Exploring Job Stress Among Drug Court Personnel

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EXPLORING JOB STRESS AMONG DRUG COURT PERSONNEL

by

Ragan Andrew Downey

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
ABSTRACT

EXPLORING JOB STRESS AMONG DRUG COURT PERSONNEL

by Ragan Andrew Downey

May 2014

In the field of criminal justice, much research has been devoted to exploring job stress among corrections staff, police officers, and individuals working in legal professions. Additionally, there is an abundance of research regarding drug courts and their impact on the justice system. There is, however, a stark absence of research concerning job stress among drug court personnel. This study was designed to fill that gap in the existing literature by examining the perceptions of drug court personnel regarding job stress, job satisfaction, and other relevant factors identified in the literature. Results of bivariate and multivariate analyses indicated that drug court personnel experience job stress as an intact, homogeneous group. Role conflict and qualitative role overload were significant organizational sources of stress. Caseloads and client-oriented sources of stress were significant task-related stressors. Job satisfaction was the only significant protective factor against job stress. The results of this study guided the construction of a proposed job stress model specifically designed for drug court personnel. This model provided context for discussion regarding policy implications and recommendations for future research.
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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2014
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks are owed to the faculty in the School of Criminal Justice at The University of Southern Mississippi. Specifically, I would like thank Dr. Philip Carlan for his friendship, mentorship, and guidance throughout this arduous process. I would also like to thank Dr. Wes Johnson for his advice and assistance in this process, as well as his contagious dedication to therapeutic jurisprudence. I also owe a great debt to Dr. Lisa Nored for giving me multiple opportunities to succeed as a student and researcher. Those opportunities led me to where I am today. I must also express gratitude to Dr. Alan Thompson and Dr. Richard Mohn. Their guidance and instruction during multiple graduate statistics classes provided me with the tools to succeed both academically and professionally.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ...................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF TABLES ............................................................................................................... vi

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................................................ vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................ 1
   Statement of the Problem
   Purpose of the Study
   Hypotheses
   Delimitations
   Assumptions
   Definition of Terms
   Justification for the Study

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................... 12
   Occupational Stress in Criminal Justice Professions
   Occupational Stress in Treatment Professions
   Conceptualizing Common Sources of Job Stress
   Existing Metrics and Models of Occupational Stress

III. METHODOLOGY ......................................................................................................... 42
   Research Design
   Dependent Variables
   Independent Variables
   Population
   Sampling Frame and Subject Selection Procedure
   Data Collection

IV. ANALYSES AND RESULTS ....................................................................................... 49
   Statistical Analyses
   Revisiting Hypotheses
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .................................................................66

Revisiting Research Questions
Conceptualizing a Model
Validity of Results and Interpretation
Recommendations for Practitioners
Recommendations for Future Research
Conclusion

APPENDIXES ...................................................................................................................80

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................92
LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Categorical Variables & Relationships with Job Stress ........................................49
2. Continuous Variables & Relationships with Job Stress ........................................51
3. Examination of Normality & Reliability among Continuous Variables ..................53
4. Correlation Matrix for Potential Variables in Multivariate Models .......................56
5. Regression Models: Sources of & Protective Factors for Job Stress ......................57
6. Final Regression Model for Sources of & Protective Factors for Job Stress ..........60
7. Organizational & Task-related Sources of Job Stress among Personnel Type ......61
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Proposed Model of Stress for Drug Court Personnel.............................................72
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Given the public’s attitude toward illegal drug use and perception of the stereotypical drug user, it is not surprising that incarceration rates of drug-involved offenders have increased substantially over the last two decades. As Irwin (2005) noted, “the recent imprisonment binge and most contemporary forms of imprisonment are the end products of the recent war on crime and its stepchild, the war on drugs” (p. 8). Welch (2005) echoed that sentiment in his assessment of the so-called militarized approach to curbing the U.S. drug epidemic. Arguably, current policies regarding the incarceration of drug-involved offenders have sparked one of the most contentious debates in both academic and practitioner circles in criminal justice.

The war on drugs created a chasm between rehabilitation and punishment. Some (e.g., Cullen, 2007) have insisted that correctional policy should be guided by rehabilitation since punitive models (such as the war on drugs) have failed. Although this is a noble idea, it relies on the assumption, or perhaps fallacy, that every offender can be rehabilitated. As Welch (2005) stated, “America’s response to drug usage will not be afforded legitimacy if it relies solely on rehabilitation as a corrective measure” (p. 39). In the early 1990s, the development of drug courts provided a means to bridge the gap between rehabilitation and punishment.

Although drug courts appear to have been developed in the absence of any formal theoretical framework, they are largely considered by academics and practitioners as a prime example of therapeutic jurisprudence (Belenko, 2002; Hora, 2002). Drug courts exemplified the components of therapeutic jurisprudence (see Wexler, 1992) by utilizing
agents of the judicial system in a therapeutic (rather than punitive) manner and provided a new model of crime control based on compassion, accountability, and supervision. Judge Herbert Klein established the first drug court in Dade County, Florida, in 1989, as a response to the growing influx of drug-involved offenders and a potential decrease in federal funding due to overpopulated correctional facilities (Wiseman, 2005). Initially, Judge Klein’s court accepted offenders arrested for simple possession or other offenses which were influenced by a controlled substance. Subsequently, drug courts evolved and began to serve most any offender who acknowledged that a substance abuse problem had influenced his or her decision to commit a crime (National Association of Drug Court Professionals [NADCP], 2008).

Drug courts eschewed the traditional adversarial system, and instead relied on collaboration and cooperation among agents of the court, defense attorneys, and treatment providers (Fulkerson, 2009). Drug court judges used a markedly different approach from their peers in conventional courts, and broke from tradition by assuming the role of “guardian angel” rather than “playing God” (Stinchcomb, 2010, p. 151). Prosecutors and defense attorneys worked together to develop a plan of action for drug-involved offenders rather than bargaining over the length of time they would spend in jail or prison. The court sought advice and secured services from substance abuse treatment agencies, and routinely monitored offenders’ treatment progress. Probation officers began acting as proxy case managers and focused on progress rather than failure. In short, drug courts responded to the incarceration binge by changing many aspects of the traditional judicial and correction-related processes. Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys,
probation officers, court administrators, case managers, and mental health professionals worked as a team and provided a network of support for drug-afflicted offenders.

As would any new crime control policy, drug courts garnered an extraordinary amount of scrutiny from the public, media, academics, and practitioners. Contrary to other unique crime control policies, though, drug courts received the attention of researchers almost immediately after their inception (Belenko, 2002). These researchers focused on intuitive measures of success such as (a) recidivism reduction, (b) treatment retention (Belenko, 1998; Gottfredson & Exum, 2002; Peters & Murrin, 2000), and/or (c) cost effectiveness (NADCP, 2008; Wiseman, 2005). Other studies regarding drug court success aimed to examine individual success (i.e., offender performance) as an outcome and determine what (if any) factors increased (or decreased) the likelihood of graduation from a drug court program (e.g., Miller & Shutt, 2001). While most drug court studies were process-centered in the beginning, later studies included more outcome data in order to evaluate program success. Throughout the first 10 years of research, criticisms from the academic community regarding methodological flaws (e.g., Belenko, 1998) only served to strengthen the quality and rigor of drug court studies. Some studies (e.g., Banks & Gottfredson, 2004; Gottfredson & Exum, 2002) even incorporated research designs in which drug court participation was treated as a randomly-assigned experimental condition (Belenko, 2002).

By the mid-2000s, a large body of research indicated that, as a whole, drug courts reduced recidivism, increased treatment retention, and provided a cost effective alternative to incarceration. As noted by Marlowe, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2003), “drug courts outperform virtually all other strategies that have been attempted for drug-
involved offenders” (p. 154). However, even the most notable and comprehensive examples of drug court research (e.g., Banks & Gottfredson, 2004; Belenko, 2002; Goldkamp, White, & Robinson, 2001; Gottfredson & Exum, 2002; Turner et al., 2002) failed to include any information regarding the perceptions and characteristics of drug court personnel. To date, nearly a decade after Marlowe et al. (2003) confidently confirmed the success of drug courts and 20 years after their inception, the extant literature is still relatively silent in regard to the very people who manage the day-to-day operations of drug courts. Simply put, the perceptions and attitudes of drug court employees—which likely play a pivotal role in both individual (treatment) and organizational success (efficiency)—have been largely ignored.

Considering the nature of the drug court model, it is reasonable to assert that drug courts operate in hostile territory. Nored, Carlan, and Goodman (2009) explored the attitudes and perceptions of drug court judges and administrators regarding implementation of drug courts in the United States. Implementation activities of these judges and administrators included attending training sessions, applying for federal and/or state grants, requesting budget increases, securing technical assistance, and consulting with external agencies (e.g., law enforcement administrators) and elected officials. In addition to the time and resources necessary for implementation activities, the authors also identified the following barriers to implementation at the federal, state, and local levels: vague laws and/or policies, conflicting agency policies, absence of political and/or administrative support, lack of and poor allocation of funding, deficiency in staff training, absence of belief in the drug court model, interagency conflict and/or noncooperation, poor communication within the agency, lack of technical assistance, and
finally, dealing with those who espouse a *nothing works* belief system. Nored et al.’s (2009) analyses revealed three key points. First, drug court personnel face numerous barriers to implementation at each level of government. Second, the most identifiable barriers across federal, state, and local levels were a lack of funding sources and poor allocation of funding. Finally, judges and administrators identified more barriers at the state and local levels. Thus, for drug courts, financial and political difficulties were salient issues to consider during implementation.

In addition to implementation difficulties, drug court personnel face a variety of obstacles once a court becomes operational. Judges and administrators are faced with the task of ensuring the sustainability of the court when using grant funds as seed money. For judges in particular, this task could involve expending political capital. Judges must also gain and maintain the respect and trust of participants, meting out rewards and punishments when required. Administrators must communicate with treatment, employment, and other assistance-based agencies to track participants’ progress. Case managers must identify and meet a variety of participants’ needs. Probation officers must coordinate mass drug testing and locate participants who abscond from the program. Prosecutors and defense attorneys must work together rather than engage in traditional adversarial processes. Treatment providers must offer timely information to the court regarding treatment progress and relapse. In short, the operation of a typical drug court could easily be characterized as an elaborate juggling act.

Given the implementation barriers, operational complexity, and political issues associated with drug courts, it seems reasonable to assume that drug court personnel are exposed to a variety of stressors. Job stress has been consistently linked to both employee
and organizational performance (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004). Considering the current focus on management and organization in policing and corrections, it is not surprising that many criminal justice practitioners and researchers have focused their attention on job stress and job satisfaction. However, existing research has focused on personnel in the three traditional dimensions of criminal justice: police, courts, and corrections.

It is generally accepted that criminal justice personnel who are in day-to-day contact with offenders (e.g., police officers, correctional officers) experience more stress than most other working individuals (Gershon, Lin, & Li, 2002). However, research has also indicated that, despite many shared stressors, these types of personnel are exposed to stressors unique to their respective environments (Tewksbury & Higgins, 2006). The development of drug courts and other specialized courts (e.g., veteran’s court, DWI/DUI courts, mental health courts) created a new operating environment for police officers, attorneys, judges, probation officers, and substance abuse treatment providers, and arguably established a fourth dimension to criminal justice. Considering that researchers previously noted the relative absence of correctional treatment personnel in stress and satisfaction studies (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Slate, Vogel, & Johnson, 2001), it is unsurprising that drug court personnel (as a homogeneous group) were omitted as well.

Among criminal justice personnel, high job stress has been linked to marital problems, psychological and physical illness, burnout, suicide, substance abuse, and high turnover (Anderson, Litzenberger, & Plecas, 2002; Maslach & Jackson, 1984; McCarty, Zhao, & Garland, 2007; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). The drug court model presents several unique challenges in regard to job stress. Traditional correlates of high job stress, such as high absenteeism and low morale, could likely impede the recovery process of
drug court participants simply by fostering an environment of apathy or negativity. Additionally, other correlates of job stress, such as poor health and high turnover, could negatively impact organizational performance by increasing training and operational costs (issues of particular concern noted by Nored et al., 2009), thus potentially negating any cost benefits netted by the drug courts in lieu of incarceration.

These correlates of high job stress have the potential to negatively impact employees’ performance, offenders’ recovery, and organizational success (e.g., cost effectiveness and completion rates). Given the severity of circumstances under which a drug court operates, poor outcomes at the employee, offender, and/or organizational court levels would likely yield a variety of negative consequences—from incarceration of participants to elimination of the drug court itself. It follows, then, that the subjects of job stress should be of particular importance to the drug court community.

Statement of the Problem

Job stress, in general, can negatively impact organizations, personnel, and clientele. Although there is an abundance of research concerning both drug courts and job stress, job stress of drug court personnel has received little (if any) attention. Concurrently, the overwhelming body of research on job stress among justice professionals has failed to address drug court personnel as an intact, homogenous group. The nature and environment of drug courts also present additional sources of strain and barriers to success. Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that there is a need for research regarding the sources and magnitude of job stress among drug court personnel.
Purpose of the Study

Prior research has clearly indicated the negative effects of job stress on individual and organizational outcomes in numerous areas of employment. This study seeks to examine factors impacting job stress among drug court employees in order to identify methods which could ameliorate that stress, and potentially improve participant and organizational outcomes. This study is guided by four general research questions:

1. Do drug court personnel experience job stress in ways similar to their counterparts in traditional fields?
2. Do perceptions of job stress impact perceived program success?
3. Do drug court personnel experience job stress as a homogenous group?
4. What are the primary sources of job stress for drug court personnel?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

H$_1$: There will be a significant relationship between job stress and perceived program success.

