission, “he’s a terrific boss and he’s understanding, and uhm, very supportive. And uh – that
helps a lot. Because I never felt in any way, at risk or you know in trouble with my work.”

Support off-site was any support that participants received from individuals who were
not in Rio or not involved with the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. This theme can also be
divided into two categories: Friends and Family or Other. Family support can be as simple as
checking in with what is happening at home or keeping participants grounded by not being
associated with the furore of the Games. One participant did however speak of the potential
downfall to contacting family, “Uhm…it’s both, on the one side it’s supporting you and your
mood, on the other side it’s important not to have too much family contact because you’re able
to be – you have to stay on duty.” (SP02). Support from other sources, was usually in the form
of an established network or line of management. However, while these sources of support are
there it did not mean they were automatically utilised.

7.7.3.2 Recovery

7.7.3.2.1 Sleep as psychological detachment and recovery

Another key theme was the difficulty to sleep, which indicates an inability to
psychologically detach. Participants were unable to switch off effectively at bedtime. SP03
highlighted:
…by the time I was getting to bed or having something to eat, I was pretty buzzing and finding it hard to come down and finish the day - lots going on in my head, probably getting 4-5 hours’ sleep a night.

Some participants, on the other hand, found themselves in the position of going to bed late coupled with getting up early. Participants experienced extreme sleep patterns, which may have had a knock-on effect with their overall well-being. SP04 explaining their feelings of “Fatigue. It was uh…I was more sleep deprived at this Games than I’ve ever been.”

7.7.3.3.2 Exercise as mastery and recovery

As part of their recovery, participants were questioned over their ability to exercise. Exercise is a form of mastery in the JD-R-R (Kinnunen et al., 2011). Participants planned their exercise into their schedule and attempted to keep to their schedule as often as possible. This was sometimes impossible to do. SP06 said, “What I had planned to do was dedicate about a half an hour every day to my own workout. But that quickly flew out the window.” Another participant, who had the most experience at the Games recognised the negative knock-on effect of not exercising, SP01:

I make sure I do workout every day, so that’s pretty much a given…Otherwise, if I don’t do that, if I you know, go past a day or two then things can go a bit flat and it’s a bit hard to pull back from there because it’s like whatever snowball effect. Like if I don’t do that then I’ll eat more and kind of not be smart about what I do.

One participant recognised the need to increase their fitness before the Games started in order to maintain a certain level of work whilst in Rio. SP03 spoke about the relative fitness of their whole support team by saying:

[At a] test event in April, a few of us had niggling injuries and things like that, we realised if we want to be effective, we’d have to make sure we were all fit, so we all
ended up out there- we all kind of got a bit stronger and a bit fitter... And actively did stuff to be in that state.

Others had not even planned to exercise and did not recognise the importance of engaging in planned physical activity. SP05 instead maintained a level of physical activity incidentally:

…my, that walks were my exercise (laughing) so I suppose I got my exercise out of that and then you, to be fair…one of the, I wish, I wish I’d worn a Fitbit or something like that, coz you do, you do walk around a lot.

Participants also used reflection as a source of recovery, specifically to help them psychologically detach before sleep. By taking the time to reflect on their day, they were able to gather their thoughts for the day instead of ruminating on them, SP06 states:

Every night before I went to sleep, no matter what time it was I would take a couple of minutes to sort of do a little bit of imagery and to review my day of what had gone on, what had happened.

While others also tried to engage in other self-care (e.g. detachment techniques), SP02 listed the following as ways to detach from the Games: “there are several methods that I am using [for example] relaxation techniques, uh… I tried to be active … jogging for example … and I have a diary, I am writing a daily diary”.

7.7.4 Post Games recovery

This theme and its subthemes developed from the data obtained in the qualitative interviews. Recovery post Games was supplemental to the longitudinal study, examining the longer-term effects of working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games on the well-being of applied sport psychologists.
One subtheme that developed was the consistency of the length of time required for an applied sport psychologist to recover from working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. With SP01 “[I] realised, most of the Games I’ve been to, there’s probably about a month of recovery time”, SP04 “…I’d say about a month”. And SP06 “it probably took about a month to feel like a hundred percent normal again”. This is something that is not automatically known or warned of within the industry with a first time Games attendee saying, “But I think the mistake I made was I didn’t [recover] - I went straight back into work” (SP03).

The following subtheme also highlights the need to prepare a recovery strategy. Participants spoke about their need to be kind to themselves on their return home. The most experienced attendee sharing the following:

_I was just kind to myself, uhm and not too critical around how I felt or what I did, sort of like one of those you know, ACT type things, uhm you’re aware and accept it and then just, just ride with it and know that it will change_ (SP01).

### 7.8 General Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the overall effect of working at a large international multi-sport competition on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. The overall results from the longitudinal study and the qualitative interviews will be discussed under the following headings: burnout, work engagement, job resources, personal resources, mood, passion and motivation.

#### 7.8.1 Burnout

The applied sport psychologists who participated in the longitudinal aspect of this study exhibited overall low to moderate levels of burnout. The dimension that received the highest mean score was emotional exhaustion, which is in line with previous research and the review
conducted in Chapter 2. However, this score falls into low burnout Maslach et al. (1996).

Depersonalisation is the dimension in which the participants are on the borderline between low and average/moderate burnout. This dimension has been defined as “an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people” (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 403). It is often thought to be prompted by the emotional exhaustion an individual will experience, which causes them to distance themselves both emotionally and cognitively from their work (Maslach et al, 2001).

Indeed, when looking at individual scores, depersonalisation is the only dimension in which any of the participants reported high levels of burnout. In a study conducted by Bakker, Schaufeli, Sixma, Bosveld and van Dierendonck (2000), employees who depersonalise their clients and treat them as objects, rather than as human beings, may induce more demanding and stressful interactions. It is thought that outside of the human service occupations depersonalisation materialises as cynicism or indifference towards the work an individual is completing (Maslach, et al., 2001). Considering the nature of the work conducted by an applied sport psychologist, this is evidently a worrying trait to possess. Overall, the results of the longitudinal study indicate that the individuals who participated in this study exhibit a low-to-average level of burnout for the duration of the study. On the dimensional level, depersonalisation received the highest scores, with some participants reporting high levels of depersonalisation when compared to normative values. Whereas, emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment remained low or moderate when compared to normative values. However, this does not mean we can dismiss burnout entirely.

According to our analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted post Games, the feeling of needing to be constantly on indicates a high job demand, as does the emotional load of having to mask personal feelings or remain neutral in order to effectively support the athletes.
during negative performance outcomes. For some, the job and personal resources were not enough to reduce the demands placed on them at this time. The participants had varying levels of experience in terms of working at and attending large international multi-sport competitions. One participant (P01) who happened to have the most experience of all was able to utilise his supports as well as recovery opportunities including exercise and sleep. As the most experienced participant, it could be their age and experience that has buffered them from experiencing a fluctuation in burnout which conforms with the previous research regarding age of applied psychologists and experience’s effect on burnout (e.g. D’Souza, Egan, & Rees, 2011; Hardiman & Simmonds, 2013; Rupert & Morgan, 2005, see also Chapter 3 for review into the burnout among applied psychologists). It is also posited that the experience of attending previous Games has taught this participant to utilise their resources. Another participant, a member of a system that offered multiple levels of support to their staff, was unable to utilise some of the resources that were in place for them. Contrary to that, the participant with the most experience ensured they engaged in resources, specifically social support whilst at the Games. This highlights the sentiment that just because something is in place does not mean it will provide a protective buffer to the ill-effects of high pressure and increased workload. It is the individual’s responsibility to ensure they utilise the resources they have available to them.

Both SP01 and SP04 were also part of a system that provided inbuilt support in terms of other practitioners. However, SP04 was unable to utilise their recovery or social support, often due to the high work demands that were placed upon them. This was revealed in the semi-structured interview post-games. Participant (P02) revealed that while they did not come from a system that provided immediate social support (additional applied sport psychologists at the Games) they had sought external (to their Olympic Council) social support in the form of applied sport psychologists they had met through accrediting organisations (e.g. AASP).
Creating this network around them, allowed this applied psychologist to utilise the resource, which could have had a positive effect on the levels of burnout they experienced throughout the duration of the Olympic Games.

**7.8.2 Work Engagement**

Results from the longitudinal study found that the applied sport psychologists experienced between average and high levels of work engagement. Dedication increased, peaking at Time 2 (approximately 1 month before the start of the Games) and then decreased. According to some schools of thought, work engagement and burnout exist on the same continuum with the two constructs existing on opposite ends (e.g. Maslach et al., 2001). However, as stated in the conclusion section of Chapter 5, this author is inclined to agree with Schaufeli and colleagues (2007) that work engagement and burnout are separate constructs which converge, sometimes sharing the same influencers i.e. job/personal resources and job demands. Therefore, it could be argued that our participants experience of positive levels of work engagement is unrelated to their experience of burnout. For some, burnout and work engagement may have changed in the same direction, for others it may have had an opposite shift in pattern. Due to a lack of data due to the small $n$, this comparison cannot be made, however it opens the door for future research into these constructs.

Work engagement is seen as a congruent factor in the development of both personal and job resources (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). If an individual possesses increased levels of job resources, this should lead to an increased level of personal resources and work engagement, and if an individual is engaged with their work, they will experience an increase in personal and job resources (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).
The participants in this study reported feelings of dedication over and above other dimensions of work engagement. Dedication refers to feelings of strong involvement, significance, inspiration and pride (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Pride in the workplace is defined as feelings of importance, value and admiration (Todd & Harris, 2009). The sense of meaning, as exhibited through the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, also exemplifies the sentiment of the applied sport psychologists who are working closely with athletes. However, as the results show, the lowest levels of engagement were reported at T3, closest to the start of the Games in Rio. This means that we cannot take for granted the meaning, pride or significance of the Olympics held by these applied sport psychologists to maintain their work engagement throughout an Olympic year or an international multi-sport event.

7.8.3 Job Resources

Job resources are thought to instigate the processes, which lead to job-related learning, commitment to work and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Personal resources are positive self-evaluations that are linked to an individual’s resilience, they refer to a sense of ability to control and successfully impact an individual’s environment (Hobfoll et al., 2003). Personal resources can predict goal setting, motivation, performance and job and life satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to the results of a longitudinal study by Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2009), over time, personal resources are reciprocal with job resources and work engagement.

According to the information gathered from the qualitative portion of this research is that despite participants having the opportunity to engage in peer based social support that was on site at the Games, it did not automatically exclude them from experiencing feelings of burnout whilst there. This support equated to other applied sport psychologists who worked for the same Olympic Nation who were onsite at the Games but in roles supporting other athletes
and/or teams. For one participant, they were unable to utilise this onsite support due to what appeared to be a timing issue, their workload and down time was not conducive to being able to have conversations with other applied sport psychologists who were employed by the same entity. When this collaboration did occur, they referred to the benefits it afforded. The second participant also appears not to have had the opportunity to communicate regularly with their peers, through timing and logistical issues. They also admit to not making use of their connection to supervisory support off site. This supports the idea that perceived social support and actual social support do not correlate and can even have vastly different associations with distress (Lin, Ye & Ensel, 1999). More simply put, in order for the full benefit of social support to be experienced, applied sport psychologists who attend major multi-sport events should engage in reflective discussions from their peers, which will enable for a positive effect on the individual’s well-being.

7.8.4. Personal Resources

Personal resources were an extension to the original JD-R model (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Personal resources such as optimism play a similar role as job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In this portion of the research, we examined Optimism as a resource. The highest optimism score that was recorded was taken at T1, with lower scores reported at subsequent times, however, it is noted that this may be an outlier. Expectations on specific social roles can motivate an individual to change their behaviour to meet the demands of a situation (Chopik, Kim and Smith, 2015). Could it be that the applied sport psychologists reported a down shift in optimism scores to protect the expectations of the athletes they were working with in preparation for the Olympic Games. As competition looms closer, the need to shift expectations of success may be required, in order not to build up unrealistic hopes of achievement i.e. winning a gold medal at the Olympic or Paralympic Games. This is simply a proposition from the author as a lack of
statistical analysis cannot show a significant decrease in optimism over time. Another explanation could be that the resource of optimism was needed furthest out from the start of the Games, therefore found to gradually deplete as time went on (Clauss et al., 2018).

Recovery, in the form of sleep and exercise, was also questioned during the qualitative interviews. Increased job stressors are negatively related to psychological detachment from work, as are a lack of spatial boundaries (Sonnentag, Kuttler, & Fritz, 2010). Whilst working at the Olympics the applied sport psychologists were under large amounts of job stress and in some cases did not have the ability to remove themselves physically, from the work environment. Sleep was sometimes hard to come by as participants experienced the inability to switch off from the excitement of their day. Disturbance of sleep is thought to be an indication of poor well-being (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006) which would indicate that higher levels of burnout may contribute to lower hours of sleep. This continued disturbed sleeping pattern experienced whilst at the Games may have an influence on the participants’ post-Games recovery, which in turn may influence their feelings of burnout on return from the Games. Again, these ideas, whilst beyond the scope of this body of research warrant further investigation in future research.

