

PSYCHOLOGY OF EMOTIONS, MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIONS

PSYCHOLOGY OF BURNOUT

NEW RESEARCH

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EDITOR

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Chapter 2

CALLING AND BURNOUT: INTEGRATING CAREER RESEARCH WITH OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

People are increasingly in search for meaning in their work and private life. They want to increase their self-awareness and reach personal fulfillment. People who are not able to cope with life's challenges often suffer from burnout, anxiety and depression. Consequently, the construct of calling becomes more and more important in the occupational context because of its positive consequences regarding numerous work (e.g. organizational commitment) and non-work-related outcomes (e.g. depression, life satisfaction) for individuals as well as for organizations. Building on first promising findings, the aim of the following chapter is to investigate the association of experiencing a calling in one's job and burnout (here defined as psychological phenomenon of prolonged exhaustion and disengagement at work, cf., Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).

Our findings suggest that experiencing one's work as a calling is negatively related to burnout. Especially with regard to the sub-dimension of disengagement, experiencing a calling turned out to be a protective factor. Further, the burnout sub-dimension of disengagement mediated the relationship between the experience of a calling and job satisfaction. Implications for further research and health-related preventive strategies are discussed.

Keywords: Calling, burnout, disengagement, exhaustion

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INTRODUCTION

In today's work environments change seems to be the only stable aspect. Globalization of economies and the rapid advances in technology have changed (work) life and pose a series of new questions and challenges to the workforce. Nowadays, employees themselves are responsible for their career development and work-life-balance (e.g. Duarte, 2004). Employability, functionality, adaptability, and flexibility are some of the necessary requirements an employee in the 21st century has to deal with (cf. Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan, 1999; Volmer & Spurk, 2011). People who are not able to cope with these new challenges are more likely to suffer from burnout, defined as a psychological phenomenon of prolonged exhaustion and disengagement at work (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout has become a very important issue both in research and practice due to its negative consequences for individuals such as depression, decreased job performance, drops in self-esteem, substance abuse, and increased health problems (cf. Maslach et al., 2001; Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006) as well as its negative consequences for organizations, such as high absenteeism rates, increased health related costs, and impaired productivity. Being confronted with so many challenges in today's work environment, one might ask if it is possible to pursue a career without an impaired well-being? Or positively formulated: What factors foster a "healthy" career and work life?

Reviewing the past 20 years of calling literature, we found that the experience of a calling towards a particular kind of work is associated with numerous positive work and non-work-related outcomes for organizations as well as for individuals. Hereby, the term "calling" describes the subjective experience of determination towards one's work (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012), or the kind of work a person understands as his or her purpose in life (Hall & Chandler, 2005). In correspondence with these definitions studies revealed for example, that experiencing one's work as a calling is positively related to life satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997; Peterson, Park, Hall & Seligman, 2009), job satisfaction (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), less depression (Treadgold, 1999), less days of absence at work (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), good coping strategies concerning tensions and conflicts (Oates, Hall, & Anderson, 2005), positive affect (Peterson et al., 2009) as well as less turnover intentions (Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2011). Building on these results, the aim of the present chapter is to extend recent findings by investigating the relationship between the experience of calling and health-related symptoms and attitudes (i.e., burnout and job satisfaction).

CALLED TO WORK?

Most adults spend at least one-third of their time a day at work. Hereby, professionals differ considerably in the way they think and feel about their work life. Researchers found that there are three distinct work orientations people may have (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). First, people, experiencing work as a job are interested in the material benefits of their work in order to pay their livings and enjoy leisure time. For such people, work is necessary to earn one's living. In comparison, people who have a career orientation put a lot of effort in their work because of their interest in

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career advancement, monetary gain, social status and power. Third, for people who experience a calling towards a particular kind of work neither material benefits nor career advancement are central, but rather the fulfillment they experience while they are performing their work. Such persons love their work and do not only focus on themselves, but through their work they are linked to a “larger community, a whole in which the calling of each is a contribution to the good of all” (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 66). In recent years researchers have become more and more interested in the construct of calling and its positive consequences for individuals as well as for organizations. Studies revealed for example, that experiencing one’s work as a calling is positively related to subjective well-being (e.g. life and job satisfaction, positive affect; cf. Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), health (e.g. less depression, less days of absence at work; cf. Treadgold, 1999; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), and work-related variables (e.g. less turnover intentions, more organizational commitment; Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2010).

Due to such positive consequences scientists agree that the construct of calling is highly relevant in contemporary society and salient for a substantial proportion of the population (Duffy & Selacek, 2007; Peterson et al., 2009). However, defining elements of a modern understanding of the construct of calling was a difficult task to undertake: The roots of the construct of calling can be found in the religious context in which it describes the process by which God calls a person to do a work that fits his or her talents and life circumstances (Calvin, 1574; Luther, 1883). Early secular conceptualizations (Novak, 1996) see “calling” as the subjective experience of determination towards one’s work, or the kind of “work a person understands as his or her purpose in life” (Hall & Chandler, 2005, p. 160). Other authors stress the social component of calling, i.e., the work called people fulfill is considered to be of social value and does not aim at material benefits or an upward career (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). In the last few years researchers have begun to integrate these different aspects of the construct of calling and came up with more multifaceted conceptualizations. Dobrow (2004) for instance distinguishes between seven components of calling: (1) compassion, which refers to deep satisfaction and joy from engaging in one’s work, (2) identity, which describes the degree to which people are able to identify with their work, (3) urgency to fulfill one’s work, which refers to a sense of destiny and the need to fulfill a particular work, (4) longevity, which means that calling is a long-term matter, (5) engulfing one’s consciousness, which refers to the fact that for people, who experience a calling their work domain is always present in their consciousness, (6) experiencing meaning, which means that people with a calling towards a particular kind of work often experience their actions as full of meaning and purpose, and (7) domain specific self-esteem, which describes people’s perception of their own abilities regarding the work domain.

More recently, other authors have suggested a distinction between the following facets of calling: (1) the perception of a transcendent guiding force, which means that a person experiences a transcendent summons or inner voice that guides him/her on her career path, (2) the identification with one’s work and Person-Environment (P-E-Fit), which means that a fit between the interests and abilities of the person and the requirements of the job are given and thus the person is able to identify with his work, (3) the experience of sense and meaning, which describes that people with a calling often experience their work as highly purpose- or meaningful, and (4) value-driven prosocial behavior, which refers to the fact that people with a calling often hold other-oriented values and act prosocially (cf. Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, 2012; Elangovan, Pinder, & McLean, 2010; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Hunter, Dik, &

Banning, 2010). Hereby, it is important to note that the experience of a calling is not limited to some specific occupations. Rather, within any career domain it is possible to find people who experience their work as their calling and others who do not (cf. Hall & Chandler, 2005; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). However, empirical results reveal that higher education facilitates the experience of work as a calling (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Peterson et al., 2009; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Further, Davidson and Caddell (1994) found that people with many social interactions at work report more often about experiencing a calling. These occupations include teachers (Serow, 1994), physicians, lawyers, and CEOs (Peterson et al., 2009). Correspondingly, Hagmaier and Abele (2012) found that especially people, who work in the health and education sector experience their work as their calling. As in these two sectors the number of people suffering from burnout is also very high (Shimizu et al., 2003; Maslach et al., 2001) the question, if there is a connection between experiencing one's work as a calling and burnout raised.

BURNOUT: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT ISSUES

Maslach and Jackson (1986) first described burnout as occupational stress that often occurs in human service professionals due to demanding and emotionally charged relationships between caregivers and recipients. They conducted studies using samples of employees in the health sector and found that they often experience fatigue and a loss of idealism. In order to measure burnout, Maslach and Jackson (1986) developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS; Maslach & Jackson, 1981) with the three subscales emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Exhaustion refers to negative affect, a lack of energy, and the feeling that one's emotional resources have been depleted by one's contact with other people (Maslach et al., 2001). Reduced personal accomplishment describes a decline in one's feelings of competence and perceived professional efficacy. Here, people often believe that they are not able to reach their work-related goals or show the performance, which they perceive as adequate. Depersonalization is characterized by callous or uncaring responses towards others and distancing oneself from the others in order to cope with the perceived work stress.

Subsequently, researchers recognized that burnout is not limited to human service jobs (Fusilier & Manning, 2005) and developed burnout measures that are not context-based, for example the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS, Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003). Due to the fact that all items in the MBI-GS were framed in the same direction, Demerouti and colleagues (2003) developed the OLBI, which overcomes this psychometric shortcoming. Thus, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) – includes both positively and negatively framed items - and assesses the two core dimensions of burnout, i.e., exhaustion and disengagement. Hereby, depersonalization, which was a third dimension of burnout in the MBI, is seen as one form of disengagement, and also the other two burnout dimensions are conceptualized slightly differently. Exhaustion is defined as a consequence of intense physical, affective and cognitive strain, i.e. as a long-term consequence of prolonged exposure to high job demands (Demerouti & Bakker, 2007). Disengagement describes the relationship between employees and their job, especially with regard to the willingness to

perform this job and identification with one's work. More specifically, it measures if a person distances him- or herself from work in general, the work content (e.g. boring, uninteresting, not challenging), and the work object (Demerouti & Bakker, 2007).

