The Missing Link - Overcoming Occupational Stress and Encouraging Mental Well-being in the Retail Sector.

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Abstract:

Work is a vital aspect of human life. It is the representation of the basic need to accomplish, to create, to feel satisfied and valued. Rewarding work is an important and positive part of life. However, when work denies people an opportunity to utilize their creativity, intelligence, and decision making ability, it could potentially trigger an individual to switch to stress mode. This research was conducted to investigate the impact a managerial role in retail had on mental well-being. By focusing it on retail managers, it attempted to explore a neglected area of research. The idea of the missing link represents the negligence shown from organizations towards managing and coping with occupational stress and their encouragement of mental well-being. Therefore this research aims to present findings that will bridge the gap between organizations and employees mental well-being.

A quantitative approach was utilized in the form of an online survey. This allowed a wider sample of data to be gathered. Findings from this research identify that a managerial role in retail does affect ones mental well-being. The reasons for this were down to lack of sufficient strategic management and training programs. To conclude the study, a recommended approach for retail organizations to implement was presented.

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Acknowledgements:

Through the dark days and the tough times it is the support that gets one through it. The love, support, encouragement and motivation from friends, family and colleagues throughout the process of writing my thesis I will be always grateful for. I was overwhelmed to see the number of people who participated in this study, thus I would like to express gratitude and appreciation to all respondents in allowing me to investigate a searing organizational topic. I would also like to thank my Course Coordinator Laura Fallon and my Supervisor Dr Philip Hyland for their help, knowledge and encouragement received to reach my end goal.

Personal Learning Reflection:

Most individuals expect to spend many years of their lives working in organisations of various kinds, being managed or managing others. Nonetheless, I am one of those who like to manage people and interact with them to achieve their best potential, I see every employee as my number one resource. Not only this, but as an experienced manager I've learnt that a great team is what makes a great manager, thus giving the best support and respect towards your employees is just as important as expecting the best from them.

From studying psychology in my previous degree, I was fond of behavioural studies. With this in mind, I knew I wanted to investigate an organizational issue that could potentially effect or eliminate an organizations talent pool. Mental health issues in organizations are on the rise. By combining this with my management experience in retail I decided to research into an area of study that is known for having a stigma attached when addressed. By conducting research in my field of work it is clear that I am highly interested in this area of practice and allowed for it to be manageable in terms of access to participants and meeting time constraints.

From previous literature it became evident that the majority of research was previously conducted at an international level and not within a retail environment. Despite this challenge, I continued to research an area and sector which I have passion for. Methodology used for this research was based on previous literature, but also took the time constraints of this study into consideration. Difficulties of this research included utilizing web tools (Survey Monkey) and software (Microsoft Excel) that I would not have utilized previously. If this research was to be repeated I would aim to conduct and compare survey results from a peak period (December), and an off-peak period (May), to get a more effective outcome of retail manager's mental well-being. This would also allow for HR to implement mental well-being strategies to a higher degree if needed in peak periods.

On an overall note, I found this research to increase my awareness of mental well-being in the workplace and it also encouraged me to promote positivity and detach the stigma of mental well-being throughout my current organization. The research process was an experience that I enjoyed and in the future I hope to put all the skills I gained to use in a PHD. But for now I plan to utilize them in my current HR role.

Contents

List of Diagrams

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

Nowadays, mental health issues are becoming more frequent and difficult to ignore in society as a whole. However the increasing issue of mental health in workplace is a hot topic across many organisations. This research topic relates to the academic area of Talent Management as it will investigate mental well-being in the workplace, the effect it may have on employees, and uncover the potential risk of damaging an organizations talent pool. The aim of this thesis is to examine if a managerial role in the retail sector affects their mental well-being. As a result, findings will aim to uncover beneficial data that will encourage the implementation of a wellbeing strategy in retail organizations. As a result, the bridge between employee's mental well-being and the employer's expectations will be built and discretionary effort within an organization will be achieved.

The structure of this thesis will begin with a literature review that acknowledges the concept of stress, occupational stress theories and the sources of stress. Following on from this the literature review will also discuss arguments from previous literature on managing and coping with occupational stress. To conclude the chapter, a review of occupational stress and the retail sector, along with mental well-being will be presented in order for the reader to gain an understanding of occupational stress.

The subsequent chapter illustrates the research questions which, the researcher aims to accomplish. In turn, this leads on to chapter four, methodology, which outlines the research process, the philosophy adopted and the design implemented. Each scale is presented and validated based on previous studies and the process of data analysis is evident. The chapter ends with a summary of limitations and ethical considerations that the researcher endured.

Following on from methodology, results will be illustrated in chapter five. The results from each scale will be depicted and described. Therefore this allows chapter six to interpret and conclude insightful and critical analysis of findings. This thesis will be concluded by summarising prominent points, recommending actions to take to reduce occupational stress and to present points for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Occupational Stress: The Concept and Theory

2.1.1 The Concept

When one says "occupational stress", what comes to mind? The long hours of torture on those sunny days? Preparation for stock audits? An upcoming sale? Some may argue that stress induced by these retail-sector-tasks, is nothing more than a consequence of poor management, however occupational stress is a lot deeper than one distressful day. A significant amount of literature refers to it as work-related stress and describes it as an ambiguous concept. Stress itself can be medically defined as a physiological response to an event or a set of conditions. Therefore occupational stress can be described as the physiological response to particular work place events or conditions, "job stress is popularly described as occurring when there are discrepancies between the physiological demands within a workplace and the inability of employees to either manage or cope with such work demands" (Babatunde, 2013, p.73). Abu Al Rub (2004) outlines how the idea of occupational stress is linked to employee performance, as stress can decrease the attention, concentration and decision-making skills of the employee (Shapiro et al., 2005). Previous research also indicates that there is a negative relationship between occupational stress and absenteeism (Eriksen et al., 2003). Mosadeghrad (2014) argued in favour of this and added that it also led to a high level of employees willing to leave their organization due to occupationally induced stress. However, Colligan and Higgins (2005) noted that in order to understand occupational stress, one should review previous research, which depicts theoretical models of the concept in question.

Stress is illustrated as a force that causes deformation in bodies (Selye, 1974). The term *"stressors"* were acknowledged as the triggers igniting a stress response (Le Fevre, et al., 2006). The concept of the term *"strain"* represents the responses that have occurred as a result of stress. Furthermore, Selye (1987) exhibits stress in two ways (1) Positive: this is when stress induces productivity and enhances an employee's performance - commonly referred to as *"eustress"*. Quick et al., (1990) acknowledged how an element of stress can be necessary in order to challenge and motivate an employee. (2) Negative: where stress is ignited when an individual is exposed to a high demand as a result of a stressor, thus causing an increased strain. Literature refers to this state as *"distress"*. Cooper (1988) and Harris

(1970) observed that stress leads to a negative outcome, such as effecting ones mental health. Both studies did not take the coping mechanisms into account. However, Selye (1987) states that it is the individual who determines whether the nature of the stress that occurs. Michie (2002), disputes the work of Cooper (1988) and Harris (1970) implying that stress can depend on the circumstances and the individuals use of coping mechanisms, which directly relates to what Selye (1987) suggests.

2.1.2 The Theories of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress has been analysed through various theoretical models in the past and two that are central to literature on occupational stress are the Person-Environment Fit Model (French et al., 1973) and The Job Demand Control Support Theory (Spector, 1988).

Firstly, The Person-Environment (P-E) Fit Model suggests employee adjustment in their work environment is essential for overall well-being. Theoretically speaking, when there is a mismatch between an individual and the environmental characteristics it could induce a psychological stress, thus reducing their psychological wellbeing. For example; if a manager is delegated a task but does not have the time or manpower to action it, the expectations of the employer are not met. Dewe et al., (2012) outlines how the psychological stress peaks when the desired condition is not received as the mismatch between demands and abilities occurs. In this scenario if the manager was given a realistic timeframe and adequate manpower to action it, psychological stress would not be experienced as the managers needs are met. According to the P-E Fit Theory, organizations need to aim for the optimal fit between both the individual and the environment. As a result, effective human functioning in the workplace will occur (Dewe et al., 2012). This model was adopted by Yang et al (2008) and findings support the theory of P-E Fit. A critique of this model is how best to investigate the person-environment variables.

Secondly, The Job Demand Control Support Theory purposes three aspects that lead to stress, however if managed correctly could essentially alleviate stress. Firstly, *job demand* refers to the workload encountered by an employee in terms of time pressures and role conflict. If unmanaged this could potentially cause employees to experience emotional exhaustion. Secondly, *job control* is acknowledged as the extent an employee can exert control over their tasks and can either lead to one experiencing depersonalization or personal achievement. Finally, *job support,* refers to the social support from superiors and colleagues. Hashim et al., (2012) argues that by offering social support from superiors and colleagues can impact and act as a shield to stress when experiencing high demand situations. When combined together each aspect may affect the intensity of occupational stress that occurs (See Figure 2.1). However, literature critically assesses that this model failed to consider that the same demands or controls may not affect individuals in the same way.

It will become clear how both theoretical models based on occupational stress serve purpose to this research. For the purpose of this research the definition of occupational stress

as embraced by Babatunde (2013) will be adopted. Along with this, findings will be discussed with reference to both theoretical models presented.

Table 2.1 The Job Demand Control Support Theory of Occupational Stress Outcomes.

High Demand + High Support	= Active Job
Low Demand + Low Control	= Passive Job
High Demand + Low Control	= High Strain Job
Low Demand + High Control	= Low Strain Job

2.2 The Fuel to the Fire

It is an employer's best interest to prevent occupational stress occurring. The possibilities of sources for occupational stress to ignite are endless (See Appendix A). Robinson et al., (2003) found that duties, responsibilities, heavy workload, variations in workload, role ambiguity and role conflict were a source of stress for employees. Similar enough, Mc Gown (2001) and Michie and Williams (2003) findings agreed. Flanagan (2006) identified that staff shortages, staff conflict and poor management styles caused an increase in stress in the workplace. Equally, Steinhardt et al., (2003) identified that the environmental factors caused stress to employees. For the purpose of this research a firm focus on time management, personal development, role dynamics and occupational burnout will be presented in order to illustrate the sparks that kindle the occurrence of occupational stress within a retail environment.

A significant amount of literature addresses the individual stressors that cause occupational stress. The term time pressure portrays the idea of time scarcity. Teuchmann et al., (1999) suggests time pressure limits an individual's performance as the required or desired time for a task is not established. However, Mauno et al., (2007) argues against Teuchmann et al., (1999) and states how time pressures can lead to high engagement levels of employees rather than high stress levels. Findings from Schmitt et al., (2015) support Teuchmann et al., (1999) argument, thus portraying time pressures as challenging rather than an engaging. Likewise, Broadbridge (1999) found time pressure as the highest source of stress to retail managers.

Following on from this, career development is a crucial competency an organization can offer. By encouraging and investing employee's development paths, the employee feels valued and perceives themselves as an asset rather than a cost. Promotion in the workplace is an effective tool to extinguish occupational stress (Colligan and Higgins, 2005). Another aspect of career development is the lack of job security as it has a negative influence on employee's mental well-being (Babatunde, 2013). Consequently the unpredicted economic changes and competition can also effect ones development, thus also affecting their mental well-being.

The theory of role dynamics developed by Kahn et al., (1964) states that stress is a result from conflicting or incompatible and unclear or vague expectations. Expectations which are in conflict may result in role conflict for the individual, while unclear or vague

expectations may cause role ambiguity. Not only does role conflict and ambiguity pose problems of adjustment for the individual Kahn et al., (1964) also found lower levels of job satisfaction for those with high conflict and ambiguity. A review of the previous literature (Rizzo et al., 1970) on role conflict and ambiguity, supported the Kahn et al., (1964) theory, and found both conflict and ambiguity to be clearly associated with low job satisfaction and dysfunctional behaviour due to the stress and anxiety that role pressures present. Similar to this, Yongkang et al., (2014) expressed how role stressors are a source of occupational stress but also expressed how role dynamics links positively to time pressures.

Occupational burnout refers to employees who are disengaged in their job role and can be characterized by exhaustion, lack of enthusiasm and motivation, feelings of ineffectiveness and also may have the dimension of frustration. Spickard et al., (2002) noted how the outcome of occupational stress may also lead to an increase in burnout such as experiencing physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. As a result reduced efficacy within the workplace becomes evident (Ruotsalainen et al., 2014). Across occupations, females reported higher levels of burnout than males, particularly when they were relatively young or had relatively little working experience (Bakker et al., 2002). However it could be argued that stress may not only occur due to the sources and demands within an organization but also how it could be a result of an employee's incapacity of managing and coping with organisational demands (Babatunde, 2013). Therefore, this identifies coping techniques and managing stress as a vital part of occupational stress research.

2.3 Extinguishing Occupational Stress

2.3.1 The Theoretical and Strategic Approach

Research has provided a wide range of literature relating to occupational stress, all agree that yes stress is inevitable, but how one copes and responds to it can then be the ultimatum for the impact on one's mental health. However, most literature concentrates on the causes of occupational stress rather than the coping strategies. Theoretically speaking, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) is a model that evaluates the processes involved in coping with stressful situations. It is argued how an individual's appraisal of a threat (primary appraisal) and of their coping techniques (secondary appraisal) determines the degree of stress endured (Cohen, 1984). When stress ignites, an individual assesses the potential threat which can be referred to as the primary appraisal. A primary appraisal acknowledges the judgement of the threat, i.e., how one is going to experience it. Examples include stressful, challenging or incontrollable experiences. Once evaluated, the secondary appraisal initiates. This process involves assessing ones resources and options to cope which are shaped from past experiences of stress. This model illustrates that in order to manage or cope with stress will depend on how the situation is perceived and responded to.