H$_2$: There will be no significant job stress differences among types of drug court personnel.

H$_3$: There will be a significant relationship between organizational stress and job stress.

H$_4$: There will be a significant relationship between task stress and job stress.

H$_5$: There will be a significant relationship between personal characteristics and job stress.
H₆: There will be significant organizational and task-related stress differences among personnel types.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to the following conditions:

1. This study is limited to drug court personnel in the United States.

2. This study is limited to personnel working in drug courts identified by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study are as follows:

1. The sample of drug court personnel will be representative of all drug court personnel in the United States.

2. The data collection instrument will contain valid and reliable metrics.

3. The respondents will return honest and accurate responses.

4. Selected models and metrics of stress will be applicable to drug court personnel.

Definition of Terms

The following terms apply to this study:

**Case manager**: Responsible for coordinating services ancillary to treatment (such as housing, education, and employment assistance) and who are either employed by a drug court or associated treatment agency.

**Client**: An individual receiving mental health and/or substance abuse treatment.

**Clinician**: Responsible for coordinating and/or delivering therapeutic and counseling services.
**Drug court**: Specialized court that utilizes principles of therapeutic jurisprudence rather than traditional adversarial approaches.

**Drug court administrator/coordinator**: Responsible for day-to-day administrative and organizational responsibilities of drug court.

**Drug court personnel**: Any individual working for or with a drug court in a capacity that involves direct contact with drug court clients.

**Job satisfaction**: An employee’s perception of the degree to which his or her job meets his or her self-held positive expectations regarding the position itself; for the purposes of this study, job satisfaction is operationalized using one Likert-type item with five possible responses (Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?).

**Job stress**: Perceived emotional or psychological strain resulting from various sources in the workplace.

**Perceived program success**: Drug court personnel’s estimation of the percentage of participants who successfully complete a drug court program.

**Protective factor**: Variables or characteristics that exhibit negative relationships with job stress.

**Recovery**: Sobriety as an ongoing process rather than a finite moment in time.

**Risk factor**: Variables or characteristics that exhibit positive relationships with job stress.

**Therapeutic jurisprudence**: Theoretical model linking the justice system to mental health and/or substance abuse treatment; actors in the justice system function as therapeutic agents for offenders.
Justification for the Study

Job stress has been linked to marital problems, psychological and physical illness, burnout, suicide, substance abuse, and high turnover (Anderson et al., 2002; Maslach & Jackson, 1984; McCarty et al., 2007; Roberts & Levenson, 2001). As previously mentioned, correlates of high job stress such as high absenteeism and low morale could likely impact drug courts on multiple levels. Negative outcomes related to high job stress have the potential to negatively impact employees’ performance, offenders’ recovery, and organizational success (e.g., cost effectiveness and completion rates). Given the severity of circumstances under which a drug court operates, poor outcomes at the employee, offender, and/or organizational court levels would likely yield a variety of negative consequences—from incarceration of participants to elimination of the drug court itself. It follows, then, that the subjects of job stress should be of particular importance to the drug court community.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

An exhaustive search of the literature on drug courts and job stress yielded no research which treated drug court personnel as an intact, homogenous group. Additionally, justice system-focused stress research varies widely in regard to target populations, theoretical foundations, variables of interest, and conclusions. Given these voids, the purpose of this literature review is two-fold: (a) to provide a general overview of occupational stress research that falls within either the criminal justice or mental health/substance abuse treatment spectrums and (b) to evaluate potential models and metrics within that body of research, which could be adapted to explore the salient research questions of this study.

Occupational Stress in Criminal Justice Professions

Policing

Policing is inherently a dangerous profession. The nature of police work lends itself to hazard, and even the simplest of tasks can entail multiple levels of risk. It is therefore no surprise that policing has been labeled (by some) as one of the most stressful professions (Dantzker, 1986, 1987). Occupational stress has been a popular topic in policing research for quite some time—and with good reason. Stress is linked to a variety of physical and psychological symptoms that are highly undesirable traits in someone charged with protecting the public.

Stinchcomb’s (2004) review of the literature provided several key points that provide a framework for understanding police stress. First, she noted that much research focused on acute (or episodic) incidents such as exposure to trauma, having to make a
life-or-death decision, or being involved in a high-speed pursuit. While these types of incidents are certainly not unusual in policing, she contends they are not the norm. While Stinchcomb acknowledges the potential impact of such events, she carefully points out that most police departments have services to help ameliorate symptoms of stress resulting from traumatic incidents. Moreover, some officers tend to wear that stress as a badge of honor. As such, Stinchcomb hypothesized that the majority of stress in policing is not rooted in potential or actual dangers of the job, but rather within the organizational characteristics and management practices of the police department. Lastly, Stinchcomb highlighted the fact that organizational stress resulted from high-frequency exposure to low-intensity antecedents (as opposed to acute episodic incidents which are low-frequency/high-intensity events).

In a rather comprehensive examination of police officers from 11 departments in seven states, Morash, Kwak, and Haarr (2006) focused specifically on workplace-related stressors. Of particular interest were gender- and race-related issues such as physical underestimation, bias, and sexual harassment. Initial analyses aimed to determine if gender differences existed in regard to job stress, workplace problems, and support. Bivariate analysis revealed that female officers reported significantly higher perceptions of job stress, physical underestimation, lack of influence, bias, and language, sexual, and racial harassment. Subsequent multivariate analyses were utilized to identify individual predictors of job stress for male and female officers separately; the results were surprising. Two factors were significant predictors of job stress for both male and female officers: (a) perceptions of bias (based on race, gender, age, or ethnicity) within the department and (b) language harassment (e.g., cursing, inappropriate jokes, etc.). For
male officers, however, five additional predictors surfaced: (a) perceptions of lack of influence, (b) stress over stigma and appearance, (c) lack of family support, (d) high property crime rates (within officers’ areas of operation), and (e) minority status (Morash et al., 2006). The authors also note that the model for male officers explained far more job stress variance than the female model, and further concluded that their results “suggest that interventions—including strategies of management, supervision, and training—to reduce workplace problems, particularly bias among coworkers, could have a substantial effect on police officer stress” (Morash et al., 2006, p. 554). Additionally, as regards the gap in explained variance between male and female models, Morash et al. relate the need to explore other female-specific variables that contribute to job stress (e.g., family structure, see Kurtz, 2012).

In a similar study, McCarty et al. (2007) explored factors contributing to job stress among police officers, as well as the potential interaction effect of gender on job stress. These researchers focused on four general sources of job stress that frequently appear in the literature: (a) work environment, (b) bureaucratic and organizational stress, (c) availability of peer support/trust, and (d) coping mechanisms. Using a sample of Baltimore police officers and an instrument adapted from other various job stress research, multiple Likert-type items were used to create summated scales measuring dependent (workplace stress and burnout) and independent variables (negative workplace exposures, unfairness, camaraderie, and use of constructive/destructive coping mechanisms). Descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses indicated there were no statistically significant differences between male and female officers’ workplace stress or burnout. Four multivariate models were developed to assess the relationships between
workplace stress, burnout, the aforementioned independent variables, and demographic characteristics (e.g., education). In regard to workplace stress among male officers, McCarty et al. (2007) found that negative exposures, unfairness, and use of destructive coping mechanisms significantly increased workplace stress. Camaraderie and use of constructive coping mechanisms significantly decreased workplace stress. For female officers, workplace stress was significantly increased by unfairness and use of destructive coping mechanisms and significantly decreased by camaraderie. Standardized coefficients indicated that use of destructive coping mechanisms had the most impact on workplace stress regardless of gender. Demographic factors had no significant impact on workplace stress in either model. Both male and female models explained a modest (yet statistically significant) portion of workplace stress.

McCarty et al.’s (2007) models assessing factors contributing to burnout were identical to the workplace stress model with the exception of incorporating workplace stress as an additional independent variable. For both male and female officers, burnout was significantly increased by negative exposures, use of destructive coping mechanisms, and workplace stress. Camaraderie and use of constructive coping mechanisms also significantly decreased burnout for both male and female officers. However, perception of unfairness was found to increase burnout for male officers only, while burnout among female officers was uniquely affected by race/ethnicity (being African American). The inclusion of workplace stress in the burnout model yielded two interesting results. First, standardized coefficients indicated that workplace stress was now the most influential factor in both male and female burnout models. Second, although the amount of explained variance in burnout was higher than the explained variance in workplace stress,
the magnitude of change in variance for female officers was far less than their male counterparts and remained higher than the male model. McCarty et al. (2007) posited that though female and male officers shared several common factors, the larger proportions of explained variance in workplace stress and burnout among female officers might indicate that those factors are especially salient in predicting stress and burnout among female officers. Put simply, the researchers concluded that while male and female officers share a variety of characteristics that might impact stress or burnout, unique factors affecting female officers should be used to explore targeted intervention and/or assistance policies (thus reflecting the conclusion of Morash et al., 2006).

Dowler and Arai (2008) also found evidence to support the notion that male and female officers experience stress in similar ways. While their research indicated that female officers experienced significantly more stress than male officers, multivariate analyses revealed that increased perceptions of work-related problems and heightened emotional responses to stressful situations (during work) were the strongest predictors of job stress for both genders. Moreover, perceptions of increased availability of debriefing outlets were associated with lower levels of job stress for both male and female officers.

Hassell, Archbold, and Stinchman (2011) also found few differences between male and female police officers in regard to job stress. When comparing perceptions regarding job stress and common sources of job stress for male and female officers, Hassell et al. found only one statistically significant result: female officers were more likely to perceive that their physical abilities were underestimated. Multivariate analysis indicated that job stress among both male and female officers was not significantly impacted by any commonly-accepted antecedents in the literature (e.g., negative
perceptions of the organization, gender, experience, etc.). The only significant predictor of job stress among their sample of officers was the perceived need for a mentoring program.

Kurtz (2012) provided another perspective regarding the relationship of gender and stress among police officers. Kurtz’s research confirmed that, as an intact group, female officers exhibited significantly higher levels of job stress than male officers. However, when comparing job stress across gender and family status (e.g., marital status and children), Kurtz found no significant difference in stress levels between male and female officers who were not married and/or had no children. Additional analyses utilizing separate regression models for male and female officers revealed several interesting results, of which the most noteworthy was that being the subject of an internal investigation was the most powerful predictor of job stress for both male and female officers. Other significant predictors of male officer stress included knowing the victim or offender and perceptions of leniency within the department. Having a college degree, increased unit cooperation, and increased family support were all significant factors associated with reduced stress. For male officers, being married with children was negatively associated with job stress (though this factor was not statistically significant).

Kurtz’s (2012) model for female officers revealed further evidence of a link between family structure and stress: being married with children significantly increased stress levels for female officers. Violence during arrest was also a significant predictor of increased stress for female officers. Like their male counterparts, increased family support was a significant predictor of decreased stress. Kurtz concluded that family characteristics and the constraints of traditional domestic duties associated with marriage
and children may play a considerable role in the stress of female officers. The catch, Kurtz noted, is that policies aiming to make women equals among their fellow officers (e.g., gender-neutral language, recruiting, etc.) might need to be augmented by policies that acknowledge and can remediate problems associated with family life, yet any policy shift reflecting favoritism towards those officers with a family (in particular, women) will likely result in increased perceptions of leniency (which is a significant factor increasing stress among male officers). These organizational issues, specifically the male-oriented nature of policing, “question the effectiveness of any formal organizational policy to address stress” (Kurtz, 2012, p. 81).

Other research has confirmed that organizational characteristics are a primary source of stress for police officers. Noblet, Rodwell, and Allisey (2009) studied a state police agency in Australia that had recently implemented a series of management reforms. When controlling for gender, age, and tenure, Noblet et al. found that increased perceptions of organizational social support and control over their job were the most significant factors contributing to psychological wellbeing. Decreased perception of their job as high-demand also increased psychological wellbeing. Moreover, those factors accounted for a large portion of the explained variance in psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization.

Summerlin, Oehme, Stern, and Valentine (2010) also concluded that organizational characteristics were of primary concern. In their study, both police and correctional officers reported more stress due to organizational issues than operational duties. Of note, though, is the fact that stress perceptions of police and correctional
officers were fairly similar in regard to operational duties, yet correctional officers reported more stress over organizational issues than police officers.

**Corrections**

Correctional officers work in a variety of atmospheres. Probation and parole officers’ duties are centered in the field or in an office. Juvenile detention officers, jailers, and prison guards work within the confines of correctional institutions with a variety of security levels. Given the far reaching scope of corrections and the abundance of research on stress and corrections, it was not feasible to include an exhaustive review of the literature. Instead, the researcher attempted to highlight more recent works concerning correctional personnel and job stress. Though probation officers comprise the ‘correctional’ personnel of drug courts, this review also included research regarding staff at correctional institutions.

Slate, Wells, and Johnson (2003) examined multiple dimensions of stress among probation officers in a large southern state. Their research, which utilized a fairly large sample size (n = 636), included metrics for sources of external (outside the agency), internal (within the agency), job (duty-related), personal (e.g., family-related), and physical (health-related) stress. Slate et al. were particularly interested in officers’ perceptions regarding their ability to take part in work-related decision making and how those perceptions, as well as other sources of stress, influenced perceived physical stress. Job opinion (satisfaction) and demographic factors were also included in their analyses.

