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The Roles of Social Support and Job Meaningfulness in the Disturbing Media Exposure-
Job Strain Relationship

By

Hung Hoang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts
in
Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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ABSTRACT

The Roles of Social Support and Job Meaningfulness in the Disturbing Media Exposure- Job Strain Relationship

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This study examined the relationship between exposure to disturbing media and a number of strain outcomes. Past research suggests that individuals exposed to disturbing media report symptoms of secondary traumatic stress and burnout (Perez, Jones, Englert, & Sachau, 2010). This relationship was further explored in the current study. Additionally, the current study explored the roles of social support and job meaningfulness in the work place, as past research suggests that support and meaningfulness may help to mitigate the negative outcomes typically found among workers exposed to traumatic stressors (Britt, Adler, & Barton, 2001; Halbesleben, 2006; Morales, 2012; Stephens & Long, 2000). The job demands-resources model (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005) served as the theoretical framework for the current study. Participants were recruited through email and completed an online survey. The results of the study showed that exposure was not related to secondary traumatic stress or emotional exhaustion. Also, coworker support and job meaningfulness did not serve as a significant moderator in any of the analyses. However, exploratory analyses revealed that the relationship between exposure and professional efficacy was mediated by job meaningfulness, suggesting that organizations can decrease the risk of burnout symptoms (specifically, a decrease in professional efficacy) by promoting awareness of the meaningful nature of working with DM. Additional implications of the study's findings were discussed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

An emerging group of employees that have received little attention in the psychology literature are individuals who work with DM (i.e., disturbing media). DM is a category of images and videos that comprise explicit acts of violence, physical abuse, and/or sexual deviance (Perez, Jones, Englert, & Sachau, 2010). While the exact number of employees exposed to DM is unknown, many organizations, including government agency and law enforcement sectors, have dedicated positions in their organizations to individuals with the sole task of examining various forms of DM. These employees can spend hours at a time viewing and listening to graphic acts of violence and sexual abuse. Unfortunately, few studies have focused on this growing population of employees and the ways in which DM can affect these workers. This study aims to supplement the literature on DM by examining the impact of exposure to DM on employees.

Of particular interest in the current study are the potential factors that may reduce the harmful impact associated with viewing/listening to the various forms of DM. While past researchers have linked exposure to DM with a number of negative effects, including secondary traumatic stress, burnout, intrusive thoughts about work, and physical illness (Burns, Morley, Bradshaw, & Domene, 2008; Krause, 2009; Perez et al., 2010), much less is known about what can be done to help these employees cope with or decrease the experience of these negative outcomes. Understanding these mitigating factors is particularly important for individuals that work with traumatic stressors (such as DM exposure), as research suggests that individuals exposed to these traumatic stressors report considerably high levels of strain outcomes, including emotional exhaustion and

cynicism (Perez et al., 2010). While some studies have explored factors that may reduce the negative outcomes associated with exposure, including personality variables, viewing strategies, control over the work, and social support (Burns et al., 2008; Krause, 2009; Stevenson, 2007), the majority of these studies have incorporated qualitative methods of research and analysis with relatively small samples. In my own investigation of the DM literature, I found only one study to date that incorporated quantitative data to examine potential buffers in the exposure to DM-strain relationship (Morales, 2012). However, the study suffered from flaws in terms of experimental design (e.g., exposure to DM was defined in terms reactions to the DM, and not in terms of amount/length of exposure). In an effort to expand upon the extant literature on DM, the current study will incorporate a quantitatively-based research design to explore potential mitigating variables. Specifically, the study will examine the role of social support and job meaningfulness on the DM exposure-job strain relationship.

A great deal of existing research suggests that social support can play a key role in the stressor-strain relationship, particularly among employees exposed to traumatic stressors (Burns et al., 2008; Halbesleben, 2006; Morales, 2012; Stephens & Long, 2000). There is also preliminary evidence that employees who are able to derive meaning from their work are protected from some of the negative effects of traumatic exposures (Britt, Adler, & Barton, 2001).

In addition to exploring the buffering effects of support on the exposure-strain relationship, this study will examine the role of job meaningfulness (i.e., the extent to which employees identify with the mission of their work) in the link between exposure to DM and job satisfaction. Past researchers have found that despite the difficult work,

individuals who regularly work with traumatic stressors (e.g., exposure to DM) report high levels of job satisfaction (Holt & Blevins, 2011). However, there is only preliminary evidence, and no one has yet examined why this relationship exists. Furthermore, job meaningfulness has been examined among soldiers on peacekeeping missions (Britt et al., 2004) but this relationship has yet to be studied among employees who work with DM. This study will explore whether job meaningfulness may help to explain why this unique group of workers report high levels of job satisfaction.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is twofold: 1) Examine the ways in which social support can help mitigate the adverse effects of exposure to DM, particularly the strain outcomes of secondary traumatic stress (STS) and burnout, and 2) Investigate the role of job meaningfulness in the relationship between exposure to DM and job satisfaction.