7.8.5. Mood an additional resource

Positive and negative affect have been found to be distinct from each other (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000) and thus both have distinct effects on the perceived and objective nature of the work environment, along with distinct effects on burnout (Alarcon, Eschleman, & Bowling, 2009). High levels of positive affect will negatively relate to burnout, whereas high levels of negative affect have a positive relationship with burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003). The applied sport psychologists exhibited higher levels of positive affect when compared to their levels of negative affect. Both
positive affect and negative affect changed over time, which coincided with the occurrence of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, however, we cannot say whether this change is significant due to a lack of inferential statistics. However, positive mood decreased from the initiation of the study to the end of the study for all bar one participant. A similar pattern emerged for the participants in relation to their negative affect, with two participants experiencing higher levels of negative mood at Time 4 compared to Time 1. If we combine these with the results from qualitative interviews, it could be proposed that this drop in positive affect coincided with increased feeling of burnout post Games. Where the applied sport psychologists admitted to experiencing burnout symptoms and needing a month to recover fully from their experience. A decrease in positive affect could be evidence of this, however, it does not account for the decrease in reported negative affect.

The participants in this study exhibited both high and low scores for positive affect, compared to normative data of a nonclinical population (Crawford & Henry, 2004) the mean score for positive affect would place our participants in the 67th percentile, with their mean negative affect score placing them in the 55th percentile, for the respective tables. On a more individual level, four of our participants score in the 80th percentile or above for positive affect, the remaining three participants find themselves in the 36th percentile of lower for mean positive affect scores across all four time-points. Similarly, three of the participants who reported higher mean positive affect, also found themselves in the 47th percentile and lower, while the remaining participants (including an individual who reported high positive affect) found themselves in the 63rd percentile and higher for mean negative affect scores. We can conclude that 57.2% of our participants have high positive affect; however, 57.2% of our participants also exhibit above average score for negative affect.
An individual who is high in positive affect is predisposed to viewing their work environment as being pleasant and favourable (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000). Alarcon et al. (2009) through meta-analyses found that positive affect was negatively related to depersonalisation. Our participants reported higher levels of positive affect, yet also experienced moderate levels of depersonalisation. Similarly, positive affect has a negative relationship with the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout (Alarcon et al., 2009). An individual with higher levels of negative affect will be more likely to experience increased job strain, in part due to the unlikelihood that they will engage in cognitive efforts to focus attention away from negative aspects of the job environment (Thoresen et al., 2003). Higher levels of negative affect have a positive relationship with burnout and its dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Alarcon et al., 2009; Thoresen et al., 2003). When examining the data at an individual level, those who reported higher levels of negative effect and lower levels of positive affect in comparison to their peers, were also the applied sport psychologists who experienced moderate levels of depersonalisation.

7.8.6 Passion

Work engagement has also been found to have a positive relationship with passion. The dualistic model of passion developed by Vallerand and colleagues (2003) stipulates that passion can be both positive in the form of harmonious passion, and negative in the form of obsessive passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). The internalised and autonomous positive harmonious passion is often found to be positive related to work engagement in the workplace (Vallerand, 2010). The participants in the longitudinal study also exhibited higher levels of harmonious passion compared to their reported levels of obsessive passion. Considering the relationship between work engagement and harmonious passion, one again could claim not to be surprised that the applied sport psychologists who participated in this study would experience positive levels in both. Exhibiting a strong inclination towards one’s work, liking and valuing the work that is
done, whilst investing considerable time and energy into one’s work can be considered being passionate about one’s job (Vallerand, 2010). However, whilst this passion can lead to positive experience in the form of engagement, it may also lead to a negative cost in the form of burnout for the individual (Trépanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest, & Vallerand, 2014). While it was not possible to draw comparison between these two constructs it may be worth further investigation in the future.

Both iterations of passion reached their peak at Time 3, closest to the start of the Olympic Games. This is not overly surprising, after all both passion in addition to pride are thought to be distinguishing characteristics of the field of sport (e.g. Stewart & Smith, 1999; Taylor, Doherty, & Mcgraw, 2008). The Olympic and Paralympic games are thought to be the pinnacle of most sporting careers (Elsborg et al., 2015), ergo the increase in passion during this time could be expected. According to (Trépanier et al., 2014) obsessive passion can fuel a motivation drive in an individual, which could account for the relationship between job demands and burnout. This could also provide an explanation as to why there is an increase in obsessive passion when job demands are highest during the Olympic Games and why there are increased feelings of burnout during the Games and as exemplified by the semi-structured interviews, directly after the Games.

It is through understanding and disseminating not only what professionals do, but also how they do it well, that valuable contributions to our field and the community at large are made (Smith, Shanteau, & Johnson, 2004). Elite sporting environments are faster paced, are more complex and are prone to a higher level of intense social and political tension than other sport settings (Cruickshank & Collins, 2013; Eubank, Nesti, & Cruickshank, 2014). Ideographic results from the semi-structured interviews provide a clear picture of what working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games can be like for an applied sport psychologist. This
study paves the way towards understanding the impact these highly stressful events has on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists, not only whilst on site but once the events are over. By combining self-report measures and qualitative interviews, we were able to gather rich and informative data; however, this does not come without its limitations.

7.9 Limitations and future directions

This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the sample size for both sections of the study yielded low numbers. One could argue that asking for members of the applied sport psychology profession to partake in a research project during what is potentially their busiest year, and most likely their busiest two weeks within that year was ambitious. It is this very reason that makes the results so impactful. While it was unwise to run sound statistical tests with this sample size, nor to calculate the effect size of the results, it is still possible to infer the relationship that exists between high job demands (i.e. high work load) resultant job strain (burnout), motivation (work engagement), and resources examined (social support, self-efficacy and optimism) and potential mediating role of recovery experiences (sleep and exercise).

Secondly, self-report measures were relied upon for the quantitative portion of this investigation, meaning the responses may be skewed due to common methods bias. The online survey method was supplied by Qualtrics Survey Software; each questionnaire received its own unique link which was independently emailed with instructions at each time point for the longitudinal survey. An objective measure of performance from additional support staff or athletes who the applied sport psychologists work with could provide an even more colourful illustration of how working at these events may affect the well-being of applied sport psychologists.
While subject participation was monitored, human error was not accounted for. This caused some difficulty with data collection on the planned diary study which can be rectified for future research. Time difference for the daily diary study also played its role in the data collection phase. Emails with links to the online survey used by the participants automatically set to send twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening for those who had not completed the survey already. However, some participants mentioned during the qualitative phase that this had not worked as planned. Future research could employ a combination of previous diary studies procedures (Simbula, 2010), i.e. compiling a physical daily diary booklet complete with instructions for participants to complete and return to the researcher, with the modern convenience of online resources for electronic data collection.

While the qualitative portion of the research study was able to give a rich and colourful impression of the participants’ experiences, and the participants represented almost 9% of the applied sport psychologists reportedly working at the Olympic Games. The results from these interviews cannot be generalised to every applied sport psychologists in situ, nor their applied sport science colleagues. Future research may consider embedding itself in the national governing body or Olympic Council, utilising multiple perspectives of the same organisational setup, as well as recruiting applied sport psychologists from a wider birth of countries for a truly international perspective of the Games environment.

Despite these limitations, this study provides novel results for the specific population, methods for which to attain them are easily replicated with room for adjustment.

7.10 Practical implications

Implications for this research surround a message of self-care for applied sport psychologists, especially for those working at large international sporting events. The need for the building and protection of resources is evident from the results of this study. Applied sport
psychologists should be encouraged to enhance their resources in order to effectively buffer from these high stress and increased pressure situations. Employing stringent and effective recovery strategies for the duration and immediate aftermath for these events is imperative for longer-term well-being and overall recovery. Ideally, this message of self-care will be disseminated at an educational and training level, equipping early career practitioners with the correct tools to manage their work-based well-being. Alternatively, this message needs to be spread through NGBs, Olympic committees and sporting organisations in a top down approach.

7.11 Contribution to the JD-R/JD-R-R Model(s)

Figure 7.1 Proposed contribution to Models. This figure suggests how this research could contribute to these models.

Results from this study tentatively contribute to both the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and JD-R-R models (Kinnunen et al., 2011). This study shows that high job demands contribute to feelings of job strain, which can present as burnout. Indeed, the participants of this study who attended the Games in Rio experienced acute burnout on their return from working in Brazil, requiring at least a month to recover and feel like themselves again. Some participants
were able to utilise their available job resource (social support), however, others were not. This may have contributed to differing experiences of burnout whilst at the Games and the duration of experienced burnout once returning. Consistent recovery as suggested in the JD-R-R model, may be key to sustained effort whilst at the Games. However, more effort must be made in highlighting the impact that resources and recovery have on positive work-based well-being of this cohort, such that it is utilised and protected during times of increased job demands.

7.12 Conclusions

There has been an increase in the number of sport psychologists working at the Olympic Games over the last three decades (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015). Indeed, this professional population is growing and receiving more recognition. With this increase in recognition and use of sport psychology comes extra organisational demands on the individual. This study tentatively supports both the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and the JD-R-R (Kinnunen et al., 2011; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007) in stating that end state job strain (i.e.) burnout, work engagement (end state motivation process) are related to resource possession and utilisation, along with recovery strategies as potential mediators. While generalizable or conclusive results cannot be made, this study paves the way for more in-depth research into the phenomenon and delivers notable findings to those working as applied sport psychologists in the elite sporting industry.
Chapter 8

Discussion

*The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on. It is never of any use to oneself.*

- Oscar Wilde
8.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the prominent themes which were developed from the data of this thesis and the important findings which will augment research surrounding the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists, impacting work and organisational psychology research as well as the education and training of applied sport psychologists. A secondary benefit to this research is the knock-on effect supplemented well-being will have on the athletes, performers and personnel that employ applied sport psychologists to safeguard and improve psychological performance and mental health. The prevalence and cases of burnout among applied psychologists was reviewed initially which then paved the way for a focused approach investigating the work-based well-being of an international sample of applied sport psychologists. Original research was conducted in order to assess the general disposition of these individuals, both in academic and applied arenas, how working in the industry affects their wellbeing, through burnout, work engagement and social support, as well as workaholism and optimism. Following on from this, the opportunity to assess the well-being of applied sport psychologists who were working directly with athletes in the year of the XXI Olympiad in Rio, Brazil through a longitudinal survey was conducted, augmented by semi-structured interviews post Games. Throughout the discussion, emphasis will be paid to the key findings and how they have broadened the literature on work-based well-being among applied sport psychologists. Additionally, limitations of this research coupled with future direction will be discussed and highlighted, suggesting how this piece of work can pave the way to more in-depth discovery of this topic in the future.

The industry of applied sport psychology is expanding, having seemingly gained more traction in recent years. The industry has been in existence for quite a while, Coleman Griffith, seen as the father of sport psychology in North America, founded the first athletic laboratory in
1925, directly serving athletes with a focus on improved mental performance (Ayogi et al., 2012; Gould & Pick, 1995). The professionalisation of this industry is still in its fledgling state (Winter & Collins, 2016). As such, it seems that research is only beginning to investigate the impact that working in this industry has on the individual (see Quartiroli et al., 2018).

Theoretically driven research into the topic of work-based well-being among applied sport psychologists is an area that is ripe for investigation, therefore the aim of this thesis was to fill that gap. By using resource theories from organisational psychology i.e. COR (Hobfoll, 1989, in Chapter 5 and 6) and JD-R (Demerouti et al., 2001, in Chapter 7) I aimed to investigate the dispositional work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists, especially those who may be working in dual or multiple roles. Exhibited in Chapters 5 and 6, this research employed the work and organisational psychology lens, focusing upon those who are often given the responsibility of safeguarding the well-being of athletes and performers. The work practices, potential burnout, work engagement, workaholism and recovery practices of these individuals was investigated. The personal resource of optimism was also examined along with the job resource of social support. Next, the investigation researched progressed to use the real-time laboratory of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. Thus, a second aim of this research was to investigate how working with athletes in the lead up to and during the largest international multi-sport event in the world would affect the well-being of applied sport psychologists.

8.2 Burnout

As highlighted in the literature review, theoretically driven research in burnout among applied psychologists is lacking when compared to the burnout research of other disciplines. While burnout in sport has received attention (e.g. Dale and Weinberg, 1989; Goodger et al., 2010; Goodger et al., 2010) our initial intention of examining burnout among applied sport psychologists had to be modified. Other disciplines of applied psychology and allied mental
health workers were included in order to strengthen the range and scope of the review. According to the review chapter, burnout and its dimensions, specifically emotional exhaustion, are prevalent among those who provide psychological support to others. Emotional exhaustion can be referred to as the “feelings of being emotionally drained by one’s contact with other people and is the central strain dimension of burnout” (Bakker et al., 2014, p. 390), this dimension of burnout was found to be the most frequently reported amongst applied psychologists. According to our qualitative research findings, the applied sport psychologists interviewed had all experienced an iteration of burnout at some point in their careers, the intensity of which was offset by their source of social support. Social support provided by peers and colleagues resulted in subjectively fewer experiences of burnout, or less severe experiences of burnout and enabled the applied sport psychologists to recover from the ill effects of stressful work environments or situations. This supported results from a meta-analysis which found that the source of social support influenced differences in work-family conflict (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner and Hammer, 2011). These results expanded on the JD-R theory, supporting the claim that job resources such as social support, will reduce the effects of burnout (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017), but also by differentiating between the sources of this support.