In contrast to calling, burnout has been identified as an inhibitor of many well-being and work-related outcomes. Studies revealed for example that burnout is negatively related to organizational commitment (cf. Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993; Lee & Ashforth, 1996) and positively to turnover intentions (Ducharme, Knudsen, & Roman, 2008). Further, a negative relationship between burnout and job satisfaction - defined here as feelings a person has about his/her job experiences and expectations - was found (cf. Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). In a longitudinal study, Wolpin, Burke, and Greenglass (1991) even showed that burnout can be a cause of reduced job satisfaction.

CALLED AND BURNED OUT?

Based on the fact that disengagement is an essential component of burnout, yet people with a calling are extremely engaged in their job, we believe that there might be a negative relationship between calling and burnout. Recent studies revealed for example that people, who experience their work as their calling, were able to adaptively deal with tensions and role-conflicts (Oates et al., 2005) and suffer less stress and depression (Treadgold, 1999). Treadgold (1999) also found that people with a calling towards a particular kind of work are more likely to use problem-focused coping styles rather than emotion-focused (avoidance) coping styles. As problem-focused coping styles are positively related to well-being and health related variables (cf. Leiter, 1991; Sears, Urizar, & Evans, 2000), we believe that experiencing one's work as a calling might also be a protective factor against burnout.

A theory that might support this assumption is Harrison's (1978) Person-Environment (P-E) Fit theory (overview Edwards, 1998). In short, this theory assumes that an incongruence between a person's abilities and the requirements of the environment (here: the job or occupational context) may cause physical, psychological and biological strains (cf. Edwards, 1996). As identification with one's work and P-E-Fit are essential aspects of experiencing one's work as a calling, we believe that the realization of one's calling may lead to less strain and in turn to less burnout.

Taken together, the first aim of the present chapter is to investigate if there exists a negative relationship between the experience of a calling and burnout.

PRESENT RESEARCH

Reviewing the existing literature and empirical studies on calling and burnout, findings point to the fact that experiencing a calling is associated with rather positive consequences, whereas burnout was found to be rather negatively correlated with work and non-work related outcome variables. However, there exists no quantitative study yet, which examines the relationship between calling and burnout. Based on recent studies and Harrison's (1978) Person-Environment (P-E) Fit theory we believe that people who are able to realize their calling in the world of employment will not suffer from burnout due to the fact that they are

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able to fulfill their own career aspirations at work (Radziewicz, 2001). Thus, we assume that there exists a negative relationship between the realization of one's calling and burnout (Hypothesis 1).

Moreover, empirical findings revealed that both calling and burnout are related to job satisfaction. Given the fact that we find a negative relationship between calling and burnout, the second aim of this study is to investigate if the positive relationship between calling and job satisfaction is mediated by the burnout facets disengagement and exhaustion (Hypothesis 2).

METHOD

Overview

In order to test our assumptions we conducted an online survey in 2011 and asked a sample of professionals from various occupations to answer measures of calling, burnout and job satisfaction. We analyzed the influence of calling on burnout by means of correlation and hierarchical regression analyses. Further, we developed a multiple mediation model in order to test the indirect effect of calling on job satisfaction mediated by the burnout dimensions exhaustion and disengagement.

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 107 employees living in the U.S. (71 female, 36 male; mean age $M = 36.6$, $SD = 13.52$; 55% holding a university degree; most of the participants were White/European Americans ($N = 98$; 91.6%), five were Black/African Americans (4.7%), two were Hispanic Americans (1.9%), one participant was a Native American (0.9%), and one an Asian American (0.9%). They worked in a wide range of occupations (e.g. teachers, managers, mechanics, pastors) and worked on average 41.79 hours per week ($SD = 12.16$). We invited 190 participants via e-mail to take part in our online survey (response rate: 56.3%).

Measures

Calling. We assessed calling using the English version of the Multidimensional Calling measure from Hagmaier and Abele (2012). This measure consists of three subscales: (a) transcendent guiding force (TGF; sample item: "I follow an inner call that guides me on my career path."), (b) identification and P-E-Fit (IP; sample item: "Doing my job I can realize my full potential."), and (c) sense and meaning and value-driven behavior (SMVB; sample item: "My job helps to make the world a better place."). The response scale ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*. The reliabilities were good, (Cronbach's α : MCM-TGF $\alpha = .83$, MCM-SMVB $\alpha = .85$, MCM-IP $\alpha = .88$).

Burnout. Burnout was measured with the English version of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2003). It consists of the two subscales called disengagement and exhaustion. A sample item of the disengagement scale is: “Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.” A sample item of the exhaustion scale is: “After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.” The response scale ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*. The internal consistencies of the scales were good (disengagement: $\alpha = .81$, and exhaustion: $\alpha = .80$).

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was assessed using a Kunin-scale from Baillo and Semmer (1994). The scale consist of one item, namely: “Regarding the last 6 months how satisfied were you overall with your work?” Participants indicated their response on a 7-point rating scale (1 = *very dissatisfied* to 7 = *very satisfied*). Meta-analytic work demonstrated that overall job satisfaction correlates highly with multiple-item measures (corrected $R = .67$), thus providing an efficient alternative to more comprehensive facet measures of job satisfaction (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997). Moreover, another meta-analysis showed that the Kunin scale is very well suited to capture both employees’ affective and cognitive reactions to work (Kaplan, Warren, Barsky, & Thoresen, 2009).

Socio-demographic data. To reduce the influence of confounding variables, we entered participants’ gender (1 = *male*, 2 = *female*), education (1 = *participants without university degree*, 2 = *university graduate* [Bachelor’s or Master’s degree]), age, ethnicity and weekly work load (open ended questions) as control variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations among all measured variables. As can be seen, the calling facet SMVB was endorsed most and the TGF calling facet was endorsed least, all $t_s > 3.90$, $p_s < .001$, $d_s > 0.76$. Between the endorsement in the burnout dimensions exhaustion and disengagement no differences occurred, $t(106) = 0.45$, $p = .65$.

Test of Hypotheses

Concerning our first hypothesis, which assumes a negative correlation between the experience of a calling and burnout, we found significant negative correlations between all measured calling facets and the burnout dimension disengagement (see Table 1). Further, all calling facets were negatively related to the burnout dimension exhaustion. Yet, the correlation between the calling facet SMVB and exhaustion failed significance (see Table 1).

Further, we compared the correlation coefficients of the relationships between the calling facets and disengagement with the coefficients of the relationships between the calling facets and exhaustion and found that for all three tested calling facets the correlation coefficients were higher concerning disengagement than regarding exhaustion, $z_s > 1.87$, $p_s < .06$. Due to the fact that the correlation between the calling facet MCM-IP and disengagement was very

high, $r(107) = -.50, p < .001$, we ran a confirmatory factor analysis to make sure that these constructs are distinct from each other. Results revealed that a two-factor solution with the MCM-IP and disengagement items loading on two different factors fit the data much better than a one-factor solution, assuming that the MCM-IP items and disengagement items load on the same factor, $\Delta\chi^2 = 245.366, df = 1$. Thus, we conclude that the MCM-IP and disengagement items measure distinct constructs.

In order to test the influence of the calling facets on burnout beyond control variables we also conducted hierarchical regression analyses. We first entered the control variables (gender, education, age, and workload) and in a second step we entered the three calling subscales.

In the first hierarchical regression model disengagement served as the dependent variable (see Table 2). Results revealed that the calling facets explained 22% of variance in disengagement beyond our control variables (gender, education, age, and workload). Hereby, the calling facets IP and TGF tuned out to be significant predictors of disengagement. Regarding the burnout dimension exhaustion we performed the same analyses. Yet, the calling facets explained only 6% of variance beyond our control variables (gender, education, age, and workload) and none of the calling facets turned out to be a significant predictor (see Table 2).

Taken together, all calling facets were negatively correlated to burnout (cf. Table 1). Further, results from regression analyses revealed that the calling facet IP was the best predictor concerning disengagement after entering the control variables, followed by the calling facet TGF. However, the calling facet SMVB turned out to be no significant predictor concerning the burnout dimension disengagement. Regarding the burnout aspect exhaustion, none of the calling facets turned out to have significant beta values.