Exposure to DM and its Negative Outcomes

In one of the first studies published on DM, Burns and colleagues (2008), investigated the effects of DM exposure among a sample of Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In their study, the researchers utilized qualitatively-based research methods (including interviews and critical incident techniques) to gain a better understanding of how these workers were reacting to the DM exposure. As part of their job duties, the 14 members of the police team were required to view images of sexually abused children. The results of their study indicated that these police officers suffered from a number of negative outcomes, including intrusive thoughts and images about their work, over-protectiveness and paranoia with their own children, and feelings of inability to fulfill their duties to their loved ones (Burns et al., 2008).

Perez and colleagues (2010) also found negative effects among a sample of law enforcement officers and civilian workers exposed to DM. In their study, quantitative data was collected from a sample of employees whose primary task was to search the computers of suspected criminals. The researchers were particularly interested in examining the link between exposure to DM and the experience of secondary traumatic stress disorder (STSD). STSD can be defined as the behaviors and emotions that result from knowledge of a traumatizing event that occurred to another individual (Bride, Robinson, Yegidis, & Figley, 2004). Symptoms of STSD are very similar to the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including (but not limited to) feeling emotionally numb, difficulty sleeping, and intrusive thoughts about work (Bride et al., 2004). However, symptoms of STSD result from indirect exposure to trauma (as is the case for these forensic analysts) as opposed to direct exposure to trauma (such as the actual victims depicted in the DM). In the study conducted by Perez and her colleagues, exposure to DM was, in fact, positively related to STS symptoms (Perez et al., 2010).

Another negative outcome linked to individuals working with DM is burnout (Perez et al., 2010). Burnout is generally defined in terms of the 3 following subscales – emotional exhaustion (i.e., a sense of being drained from one's work, either intellectually, emotionally, or physically), cynicism (i.e., distancing oneself from one's work and others), and decreases in professional efficacy (i.e., feelings of reduced personal accomplishment) (Alarcon, 2011; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Although studies have supported the notion that burnout is composed of these 3 subscales (Leiter, 1991), researchers argue that exhaustion is the defining aspect of the burnout response (Leiter, 1991; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Sulsky & Smith, 2005). In the study

conducted by Perez and colleagues (Perez et al., 2010), law enforcement officers exposed to DM reported markedly high levels of burnout, particularly for the subscales of exhaustion and cynicism. However, the officers experienced relatively low levels of professional efficacy, suggesting that these employees still felt that they were making meaningful contributions through their work. Similar results have been found among qualitative studies on DM, in which individuals exposed to DM reported increased levels of fatigue (Burns et al., 2008). The implication of these findings and the relation to social support are discussed in the next section.

Social Support

Social support can be generally defined as “the availability of helping relationships and the quality of those relationships” (Leavy, 1983, p.5). Research on social support and the stressor-strain relationship has focused on three distinct models: 1) the direct effect model, in which social support and stressors have an independent effect on strain, 2) the mediating model, in which stressors have an indirect effect on strain through social support, and 3) the moderating model, in which social support interacts with stressors to affect strain outcomes (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). The mediating effect of social support on the stressor-strain relationship is generally unsupported in the literature. However, more studies have supported both the direct effect model of support on job strain as well as the moderating effect on the job-strain relationship (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). With regards to the moderating effect, researchers have found that social support can interact with stressors to decrease strain outcomes. These findings support the hypotheses that suggest social support serves as a buffer in the stressor-strain relationship. Although the negative

outcomes associated with exposure to DM have been established (Burns et al., 2008; Perez et al., 2010; Stevenson, 2007), little is known in terms of definitive methods of reducing these negative effects linked to work with DM. However, past research on social support suggests that help from others serves as a vital buffer in the stressor-strain relationship (Halbesleben, 2006; Viswesvaran et al., 1999) so it is reasonable to expect that this will also hold for the DM exposure-strain relationship.

Several studies have also examined different sources of social support and how these sources uniquely affect the stressor-strain relationship. For example, researchers have classified sources of social support into a number of distinct categories, including (but not limited to) co-worker, supervisor, and spousal support (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002; McIntosh, 1991; van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006). Research on various sources of support suggests that co-worker support is particularly important in mitigating the negative outcomes that arise from one's job. For example, a meta-analysis investigating the relationship between social support and burnout (Halbesleben, 2006) found that support at the workplace (i.e., support from peers and supervisors) was strongly (and negatively) related to the emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout. Stephens and Long (2000) found similar results in their study, in that support from peers buffered the relationship between exposure to traumatic events and symptoms of PTSD. In a recent study investigating the effects of exposure to DM among law enforcement officers of a federal agency (Morales, 2012), co-worker support was negatively correlated with adverse outcomes, including secondary traumatic stress, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism. Support from supervisors also had negative correlations with emotional exhaustion and cynicism; however, supervisor support was not related to symptoms of

STS. The results in these studies indicate that social support, particularly from co-workers, may serve to mitigate the negative effects (e.g., STSD and burnout) associated with exposure to DM.