Quantitatively, the longitudinal survey showed that overall, the respondents reported low to moderate levels of burnout. The dimension of burnout, which received the highest mean score across participants, was depersonalisation. This goes against trends seen in previous research and is not without concern. Depersonalisation can be defined as “a negative or excessively detached response towards [other] people, who are the recipients of one’s service or care” (Bakker et al., 2014, p. 390). Considering the nature of an individual’s work as an applied sport psychologist, it could be worrying if that person would begin to regard the athletes or performers one works with negatively or even in a detached manner. Alliance and empathy
are critical in therapeutic settings (Wampold, 2015), as such depersonalisation could hypothetically reduce the effectiveness of the applied sport psychologist.

Results developed from the qualitative interviews conducted post Games, brought one of the most interesting facets of this research. Unsurprisingly, once the excitement and adrenaline abated, the negative aftereffects took hold. Prolonged exposure to high job demands can cause chronic exhaustion, which may cause a psychological distancing of the individual from their work (Bakker et al., 2014). To phrase it another way, they may start to experience burnout (Bakker at al., 2000). This tentatively supports the JD-R model, which states that increased job demands, as can be experienced whilst in attendance at a large multi-sport event, can lead to job strain or burnout. The applied sport psychologists, who had attended the Games in Rio as support staff, required the minimum of a month on their return to feel fully recovered from their experience. This period of time was spent working minimally, or not at all. Those who continued into work immediately upon their return took longer to recover, often experiencing illness. While this may not be an extreme amount of time in terms of required recovery, it is important to note. Especially for neophyte practitioners, or first-time attendees of the Games. Taking time away from work may be necessary for full recovery from such an intense competition. This distancing of oneself from work is to allow for full psychologically detachment, and enable an opportunity to achieve something else, this time should be used to relax fully, not only physically but emotionally and psychologically (Bernier, 1998). Support becomes an invaluable resource in the process of recovery (Bernier, 1998; Dyrbye et al., 2010), corroborating the results put forward in Chapter 5. Although to truly detach and recover, the support may need to be external to work-based colleagues until work is reinstated (Bernier, 1998). Recovery is an individual psychosocial process, with different people requiring different strategies and intensity, however, it appears that the stages of distancing, revaluation and making a change are required to recover from burnout (Bernier, 1998).
Burnout is often thought to be the end result of long term or chronic stress (Maslach et al., 1986). While arguably, the duration of the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games may not be long (up to two weeks of competition each), one could argue that the intensity of the environment, and what is required of the individual whilst they are there for a consistent period of time throughout, could be considered as contributory to chronic feelings of stress, or perhaps a culmination of stress of the previous four years. The Olympic and Paralympic Games often dictate the previous four-year training and preparation cycle for athletes and their support team and can influence funding opportunities for given sports in the next four years. Burnout has been found to predict depression (Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012) and can be considered a phase in its development (Ahola et al., 2006; Iacovides et al., 2003). For severe burnout, the condition will manifest itself in fatigue, physical discomfort, insomnia, overexcitement, negative feelings and a decrease in productivity at work (Bernier, 1998), not unlike the sentiment of some participants post-Games. For most, burnout will not be immediately recognisable, for the individual, it may be a gradual awareness of the situation, whilst those around that individual may recognise it sooner (Bernier, 1998). Therefore, it may be necessary to ingrain the recovery process in the individual in order to prevent them reaching severe burnout. Indeed, by encouraging complete detachment from work during leisure time, you can prevent psychological strain and induce greater engagement with work simultaneously (Sonnentag, 2012). Full psychological detachment requires a restorative environment, where the individual can apply effortless attention, preferably in a natural environment with soft stimuli, allowing for reflection (Sonnentag, 2012). Therefore, time away from performance sport could be encouraged for applied sport psychologists in the aftermath of the culmination of large sporting competitions, pursuing activities for their own interest and savouring time with their own support systems. Thus, decreasing job demands and allowing for the development of personal resources on the return to work, according to the JD-R (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017), should
reduce feelings of job strain, contribute to motivation, overall performance and organisational outcomes.

8.3 Resources

According to both JD-R (Demerouti et al., 2001) and COR (Hobfoll, 1989), resources are invaluable for employee well-being. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) recognise that personal resources such as optimism and self-efficacy, have the same impact on job strain as job resources such as autonomy, social support, quality of relationship with the supervisor and performance feedback. This research took influence from positive psychology and focused on both optimism and to a lesser extent self-efficacy (as personal resources), and social support (as a job resource). Optimism is a key facet of positive psychology (Seligman, 1998; 2002) as are relationships with others (Seligman, 2012).

The applied sport psychologists, who participated in the initial qualitative portion of this research, all identified as either realistically optimistic or highly optimistic. This optimism applied not only towards themselves but also towards those who employed their services in order to improve performance. Optimism has positive effects on health and appears to remain constant even after changes in health have occurred (Chopik, Kim and Smith, 2015). Put simply, even if a condition changes negatively for an individual this may not affect their levels of optimism. On the surface, this can be seen as a positive attribute of this resource, however, it also means that despite something bad happening, an individual may not change their opinion on the possibility of that happening again. Optimistic people are slower to update their beliefs following a negative event (Kuzmanovic et al., 2015), this optimistic bias phenomenon could explain why the applied sport psychologists in the first qualitative study of the research to also exhibit workaholic tendencies. While the participants subjectively identified as either realistic or highly optimistic, that does not ensure that these individuals were not unrealistically
optimistic. Unrealistic optimism can often result in emotional costs, due to expectations not being met (Shepperd, Pogge and Howell, 2017). This could result in an individual to chase that expectation, committing greater goal persistence than when expectations are more realistic or pessimistic (Shepperd et al., 2017) thus lending to the cycle of further effort, leading to potential false expectation and time management. In fact, those who were highly optimistic also spoke about workaholic tendencies. This research proposes that the personal resource of optimism could have the potential to result in negative motivation to work, rather than positive motivation as suggested in the JD-R (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017). True correlation and causation cannot be drawn from this research; however, it opens the door for future research into personal resources and how they may not always be beneficial to work-based well-being.

Optimism, whether unrealistic or not, remains to have benefits on an individual’s health and well-being, as well as interpersonal benefits, specifically, people show greater interest with an individual when they are optimistic (i.e. interest in working with them or having them as friends) (Shepperd et al., 2017). Which is understood to be beneficial when working as an applied sport psychologist. Optimism was also measured during the longitudinal portion of the research. Reported mean optimism was highest at Time 1 (up to four months before the start of the Games), mean scores then decreased and remained lower than Time 1 throughout the remainder of that study. While optimism does not have standard scores, it is interesting to see that it was on average highest furthest out from competition, dropped, and then remained lower than this higher score for the remainder of the study. One could speculate that as the Games drew closer, optimism became more realistic and decreased to match expectations regarding results of their athletes. Despite the potential risks of unrealistic optimism, overall optimism is a positive resource to possess, which can be learned (Seligman, 1998), and should be encouraged within this cohort, as long as it contains a sufficient level of realism.
The job resource measured in this research was social support. Relationships have been shown to be a key aspect of happiness and life satisfaction (Waldinger & Shulz, 2010). The importance and use of teams in applied sport psychology consulting has been covered in previous literature (see Cogan et al., 2011; Pitt, et al., 2014). Social support and the effect on burnout of the applied sport psychologists has already been discussed from the initial qualitative investigation. This influenced the interest in what role social support would play during the period with the highest demands placed on the applied sport psychology. Social support was qualitatively reported as invaluable to the participants at the Games, with some choosing to rely on their support from home in the form of friends and family, somewhat contrasting to results from Chapter 5. Participants also mentioned the lack of opportunity to avail of this resource whilst at Rio, with one participant mentioning a lack of relationship with line manager, which deterred them from leaning on this resource for support. Thus, despite these support structures being in place, and therefore a positive job resource to have access to, in order to experience the full effect of social support, it must be utilised. Otherwise this social support may not have the positive affect on an individual’s higher workload and resultant job strain, as outlined in the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

8.4 Workaholism and Work Engagement

Two other constructs of work-based well-being that this research focused on were workaholism and work engagement. Both are distinguished as types of heavy work investment (Shaufeli, Taris & Van Rhenen, 2007), with workaholism considered the “bad type” and work engagement the “good type” (Shimazu et al., 2012, p. 316). Workaholism and work engagement can be separated by their relationship with conflicting indicators of well-being (Shaufeli et al., 2007). Workaholism is generally related with unwell-being (low life satisfaction coupled with high ill health) and poor work performance, whereas work engagement is associated with well-
being (high life satisfaction and low ill-health) and greater work performance (Shimazu et al., 2012). While both concepts share an attitude of hard work (vigour element of work engagement), involvement (dedication element of work engagement) and the feeling of being engrossed in one’s work (absorption element of work engagement), their difference comes in the motivation behind these actions (Hakanen et al., 2012). Those who are engaged in work are driven through intrinsic motivations and will enjoy the work that they do, workaholics are propelled by an obsessive irresistible inner drive (Shimazu et al., 2015).

Workaholic tendencies were common among the cohort of applied sport psychologists who participated in the qualitative Study 1 portion of this research. Workaholic tendencies occurred regardless of the main area of the industry with which the psychologist identified i.e. academic, applied practitioner or combined. Workaholism indicates a level of working excessively and being obsessed with work, which manifests itself as compulsive working (Hakenen et al., 2012). It was found that optimism was highly reported in this cohort, optimism is a known personal resource and is traditionally related to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). We hypothesized that high levels of optimism may induce unrealistic expectations on the ability to complete tasks as per planning fallacy (Buehler et al., 2004). It is suggested by some organisations and managers that workaholics are superior workers, however research has shown that workaholic behaviour is weakly related to job performance (Shimazu et al., 2015). Meaning an individual who exhibits workaholic tendencies, may be seen to be doing more work, through effort and time spent working, but it does not automatically suggest that they are doing better work. In this instance, less may indeed equal more. Therefore, this negative form of work motivation will actually detract from organisational outcomes according to the JD-R (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017), and may be influenced by unrealistic levels of optimism (personal resource).
According to the longitudinal survey in Study 2, which utilised the UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) to assess employee engagement, the applied sport psychologists who completed the quantitative study reported an average to high mean score for work engagement across all four time points. One participant reported low levels of engagement at T3, which coincided with the time of the Games in Rio, however, their reported work engagement regained high status at T4.

Unlike burnout, job resources are the most important predictors of work engagement (Halbesleben 2010, Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). According a recent meta-analysis, which confirmed the importance of job resources in the prediction of work engagement, resources such as; task variety and significance, autonomy, feedback on performance, social support from colleagues, high quality relationship with the supervisor and, transformational leadership, were the most predictive of work engagement (Christian et al., 2011). Many of these examples fall into ideas of social support, as they require interactions with others. Resources have been found to not only contribute to work engagement over time, they also have exhibited a similar effect day-to-day (Bakker et al., 2014). Social support was noted as being invaluable to the participants who worked at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. Participants also reported an average to high level of work engagement throughout. A relationship between the two cannot be determined due to lack of statistical analysis, however, it would support the JD-R model which states that job resources should positively influence positive work motivation, i.e. work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Working with athletes who compete at the Olympic Games, unsurprisingly creates a lot of meaning for the applied sport psychologists, a theme which developed from the data collected during the qualitative interviews in the wake of the Games completion. Given the importance an applied sport psychologist can place on working at the Games (Elsborg et al., 2015), this is also not a surprising result to have found.
While job resources could be viewed as integral for work engagement, Demerouti (2014) has proposed that challenge demands (those that place positive pressure on the individual, where they feel they can rise to meet it) strengthen the positive link between job resources and work engagement. Alternatively, hindrance demands (demands which could be viewed as threatening or a roadblock towards progression) can weaken this relationship. This is an area of research which was beyond the scope of this thesis, however, it would contribute to interesting future research within this field.

Work engagement leads to improved health, life satisfaction and job performance over time (Shimazu et al., 2015). A work engaged employee will differ in their approach to their work investment when compared to a workaholic. Workaholics will participate in boundaryless working (working at weekends or on holidays) and will continue to work whilst sick; while an engaged employee will also work outside of conventional work hours, they may do so to a lesser extent and will not work when sick (Hakanen et al., 2012). The work practices of workaholics are also associated with poor recovery (due to inability to detach) and sleep problems, something that their work engaged counterparts do not experience (Hakanen et al., 2012). On a day level, Reina-Tamayo and colleagues (2017) found that employee work engagement can fluctuate during the day, with individuals being most engaged during two-hours work episodes and on workdays which were proceeded by evenings in which they have recovered well (Sonntag, 2003). These subtle differences between the constructs also extend to the nature of the intention of high work investment. Work engagement involves vigour and dedication, which workaholism does not seem to be related to, what they share is the dimension of absorption (Hakanen et al., 2012). Therefore, “vigour and dedication seem to be “pure” indicators of engagement, whereas high level of absorption could also be a sign of workaholic tendency” (Hakanen et al., 2012, p. 78).
The question remains how we can conclusively state that applied sport psychologists are work engaged rather than workaholic. Unfortunately, workaholism was not included in the longitudinal study, the reason being that the lead up to and duration of the Olympic Games would result in overworking, high pressure, and feelings of obligation (Arnold & Sarkar, 2015; McDougall et al., 2015), thus, job demands would be high. We already knew that sleep would be affected and working hours would be extended (MacIntyre, 2012), indicating that recovery which is integral to well-being according to the JDR-R (Kinnunen et al., 2011) could be at a minimum. This practice is accepted and somewhat expected in sporting environments, the reason for this could be because of the expectant passion that employees of elite sporting environments are supposed to show. There was a potential for false positives to be reported if we had measured workaholism around the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. However, this would also be an interesting avenue to further explore in future research.