In order to test our second hypothesis, in which we assumed that burnout mediates the relationship between calling and job satisfaction, we first followed the steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) to make sure that all conditions for performing mediation analyses are met. We first tested whether calling as a whole (sum score) is directly related to job satisfaction. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between the experience of a calling and job satisfaction, $r(107) = .44, p < .001$. Second, we tested whether calling is related to our supposed mediators. We found that calling was negatively related to exhaustion and disengagement, $r(107) = -.23, p < .05$ and $r(107) = -.53, p < .001$. Finally, we tested if our mediators were also related to our dependent variable. Results revealed significant negative correlations between our mediators exhaustion and disengagement and job satisfaction, $r(107) = -.45$ and $r(107) = -.60, ps < .001$.

Thus, these correlational results allow the test of mediation analyses. Our mediation hypotheses were tested using the multiple mediation SPSS macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). We used this method because it computes coefficients for direct and indirect paths at the same time and allows testing for several mediators simultaneously.

Figure 1 shows that calling had a significant direct path to job satisfaction ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). Moreover, calling had significant direct paths to our two mediator variables exhaustion ($\beta = -.18, p < .05$), and disengagement ($\beta = -.36, p < .001$). Moreover, for exhaustion ($\beta = -.40, p < .001$) and disengagement ($\beta = -.83, p < .001$), we found significant direct paths to job satisfaction. In support of our mediation hypothesis, we also found a significant indirect path from calling to job satisfaction mediated by disengagement ($\beta = -.30, p < .001$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

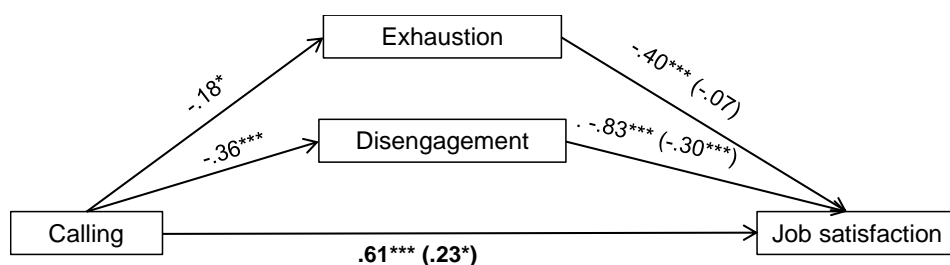
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. TGF	3.34	1.36					
2. IP	3.96	1.34	.53***				
3. SMVB	4.40	1.32	.46***	.63***			
4. Disengagement	3.27	0.76	-.44***	-.50***	-.39***		
5. Exhaustion	3.30	0.88	-.21*	-.24**	-.12	.43***	
6. Job Satisfaction	5.17	1.53	.31***	.44***	.36***	-.60***	-.45***

Note. *N* = 107. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; TGF: calling subscale transcendent guiding force, IP: calling subscale identification and P-E-Fit, SMVB: calling subscale: sense and meaning and value-driven behavior.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analyses testing the influence of the calling facets on burnout

	Variable	Disengagement		Exhaustion	
		ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	Control variables	.17**		.08	
	Gender ^A		-.08		.07
	Education ^B		-.12		.02
	Age		-.25**		-.26**
	Work Load		.02		.09
Step 2	Calling Facets	.22***		.06	
	TGF		-.23**		-.12
	SMVB		.03		.14
	IP		-.33***		-.22 ⁺
Total R ²		.39***		.14	

Note. *N* = 107; All beta values are taken from the second step; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; + $p = .08$; ^A: 1 = male, 2 = female; ^B: 1 participants without university degree, 2 = participants with university degree; TGF: calling subscale transcendent guiding force, SMVB: calling subscale: sense and meaning and value-driven behavior, IP: calling subscale identification and P-E-Fit.



Note. In parentheses are the indirect effects for the mediator variables and the direct effect of calling on job satisfaction after accounting for mediator variables; *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$.

Figure 1. Multiple mediation model examining the direct and indirect effects of calling on job satisfaction mediated by the burnout aspects exhaustion and disengagement.

However, the indirect path from calling to job satisfaction mediated by exhaustion failed to reach the conventional level of significance, but was marginally significant ($\beta = -.07$, $p = .06$).

After accounting for the significant mediator disengagement, the size of the direct path from calling to job satisfaction was diminished, but remained significant indicating a partial mediation ($\beta = .23$, $p < .05$, see value in parentheses in Figure 1). The total model was highly significant, $F(3,103) = 25.35$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 48% of variance in job satisfaction beyond the control variables (sex, age, education, work load). As recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Shrout and Bolger (2002) the significance of indirect effects in models with multiple mediators as well as a small sample size should also be tested using bootstrapping in order to get more precise estimates. Using Preacher's and Hayes's (2008) multiple mediation macro, we created 5,000 bootstrap samples and computed the mean estimated indirect effects, the standard errors as well as the 95% confidence intervals for each mediational path.

The indirect effect remains significant, if zero lies outside the computed confidence intervals. Results show that the indirect path between calling and job satisfaction mediated by the burnout dimension disengagement ($SE = .10$, $CI = .13-.55$) remains significant. However, the indirect path between calling and job satisfaction mediated by the burnout dimension exhaustion failed significance ($SE = .04$, $CI = -.01-.18$).

DISCUSSION

The present study extends prior research on calling by investigating the relationship between calling and burnout. In line with our expectations, our results show that all calling facets (i.e., TGF, IP, and SMVB) were negatively correlated with the two burnout dimensions. Results of hierarchical regression analyses paint a more differentiated picture by showing that the facets IP and TGF significantly predicted the burnout dimension disengagement whereas the calling facet SMVB had no significant influence on this burnout dimension. Concerning the burnout dimension exhaustion, none of the calling facets turned out to be a significant predictor. Taken together, the findings of the present study suggest that people who experience their work as a calling suffer less burnout. Being able to identify with their job, undergoing a supporting transcendent force and deriving sense and meaning from one's actions seems to protect against disengagement. Yet, it does not have an influence concerning the burnout dimension exhaustion. It might be possible that people with a calling are so engaged in the realization of their calling that in the long run they might suffer from exhaustion.

Especially, if they are experiencing a calling, but are not able to realize it in the world of employment, dissatisfaction and exhaustion may occur (cf. Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010). This argumentation corresponds with Bunderson and Thompson (2009) who showed that people, who experience a calling are also more likely to view their work as moral obligation and are willing to sacrifice (e.g. personal time, extra pay, and comfort of their work). Thus, it is important to keep in mind that too much of a good thing – like experiencing one's work as a calling – may also have negative consequences, especially if the realization of one's calling is impossible or troublesome.

Therefore, also for people with a calling it seems very important to carefully use their resources in order to stay healthy and productive at work.

The second aim of our study was to make a contribution to the calling research by investigating a possible mechanism underlying the relationship between calling and job satisfaction. Results revealed that the relationship between calling and job satisfaction was partially mediated by the burnout dimension disengagement. This means that people with a calling are very engaged in their work (cf. Hirschi, 2012), and that engagement in meaningful work (or here less disengagement) leads to job satisfaction.

Taken together, our results point to the fact that due to their high engagement people with a calling seem to be a) less likely to suffer from burnout and b) more satisfied with their job in general.

Limitations and Further Research

Like with any study, there are some limitations to consider. First, the cross-sectional design limits conclusions regarding causality. Future research should therefore replicate findings with more than one measurement point. Second, in order to compare the role of calling for various jobs, future research should use more homogenous samples, and compare findings between different occupations. It might be for instance, that calling is more advantageous for professions with many social interactions compared to administrative jobs.

Moreover, future research should broaden the scope of outcome variable e.g. by investigating the influence of calling on ailments or other health-related variables. Further, it might be interesting to study the mechanisms underlying the relationship between the experience of a calling and burnout. Potential mediators might be for instance occupational self-efficiency and self-discrepancy. Moreover, it would be interesting to test whether people, who are not able to fulfill their calling in the world of employment, are more likely to suffer from burnout than those, who can realize it.

Regarding well-being measures, also other constructs of positive flourishing such as thriving (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005), work engagement (Bakker & Leiter, 2010), and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) should receive attention in future research in order to study their impact on burnout and other health-related variables.

CONCLUSION

The present study showed that the experience of a calling is negatively related to burnout. Thus, the experience of a calling might function as a kind of “health-protective strategy”, which increases a person’s engagement at work and job satisfaction. However, one should keep in mind, that there might also be the danger of too much of a good thing, incorporating the risk of depleting rather than replenishing resources. We hope that our study stimulates further research on this promising area of research.