Bivariate analysis revealed that physical stress was significantly and positively associated with being female, tenure, and higher levels of total stress (a metric assessing stress from the other dimensions mentioned above); significant variables negatively
associated with physical stress included positive perceptions about the job and increased perceptions of being able to participate in decision making (Slate et al., 2003). In an effort to better understand the relationships among these variables, the authors utilized path analysis to determine temporal ordering and explain which factors truly impacted physical stress directly and indirectly. Results indicated that total stress had the largest significant direct effect on physical stress, followed by gender, tenure, and job opinion (respectively). Interestingly, perceptions regarding participatory decision making did not have a significant direct effect on physical stress. However, those perceptions did have a direct effect on both total stress and job opinion, leading to the conclusion that an atmosphere of participatory decision making increases positive perceptions about the job and decreases stress in general—which in turn decreases the symptoms of physical stress. Slate et al. concluded that their results underscored the importance of participatory management and its potential role in mediating multiple dimensions of stress among probation officers.

Building upon the earlier work of and utilizing the same data as Slate et al. (2003), Wells, Colbert, and Slate (2006) sought to further explain the relationship between gender and stress of probation officers. Slate et al.’s sample was particularly suited for this research, in that females slightly outnumbered males. Wells et al. focused on determining if significant differences between males and females existed across multiple dimensions of stress and whether or not gender was a significant predictor of any of those dimensions. Initial analyses indicated that female probation officers exhibited significantly higher levels of physical stress than males. However, male officers reported significantly higher levels of internal, job, and personal stress. Wells et al. then
generated four multivariate models to determine significant predictors of internal, external, job, and personal stress. Results showed that gender was not a significant predictor of any stress dimension. In fact, all four dimensions shared the same three significant predictive factors: all measures of stress were positively related to being in a managerial position and negatively related to increased job satisfaction and perception of a participatory atmosphere. Perception of a participatory atmosphere was the strongest predictor in all four models and confirmed most of the conclusions reached by Slate and colleagues (2003). Moreover, Wells et al. (2006) noted that, in their sample, more men occupied management or supervisory positions than women. Taking this into account, they suggested that stress differences observed between males and females were potentially reflective of position rather than gender (a notion confirmed by the four multivariate models) and that factors such as job satisfaction, organizational characteristics (e.g., participatory management), and position could play a mediating role between gender and job stress of probation officers.

Pitts (2007) utilized a unique approach to examining the relationship between probation and parole officer stress and education. Rather than measuring education in terms of years or degrees, Pitts operationalized education as an opinion by asking officers to indicate whether or not their educational experience had prepared them for the job. Pitts focused primarily on examining stress differences between officers who felt prepared by education and those who did not feel prepared. A series of bivariate analyses indicated that officers who did not feel that their education prepared them for the job consistently exhibited significantly more manifestations of stress (i.e., physical symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, alcohol/drug abuse, etc.) and experienced significantly higher
levels of internal, external, job/task, personal, and total stress. Pitts concluded that probation and parole administrators need to reconsider the relative impact of education on job stress and make policy adjustments to hiring practices (e.g., requiring a criminal justice, social work, or psychology degree).

In a study of federal probation officers, Lee, Joo, and Johnson (2009) examined the impact of participatory climate on job satisfaction, internal (organizational) stress, and turnover intention. Lee et al. hypothesized that, when controlling for demographic factors, participatory climate would have both direct and indirect effects on turnover intention. Preliminary analysis exploring significant relationships indicated that turnover intention was negatively related to participatory climate and job satisfaction and positively related to internal stress and tenure. Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that only three variables were significant predictors of turnover intention: tenure, internal stress, and job satisfaction. In order to further examine the relationship between turnover intention, internal stress, and job satisfaction, the authors estimated a more complete model using path analysis. Results pointed to a more complex relationship than the hypothesized model. Participatory climate, while having no direct effect on turnover intention, had the strongest direct effects on internal stress (negative) and job satisfaction (positive). At the same time, internal stress and job satisfaction had the strongest direct effects on turnover intention. Lee et al. concluded that participatory climate is an important factor in predicting internal stress and job satisfaction and, as such, should also be considered an important factor with regard to its effect—even if indirect—on turnover intentions.
The “imprisonment binge” noted by Irwin (2005, p. 8) placed a fairly heavy burden on correctional institutions. Correctional officers, perhaps now more than ever before, work within overcrowded and underfunded facilities housing a population of addicts, thieves, sexual predators, and murderers. It is not surprising that much (if not most) research on job stress of correctional employees is focused on institutional staff.

Armstrong and Griffin (2004), in a study of correctional officers and treatment personnel (e.g., medical doctors, priests, mental health professionals, etc.), examined the relationship between perceptions of job stress, physical symptoms of stress (e.g., headaches, stomach problems, etc.), job characteristics, and demographic variables. Initial analyses indicated no significant physical or job stress differences between correctional officers and treatment personnel. The authors estimated separate regression models to compare significant factors impacting physical symptoms of stress and perceived job stress for correctional and treatment personnel. Tenure and role problems were significant predictors of job stress for both personnel groups, and age was an additional predictor of job stress for treatment personnel. Organizational and coworker support, intrinsic reward, and environmental safety were significant protective factors negatively related to job stress for both groups. Tenure and role problems were also significant predictors of physical stress symptoms for both groups, and organizational support and intrinsic reward were significant protective factors negatively associated with physical stress symptoms. Coworker support and environmental safety were significant protective factors against physical symptoms of stress only for correctional officers. Age (older employees) and gender (males) of both correctional and treatment personnel were significant factors associated with fewer symptoms in the physical stress model.
Armstrong and Griffin’s (2004) results suggested that job stress (at least for correctional personnel) is dependent mainly upon organizational characteristics rather than personal characteristics or the job itself. This was evidenced by the similarities between two groups of employees serving a client base in very different manners.

In a study similar to that of Armstrong and Griffin (2004), Lambert, Hogan, and Cluse-Tolar’s (2007) research focused on job stress among prison employees. Lambert et al., though, chose to include all categories of employees (e.g., food service staff). Correlation analysis indicated that age, tenure, perceived dangerousness, and role stress were all significantly and positively associated with job stress; significant negatively associated variables included supervision, job variety, and feedback. Multivariate analysis produced slightly different results, however. Age, perceived job dangerousness, job involvement, and role stress were significant predictors of job stress. Role stress was, by far, the strongest predictor of job stress. Gender (being male) and feedback were significant predictors of lower job stress. Lambert and colleagues concluded that personal characteristics had little impact on job stress and that job and organizational characteristics had far more explanatory power.

Building upon Lambert et al.’s (2007) earlier work, Lambert, Hogan, and Tucker (2009) conducted additional research on role stress and its potential causes. Personal, job, and organizational characteristics of correctional employees (the same sample used by Lambert et al., 2007) were measured and assessed for their relative impact on role stress. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that low tenure, job classification (correctional officer), and positive perceptions regarding input into decision making, supervision, formalization, integration, and communication were all significant predictors of low role
stress. The authors’ results confirmed their earlier conclusions regarding organizational characteristics and their impact on stress, and also suggested the possibility that interplay between organizational characteristics and role stress is an important factor to consider when assessing job stress.

Given the ambiguous results of prior research regarding demographic characteristics, Cheeseman and Downey (2012) opted to approach their research from a cultural perspective by operationalizing age as generation (traditional, baby boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y). Their study focused on the interactions between job stress, job satisfaction, and demographic characteristics (i.e., no other organizational or job characteristic metrics were included in their analyses). Their results revealed some interesting relationships, primarily that low job stress was the most powerful significant predictor of job satisfaction; membership in the traditional and baby boomer generations also were significant predictors of job satisfaction. Conversely, high job satisfaction and gender (being male) were dominant significant predictors of low job stress. Race, marital status, and education had no significant impact on job stress or job satisfaction.

Cheeseman and Downey’s (2012) results indicated that high job satisfaction was dependent upon low job stress and generational characteristics (membership in older generations) and that low job stress was best explained by high job satisfaction and gender (being male). This suggested that while demographic characteristics could increase job stress directly (e.g., being female), their indirect effects via other powerful predictors such as job satisfaction should also be considered in predictive models. Cheeseman and Downey concluded that increasing job satisfaction would best be
accomplished by decreasing job stress of younger employees and that decreasing job stress would necessitate increasing job satisfaction for female employees.

Research conducted by Blevins, Cullen, Frank, Sundt, and Holmes (2006) explored the relative impacts of individual and workplace characteristics on job stress and satisfaction levels of juvenile correctional employees. Blevins et al.’s results indicated that sources of job stress and satisfaction for correctional employees working with juveniles were similar to those of their counterparts working with adults. Multivariate analyses indicated that perceived dangerousness and role conflict were significant predictors of job stress when controlling for demographic characteristics. Job satisfaction was best predicted by age (older), race (white), tenure (less time on the job), dangerousness (lower perception), role conflict (less conflict), and supervisory support. Blevins et al., noting prior research, also estimated models that included job stress and satisfaction as independent variables in their corresponding models and found that, while they were significant predictors of each other, their inclusion added little explained variance and did not change the relative impacts of the significant variables in the initial models.

Blevins et al.’s (2006) results were consistent with research regarding adult correctional staff job stress. Just like their peers who work with an adult population, sources of job stress for juvenile correctional workers stemmed mainly from organizational or job-related characteristics. Additionally, those same characteristics, along with demographic factors, impacted job satisfaction. Thus, for correctional workers in general, it appears that job stress is directly influenced by workplace and
organizational characteristics and indirectly influenced by individual characteristics through job satisfaction.

Courts

As noted by Maute (1992), “The legal profession must recognize that job-related stress impairs both the quality of practice and life for many practitioners. Regardless of the practice context, lawyers experience high levels of stress which may undercut their effectiveness, shorten their legal careers or their lives” (p. 797). Compared to other criminal justice professions, the availability of extant literature concerning job stress among legal professionals is, to say the least, sparse. The topic of judicial stress, for example, has received attention in professional publications (e.g., Coyle, 1995), yet there is little empirical data on the subject. Eells and Showalter (1994) noted such a gap in their study assessing the sources and impacts of stress for trial judges. Eells and Showalter aimed to surpass previous research efforts, which had mostly used anecdotal and case-study data (e.g., Zimmerman, 1981), and explore common causes and effects of stress among judges in the U.S.

Eells and Showalter (1994) measured both perceptions and self-reported physical symptoms of stress among judges. Preliminary analysis indicated that most judicial stress came from issues regarding attorneys (e.g., disrespectful or unprepared) or difficulties in decision making (e.g., cases in which no clear solution existed or in which a great deal of judicial discretion was exercised). Eells and Showalter then used factor analysis to identify five latent traits that impacted judges’ perceptions regarding stress: type of case, litigant, purpose of decision, values conflict, and seriousness of the offense. Further analysis revealed that caseload backlog, pressure to move cases, and reduced control of
the workday were significant correlates of both perceived and physically symptomatic stress. Additionally they found significant correlations between judicial stress and negative psychological symptoms (e.g., general disinterestedness) and cognitive abilities (e.g., constantly double-checking tasks). Eells and Showalter concluded that their results, in general, reflected Zimmerman’s (1981) conclusions. Specifically, they noted that stressors regarding caseloads and the workday were particularly important factors because they illustrate the fact that judicial stress is primarily task-oriented.

Chamberlain and Miller’s (2009) qualitative work on judicial stress offered a striking and robust view of judicial stress. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to explore the impacts of secondary traumatic stress, safety concerns, and burnout on nine judges in a single district. Comments from Chamberlain and Miller’s interviews revealed some personal insight into judicial stress that, admittedly, would be difficult to capture in a quantitative study. One judge stated:

It (making a decision) is not altogether so clear and somebody usually benefits by your decision and somebody is usually harmed by it in some ways: it costs them money, or they lose property, they go to jail, or are on probation. And it’s so stressful to me to make those decisions because I tend to go out of here and think about them for a day or two, or wake up in the middle of the night and wonder if it’s the right thing. (p. 220)

Chamberlain and Miller concluded that their sample of judges was particularly susceptible to stress stemming from heavy caseloads, decision making, and public opinion.
Other research has been focused on stress among attorneys. Early work by Jackson, Turner, and Brief (1987) recognized the lack of research regarding job stress among attorneys and focused on burnout symptoms in a sample of public service lawyers (attorneys serving indigent clients). Their results indicated that role conflict and caseload were significant predictors of job stress (emotional exhaustion). Jackson and colleagues stressed the importance of recognizing job stress among public service employees, given the potential consequences that could arise from diminished performance due to burnout.

Schenker, Eaton, Green, and Samuels (1997) studied the work habits, job stress, and reproductive health of a sample of female lawyers. Women working more hours per week were more likely to report being stressed by their jobs. Additionally, family characteristics (e.g., being married and/or pregnant) and tenure were associated with higher levels of job stress. Fairly recent research by James (2008) examined job stress and job satisfaction of lawyers in Australia. James concluded that organizational characteristics, long hours, and poor mentoring accounted for the majority of job stress experienced by the sample of attorneys.