8.5 Passion

Swanson and Kent (2016) found that obsessive passion had positive influences for employees within sporting organisations, in direct conflict to the negative effect it has on employees of other non-sporting industries. This could be due to the autonomous internalisation obsessive passion may have within a sport setting. The applied sport psychologists in this research during the longitudinal study reported their highest level of passion for both the harmonious and the obsessive scale of passion at the time-point closest to the start of the Games.

The sporting background that these employees come from may have conditioned them to view the pressure from their work environment as welcomed if not expected due to their experiences in a competitive sporting environment (Swanson and Kent, 2016). The positive outcomes for obsessively passionate employees could be due to the consistent focus on team performance combined with a sports participation mind-set, which is present in the sporting
workplace. Job resources can enable individuals to distribute their energies at work harmoniously, this involvement could prevent the employee from feeling overwhelmed or pressured (Trépanier et al., 2014).

Tépanier and colleagues (2014) research highlights the fact that it is not necessarily the level of investment into one’s work that could be the concern, rather it is the quality of the investment which will predict their functioning at work, i.e. harmonious vs obsessive passion. As was seen in Chapter 6, where the applied sport psychologists’ tendencies to overwork was discussed, this cohort invests a lot of themselves into their job. Over the course of the Olympic year, we also saw a change in mean levels of harmonious passion whereas this change was not found with the mean levels of obsessive passion exhibited by our participants. Again, perhaps with a larger sample size we may be able to get a clearer insight into the relationship between these variables among applied sport psychologists.

While inconclusive in this research, Swanson and Kent (2016) have shown that those working in the sporting industry are prone to obsessive passion, but this seems to have the countereffect to what is presented in other research (e.g. Vallerand et al., 2010). We must however, not take this for granted. Those who exhibit obsessive passion are more inclined to think constantly about their jobs, work overtime and throughout holidays (Forest et al., 2011), which is not dissimilar to the characteristics of workaholism. It appears that despite having adequate job resources, such as supervisory support and a flexible work schedule, workaholics will still experience work-home conflict, suggesting that they will fail to utilise or perhaps even recognise their job resources (Russo and Waters, 2006). Indeed, it is suggested by Trépanier and colleagues (2014) that an employee exhibiting obsessive passion towards work may become so engrossed with their work that they will feel obliged to immerse themselves further in order to cope, eliminating the availability of colleague or supervisory support. And while obsessive passion is accepted and normalised within the sports industry, as suggested by
Trépanier et al (2014), it may not be that the employees are immune to the negative effect of obsessive passion, rather that it may be an incidence of higher levels of obsessive passion are needed to be experienced in order to result in negative effect on an individual’s well-being. Therefore, there is still a hazard associated with this disposition.

Rather, by encouraging higher levels of autonomous harmonious passion, which is characterised by volition and flexibility, an ability to release appropriately from work should be honed (Vallerand et al., 2010), this also enables the individual to create a disposition where when work becomes exhausting they are able to disengage from their work, without guilt or anxiety (Trépanier et al., 2014). Sonnetag (2012), recognises that it is the detachment from work which enables an individual to fully recover, therefore preventing the negative effects of a stressful or busy workday/period. Individuals who are high in harmonious passion are also more flexible in their approach to task completion (Trépanier et al., 2014) meaning that they are able to experience the positive effect, absorption and even flow that comes with the accomplishment of this achievement (Vallerand et al., 2003).

The JD-R posits that motivation mediates the relationship between job resources and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), however, it appears that motivation may also mediate the relationship between job demands, compulsive working and exhaustion (Trépanier et al., 2014). The authors concluded that obsessive passion is fostered by job demands whilst they also thwart harmonious passion, indicating that job demands deplete energy, encouraging maladaptive behaviour with their consequential costs to well-being (Trépanier et al., 2014). It has even been suggested that job resource availability whilst working under highly demanding conditions can be engaging, it may still result in exhaustion in the long run (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017), meaning that resource availability may not be enough to protect from stressful or highly demanding work environments. Ultimately, these relevant resources must be
utilised, for as was shown in this research it is not enough to have them in place but not called upon, so perhaps this is the role that obsessive passion plays in mediating the relationship between job resources and burnout.

8.6 Contribution to Theoretical Framework

This thesis and body of work within expands the knowledge surrounding the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) by applying it in the novel field of applied sport and exercise psychology. Whilst those working in high-performance sport are subject to similar work-related issues as most other workers i.e. job demands, job resources and personal resources, as specified in section 1.3.2, applied sport psychologists work within a unique environment. McDougall et al. (2015) highlight the differences, not only in environment but also culture that those employed by high performing teams experience. Swanson and Kent (2016) further the cultural differences in relation to work-based practices by showcasing the normality placed upon obsessive passion (often detrimental to one’s well-being) within this industry. All of this considered, there is tentative support for the explanatory value of the JD-R when applied to sport psychologists. This discussion has so far highlighted the impact of increased job demands (the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games) on resultant job strain i.e. burnout, and the importance of the utilisation of resources on the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists working at large international multi-sport events.

Findings from Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 also show that social support (a job resource) has an important role to play regarding applied sport psychologists work-based well-being. However, not all resources can be guaranteed to be beneficial to the individual, as was shown in Chapter 6, optimism as a personal resource could have a negative effect on work motivation, or more precisely, too much optimism could result in workaholic tendencies due to planning
fallacy and the inability to update believes despite previous experiences. In fact, this work behaviour could contribute to job strain by placing more demands on the individual.

Organisational outcomes within applied sport psychology could be hard to identify in a tangible way. However, the role for the psychologists is in part, to guard the well-being of those in their charge. Therefore, the JD-R could be beneficial in its influences on the organisation in which these applied psychologists operate. Well-being in the workplace requires cultural norms, using the JD-R model to plan organisational set-up, especially with regard to social support systems, may have positive affect on those working in this environment.

8.7 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this research which must be addressed. The numbers of applied sport psychologists who completed the longitudinal study and qualitative interviews in Study 2 are small. Originally 20 applied psychologists agreed to participate in the longitudinal study, however, despite being reminded of their initial participation, that number gradually reduced until we got the final number of nine participants who completed all measures in that portion of the research. The numbers who completed the qualitative interviews post Games were, however, fairly representative of both the numbers who participated in the longitudinal study and also of applied sport psychologists who attended the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. The results gained should not be dismissed as this the first kind of investigation to be administered and the quality of the data and the unique insight it brought should compensate for the quantity of participants being a limitation. Data was collected during the lead up to the culmination of a four-year Olympic cycle, which is understandably when an applied sport psychologist will experience some of their greatest pressures. Indeed, we chose this year and this event for that exact reason, to examine how the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games can impact the work-based well-being of applied sport psychologists. Additionally, we
only chose to focus on the well-being of applied sport psychologists, which restricts the generalisability into other occupations, however we do envision that the results of this research could be applicable to other applied sport science practitioners who support athletes throughout the process of preparing for and competing at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games.

Additionally, this research relies on self-report measures which can increase the likelihood of common method variance, self-report measures can also influence participant responses, this could be due to memory, or the desire to be seen as favourable to the researcher. It may be interesting to gather and assess data from those who work with applied sport psychologists. An area of concern for the work-based well-being of this cohort is the potential impact it may have on the athletes in their charge. By adding the perspective of the athletes, we could gain a very unique, and alternative, insight into how the fluctuations in well-being of applied sport psychologists could directly affect those they work with. Alternatively, by gathering data from supervisors, it would also provide an additional perspective to this phenomenon.

In the research conducted in Chapters 5 and 6 relied on qualitative methods alone. While qualitative research is not without flaws, and this study allowed a unique insight into the lived experience of applied sport psychologists, it cannot be denied that the data could have been strengthened by mixing methodologies and including quantitative baseline measures for the variables assessed in these studies. As was exampled in Chapter 7, which enables the triangulation of data to create a stronger picture on which the foundation of the findings was built.

8.8 Future directions

Primary and secondary preventative interventions to reduce the risk of burnout amongst psychologists is also an area of interest for future research. Mindfulness has been recognized
as a useful resource to use in the prevention and treatment of burnout (Di Benedetto & Swadling, 2013). *Mindfulness* is observing of one’s moment-to-moment experiences without seeking explanation or analysis (Shapiro, Brown, & Biegel, 2007). Research has shown a strong negative correlation between the practice of mindfulness and levels of burnout experienced (Di Benedetto & Swadling, 2013). Non-reactivity to inner experience, acting with awareness, describing and non-judging of inner experience were the four facets of mindfulness that were significantly negatively correlated with burnout. Thus, mindfulness-based interventions may be a useful preventative strategy for practicing psychologists. Similarly, resilience training offers another preventative approach. Recently, Rees, Breen, Cusack and Henry (2015) have developed a model which suggests that psychological resilience will mediate relationships between workplace stress and variables such as coping and adjustment.

While this research included positive work-based well-being, i.e. work-engagement, the focus remained on negative work-based behaviours and outcomes. Burnout, workaholism, the negative repercussions of working with athletes in the lead up to and during the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. However, by shifting the focus to work engagement and its consequences would also make interesting research. The most contemporary research surrounding work engagement has been stimulated by the research on burnout (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris, 2008), therefore it could be opportune to examine the prevalence, antecedents and consequences of work engagement and resilience in applied sport psychologists more closely in the future. Work engagement and burnout are after all, somewhat related yet independent constructs (Bakker et al., 2014) and while it is necessary to prevent or minimise burnout, it is also important to actively encourage work-engagement among this cohort.

Interventions, which address this, could also be administered. Applied sport psychologists’ unique work environment could make previous research into work-based
interventions difficult to transfer. Therefore, interventions which optimise job demands, increase job resources and foster personal resources specific to the allowances afforded to applied sport psychologists, some who inhabit dual roles (i.e. academic/practitioners) could be an ideal way to broaden this research.

It is important to note the potential difference in demands placed on the individual, an area which could benefit further investigation among this cohort. Demands have the potential to be viewed as either hindrance demands or challenge demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Hindrance demands can restrict an individual from their ability to achieve their valued goals, these demands can include “role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, p. 277). Alternatively challenge demands, while cost the individual effort also have the potential to promote individual growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). High levels of workload, time pressure and responsibility can all be viewed as challenge demands (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott & Morrow, 1994). These demands can be viewed as good stressors as they have the capability of resulting in rewarding work executed by the employee in question, despite the discomfort that accompanies them (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The main issue is that there is no consistency with what is viewed as a challenge or a hindrance demand, they can become interchangeable in a given context or per the individual, for example, nurses have expressed the sentiment that pressure is more hindering than challenging (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). The JD-R shows consistently that employee performance is at its best in environments that combine challenge job demands with job resources, due to the facilitation of these environments to work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). If you compare this with Flow theory, it is not hard to understand why, for flow is achieved when and individual is challenged just beyond their usual capabilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Ultimately the
individual will decide what is a challenge and what is a hindrance, but without the relevant resources an individual is liable to suffer the negative consequences.

While this research is quite novel, and the sample size has been highlighted in the limitations of the studies, a larger sample size would return results that are more generalizable. Indeed, there is scope to extend the research population to other elite sport support personnel working at the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. After all, protecting the well-being of staff is as imperative as protecting the well-being of athletes.

Finally, in order to ensure that this research is used to its full potential, it is hoped that it can be used for educational purposes. As per the findings of the Olympic and Paralympic based study in Chapter 7, enabling applied sport psychologists to utilise their resources may be as important as it is to identify them. This of course could be disseminated through the appropriately accredited degree courses or through the accreditation process itself. Building support networks, recognising job and personal resources as well as recognition of potential consequences for job demands will ideally create an industry, which is sufficiently buffered form the negative effects and, embraces the positive effects of working as an applied sport psychologist.

8.8.1 Best Practice Guidelines

Based on the results of the research conducted in this thesis, it is felt pertinent to include proposed best practice guidelines for organisations educating and employing applied sport psychologists.

- Results from the empirical study conducted during the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games shows that recovery will be essential post Games. Education around self-care and recommendation of self-care practices should be included in course syllabi for those
training to be applied sport psychologists, especially for those who will be travelling with athletes to important competitions which may last for weeks at a time. Self-care practice guidelines whilst in situ, but also post event are integral to the well-being of applied sport psychologists. Continual professional development should also be made available for those incumbent as professional applied sport psychologists. Emphasis should be paid on the importance of these on the well-being of the individual.

- Results from the both the literature review and the empirical studies show that burnout is a genuine concern for those who work within the applied psychological field. Workload, job demands, resources and experience can all influence levels of burnout experienced. The empirical studies show that burnout is experienced by those who specialise in applied sport psychology, therefore awareness around burnout and the consequences of not only chronic stress, but also the culmination of an acute stressor (such as a multi-sport or major international multi-day competition) should be shared among applied sport psychologists. Training and education surrounding management of work-based stress should become part of the accreditation process for applied sport psychologists. As a profession who is susceptible to this work phenomenon, preventative measures need to be put in place, as well as specific recommendations for those working in performance sport on how to recover, should burnout occur.