DM, Job Satisfaction, and the role of Job Meaningfulness

While several researchers have established the negative outcomes associated with exposure to traumatic stressors, there is a growing body of research that has explored some of the positive outcomes that can be derived from exposure to such traumatic work. In a study conducted by Holt and Blevins (2011) a group of forensic examiners completed surveys about work stress and job satisfaction. The results of the survey indicated that the forensic examiners experienced a moderate amount of stress, with approximately 70% of the employees reporting that they felt “under a lot of pressure” at work, and more than 50% of the respondents claimed that many aspects of the job could “upset” them. However, the researchers also found that most of the participants reported high levels of job satisfaction, with approximately 93% of the sample responded being at least “somewhat satisfied” with their jobs, and nearly half of the participants reported being “very satisfied” with their jobs. Similar results have been found in other studies examining the work of law enforcement officials, in which participants reported moderate to high levels of traumatic stress, but also high levels of job satisfaction (Alkus & Padesky, 1983; Johnson et al., 2005).

Given that these past studies have found high levels of job satisfaction among employees exposed to traumatic stress, it is pertinent to explore some of the possible reasons why this relationship exists. Research involving individuals known as peacekeepers may be crucial in shedding light upon the relationship between traumatic

stress and job satisfaction. Peacekeepers are a unique group of soldiers who are dispatched to areas with some type of conflict, such as areas of political turmoil. Despite the potentially dangerous settings of these environments, peacekeepers have reported a number of positive outcomes associated with their work, such as greater sense of appreciation for the state of affairs in their personal lives, a sense of pride in serving for their country, as well as an increase in respect and understanding of those around them (Litz et al., 1997; Thomas et al., 2006). These positive outcomes linked to traumatic stress can be further understood in a study conducted among peacekeepers deployed in Bosnia (Britt et al., 2001). In their study, the participants completed surveys measuring a number of constructs, including perceived benefits of their work and the meaningfulness of the work. Participants who reported higher levels of meaningfulness in their work also reported higher levels of perceived benefits of their work (e.g., greater levels of appreciation for family, a better understanding of problems in the world, and improved coping strategies with dealing with stress).

The relationship between meaningful work and positive outcomes among these peacekeepers may help to explain why individuals who work with DM experience high levels of job satisfaction. Although individuals working with DM may be exposed to high levels of stress, perhaps some individuals experience high levels of meaningfulness or a sense of duty at their job, which in turn increases their levels of job satisfaction. To help explain why the exposure-job meaningfulness interaction occurs (as well as the exposure-support interaction), the job demands-resources model will be explored in the following section.

Theoretical Framework: The Job Demands-Resources Model

To help shed light upon the stress response among individuals in the workplace, Bakker and colleagues (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005) developed a theory known as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model. According to the model, facets of an individual's workplace can be classified under two broad categories: job demands and job resources. Job demands are aspects of an employee's work (including physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects) that require continued exertion on the part of the employee, thus resulting in both mental and physical costs (Bakker et al., 2005). However, job resources are the aspects of an employee's work (including physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects) that a) help individuals accomplish their work tasks, b) decrease the costs associated with job demands, and/or c) promote personal development (Bakker et al., 2005). Consequently, strain outcomes result when an employee experiences a combination of high job demands but access to low job resources.

When considering the DM exposure-strain relationship, high levels of exposure may be deemed as a demand of the work place. Without an adequate amount of resources to help cope with the work demands, the employees may experience strain outcomes, such as STSD and burnout symptoms. However, if employees have access to important resources, including support from coworkers, the workers may experience a decrease in these negative outcomes. Furthermore, if employees believe they are making meaningful contributions through their work with DM, the sense of meaningfulness may be viewed as a psychological resource on the job that contributes to their personal development. This resource can help to enrich the employee's role in the organization,

thus increasing his or her job satisfaction and overall well-being. The current study will examine the roles of co-worker support and job meaningfulness in the work place through the theoretical framework of the JD-R model.