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practices, and a sense of competence in ministry skills. Internal orientation to ministry, then, is hypothesized to be negatively associated with clergy burnout because it compensates for stressful work-related consequences of secularisation. The second spiritual resource is a secure attachment relationship with God. Security of attachment to God provides a relatively stable and positive cognitive-affective foundation for healthy religious coping, spiritual practices and engagement with the world. Data from the 2011 National Church Life Survey (Australia), collected from local church leaders, were used to test the hypotheses that having a secure attachment to God, and an internal orientation to ministry, would both be associated with lower burnout and higher satisfaction in ministry, and that orientation to ministry would mediate the relationship between attachment to God and burnout. The hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modelling and were confirmed. Theoretical implications of these findings are discussed, as well as directions for future research and applications to the formation and resourcing of church leaders.

SPIRITUALITY AND BURNOUT AMONGST CHURCH LEADERS: FINDINGS FROM THE 2011 AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CHURCH LIFE SURVEY

Burnout has long been recognized as a work-related hazard for people engaged in a range of human-service occupations (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) although burnout can also be found in other workers (Bakker, Demerouti Schaufeli, 2003). Church leaders consistently report high levels of stress and burnout associated with their work (Croucher, 1991; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Sanford, 1982; Willimon, 1989) in which they engage with people in emotionally-charged situations of transition, grief, illness, and other suffering. Burnout is a serious issue for clergy because it is linked to physical and mental health symptoms (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001), increased turnover of ministers (Croucher, 1991; Randall, 2004; Miner, 2007c) and lowered satisfaction in ministry (Miner, Dowson & Sterland, 2010). Hence, it is important to understand the processes relating to burnout amongst church leaders in order to prevent premature resignations and reduced health and well-being – consequences that affect individuals, families and communities.

Research into clergy burnout has largely been conducted using the conceptualization of Christina Maslach and associates (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) where burnout is defined as a psychological condition comprising three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is the experience of being emotionally drained as a result of one's work; depersonalization refers to a response of cynicism and withdrawal from those receiving one's services; and reduced personal accomplishment involves a negative appraisal of one's work, and related feelings of insufficiency (Maslach, 1993). Whereas burnout was initially conceptualized as three independent dimensions, Leiter and Maslach (1988) further revised the burnout model to suggest that the emotional exhaustion component of the model indirectly affected depersonalization (as a form of defensive coping) and personal accomplishment (as a form of self-evaluation). Other researchers have proposed different relationships between the three dimensions of burnout (Bresó, Salanova & Schaufeli, 2007; Shirom, 2003; Walkey & Green, 1992). Nonetheless, there is general agreement that emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal

accomplishment constitute the essential dimensions of burnout, regardless of how these dimensions are deemed to inter-relate.

Three major theories of the antecedents of clergy burnout can be found in the organizational literature. These are: 1) Diathesis-stress theory in which burnout results from individual vulnerabilities and high work stressors (Schaefer & Enzmann, 1998); 2) Job-person fit theory that holds the mismatch between the person and the job causes stress and burnout (Maslach et al., 2001); and 3) Job-demands-resources theory (JDR) in which burnout results from excessive job demands and paucity of job resources to buffer the relationship between job demands and burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). All three theories have guided research into clergy burnout, as discussed below. However, we argue that there has been insufficient recognition of the unique *spiritual* characteristics of church leadership. As a result, antecedents of burnout are known in part but previously neglected aspects of church leadership are likely to contribute to clergy burnout. Where the spiritual nature of church leadership *has* been recognized, spiritual variables have often been studied without clear articulation of the theoretical linkages between the spiritual antecedents and outcomes. The aims of this chapter are to clarify what is known about burnout amongst church leaders, recognizing the implicit or explicit theoretical frameworks of the research findings, and to propose and test a model of clergy burnout that considers *foundational* spiritual antecedents.

SECULAR THEORIES OF BURNOUT APPLIED TO CHURCH LEADERS

Diathesis-Stress Theory Applied to Church Leaders

Consistent with diathesis-stress theory, several individual-level vulnerabilities and work-related stressors have been associated with clergy burnout. It is noteworthy that no demographic variable (age, gender, marital status, education, income) has been reliably associated with burnout in church leaders, although age has some equivocal support. Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi & Rodgers (2004) reported that age accounted for about 2% of the variance in burnout, a finding consistent with research by Miner, Dowson & Sterland (2010) and studies of the general workforce where burnout is more common among younger people, with lower burnout beyond the age of 30 or 40 (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). However, age was not a significant predictor of clergy burnout in studies by Doolittle (2008); Francis, Loudon and Rutledge (2004); Hills, Francis and Rutledge (2004); Randall 2004, and Miner (2007 b,c). Personality traits have been reliably associated with burnout: neuroticism (positively), extraversion and openness to experience (negatively) together appear to account for about 25% of the variance in burnout amongst church leaders (Golden et al., 2004; Miner, 2007b). Hence, within a diathesis-stress model of clergy burnout the effects of personality as a general, individual-level vulnerability should be studied.

Of the work-related stressors, job demands (alternatively described as role overload or excessive workload) are consistently associated with clergy burnout (Golden et al, 2004; Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001; Shehan, Wiggins & Cody-Rydzewski, 2007). Job demands explain an additional 34% of variance in burnout beyond the effects of personality (Golden et al., 2004). Other work-related stressors for church leaders include high expectations or pressures

by congregations (Doolittle, 2008; Whetham & Whetham, 2000), conflicted or traumatic relationships with church members (Doolittle, 2008), the open-ended nature of church ministry (Miner, 2007b), high levels of job mobility (Whetham & Whetham, 2000), rigid work schedules, excessive bureaucracy, and irrelevant denominational structures (Grosch & Olsen, 2000). Holding a senior position in church ministry has also been associated with burnout (Miner, Dowson & Sterland, 2010), possibly related to increased job demands and/or increased exposure to conflicted or difficult interpersonal relationships with staff and congregants. Job demands and related work stressors, then, are important antecedents of clergy burnout.

Within diathesis-stress theory, positive coping can ameliorate, or buffer, relationships between individual-level vulnerabilities, work-related stressors and burnout (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Positive secular coping strategies, including active coping, acceptance, planning and positive reframing, appear to protect against burnout in church leaders, whereas negative coping strategies of venting, disengagement and self-blame are associated with higher burnout (Doolittle, 2007). Very few studies have examined *spiritual* coping as an antecedent of burnout, and particularly as a buffer of the relationship between relevant work stressors and burnout. The Prayer Fulfillment dimension of Spiritual Transcendence (measuring a church leader's perceived relationship with God) was a modest direct predictor of clergy burnout, accounting for an additional 2% of the variance of burnout (Golden et al., 2004), as was Religious Problem Solving which accounted for 2-5% of the variance of burnout (Rodgers & Piedmont, 1998) but moderating effects were not examined in either study. There is a clear need to include moderating effects of relevant forms of spiritual coping on clergy stress- burnout if the diathesis-stress theory is to be fully tested.

Job-Person Fit Theory Applied to Church Leaders

Job-person fit theory (Maslach et al., 2001) suggests church leaders (or any other occupational grouping) who perceive that they do not 'fit' their job will experience their work as stressful and be more likely to exhibit signs of burnout. Thus, the interaction between psychological perceptions of, and orientations to, work and work contexts is theorized to be a critical predictor of ministry burnout. Maslach and Leiter (2008) summarized the risk factors for burnout as existing within the workplace domains of: workload (excessive job demands); control (low levels of autonomy, or personal control); reward (reduced financial or other personal rewards); community (lack of positive, supportive community); fairness (lack of supervisory fairness & support), and values (conflict between an individual's and organization's values). Burnout, then, is likely to occur when the church leader's expectations of workload and the job resources of control, reward, community and fairness do not match their actuality, and personal values conflict with those of the organization.

Researchers have identified relationships between some of these risk factors and clergy burnout. Findings regarding job demands are discussed above in the section on diathesis-stress theory. With respect to other risk factors, Grosch & Olsen (2000) reported mismatches between demands of the church organization and individual church leaders' personal-family patterns of responding. They highlighted examples of loss of autonomy through acquiescing to the demands of others; eschewing of material rewards and loss of a sense of personal rewards due to waning praise and congregational affirmation; lack of a sense of supportive

community through taking on a more distant, parental role; and lack of supervisory support due to flattened church structures. A large empirical study about mismatches of theological values (conservative through liberal) between clergy and their congregations found that mismatches involving liberal ministers were associated with job dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Mueller & McDuff, 2004). Nonetheless, broad theological categories are blunt indicators of personal values, and specific empirical studies examining the fit between relevant personal and job domains for church ministers are lacking.