Furthermore, literature has illustrated the significance of managing occupational stress through two mechanisms; the individual approach and the organizational approach. Firstly, the individual approach aims to develop employee's skills and confidence in order to change their view and coping approach with stressful situations rather than accepting and adapting to them. Michie (2002) suggests how implementing a training strategy can potentially decrease the level of stress an individual is open to whilst at work. It is argued that a training strategy can increase the awareness of stress and the signs of incoming stress. Contents of this strategy would focus on developing skills such as active coping techniques, for example; communication, assertiveness, time management, problem solving and effective management (Michie, 2002**).** Broadbridge (2002) supports the vision of Michie (2002). Despite this, it is important to consider how sources of stress can be perceived as unchangeable or uncontrollable. Examples of this would include; the structure, management style, and the culture of an organization. This notes how an organizational intervention is necessary and an individual approach may not be enough by its self.

Intervention by an organization is limited to assisting those already experiencing stress. An analogy would be pouring water over a burning object, rather than using an extinguisher. It will continue to catch flames until the source of fire is extinguished. As argued throughout, employees are an organizations number one resource and they must be protected. From organizations prospective approaches can range from structural to psychological. Michie (2002) portrays the idea of a risk assessment strategy to control and reduce the risk of occupational stress, if not prevent them (See Appendix B). By monitoring and reviewing these strategies consistently will allow for an assessment of how effective the prevention and control strategy is. Although, the developing of training and risk assessment strategies are presented as sufficient, it can be assumed that one strategy does not fit all organizations. However, it is an employer's duty to implement controls to reduce the risk of health and safety problems. This will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

2.3.2 The Coping Strategies

Three coping strategies will be presented in order to gain an understanding of how one may react when faced with a stressful situation. Firstly, the *Avoidant Coping Strategy* refers to the idea of basing ones choice of behaviour on avoiding or escaping thoughts or feelings. This strategy can also be referred to as maladaptive or palliative coping. Avoidant coping involves methods such as; drug use, denial, gambling abuse, mental breakdowns and externalization. These mechanisms of dealing with stress as a manager are not sufficient as the after effects of some could affect their managerial role.

Secondly, the *Problem Oriented Coping Strategy* has been considered the most efficient method of overcoming stress as it encourages the individual to concentrate on the problem rather than on the stress it ignites. By doing so it allows for the source of stress to either be managed or potentially extinguished (Babatunde, 2013). This coping strategy involves seeking social support, establishing an active plan, remaining positive and to remain patience when faced with stressful situations. In terms of managers, when faced with stressful situations it is would be ideal to identify the source and manage it with positivity as negative energy can spread just as fast as positive energy.

Lastly, the *Emotion Focused Coping Strategy* focus on the feelings of distress instead of the actual situation that caused the distress, hence the classification of emotion focused. Emotions experienced in this approach include brood, imaginative, self-blame, and denial. This approach includes characteristics from both the avoidant and problem orientated strategies as it acknowledges mental breakdowns and attempts to mend the issue by realizing the cause. As a result individuals tend to ignite emotional expressions to highlight the negative elements of a situation, resulting in less worry and anxiety experienced. Examples of handling stress through this method includes; yoga, meditation, religion and exercise. In comparison to problem oriented, emotion focused strategies aim to address the negative of a situation, whereas problem oriented focus on the positives.

2.3 Occupational Stress and the Retail Sector.

Despite the awareness of occupational stress rising in organizations, research addressing occupational stress within the retail environment can be described as a neglected area. Previous research focused on the education sector (Brown and Ralph, 1992), hospitality sector (Gibbons and Gibbons 2007) and the healthcare sector (Ruotsalainen et al., 2014). Similar to the present study, the causes of work related stress and recommended approaches for organizations on how to potentially overcome it was measured. Like all research these recommendations were just guidelines. Therefore, this identifies the gap for this research to be conducted within a retail environment.

Currently, retail employs near 275,000 of the Irish population and counts for over 40,000 businesses operating in Ireland (Retail Ireland, 2016). Retail organizations are always on the rise to meet customers' demands of the new trends that evolve. Expansions and acquisitions are two of the main activities occurring to improve and develop the retail sector throughout Ireland. Not only this but the arrival of foreign companies into the country has led to the retail sector becoming more competitive and challenging than ever before. Given this, protecting its people should be at the top of all retailers list. However, research indicates differently.

Regardless of the lack of research in the retail sector, one common ground all research conducted has agreed on is that working within a retail environment is a stressful job (Broadbridge, 1999). Broadbridge (2000) examined the sources of occupational stress associated with both female and male retail managers by implementing a quantitative approach. As predicted, it was stated how work demands, staff shortages and long working hours were examples of stressors within the retail environment. Findings supported previous arguments regarding the causes of occupational stress; role ambiguity and role conflict (Robinson et al., 2003), lack of social support (Davidson and Cooper, 1983) and lack of resources (Terborg, 1985). It was also identified that female managers reacted to stressful situations negatively compared to male managers. Previously Babin and Boles (1998) supported this argument that female managers are more prone to occupational stress than male managers are. Overall, Broadbridge (2000) presented findings that suggest the retail environment stressors can lead to negative impacts on employee's mental health. Further investigation, Broadbridge (2002), carried out the effect of a managerial role on one's mental health. Similar to the present study, it aimed to not only analyse the stressors of occupational

stress but also assess the coping strategies that could potentially see a decline in occupational stress. Broadbridge (2002) notes how individuals must be willing to avail of coping strategies in order for them to work. This is described as the complementary effect; in order for one to benefit from coping strategies one must be open to them. Unlike, Broadbridge (2000), this study was conducted by executing qualitative methods rather than quantitative as a group discussion orientated approach was thought to ignite each other's experiences and gain personal insights into ones experiences.

Similar to Broadbridge (2002) Aluculesei et al., (2015) conducted qualitative research within a retail organization in Germany. Aluculesei et al., (2015) outlined how occupational stress is an important factor in determining ones job satisfaction in the world of retail. In turn, this argument was previously portrayed (Azman et al., 2009) and therefore generates the idea of how occupational stress can not only impact ones mental health but also ones job performance. Although Aluculesei et al., (2015) utilized a qualitative approach like Broadbridge (2002) it did not identify coping strategies rather it catered for the stressful employees experiences by encouraging the idea of them to attend a day or a weekend in a spa resort. This technique resulted in many critiques as the coping technique was illustrated as reactive rather than proactive. Previous to this, Knight et al., (2007) argued that role stress such as conflict and ambiguity was ranked the top cause of organisational stress in a retail environment. However, Knight et al., (2007) did not outline any coping mechanisms but suggested that managers with customer oriented behaviour can potentially mediate the effects of role stress on retail managers.

It is clear from previous research conducted in the retail environment that the main causes of occupational stress is down to role stress which includes conflict and ambiguity. There is a significant difference in results obtained based on gender, it is believed females are more likely to experience mental well-being issues more than males. Following on from this, the difference between proactive and reactive approaches were acknowledged, however the reliability of them is unclear.

2.4 Mental Health and Well-being.

Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2011, the Disability Act 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, an employer has a duty of care to their employees as far as reasonably practicable. Organizations need to understand that this is in terms of both physical and mental health. Just like physical health, mental health fluctuates, therefore it is best for both the employee and organization to identify and assess the hazards and risks of a work environment that include factors that affect physical and psychological health. As many would agree, people are the most important resource to an organization and it is important to nurture and develop them. With a particular focus on mental well-being in this research, an outline of the importance of strategically managing mental well-being will be presented. Mental health issues can be described as everyday worries or long-term conditions. Similar to other health issues, it is best to recognize early signs of mental health issues in order to mitigate and manage it.

Firstly, understanding mental well-being is essential. How one thinks, feels, and portrays their confidence and ability to control events can be referred to as their mental well-being. In assessing mental well-being, the aim of an organization is not to discover and diagnose an employee's health, but rather it is to encourage a positive and proactive approach to alleviating the stressors involved in occupational stress. For the purpose of this research what is referred to as mental health issues will be three problems; anxiety, panic and depression. IBEC (2007) noted how one in four people experience mental health problems which included stress, panic, anxiety and depression. Similar enough, OCED (2011), noted how one in five people can experience the same mental health problems due to occupational stress. Overall, the World Health Organization(WHO) predicts that by 2020 depression will be the second greatest illness within an organization with cardiovascular diseases remaining the first (IBEC, 2007). Despite these findings, (IBEC, 2012) outlines how the majority of employees experiencing a mental health issue still have the ability to work productively.

Secondly, the stigma towards mental health is indescribable. Individuals see it as weakness and become reluctant to discuss with employers. Again, organizations awareness of the Employment Equality Acts (1998 -2011) is essential. It is strongly advised for employers not to discriminate against employee's experience of mental issues as previous case law identified how mental well-being can be referred to as a disability; therefore it falls under one of the nine grounds of this act. If an organization allows for the stigma of speaking out about mental health issues to affect the company culture, it will not only allow for occupational

stress to occur but also to escalate and decrease ones mental well-being. As a result, it could potentially damage an organizations talent pool and an employer's brand. Considering that globalization is a powerful and dynamic force for growth, it is clear how organizations need to retain their top talent in order to succeed now more than ever.

Ultimately, by implementing a well-being strategy into an organisations policy it will alleviate stressors. In addition, by supporting and managing employees who are experiencing stress it will potentially enhance productivity and one's performance, increase retention and decrease absenteeism levels. IBEC (2012) identified that there is significant reasons for organizations to invest in well-being initiatives. IBEC (2007) discovered that well-being initiatives could affect retention, productivity, absenteeism and performance while also assisting and supporting employees experiencing distress. IBEC (2007) also noted how the organizations culture plays a major role in the stigma attached to occupational stress. Furthermore, the organizations provision of working conditions, awareness campaigns and the promotion of a culture where the employees are treated with respect and dignity, were noted as a central element to promote well-being in the workplace. Moreover, these elements will lead to a reduction in absenteeism, grievance and discrimination claims, complaints and the incidence of mental health problems (IBEC, 2007). Prior to this, Broadbridge (2002) argued that with the correct well-being strategy implemented, the threat of litigation is minimised and the standard of organizational performance increases. Therefore, it is clear how a positive and proactive approach to the promotion of mental well-being and overcoming occupational stress can reap benefits for an organization, reduced absenteeism, increase engagement and productivity levels (Broadbridge, 2002).

The biggest challenge an organization faces is not only how to approach occupational stress but how to manage it. Like any other issue in the workplace; unauthorised absence, lateness's, sicknesses, bullying and harassment all issues must be managed in the correct manner with respect and dignity shown towards the injured party. Le Ferve et al., (2006) portrayed the process of *Stress Management Intervention (SMI)* and defined it as "any purposeful action taken to reduce or alleviate the stress experience" (p.548). DeFrank and Cooper (1987) identified that SMI's are based on the idea to benefit the individual, the organization and then both individual-organizational interfaces. This process involves three stages primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary interventions are organizational aims to reduce, modify or eliminate high-pressured work demands that may affect ones health or performance. Promotion of positive energy in the workplace with regards to well-being,

creating a culture of respect and trust and execute job redesigns to include flexibility are examples of primary interventions. Secondary interventions aspire to help employees cope with stress by utilizing well-being programs, promoting recreational social events and stress management training. As primary interventions present strategies to prevent occupational stress before the issue escalates, and secondary interventions aim to assist developed health issues, it is understandable how tertiary interventions are utilized to help employees who have developed occupational stress. These may include remedial activities such as counselling, return to work interviews and individual assistance programs.

Ackfeldt and Malhotra (2013) criticised the SMI approach and argued that only secondary and tertiary interventions are worthwhile in order to reduce occupational stress. Despite this, Cousin et al. (2004) argued that in order for an organization to successfully manage occupational stress, it is necessary for the primary interventions to be prioritised and utilized to avoid escalation of issues. In addition, Biron (2012) agreed with this and identified that investing time, energy and cost into primary SMIs can benefit employees significantly in comparison to the negative cost and extensive loss of talent and productivity to an organization by not implementing a primary SMI. Therefore, this identifies the significance of primary SMI's and their equal ability with secondary and tertiary SMIs.

Chapter Three: Research Questions

From the literature presented, it is clear that occupational stress is becoming a simmering topic for organizations. The overall aim of this research is to investigate if a managerial role within the retail sector has an effect on one's mental well-being. The analysis and findings of this research will aim to add to Irish literature based on the topic of occupational stress within the retail sector. Alongside this, recommendations for how to potentially manage and mitigate occupational stress within a retail environment will be provided. In order to achieve the aim of this study, it is essential to establish sub-objectives, which are evident below.

Objective One: Determine the most prominent organizational causes of occupational stress of retail managers.

Objective Two: Examine the coping techniques utilized by retail managers.

Objective Three: Investigate if job burnout levels can identify risk towards mental well-being.

Objective Four: Identify if there is relationship between mental well-being and gender, age, and years of management experience.

Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Overview:

The imperative issue of how research is philosophically informed is outlined by Johnson and Clark (2006), who also argue that researchers should be able to reflect upon their philosophical choices. Not only this, but also defend selected approaches against the alternatives which could have been adopted. This chapter seeks to summarise the path the researcher took in order for one to replicate the study. The chosen research methods will be analysed and justified. It is important to note the tools utilized in this research do not seek to discover or diagnose individual's health, rather to assess feelings and behaviours in a given circumstance.