- Both empirical studies highlighted the importance of the job resource of social support. Whether that be from a peer or colleague or from a mentor or supervisor. This source of support was shown to be beneficial for general work-related well-being but also during times of high pressure such as during an Olympic and/or Paralympic Games. Therefore, peer support should be made compulsory for those working as applied sport psychologists, with standards falling in line with other strands of psychology professionals (i.e. clinical or counselling psychologists). This will enable applied sport
psychologists to have a safe and productive avenue for discussing their own work-based stressors inside the workplace. This could also eliminate potential stigma attached to asking for help.

- According to this research, applied sport psychologists will engage in workaholic tendencies. The nature of the industry supports this negative approach to work. While the flexible work hours and high demands places on applied sport psychologists may not have the same negative effect on every individual, organisations should advocate for a healthy workload among their employees. Or at a minimum, in order to protect these professionals, measures may have to be taken to ensure a healthier attitude to work practice is realised.

- Results from the study conducted in the same year at the Olympic and Paralympic Games show there may be a lack of awareness surrounding the impact that large international, multi-sport competitions can have on the support staff in attendance. Therefore, this needs to be shared within organisations. Applied sport psychologists (and other staff) may need to go through specific training in the lead up to such events in order to prepare them for the unique stressors they may face. Debriefing post competition is necessary for staff as well as athletes, understanding and compassion needs to be shown from the top down in order to allow for appropriate self-care to occur on the return home of all support staff.

Ultimately, these guidelines need to be executed in a top down approach, expectations around the abilities of the individual may have to be amended to protect the applied sport psychologist and their work-related well-being. These changes need to also occur concurrently with training and education of the applied sport psychologists themselves. The awareness around work-based well-being, what to look out for and, how to deal with stressors, acute or
chronic should be taught as part of degree course syllabi as well as being offered as continual professional development to those already working within this industry.

8.9 Conclusions

The findings of this thesis contribute to both the applied sport psychology field and the field of work and organisational psychology. This research takes a step back from the field of sport and performance, switching the focus of interest from the athlete to the psychologist themselves. There has been a recent increase in interest into the mental health of the athlete outside of the gym or away from the training pitch. So too, this research concerns itself with the well-being of the individual, however the individual in question this time, is the person who is often tasked with the responsibility of enhancing and maintaining the psychological performance and well-being of others. Through these findings we can conclude that those in this position, whilst in theory are best equipped to deal with their own well-being, may in practice not be afforded the opportunity to use their skills. By diverting the attention to this group, we have also tapped into research not previously conducted. As exemplified in Chapter 3 (burnout review) investigation into the work-based well-being of applied psychologists, is as a whole, lacking in comparison to the research that has been conducted within different industries, and there is little no research that focuses in on the direct effect working as an applied sport psychologist has on the work-based mental health of the individual. It is important to emphasise that the applied sport psychologists can exist in an environment not only as a skilled professional, but also as a human being (McDougall et al., 2015). Therefore, this research has paved the way for those who specialise in work and organisational psychology to expand the burnout, workaholism and resource research into this industry. The research also leaves the door open to the discovery of the effect of working within this industry has on other applied sport science practitioner academics, making results, both current and future, applicable to a much wider interest group.
Importantly we can conclude that burnout, work engagement and workaholism, while interconnected, often sharing predictors through the JDR, are separate constructs. Indeed, it seems possible to experience work engagement, but still suffer the consequences of high workload i.e. burnout, at least as an applied sport psychologist. Both job resources (e.g. social support) and personal resources (e.g. optimism and self-efficacy) play a pivotal role in buffering job demands among applied sport psychologists. Therefore, we cannot ignore the importance of enhancing these resources among this cohort, whilst concurrently managing perception of job demands. For while it is necessary to protect those in the caring profession from workaholic tendencies and burnout, we should also encourage the development of work engagement.

It is also vital that we ensure that members of this industry are informed of the potential repercussions of working within a high-level performance environment. Elite sport, and specifically the Olympic and/or Paralympic Games, may be the pinnacle of a career, however as well as managing the well-being and performance issues of athletes, it is important for an applied sport psychologist to manage themselves. While increased workload at these events may not be something that can be avoided, it is imperative that the applied sport psychologist do what they can to guard their well-being. Establishing recovery strategies and social support connections can be invaluable during their time at these competitions. Scheduling time for recovery on their return, time where they can potentially distance themselves emotionally and physically from work, may be indispensable to the individual, their well-being and mental health, and their relationships. Developing their own exit strategies, to support their needs coming down from the high of the Olympics, while not neglecting their duty to care for their athletes is a balance that will need effort and support to achieve. Academia is also the perfect petri dish for developing negative work behaviours, the scope of which were too far reaching to be included in this thesis. Suffice to say, recovery and detachment strategies, social support
and other job and personal resources will go a long way to protecting the individual within this environment. In all realms of work that an applied sport psychologist might find themselves in, this will need to be a top down approach, NGBs and Olympic Committees and, academic institutions will need to be aware of the demands and resources available to the individual and the community, in order to allow all their personnel to recover, so as to continue to provide the most nourishing environment possible in which people can flourish.
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Waldinger, R. J., & Schulz, M. S. (2010). What's love got to do with it? Social functioning,


Appendices
Appendix 1

Burnout Review Study Characteristics Table
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample / Specialty</th>
<th>Aim of paper</th>
<th>Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Burnout dimensions measured</th>
<th>Predictors of burnout studied</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acker (2011)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 460 mental health service providers (social workers, psychologists and case managers)</td>
<td>Compare relationships in workplace conditions with role stress, burnout and intent to quit.</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Demographic variables. Work setting and work variables. Career satisfaction.</td>
<td>More than half (56%) of participants reported moderate to high EE, almost three quarters (73%) reported high role stress (RS), and half (50%) reported intention to leave the role. RS significantly predicted burnout. EE significantly predicted the intent to quit, over and above the effect of RS. Those working with patients with severe mental illness report higher levels of burnout and stress. EE is a mediating variable rather than outcome variable of burnout.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ackerly, Burnell, Holder and Kurdek (1988)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 562/Licensed psychologists</td>
<td>Examining the correlates of burnout along with the instance of burnout in national sample.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Demographic information. Case type. Work setting and variables.</td>
<td>Licensed psychologists have higher levels of burnout that other mental health workers. EE was the highest rated dimension of burnout. Age negatively related to burnout. Those in private practice experience less EE, DP and more PA than those in agency settings. PP workers less likely to experience burnout or its correlates. No gender difference in experienced burnout. Psychologist-client relationship influences burnout.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballenger-Browning, Schmatz, Rothacker, Hammer, Webb-Murphy, and Johnson (2011)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 97 Civilian and active duty mental health providers in the US military. Psychologists made up the majority of participants (31.5%)</td>
<td>Assess levels and predictors of burnout among mental health providers in a military setting.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Providers demographics, social support and situational variables.</td>
<td>27 (27.8%) providers scored in the high level of emotional exhaustion, 18 (18.6%) had high depersonalization scores, and 4 (4.1%) reported a low level of personal accomplishment. Gender, profession and hours worked predicted burnout. Case type influences DP. Employment, experience and support increased PA. High case load decreased PA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Zur and Michael (2007)</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1 249/Social workers (55.8%), Psychs (20.5%) and Nurses (23.7%) all female.</td>
<td>Compare burnout and related characteristic between social workers, psychologists and nurses and assess effectiveness of appraisal, support and coping.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Age, number of hours working, and origin.</td>
<td>High burnout is negatively correlated with support at work, challenge/control appraisals, and problem-focused coping. At the same time it is positively correlated to stress/load and emotion-focused coping. Social support is mediated by appraisal and coping.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boccio, Weisz and Lefkowitz (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 291 school psychologists</td>
<td>Role conflict, administrative pressure and their influence on burnout.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Experience with administrative pressure to act unethically or illegally.</td>
<td>High instance of administrative pressure to act unethically and/or illegally. Administrative power positive related to increased EE, decreased PA, decreased job satisfaction and increased intent to quit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrola, Olivarez and Karcher (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 and/or 2 86 correctional counsellors with a minimum masters levels qualification (professional counsellors, 64%; licenced psychologists, 11.6%; social worker, 5.8%;</td>
<td>Use of CBI among correctional counsellors. Compare burnout rates as related to gender and workplace.</td>
<td>EE, DP,PA.</td>
<td>Gender and experience</td>
<td>Higher burnout was experienced by those who work in maximum security environments. Case type correlated with burnout experienced. Gender and work setting also influenced type of burnout experienced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17.4% were not licenced; 1.2% did not specify.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devilly, Wright and Varker (2009)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1 and/or 2</td>
<td>152 mental health workers: (125 or 82%) psychologists, (15 or 9.8%) psychotherapists, (6 or 3.9%) clinical social workers, 1 nurse, 1 psychiatrist and 4 other (all engaging in clinical therapeutic work)</td>
<td>Assess STS, VT and burnout among Australian mental health professionals in clinical practice. Burnout contributes to therapists distress more highly than Secondary traumatic stress (STS) and Vicarious trauma (VT). Exposure to trauma patients did not influence burnout experienced. Both VT and burnout contribute significantly to affective distress. Burnout explains more variance in affective distress than VT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di Benedetto and Swadling (2013)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1 and/or 2</td>
<td>167/ registered psychologists</td>
<td>Investigate burnout in Australian psychologists, work-setting and years of experience.</td>
<td>Work-setting (private vs public), length of experience, mindfulness. Burnout did not differ between psychologists dependant on work-setting. The longer someone had worked, the less burnt out they would be. Mindfulness was negatively related to burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreison, White, Bauer, Salyers, and McGuire (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1 and/or 2</td>
<td>358 staff from mental health agencies (Psychology was highest cited discipline. Social work, counselling, nursing, addictions, business and psychiatry)</td>
<td>To identify factors that might protect against burnout.</td>
<td>Psychologists had significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Education was sig. related to lower DP and lower PA. Men reported higher levels of PA. Age and length of time in the field were not sig. related to any burnout dimensions. Resources interact differently with the different dimensions of burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Souza, Egan, and Rees (2011)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87/ Clinical psychologists</td>
<td>Impact of personality on stress.</td>
<td>Perfectionism and stress are related to burnout. Those who are highly stressed are more likely to experience different dimensions of burnout. Burnout is a reflection of continued exposure to stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emery, Wade, and McLean</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>190/ Clinical Psychologists</td>
<td>Examine relationship between burnout, demographics and workplace variants.</td>
<td>OS, EE, DP, PA. Age, gender, professional training, years of professional experience, work-status, client type, work setting, annual income, living arrangement. Distress exacerbated burnout. Perfectionistic tendencies, therapeutic control contributed to stress. High levels of personal resources detract from EE and PA. Higher levels of EE were significantly associated with being female, working primarily for the government, having less personal resources, and endorsing more therapist beliefs related to control. Personal factors were strongest predictors of EE and PA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcia, McGeary, Finley, McGeary, Ketchum, and Peterson</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>137 (doctoral-level psychologists, psychology residents and interns, master-level counsellors, both master- and doctoral-level social workers)</td>
<td>Examine predictors of burnout and intent to leave.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA Demographics, theoretical orientation, education and experience. Exposure to trauma. Workplace characteristics. High levels of exhaustion and cynicism were reported, with low PA. Demographic variables not significant for burnout. High EE impacted the quality of the service provided. Lack of control influenced exhaustion. Trauma characteristics not related to burnout. Malingering patients increased feelings of cynicism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardiman and Graetz Simmonds</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>89 clinicians, counsellors and psychotherapists</td>
<td>Relationship between spiritual well-being and burnout.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA Demographic information. Exposure to trauma. Low levels of burnout reported. EE still came out as strongest indicator of burnout. EE scores weakly and negatively related to ratings of severity of client trauma. Age related to burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinowski</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>133/ psychotherapists</td>
<td>Investigate the relationship between different types of humour and burnout.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA Work setting, age, number of years experience after being licenced, average hours worked per week. Adaptive types of humour used twice as much as maladaptive humour. If looking at the severity levels of burnout as conceptualised by Maslach et al., (1996) therapists who experience EE were between low and moderate levels of severity of burnout. Therapists who experienced DP and decreased PA were on the low level of severity of burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCormack, Maclntyre, O'Shea, Campbell and Igou</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>30 Applied sport psychologists</td>
<td>Impact of social support on burnout and work engagement.</td>
<td>Qualitative investigation into the impact of social support and Types of social support All participants were able to recall easily, moments in their career when they felt burnt out. Often during high pressure situations with increased responsibility and/or high stakes. Burnout was experienced at a lower level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Methodology Study</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills and Huebner (1998)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>225 at T1: 173 at T2/ School psychologists</td>
<td>Prevalence and antecedents of burnout in school psychologists.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proctor and Steadman (2003)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31 in house/ 32 traditional school psychologists (63 total)</td>
<td>Work setting and it's influence on Burnout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puig, Baggs, Mixon, Min Park, Young Kim and, Min Lee (2012)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>129 mental health professionals (mental health counsellors (29%), psychologists (14.7%), counsellor education (8.5%), marriage and family therapy (7%), social work (1.6%), rehabilitation counselling (0.8%) other disciplines (38%))</td>
<td>Burnout in relation to personal wellness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosenberg and Pace (2006)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Marriage and family therapists</td>
<td>Predictors and prevalence of burnout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rupert and Kent (2007)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>practicing psychologists</td>
<td>Determine factors that relate to different levels of burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert, Miller, Tuminello, Hartman and Bryant (2012)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>practicing psychologists</td>
<td>Determine career satisfaction in practicing psychologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rupert, Stevanovic and Hunley (2009)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>487/421</td>
<td>Determining difference in work-family conflict and its contribution to burnout.</td>
<td>Age is related to burnout. No sig difference between gender and work settings in relation to burnout. Control is negatively related to EE and DP while positively related to PA. Gender differences exist in family life and responsibility of care and exhaustion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rzeszutek and Schier (2014)</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Severity of burnout in relation to temperament traits and social support.</td>
<td>No significant difference between Gestalt therapists and CBT therapists. Perceived social support and briskness were both negatively associated with burnout. Perseveration proved to be a significant positive predictor of burnout symptoms in the whole group of therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senter, Morgan, Serna-McDonald, and Bewley (2010)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>203 Correctional psychologists (CR), Veteran's affairs (VA), Counselling Centres (CC), Public Psychiatric Hospital (PPH)</td>
<td>Burnout in correctional psychologists vs other public sector psychologists.</td>
<td>Correctional facility (CR) psychologists experience higher levels of burnout and report lower levels of job satisfaction. Greater professional identity predicted lower levels of burnout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim, Zandarelli, Loughran, Mannarino, and Hill (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Experience in thriving, burnout and coping of psychologists in university counselling centres.</td>
<td>Recognition for achievement was typically identified as important by both ECPs and LCPs. Work setting correlated with thriving. Work variables correlated to thriving. Client improvement also contributed to thriving. Burnout was related to challenge, Non-clinical tasks and crisis work. Challenges in professional relationships contributed to burnout. Loneliness and isolation was only reported as a burnout factor by ECPs and not by LCPs. Participants used interpersonal support for coping. Self-care, cognitive coping-strategies, behavioural strategies (creating boundaries and adjusting work schedules). Personal therapy only reported by ECPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel, Macdonald, Schröder and Mellor-Clark (2015)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Investigating levels and predictors of three burnout dimensions among therapists in IAPT services</td>
<td>High levels of EE reported. Low levels of DP reported. Psychological job demands predict EE. Age and psychological job demands predict DP. Training significantly predicted PA. Resources and feelings of in session flow predicted PA. Demographic variables and case type did not predict burnout. High demands and lack of autonomy predict EE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Sample / specialty</td>
<td>Aim of paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acker (2011)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>460 mental health service providers (social workers,</td>
<td>Compare relationships in workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viehl and Dispenza (2015)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>189 mental health practitioners (licenced individuals e.g. psychologists 66.67%, and certified professionals 15.87%). Final sample size of 150.</td>
<td>Differences in coping and burnout among sexual identified minority MHP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vredenburgh, Carlozzi and Stein (1999)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>521/ counselling psychologists who had PhDs</td>
<td>Extent of burnout and relationships between work-setting, demographics and worksetting variables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study design: 1 = Cross sectional survey on Paper; 2 = Cross sectional survey via web; 3 = semi structured interview; 4 = 2-time prospective study