The Present Study

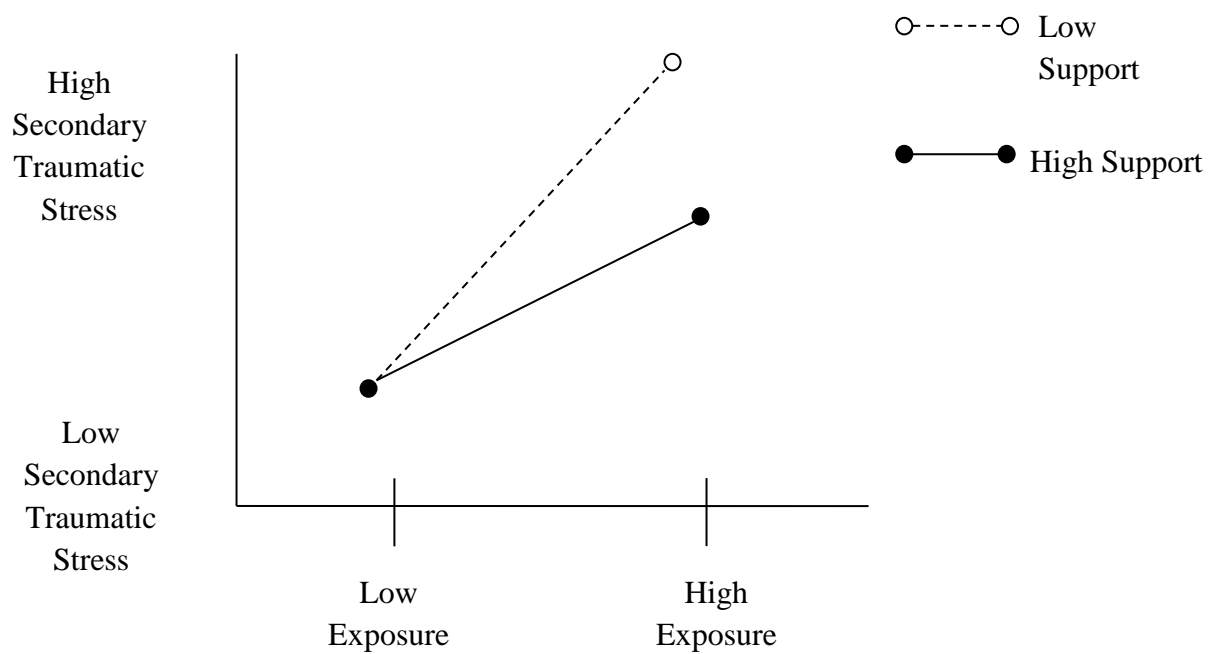
The present study examines the effects of DM exposure among a group of United States military JAG officers. In line with previous research examining the negative effects of DM exposure (Perez et al., 2010), the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Exposure to DM will be positively related to strain outcomes (i.e., secondary traumatic stress and emotional exhaustion)

Furthermore, the current study will examine the buffering effects of social support in the stressor-strain relationship. Specifically, the role of co-worker support in the DM exposure-strain will be examined, as past research suggests that co-worker support can serve to buffer the negative outcomes experienced on the job (McIntosh, 1991; Morales, 2012), as explained by the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker et al., 2005)

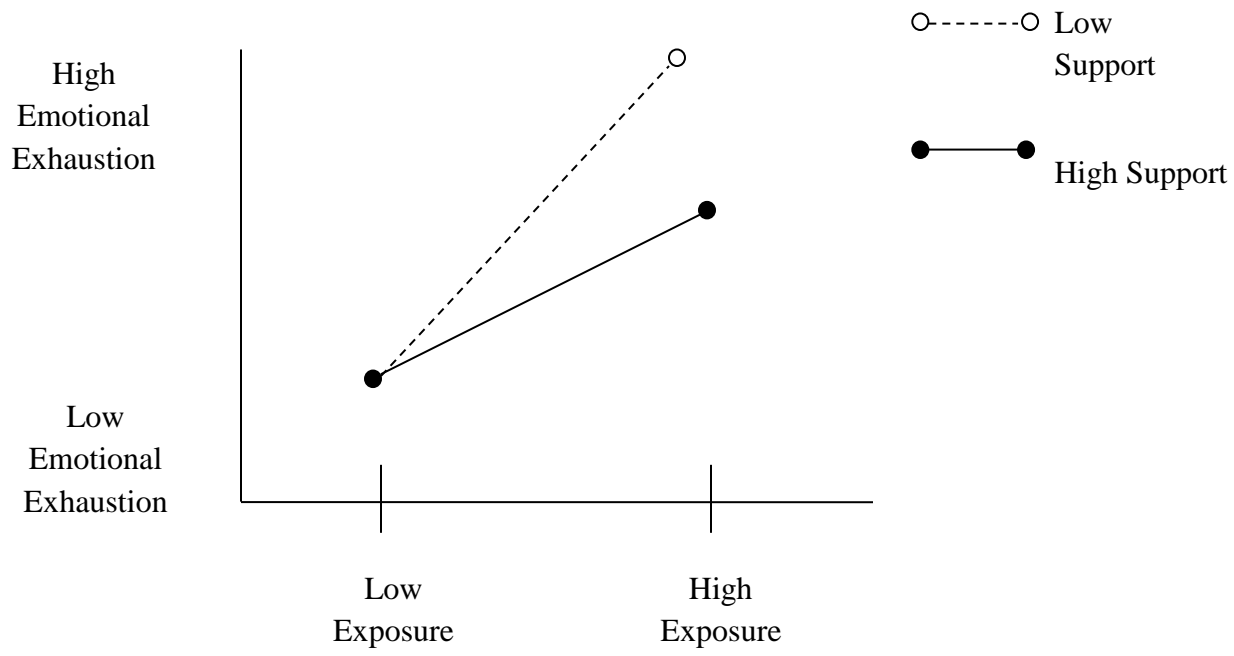
Hypothesis 2: Support from co-workers will moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress. Individuals with low coworker support will demonstrate a stronger relationship between STS and exposure than individuals with high coworker support.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Moderating Effect of Co-Worker Support on the Exposure-STS Relationship