Job Demands-Resources Theory Applied to Church Leaders

According to the Job demands-resources (JD-R) theory, job demands directly predict burnout and job resources moderate (buffer) the relationship between job demands and burnout (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). Job demands, such as high workload, time pressures and difficult environments characterized by role ambiguity, role conflict and physical difficulties, are aspects of work that require sustained physical and psychological effort. High job demands overstretch the individual's capacities and lead eventually to job strain, manifest as burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). This proposed relationship between job demands and burnout is broadly consistent with diathesis-stress and job-person fit theories. However, the JD-R theory also considers job resources. Job resources are physical, psycho-social and organizational aspects of one's work that increase personal strength and/or reduce job demands and associated job strain. Hence, job resources buffer the impact of job demands on burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Typical examples of job resources are conditions that satisfy basic human needs for autonomy, competence and sense of being related to others (Deci & Ryan, 1985), such as having control over one's work, participation in decision making, opportunities for work-related development, task variety, feedback, and peer or supervisory social support (Crawford, Lepine & Rich, 2010).

Some studies of clergy burnout have considered individual job resources without locating the research with the JD-R theory. Church leaders generally experience high levels of control over work scheduling, but decisions may require multiple committee meetings or hierarchical structures (Grosch & Olsen, 2000). Holding a senior position, presumably with increased decision making control, is *not* associated with lowered burnout (Miner, Dowson & Sterland, 2010). On the other hand, job satisfaction which is an outcome of low burnout amongst church leaders *is* related to job resources such as material benefits, autonomy, decision-making opportunities and opportunities for professional growth (Mueller & McDuff, 2004). Much more empirical work is needed to apply the JD-R theory of burnout fully to church leaders.

SPIRITUALLY ORIENTED APPROACH TO BURNOUT IN CHURCH LEADERS

Organizational theories of burnout have either neglected the essential, spiritual nature of church ministry or included discrete spiritual activities such as religious coping, spiritual

transcendence or theological conflicts as special examples of antecedents of burnout. These spiritual activities and conflicts may be relevant to the psychological functioning of religious believers generally, but it is not clear why they should be closely related to the particular outcome of burnout within a particular sub-set of religious believers, church leaders. Spirituality has not been integrated as a component of any of the above organizational theories of burnout in a systematic way. Further, in none of the theories surveyed above are spiritual behaviors, states or orientations applied within an overall account of burnout that recognizes the unique context and focus of church ministry. The unique context of Christian church ministry in most developed countries today is the context of a secularized society and the unique focus of Christian ministry is the spiritual development of people within church communities (Miner, Dowson & Sterland, 2010). Arising out the unique context and focus of church ministry are central spiritual orientations and states that have been associated with clergy burnout in previous studies: Orientation to the demands of ministry (Miner, Sterland & Dowson, 2006), and Attachment to God (Barr-Jeffrey, 2008).

Secularization and Orientation to the Demands of Ministry

Secularization theory suggests a key source of job stress for church leaders: the reduced authority of religious leaders at institutional, organizational and local parish levels (Chaves, 1993, 1994). Religious authority is defined as the “influence of social structures whose legitimation rests on reference to the supernatural” (Chaves, 1994, p.756). At the level of the social institution, the Christian church has relatively little power to influence national or international affairs; at the level of the organization there is a decline in the control of religious personnel over organizational resources; whereas at an individual level there is religious disinvolvement i.e., the decline in religious belief and practice by individuals (Chaves, 1994). As a result, church members typically develop a privatized set of religious beliefs derived from both secular and religious sources. In this way, the more-or-less exclusive influence of the church over the personal content and structure of religious beliefs declines as society becomes more secularized (Berger, 2001; Luckmann, 1967).

Secularization, or reduced religious authority, impacts clergy stress via perceptions of job demands, autonomy; rewards; community; supervisory support; and values conflicts – all domains in which stress induces burnout according to Maslach and Leiter (2008). *Job demands* increase because congregations-as-consumers place pressure on ministers regarding the content and structure of religious services. This pressure further undermines a minister’s sense of *autonomy* (Daniel & Rogers, 1981) as the church leader strives to accommodate different views. Autonomy is also undermined by tighter management structures as religious organizations, under the influence of secularization, begin to replicate secular management practices and policies. Weakened institutional authority is associated with loss of status for church leaders, which reduces opportunities to derive *rewards* such as self-esteem from a high status occupation (Rassieur, 1982). Bureaucratic organizational structures of secularized church organizations undermine a sense of *community* at local levels, and *supervisory support* of a religious nature. Finally, the privatized nature of beliefs results in less agreement and more clashes between the *values* of church leaders and their congregations. In addition, privatized belief systems may reduce the rewards of social support and increase perceptions of job demands. Social support declines when church attenders become more mobile as they

‘shop around’ for congenial meanings and contexts and so make it difficult for clergy to maintain a stable support base (Whetham & Whetham, 2000). Then, in the face of declining numbers, the minister feels under pressure to work harder to maintain existing services and, thus, may experience work overload (Willimon, 1989).

Since ministers can no longer assume legitimation based on the authority of religion as an institution or organization, they must find other sources of legitimation, whether these are sourced from within or externally. Internal self-legitimation can be derived from a sense of spiritual relatedness, accompanied by reported satisfaction in their relationship with God; a sense of competence in clergy roles; and a relative sense of autonomy in their work (Miner, Sterland & Dowson, 2006).

These inner sources of coping allow internally oriented ministers to overcome some of the key stressors of ministry in a secularized context. Hence, it is proposed that an internal orientation to the demands of ministry (internal ODM) will act as a *foundational* spiritual resource that is directly associated with lower levels of burnout. Internal ODM is defined as a psychological orientation, prompted by the demands of ministry, in the context of which ministers rely on personal qualities and skills as sources of ministry legitimation and coping. There are three dimensions of internal ODM: a sense of spiritual relatedness; a sense of competence based on perceived ministry-relevant skills; and a capacity to function in ministry in the absence of direct congregational support, indicative of personal autonomy (Miner, Dowson & Sterland, 2010).

Attachment to God

A key spiritual resource for church leaders is the perceived quality of their relationship with God. Attachment to God (ATG) refers to a particular quality of relationship between a believer and God where characteristics of a human attachment relationship are present. According to Bowlby (1979) and Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall (1978) an attachment relationship is discerned by the presence of specific kinds of cognitions and behaviors. Attachment-related cognitions, arising out of early life experiences, are mental representations of the self as worthy of care, and of the other as available, responsive and nurturing. Attachment behaviors include seeking closeness to the attachment figure, expressing anxiety at separation from the attachment figure, and engaging in activities in the absence of the attachment figure (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Attachment relationships are generally observed to be either secure or insecure. Secure attachment relationships are experienced as warm, supportive and comfortable, whereas in insecure attachment relationships figures are experienced as either inconsistent (resulting in an anxious ambivalent or preoccupied attachment relationship) or as distant, rejecting and apathetic (resulting in an avoidant dismissing attachment relationship) or both (resulting in a fearful or disorganized attachment relationship) (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Studies of human attachment suggest that secure attachment relationships are foundational for subsequent well-being over the lifespan (see reviews by Fonagy, 1999; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004). Whilst the earliest observed attachment relationship is between an infant and caregiver, attachment relationships may also be formed with a counselor, friend, romantic partner and God (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002).

A secure attachment relationship with God is associated with good psychological and physical health amongst Christian believers. Individuals with a secure ATG report less anxiety, depression, and physical illness and greater life satisfaction, than those with insecure religious attachments (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992), as well as reduced trait anxiety and greater reported existential well-being (Miner, 2009). Secure spiritual attachment is associated with openness to theological exploration (Beck, 2006) and spiritual well-being (Beck & McDonald, 2004). Further, secure ATG amongst those with insecure attachment relationships to caregivers regulates distress and other negative emotions (Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999). Conversely, insecure ATG (marked by anxiety and avoidance in one's relationship with God) is directly associated with symptoms of Dependent Personality Disorder (Miner & Dowson, 2009). A reasonable conclusion from these findings is that secure ATG is likely to function similarly to secure attachment to human figures, and to be foundational for well-being amongst believers, whereas insecure ATG is likely to be foundational for psychological problems amongst believers, including burnout amongst church leaders.

It is presumed that secure ATG is foundational for mental health and resilience amongst Christian believers because secure ATG provides a safe haven in times of stress and a secure base for facing stressors as they arise in the course of work and other areas of life (Miner, 2007a). Similarly, insecure ATG is a foundation for psychological problems because it leads to negative, unregulated emotions and maladaptive responses to stressors, such as avoidance or overcompensation. In contrast, secure ATG provides a basis for healthy coping responses in the face of stress. One of these healthy coping responses is positive spiritual coping (including such activities as performing good deeds, engaging in spiritually-based behaviours, and focusing on spiritual matters rather than stressful concerns). Positive spiritual coping is associated with greater security of attachment to God (Belavich & Pargament, 2002; Cooper, Bruce, Harman & Boccaccini, 2009). In addition, positive spiritual coping is associated with better psychological adjustment (Belavich & Pargament, 2002), suggesting that positive spiritual coping may mediate the relationship between secure ATG and positive outcomes. On the other hand, negative spiritual coping (such as expressing discontent to God) is associated with distress, psychological symptoms and poorer quality of life (Pargament, 1997) and with insecure attachment styles such as dismissing and fearful ATG (Cooper et al., 2009). One's attachment to God, then, is expected to have direct effects on the use of healthy or unhealthy religious coping.