Theoretical Framework: 1 = N/A; 2 = Role Stress Model; 3 = Cognitive model of stress and coping; 4 = JD-R; 5 = SDT; 6 = Theory of multidimensional humour; 7 = Maslach's theory of job burnout; 8 = COR; 9 = Transactional model of burnout, personal situational stressors; 10 = Structural model of burnout; 11 = Regulatory theory of temperament; 12 = General Model of Burnout.
276 psychologists and conditions with role stress, burnout and intent to quit.

variables. Career satisfaction, moderate to high EE, almost three quarters (73%) reported high role stress (RS), and half (50%) reported intention to leave the role. Those working with patients with severe mental illness report higher levels of burnout and stress. EE is a
| Ackerly, Burnell, Holder and Kurdek (1988) | USA | 562/ Licensed psychologists | Examining the correlates of burnout along with the instance of burnout in national sample. | EE, DP, PA | Demographic information. Case type. Work setting and variables. | Licensed psychologists have higher levels of burnout that other mental health workers. EE was the highest rated dimension of burnout. Age negatively related to burnout. Those in private practice experience less EE, DP and more PA than those in agency settings. PP workers less | 31 |
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Ballenger-Browning, Schmitz, Rothacker, Hammer, Webb-Murphy, and Johnson (2011) USA 1 97 Civilian and active duty mental health providers in the US military. Psychologists made up the majority of participants (31.5%) Assess levels and predictors of burnout among mental health providers in a military setting. EE, DP, PA Providers demographics, social support and situational variables. 27 (27.8%) 26 providers scored in the high level of emotional exhaustion, 18 (18.6%) had high depersonalization scores, and 4 (4.1%) reported a low level of personal
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Gender, Profession, Hours Worked Predicted Burnout</th>
<th>Case Type Influences</th>
<th>Employment, Experience, Support Increased PA</th>
<th>High Case Load Decreased PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Zur and Michael (2007)</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>249/ Social workers (55.8%), Psychs (20.5%) and Nurses (23.7%) all female.</td>
<td>Compare burnout and related characteristic between social workers, psychologists and nurses and assess effectiveness</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Age, number of hours working, and origin.</td>
<td>High burnout is negatively correlated with support at work, challenge/contr ol appraisals, and problem-focused coping. At the same time it is positively correlated to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role conflict, administrative pressure and their influence on burnout.

Experience with administrative pressure to act unethically or illegally.

High instance of administrative pressure to act unethically and/or illegally. EE was the most highly experienced characteristic of burnout. Administrative power positive related to increased EE, decreased PA, decreased job satisfaction and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Study Type</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Sample Description</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrola, Olivarez and Karcher (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Correctional counsellors with a minimum masters level qualification (professional counsellors, 64%; licenced psychologists, 11.6%; social worker, 5.8%; 17.4% were not licenced; 1.2% did not specify).</td>
<td>Use of CBI among correctional counsellors. Compare burnout rates as related to gender and workplace.</td>
<td>Gender and experience higher burnout was experienced by those who work in maximum security environments. Case type correlated with burnout experienced. Gender and work setting also influenced type of burnout experienced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devilly, Wright and Varker (2009)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>Mental health workers: (125 or 82%) psychologists, (15 or 9.8%) psychotherapists, (6 or 3.9%)</td>
<td>Assess STS, VT and burnout among Australian mental health professionals.</td>
<td>Satisfaction with work. Demographic information. Exposure to trauma. Burnout contributes to therapists distress more highly than Secondary traumatic stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
clinical social workers, 1 nurse, 1 psychiatrist and 4 other (all engaging in clinical therpeutic work)

health professionals in clinical practice.

(STS) and Vicarious trauma (VT). Exposure to trauma patients did not influence burnout experienced. Both VT and burnout contribute significantly to affective distress. Burnout explains more variance in affective distress than VT.

Di Benedetto and Swadling (2013) Australia 1 and/or 2 167/ registered psychologists Investigate burnout in Australian psychologists, work-setting and mindfulness.

PB, WB, CB Work-setting (private vs public), length of experience, mindfulness.

Burnout did not differ between psychologists dependant on work-setting. The longer
years of experience.

someone had worked, the less burnt out they would be. Mindfulness was negatively related to burnout.

Dreison, White, Bauer, Salyers, and McGuire (2016) USA 1 and/or 2 358 staff from mental health agencies (Psychology was highest cited discipline. Social work, counselling, nursing, addictions, business and psychiatry) To identify factors that might protect against burnout. EE, DP, PA Age, education and discipline Psychologists had significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion. Education was sig. related to lower DP and lower PA. Men reported higher levels of PA. Age and length of time in the field were not sig. related to any burnout dimensions. Resources

Resources
D'Souza, Egan, and Rees (2011) Australia 2 87/ Clinical psychologists Impact of personality on stress. PB, WB, CB Years of experience, work variables, access to peer support, client presenting problems, theoretical orientation. Perfectionsism and stress are related to burnout. Those who are highly stressed are more likely to experience different dimensions of burnout. Burnout is a reflection of continued exposure to stress.

Emery, Wade, and McLean (2009) Australia 1 190/ Clinical Psychologists Examine relationship between burnout, demogr OS, EE, DP, PA. Age, gender, professional training, years of professional experience, work- Distress exacerbated burnout. Perfectionistic tendencies,
hics and workplace varients. status, client type, work setting, annual income, living arrangement. therapeutic control contributed to stress. High levels of personal resources detract from EE and PA. Higher levels of EE were significantly associated with being female, working primarily for the government, having less personal resources, and endorsing more therapist beliefs related to control. Personal factors were
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Authors</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garcia, McGeary, Finley, McGary, Ketchum, and Peterson (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>High levels of exhaustion and cynicism were reported, with low PA. Demographic variables not significant for burnout. High EE impacted the quality of the service provided. Lack of control influenced exhaustion. Trauma characteristics not related to burnout. Malingering patients increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sample Description</td>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardiman and Graetz Simmonds (2013)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Clinicians, counsellors and psychotherapists</td>
<td>Relationship between spiritual well-being and burnout.</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinowski (2013)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Psychotherapists</td>
<td>Investigate the relationship between different types of humour</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and burnout. Therapists who experienced EE were between low and moderate levels of severity of burnout. Therapists who experienced DP and decreased PA were on the low level of severity of burnout.

McCormack, MacIntyre, O'Shea, Campbell and Igou (2015) 8 Qualitative investigation into the impact of social support and the causes of burnout. Types of social support All participants were able to recall easily, moments in their career when they felt burnt out. Often during high pressure situations with
increased responsibility and/or high stakes. Burnout was experienced at a lower level than those who credited work based peer support as their main source of social support.

Mills and Huebner (1998) USA 4 225 at T1: 173 at T2/ School psychologists Prevalence and antecedents of burnout in school psychologists. EE, DP, PA Personality, demographics, number of schools, years of experience, job location, number of colleagues, student ratio.

40% reported high levels of EE, 10.2% report high DP, and 18.7% reported low PA. Demographic info did not correlate with burnout. Neuroticism correlated all three burnout
Depersonalization was related to agreeableness and reduced personal accomplishment and conscientiousness.

Proctor and Steadman (2003) in a study of 31 in-house/32 traditional school psychologists (63 total) found that work setting and its influence on burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and personal effectiveness were related to extraversion.

General burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and personal effectiveness were related to extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Demographics, job satisfaction, burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and preference of employment setting also report perceived effectiveness. In-house psychologists report higher job satisfaction and lower burnout. They also report perceived effectiveness.

Looking at 27 traditional school psychologists (63 total), Proctor and Steadman (2003) found that work setting and its influence on burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and personal effectiveness were related to extraversion.

General burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and personal effectiveness were related to extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

Depersonalization was related to agreeableness and reduced personal accomplishment and conscientiousness.

Proctor and Steadman (2003) in a study of 31 in-house/32 traditional school psychologists (63 total) found that work setting and its influence on burnout, perceived job satisfaction, and personal effectiveness were related to extraversion.
burnout alone and specifically between items, there are no differences between groups and only the conglomerate score shows a difference. Those serving a single school compared to those who serve multiple schools experience lower levels of burnout. However, overall burnout does not seem to be an issue for the population.
Puig, USA, 2012
Baggs, Mixon, Min Park, Young Kim and Min Lee

129 mental health professionals (mental health counsellors (29%), psychologists (14.7%), counsellor education (8.5%), marriage and family therapy (7%), social work (1.6%), rehabilitation counselling (0.8%) other disciplines (38%))

Burnout 1 in relation to personal wellness. Exhaustion, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client and deterioration in personal life.