Hypothesis 3: Support from co-workers will moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and emotional exhaustion. Individuals with low coworker support will demonstrate a stronger relationship between emotional exhaustion and exposure than individuals with high coworker support.

Figure 2. Hypothesized Moderating Effect of Co-Worker Support on the Exposure-Emotional Exhaustion Relationship

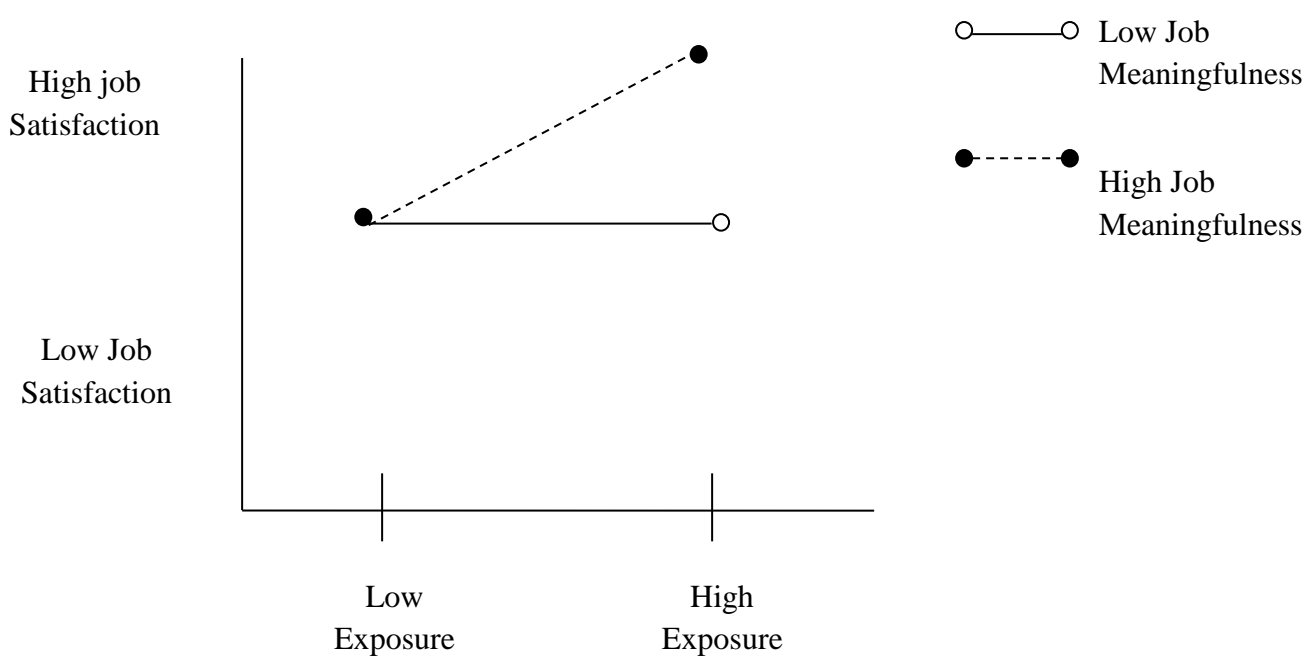


In addition, the current study will examine the relationship between exposure to DM and job satisfaction. Previous research has found high levels of job satisfaction among individuals working with traumatic stressors (Alkus & Padesky, 1983; Holt & Blevins, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005). This relationship will be explored in the current study with regards to job meaningfulness. Past research suggests that job meaningfulness may play a role in our understanding of the traumatic stressor-strain relationship (Brittet al., 2001; Litz et al., 1997). This notion is further supported by the JD-R model, in that

deriving meaning from one's stressful work environment can serve to increase one's personal development and growth (Bakker et al., 2005). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Job meaningfulness will moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and job satisfaction. Individuals with high job meaningfulness will demonstrate a stronger relationship between job satisfaction and exposure than individuals with high coworker support.