Attachment to God, Orientation to the Demands of Ministry and Burnout

Since secure ATG appears to provide a foundation for positive spiritual coping amongst Christians in general when they experience stress, it is reasonable to assume that secure ATG might provide a foundation for other positive coping responses amongst specific Christian groups –such as church leaders who experience work-related stress. One relevant form of positive coping is internally oriented coping (coping based on perceived internal resources and hence, indicative of an internal orientation to the demands of ministry- ODM). Under situations of stress, then, church leaders who experience a secure ATG with low levels of anxiety and avoidance are expected to use internal coping based on an internal ODM where they draw on their sense of spiritual relatedness, competence and autonomy. Conversely,

insecure ATG that is marked by anxiety and insecurity in relationship with God should result in lower levels of positive coping such as internally-oriented coping (hence, lower levels of ODM) amongst church leaders. The proposed model, then, is a mediated model, in which insecure ATG reduces behavior consistent with an internal orientation to ministry and thence leads to increased burnout.

In summary, in the context of secularization, clergy experience reduced sources of legitimization and heightened work-related stress. A secure ATG is likely to enable ministers to experience less stress and employ helpful coping strategies. On the other hand, an insecure ATG is likely to increase perceptions of stress and reduce helpful coping. One helpful coping strategy for the stress of reduced legitimization is to draw on internal resources via an internal orientation to ministry. Hence, an internal ODM should be directly related to reduced burnout. On the other hand, an insecure ATG should be indirectly related to increased burnout because it reduces one's capacity to cope via an internal ODM.

Reduced Satisfaction in Ministry, Orientation to the Demands of Ministry, and Burnout

Satisfaction in ministry is defined as the extent to which ministers experience positive affect in relation to ministry, and notably a sense of contentment with the progress and outcomes of their ministry work (Miner et al., 2010, p.169). Typically, church ministers report high levels of satisfaction in ministry (Cotton, Dollard, DeJonge & Whetham, 2003; Dowson & McInerney, 2005; Goetz, 1997). However, those who report low ministry satisfaction tend also to report high levels of burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001). Further, previous work has found that an internal orientation to coping with the demands of ministry is associated with high satisfaction in ministry, and burnout is associated with low satisfaction in ministry: in fact, burnout partially mediates the relationship between internal ODM and satisfaction in ministry (Miner et al., 2010). Hence, it is expected that burnout would also partially or fully mediate the relationship between ODM and satisfaction in ministry, such that an internal ODM would directly result in high ministry satisfaction and indirectly increase ministry satisfaction through reduced burnout. A fully mediated model is the more stringent test of the causal ordering of variables in the model and thus, a fully mediated model is hypothesized.

Hypotheses

There will be a fully mediated relationship between insecure ATG and high burnout and low ministry satisfaction, such that insecure ATG reduces coping consistent with an internal ODM which in turn results in high burnout and low ministry satisfaction. The hypothesised relationships are represented in Figure 1.

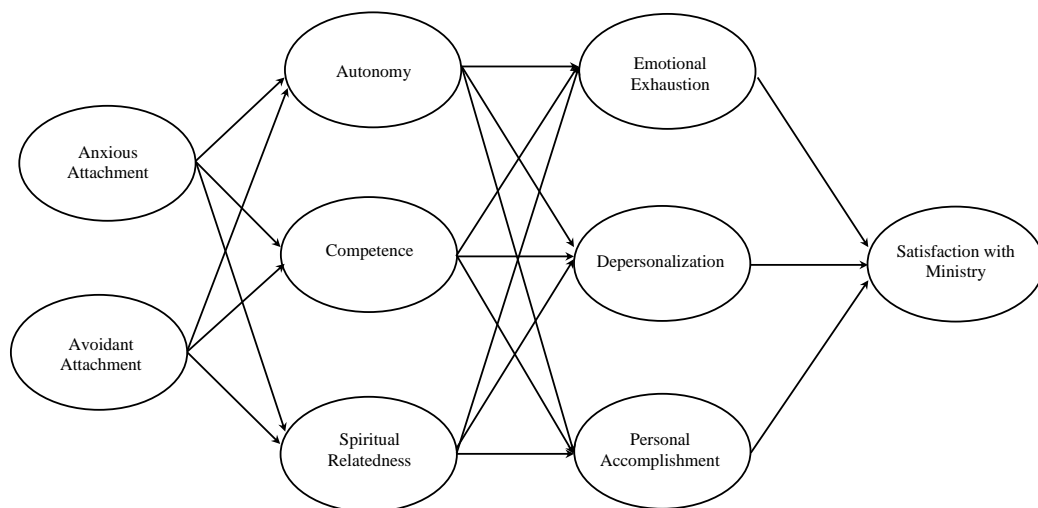


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of hypothesized relationships.

METHOD

Participants

The sample comprised 523 senior church leaders who responded to the 2011 National Church Life Survey (Australia). These leaders had indicated they were either the only minister/pastor/priest, the senior leader over a team, an interim minister, or a lay person serving as the principal leader. However, with deletion of cases due to missing data, the final sample size for data analysis was 422 church leaders. The average age of this final sample was 54.0 years, and the standard deviation was 11.6 years. The majority (80%) were male. These church leaders represented 17 different denominations as well as independent churches, including all traditions (Mainstream Protestant, Small Protestant, Catholic, and Pentecostal) except Orthodox churches. Of the sample, 32.5% were Anglicans, 19.4% Pentecostals, 15.9% Uniting Church, 11.1% Catholic, with other denominations falling below 10% in each case.

Measures

Thirty-four items were used to construct the models tested in this study. These items were drawn from a number of different scales specifically designed for use with clergy or with Christian believers (see Table 1 for a list of items and their sources). The specific items were chosen because, in initial factor analyses, they displayed high factor loadings, low uniquenesses, and low cross-loadings on other factors.

Five items measured each dimension of anxiety and avoidance with respect to attachment to God. Alpha reliabilities of the ATG-anxiety and ATG-avoidance items respectively in the present study were .82 and .71. Alpha reliabilities of the three scales measuring Spiritual Relatedness, Autonomy and Competence in the present study were .75, .63 and .63

respectively. Reliabilities for the burnout scales were .74 for Emotional Exhaustion, .74 for Depersonalisation, .70 for Personal Accomplishment and .80 for Ministry Satisfaction.

Table 1. Dimensions, scale items and source

Construct/Dimension	Item	Source
Attachment to God/ Anxiety	I get upset when I feel God helps others but forgets about me I often feel angry with God for not responding to me I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry	Beck & McDonald (2004)
Attachment to God/ Avoidance	My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life Without God I couldn't function at all Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God I let God make most of the decisions in my life	Beck & McDonald (2004)
Internal Orientation to Ministry/ Spiritual Relatedness	I often find it hard to maintain good spiritual practice I am frustrated with the lack of effect my private spiritual practices have in the rest of my life The quality of my spiritual practice has improved over my time in ministry During busy times my personal time with God is often the first thing to go	2011 National Church Life Survey (NCLS)
Internal Orientation to Ministry/ Autonomy	Without encouragement from others I find it really hard to keep going. I feel annoyed when people don't treat me with the authority I'm supposed to have as a minister/ pastor/ priest. I feel pulled around by different people's expectations of me here	2011 National Church Life Survey (NCLS)
Internal Orientation to Ministry / Competence	I feel out of my depth in areas of my ministry I don't struggle to achieve most of the tasks of ministry I believe I have developed the abilities I need for ministry	2011 National Church Life Survey (NCLS)
Emotional Exhaustion	I feel drained in fulfilling my functions here Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience I have been discouraged by the lack of personal support for me here I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me	Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (Francis et al., 2004)
Depersonalisation	I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work I am less patient with people here than I used to be I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with attenders	Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (Francis et al., 2004)
Personal Accomplishment	I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my ministry here I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives I feel that my teaching ministry has a positive influence on people's faith I feel my ministry is really appreciated by people	Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (Francis et al., 2004)
Satisfaction in Ministry	I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people here The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions here	Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (Francis et al., 2005)

Procedure

Australian church leaders from all major Christian denominations were invited to complete the questions individually via a mailed survey or online as part of their church's participation in the 2011 National Church Life Survey. From multiple responses, participants were asked to indicate which best represented their situation, perception or evaluation. Participants were not identified in this survey, and participation in the study was voluntary.