4.2 The Research Process:

In order to design a method to address the objectives of this research, the Onion Approach (Saunders et al., 2009) was applied. This approach represents the idea of stages that must be adopted to formulate an effective and efficient method. It guides a researcher by defining the research philosophy to establish the research approach. From this, the researcher must embrace a research strategy that will explain the plan of action the researcher will take to address the aims and objectives of a study. Finally, the last layer of the onion represents the time horizon the research will be conducted in. The Onion Approach is beneficial as it establishes a set of stages to allow for the various data collection methods to be understood and depicts the steps of how a methodological study can be described.
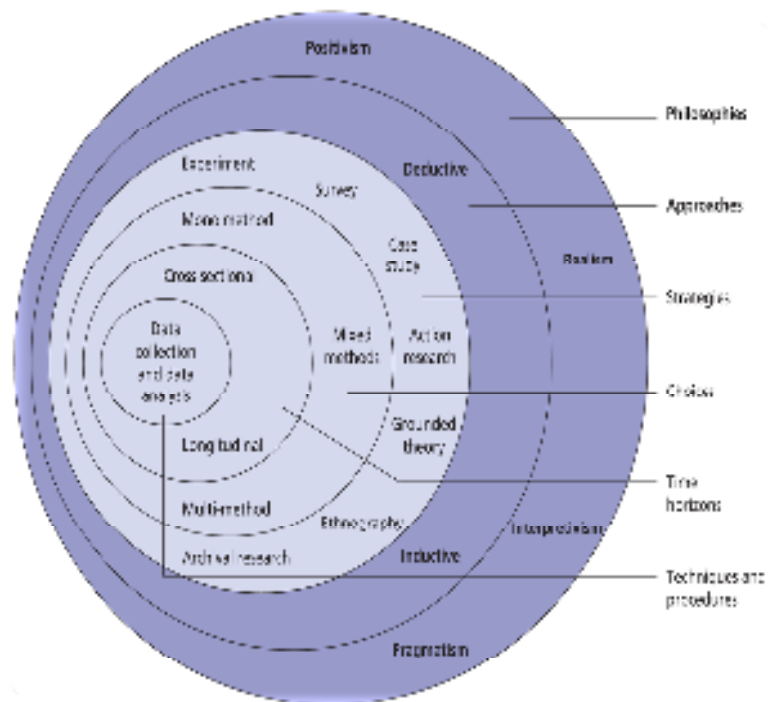
Figure 4.2

The Onion Approach.

Source: Saunders et al., (2009)

4.2.1 Research Philosophy:

From a philosophy perspective, research can involve a positivist or an interpretivist approach. The positivist approach involves collecting data in an objective scientific manner method. It focuses on data that can be counted in social and organisational realities, again, in a scientific way (Anderson, 2013). Interpretivist acknowledges individuals perceptions of the world and tries to access them by using qualitative methods such as observations and interviews. Therefore, it is clear that one of the main differences is how positivist research involves work from scientific principles and interpretivist involves constructing knowledge to understand their environment.

Lee and Lings (2008) noted that theories are provisional and that it is near impossible to prove theories are 100% accurate. From this, researchers can choose whether to build on theories for what the suggested outcome is or to develop new propositions. These two actions can be referred to as the deductive and inductive approaches. Anderson (2013) describes the deductive approach as refining and reconsidering previous theories by generating research to find evidence that could confirm, amend or disregard a theory. In comparison, an inductive approach is gathering data to build and develop a theory about the phenomena observed. Therefore, the deductive approach can be classified as a positivist approach that utilises quantitative research methods. On the other hand, the inductive approach can be categorised as an interpretivist approach and implements a qualitative approach. For the purpose of this research a positivist and deductive research approach will be applied.

Due to quantitative research methods involving data that can be counted and quantified it can therefore allow for the frequency, the central tendency and dispersion of a situation to be described. Thus allows the ability to present data visually and depict relevant trends. In HR research it is clear that the utilization of a survey is most applicable in terms of quantitative research (Anderson, 2013). A survey allows for the relationship between variables to be tested based on a research aim or hypothesis and data to be gathered from a wide sample. Surveys are classified as a deductive approach as it takes previous theories and research into consideration and aims to build on them. Considering that a survey implemented is based on previous theories and how the sample being investigated is within an organizational environment and how it will collect quantifiable data, it is evident how the positivist deductive approach is utilized with reference to the philosophy aspect of research.

4.2.2 Research Design:

The aim of this research was to measure the effect that an organisational role has on mental health. The researcher illustrates the hypothesis as, *"does a managerial role in retail effect their mental well-being"*. The research was conducted under cross sectional research and a quantitative approach was adopted in the form of a self-completed questionnaire. In this research, the organizational role examined fell under an employee who is a retail manager. The independent variables being measured are organizational stressors, coping techniques and job burnout. These are the factors previously outlined that have been identified as the sources of organizational stress (Robinson et al., 2003; Babatunde, 2013;and Spickard et al., 2002).Therefore, these independent variables will predict the dependent variable: ones mental well-being. Appendix C depicts the research design and this will be referred to as the non-casual directional hypothesis.

As the utilization and implementation of a survey in previous research (Broadbridge, 2000) was proven successful, it is for that reason the proposed research will adopt this quantitative approach. Not only this, but it was successful in the retail environment, thus identifying the advantages of selecting this approach. The survey will be distributed via email to various HR departments within the retail sector to gain an unbiased view. By selecting this method, it will allow a large sample to be analysed, thus gaining a large body of information. As a result, potential findings may create a step for further research to be conducted.

4.3 Setting and participants:

For the purpose of this research, the survey was conducted online in order to reach a wider sample. A survey was inputted into the website www.surveymonkey.com and a link was established. This link was then distributed to HR retail managers across the country, which they would distribute to suitable participants. It was outlined that every response would be confidential and anonymous to encourage each individual to answer truthfully. The link was open for responses for four weeks to allow employees to complete the survey at their most convenient time.

Due to the additional data like body language, eye contact and voice tone in qualitative methods it is proven successful in conducting research in this field. However, for the purpose of this research, a questionnaire was designed and implemented to reach a wider sample and to gain a representation of the relationship between retail managers and occupational stress. Another benefit of this quantitative method was that the data obtained could not be altered, thus obtaining genuine results.

4.4 Instrument: The Missing Link Survey

Previous scales used in research relating to occupational stress and wellbeing were complex and unpractical. Therefore, by combining different scales used into one survey allowed this study to be carried out effectively. The survey opened with a cover letting explaining the purpose and confidentiality of the research and invited participants to contact the researcher if there was an interest in receiving the final results. Following on from this the survey consisted of five sections in order to measure both the independent and the dependent variables.

4.5 Measuring the Independent Variable:

4.5.1 Section A: General Information:

The survey opened with this section and contained questions that were phrased in a simple and unambiguous manner, which collected biographical information from the participant. This included their consent to participate, by clicking *"yes"* the participant could continue, however if the participant responded with "*no*", the system denied them to proceed. Broadbridge, (2000) and Babin and Boles, (1998) note a difference in the relationship between occupational stress and experience, therefore the researcher included this observation and collected indicators relating to retail and management experience.

Participants were provided to score themselves out of ten based on how their manager would perceive their performance; as a result the researcher could use this indicator as a measure for manager's performance. Previous studies (CIPD, 2014 and Eriksen et al., 2003) linked absenteeism to occupational stress, for that reason a question asking participants to declare the number of sick days they endured within the last six months was appropriate. Questions that assessed if an organization operates a wellbeing strategy or training programs, which recognize and support anyone at risk was inspected. The objective of this scale was to; gather biographical data, absenteeism rates and if well-being strategies or training programs are utilized and relate it all to the dependent variable.

4.5.2 Section B: Organizational Stressors

Previous research suggests that role stressors (Knight et al., (2007), career development (Colligan and Higgins, 2005) and time management (Teuchmann et al., 1999) are issues that are triggers to stress occurring. Four subsections with statements were created based on these organizational stressors. The participant had to select the most relevant response, which ranged from *"strongly disagree"* to *"strongly agree"*. The aim of this section was to identify if these stressors are significant to retail managers. This scale was not previously used, rather the research combined statement from previous studies to establish a suitable scale.

4.5.3 Section C: Coping Techniques

As mentioned managing and coping techniques towards stress is an important aspect that can determine the level of occupational stress that is expected. Therefore, the Brief COPE questionnaire was implemented to discover the coping strategies used by participants in response to stressful events or situations. The Brief COPE consists of 14 scales both with 2

items that represent a coping technique. Participants were presented with statements in which they had to rate their experience of each technique. Despite previous research focusing it on individuals experiencing physical health problems, the researcher utilized this method as it was identified as a reliable and valid tool for assessing how one copes in stressful situations (Yusoff, 2010).

4.5.4 Section D: Burnout

The Maslach Burnout Inventory Scale (MBI), which measures burnout, was presented in Section D. Spickard et al., (2002) suggested how burnout is related to lack of control, lack of social support and work-life imbalance. Therefore justifying the implementation of the MBI Scale in this research, as it captures three aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP) and personal accomplishment (PA). Items are in the form of statements that relate to an individual's personal feelings or attitudes and were rated by how frequent they occur. The frequency scale ranges from *"never (0)"* to *"every day (6)"*. Maslach and Jackson (1981) noted how psychometric analyses identified that MBI scale has both high reliability and validity with regards to measuring burnout. The utilization of this scale in previous studies (Baker et al., (2004); Schaufeli and Baker (2004); and Ahola et al., 2005)), supports Maslach and Jackson (1981) rationale. Therefore, the objective is to measure the level of burnout retail manager's experience.

4.6 Measuring the Dependent Variable:

4.6.1 Section E: GHQ-12 Scale.

It is apparent that mental well-being issues are increasing rapidly. Managers are aware of the issue yet struggle to understand why it happens. By measuring ones mental well-being by the use of the GHQ-12 Scale, it will lead to a classification of the correlation between a managerial role in retail and one's mental well-being. The GHQ-12 Scale was created as a screening instrument to identify psychological stress. It consists of 12 items that contain positive and negative descriptions of mood states. The respondent was asked to answer based on their feelings, behaviours and thoughts experienced by selecting from responses provided.

Pilar et al., (2008) identified how it is suitable in assessing ones mental well-being by testing a sample of the Spanish population. Despite the validity of this scale, Pilar et al., (2008) did not take the participants work environment into consideration. In comparison, Banks et al., (2011) used the GHQ-12 Scale to assess individuals' well-being on three samples that included their environment and work status; engineers, school leavers and the unemployed. Findings indicated that higher scores were found in those unemployed, female scores were higher than males and that age and level of experience had no impact on the final scores. The total score, obtained by summing up the scores of the individual items, is a validated measure for severity of illness (Goldberg, 1987). The Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5) is another scale used to measure common mental disorders (CMD). Although the MHI is a validated and reliable measure, it was not used in this research as it contains over 36 items in comparison to the GHQ-12 containing 12. Therefore, it is clear how the GHQ-12 is more suitable for this research.

4.7 Data Analysis

Firstly the data files were downloaded from the established link and then inputted into Microsoft Excel to allow for statistical tests to be conducted. By inputting and analysing the data a comparison against previous research will be established. In addition, the comparison will identify if new themes have emerged and ignite further research on the topic. Visual representation will also be presented of findings from each objective stated in Chapter Three to allow the reader to understand and interpret effortlessly.

4.8 Ethical Considerations:

It is essential for research to generate and abide by a code of behaviour with respect to the participants, "explicit concern with ethical issues is a fundamental feature of good research in HR" (Anderson, 2013, p.149). The survey opened with stating how participation is not only voluntary but also that responses are confidential and anonymous. Participants were made aware that all responses would be kept under lock and key and only reported as a combined total. As a result of this, it was predicted that this would encourage retail managers to answer truthfully and prevent any potential repercussions from their employers, as participants had to respond with answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For example, the organizational stressor scale requests participants to respond to items as *"I receive a task without adequate resources and material to execute it"*. If employees answered strongly agree, negative consequences or conflict may arise between the employee and the employer if anonymity was not stated. Alongside this, considering all information was reported as a combined total, participant would be more inclined to feel comfortable answering.

Similar to concerns about employees consequences, another ethical concern considered when creating the questionnaire was that no organisation would face backlash, thus no questions was asked to state their organizations name. This was particularly because the researcher did not want an organization reputation to become negative, thus leading their employer brand to deteriorate.

4.9 Limitations:

As this research only investigates the retail sector, the results acquired would be incapable of representing other sectors, such as the education, healthcare and hospitality sectors due to the difference in culture and nature of organizations. Therefore, replicating results and using this sample as a representation is insufficient for sectors other than retail.

The presence of bias within in this research can limit the overall results. As surveys were circulated from early June and for a short period of under four weeks, it is questionable whether if the survey was circulated in a peak period would results differ. However, the researcher did acknowledge how June can also be a peak period within the retail sector due to the sale period that occurs. Therefore, it could be argued that the timing of the questionnaire completed may reflect inconsistent results. In other words, considering the study was a cross sectional, would it differ if longitudinal analysis was implemented.