Figure 3. Hypothesized Moderating Effect of Job Meaningfulness on the Exposure-Job Satisfaction Relationship



Chapter 2: Method

Participants

A total of 31 individuals participated in the study. The participants were sampled from United States military JAG officers who held various positions, including defense attorneys, prosecuting attorneys, and military judges. The majority of the sample (approximately 60%) reported being between the ages of 31 and 40, and approximately 67% were male. A full description of the demographic and biographical data of the participants can be found in Table 1.

Procedure

An Air Force psychologist helped recruit participants for the study via email. If the participant agreed to take part in the study, the participant was emailed an invitation to complete an online survey that included several quantitative and qualitative items. Reminder emails were sent periodically to encourage the individuals to take part in the study. Forty-four email invitations were sent, and 31 were returned with responses, yielding a response rate of 70.5%.

Measures

Participants completed an online survey that included items on demographic and biographical data as well as a variety of other psychological constructs. A description of the measures used in the study is included in the following section. Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities for each measure.

Exposure to DM. To measure the participant's exposure to DM, participants responded to two items. One item asked the participant to report the number of cases that

he or she worked with that involved child pornography. The other item asked the participant to report the number of cases that he or she worked with that involved other forms of sexual violence. Both items were free response items (i.e., the participant could report any numerical value for each item).

Burnout. Burnout was measured with the 16 item Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 1996). The MB-GS is composed of three subscales, including emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Sample items include “I feel emotionally drained form my work”, “I have become less enthusiastic about my work”, and “I doubt the significance of my work”. Participants were asked to describe how frequently they experienced the symptoms of burnout by responding to each item on a seven-point scale ranging from “never” to “every day”. For emotional exhaustion and cynicism, higher scores reflect higher levels of burnout, whereas lower scores reflect lower levels of burnout for professional efficacy.

Secondary Traumatic Stress. The secondary traumatic stress scale (Bride et al., 2004) was used to assess STS symptoms among the participants. The scale contains 17 items and asked participants to respond to each item on a five-point scale ranging from “never” to “very often”. Example items include, “I thought about work when I didn’t intend to,” “I had trouble sleeping,” and “I felt emotionally numb.”

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with the following item: “All in all, I am satisfied with my job.” Participants responded to the item on a five-point scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Past research has supported the use of single items to measure job satisfaction (Dolbier et al., 2005; Nagy, 2002; Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997).

Social Support. Two measures of social support were utilized in the study, including O'Driscoll's, Brough's Kalliath's (2004) measure of coworker support and a support developed by the researchers of the current study. O'Driscoll's social support focuses more on practical assistance with the work itself, whereas the researchers' measure of social support places more of an emphasis on the emotional support that is provided from coworkers. O'Driscoll's measure of support was composed of four items. Example items include, "My coworker provided helpful information or advice," and "My coworker provided practical assistance." Participants responded to each item on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree." Five items were developed by the researchers to gauge emotional support from coworkers. Example items include, "My coworkers help me cope with the work that I do here" and "My coworkers provide me with the strength that I need to get through a difficult day of work." Participants were instructed to rate their level of agreement with each item on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Meaningful Work. Four items were used to measure meaningful work in the current study. Four of the items were adapted from Britt et al.'s measure of job importance (2004). These items included "I am making a real contribution to accomplishing the [JAG Corps] Mission", "My job is an important part of my unit's success", "I consider what I do on my job personally important", and "Other members of my work group believe in the importance of what I do". Participants were instructed to rate their level of agreement with each item on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

Work Overload. As previously stated, job demands can have a negative impact on employees, particularly when individuals have limited resources to help cope with high work demands (Bakker et al., 2005). Past research suggests stressors such as work overload have a positive correlation with undesirable outcomes, such as burnout (Alarcon, 2011). Also, researchers suggest that stressors such as work load have a negative correlation with job satisfaction (Trivellas, Reklitis, & Platis, 2013). Therefore, a measure of work overload was included as a covariate in the analyses to help ensure that the results of the study were not confounded by the effects of work overload. Work overload was measured with five items. Example items include “How often does your job require you to work very fast?”, “How often is there a great deal to be done?”, and “How often does your job require you to work very hard?” Participants responded to each item on a five-point scale ranging from “Never” to “Very Often”.