Analysis of Data

Responses to the 34 items as specified above were examined by means of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and a nested structural equation model. CFAs assess the extent to which observed indicators (items) reflect the hypothesized structure of underlying constructs (factors). CFAs allow the researcher to specify not only how many factors are (theoretically) measured by a given set of items but, also, which items function as indicators of which factors (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

We hypothesized a strict causal ordering of variables in our research model, and so estimated the corresponding Structural Equation Model (SEM) as a fully mediated model (i.e., a model estimating only direct paths to adjacent downstream variables) nested within an unconstrained model (i.e. a model estimating all possible paths – including those to non-adjacent variables) for the purposes of model comparison. SEMs are superior to standard regression models because they allow for the assessment of relations between multiple independent and dependent variables – with measurement error at the item level extracted from the structural parameter estimates between these multiple variables.

Modeling Procedures

All analyses were conducted using LISREL version 8.54, and all parameters were estimated using the maximum likelihood procedure. An underlying assumption of maximum likelihood estimation procedures is that responses are normally distributed (Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992). As is common in psychometric research, however, responses to the present survey items were not normally distributed (in general, responses to the survey items were negatively skewed and moderately leptokurtic). Fortunately, however, maximum likelihood estimation procedures appear to be robust with respect to violations of normality, particularly in relation to parameter estimates and goodness-of-fit indices (Loehlin, 2004; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). In fact, to the extent that estimation problems are associated with non-normality, parameter estimates and observed goodness-of-fit measures tend to conservatively indicate a poorer fit if data are non-normally distributed (Hau & Marsh, 2000). For this reason, non-normality does not appear to be a significant problem with respect to maximum likelihood estimation procedures.

In the CFA, all items were specified as indicators of one factor only, and the uniqueness of each item was modeled to be independent of all other uniquenesses. The structural models used the nine latent variables from the CFA in strict causal ordering corresponding to the hypothesized research model. Model fit in CFAs and structural equation models is assessed through a combination of parameter examinations, a chi-squared test of model fit, and various descriptive fit indices. In this study, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA),

the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used to assess model fit. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006) suggest that values of the RMSEA ranging from .05 to .08 represent acceptable model fit, with an RMSEA of .10 considered a threshold for indicating poor models. Values of the NNFI and the CFI above .90 represent good model fit under most modeling conditions.

In addition to the above measures, nested SEMs can be compared by subtracting the chi-squared and degrees of freedom associated with a ‘base’ model from the chi-squared and degrees of freedom associated with an alternative, more restrictive, model. The resulting chi-squared/degrees of freedom difference between models can be statistically evaluated. This statistical evaluation allows researchers to determine the extent to which a nested model represents a worse fit to the data than its referent base model. In other words, the base model acts as the comparative standard against which alternative models may be compared. In the present study an unconstrained non-mediated model was used as the base model against which a fully mediated model was tested.

RESULTS

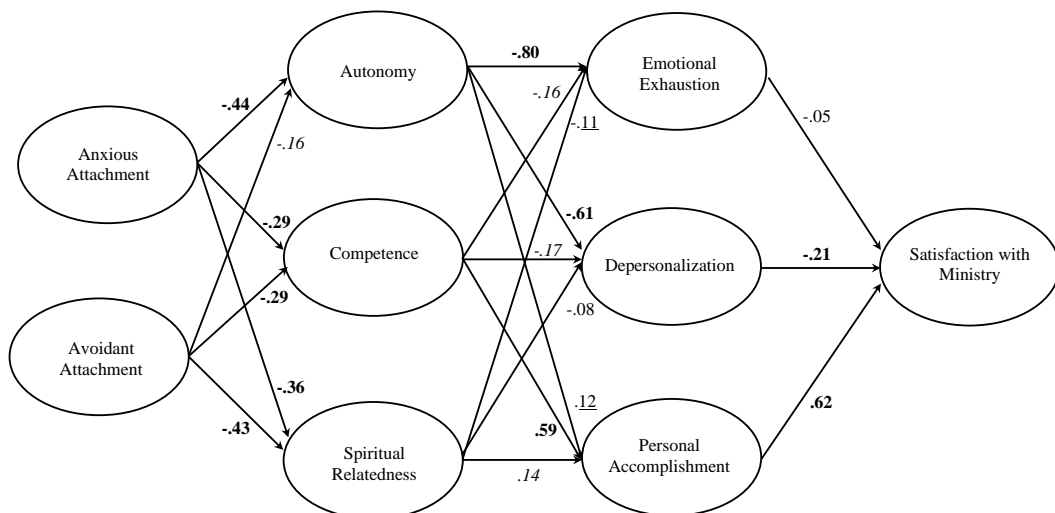
All model solutions converged properly, and all parameters in all models were plausible, i.e. there were no out of range or impossible values in any of the models. Table 2 indicates that all models met criterion values according to the NNFI and TLI. Values of the RMSEA were higher than desirable. However, the upper end of the confidence interval for the RMSEA (.089 for M1 and M2; and .090 for M3) was well below the .10 threshold, suggesting that the RMSEA for these models is constrained within acceptable limits.

Table 2. Model fit statistics for confirmatory and structural models

Model	Description	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI
M1	CFA Model	2189.96	498	4.40	.086	.91	.92
M2	Unconstrained Model	2189.96	498	4.40	.086	.91	.92
M3	Full Mediated Model	2234.16	509	4.39	.085	.91	.91
M4	Model Test (M3 vs M2)	44.20***	11				

*** Indicates that M3 is a statistically significantly poorer fit to the data than M2, $p < .001$.

The results of the model comparison between M2 and M3 indicated that M3 is a statically worse model than M2. However, M3 is also more parsimonious, has a lower χ^2/df ratio, and fits the data better according to the RMSEA which assesses model misfit per degree of freedom. These results taken together suggest that, while the greater restrictions placed on M3 resulted in a total between-model (M2 vs M3) decrement to model fit, this decrement is not reflected in a deterioration of fit per degree of freedom. For this reason, and if relative parsimony is accepted as criterion for model selection, M3 may be considered to represent an adequate fit to the data. Model M3, with its associated parameter estimates is reproduced in Figure 2.



Note. Boldfaced coefficients = $p < .001$; italicised coefficients = $p < .01$; underlined coefficients = $p < .05$; plain type coefficients = not significant.

Figure 2. Fully-mediated structural equation model: Chi-Square = 2234.16; df = 509; NNFI = 0.91; CFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.085.

Figure 2 indicates that all paths but two (from Emotional Exhaustion to Satisfaction with Ministry and from Spiritual Relatedness to Depersonalization) are statistically significant and typically substantial i.e., 10 paths out of 18 (55%) display coefficients greater than .20. Moreover, all paths are in the expected direction, attesting to both the theoretical and the measurement validity of the model. As such, the model is highly interpretable causally and theoretically with:

- both negative ATG factors clearly and consistently negatively impacting on ODM;
- all ODM factors positively impacting - Personal Accomplishment and negatively impacting Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization;
- Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization negatively impacting Satisfaction with Ministry, but Personal Accomplishment positively impacting Satisfaction with Ministry

Thus, our model identifies a theoretically grounded, parsimonious and non-recursive causal network of key variables underpinning satisfaction in ministry.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of the study reported here was to test whether two different forms of spirituality (namely attachment to God and orientation to the demands of ministry), considered as *foundational* spiritual resources for church leaders, would be associated with burnout and ministry satisfaction in theoretically specified ways. An associated aim was to clarify the association between the dimensions of clergy burnout and satisfaction in ministry.

Burnout and Satisfaction in Ministry

Low job satisfaction, or a reduced sense of contentment, is consistently associated with high levels of burnout amongst workers in a range of occupations (Best, Stapleton & Downey, 2005; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2000; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Hence, it is not surprising that the Depersonalization dimension of burnout is significantly associated with lower satisfaction in ministry, and Personal Accomplishment is significantly associated with higher satisfaction in ministry. These results are also broadly consistent with a previous study of church leaders in which all three dimensions of burnout (including Emotional Exhaustion) were significantly associated with satisfaction in ministry (Miner et al., 2010).