As mentioned above, a qualitative approach has been proven successful in the past in this area of research, however due to time constraints and wanting to involve a wide sample, quantitative research was more suitable. However, interviews could have provided results with a more personal touch and further elaboration of information about both the independent and the dependent variables. Finally, it is worthy to note that the scales used were not previously implemented in the area of retail research.

4.10 Conclusion of Methodology:

To conclude, by measuring three independent variables an insight into what could ignite stress within an organisation and how one copes with it will become clear. By utilising the MPI, it will allow for the risk of employee burnout to be identified, thus results could potentially show it is down to the sources or the coping techniques. In other words, if the causes were managed, the coping techniques were proactive, the risk of burnout will be low and vice versa. However, it is these three variables that will assess the effect on one's mental well-being within the retail sector.

Chapter Five: Results

5.1 Overview:

This chapter will present a brief overview of each scale in an orderly sequence. Following on from this, results for each objective outlined in chapter 3 will be established. By presenting results in this manor it allows the reader to understand the findings and also resolve the puzzle of the hypothesis. For ethnical consideration it was stated that all results would be presented as a combined total, however results will be grouped by gender for the sole purpose of answering objectives. Results and observations will be stated allowing for the subsequent chapter to interpret them. Data analysis for the independent variables consisted of scoring the surveys and presenting the findings visually. In comparison, the researcher decided to use statistical analysis for the dependent variable to identify relationships, significance and comparisons. In addition, it is important to note that all scales utilized were found to be reliable with consistency throughout as the coefficients ranged between 0.74 and 0.81. Alongside this, the confidence interval for this survey was 95% ($\alpha=0.05$). From assessing both variables it will establish the findings to evaluate the hypothesis.

5.2 The Results of the Independent Variable

5.2.1 Section A: General Information

The aim of this section was to find general information from participants to get an understanding of their age, experience and identify if training programs were offered. The respondent's participation rate was 57.2% female and 42.8% male, which is presented in Diagram 5.1. With regards to age and experience, the average age was 26 with an average of 7 years working in retail, identifying participants were experienced retailers. Along with this, 4.5 years was the average length of service in a managerial role.
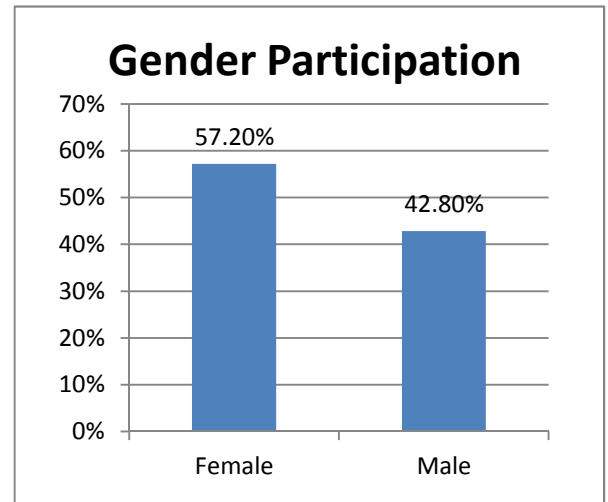
Diagram 5.1 The Gender Participation Rate.

In terms of absenteeism, 64.2% responded with no sick days and 17.8 % had 1 sick day within the last six months. However, 14.5% had 10 sick days or less with 3.5% experiencing 10 days of more. Diagram 5.2 depicts this outcome. Participants were asked to rate their performance in terms of how they feel their manager would on scale from one to ten. With over 74.1% answering higher than 8 it suggests that the low absences encourage a high level of performance.
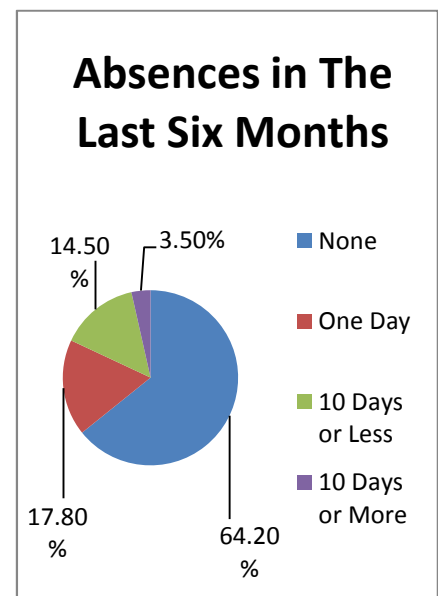
Diagram 5.2 Absenteeism Rates of Respondents.

Finally, participants were asked if their organization offers any training programs, nine options were provided and participants were able to respond with multiple answers. Communication skills were identified as the most recognisable training program that managers received. Following on from this was conflict resolution training programs (39%). However, 32% of participants responded with their company not offering any of the training programs mentioned and as little as 10% responded with their organization providing well-being strategies and promoting wellness. Training programs on *work life balance* and responses to *unsure* fell equally at 25%. Overall, it was found that training programs are insufficient with respect to mental well-being.

5.2.2 Section B: Organizational Stressors:

The aim of this section was to investigate the organizational stressors and achieve Objective One; *Determine the most prominent organizational causes of occupational stress of retail managers*. With reference to the literature addressed, time management, career development, role ambiguity and role conflict were chosen as organizational stressors to measure. All scores for this section were established by calculating the responses into percentages to analyse the impact a stressor may cause. Therefore, the percentage outcomes represent the frequency of stress experienced by retail managers based on the previous four week period prior to this investigation.

5.2.2.1 Time Management:

It is clear from Table 5.1 that time management is an organizational stressor for retail managers. Respondents answered strongly in agreement to the statements presented. It can be observed that managers try to do more than one thing at once as 48.15% strongly agreed. Likewise, over commitment (77.77%), feeling impatience (85.18%), and no time to relax (59.26%), identify that time pressures are an organizational stressor for the sampled retail managers. Overall it is clear from results that time management is an issue as responding to statements with *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* was 72%. This will be further discussed and interpret in the subsequent chapter.

Table 5.1 The Results of Time Management Pressures on Retail Managers
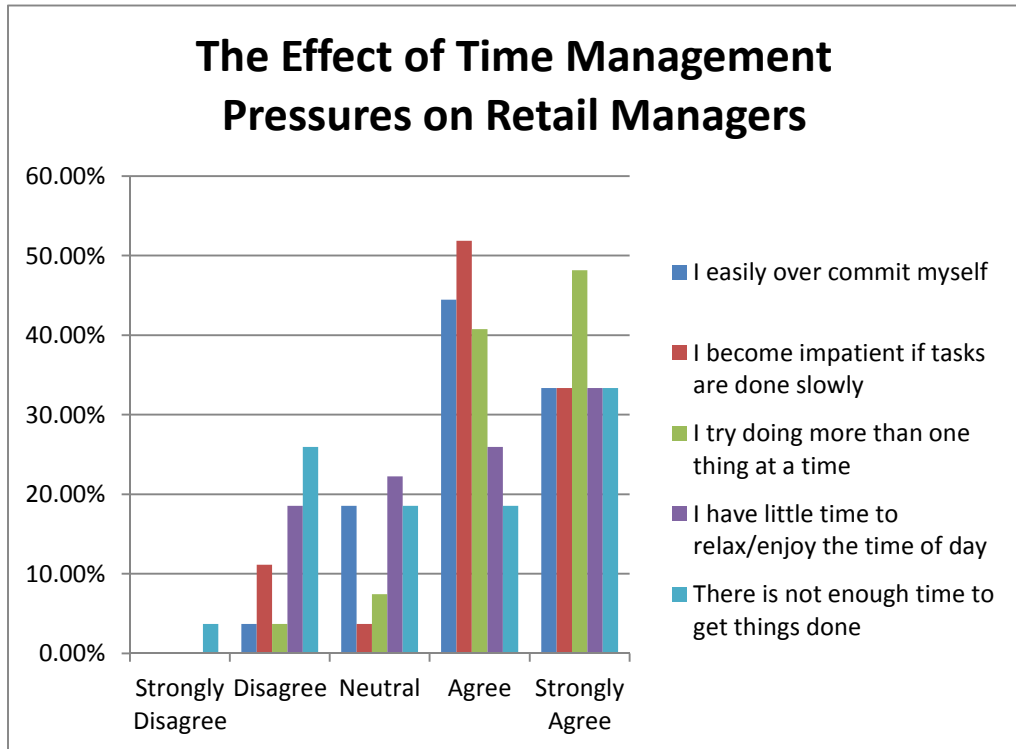
Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I easily over commit myself	0.00%	3.70%	18.52%	44.44%	33.33%
I become impatient if tasks are done slowly	0.00%	11.11%	3.70%	51.85%	33.33%
I try doing more than one thing at a time	0.00%	3.70%	7.41%	40.74%	48.15%
I have little time to relax/enjoy the time of day	0.00%	18.52%	22.22%	25.93%	33.33%
There is not enough time to get things done	3.70%	25.93%	18.52%	18.52%	33.33%

5.2.2.2 Career Development:

Findings of measuring career development suggest that promotion or advancement opportunities is not an issue as 37.04% of respondents strongly disagreed and 3.70% strongly agreed to the statement provided. However, the idea of not progressing as fast as one perceives, peaks at the response to *agree* (33.33%), with *disagreement* (29.63%) followed closely behind. When asked if needed more status, respondent's results can indicate this as a minor source of stress. All in all it can be suggested from these results career development as organizational stressors could be classed as a minor stressor as 24% of responses intersect at a point representing *disagreement* towards statements.

Table 5.2 The Results of Career Development as a Source of Stress in Retail Managers

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I lack promotion and/or advancement opportunites	37.04%	33.33%	11.11%	14.81%	3.70%
I am not progressing in my job as rapidly as I would like	22.22%	29.63%	14.81%	33.33%	0.00%
I need more status	18.52%	18.52%	29.63%	29.63%	3.70%
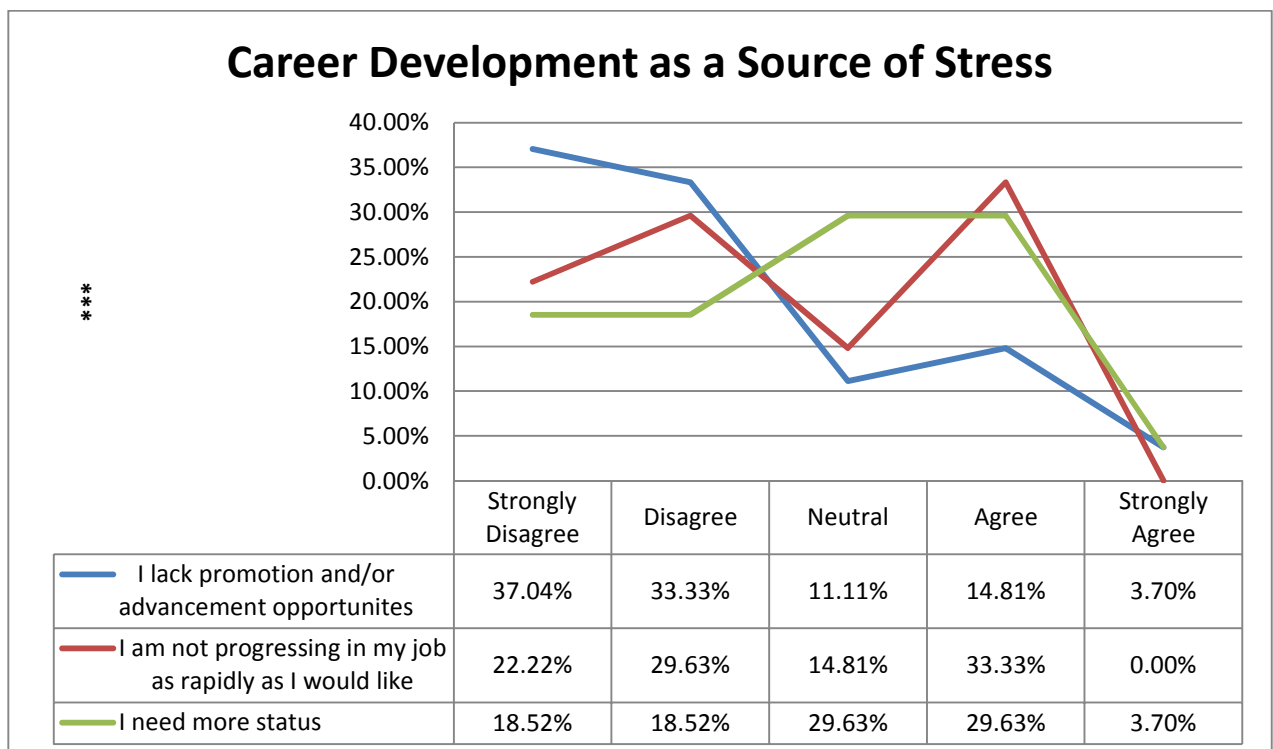
5.2.2.3 Role Ambiguity:

By assessing if role ambiguity occurs, allows the researcher to identify if a vague expectation of one's role ignites occupational stress. The expected finding for this stressor was for participants to respond highly to statements provided with *"disagree"* or *"strongly disagree"*. However, Diagram 5.3 illustrates this was not the case. Results identify that managers are certain about how much authority they have as 55.65% answered *"agree"* and 14.81% answered *"strongly agree"*. Similar to this, 66% of participants agreed they have clear planned objectives for their role and 88% agreed to knowing their responsibilities. Overall, the results identified how managers receive clear expectations as 87% answered in agreement to this statement and 79% are aware of what is expected of them. However, one statement that illustrates negativity in this category was the response to how one manages their time. In response to "I know I have divided my time properly", 57% of answers ranged from disagree to neutral. Therefore, the results suggest that managers are aware of expectations, but the time management of expectations is an issue.