Chapter 3: Results

Removals

A total of 31 participants started the survey; however, not all of these participants were retained for the analyses. One participant who did not view any DM during the course of his or her work was removed. One participant who started but did not complete the survey was removed. Additionally, two participants who reported working with 300 cases with child pornography and 4,000 cases with other sexual violence respectively were removed from the study. The overall sample reported working with an average of 30.86 cases involving child pornography, with a standard deviation of 75.175, and 185.41 cases with other forms of sexual violence, with a standard deviation of 756.305; therefore, these two participants were removed for being outliers, as they were 3.58 and 5.04 standard deviations above the mean, respectively. With these two participants removed, the average number of cases that involved child pornography or other sexual violence was 10.93 and 13.96, respectively. A final sample of 27 participants was retained for the analyses of the study.

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analysis examined the reliability of each measure by calculating Cronbach's alpha and revealed that some of the scales' reliabilities fell below the acceptable .70 level. The original four-item scale used to measure meaningful work (Britt, Adler, & Barton, 2001) had an alpha of .67. In order to increase the reliability of the measure, a fifth item was added to the scale (i.e., "I play an important role in this mission"). The reliability of the scale was increased to .75 with the addition of the fifth

item. Furthermore, the measure of emotional support had an alpha of .69. One item (i.e., “At work, people show little interest in each other’s work”) was removed due to a low item-total correlation. The reliability of the scale was increased to .88 after the item was removed.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the sample are provided in Table 2. Correlations between all of the measures used in this study are presented in Table 3.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one (i.e., exposure to DM will be positively related with strain outcomes, including secondary traumatic stress and emotional exhaustion) was tested with correlation analyses. The correlation between exposure to child pornography and emotional exhaustion ($r = -.23, p = ns$) and the correlation between exposure to child pornography and STS ($r = .02, p = ns$) were not statistically significant. Furthermore, the correlation between exposure to other sexual violence and emotional exhaustion ($r = -.30, p = ns$) as well as the correlation between exposure to other sexual violence and STS ($r = -.04, p = ns$) were not statistically significant; therefore, hypothesis one was not supported.

Hypothesis two (i.e., support from co-workers will moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress) was examined with hierarchical moderated regression. The first block of the analyses included the predictor variable (i.e., exposure to DM), the moderator (i.e., social support), and the covariate (i.e., workload). As previously stated, past studies have shown that workload is positively related with undesirable outcomes, such as burnout (Alarcon, 2011). Also,

researchers have found that stressors such as work load have a negative correlation with job satisfaction (Trivellas, Reklitis, & Platis, 2013). Therefore, workload was entered as a control variable in the first block of the hierarchical regression. The second block of the analysis included the interaction term (i.e., exposure to DM x social support) to determine if the interaction term predicted an incremental amount of variability in the outcome variable that was statistically significant. The predictor variables were centered before the interaction term was created and entered into the analyses. The analyses with exposure to child pornography as the predictor variable did not support hypothesis two. Workload ($\beta = .39, p < .05$) and O'Driscoll's measure of social support ($\beta = -.39, p < .05$) were significant predictors of STS. Additionally, when workload was used as a control variable in the analyses, the interaction term that included exposure to child pornography and O'Driscoll's support ($\beta = -.22, p = ns$) as well as the interaction term of exposure to child pornography and emotional support ($\beta = -.18, p = ns$) were not significant predictors of STS. A summary of the analyses are presented in Table 4. The analyses that utilized exposure to other forms of sexual violence as the predictor partially supported hypothesis two. There were no main effects of exposure ($\beta = .10, p = ns$), emotional support ($\beta = -.34, p = ns$), or workload ($\beta = .37, p = ns$) in the analyses. The interaction term (i.e., exposure to DM x emotional support) was not significant ($\beta = -.63, p = .053$) with workload used entered as control variable in the analysis; however, the effect size of the interaction term should be considered in the analysis. As hypothesized, the positive relationship between DM exposure and STS is much stronger for those who do not have social support, while those who have high levels of support are less affected by exposure. Therefore, hypothesis two was partially supported. A graph of the moderated analysis is

included in Figure 4. The analysis that utilized O'Driscoll's (2004) measure of social support did not support hypothesis two. Support ($\beta = -.41, p < .05$) and workload ($\beta = .39, p < .05$) were significant predictors of STS; however, the interaction term between exposure and support was not a significant predictor of STS ($\beta = -.22, p = ns$). The results are presented in Table 5.