The association between burnout and ministry satisfaction is not surprising, given the nature of burnout's dimensions. Emotional Exhaustion is a state of extreme fatigue and emotional depletion in the interpersonal contexts of work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Emotional exhaustion can lead directly to reduced work satisfaction (Miner et al., 2010) because, under conditions of emotional exhaustion, work tasks require excessive perceived effort with a commensurate narrowing of focus on 'getting the job done'. Thus, instead of taking ongoing pleasure or satisfaction from accomplishments, ministers increasingly focus on job demands to the detriment of job satisfaction (c.f. study of nurses by Demerouti et al., 2000). However, another well-attested process is from emotional exhaustion to depersonalization, where work relationships are marked by emotional distance, cynicism and a degree of callousness (Leiter & Durup, 1994). Therefore, the link between emotional exhaustion and reduced ministry satisfaction may be an indirect path through depersonalization. When burnout progresses to the stage when depersonalization is evident, church leaders are likely to experience guilt for their reduced compassion for their flock and thus significantly reduced job satisfaction. On the other hand, workers with a strong sense of personal accomplishment experience exhilaration, energy and perceived effectiveness in their jobs (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Such a perception of energy and accomplishment is likely to enhance a sense of satisfaction regarding the process and outcomes of ministry work.

ODM, Burnout and Satisfaction in Ministry

Each of the ODM dimensions (autonomy, competence and spiritual relatedness) was associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and higher levels of personal accomplishment, as predicted. Similarly, the three dimensions of an internal ODM were associated with higher levels of satisfaction in ministry. The best model of these relationships is a "fully mediated" model (see Figures 1 and 2) in which internal ODM directly reduces burnout which, in turn, directly increases satisfaction in ministry even with no direct effect of internal ODM modeled on satisfaction with ministry itself. Under these modeling conditions, the impact of internal ODM is not simply as a buffer against low ministry satisfaction when burnout is high. Rather, the resources of spiritually-based autonomy, competence and sense of relatedness directly reduce emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and boost a sense of personal accomplishment. This reduced burnout in turn boosts a sense of satisfaction in ministry. The finding of mediation is broadly consistent

with previous research (Miner et al., 2010) and hence points to the importance of a targeted, foundational ministry resource (internal ODM) for satisfaction in one's work as a minister.

Of the three dimensions of ODM, Autonomy is the strongest inverse predictor of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and Competence is the strongest predictor of personal accomplishment. Since Autonomy represents a global sense of being able to function without external support and legitimation in a secularized society, ministers with high levels of Autonomy should more easily differentiate self and ministry roles; high levels of differentiation by ministers are related to lower levels of burnout (Beebe, 2007). Highly autonomous ministers are sensitive to internal resources (such as the presence of God 'within') and thus would be expected to perceive the presence of inner strength. Ministers who are aware of such inner resources are typically able to draw on them and continue in ministry without being emotionally depleted, or withdrawing from people. Competence represents the evaluation that one is able to perform the tasks of ministry at a satisfactory level, despite the difficulties arising from a secularized context. If the minister's evaluation of their competence is broadly accurate, then it is likely that actual achievements, and a sense of personal accomplishment, will follow. Finally, Spiritual Relatedness has small but significant associations with emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. A sense of satisfaction in one's spiritual practice and ways of relating to God is likely to provide an inner source of authority and coping allowing ministers to withstand pressures that might otherwise lead to emotional overload and withdrawal. Further, it is not surprising that satisfaction with one's spiritual relatedness would enhance a sense of effectiveness since ministry itself is a calling to spiritual 'work'.

Overall, boosting a minister's sense of internal orientation to ministry is likely to decrease burnout and thus increase a sense of ministry satisfaction. In particular, achieving an inner source of legitimation in the broad context of a secularized society offering little external sources of legitimation would reduce emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and increase a sense of accomplishment in ministry.

Attachment to God, ODM and Burnout

It was hypothesized that insecure attachment to God would be associated with increased burnout because insecure ATG reduces the spiritual coping resources of an internal ODM (autonomy, competence and spiritual relatedness). This hypothesis was supported. Both dimensions of insecure attachment to God (anxiety and avoidance) were associated with lowered ODM dimensions which, in turn, were associated with increased burnout. The finding adds further information about the spiritual processes involved in burnout amongst church leaders.

Secure attachment to God is a foundational spiritual resource for believers and church ministers because it is a necessary condition for healthy psychological responding – responses consistent with positive spiritual coping, emotional regulation, resilience, and well-being (e.g., Miner, 2009 c.f. Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004). Conversely, insecure ATG amongst believers and church leaders compromises the person's ability to draw upon positive spiritual resources for emotional regulation, resilience and well-being. Findings that an insecure ATG is associated with reduced ODM scores in church leaders indicate, unsurprisingly, that relationships with God marked by anxiety and/or avoidance reduce a minister's sense of

functioning without external legitimation, felt competence in ministry tasks, and satisfaction with their spiritual practice. It would appear that a secure sense of attachment to God would be particularly important for church leaders whose work involves the spiritual development of people within a church community: development towards better relationships with God (including attachment to God) within a system of human relationships (including human attachment relationships).

Believers with an insecure attachment to God have difficulty developing cognitive-affective representations of God as a safe haven and secure base in times of stress; they find it difficult to approach God (e.g., in prayer) when they feel threatened; they may experience a prolonged sense of anxiety because of the perceived distance of God; and they either experience God as uncaring or rejecting, or themselves as unworthy of God's nurture (Miner, Dowson, Ghobary & Proctor, 2012). In the context of a secularized society, insecurely attached Christian ministers (as leaders of a minority group that is largely marginalized and sometimes ridiculed) find it difficult to use positive spiritual resources. In particular, they find it difficult to draw upon an inner sense of autonomy, competence and sense of being in relationship with God. In the presence of ubiquitous job demands church leaders with insecure ATG fail to cope adequately and experience both burnout and reduced job satisfaction.

Limitations and Further Work

Although the study is based on a national sample of Australian clergy across major Christian denominations, it is limited because it uses archival data with brief or alternative measures of some variables. The study is also cross-sectional in design and relies on self-report measures. Future research should include multiple methods (such as behavioral observation, peer or congregational ratings etc.) and longitudinal designs.

The study did not attempt to validate any secular theory of burnout as applied to church leaders. As such, other potential correlates, causes and effects of burnout such as personality traits, cognitive styles, general coping, emotional disturbance, specific work contexts, and family relationships were not examined. Instead, the study sought to propose and examine a partial theory that foundational psychospiritual resources are related to burnout and ministry satisfaction in theoretically specified ways. Moreover, by explicitly modeling items to be independent indicators of their respective factors (i.e., error terms for all items were modeled to be uncorrelated with each other both within and between factors) we were able to estimate structural effects between factors independent of any systematic measurement error at the item level. Future research, however, may further investigate with other samples the dimensional separation of items and factors in this study, as well as other potential correlates, causes and effects of burnout.

Since ATG and ODM have now been supported as foundational psychospiritual resources it would be useful to include these spiritual resources in tests of the diathesis-stress, job-person fit, and JD-R models of burnout. To test the diathesis-stress theory, the moderating effect of spiritual resources/coping on the relationship between stress and burnout should be examined amongst church leaders. Some of the individual components of the job-person fit model have been applied to studies of church leaders, but a full suite of predictors should be examined, including expectations and 'fit' relating to spiritual attachment and responses to

secularization. To test the JD-R model fully, the moderating effect of spiritual resources on the relationship between job demands and burnout should be examined.

Contribution and Applications

Findings that spiritual resources predict burnout and satisfaction in ministry within a clearly differentiated occupational group contribute to an understanding of burnout's antecedents and consequences informed by both organizational psychology and the psychology of religion. Based on attachment theory as applied to believers in monotheistic religions, we predicted that secure attachment to God would be a foundational spiritual resource for church leaders, facilitating the use of positive spiritual resources during stress. Based on the complex and challenging work situation of church leaders in secularized societies, we predicted that ministers who reported a strong internal orientation to the demands of ministry (i.e., an internal source of legitimation and coping) would be better able to withstand ministry pressures and experience work satisfaction than those whose internal orientation was weak or absent. Findings from our structural equation modeling support these predictions.

In order to reduce burnout and promote ministry satisfaction, church leaders need to develop a more secure attachment relationship with God. Carefully targeted retreats and spiritual mentoring could be considered, together with psychological therapies that address attachment issues. Ministers with a relatively secure spiritual attachment could then be encouraged to foster a more internal orientation to ministry through spiritual direction, competence building and affirmative feedback to support autonomy.

CONCLUSION

This study has proposed and tested a partial model of clergy burnout in which foundational spiritual resources are significant antecedents of burnout and ministry satisfaction. Findings support the relevance of targeted spiritual resources for understanding a negative outcome (burnout) and a positive outcome (satisfaction in ministry) in church leaders. Our partial model can be nested within a diathesis-stress or a job demands-resources model of burnout for a more complete explanation of important occupational outcomes amongst ministers. Nonetheless, our work supports the claim that spiritual resources of secure attachment to God and an internal orientation to ministry are foundational for the healthy and productive functioning of church leaders.

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