Occupational Stress in Treatment Professions

Treatment personnel are a vital part of drug courts, primarily because treatment retention is an important factor in predicting participant success (see Gottfredson & Exum, 2002). The relationship between a drug court and its treatment providers is essential to ensuring both treatment and program success. Clinicians and case managers that treat drug court clients deal with burdens and responsibilities that are ancillary to their normal duties. They must communicate with their respective drug courts on a regular basis to ensure that treatment noncompliance and/or relapse can be immediately
addressed. Additionally, they are dealing with a situation in which relapse can lead to clients spending time in jail or prison. They also (in many cases) take time away from the workday to attend drug court on a regular basis. Many clinicians and case managers also attend drug court staffing meetings to discuss participant progress. Put simply, treatment personnel are vital members of the drug court team (even though they normally are not employed by the court itself).

Capps, Myers, and Helms (2004) examined factors impacting job stress among treatment personnel in therapeutic communities (TCs) (see Hiller, Knight, & Simpson, 1999 for more information) within multiple California prisons. Capps et al. hypothesized that differences in education and substance abuse history were important factors in understanding sources of job stress among TC employees. Results of their analyses indicated that formal training (e.g., college degree or certification) and prior history of substance abuse had no significant direct effects on duty-related or environmental stress. However, there were two significant—and opposite—interaction effects observed in the sample. Exposure to formal training mitigated both types of stress for personnel with no history of substance abuse and increased both types of stress for personnel reporting a history of substance abuse. The researchers concluded that role conflict resulting from foundational differences between training and life experience likely explained the interaction effect and its differential impact on job stress for personnel reporting a history of substance abuse.

Broome, Knight, Edwards, and Flynn (2009) examined burnout among counselors employed by outpatient drug treatment facilities. Multivariate analyses revealed that positive perceptions regarding organizational leadership were negatively related to
burnout, and that higher caseloads increased symptoms of burnout indirectly through negative perceptions of organizational leadership. Curiously, symptoms of burnout were impacted by interaction between caseload and rates of referral from the criminal justice system, in that the effect of caseload was essentially nonexistent for programs with higher rates of referral from the criminal justice system. Broome et al. concluded that their results confirmed the importance of both environment- and task-oriented stressors in predicting burnout.

Duraisingam, Pidd, and Roche (2009) found that workload and client pressure were significant positive correlates of job stress. Significant factors negatively related to job stress included autonomy, organizational support, salary, and job satisfaction. Duraisingam et al. found no significant job stress differences with regard to demographic characteristics. Multivariate analysis indicated that job stress was the only positive predictor of turnover intention; significant protective (negatively related) factors for turnover intention included age (older), job satisfaction, organizational support, and salary. Duraisingam and colleagues emphasized the need to recognize the impact that job stress can have on employee health, as well as potential negative organizational ramifications (e.g., reduced productivity due to turnover) that can result from employees’ job stress.

Wallace, Lee, and Lee (2010) analyzed predictors and mediators of burnout among sexual and substance abuse counselors. Initial analysis indicated that workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity were significant predictors of burnout in the absence of mediating factors. Workload and role conflict remained significant predictors of burnout when mediating factors were introduced into the model; increased utilization of self-
distraction and disengagement were coping strategies significantly predicting burnout. Additionally, active coping skills significantly lessened the impact of workload on burnout. Wallace et al. noted that their results suggested burnout was primarily related to factors associated with high job demand and low job control and/or resources.

Conceptualizing Common Sources of Job Stress

A review of prior research on job stress among criminal justice and treatment professionals yielded varying (and sometimes conflicting) results. While no universal theme regarding job stress emerged, the literature did offer some insight as to potential sources of job stress. The central focus of this study is to determine whether or not drug court personnel experience job stress in similar ways from similar sources. It follows, then, that classifying general sources of job stress identified in the review above will help guide the process of selecting a job stress model with metrics that could be adapted to suit drug court personnel.

Though focused on correctional officers, two studies provided a generalized foundation for exploring general sources of job stress in this study. First, recognizing that correctional officers likely are exposed to similar sources of stress as others in the general workforce, Triplett, Mullings, and Scarborough (1996) sought to examine job stress among prison employees through metrics adapted from occupational research. They identified eight broad sources of stress: role ambiguity, role conflict, quantitative role overload, qualitative role overload, career development, under-utilization, overwork, and safety concerns. A series of multivariate analyses indicated that safety concerns, qualitative role overload, working with the same inmates, promotion, and shift changes were associated with increased job stress. Later examination of their data also identified
work-home conflict as a source of job stress for female correctional officers. The utility of Triplett et al.’s work does not lie in the results, but rather the conceptualization and use of multiple dimensions of job stress sources that are generally applicable to any occupation. This method of examining job stress would be particularly applicable to drug court personnel, given the range of occupations necessary to sustain drug court operations.

Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) compiled an extensive literature review that proved to be a second study of particular interest. Their work provided a compilation of results from 43 studies on job stress among correctional officers in nine countries. Their review of the literature indicated that role problems, work overload, demanding social contacts, and poor social status were the most represented sources of job stress. Again, the results were not the salient issue of interest, but rather their identification and conceptualization of sources of job stress. Assessment of the literature pointed to 10 sources of job stress for correctional officers: high workload, lack of autonomy, underutilization, lack of job variety, role problems, demanding social contacts, uncertainty, safety risks, poor social status, and inadequate pay.

The works of Triplett et al. (1996), Triplett, Mullings, and Scarborough (1999), and Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) are generally concomitant with the previously reviewed research concerning police officers, corrections officers, judges, attorneys, and treatment personnel. The sources of job stress identified in the previously reviewed literature—as well as those classified by Triplett et al. (1996, 1999) and Schaufeli and Peeters (2000)—can be further reduced to represent three main sources of job stress: organizational stressors, task-related stressors, and personal characteristics.
Organizational Sources of Stress

As Stinchcomb (2004) noted in a review of the literature on policing, much research has indicated that low-intensity/high-frequency events occurring at the organizational level have a substantial impact on job stress. Indeed, other research confirmed the importance of organizational sources of stress in the fields of policing (Dowler & Arai, 2008; Hassell et al., 2011; McCarty et al., 2007; Morash et al., 2006; Noblet et al., 2009; Summerlin et al., 2010), corrections (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Blevins et al., 2006; Lambert et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Slate et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2006), law (James, 2008; Schenker et al., 1997), and substance abuse/mental health treatment (Broome et al., 2009; Duraisingam et al., 2009; Farmer, Clancy, Oyefeso, & Rassool, 2002; Wallace et al., 2010). Though definitions and descriptions varied across these studies, the identified sources of organizational stress generally were all tied to policy, procedure, and managerial style. Others identified the atmosphere of the job itself (e.g., racial or sexual harassment, perceptions of bias, etc.) as a source of job stress. In general, organizational sources of stress are environmental, and personnel have little to no control over them.

Task-related Stress

Each area of the criminal justice system is responsible for different aspects of public safety. Police officers investigate crimes and make arrests, the judicial process determines guilt or innocence, and corrections agencies are responsible for housing and (in many cases) subsequently tracking convicted offenders. Drug courts incorporate the responsibilities of judicial and corrections agencies along with those of treatment agencies.
Though these agencies work together under the same organizational structure, each is accountable for distinct responsibilities. Additionally, personnel are tasked with different roles and duties within their respective agencies when acting on behalf of the drug court. For example, probation officers may spend more time with a drug court participant than a normal probationer, or a counselor may use a specific treatment model for drug court participants. It seems likely that these potential differences regarding roles and tasks, combined with other difficulties such as intra-agency communication and cooperation, could be an additional source of job stress.

Though some (e.g., Stinchcomb, 2004; Summerlin et al., 2010) have noted that task-related stress is not as impactful as organizational stressors, it is nonetheless a component of job stress. Dowler and Arai (2008), for example, found that escalating emotional responses to stressful situations significantly impacted job stress among police officers. Kurtz (2012) noted that knowing a victim or offender and violence during an arrest significantly increased job stress for police officers. Other research indicated that safety concerns (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Blevins et al., 2006) and lack of job variety (Lambert et al., 2007) contribute to correctional officer job stress.

For judges and attorneys, task-related stress appears to be the salient source of job stress. Eells and Showalter (1994) concluded that judicial stress is task-oriented, and Chamberlain and Miller’s (2009) qualitative work illustrated the complexity involved in the judicial decision-making process. Jackson et al. (1987) concluded that caseloads and role conflicts were problematic sources of job stress for attorneys. Attorneys also experienced job stress due to working long hours (James, 2008; Schenker et al., 1997). Role conflict (Capps et al., 2004; Wallace et al., 2010) and caseloads (Broome et al.,
2009; Duraisingam et al., 2009) have been identified as sources of job stress for treatment providers. Wallace et al.’s (2010) research in particular noted that perceptions of high job demand and low job control had the most impact on job stress and burnout.

Task-related sources of stress are also problematic for treatment personnel. A review of the research thus far has revealed that role conflict and/or role ambiguity (Capps et al., 2004; Wallace et al., 2010), caseloads (Broome et al., 2009; Wallace et al., 2010), referral sources (Broome et al., 2009), and client pressure (Duraisingam et al., 2009) were significantly associated with job stress among treatment professionals. Curiously, other research has indicated that job stress among treatment personnel has little to do with problems associated with clients (Farmer et al., 2002).

Personal Characteristics Associated with Stress

The impact of personal characteristics on job stress among criminal justice professionals is, to say the least, debatable. Demographic factors, such as gender (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Dowler & Arai, 2008; Slate et al., 2003), race (Morash et al., 2006), education (Capps et al., 2004; Kurtz, 2012; Pitts, 2007), and age (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012; Lambert et al., 2007) have been linked to job stress in criminal justice professionals. Much of the same research, however, indicated that demographic factors may not have direct effects on job stress, but rather an indirect effect through interactions with other sources of job stress, such as perceptions of physical underestimation or bias (Morash et al., 2006), position (e.g., supervisory duties, see Wells et al., 2006), other job perceptions (e.g., job satisfaction, see Cheeseman & Downey, 2012), or lifestyle (e.g., family structure, see Kurtz, 2012). Other previously
reviewed studies indicated that demographic factors have little to no effect on job stress (Hassell et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2009; McCarty et al., 2007; Noblet et al., 2009).

In addition to demographic characteristics, other characteristics related to personality and lifestyles have been identified as contributors to job stress. Low family support and family structure (Kurtz, 2012; Morash et al., 2006; Schenker et al., 1997), escalated emotional responses to stressful situations (Dowler & Arai, 2008), and use of destructive coping mechanisms (McCarty et al., 2007; Wallace et al., 2010) have all been linked to job stress.

**Existing Metrics and Models of Occupational Stress**

Generally, stress can be defined as negative physical and/or psychological responses to stimuli. Andreassen, Ursin, and Erikson (2007), in an attempt to simplify the concept, defined stress as how people “react to challenges and threats based on their expectancies to the stimuli and to their available responses” (p. 618). Thus, the term stress, for the purposes of this study, should be conceptualized as a state of psychological distress caused by negative stimuli (stressors).

As previously mentioned, there is no existing model for exploring job stress among drug court personnel. Moreover, most existing models applicable to job stress among criminal justice and treatment professionals are tailored to fit their respective professional atmosphere. For example, job dangerousness and safety concerns are certainly legitimate factors if included in job stress models for police and correctional officers, yet inclusion of these factors in a model assessing job stress among judges, attorneys, or treatment personnel would likely be less meaningful. Thus, the exploration of job stress among drug court employees required conceptualization of a new model. In
order to conceptualize the framework for the new model, three existing models of job stress from service, corrections, and treatment professions were selected for review.

*Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)*

In an effort to better understand organizational factors linked with burnout, Maslach and Jackson (1984) developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory—Human Services Survey (MBI). The MBI utilized three subscales to identify the latent trait of burnout in service-oriented personnel, which is often characterized by depressive symptoms (Schaufeli, Bakker, Hoogduin, & Kladler, 2001) and diminished occupational performance.

Generally, burnout can be defined as negative emotional responses resulting from continued exposure to a high-stress work environment (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). More specifically, Maslach and Jackson (1981, 1984) noted three distinct characteristics of burnout: (a) general emotional and physical exhaustion, (b) increased detachment and cynicism with regard to patients, and (c) loss of confidence in occupational performance and increased negative self-perception. Subscales of the MBI identified burnout as increased emotional exhaustion (EE), increased depersonalization (DP), and decreased personal accomplishment (PA). Maslach and Jackson’s subscale of emotional exhaustion has been largely utilized by researchers to quantify job stress (Duraisingam et al., 2009). Moreover, the emotional exhaustion subscale has been used as a validation tool in the development of occupation-specific measures of job stress (e.g., Farmer et al., 2002).

Blevins et al. (2006) explored job stress among correctional officers working in juvenile detention and treatment facilities in Ohio. Blevins et al. noted that prior research had demonstrated that two models of inmate behavior were also theoretically applicable
to correctional officers. The first, deemed the importation model, postulates that correctional officers’ life experiences and unique personal characteristics shape the manner in which they react to experiences on the job. The second model, prisonization, holds that reactions to correctional work are shaped by organizational and work/role characteristics (e.g., the workplace itself influences behavior). Blevins et al.’s review of prior studies identified five individual traits associated with job stress in the importation model (age, education, race, gender, and correctional orientation) and four organizational traits in the prisonization model (role conflict, perception of danger, correctional experience, and supervisory support). Blevins and colleagues then examined the relative impacts of importation and prisonization factors on job stress and job satisfaction among their sample of correctional officers. The results indicated that the prisonization model was far more effective in predicting job stress. Only role conflict and perceptions of danger were significant factors associated with job stress. None of the individual factors were significantly related to job stress. However, Blevins et al. did note that age (older) and race (white officers) were significant predictors of job satisfaction, and that high job satisfaction was significantly associated with low job stress (thus reflecting the earlier mentioned idea that individual characteristics may indirectly influence job stress through interactions with other variables).