Burnout and wellness

Exhaustion had the highest mean score from the CBI. Devaluing clients had the lowest mean score. The highest means score on the wellness question went to the social self subscale, with the coping self receiving the lowest mean score. Job burnout is negatively related to an individuals exercise and nutrition.
| Rosenberg and Pace (2006) | USA | 1 | 116/ Marriage and family therapists | Predictors and prevalence of burnout. | EE, DP, PA | Personal Characteristics. Goals and expectations. Demographics. Professional development. Work setting and work variables. | Some differences in demographics. Females reported lower levels of DP. Masters level had slightly higher levels of PA than doctoral-level. No difference between participants who engaged in professional development or professional support than those who did not. Work setting did influence dimensions of burnout experienced. |
Rupert and Kent (2007) determined factors that relate to different levels of burnout. Respondants matched the average or middle range of EE and DP for this population, and the lower range of PA. Age was significantly related to burnout. Gender and worksetting correlated to burnout. Men experience greater DP than women. Workload positively related to burnout. Personal resources have a role in preventing 30.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rupert and Morgan (2005)</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>571/ practicing psychologists</th>
<th>Work setting and it's influence on Burnout. Resources</th>
<th>EE, DP, PA</th>
<th>Demographic information, work setting and variables, degree, and theoretical orientation.</th>
<th>Work setting and gender correlated with burnout. Age negatively related to burnout. Workload positively related to burnout.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rupert, Miller, Tuminello Hartman and Bryant (2012)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>595/ practicing psychologists</td>
<td>Determine career satisfaction in practicing psychologists</td>
<td>EE, DP, PA</td>
<td>Career satisfaction. Demographic information, experience, work setting and variables, theoretical orientation, supervision.</td>
<td>Majority of practicing psychologists are satisfied with their work. Control has emerged as a resource related to lower burnout. Solo practitioners reported less support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rupert, Stevanovic and Hunley (2009) USA 1 487/421 practicing psychologists (those who were living with spouse/partner/children) Determine difference in work-family conflict and it's contribution to burnout. 8 EE, DP, PA (MBI - HSS) / Control, Overinvolvement, Support, Negative clinetelle (PBI - R) Family life, Gender, Work setting Age is related to burnout. No sig difference between gender and work settings in relation to burnout. Control is neatively related to EE and DP while postively related to PA. Gender differences exist in family life and responsibility of care and exhaustion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rzeszutek and Schier (2014)</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200 Gesalt and cognitive behavioural therapists</td>
<td>Severity of burnout in relation to temperament traits and social support. Exhaustion and disengagement from work. Burnout, temperament and aspects of social support.</td>
<td>No significant difference between Gesalt therapists and CBT therapists. Perceived social support and briskness were both negatively associated with burnout. Perseveration proved to be a significant positive predictor of burnout symptoms in the whole group of therapists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senter, Morgan, Serna-McDonald, and colleagues (2013)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>203 Correctional psychologists (CR), Veteran's affairs (VA), Counselling</td>
<td>Burnout in correctional psychologists vs Job satisfaction, life satisfaction.</td>
<td>Correctional facility (CR) psychologists experience higher levels of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<td>Bewley (2010)</td>
<td>Public-sector Psychoastric Hospital (PPH)</td>
<td>other public-sector psychologists.</td>
<td>Burnout and report lower levels of job satisfaction. Greater professional identity predicted lower levels of burnout.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim, Zandarrelli, Loughran, Mannarino, and Hill (2016)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14 staff psychologists at colleges and university counselling centres.</td>
<td>Experiences in thriving, burnout and coping of psychologists in university counselling centres.</td>
<td>Qualitative comparison of ECPs vs LCPs</td>
<td>Recognition for achievement was typically identified as important by both ECPs and LCPs. Work setting correlated with thriving. Work variables correlated to thriving. Client improvement also contributed to thriving.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Burnout was related to challenge, Non-clinical tasks and crisis work. Challenges in professional relationships contributed to burnout. Loneliness and isolation was only reported as a burnout factor by ECPs and not by LCPs. Participants used interpersonal support for coping. Self-care, cognitive coping strategies, behavioural strategies...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample Description</th>
<th>Methods Description</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steel, Macdonald, Schröder and Mellor-Clark (2015)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>116 High Intensity Therapists (HITs) and Psychological Well-being Practitioners (PWPs).</td>
<td>Investigate levels and predictors of three burnout dimensions among therapists in IAPT services Predictors chosen from the GMB (General model of burnout): causal factors &quot;demands&quot; and lacking &quot;resources&quot;. Demographics, basic client data.</td>
<td>High levels of EE reported. Low levels of DP reported. Psychological job demands predict EE. Age and psychological job demands predict DP. Training significantly predicted PA. Resources and feelings of in session flow predicted PA. Demographic factors related to EE and DP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Emotional Health</td>
<td>Gender, Sexual Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viehl and Dispenza (2015)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>189 mental health practitioners (licensed individuals e.g. psychologists 66.67%, and certified professionals 15.87%). Final sample size of 150.</td>
<td>Differences in coping and burnout among sexual identified minority MHP.</td>
<td>Exhaustion, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client and, deterioration in personal life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
focused coping than men. Sexual minority men in this sample are experiencing more exhaustion, frustration, stress, and not feeling effective as counselors when compared to heterosexual MHPs.

Vredenburg, Carlozzi and Stein (1999) USA 1 521/ counselling psychologists who had PhDs Extent of burnout and relationships between work-setting, demographics and worksetting 12 EE, DP, PA Demographics, work setting and variables.

Reports of moderately low to medium level burnout. Practice setting has implications for burnout: lower level of PA and DP. Private
practice lead to lower levels of burnout in general, probably due to autonomy and income. Client load is positively associated with PA but not related to EE or DP. There is an inverse relationship between age and burnout. Males have greater levels of DP than females.

Study design: 1 = Cross sectional survey on Paper; 2 = Cross sectional survey via web; 3 = semi structured interview; 4 = 2-time prospective study
Theoretical Framework: 1 = N/A; 2 = Role Stress Model; 3 = Cognitive model of stress and coping; 4 = JD-R; 5 = SDT; 6 = Theory of multidimensional humour; 7 = Maslachs theory of job burnout; 8 = COR; 9 = Transectional model of burnout, personality and situational stressors; 10 = Structural model of burnout; 11 = Regulatory theory of temperament; 12 = General Model of Burnout.
Appendix 2

Extract from APA Ethics Code (2016)
2. Competence

2.01 Boundaries of Competence

(a) Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience.

(b) Where scientific or professional knowledge in the discipline of psychology establishes that an understanding of factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status is essential for effective implementation of their services or research, psychologists have or obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals, except as provided in Standard 2.02, Providing Services in Emergencies.

(c) Psychologists planning to provide services, teach, or conduct research involving populations, areas, techniques, or technologies new to them undertake relevant education, training, supervised experience, consultation, or study.

(d) When psychologists are asked to provide services to individuals for whom appropriate mental health services are not available and for which psychologists have not obtained the competence necessary, psychologists with closely related prior training or experience may provide such services in order to ensure that services are not denied if they make a reasonable effort to obtain the competence required by using relevant research, training, consultation, or study.

(e) In those emerging areas in which generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist, psychologists nevertheless take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients/patients, students, supervisees, research participants, organizational clients, and others from harm.

(f) When assuming forensic roles, psychologists are or become reasonably familiar with the judicial or administrative rules governing their roles.

2.03 Maintaining Competence

Psychologists undertake ongoing efforts to develop and maintain their competence.

2.06 Personal Problems and Conflicts

(a) Psychologists refrain from initiating an activity when they know or should know that there is a substantial likelihood that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their work-related activities in a competent manner.

(b) When psychologists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their work-related duties. (See also Standard 10.10, Terminating Therapy.)
Appendix 3

Recruitment Letters for participants for Study 1 (Chapter 5 and 6)
Hi [insert name]

We at the University of Limerick are conducting an AASP funded study looking at the work practices of Applied Sport Psychologists.

We are investigating the overall well-being of applied sport psychologists and we think you could help. We want to find out about your work engagement; your workload; how you manage your workload, your recovery and burnout; and also your levels of optimism and social support.

The first phase of the study involves a short online survey (15mins or less) designed to gather your general information, educational history and work practices. The link to the survey is here:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OnlinePsychSurvey

If you complete the online survey you are under no obligation to continue onto the interview phase. However, once you complete the survey, we will contact to ask you to partake in an interview about the topics above. Your participation is voluntary and you may decline further participation if you so wish.

The second phase of the study will be a semi structured interview asking about your workload, the stressful times you face in your work but also the positive moments and the resources you posses to cope with the stress. This will more than likely be conducted via Skype. It will last approx 60 mins.

The study is being conducted by; Hannah McCormack a PhD researcher in the Physical Education and Sport Science (PESS) Dept. at the University of Limerick. Supervised by Dr Tadhg MacIntyre, Dr Mark Campbell (PESS) and Dr Deirdre O'Shea (Kemmy Business School).
Collaboration comes from Prof. Judy Van Raalte & Prof. Brit Brewer (Springfield College), Prof. David Lavallee (Stirling University), Prof. Craig Mahoney (University of the West of Scotland), Prof. Aidan Moran (University College Dublin)

This research project has been approved by the University of Limerick's Faculty of Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Ethics approval code: 2013-03-48 EHS.

By taking part in the study you will contribute to the field, defining the good practices of our industry and give back by helping us develop a best practice model and expert statement. You will also be engaging in good research karma!

Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.
Practicing what we preach: The well-being of applied sport psychologists

- Did you read that subject line and think: That's about me!?
- Have you ever worked at an Olympics or Paralympic games?
- Are you a fully accredited Sport Psychologist with AASP, HPC, BASES, IIS, PSI, AHPRA APS, or AIS?
- Do you or have you also worked in academics as a researcher or lecturer?

If you answered yes to at least 2 of those questions - then AASP needs you.

We at the University of Limerick are conducting an AASP-funded study looking at the work practices of Applied Sport Psychologists.

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Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.
Appendix 4

Interview Script for Study 1 (Chapter 5 & 6)
Aim: To investigate the coping methods, resources, self-care and work engagement of applied sport psychologists.

Begin with an interview script, telling the subject about the study; what we are looking at; how they are contributing. How they can access the results and any potential follow up. Present them with informed consent form.

Build a rapport; ask about what sport they have come from/ are involved in (participate, recreational, managerial, coaching etc.) Maybe couple of general questions about their work, work activities, different roles, time spent on each one

What is your educational background? Do you have a degree, masters, or doctorate? Where from?

What area are these qualifications in? Sport Science or Psychology?

What motivated you to get into the field of sport psychology?

How long have you worked as an applied sport psychologist

What do you most enjoy about your work?

What do you least enjoy about your work?

Q1. Work Engagement

Firstly I would like to ask you about how energized you are when it comes to your work, if you often feel absorbed by what you do and if you find work invigourating…

• Work engagement or flow is described as a work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption.
• Do you agree/ can you relate/ what do you think of that comment.
• Can you think of a specific time when you could describe yourself as engaged in your work?
• What specifically about this situation/time sticks out in your mind as being particularly engaging? Why did you find it engaging?
• Why was this different to other activities/situations for you?
• What was the outcome of this experience? (e.g. did you enjoy your work more, did you find it easier to stay on task; would you say your
• What were the positives/ negatives?

Prompts and Probes

Tell me more about your energy levels at this time…

Can you expand on how exciting you found it to work…
What made you so enthusiastic about this time?

high levels of energy, mental resilience, willingness to invest effort, avoid being easily fatigued, and persistence in face of failure, strong involvement, feelings of enthusiasm and significance, sense of pride and inspiration, fully concentrated and engrossed in their work, time passes quickly, difficulty detaching.

Q2. Recovery/ Workload/ Burnout

In this section I am interested in ways in which you manage your workload, how you recover from work, and how you manage your stress...

- Weekends free from work activities help employees to replenish their resources and improve their well-being. Recovery strategies are activities that people engage in after work/at weekends/during their breaktimes from work which allow them to relax, detach from work or restores their energy after working ….
- What do you typically do in the evening or at the weekends to unwind/recover from work?
- Do you ever feel like the weekend is just an extension of the working week?
- Can you think of specific time when you were really exhausted after work?
- Tell me about the situation? what was it that made it so exhausting? What were the specific activities that you engaged in that allowed you to recover from this? Why were these particularly effective/ineffective?...

Burnout

- Can you think of a time/situation when you just weren’t able to keep up with your workload/weren’t able to recover from work. For example, a time that you would describe yourself as burned out?
- Burnout can be seen to possess three dimensions; exhaustion (physical and emotional); cynicism; and a decreased sense of efficacy.
  - What led up to this time/situation?
  - How would you describe your behaviours/performance/emotional state during this time?
  - What actions did you take to alleviate this situation?
  - How effective/ineffective were they….

Prompts and Probes

Can you go over how you felt during/after this period of time?

Would you say your energy levels were low during this situation?
Can you explain what it felt like to be overwhelmed?

**Nature of work, research, publishing, teaching, consulting. Dual role. Exercise, reading (non-work related), time spent with family, sleep, vacation, humour.**

**Q3. Workaholism**

- Workaholism is defined by some as the tendency to work excessively hard and also to be obsessed with work. It is the act of working compulsively.
- Do you agree with/ can you relate to…
- Can you think of a specific time when you felt you worked excessively hard/ felt obsessed with work?
- What happened in the lead up to this time?
- How was your attitude to work during this period of time different to your normal approach?
- What were the positives/ negatives?

**Prompt and Probes**

Tell me more about what pressure you felt to work this hard…

Did you ever feel unwell or run down but still work?

**Strong inner drive to work hard, high effort expenditure, excessive working. Working more hours than required. Taking work home. Unable to detach mentally. Working when feeling sick. May not be loyal to their jobs, turnover intentions. Sleep problems.**

**Q4. Optimism**

The following sections I am interested in how you cope with all the demands we have just spoken about, focusing on your outlook and support networks.

- Optimism levels differ between people. Those high in optimism hold a generalized belief of favourable experience for their future. They believe that good things are going to happen to them. They will also persevere in the face of adversity.
- Do you agree with/ can you relate to this?
- Can you tell me about a specific time when you felt that good things were going to result from your work/ when you persevered in the face of adversity?
- What were the positives/ negatives?

**Prompts and Probes**

Tell me more about knowing how it would work?
Can you clarify what you said about being confident in your approach?

**Perseverance in the face of adversity, expectant of the best, expect good outcomes even when things are hard, positive interactions with clients, reflective optimism, accepting reality but putting positive spin on it. Confidence in success. Confidence in the future. Relationship satisfaction. Proactive problem solving.**

**Q5. Social Support**

- Social support and specifically the feeling that you have someone you trust to turn to for that support is theorized to be a key resource to surviving stress filled times.
- Example: 5 Sports Psychs working with USOC.
- Do you agree with/ can you relate to this?
- Can you think of a specific time when you turned to someone you trust in a time of stress?
- How did this affect your outlook/approach to your work?
- What were the positives/negatives?

**Prompts and Probes**

Have you ever mentored or been mentored by someone else in your field?