Diagram 5.3 The Results of Measuring Role Ambiguity in Retail Managers
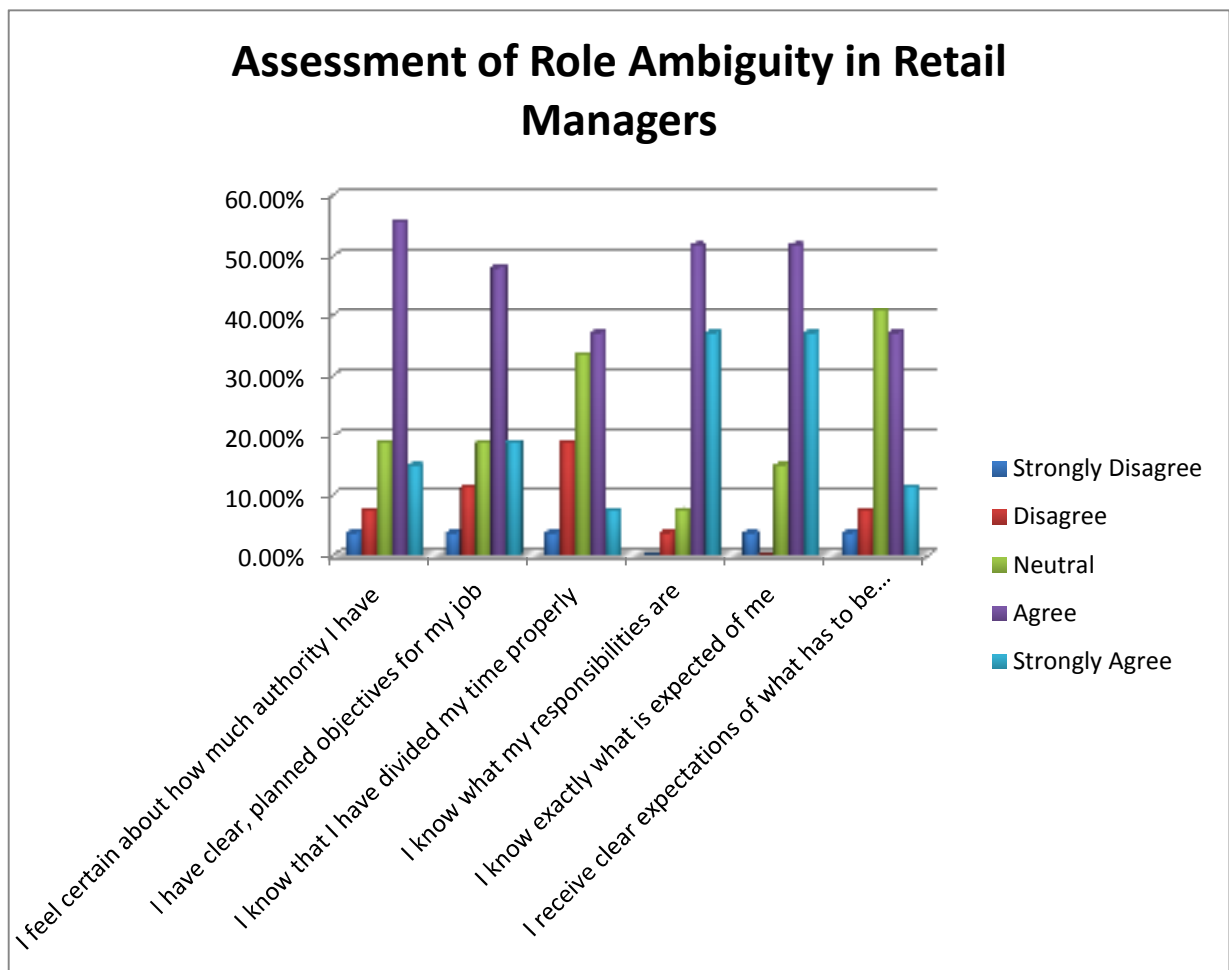
5.2.2.4Role Conflict:

By assessing role conflict in participants it allowed for the researcher to analyse if it is an organizational stressor with regards to retail managers. Findings include responses that suggest role conflict is an issue for retail managers. Firstly, 67% agreed to not receiving the staffing needed to complete a task and 63% responded that they have to work with groups that operate differently to them. Likewise, 66% illustrate how they receive incompatible requests. However, 43% disagreed with receiving a task without the adequate resources, suggesting resources are not an issue but manpower, conflicting operations and incompatible requests are.

Table 5.3 The Results of Role Conflict as a Source of Stress in Retail Managers

Statements:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have to do things that should be done differently	7.41%	18.52%	29.63%	33.33%	11.11%
I receive an assignment without the staffing to execute it	7.41%	25.93%	18.52%	18.52%	29.63%
I have to buck a policy in order to carry out an assignment	14.81%	37.04%	22.22%	14.81%	11.11%
I have to work with two or more groups who operate quite differently	7.41%	14.81%	14.81%	33.33%	29.63%
I receive incompatible requests from two or more people	3.70%	29.63%	11.11%	37.04%	18.52%
I receive a task without adequate resources and material to execute it	3.70%	40.74%	18.52%	18.52%	18.52%

5.2.3 Section C: The Brief COPE Scale

The purpose of utilizing the Brief COPE Scale was to assess the coping techniques used by participants in response to particular stressful events or situations. Therefore, Objective Two; *Examine the Coping Techniques utilized by Retail Managers* was achieved. The Brief COPE consisted of 14 scales that contained 2 items each, Table 5.4 outlines how each item represented a coping mechanism method, i.e. the scale. Unlike other sections, instead of finding the overall total score the Brief COPE Scale score was calculated by adding the total scores of each scale together, thus the results would range from 2 to 8 as each response had a score attached to it, *"I haven't been doing this(1)", "I've been doing this a little bit(2)", "I've been doing this in a medium amount(3)" or "I've been doing this a lot(4)"*. As a result, this allowed the researcher to gather 14 scores measuring each coping technique which are presented in Table 5.4.

From Figure 5.4 it is evident that planning was the highest scored technique for the sample of retail managers investigated. This technique was closely followed by acceptance, positive reframing and active coping techniques. However, self-blame as a coping technique was identified just as high as acceptance. Therefore it is clear from the results of this research that the coping strategy that reflects this sample is Problem-Oriented which was outlined in Chapter Two and will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

Table 5.4 The Results of Coping Techniques Utilized by Retail Managers

Coping Techniques Scales:	The Scores of Coping Techniques Utilized
Self-Distraction	3
Active Coping	4
Denial	2
Substance Use	2
Use of emotional Support	2
Instrumental Support	2
Behavioural Disengagement	2
Venting	3
Positive Reframing	4
Planning	6
Humour	3
Acceptance	5
Religion	2
Self-Blame	5

Diagram 5.4 The Coping Techniques used by Retail Managers
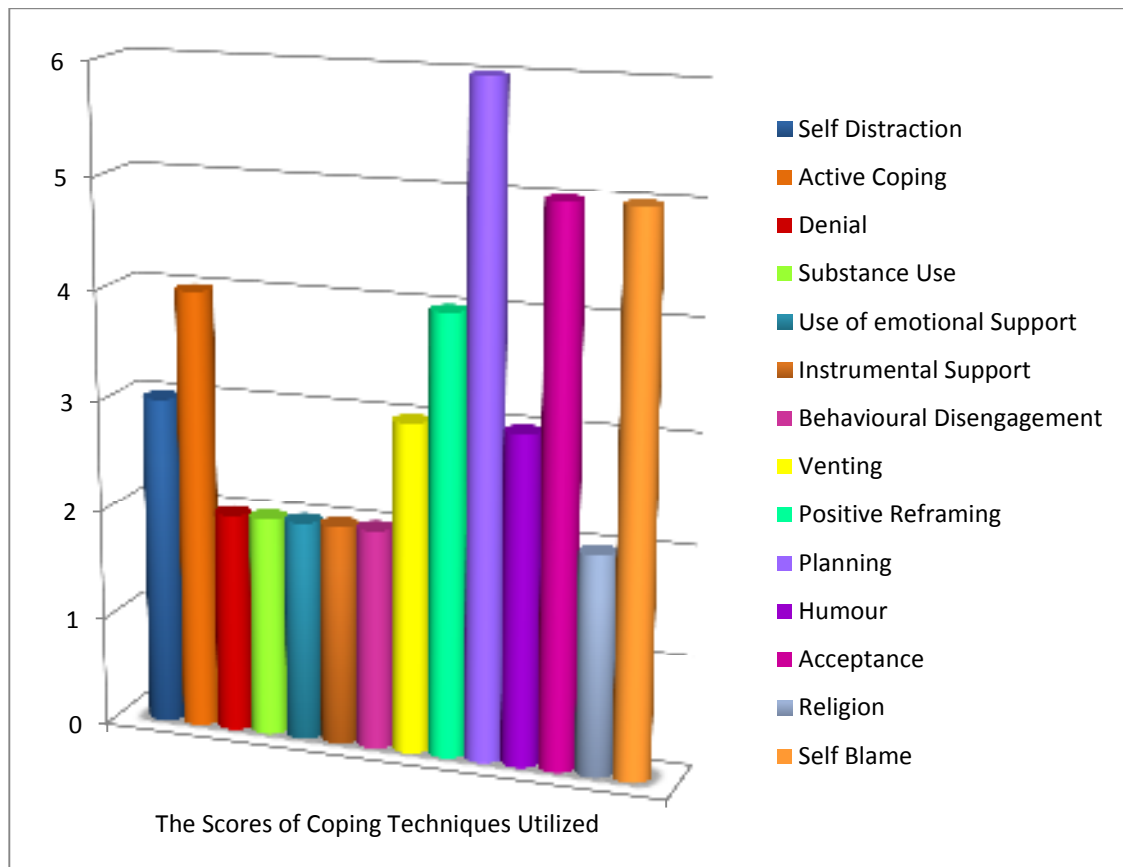
5.2.4 Section D: Maslach Burnout Inventory Scale

The purpose of implementing the MBI as a scale was to accomplish objective three: *Investigate if Job burnout Levels can identify Mental Well-being Risk.* By presenting results from the MBI Scale, it will allow for further discussion of the link between burnout and mental well-being in the subsequent chapter. This section was broken down into three sub sections; Burnout (A), Depersonalization (B) and Personal Achievement (C). Scoring was based conducted using the Likert method (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). It is important to note that all results for this section were based on the previous four week period prior to completing this survey.

5.2.4.1 Burnout Levels

A total score of 21was established for burnout and results are illustrated in Diagram 5.5.This level of burnout suggests moderate burnout. It is evident that 46% felt drained considerable often. Likewise, 53.85% responded with working too hard at their job on a regular basis. Despite the result of moderate burnout, 53.85% have never experienced being at the end of their rope. Giving the requirements of retail managers dealing directly with customers, an optimistic representation of 38.46% have never experienced dealing directly with people stressful and only 7.69% experience this on a daily basis.

Diagram 5.5 The Results of Burnout Levels in Retail Managers
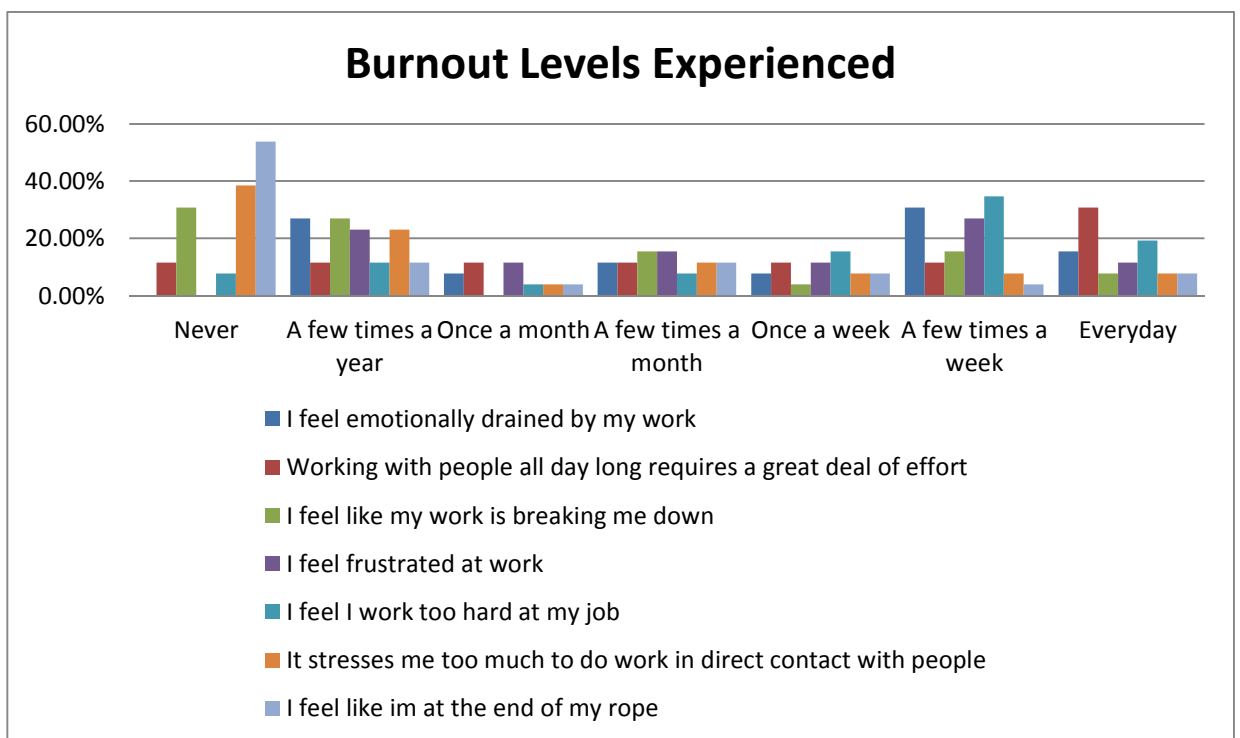
5.2.4.2 Depersonalization Levels

Depersonalization was measured and results calculated a total score of 3which is identified as low level burnout on the MBI Scale. Findings include that managers would never treat employees impersonally and have respect for their customers and employees as 76.92% responded with *never* when asked *"I really don't care what happens to my employees/customers"*. This suggests managers do not avoid social contacts rather promote positive communication and show empathy towards others. Not only this but, it is evident that managers do rarely become more insensitive to people due to their role as 42.31% answered with *never* experiencing this feeling. However, 34.5% reported to feel tired in the mornings with the thought of facing another day of work. It is evident from Diagram 5.6 that managers predominately responded to this section with *never*. In comparison, *everyday* experiences were low. These results will be further discussed with respect to previous theories in Chapter Six.