Addiction Employees’ Stress Scale (AESS)

Farmer et al. (2002) developed the Addiction Employees’ Stress Scale (AESS) to explore the nature of stress among substance abuse treatment personnel. Primarily, Farmer et al. justified the creation of the AESS based on two factors. First, earlier research regarding substance abuse treatment personnel found no negative correlations
between job stress and job satisfaction (Farmer, 1995). This result indicated that high
levels of job stress were not necessarily indicative of low job satisfaction (and
counterintuitive to conceptualizing job stress as defined by Maslach & Jackson, 1984).
Second, Farmer et al. considered the importance of identifying occupational-specific
stressors in order to gain some insight into organizational decision making, policies
regarding employee assistance programs, and stress resulting from interactions with
clients. Using factor analysis, Farmer et al. identified 25 unique items corresponding to
two concepts—organizational demand and client demand—which accurately and
consistently measured sources of job stress among treatment personnel. Results indicated
that factors associated with organizational demand were significantly associated with
multiple measures of job stress, while client-related stressors had little to no impact.

*Application of Existing Frameworks to a New Job Stress Model for Drug Courts*

The development of a new model for drug court personnel was necessary for
several reasons. First, Maslach and Jackson’s (1984) MBI is not an open source
instrument; and, as such, licensing costs were fairly steep. Additionally, the MBI is
intended for use among a very broad base of professions (thus making it difficult to
examine task-specific factors). Blevins et al.’s (2006) model—while certainly appropriate
in scope (e.g., inclusion of personnel at both treatment and detention facilities)—focused
only on correctional personnel. Drug courts do serve a corrective purpose and employ
correctional personnel, but they are treatment-focused. Farmer et al.’s (2002) AESS
model looked promising but did not address commonly recognized stress sources in the
criminal justice literature (e.g., safety concerns, correctional orientation, etc.). All three
models, however, offered utility in selecting criteria for creating a basic framework for a
model of job stress applicable to drug courts. An initial conceptualization of that framework is provided in the following chapter.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Considering that high job stress has been linked to negative individual and organizational outcomes across multiple fields of employment, it seemed reasonable to presume that an examination of factors previously shown to increase or ameliorate job stress would provide a general model for increasing positive outcomes for national, regional, state-wide, and local agencies responsible for the administration and development of drug courts. This chapter outlines the conceptualization for such a job stress model geared specifically toward drug court personnel.

Research Design

This study was exploratory in nature and utilized an ex post facto research design to examine magnitudes of impact for various correlates of job stress among drug court personnel. Traditional exploratory statistical techniques such as bivariate analyses, correlation matrices, and linear regression models served as exploratory tools and were used to test the hypotheses of this study. The ultimate goal was to develop a suitable job stress model for drug court personnel. Given the absence of existing instruments specifically tailored to drug court personnel, a custom instrument was created to capture data relevant to this study (2013 Drug Court Personnel Survey, see Appendix A).

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study, job stress, was measured using five Likert-scale items adapted from Cheeseman and Downey (2012) (originally adapted from Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985). Items were reworded to refer to drug court-specific activities and include: (a) Working in drug court makes me feel tense, (b) Working in a
drug court is frustrating, (c) Some aspects of working in a drug court are upsetting, (d) I am usually at ease when working in drug court, and (e) I do not consider working with drug court to be a stressful job. Item responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For analysis purposes, the latter two items were reverse-coded so that higher scores reflected higher job stress. Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 5 (low stress) to 25 (high stress).

Independent Variables

Organizational Sources of Stress

Three measures of organizational stress were collected in this study: role conflict, role ambiguity, and qualitative role overload. Each of these measures were constructed using four distinct and mutually exclusive items selected and adapted from Triplett et al. (1996) and were reworded to reflect perceptions specifically about drug court activities. All 12 items range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Role conflict included the following items: (a) Working in drug court involves doing things that are approved by some staff and not others, (b) I often receive conflicting requests from different people working for the drug court, (c) It seems like working in drug court often involves working on unnecessary tasks or projects, and (d) I feel like I am often caught in the middle between my supervisor and my subordinates. Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 4 (low conflict) to 20 (high conflict).

Role ambiguity included the following items: (a) My job duties in drug court are unclear to me, (b) I lack the authority to carry out my drug court responsibilities, (c) I do not fully understand what the drug court expects from me, and (d) I do not understand the
part my job plays in meeting the goals of drug court. Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 4 (low ambiguity) to 20 (high ambiguity).

Qualitative role overload included four items: (a) The demands for work quality upon me in the drug court are unreasonable, (b) Working for a drug court is sometimes too complex, (c) The drug court often expects more of me than my abilities can provide, and (d) I feel that I have sufficient training to successfully work in drug court (this item was reverse-coded so that higher scores reflect higher qualitative role overload). Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 4 (low overload) to 20 (high overload).

Task-related Stressors

Client-related stress was measured using items selected and adapted from Farmer et al. (2002). Items were reworded to reflect perceptions about drug court activities and included: (a) Participants in my drug court are manipulative, (b) Participants in my drug court are demanding, (c) I have to deal with violent participants in my drug court, (d) Participants in my drug court exhibit hostility, and (e) I have to deal with aggressive participants in my drug court. Item responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 5 (low client-related stress) to 25 (high client-related stress).

Client recovery is likely one prominent source of stress among drug court personnel, but one about which the literature is relevantly silent. As such, client recovery-related stress was measured using three custom items based on the experience of this author: (a) I often worry that participants’ recovery will not continue after they complete
drug court, (b) I feel personally responsible when a participant in drug court relapses, and (c) Participants in my drug court do not understand the importance of recovery. Item responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 3 (low client recovery-related stress) to 15 (high client recovery-related stress).

*Caseload* was measured using items selected and adapted from Triplett et al. (1996). Items were reworded to reflect perceptions about drug court caseloads and included: (a) My drug court’s caseload is so large that it feels unmanageable, (b) My drug court’s caseload requires me to work overtime, and (c) My drug court responsibilities make me feel overworked. Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses for each item were summed to obtain an overall metric ranging from 3 (low overload) to 15 (high overload).

**Demographic, Personal, and Court Characteristics**

*Demographic information* was gathered from participants along five specific lines: race, age, gender, education, and marital status. Participants also were asked to respond to the following items related to their work duties: (a) What is your role/position in drug court? (b) How long have you been at your current position? and (c) Some drug court staff have work responsibilities outside drug court; what percentage of your work week is devoted specifically to drug court-related tasks?

*Coping mechanisms* were measured using items selected and adapted from McCarty et al. (2007). *Positive coping skill* was measured using three items: (a) I often talk to others about problems at work, (b) When I have problems at work I pray for guidance and strength, and (c) Making a plan of action and following through is a good
way to deal with work problems. Conversely, negative coping skill was measured using three different items: (a) When I am having problems at work I tend to stay away from other people, (b) If I am having a difficult day at work I try to act like nothing is bothering me, and (c) If I have a bad day at work I sometimes shout at other people. Responses for both positive and negative coping skills range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Responses for each item were summed within each coping dimension to form two overall metrics ranging from 3 (low negative coping and low positive coping) to 15 (high negative coping and high positive coping).

Job satisfaction was measured using a single item: Overall, how satisfied are you with your job? Responses range from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Research has indicated that a single-item metric exhibits substantial validity for measuring job satisfaction compared to multiple-item constructs (Nagy, 2002; Scarpello & Campbell, 1983).

Court characteristics were collected from drug court personnel regarding the following items: (a) How long has your drug court been operational? (b) How many judges does your drug court regularly use? (c) In the last year, approximately what percentage of your drug court participants successfully completed the program? and (d) How many active clients do you have at this moment?

Population

For this study, persons working in or directly with a formally recognized drug court or hybrid drug/DUI court in the United States served as the population of interest. Typically, persons working in a drug court include judges, prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, case managers, and court administrators/coordinators. Persons
working directly with drug courts include clinical and case management personnel employed by treatment providers. In general, all persons who work within a drug court environment on a regular basis were considered to be drug court personnel.

**Sampling Frame and Subject Selection Procedure**

The sampling frame for this study was constructed by developing a master list of formally recognized drug courts or hybrid drug/DUI courts operating within the United States. This list was compiled from information about active drug courts available on the websites of each state’s Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) and the website of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. As of 2009, approximately 2,500 drug court programs were operating in the U.S. (Huddleston & Marlowe, 2011). Assuming those courts operate under normal conditions (e.g., staffed with a judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, program administrator, case manager, and probation officer), they would yield at least 15,000 potential subjects. After compiling a list of each state’s active drug courts, multistage sampling was used to randomly select 10% of the courts in each state and the District of Columbia (see Appendix B for a more detailed description of selection metrics). In an effort to improve response rates from smaller states, two sites were selected from states having less than 10 drug courts. In total, 240 active drug courts were randomly selected for inclusion, yielding a potential subject pool of approximately 1,440 persons.

**Data Collection**

Data were collected using an Internet-based version of the 2013 Drug Court Personnel Survey (see Appendix A). This instrument contained adapted items from previous studies and was designed to assess levels and sources of job stress, protective
factors, court characteristics, and demographic information. Selected courts received an email containing an explanation of the study’s purpose, survey instructions, and a link to the survey’s hosting agent, Qualtrics (see Appendix C). These emails were sent to either a listed contact person or the court administrator/coordinator along with a request to forward the email to the rest of their drug court team.¹ The email also related that letters of support from two drug court judges were available upon request (see Appendix D). A letter of approval from The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E) was also available upon request. The survey remained available for six weeks.

In total, 223 people responded to the survey. Data were downloaded from the hosting agent in Microsoft Excel format. Data cleaning included the identification of missing values, imputation of missing values where possible, and converting text responses to numerical values. After eliminating entries that were completely blank (n = 32) and missing job stress data (n = 8) as well as identification of a respondent who was no longer working with a drug court (n = 1), 182 cases were retained and imported into SPSS 17.0 for analysis. Due to the nature of survey dissemination used in this study, calculating an accurate response rate was not possible.

¹ Using Internet-based surveys often eases the dissemination process (see Pitts, 2007).
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSES AND RESULTS

The following narrative provides an overview of data analyses and hypotheses testing. First, frequency distributions and other descriptive statistics were generated in order to provide an overall picture of the sample. Next, all continuous variables were assessed for normality in accordance with assumptions of multivariate analyses. Finally, a series of multivariate analyses was performed in order to fully test the hypotheses of this study.

Statistical Analyses

As seen in Table 1, drug court administrators (also known as supervisors or coordinators) comprised the largest group of respondents (23.5%, n = 42). Individuals in treatment and human service professions (20.1%, n = 36) and case managers (15.6%, n = 28) also were well-represented in the sample. A one-way analysis of variance indicated no significant job stress differences with regard to personnel type/drug court role, $F(7, 171) = 1.33, p > .05$. A substantial majority of respondents (62.3%, n = 109) reported working in an adult drug court. Individuals working in juvenile or family drug courts (25.7%, n = 45) comprised the second largest court group in the sample. No significant job stress differences existed among court types, $F(4, 170) = 0.78, p > .05$.

Table 1

*Categorical Variables & Relationships with Job Stress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Personnel Type/Role</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator/Supervisor</td>
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<td>23.5</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment/Human Services</td>
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<td>20.1</td>
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<td>Case Manager</td>
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<td>16.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation/Law Enforcement</td>
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<td>11.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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</table>
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Prosecutor</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
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<td>13.5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Adult Drug Court</td>
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<td>14.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13.7</td>
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<td>14.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<td>Multiple Courts/Other</td>
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<td>15.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>17.5</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>42.4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>High School/GED</td>
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<td>Some College</td>
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<td>15.0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<td>34.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
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<td>32.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Degree</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>67.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>12.9</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
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<td>Divorced</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Partner</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of respondents reported they were White (82.6%, n = 128) and female (57.6%, n = 98). A sizeable number of respondents reported having college degrees at the bachelor’s level (34.3%, n = 60), graduate level (32.6%, n = 57), or a law degree (24.0%,
n = 42). Most reported being married (67.1%, n = 114). A series of statistical tests examining group mean differences indicated no significant job stress differences in regard to race, $F(5, 149) = 2.11, p > .05$, gender, $t = 1.79, p > .05$, education, $F(4, 170) = 1.42, p > .05$, or marital status $F(4, 165) = 1.20, p > .05$.

Table 2 provides descriptive information about metric (continuous) data. Results of Pearson’s correlational analyses are also presented to illustrate bivariate relationships between the dependent variable job stress and other continuous independent or control variables for this study. It should be noted that only summated scores for multiple-item scale variables are presented below. Descriptive statistics of individual items are available in Appendix F.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MIN</th>
<th>MAX</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Stress</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>.559**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>.407**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>.565**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Role Overload</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>.451**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client-related Stress</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.449**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Recovery</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.486**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>.325**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Coping Skills</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.248**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Coping Skills</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>.395**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-.395**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Court Tenure (yrs)</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Tenure (yrs)</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Court Time (%)</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>.265**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Operational (yrs)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Judges</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate (%)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>-.177*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Clients</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>700.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>-.151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$
All measures of organizational stress, which included role conflict \( (r = .559, p < .01) \), role ambiguity \( (r = .407, p < .01) \), and qualitative role overload \( (r = .565, p < .01) \), exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with job stress. Additionally, all measures of task-related stress, which included client-related stress \( (r = .451, p < .01) \), client recovery \( (r = .449, p < .01) \), and caseload \( (r = .486, p < .01) \), exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with job stress.

