

Abstract

The current research study included the personality trait of sensory processing sensitivity as an individual factor in the Job-Demands Resources model. The main aim of the study was to explore whether employees' levels of sensory processing sensitivity moderated the relationships between job demands and burnout (i.e., exhaustion and disengagement), and the relationship between job resources and work engagement (i.e., vigour and dedication). The job demand of overload, and the job resources of organisational support and growth opportunities were included in the JD-R model. The research design of the current study was a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional design. The nature of the questions was purely exploratory and correlational, where the study was interested in exploring the relationships between sensory processing sensitivity, job demands (overload), job resources (organisational support and growth opportunities), burnout (exhaustion and disengagement), and work engagement (vigour and dedication). The sample of 125 candidates used in the current study was obtained using non-probability sampling, convenience sampling and was limited to any individual who was employed and above the age of 18 years. The sample within the current study was highly heterogenous, representing many different work sectors within the South African context. The data that was collected was analysed using descriptive statistics, correlations, and several moderated multiple regressions.

The results of the study reveal that the personality trait does not moderate the relationships between overload and burnout, and the relationships between organisational support, growth opportunities and work engagement. The interaction terms of SPS and the demand and resource variables were all found to be non-significant. Nonetheless, it was found that sensory processing sensitivity was positively associated with the exhaustion construct of burnout, and the job demand of overload. Furthermore, the findings in the current study provided further support for the dual-process of the JD-R model, where high demands are associated with higher levels of burnout, and high resources are associated with high levels of work engagement. With regards to the sensory processing sensitivity construct, the current study revealed that those employees with a higher propensity of possessing the SPS trait may show higher levels of exhaustion, and that high levels of this trait may be associated with high levels of overload.

Keywords: sensory processing sensitivity, overload, organisational support, growth opportunities, burnout, work engagement, South Africa