Diagram 5.6 The Depersonalization Levels in Retail Managers
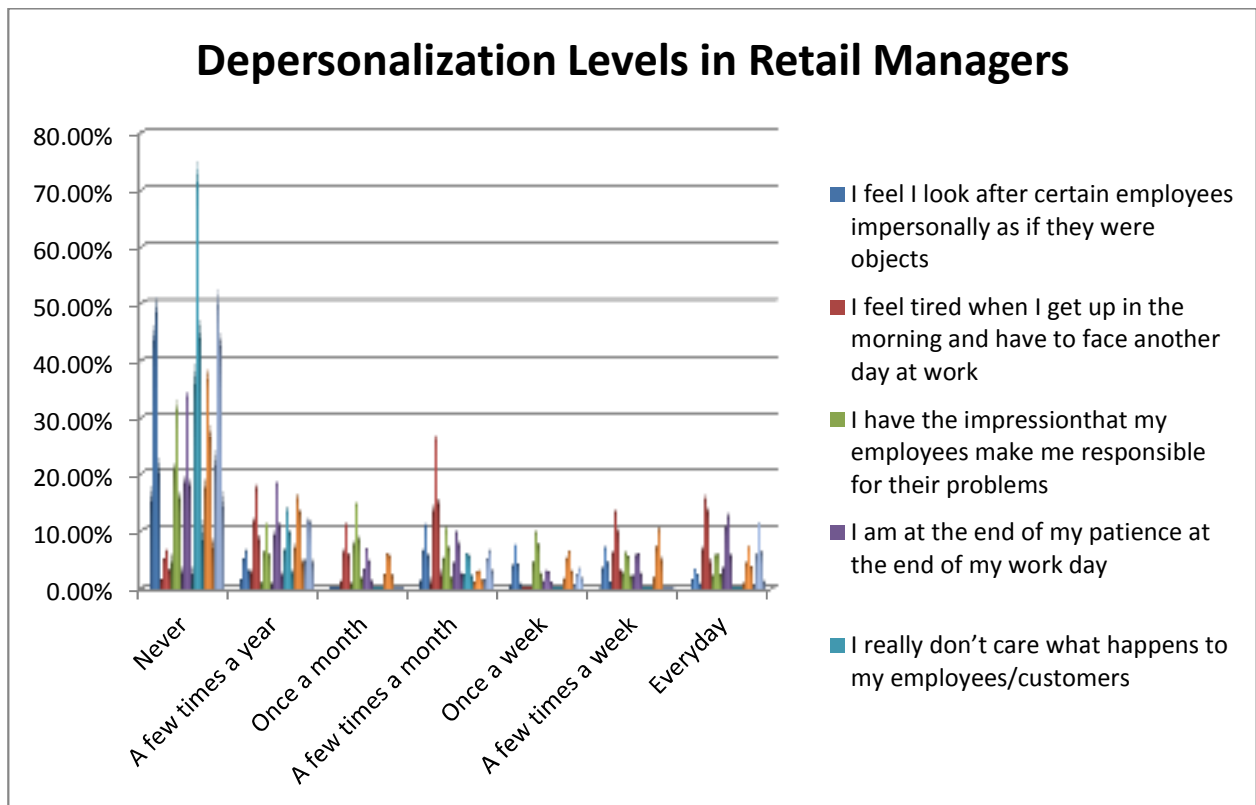
5.2.4.3 Personal Achievement

Lastly, the aim of assessing personal achievement was to examine if an individual identifies themselves negatively, lacks motivation and courage, thus perceives themselves as a failure. However, the total score was 46 suggesting low level burnout, thus participants self-perceptions is positive. In Table 5.5 responses are presented and it is clear to see how the highest percent consistently responded was either *"a few times per week"* or *"everyday"*. Therefore given statements were presented in a positive manner it would be expected participants would have answered in disagreement with *"never"* or *"a few times per year"* as a positive relationship between burnout and retail managers was expected. An example of this is 64% of participants responding to *"I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job"* with responses ranging from weekly to everyday. In comparison it was expected participants would respond negative towards this, which would identify burnout.

Table 5.5 The Frequency of Personal Achievement

Personal Achievement	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job	8.00%	8.00%	4.00%	16.00%	20.00%	20.00%	24.00%
I feel full of energy	11.54%	11.54%	3.85%	15.38%	11.54%	30.77%	15.38%
I am easily able to understand what my employees/customers feel	0.00%	7.69%	11.54%	7.69%	3.85%	26.92%	42.31%
I look after my employees/customers very effectively	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	23.08%	61.54%
In my work, I handle emotional problems very calmly	0.00%	0.00%	3.85%	15.38%	3.85%	23.08%	53.85%
Through my work, I feel that I have a positive influence on people	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%	26.92%	50.00%
I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with employees/customers	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.69%	15.38%	26.92%	50.00%
I feel refreshed when I have been close to my employees/customers at work	7.69%	11.54%	3.85%	11.54%	19.23%	30.77%	15.38%

5.3 The Results of the Dependent Variable - Mental Well Being.

Section E: The GHQ-12 Scale.

By applying the GHQ-12 scale to this research, it allowed for the dependent variable to be tested. All scores were calculated by the Likert Scoring Method (0,1,2,3) and the severity was rated out of 36 which implied the higher the score the higher the severity of risk to one's mental well-being. The total average overall score across both genders was *24/36*. Therefore this detects mental well-being problems in retail managers.

Firstly findings presented in Diagram 5.7 identify that concentration levels were responded to with 44% stating they have the ability to concentrate *every day* and 0% responded with *never*. However, 66.6% were found to have lost sleep over worry *every day* and 54% feeling under strain *on a daily basis*. When asked if they felt unhappy or depressed 60% responded with *every day* and 14% stated *never*. In comparison, when asked if the respondent felt reasonably happy all things considered, 28% answered with *every day* and 48% responded with *once a week.* Measuring the loss of confidence for each participant revealed that 39% experienced this feeling *every day*, with 54% of respondents identified as males. Despite this, 35% answered they would be able to face their problems. The scale also identified that 35% had time *every day* to enjoy normal day to day activities, with a 50% participation rate for both females and males. However, 14% felt they *never* enjoy normal day to day activities. Although positive factors such as having time to do daily activities and feeling reasonable happy were identified, findings can argue that the sampled retail managers have risk towards their mental well-being which are due to losing sleep over worrying about their work, experiencing strain on a daily basis and losing self-confidence.

Diagram 5.7 The GHQ-12 Scale Severity Results.

Measuirng the Mental Well-being of Retail Managers

The Severity of Risk Experienced
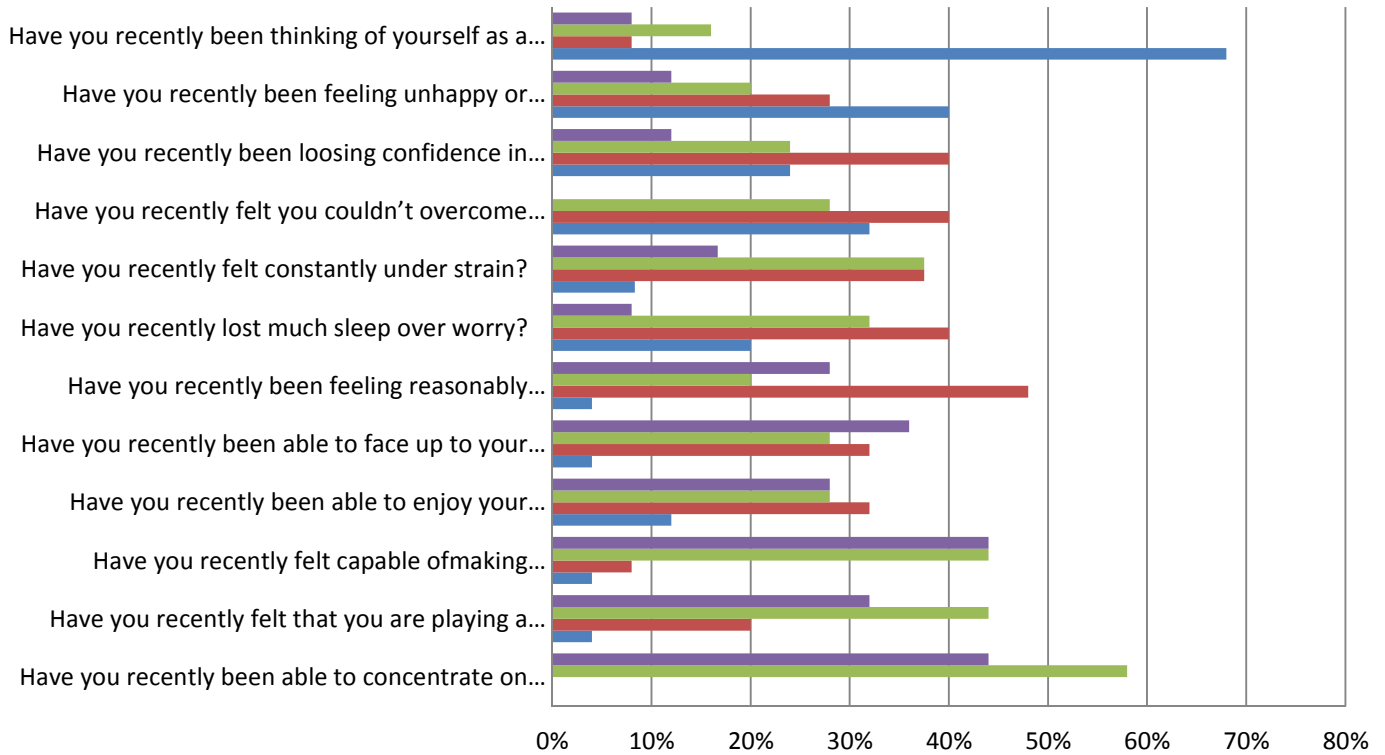
	Have you recently been able to concent rate on what you've been doing ?	Have you recently felt that you are playing a useful part in things?	Have you recently felt capable ofmakin g decisio ns about things?	Have you recently been able to enjoy your normal day to day activitie s?	Have you recently been able to face up to your proble ms?	Have you recently been feeling reasona bly happy all things conside red?	Have you recently lost much sleep over worry?	Have you recently felt constan tly under strain?	Have you recently felt you couldn' t overco me your difficult ies ?	Have you recently been loosing confide nce in yourself ?	Have you recently been feeling unhapp y or depress ed?	Have you recently been thinking of yourself as a worthle ss person?
Everyday	44%	32%	44%	28%	36%	28%	8%	17%	0%	12%	12%	8%
A few times a week	58%	44%	44%	28%	28%	20%	32%	38%	28%	24%	20%	16%
Once a Week	0%	20%	8%	32%	32%	48%	40%	38%	40%	40%	28%	8%
Never	0%	4%	4%	12%	4%	4%	20%	8%	32%	24%	40%	68%

5.4. Establishing Objective Four:

Identify if there is relationship between mental well-being and gender, age and years of management experience.

5.4.1 Gender Vs Mental Well-being

The GHQ-12 scores were divided into groups based on gender and is depicted in Table 5.6. This allowed the research to enlighten further evidence. Males scored a mean rank of *23* with the most frequent score as *30*. In comparison, females scored a mean rank of *21* and the most frequent score was *23*. It is therefore clear how findings suggest that male managers experienced a higher rate of severity than female managers.

Table 5.6 Gender Vs Mental Well-being

GHQ-12 Scores		
	Female	Male
Mean	21	23
Mode	23	30
S.D	3.39	4.65

5.4.2 Age Vs Mental Well-being

In order to assess if there was a relationship between *Age* and *Mental Well-being* the correlation coefficient was calculated. A negative correlation coefficient score of *-0.13* was identified, thus suggesting a negative correlation between age and mental well-being. In other words, the GHQ-12 score did not increase as age did.

5.4.3 Management Experience Vs Mental Well-being

A correlation coefficient of *-0.09* determined that there is no relationship between years of management experience and mental well-being. Therefore it is evident an individual's length of service as a manager does not indicate that their mental well-being status lowers.