Few personal characteristics were significantly related to the dependent variable. Curiously, both positive \( (r = .248, p < .01) \) and negative \( (r = .325, p < .01) \) coping skills exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with job stress. The relationship between job stress and job satisfaction \( (r = -.395, p < .01) \) was statistically significant and negative. Reported proportion of time spent devoted to drug court operations also was significantly related to job stress \( (r = .265, p < .01) \). The relationship between respondents’ estimated program success rate (measured as estimated program graduation rate) and job stress was negative and statistically significant \( (r = -.177, p < .05) \).

Given that a series of multivariate analyses would be employed to test the hypotheses of this study, a more thorough examination of continuous variables was conducted to further assess their normality in regard to distribution and internal consistency of summated scales. Table 3 provides an overview of standardized values for these variables, as well as measures of univariate normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s \( D \)), kurtosis, and skew. Values for Cronbach’s alpha are also provided (where appropriate) as a measure of reliability for multiple-item scales.
Table 3

Examination of Normality & Reliability among Continuous Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Z MIN</th>
<th>Z MAX</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>KU</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Stress</td>
<td>-2.217</td>
<td>2.380</td>
<td>-0.110</td>
<td>-0.442</td>
<td>.095*</td>
<td>.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>-2.062</td>
<td>2.789</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>-0.191</td>
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<td>.751</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Ambiguity</td>
<td>-1.098</td>
<td>3.750</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>.170**</td>
<td>.848</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative Role Overload</td>
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<td>2.914</td>
<td>0.449</td>
<td>-0.403</td>
<td>.150***</td>
<td>.634</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client-related Stress</td>
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<td>2.800</td>
<td>0.397</td>
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<td>.740</td>
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<td>.199***</td>
<td>.421</td>
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<td>Caseload</td>
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<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>.159***</td>
<td>.849</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Coping Skills</td>
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<td>2.090</td>
<td>-0.426</td>
<td>0.642</td>
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<td>.210</td>
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<td>-1.217</td>
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<td>Drug Court Tenure (yrs)</td>
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<td>Position Tenure (yrs)</td>
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<td>Court Operational (yrs)</td>
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Notes: SK = skew; KU = kurtosis; D = Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s D; α = Cronbach’s alpha

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Values in Table 3 were examined for three primary indicators of normality: an absence of outliers (standardized scores within approximately plus or minus three standard deviations from the mean), shape (skewness and kurtosis), and statistical probability of normality (K-S D) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Most variables exhibited standardized scores within the acceptable range. There were, however, evident outliers among the number of judges and number of active clients.

Regarding shape, zero is a desirable value for both skewness (indicating a symmetrical distribution) and kurtosis (indicating a distribution that is neither severely peaked nor extremely flat). Values falling between -1.0 and 1.0 are considered acceptable (Field, 2005). Most variables in Table 3 exhibited skew and kurtosis values within this
range. Extreme values for both skew and kurtosis were found among the number of judges and number of active clients. Testing via Kolmogorov-Smirnov’s $D$ indicated that all continuous variables demonstrated statistically significant departures from univariate normality. It should be noted that the K-S $D$ statistic is sensitive to larger sample sizes and significant values can often indicate minor deviations, thus requiring manual inspection of value distributions to assess degrees of departure from normality (Field, 2005). Visual examination of histograms and normal P-P plots for each metric confirmed that all frequency distributions exhibited some degree of departure from normality. Although data transformation is a common remedy for addressing normality issues (Hair et al., 2006), it was not employed for these variables due to a lack of support in previously reviewed literature and potential added difficulties in interpreting model results. Consequently, results of models using parametric tests should be interpreted with caution.

Results regarding the internal consistency of multiple-item scales were mixed. Generally, Cronbach’s alpha values of .6 to .7 (or greater) are considered minimum thresholds for consistency (Field, 2005; Hair et al., 2006). Scales measuring job stress (Cronbach’s alpha = .828), role conflict (Cronbach’s alpha = .751), role ambiguity (Cronbach’s alpha = .848), qualitative role overload (Cronbach’s alpha = .634), client-related stress (Cronbach’s alpha = .740), and caseload (Cronbach’s alpha = .849) met or exceeded the minimum reliability standard. Scales measuring client recovery-related stress (Cronbach’s alpha = .421), positive coping skill (Cronbach’s alpha = .210), and negative coping skill (Cronbach’s alpha = .346) did not meet the minimum threshold. Thus, results regarding these variables should be interpreted with caution.
In order to fully explore the research questions and corresponding hypotheses of this study, a series of multivariate analyses were conducted to assess relationships between independent and control variables and the dependent variable job stress. Prior to conducting these analyses, a zero-order correlation matrix was generated to examine individual relationships among variables significantly related to job stress (found in Tables 1 and 2) and identify potential issues regarding multicollinearity that could impact the results of multivariate analysis (see Table 4). It should be noted that two dummy-coded variables that were not significantly related to job stress (gender and race) were included in the correlation matrix as well as initial multivariate analyses. These two variables were included because their respective $F$ and $t$ values (see Table 1) were fairly close to meeting critical value thresholds. Essentially, race and gender were the only available options for control variables. Results of the correlational analyses did not indicate a need for immediate concern regarding multicollinearity.

Table 5 presents the results of a hierarchical linear regression analysis, which examined the relative impacts of organizational, task-related, and personal-level variables significantly related to job stress identified in earlier bivariate analyses. Model 1 included only organizational variables, Model 2 included organizational and task-related variables, and Model 3 included organizational, task-related, and personal-level variables. As previously mentioned, dichotomous race and gender variables were included in these analyses even though their bivariate relationships with job stress were not statistically significant.
Table 4

Correlation Matrix for Potential Variables in Multivariate Models

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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<th>10</th>
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<td>.497*</td>
<td>.576*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.431*</td>
<td>.231*</td>
<td>.565*</td>
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<td>.129</td>
<td>.143</td>
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<td>.166*</td>
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Notes: Race (white = 1, other = 2); Gender (male = 1, female = 2)

*p < .05, **p < .01
Table 5
Regression Models: Sources of & Protective Factors for Job Stress

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As seen in Table 5, results for Model 1 indicated that role conflict $t(120) = 4.42, p < .001$, and qualitative role overload, $t(120) = 4.59, p < .001$, had a significant impact on job stress when only accounting for organizational variables. Qualitative role overload ($\beta = .413, p < .001$) had slightly more impact on job stress than role conflict ($\beta = .374, p < .001$). Estimates of model fit indicated a statistically significant relationship between organizational variables and job stress, $F(3, 120) = 28.97, p < .001$, and that the organizational variables in Model 1 accounted for 42% of the variance in job stress ($R^2 = .420, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .405$).

Both organizational and task-related variables were included in Model 2. The organizational variables role conflict, $t(116) = 2.73, p < .01$, and qualitative role overload, $t(116) = 2.13, p < .05$, remained statistically significant in this model, and the task-related variables client-related stress, $t(116) = 2.65, p < .01$, and client recovery $t(116) = 2.44, p < .05$, also had a significant impact on job stress. Role conflict ($\beta = .228, p < .01$) was the most influential variable in Model 2, followed by qualitative role overload ($\beta = .215, p < .05$), client-related stress ($\beta = .188, p < .01$), and client recovery ($\beta = .181, p < .05$). Model fit estimates indicated that organizational and task-related variables included in Model 2 significantly impacted job stress, $F(7, 116) = 18.34, p < .001$. The inclusion of task-related variables increased the explanatory power of this model iteration to nearly 53% ($R^2 = .525, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .497$), which was a statistically significant change in explanatory power from Model 1, $R^2 \Delta = .105, F(4, 116) = 6.43, p < .001$.

Organizational, task-related, and personal-level variables were included in Model 3. Of the included organizational variables, only role conflict, $t(110) = 2.43, p < .05$, had
a statistically significant impact on job stress. Client-related stress, $t(110) = 2.53, p < .05$, and client recovery, $t(110) = 2.47, p < .05$, remained the only significant task-related variables in the model. Job satisfaction, $t(110) = -2.56, p < .05$, was the only personal-level variable that had a significant impact on job stress. Role conflict ($\beta = .203, p < .05$) remained the most influential variable in the model, followed by client recovery ($\beta = .187, p < .05$), client-related stress ($\beta = .185, p < .05$), and job satisfaction ($\beta = -.184, p < .05$). Although model fit estimates indicated that the variables included in Model 3 had a significant impact on job stress, $F(13, 110) = 10.82, p < .001$, the inclusion of personal-level variables did not significantly increase explanatory power, $R^2 \Delta = .036, F(6, 110) = 1.50, p > .05$, and the explained variance of the dependent variable job stress increased to 56% ($R^2 = .561$, adjusted $R^2 = .509$).

Table 6 presents a finalized regression model illustrating significant sources of job stress. This model was estimated using backward step-wise linear regression in order to determine which independent variables provide the most explanatory power regarding job stress (Field, 2005). Statistically significant independent variables from Models, 1, 2, and 3 (see Table 5), as well as the variable caseload, were included in the initial iteration of the step-wise model. All variables included in the initial iteration were retained and represent a best-estimate of the manner in which organizational, task-related, and personal-level variables impact job stress of drug court employees.

---

2 Caseload exhibited $t$ values in Models 2 and 3 that were very close to meeting critical thresholds for statistical significance. Additionally, the bivariate linear relationship between caseload and job stress, as presented in Table 4 ($r = .486, p < .01$), indicated a fairly strong covariate relationship that may have been underestimated in Models 2 and 3 as a result of other included (yet nonsignificant) variables.
Table 6

Final Regression Model for Sources of & Protective Factors for Job Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.916</td>
<td>1.799</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.732**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Conflict</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>3.827***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.905</td>
<td>.239</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>-3.790***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>2.534*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Role Overload</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>2.312*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client-related Stress</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>2.529*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Recovery</td>
<td>.349</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>2.443*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: F(6, 173) = 32.595, p < .001; R² = .531; Adjusted R² = .514
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Role conflict, t(173) = 3.83, p < .001, and qualitative role overload, t(173) = 2.31, p < .05, were significant organizational factors; caseload, t(173) = 2.53, p < .05, client-related stress, t(173) = 2.53, p < .05, and client recovery, t(173) = 2.44, p < .05, were significant task-related factors; and job satisfaction, t(173) = -3.79, p < .001, was the only significant personal factor. Role conflict (β = .246, p < .001) had the most impact on job stress, followed by job satisfaction (β = -.211, p < .001), caseload (β = .168, p < .05), qualitative role overload (β = .167, p < .05), client-related stress (β = .152, p < .05), and client recovery (β = .146, p < .05). Model fit estimates indicated that included variables had a statistically significant impact on job stress, F(6, 173) = 32.60, p < .001, and accounted for over 50% of the variance in the dependent variable job stress (R² = .531, adjusted R² = .514).

The final multivariate analysis of this study explored the relationship between personnel type and sources of job stress. Specifically, this analysis examined means of summated scores measuring organizational and task-related sources of job stress. Table 7 presents the results of a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and six separate one-way ANOVAs that explored group differences among personnel types.
Table 7

Organizational & Task-related Sources of Job Stress among Personnel Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel Type</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>QRO</th>
<th>CRS</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>CL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator/Supervisor</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment/Human Services</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Manager</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation/Law Enforcement</td>
<td>10.81</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecutor</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Attorney</td>
<td>10.62</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MANOVA Fit Indices

- Box’s $M = 189.896$, $p > .05$
- Wilks’ $\lambda = .793$
- $F = .938$, $p > .05$

Notes: RC = role conflict, $F(7, 171) = .418$, $p > .05$; RA = role ambiguity, $F(7, 170) = 1.512$, $p > .05$; QRO = qualitative role overload, $F(7, 171) = 1.754$, $p > .05$; CRS = client-related stress, $F(7, 171) = .427$, $p > .05$; CR = client recovery, $F(7, 171) = 1.392$, $p > .05$; CL = caseload, $F(7, 171) = .601$, $p > .05$
regarding role conflict, role ambiguity, qualitative role overload, client-related stress, client recovery-related stress, and caseload.

Initial analysis included individual one-way ANOVAs to ascertain the existence of statistically significant organizational or task-related sources of stress differences among personnel types. Results indicated that organizational and task-related stress scores did not differ significantly among drug court personnel groups. Due to the disadvantages of conducting multiple bivariate statistical tests involving more than one dependent variable (e.g., increased probability of Type I error), as well as advantages of using multivariate analyses under the same circumstances (e.g., identifying group differences among a combination of dependent variables, see Field, 2005), a one-way MANOVA was used to simultaneously examine organizational and task-related stress scale scores across personnel groups. MANOVA results indicated that organizational and task-related stress scores did not significantly differ among personnel type (Wilks’ λ = .793, F = .938, p > .05).

Revisiting Hypotheses

Given the exploratory nature of this study, multiple analyses were conducted in order to fully examine the scope of job stress among drug court employees. As such, the hypotheses of this study could not be rejected or retained based on any single analysis. Instead, each hypothesis was considered in light of the totality of the evidence presented in this study.