When you say it gave you an option, what do you mean?

How was this trust formed?

**Some has your back, individual nature of work, someone cares, trust, communication, relationship building, options and solutions, brainstorm, formulation of plans.**

**Verification. Collaboration. Perception of social support.**

**Closing**

Thanks for your time that was really informative. Is there anything else you wish to add? Anything you feel I didn’t ask you but would be relevant to anything we have already discussed?

How did you find the process of the interview? Any tips on the style or even the phrasing of the questions?

You will receive a transcription of you interview in the 2 weeks. We will remain in contact, if you are willing, for follow up. We are hoping to develop what we find into a bank of questionnaires, next time the interview won’t be as long.
Appendix 5

Recruitment letter for participants for Study 2 (Chapter 7)
On the World Stage: The effects of the Olympics on the health and well-being of applied sport psychologists.

2016 is the year of the XXXI Olympic Games, and, we are interested in examining the effects of a major international multisport event on the well-being of support service providers (e.g. sport psychologists). Here at the University of Limerick are investigating the well-being of practitioners and we would like to invite you to participate. We want to explore your perceptions of your workload and its management; your work engagement, recovery and burnout; and your how you manage your energy, commitment and resources across the year.

The Olympics are often considered the pinnacle of an athletes’ career. The previous four year cycle culminates in 16 days of competition. The pressure felt by these athletes may be the greatest they will experience and as an applied sport psychologist you may not be immune to this pressure either. In common with athletes, many psychologists can view their professional role at the Olympics as a highpoint in their careers, and despite the attempt to approach the Games as any other competition; there is no denying that it is a unique environment.

This study contributes to a doctoral dissertation investigating the well-being of applied sport psychologists. We would very much appreciate your participation. It is a follow-up to the AASP-funded investigation entitled A Mixed Methods Exploration of Career Satisfaction, Engagement, and Self-Care among Applied Sport Psychology Practitioners. For initial findings from this research, please see the following article “Practicing What We Preach: Investigating the Role of Social Support in Sport Psychologists’ Well-Being.” (McCormack et al., 2015). http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01854/full
The Research Team

The study is being conducted by:

- Hannah McCormack, PhD researcher, Physical Education and Sport Science (PESS) Dept., University of Limerick
- Dr Tadhg MacIntyre, Registered Sport Psychologist (PESS, UL)
- Dr Mark Campbell, Registered Sport Psychologist (PESS, UL)
- Dr Deirdre O'Shea, Registered Work and Organisational Psychologist (Kemmy Business School, UL).

What’s involved in taking part

We are interested in monitoring your well-being throughout the year of the Olympic Games, including pre, post and during the Games. Thus, your participation will involve the following:

1. **6 months pre Games**: First completion of battery of questionnaires including; Maslach Burnout Inventory; Utrecht Work Engagement scale; Dutch Workaholism Scale; Life Orientation Test - Revised (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994); PANAS inventory (positive affect scale); and MASQ (mood anxiety symptom questionnaire).
2. **5 months pre Games**: First collection of baseline experiential data comprising daily input to electronic diary measuring daily emotions; fatigue; vigour; incivility; hours worked and; quantity and quality of sleep.
3. **3 months pre Games**: Second completion of battery of questionnaires as listed above.
4. **1 month pre Games**: Second collection of baseline experiential data comprising daily input to electronic diary covering factors listed above.
5. **During Games** experiential data collected daily via electronic diary measuring daily emotions; fatigue; vigour; incivility; hours worked and; quantity and quality of sleep.
6. **17 days post Games**: Third completion of battery of questionnaires including; Maslach Burnout Inventory; Utrecht Work Engagement scale; Dutch Workaholism Scale; Life Orientation Test - Revised (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994); PANAS inventory (positive affect scale); and MASQ (mood anxiety symptom questionnaire).
7. **3 months post Games**: Fourth and final completion of battery of questionnaires as listed above.
8. **3-4 months post Games**: Interview with lead investigator concerning experiences surrounding supply of data and any other information deemed important for the study.

Benefits of Participation
By taking part in this study you will be given the opportunity to measure and monitor your burnout, work engagement, optimism, workaholism and mood through questionnaires and reflective diaries. You will also contribute to the field, defining the good practices of our industry and give back by helping us develop a best practice model and expert statement. Your participation is voluntary and you may cease participation at any stage if you so wish.

Ethical Considerations

This research project has been approved by the University of Limerick's Faculty of Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Ethics approval code: 2016_02_16_EHS

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact: The EHS Research Ethics Contact Point of the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Room E1003, University of Limerick, Limerick. Tel: (061) 234101 / Email:

ehsresearchethics@ul.ie

In addition, this research is bound by the Psychological Society of Ireland’s (PSI) Code of Professional Ethics, which can be accessed at:

http://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/find-a-psychologist/PSI%202011-12%20Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf

In brief, this assures all participants of the following:

Informed and voluntary consent

It is up to you whether to take part or not to take part. At the end of this page, you will be asked to consent to partake; however you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study.

Confidentiality

All personal information will be anonymised in order to safeguard confidentiality. Personal
information and electronic data will be held securely in line with the Data Protection Act (1998). Only the chief investigators will see any personal information and the other members of the research team will only be able to access anonymised data.

What will happen to the results of the study?

At the end of the study the information will be used to present results. The information will be completely anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the results. All data gathered from the research will be stored securely and safely by the researcher in their office for 7 years. Information that is stored on computer will be stored by the researcher on a computer that is password protected. It is envisaged that the study will be submitted for publication in academic journals subsequently. However, all results will be presented in an aggregated format in order to adhere to the ethical considerations outlined above.
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

On the World Stage: The effects of the Olympics on the health and well-being of applied sport psychologists.

Dear Participant,

As part of a study being conducted in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at the University of Limerick, you are invited to participate in the following study. This information sheet will explain what the study entails and what will be required of you, should you choose to participate.

What is the study about?

The study aims to gain an insight into how a major international multisport can affect the personal well-being of sport service providers. 2016 is the year of the XXXI Olympic Games and we will be exploring your perceptions of workload and its management; your work engagement, recovery and burnout; and how you manage your energy, commitment and resources across the year. A battery of questionnaires comprising the Maslach Burnout Inventory; Utrecht Work Engagement scale; Dutch Workaholism Scale; Life Orientation Test - Revised (Scheier, Carver & Bridges, 1994); PANAS inventory (positive affect scale); and MASQ (mood anxiety symptom questionnaire). Experiential data will also be collected through daily diaries during set times throughout the year. A follow up interview will also be
conducted to assess your experience in providing such a rich data set to the principle investigator.

**What will I have to do?**

As part of this study you will be required to complete the battery of questionnaires at 3 time points; twice before the Games (6 months and 1 month) and 3 months post-Games. Baseline experiential data will also be collected on two separate occasions before the Games (approx. 5 months and 2 months out from the Games), experiential data will also be collected through the duration of your time at the Olympics and will comprise of a short questionnaire and diary to be completed each day.

**What are the benefits?**

The purpose of the study is to explore in rich detail your own experience of how a major international multisport event, such as the Olympic Games affects your well-being across the year, including the lead up and period post Games. You will be given the opportunity to measure and monitor your burnout, work engagement, optimism, workaholism and mood through questionnaires and reflective diaries. You will also contribute to the field, defining the good practices of our industry and give back by helping us develop a best practice model and expert statement

**What are the risks?**

Some items on the questionnaires may cover relatively sensitive topics. Should you feel uncomfortable you are not obliged to answer every question.

**What if I do not want to take part?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and you can choose not to take part or to stop your involvement in this study at any time.

**What happens to the information?**

The information that is collected will be kept private and stored securely and safely on the researchers’ computer. The computers are protected with a password. Your name will not appear on any information. You will be assigned a fictitious name when the information is
being written in a report by the researcher. The information that is gathered in the study will be kept for seven years. After this time, it will be destroyed.

**What happens at the end of the study?**

At the end of the study the information will be used to present results. The information will be completely anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the results. All data gathered from the research will be stored securely and safely by the researcher in their office for 7 years. Information that is stored on computer will be stored by the researcher on a computer that is password-protected. It is envisaged that the study will be submitted for publication in academic journals subsequently. However, all results will be presented in an aggregated format in order to adhere to the ethical considerations outlined above.

**What if I have more questions or do not understand something?**

If you have any questions about the study you may contact the principal investigator. It is important that you feel that all your questions have been answered.

**What happens if I change my mind during the study?**

At any stage should you feel that you want to stop taking part in the study, you are free to stop and take no further part. There are no consequences for changing your mind about being in the study.

Contact name and number of Project Investigators.

**Principal Investigator**

Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, Dept. of P.E. and Sports Sciences, University of Limerick, Tel: 0878393630

Email: tadhg.macintyre@ul.ie

**Other investigators**

Hannah McCormack MSc

PhD Researcher
Thank you for taking the time to read this. I would be grateful if you would consider participating in this study.

Yours sincerely,

______________________  _______________________
Primary Investigator      Researchers

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact: The EHS Research Ethics Contact Point of the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, Room E1003, University of Limerick, Limerick. Tel: (061) 234101 / Email: ehsresearchethics@ul.ie
PARTICIPANT CONSENT

On the World Stage: The effects of the Olympics on the health and well-being of applied sport psychologists.

Should you agree to participate in this study please read the statements below and if you agree to them, please sign the consent form.

- I have read and understood the participant information sheet.
- I understand what the project is about, and what the results will be used for.
- I understand that what the researchers find out in this study may be shared with others but that my name will not be given to anyone in any written material developed.
- I am fully aware of what I will have to do, and of any risks and benefits of the study.
- I know that I am choosing to take part in the study and that I can stop taking part in the study at any stage without giving any reason to the researchers.
- This study involves audio recording of the interview session. Please tick the appropriate box

I am aware that the interview portion of the study will be audio recorded and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can ask that the recording equipment be switched off. I understand what will happen to the recordings once the study is finished.

Please tick the box as appropriate below.

- [ ] I agree to the statements above and I consent to taking part in this research study.

or

- [ ] I decline to take part in this research study.

Name: (please print): __________________________________
Appendix 6

Recruitment poster for Longitudinal portion Study 2 (Chapter 7)
On the World Stage: The effects of the Olympics on the health and well-being of applied sport psychologists

A Real World Investigation

2016
The Year of the Games of the the XXXI Olympiad

4 Time Points
20 Minute online Survey

Well-being Psychological Resources

One of the most important conclusions is that the sport psychologist is fully involved with daily interventions (not counting staff meetings). Therefore, the assigned practitioner has to be able to work under pressure.

(Birrer et al., 2012, p. 709)

Time 2:
July 2016

Time 1:
June 2016

30 Days Out from the Games

60 Days Out from the Games

Time 3:
September 2016

30 days Post-Games

Time 4:
October 2016

60 days Post-Games

Within the sport, there can at times be a blend of manly masculinity and hypermasculine pride about working seven days a week.

(Lindsay, 2014, p. 81)

The staff is subject to the same pressures as the athletes and we spend much time there helping with crises and pulling out fires between athletes, coaches, and staff.

(Portenoy, Ayagi, & Starler, 2012, p. 106)

Rio 2016
Appendix 7

Interview script Study 2 (Chapter 7)
On the World Stage: The effects of the Olympics on the health and well-being of applied sport psychologists.

Interview Schedule

Option 1

1. Tell me about your time in Rio, did it differ from other Games/ major championship experiences?
2. What was the most enjoyable aspect of working in Rio?
3. What was the least enjoyable aspect of working in Rio?
4. What was the biggest challenge that you faced while you were working at the Games?
5. In terms of social support, who did you feel you could turn to or rely on for help, guidance, or just to vent to while you were in Rio?
6. How did having those people in place affect your experience at the Games?
7. What aspect of your work in Rio was the most exhausting?
8. How did you deal with or manage this?
9. What lead to your most enjoyable/energising experiences while you were in Rio?
10. How did your athletes’ performance influence your mood or energy levels?
11. While you were in Rio, during the games, what strategies did you use personally to help you re-energize?
12. How do these strategies differ from when you are at home, or do they?
13. Do you feel you have recovered from your time in Rio?
14. If yes, how did you manage to recover?
15. If no, do you have a recovery strategy in place in order to help you recover soon?
16. Reflecting on the Games, what you do differently if you were to do it again?
17. In four years’ times, what way will you approach attending Tokyo 2020?

**Option 2**

Games experience:

- How was your overall Olympic Games experience?
- Was this the first time you attended the Games in an applied practitioner role? If “yes”, how did it go? If “not”, how did it compare to previous times you have attended the Games?
- What was a highpoint of the Games experience for you?
- What was a low point of the Games for you?

Data collection:

- How did you find completing the daily diaries whilst at the games?
- Did it affect your performance or interrupt your routine?
- Did you find any benefit from completing the diaries? If so, what?
- Were you aware of differences in your mood, etc. as the Games went on? Do you think you would have been aware of this even without completing the diaries? On reflection can you see how your mood was affected as the competition went on?

Take home points:

- Reflecting on the Games, what do you do differently if you were to do it again?

In four years’ times, what way will you approach attending Tokyo 2020?
Appendix 8

Individual scores for MBI and UWES (Study 2)
Table 1

*Individual Burnout Scores on MBI across all Four Timepoints*

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<th>PA</th>
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### Table 2

**Individual Work Engagement Scores on UWES across all Four Timepoints**

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