5.5 Testing the Hypothesis:

To conclude this chapter, statistical analysis will be presented to determine the results of the hypothesis which is portrayed in Table 5.7. A *t-Test* was conducted to determine the Hypothesis and is presented in Table 5.8. As the *t-Stat* is larger than the *t-Critical two tail*, we can reject the H_0 and accept the H_1. Therefore, identifying that statistically there is a relationship between a managerial role in the retail sector and mental well-being.

Table 5.7 The Hypothesis, The Null Hypothesis and The Alternative Hypothesis.

Hypothesis:	Does a managerial role in the retail sector affect their mental well-being?
Null Hypothesis, H_0:	There is no relationship between managers in the retail sector and mental well-being.
Alternative Hypothesis, H_1:	There is a relationship between a managerial role in the retail sector and mental well-being.

Table 5.8 T-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Mental Well-being	Retail Service
Mean	24.39285714	7.660714286
Variance	16.2473545	36.0380291
Observations	112	112
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	47	
t Stat	12.24448237	
P(T<=t) one-tail		
t Critical one-tail	1.677926722	
P(T<=t) two-tail		
t Critical two-tail	2.01174048	

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Overview

The overall aim of this research was to examine how a managerial role within the retail sector can affect ones mental well-being. From findings it became clear that on average a retail manager's role affects their mental well-being. Not only this, but considering the length of service and management experience it was observed that participants were on average experienced managers. By measuring the rate of absenteeism it was established that managers are highly commitment to their roles.

When analysing each section of results, the same thought came to mind, is it a training issue? This chapter will interpret results rigorously and will present insightful conclusions which acknowledge the limitations of this study. Along with this, a comparison of findings to previous literature will be illustrated. It is important to remember that the discussion of findings reflect the sample participants and further research over a longer period would allow for better validity.

6.2 Organizational Stressors and Occupational Burnout:

As literature suggested time pressures were found to be the highest source of organizational stress in retail managers (Teuchmann et al., 1999; Broadbridge, 1998; and Schmitt et al., 2015). Hypothetically, it could be said that managers aim to over achieve what is expected by multitasking and driving a sense of urgency in order to impress their superiors. As a result, this leads to an increase level of commitment from managers. Once hard work pays off, they continue to do so, hence how absenteeism levels are low also. Therefore this could explain why managers feel they do not have enough time to get things done as they are aiming to over achieve expectations.

Considering the growth within the retail sector, it would be expected that career development is not a concerned area as a source of stress for retail managers. With promotion and advancement opportunities found as not being an issue in the workplace, it can suggest organizations are implying effective tools to extinguish occupational stress (Colligan and Higgins, 2005). Nevertheless, findings do suggest that the perception of progression is not fast enough, thus potentially inducing employees with stress, worry and fear otherwise referred to as the problem of job insecurity.

Taking into account the findings of time management, it was expected that role stressors would be classified as a strong source of occupational stress (Yongkang et al., 2014). However to a certain extent this was not the case. Findings suggested that managers are aware of expectations, authority, responsibilities and objectives, but lack in understanding how to action them within a given timeframe. Therefore role ambiguity is not classified as a source of stress, rather evidence of time management of expectations was the issue in this category. In addition, role conflict results identified that retail managers don't agree with how they're advised to operate tasks, the level of cost set for staffing to execute tasks, and feel they're asked to complete incompatible tasks. Despite, Terborg (1985) arguing that lack of resources was a factor for role conflict occurring, findings identified that retail managers receive adequate resources and material to complete tasks. For that reason it can be suggested that role conflict ignites occupational stress, however it is due to aspects such as costings, challenges and conduction of tasks which are controlled by superiors' rather than themselves. This low control identifies an aspect of job control from the Job Demand Control Support Theory (Spector, 1988), which states that when an individual cannot exert control over their tasks, it leads to one experiencing depersonalization and impacting their mental well-being.

All in all, findings suggest that organizational stressors can impact ones mental well-being as Steinhardt et al., (2003) argued.

Occupational burnout results varied against expectations. Firstly, moderate burnout was measured when emotional exhaustion was tested. According to theory these findings would suggest retail managers experience a high demanded job. This result was predicted due to the results of time pressures and role conflict, and previous literature (Spickard et al., 2002). Secondly, taking into account that low job control was identified, it was expected that a high level of depersonalization would be established. Yet this was not the case, results noted how this aspect of burnout was identified as low level burnout and likewise was personal achievement. Therefore, it could be said that these results contradict the Job Demand Control Support Theory, as theoretically speaking lack of job control suggests experience of depersonalization. But in this study personal achievement was experienced.

From evaluating organizational stressors and occupational burnout, two ideas can be generated. By taking into account the Job Demand Control Support Theory and how retail management was identified as a high demanded job with low control, it suggests that retail management is a high strain job. Secondly, it can be noted from the results of organizational stressors that job satisfaction may be an issue in retail management (Rizzo et al., 1970). However, further research would necessary to validate this, as an investigation on job satisfaction was not a key component of this study.

6.3 Managing and Coping with Occupational Stress:

As mentioned, managing and coping with occupational stress can be done through two mechanisms; the organizational approach or the individual approach. The outcome of how retail managers manage or cope with stress is important, as it can potentially either deteriorate or develop their branch, talent, and turnover. It was recognized that the *Problem Oriented Coping Strategy* was the strongest method utilized for managing occupational stress. Considering it concentrates on the problem rather than the emotions attached to stress it is the most effective and efficient approach. In spite of this, *self-blame* was also recognized as a coping technique, thus identifying utilization an aspect that falls under the *Avoidant Coping Strategy*. This strategy is classified as the most insufficient coping strategy and can lead to an increase in other techniques of this strategy, for example substance use or denial. The current results identify how the majority of sampled managers embrace occupational stress and aim to eliminate it with a positive and proactive approach. However, some carry the weight of occupational stress on their shoulders with a negative approach towards overcoming occupational stress.

Previous studies indicated that risk assessments based on occupational stress are to control and reduce the risk of occupational stress, if not eliminate them (Michie, 2002). Findings identified that *communication skills, conflict resolution and stress management* were the top answers for training provided, thus suggesting organizations are aiming to develop individual's skills and confidence in reacting to occupational stress. The least utilized training programs received by managers were *depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorders*; and *wellness and health promotion.* These results indicate some organizations may not encourage an educated workforce with regards to mental well-being as training and promotion of mental health issues are not provided. Alongside this, a quarter of participants were unsure if their organization offered any training programs, thus identifying how some organizations are yet to still build an active awareness of overcoming occupational stress in the workplace. Not only this, but it could also be argued that occupational stress is an issue in some organizations as without a training strategy it is not being managed efficiently (Michie, 2002). Yet, it is important to remember the complementary effect (Broadbridge 2002) and how this may impact the intensity of managing and coping with stress.

6.4 Mental Well-Being:

Considering role conflict and ambiguity pose problems of adjustment (Kahn et al., 1964), it was expected that mental well-being levels were to reflect a high severity of risk, as the P-E Fit Model states how mismatch between organization and the individual induces mental well-being issues. Along with this, the expected results correspond with the Job Demand Control Support Theory, as retail management was identified as a high strain job.

Despite predicted GHQ-12 results occurring, Banks et al., (2011) and Babin and Boles, (1998) suggested a high rate of stress in females. However the results of this study challenged this argument. Males corresponded with higher levels of risk than females, thus identifying a significant relationship between mental well-being and gender. Alongside this, Banks et al., (2011) argued that an individual's experience does not impact their final score, which contradicts the theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). However, the results identified no relationship between years of management experience and mental well-being. Therefore, it suggests further research may be necessary in order to evaluate if Lazarus and Folkman theory is suitable for research in the retail sector.

In terms of what exactly caused the GHQ-12 score to be high is reflected in Diagram 5.8. By analysing each scale in this study, the stressors for retail managers became clear. Considering 10% of participations responded with their organization offering a well-being strategy and likewise 10% promote wellness, it was expected that mental well-being would be an issue. This lack of promotion and strategic management identifies a training issue in retail organizations. Managers are not provided with the knowledge or power to stabilise their mental well-being, rather one takes action once the stress ignites. Not only does this affect the employee's well-being, but it can impact an organizations talent pool or worse, an employer's brand (IBEC, 2007). Therefore, findings establish the missing link - organizations strategic approach to mental well-being. Without this bridge between organizations and employees, it is diminishing the mental well-being of an organizations talent pool. A recommended approach for retail organizations will be presented in Chapter Eight, where a strategic approach towards mental well-being will be illustrated.

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Diagram 5.8 What Caused a High GHQ-12 Score in Retail Managers?

10% of organizations don't offer a well-being Strategy

14% don't enjoy day to day activites

10% of organizations dont promote wellness

50% belive they dont have enough staffing

76% find dealing with people stressful

34% have lost confidence

46% felt drained

What Caused a High GHQ-12 Score in Retail Managers?

60% are unhappy or depressed daily

85% agree they are impatient at work

54% feel under stain daily

34% experience tiredness daily

89% multitask on a daily basis

77% believe they are overcommited to their role

33% feel they are not progressing rapidly

66% loose sleep over worry daily

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact a managerial role within the retail sector has on mental well-being. Independent variables; organizational stressors, levels of burnout, coping techniques, and training strategies, were assessed to measure the dependent variable; mental well-being. The effect of a managerial role within the retail sector on mental well-being was severe as scores of mental well-being were on average high. Along with this, findings suggested that retail management is a high strain job and male's mental well-being was significantly higher than females. Overall, findings suggested that it is down to lack of training and strategic management. This was established due to the low response towards the implementation of well-being strategies and training programs. From this, the idea of the missing link was established.

Organizations fail to prepare strategically in managing mental well-being and promoting wellness in the workplace. Participants in this study stated they did not receive sufficient training on well-being in the workplace, therefore identifying how organizations are preparing to fail. Previous studies suggested how managing mental well-being strategically will not only reap benefits for an employee's, but also enhance an organizations performance. Recommendations on how to potentially manage and mitigate occupational stress within a retail environment will be portrayed in the Chapter Eight.

With all research comes a limitation. Prior to research limitations were presented in Chapter Five, however during the investigation and the analysis stage of this research more followed. By reporting results as a combined total or split into gender, it limited the statistical analysis available. Data measurements were varied, thus the researcher found it challenging to run statistical analysis and would recommend for future research to categorise data into nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio prior to distributing the survey.

In conclusion, this study identified how occupational stress can be extinguished by managing mental well-being strategically. Not only this, but by implementing adequate training and developing employee's skillsets will reap benefits for both the employee and the organization. Therefore it is clear how retail organizations should create a culture of openness and positivity when dealing with mental well-being. As a result employees can potentially overcome occupational stress and feel valued regardless of their mental health issues.

Chapter Eight: Recommendations

An outline of recommendations will be illustrated in this chapter. Not only will they reflect on how to potentially manage and mitigate occupational stress within a retail environment but they will also present suggestions to incorporate into forthcoming research. Each recommendation takes into consideration the cost of utilization and time constraints.

Firstly, findings from this study should be further investigated. By conducting a longitudinal study on mental well-being in the retail sector it will allow for findings to be interrupted more adequately. In addition when conducting further research a focus on one particular mental health issue such as anxiety or depression may want to be investigated rather than general mental well-being. Again, this narrows down the effect a managerial role may have on one's mental health. Along with this it is advised to investigate themes associated with job satisfaction and job performance in more depth, as these themes emerged in the findings of this study.

Following on from this, the most practical recommendation would be for retail organizations to start planning strategically how to manage their talent before they take flight. Literature has addressed how organizations should implement Stress Management Interventions (SMI's) to assist in managing employee's mental well-being. Basing a strategy on literature and the findings of this study, an approach to promote and manage mental well-being in the workplace is evident in Appendix F. By presenting this it gives retail organizations a vision, mission and values to accomplish.

The recommended approach follows the framework of a SMI. The primary stage aims to reduce, modify or eliminate high pressured work demands that may affect an employee's well-being. This allows the source of stressors to be eliminated. By implementing quarterly workshops which could be referred to as "Wellness at Work", will allow for employees to develop and nurture their coping techniques, and encourage a positive company culture towards mental well-being. Not only this but by training staff on work-life balance and developing skills of delegation and communication it will allow the manager not to try conquer the world themselves.

The SMI approach then presents a secondary intervention which aspires and equips employees with skills to cope with stressful conditions. From reviewing literature, the researcher decided the best approach for this intervention would be to promote awareness of

how take care of one's mental well-being. An example of this could be participating in recreational social events such as charity runs or take part in team sport events. Along with this, it is recommended to create training programs and establish policies which focus on mitigating and managing stress at work.

Finally, the tertiary intervention advises organizations to seek external sources of assistant, as the employee is at the highest stage of mental well-being risk. This will allow for the employee to not feel intimidated by superiors or colleagues and potentially express their experiences. Other actions could include implementing a return to work interview to help settle the employee on their return, but also to create an individual well-being progression program if necessary. This will allow for the employee to develop skills and styles of coping with occupational stress at their preferred pace.

As the retail sector was identified as a neglected area of research, further investigation may establish comprehensive strategic guidelines. However to conclude this study, it is clear how the aim to provide a recommendation to retail organizations on how to bridge the missing link was achieved.

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Appendix A: Sources of Occupational Stress

The Sources of Managerial Stress (Cooper and Marshall, 1978).