*There will be a significant relationship between job stress and perceived program success (H1)*. Bivariate analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between job stress and perceived program success (measured as estimated program graduation rate in
the last year). This relationship was negative, indicating that job stress scores decreased as perceptions of program success increased. At a bivariate level, the null hypothesis for H₁ was rejected. However, when controlling for various organizational, task-related, and personal characteristics, perceived program success did not have a statistically significant impact on job stress. In a multivariate environment, then, the null hypothesis for H₁ was not rejected. Given that perceptions about program success likely do not exist in isolation and that the ultimate goal of this study was to develop a model of job stress for drug court personnel, there was not enough evidence to confidently support the first hypothesis and conclude that perceptions regarding program success are significantly related to job stress.

*There will be no significant job stress differences among types of drug court personnel (H₂).* Although judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys exhibited lower job stress scores than other personnel types, no statistically significant differences existed among personnel groups. As such, the available evidence suggested support for the second hypothesis.

*There will be a significant relationship between organizational stress and job stress (H₃).* This study utilized three measures of organizational stress: role conflict, role ambiguity, and qualitative role overload. Bivariate analysis indicated that all three measures were significantly related to job stress. Multivariate analysis indicated that role conflict and qualitative role overload significantly impacted job stress. Given that two of the three organizational stress measures were significantly related to job stress at both the bivariate and multivariate level, the evidence was sufficient enough to support the third
hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between job stress and organizational sources of stress.

*There will be a significant relationship between task stress and job stress (H₄).*

Three measures of task-related stress were collected from respondents: client-related stress, client recovery, and caseload. All measures of task-related stress demonstrated statistically significant bivariate relationships with job stress. Multivariate analysis indicated that all three measures of task-related stress had a significant impact on job stress. The null hypothesis for H₄ was rejected, concluding that there was, indeed, sufficient evidence to support the fourth hypothesis.

*There will be a significant relationship between personal characteristics and job stress (H₅).* Results of bivariate and multivariate analyses indicated that job stress was not significantly related to any demographic characteristic. Other personal characteristics did have significant bivariate relationships with job stress, including positive coping skill, negative coping skill, job satisfaction, proportion of work time devoted to drug court, and perceived program success (again, measured as estimated program graduation rate in the last year). Only job satisfaction demonstrated a significant impact on job stress in multivariate models. Given the fact that job satisfaction was the sole personal characteristic significantly related to job stress in both bivariate and multivariate analyses, the null hypothesis for H₅ was not rejected, concluding that personal characteristics did not have a significant relationship with job stress.

*There will be significant organizational and task-related stress differences among personnel types (H₆).* A series of bivariate analyses revealed no significant organizational (role conflict, role ambiguity, and qualitative role overload) or task-related (client-related...
stress, client recovery, and caseload) stress differences among personnel groups. Additionally, multivariate analysis indicated no relationship between any single organizational or task-related source of stress (or any combination thereof) and personnel type. Therefore, the null hypothesis for \( H_6 \) was not rejected, and it was concluded that no significant organizational or task-related stress differences existed in regard to personnel type.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this study was to develop a general model of job stress among drug court personnel. Theoretically, this model would be used in future research to identify sources of job stress in a given drug court and determine appropriate amelioration strategies, thereby improving outcomes at both programmatic and client levels. The following section provides discussion regarding this proposed model and recommendations for future research.

Revisiting Research Questions

Four research questions guided this study. Prior to proposing a model of job stress for drug court personnel, it was necessary to review and provide brief answers to these questions in order to establish a basic framework for conceptualizing the model:

1. Do drug court personnel experience job stress in ways similar to their counterparts in traditional fields?
2. Do perceptions of job stress impact perceived program success?
3. Do drug court personnel experience job stress as a homogenous group?
4. What are the primary sources of job stress for drug court personnel?

An examination of the results indicated that drug court personnel experience job stress in ways similar to their counterparts working in the fields of corrections, policing, law, and substance abuse/mental health treatment. Although there was a statistically significant bivariate relationship between perceived program success and job stress, that relationship was minimal and became altogether moot in various stages of multivariate analysis. Other results indicated no statistically significant job stress differences in regard
to personnel type, confirming that drug court personnel do experience job stress as a homogenous group. Finally, the primary sources of job stress identified in this study included role conflict, qualitative role overload, caseload, client-related stress, and client recovery. Job satisfaction was the only statistically significant protective factor for job stress identified in multivariate analyses.

Conceptualizing a Model

The final multivariate model illustrating factors impacting job stress indicated that organizational and task-related sources of stress were, indeed, significant predictors of job stress. At the organizational level, role conflict and qualitative role overload were meaningful. Caseload, client-related stress, and client recovery were identified as salient task-related sources of stress. At the personal level, only job satisfaction had a significant impact on job stress. The final model also indicated that these factors account for approximately half (53%) of the explained variance in job stress, further underscoring the power and magnitude of their influence. Based these results, several key themes emerged regarding the proposal of a model for job stress among those working in drug courts.

An Absence of Demographic Influence

For the sample in this study, demographic characteristics and job stress were essentially unrelated. No significant job stress differences were identified within race, gender, marital status, or education categories. Additionally, age was not significantly related to job stress. It should be noted, however, that a substantial majority of respondents were white and (at a minimum) had a four-year college degree, thus potentially masking any demographic impact of race or education. Even so, the absence of impact on job stress from demographic characteristics in this sample reflected results
presented in previously reviewed studies (e.g., Hassell et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2009; McCarty et al. 2007; Noblet et al., 2009). Moreover, no job stress differences were observed in regard to personnel type/role or court type.

*Role Problems Are Key*

Role conflict was conceptualized as an atmosphere of mixed staff approval, conflicting requests from coworkers, and working on unnecessary tasks (see Triplett et al., 1996); it was, without a doubt, an extremely prominent variable in every analysis regarding job stress. Role conflict exhibited the second largest bivariate linear relationship with job stress among all other independent and control variables, had a statistically significant impact in each regression model iteration, and was the most influential independent variable in most regression models.

Qualitative role overload measured feelings regarding unreasonable work demands, complexities of the job, expectations related to abilities, and sufficient job training (Triplett et al., 1996). In essence, this variable measured perceptions about pressure from management within the context of individual abilities. The relationship between qualitative role overload and job stress was fairly strong. Qualitative role overload exhibited the strongest bivariate correlation with job stress and was a statistically significant factor in most multivariate regression models (including the final model).

Others have noted the importance of role-related problems in previous research (see Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Blevins et al., 2006; Capps et al., 2004; Jackson et al., 1987; Lambert et al., 2007; Lambert et al., 2009; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; Triplett et al., 1996; Wallace et al., 2010). As such, it was somewhat expected that role conflict and
qualitative role overload would have a significant impact on job stress among drug court employees. However, given the absence of significant job stress differences among personnel types (thus indicating that one’s role in drug court is not necessarily a predictor of job stress), the magnitude of the relationships between role conflict and qualitative role overload and job stress seems particularly compelling.

Attention to Clients

Prior research has shown that client-related stressors have little impact on job stress among treatment professionals (Farmer et al., 2002). For this sample, client-based sources of stress were, indeed, important. Client-related stress measured staff perceptions regarding their clients’ personalities (e.g., manipulative), attitudes (e.g., demanding and hostile), and actions (e.g., violence and aggression) (see Farmer et al., 2002). Client recovery (a variable uniquely conceptualized for this study) measured staff perceptions about clients’ understanding of and dedication to recovery. Both client-based variables were significant factors impacting job stress in the final model (though they were the least important in terms of influence magnitude).

Based on this author’s personal experiences, the impact of these variables was not surprising. Drug courts, as a general rule, are client-focused. The importance of client-based variables in this study reflects the most basic tenet of the drug court model, which dictates the eschewal of traditional adversarial processes in favor of collaborative activity focused on the offender. Put simply, staff working in a drug court that adheres to the basic principles of therapeutic jurisprudence should be experiencing stress associated with clients.
The significance of client-related stress and perceptions regarding client recovery may also be explained by the impact of caseload on job stress. As noted by Nored et al. (2009), drug courts face a litany of operational difficulties, including funding problems. Larger caseloads may specifically impact personnel working for agencies experiencing staffing shortages due to a lack of financial support. Thus, client-based sources of stress may be amplified in situations of increased caseloads and decreased staff numbers. This could explain the strong bivariate relationship between caseload and job stress, as well as the somewhat diminished importance of caseload in multivariate models.

A Question of Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was the only significant protective factor against job stress for the sample of drug court staff in this study. The ameliorating effect of job satisfaction was, in fact, expected. Previously reviewed research consistently indicated the salience of the relationship between job satisfaction and job stress among criminal justice and treatment professionals (Blevins et al., 2006; Cheeseman & Downey, 2012; Duraisingam et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Slate et al., 2003; Wells et al., 2006).

It should be noted that although job satisfaction and job stress exhibit a rather robust relationship across a wide variety of studies, the nature of that relationship is fairly complex. For example, Cheeseman and Downey (2012) found varying demographic-related interaction effects between job stress and job satisfaction. Other research has shown that job satisfaction and job stress do not share many common predictors (see Blevins et al., 2006). As such, the degree of interdependence between job stress and job satisfaction can best be described as murky.
A Proposed Model of Job Stress for Drug Court Personnel

Results of this study validate much of the previous research on job stress among criminal justice and treatment professionals. In essence, drug court staff experience job stress from many of the same sources as their counterparts in traditional roles. Job stress for drug court personnel is a result of the combination of organizational and task-related factors. Additionally, positive perceptions about their job tend to decrease job stress. A key difference between this sample and others, though, manifested itself in perceptions about clients. Drug court personnel were significantly impacted by client-based sources of stress. Moreover, the absence of statistically significant job stress differences across demographic, personnel type/role, and court characteristics indicates that people working in drug court experience on-the-job strain as a homogenous group.

The final regression analysis (presented earlier in Table 6) represents a best-estimate model of job stress among drug court personnel. Organizational factors are the most influential stressors. Job stress is predominantly influenced by lesser degrees of job clarity, higher job expectations, and organizational expectations. Task-related stressors are also important. Increased job stress results from larger caseloads, poor client attitudes and behaviors, and increased concern for clients’ wellbeing. As a whole, increased job satisfaction is the only significant protective factor against job stress among drug court personnel. Taking into account both the results of this study and previously reviewed research, a final model of job stress for drug court personnel is presented below in Figure 1.
As seen in Figure 1, the proposed model largely reflects the results of the final regression analysis (see Table 6). Increased organizational stress (high levels of role conflict and qualitative role overload) will lead to increased job stress. Additionally, increased task-related stress (large caseloads, high levels of client-related stress, and increased concern for clients’ recovery) will lead to increased job stress. Positive job perceptions (high job satisfaction) and lower job stress will have a relationship of reciprocity that is not necessarily indicative of interdependence.

Two additional factors positively impacting job satisfaction, race (white) and gender (female), were added to this model even though multivariate analyses indicated they were not significant factors related to job stress. Prior research (e.g., Cheeseman & Downey, 2012) indicated that demographic factors potentially have an indirect influence on job stress through interactions with job satisfaction. The correlation matrix (see Table 4) indicated that both race (white) and gender (female) had significant relationships with job satisfaction and no significant relationships with job stress. Given the degree of ambiguity regarding the importance of demographic factors in prior research coupled
with the results of this study, it seemed appropriate to propose a model that accounts, at
least to some degree, for demographic characteristics.

The proposed model of job stress should serve as a solid foundation for future
research which characterizes drug court personnel as an intact group. It addresses major
sources of job stress concurrently identified in existing literature (organizational and task-
related), specifically accounts for strain due to client interactions (client attitude,
recovery, and caseload), includes a major protective factor (job satisfaction), and
accounts for potential indirect influence from demographic characteristics (race and
gender). Put simply, this model should be considered a summary—not a detailed
account—of job stress.

Validity of Results and Interpretation

The results of this study are promising, in that they confirmed much of the
conclusions offered by previous research. However, some degree of caution is required
regarding the interpretation of the results. First, all univariate frequency distributions
were statistically abnormal. Given the subjective natures of visually interpreting
frequency distributions and rules-of-thumb regarding skewness and kurtosis, it is
impossible to estimate the degree to which distribution abnormalities affected parametric
model outcomes (regardless of the robustness of the model). It is encouraging, though,
that the final regression model (see Table 6) did appear to meet the assumptions of
multivariate normality. Visually, residual statistics were normally distributed in both
histogram and normal P-P plot form and homoscedastically distributed across predicted
values. No standardized residual statistics were identified as outliers (values less than -3.0
or greater than 3.0). Additionally, error terms appeared to be uncorrelated (Durbin-Watson = 2.05). As such, one must weigh doubt regarding univariate normality against confidence in multivariate normality when interpreting the results of the final model in Table 6.

An additional concern in regard to variables in this study was reliability of multiple-item variables. Client recovery and positive and negative coping scores exhibited reliability coefficients that did not meet minimum standards. Client recovery was specifically conceptualized for this study. Items assessing this variable were drawn from the personal experiences of this author and had no relative foundation in the reviewed literature. It is possible that the low reliability coefficient is a reflection of the number of items (three) used to measure client recovery, given the sensitivity of Cronbach’s alpha as regards larger numbers of items within a multiple-item scale (Field, 2005). Another possibility is that the variable itself is not at all reliable. Nonetheless, client recovery was identified as a significant factor that impacted job stress. Consequently, it cannot summarily be dismissed as an important factor of job stress.

Variables measuring positive and negative coping scores posed an interesting problem in this study. Previous research identified positive (constructive) and negative (destructive) coping mechanisms related to job stress (see McCarty et al., 2007). The same items were used in this study, and results were mixed. First, both positive and negative coping score variables exhibited reliability coefficients below the minimum standard (in fact, the lowest of all summated scales, .210 and .346, respectively). Additionally, bivariate analysis indicated that job stress had a significant positive

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3 Durbin-Watson values approaching two are ideal; values between one and three are acceptable (Field, 2005).
relationship with both positive and negative coping scores (see Table 4). Finally, multivariate analyses indicated that positive coping scores and job stress were positively related and that negative coping scores were negatively related to job stress (although those relationships were negligible and not statistically significant, see Table 5). The results of bivariate and multivariate analyses seem counterintuitive to both prior research (e.g., McCarty et al., 2007) and common sense. Although a multitude of explanations can be offered as to the peculiarity of these results, it seems likely that either (a) the respondents did not understand the items assessing coping skills, or (b) the coping habits of drug court personnel are markedly different than other criminal justice practitioners.

Finally, it should be noted that this study only represents 182 drug court professionals. Current information suggests that there are approximately 15,000 individuals in the U.S. working directly for or with a drug court. As such, this study only represents the opinions and perceptions of about 1% of the target population. Additionally, although the selection process was randomized, anonymity measures prevented any analysis regarding respondents’ court of employment. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the number of courts represented in the sample as well as the number of respondents from those courts. Finally, it bears mentioning that any interpretation of these results requires the assumptions that respondents both fully understood and accurately responded to each item.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Studies assessing job stress are generally intended to identify sources of strain in order to enact or adjust policies that will reduce that stress (thus hopefully improving organizational, employee, and client outcomes). The results of this study suggest several
policy areas that should serve as particular concerns for individuals or organizations that have drug court policy and/or oversight responsibilities.

First, organizational sources of stress resulting from role problems need to be addressed. Mixed staff approval, conflicting requests from coworkers, and working on unnecessary tasks seem to be the primary sources of stress for drug court personnel. These role conflicts could be a result of many organizational characteristics. Drug courts should implement policies and practices that reflect the overarching goals of drug court (i.e., client recovery, reduced recidivism, and cost effectiveness) and ensure that staff members are working on tasks commensurate with those goals. Additionally, staffing levels should be sufficient enough to ensure that each employee is performing the tasks for which they were trained and to which they were assigned when initially hired (this also could potentially ameliorate stress due to increased caseload).

Drug court policies also should ensure that personnel have adequate training for their respective roles and should clearly identify the expectations and duties required of each role in order to reduce qualitative role overload. It should be noted that job stress was not related to personnel type, thus indicating that these types of policy deficiencies could impact upper-echelon personnel (e.g., judges). Prior research has indicated that vague policies and insufficient training are problematic drug court issues (see Nored et al., 2009).

Given the significance of client-based sources of stress in this study, it seems reasonable to recommend that drug courts implement policies that minimize the presence of overly-problematic clients and maximize the importance of employee-client boundaries. Such policies could include more stringent eligibility requirements, the
addition or enhancement of an employee assistance program, and/or additional training on establishing roles, goals, and boundaries within a treatment context. As stated previously, the essential foundation of drug court involves reducing adversarial processes and increasing collaborative processes. These collaborations involve the client (offender), thus potentially intensifying the relationship between clients and drug court staff. Policies should embrace the inherent compassion of therapeutic jurisprudence while reflecting some degree of the traditional boundaries between client and service provider.

This study and others have underscored the importance of job satisfaction. Increasing job satisfaction—as a policy process—is beyond the scope of this study. However, minimal efforts at the organizational level could be instrumental in ensuring that employees are satisfied with their jobs. Policies that (a) ensure an equitable distribution of work, (b) clearly define expectations of the job, (c) avoid discriminatory practices based on race, gender, age, education, disabilities, etc., (d) ensure consistency with regard to operations, and (e) promote the underlying principle of therapeutic jurisprudence would likely be sufficient starting points. Most importantly, though, drug court oversight agencies and personnel should make it a priority to routinely assess job satisfaction among their employees in order to evaluate the overall atmosphere in their respective court programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the results of this study generally concurred with existing job stress research, they also generated several unanswered questions. First, the response rate for this study was fairly low. It may not represent an accurate picture of drug court personnel. Future research should include more respondents. Next, several measures were
not statistically reliable. More research needs to be conducted on coping mechanisms and client recovery-related stress as they relate to drug court practitioners. Specifically, client recovery-related stress should be explored in more detail in order to fully understand its impact on job stress. Such research should include scale development and reliability testing.

Future research should also utilize some type of tracking mechanism to assess the extent of court variety and numbers of respondents from each court. Moreover, geographic locations could play a role in assessing job stress, and they too should be gathered during data collection. Other data that could play a role in understanding job stress, but were not measured in this study, include additional demographic data (e.g., number of children, sexual orientation, and previous history of drug abuse), personal data (e.g., identifying stressors external to work), and agency-specific policy data (e.g., training, salary, and management style). This information could potentially augment the existing model of job stress for drug court personnel.

Conclusion

The results of this study provided several likely conclusions. First, drug court personnel experience job stress in ways similar to other justice and treatment practitioners in traditional roles. Second, drug court personnel can be viewed as an intact group, in that their role/personnel type has little to do with the level of job stress they experience. Third, role problems are a salient cause of job stress, indicating that organizational policies and atmospheres are essential to understanding job stress in drug courts. Fourth, larger caseloads and poor client attitudes and behaviors increase job stress. Finally, although job stress and perceptions of program success were significantly related, that
relationship was minor and not indicative of a causal relationship between high job stress and graduation rates.

These conclusions and the aforementioned recommendations should provide a path for future research and increased scrutiny in regard to policy implementation in drug court programs. Drug court personnel work in one of the most difficult areas of criminal justice—one that is relatively new, constantly evolving, and, according to the practitioners who operate them, underfunded. It is the hope of this author that the results of this study will provide a spark of new interest for researchers who specialize in drug courts.
APPENDIX A
2013 DRUG COURT PERSONNEL SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Working in drug court makes me feel tense.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Working in a drug court is frustrating.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3. Some aspects of working in a drug court are upsetting.</td>
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<td>4. I am usually at ease when working in drug court.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I do not consider working with drug court to be a stressful job.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Working in drug court involves doing things that are approved by some staff and not others.</td>
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<td>7. I often receive conflicting requests from different people working for the drug court.</td>
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<td>8. It seems like working in drug court involves working on unnecessary tasks or projects.</td>
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<td>9. I feel like I am often caught in the middle between my supervisor and my subordinates.</td>
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<td>10. My job duties in drug court are unclear to me.</td>
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<td>11. I lack the authority to carry out my drug court responsibilities.</td>
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<td>12. I do not fully understand what the drug court expects from me.</td>
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<td>13. I do not understand the part my job plays in meeting the goals of drug court.</td>
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<td>14. The demands for work quality upon me in the drug court are unreasonable.</td>
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<td>15. Working for a drug court is sometimes too complex.</td>
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<td>16. The drug court expects more of me than my abilities can provide.</td>
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</table>
17. I feel that I have sufficient training to successfully work in drug court.

18. Participants in my drug court are manipulative.

19. Participants in my drug court are demanding.

20. I have to deal with violent participants in my drug court.


22. I have to deal with aggressive participants in my drug court.

23. I often worry that participants’ recovery will not continue after they complete drug court.

24. I feel personally responsible when a participant in drug court relapses.

25. Participants in my drug court do not understand the importance of recovery.

26. My drug court’s caseload is so large that it feels unmanageable.

27. My drug court’s caseload requires me to work overtime.

28. My drug court responsibilities make me feel overworked.

29. I often talk to others about problems at work.

30. When I have problems at work I pray for guidance and strength.

31. Making a plan of action and following through is a good way to deal with work problems.

32. When I am having problems at work I tend to stay away from other people.

33. If I am having a difficult day at work I try to act like nothing is bothering me.
34. If I have a bad day at work I sometimes shout at other people.

*Very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, very satisfied*

35. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?

36. What is your role/position in drug court?
   a. Judge
   b. Prosecutor
   c. Defense attorney
   d. Administrator/coordinator
   e. Probation officer
   f. Case manager
   g. Treatment provider
   h. Other: __________

37. How long have you worked in drug court?

38. How long have you been at your current position?

39. Some drug court staff have work responsibilities outside of drug court; what percentage of your work week is devoted specifically to drug court-related tasks?

40. How long has your drug court been operational?

41. How many judges does your drug court regularly use?

42. In the last year, approximately what percentage of your drug court participants successfully completed the program?

43. How many active clients do you have at this moment?

44. Which of the following best describes your drug court?
   a. Felony or misdemeanor drug court
   b. Hybrid DUI/drug court
   c. Family drug court
   d. Other: ________________________________________

45. What is your race?

46. What is your age?

47. What is your gender?
48. What is your highest level of completed education?
   a. High school diploma/GED
   b. Some college
   c. Bachelor’s degree
   d. Master’s degree
   e. Juris Doctorate
   f. Ph.D.
   g. Other: __________

49. What is your current marital status?
   a. Single
   b. Living with partner
   c. Married
   d. Divorced
   e. Widowed
APPENDIX B

SELECTION METRICS

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
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Hello [COORDINATOR NAME FIELD] –

My name is Ragan Downey, and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Criminal Justice at The University of Southern Mississippi. I am currently conducting dissertation research that focuses on job stress of drug court personnel. Your program, the [COURT NAME FIELD], has been selected as a data collection point in this research.

Job stress is a serious issue in all areas of employment; however, its impact among criminal justice professionals is often far greater than in other areas of social services. Your participation in this research will help identify sources of job stress within the drug court environment and, hopefully, will assist policy makers in improving drug court operations.

I am requesting that you disseminate this email, which contains a link to an online survey, to the rest of your drug court team. Judges, prosecutors, public defenders, drug court administrators/coordinators, probation officers, and case managers are eligible to take this survey. Treatment personnel working for outside agencies that routinely sit in on drug court staffings are also eligible.

The survey link is provided below:

**2013 Drug Court Personnel Survey**

This survey should take no longer than ten minutes to complete.

Clicking on the survey link indicates your implied consent to participate in this research.

No identifying information will be collected, and your responses will remain anonymous. Incidental information collected by the survey site (e.g., your IP address) will be used to identify potential duplicate submissions and then will be removed from the data set.

Letters of support for this research from two sitting members on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals are available upon request.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at The University of Southern Mississippi (protocol # 13082902). Please contact me at ragan.downey@usm.edu or ragan.downey@pbmhr.org if you have any questions about this research.

Thank you very much for your time,

Ragan Downey
APPENDIX D
JUDGES’ LETTERS OF SUPPORT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
701 North Main Street, Suite 228
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

Keith Starrett
U.S. District Judge

August 2, 2013

Ragan Downey
2 Trystan Drive
Petal, Mississippi 39465

Re: Dissertation Topic

Dear Ragan,

Thank you for sending to me some information about your doctoral dissertation topic. As you know, I have worked with drug and special purpose courts for over fourteen years and have worked with many participants and staffers. One of the reasons that drug courts work so well is that judges and members of the drug court team take a personal interest in participants and are actively engaged in helping them complete their treatment regime and succeed in life. As with other criminal justice services, drug court officers work with high case loads and oftentimes with limited resources.

As a result of being invested in the success of participants, drug court personnel are affected emotionally by their successes and failures. When this is compounded by the high case load and other pressures of the job, drug court personnel can be negatively impacted.

The problems associated with high stress jobs, including burn out, substance abuse, turnover, marital problems, low moral, and absenteeism are well documented in the literature. In this respect, drug court personnel are no different than other positions. The motivation and enthusiasm that any person has to succeed in their job is necessarily outcome determinative for their clients. I believe that this research would be beneficial to the drug court field and encourage you to complete your dissertation as soon as possible. I would also like to have a copy of it once it is in final form.

Very truly yours,

Keith Starrett

Phone (601)583-4422 • Fax (601)544-7369 • starrett_chambers@mssd.uscourts.gov
Dear Ragan,

Thank you for the information about your research regarding job stress among drug court employees. As a drug court judge and member of the Board of Directors for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, I understand the important role that research plays in formulating drug court policy and demonstrating the effectiveness of drug court programs. The vast majority of existing research on drug courts has been largely focused on program and participant success. Your proposed investigation concerning drug court staff and their sources of job stress likely will provide some new perspectives on program performance and, hopefully, will assist policy makers in their efforts to continuously drug court programs across the U.S.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Helfrich
APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive 65147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6320 | Fax: 601.266.4277 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 13052902
PROJECT TITLE: Exploring Job Stress among Drug Court Personnel
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Ragan Downey
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Science and Technology
DEPARTMENT: Criminal Justice
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/13/2013 to 09/12/2014

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board
## APPENDIX F

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>M</th>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Working in drug court makes me feel tense.</td>
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<td>I am usually at ease when working in drug court.†</td>
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<td>I do not consider working with drug court to be a stressful job.†</td>
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<td>I often receive conflicting requests from different people working for the drug court.</td>
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Note: †Reverse coded
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My drug court’s caseload is so large that it feels unmanageable.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My drug court’s caseload requires me to work overtime.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My drug court responsibilities make me feel overworked.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Coping Skills (Summated)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often talk to others about problems at work.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have problems at work I pray for guidance and strength.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a plan of action and following through is a good way to deal with work problems.</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Coping Skills (Summated)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I am having problems at work I tend to stay away from other people.</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am having a difficult day at work I try to act like nothing is bothering me.</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have a bad day at work I sometimes shout at other people.</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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