Factors intrinsic to the Job	Role in The Organization
Work Overload	Role Ambiguity
Work Under load	Role Conflict
Time Pressures and Deadlines	Responsibility for People
Long Working Hours	Responsibility for Things
Inconvenient Working Hours	Lack of Participation in Decision Making
Taking Work Home	Lack of Managerial Support
Excessive Travel	Too Little Responsibility
Attending Meetings	Approaching Retirement
Organizational Change	Technology Change
Decision Making	
Poor Working Conditions	

Relationships at Work	Career Development
Relationships with Superiors	*Status Incongruity:*
Relationships with colleagues	Under or Over Promotion
Relationships with subordinates	Thwarted Ambition
Difficulties in Delegating Responsibilities	*Job Insecurity:*
	Fear of Obsolescence
	Fear of Redundancy

Organizational Structure and Climate	Extra Organizational sources of stress
Office Politics	Family Problems
Little or No Participation in Decision Making	Financial Difficulties
Lack of Effective Consultation	Company/Family Conflicts
Poor Communication	Life Satisfaction and Crisis
Restrictions on Behaviour	Conflict of Personal Beliefs
No Sense of Belonging	

Appendix B: Risk Assessment Strategy

A Hazard Identification Strategy with respect to Organizational Stressors, Michie (2002).

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1) Hazard Identification:

Reliably identify the stressors which exist in relation to
work and working conditions, for specified groups of
employees, and make an assessment of the degree of
exposure

2) Assessment of Harm:

Collect evidence that exposure to such stressors is associated
with impaired health in the group being assessed
or of the wider organisation. This should include a wide
range of health-related outcomes, including symptoms of
general malaise and specific disorders, and of organisational
and health related behaviours such as smoking
and drinking, and sickness absence

3) Identification of Risk Factors:

Explore the associations between exposure to stressors
and measures of harm to identify likely risk factors at the
group level, and to make some estimate of their size
and/or significance

4) Description of Underlying Mechanisms:

Understand and describe the possible mechanisms by
which exposure to the stressors is associated with
damage to the health of the assessment group or to the
organisation

5) Audit Existing Management Control and Employee Support systems:

Identify and assess all existing management systems both
in relation to the control of stressors and the experience
of work stress, and in relation to the provision of support
for employees experiencing problems.

6) Recommendations on Residual Risk:

Take existing management control and employee
support systems into proper account, make recommendations
on the residual risk associated with the likely risk
factors related to work stress

Appendix C: The Research Design

MEASURING THE EFFECT THAT AN ORGANISATIONAL ROLE HAS ON MENTAL HEALTH

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	→	DEPENDENT VARIABLE

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

- Time management
- Career Development
- Role Ambiguity
- Role Conflict

COPING TECHNIQUIES

- The BREIF coping questionnaire.

MENTAL HEALTH

- GHQ-12 Scale

JOB BURNOUT

- The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).
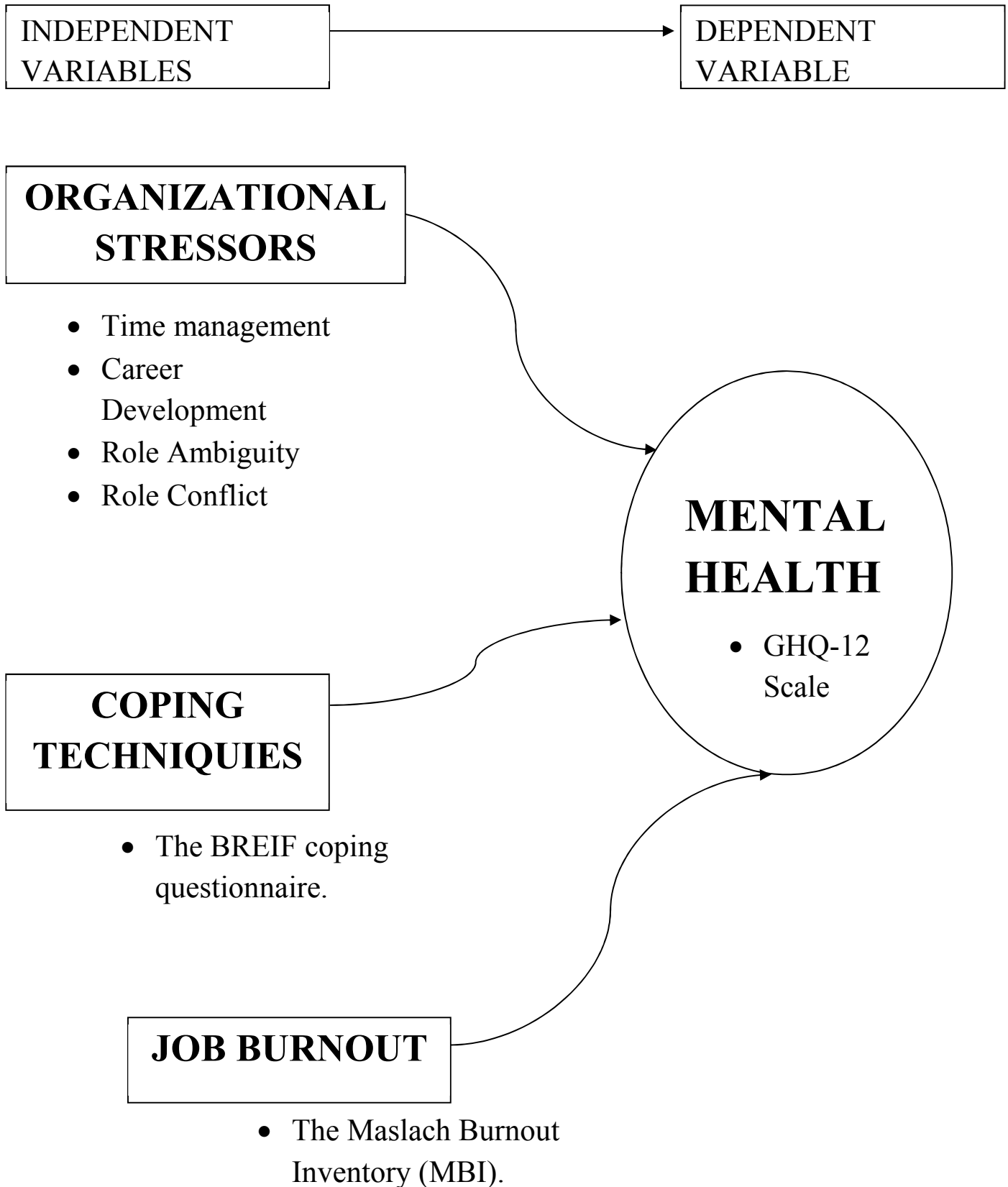
Appendix D: The Research Process

The timeframe undertook to complete the research process.

TASKS	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4	WK 5	WK 6	WK 7	WK 8	WK 9	WK 10	WK 11	WK 12
Data Collected from secondary sources	▓	▓	▓									
Research Design and Strategy in place			▓									
Creation and Preparation of questionnaire				▓								
Seek final approval of primary data collection methods				▓								
Distribution and Collection of data through online survey				▓	▓	▓	▓	▓				
Evaluating and analysing collected data								▓	▓			
Presenting the results of the data collected									▓	▓		
Discussing the results										▓	▓	▓

Appendix E: The Missing Link Survey

The Missing Link - Overcoming Occupational Stress and Encouraging Mental Well-being in the Retail Sector.

Dear Participant,

I invite you to participate in a research study entitled "The Missing Link". I am a part-time master's student at NCI, studying Human Resource Management. I am in the process of writing my master's thesis. **<u>The purpose of the research is to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and emotional well-being within the retail sector</u>**. The enclosed questionnaire has been designed to collect information on employee's organisational stressors, coping techniques, risk of job burnout and general emotional wellbeing. ***Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.*** Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total. No one other than the researcher will know your individual answers to this questionnaire. If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the questionnaire as best you can. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to receive a print of the results email: laura.gargan@student.ncirl.ie.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.

Best Wishes,

Laura Gargan.

<u>Section A: General Information.</u>

1. Do you agree to take part in this study and understand all data obtained is confidential.

 Yes. No.

2. Please select a gender:

 Male or Female.

3. Please State your age:

_____

4. How Many years have you worked in retail?

_____

5. How many years have you being a manager?

_____

6. Within the last six months have many sick days have you had?

_____

7. On scale 1 to 10 how would your manager rate your performance?

_____

8. Does your company offer any of the following training programs? Check all that apply.

A. Stress management/resilience

B. Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorders

C. Conflict resolution

D. Communication skills

E. Work-Life balance

F. Wellness/health promotion (exercise, nutrition, relaxation)

G. Well-being Strategy/ Employee Assistance Program

H. My Company does not offer any training programs

I. Unsure.

Section B: Organisational Stressors.

This section will aim to identify the triggers of organisational stress. Please tick the most appropriate response based on the last four weeks.

A) Time Management:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I easily over commit myself					
I become impatient if tasks are done slowly					
I try doing more than one thing at a time.					
I have little time to relax/enjoy the time of day					
There is not enough time to get things done.					

B)Personal Development:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I lack promotion and/or advancement opportunities					
I am not progressing in my job as rapidly as I would like					
I need more status					

C) Role Ambiguity:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel certain about how much authority I have					
I have clear, planned objectives for my job.					
I know that I have divided my time properly.					
I know what my responsibilities are.					
I know exactly what is expected of me.					
I receive clear explanations of what has to be done.					

D) Role conflict:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have to do things that should be done differently					
I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.					
I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.					
I have to work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.					
I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.					
I receive a task without adequate resources and material to execute it.					

Section C: The Brief COPE.

Please respond to the below question based on your experiences in the last four weeks. Each response can be answered based on a four-point Likert scale as seen below.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all;

2 = I've been doing this a little bit.

3 = I've been doing this a medium amount;

4 = I've been doing this a lot.

I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.	
I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.	
I've been saying to myself "this isn't real".	
I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.	
I've been getting emotional support from others.	
I've been giving up trying to deal with it.	
I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.	
. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.	
I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.	
I've been getting help and advice from other people.	
I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.	
I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	
I've been criticizing myself.	
I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.	
I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.	
I've been giving up the attempt to cope.	
I've been looking for something good in what is happening.	
I've been making jokes about it.	
I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.	
I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.	
I've been expressing my negative feelings.	
I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.	
I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.	
I've been learning to live with it.	
I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.	
I've been blaming myself for things that happened.	
I've been praying or meditating.	
I've been making fun of the situation.	

Section D: MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTOY (MBI) Scale.

For each question, indicate the score that corresponds to your response.

Questions	Never	A few times per year	Once a month	A few times per month	Once a week	A few times per week	Every day
Section A	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel emotionally drained by my work							
Working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort.							
I feel like my work is breaking me down.							
I feel frustrated at work							
I feel I work too hard at my job.							
It stresses me too much to work in direct contact with people							
I Feel like I'm at the end of my rope							
Total score for section A							

Questions	Never	A few times per year	Once a month	A few times per month	Once a week	A few times per week	Every day
Section B	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I look after certain employees impersonally, as if they were objects.							
I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work.							
I have the impression that my employees make me responsible for their problems.							
I am at the end of my patience at the end of my work day.							
I really don't care what happens to my employees/customers.							
I've become more insensitive to people to people since I've been working.							
I am afraid this job is making me uncaring.							
Total score for section B							

Questions	Never	A few times per year	Once a month	A few times per month	Once a week	A few times per week	Every day
Section C	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job.							
I feel full of energy.							
I am easily able to understand what my employees/customers feel.							
I look after my employees/customers problems very effectively.							
In my work, I handle emotional problems very calmly.							
Through my work, I feel that I have a positive influence on people.							
I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with employees/customers.							
I feel refreshed when I have been close to my employees/customers at work.							
Total score for section C							

Section E: GHQ-12 Scale:

Include information based on the last **four weeks.**

1 = Never

2 = Once per week.

3 = A few times per week

4 = Everyday

Questions: Have you recently:

been able to concentrate on what you're doing?	
lost much sleep over worry?	
felt that you are playing a useful part in things?	
felt capable of making decisions about things?	
felt constantly under strain?	
felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	
been able to enjoy your normal day to day activities?	
been able to face up to your problems?	
been feeling unhappy or depressed?	
been losing confidence in yourself?	
been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	
been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	

Appendix F: A Recommended Approach to Overcome Occupational Stress and Encourage Mental Wellbeing in the Retail Sector.

PRIMARY INTERVENTION	SECONDARY INTERVENTION	TERTIARY INTERVENTION
Preventive and Proactive	*Proactive and Reactive*	*Reactive*

PRIMARY INTERVENTION

Preventive and Proactive

Goal: Reduce, modify or eliminate high-pressured work demands that may affect ones well-being or performance.

Target: The source of stressors.

"Wellness at work" workshops.
- Promote a positive company culture.
- Develop and nurture coping techniques.
- Establish the organizations vision and mission.
- Encourage work-life balance

SECONDARY INTERVENTION

Proactive and Reactive

Goal: Aspire and equip employees to cope with stressful conditions.

Target: The percieved stressor strain and how one copes with it.

Promotion, Programs and Policies
- Promote recreational social events.
- Programs that aim to develop a sufficient skillset to cope and manage occupational stress
- Policies that provide a duty of care to their employee's.

TERTIARY INTERVENTION

Reactive

Goal: Assist employees in eliminating occupational stress.

Target: The enduring affects on well-being.

Mindfulness Matters
- Implement RTW interviews
- Create individual well-being programs
- Provide external assistance