Hypothesis three (i.e., support from co-workers will moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and emotional exhaustion) was also examined with hierarchical regression. Emotional support ($\beta = -.42, p < .05$) and O'Driscoll's measure of social support ($\beta = -.38, p < .05$) were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion in the analyses with exposure to child pornography. O'Driscoll's measure was also a significant predictor ($\beta = -.33, p < .05$) of emotional exhaustion in the analysis with exposure to other sexual violence. However, none of the interaction terms were significant predictors of emotional exhaustion. Therefore, hypothesis three was not supported. The results are presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Hypothesis four stated that job meaningfulness would moderate the relationship between exposure to DM and job satisfaction. Hierarchical moderated regression was used to test this hypothesis. When exposure to child pornography was used as the predictor variable, exposure to child pornography ($\beta = -.03, p = ns$) and workload ($\beta = .11, p = ns$) were not significant predictors of job satisfaction, but meaningful work was a significant predictor ($\beta = .59, p < .05$). The interaction term (i.e., exposure to child pornography x meaningful work) was entered in the second block of the hierarchical regression; however, the interaction term was not significant ($\beta = .17, p = ns$). Similar results were found when exposure to other sexual violence was entered as the predictor

variable in the analyses. Exposure to other sexual violence ($\beta = -.004, p = ns$) and workload ($\beta = .13, p = ns$) were not significant predictors of job satisfaction, but meaningful work was a significant predictor ($\beta = .67, p < .05$) of job satisfaction. However, the interaction term (i.e., exposure to other sexual violence x meaningful work) was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = .08, p = ns$). Therefore, hypothesis four was not supported. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 8.

Exploratory Analysis

Although hypothesis four was not supported, results of the bivariate correlations of all the study variables revealed that exposure to DM (i.e., exposure to child pornography) was significantly correlated with the measures of professional efficacy ($r = .47, p = .014$) and meaningful work ($r = .40, p = .039$). As previously stated, past research suggests that those who report higher levels of meaningfulness in their work also report higher levels of perceived benefits of their work (Britt et al., 2001). Accordingly, job meaningfulness may help to explain why individuals in the current study who report high levels of exposure to DM also report high levels of professional efficacy. Those who are exposed to high levels of DM in their work may derive a greater sense of importance in the work they do, thus increasing their levels of professional efficacy. In order to test this hypothesis, Baron and Kenny's (1986) process of testing mediation analysis was utilized. First, the outcome variable (i.e., professional efficacy) was regressed on the predictor (i.e., exposure to child pornography). Exposure to child pornography was significantly related to professional efficacy ($\beta = .47, p = .014$). Second, the mediator (i.e., meaningful work) was regressed on the predictor (i.e., exposure to child pornography). Exposure was a significant predictor of meaningful

work ($r = .40, p = .039$). In the third step of the mediation analysis, professional efficacy was regressed on the mediator (i.e., meaningful work). Meaningful work was a significant predictor of professional efficacy ($\beta = .72, p < .001$). Finally, both exposure to child pornography and meaningful work were simultaneously entered in the regression as predictors of professional efficacy. When both exposure to DM and meaningful work were entered into the analysis, exposure was no longer a significant predictor of professional efficacy ($\beta = .21, p = .165$). Therefore, the relationship between exposure to DM and professional efficacy was fully mediated by meaningful work. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

| | N | % |
|--------------------------|----|--------|
| Age | | |
| 18-20 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 21-30 | 2 | 7.41% |
| 31-40 | 16 | 59.26% |
| 41-50 | 6 | 22.22% |
| 51-60 | 1 | 3.70% |
| Older than 60 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Did Not Report Age | 2 | 7.41% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 18 | 66.67% |
| Female | 8 | 29.63% |
| Did Not Report Gender | 1 | 3.70% |
| Education Level | | |
| High School | 0 | 0.00% |
| Associate's Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| Bachelors Degree | 0 | 0.00% |
| Masters Degree or Higher | 26 | 96.30% |
| Did Not Report Education | 1 | 3.70% |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 4 | 14.81% |
| Married | 21 | 77.78% |
| Separated/Divorced | 1 | 3.70% |
| Widowed | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----|--------|
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| Did Not Report Marital Status | 1 | 3.70% |
| Do You Have Children Under Age 18? | | |
| Yes | 14 | 51.85% |
| No | 12 | 44.44% |
| Did Not Report Parental Status | 1 | 3.70% |
| Military Branch | | |
| Air Force | 14 | 51.85% |
| Navy | 12 | 44.44% |
| Did Not Report Military Branch | 1 | 3.70% |
| Most Frequent Role in DM Cases | | |
| Defense Attorney | 11 | 40.74% |
| Prosecuting Attorney | 14 | 51.85% |
| Judge | 1 | 3.70% |
| Other | 1 | 3.70% |
| Time in the JAG Corps | | |
| Less than 1 year | 1 | 3.70% |
| 1-2 Years | 1 | 3.70% |
| 2-5 years | 7 | 25.93% |
| More than 5 years | 17 | 62.96% |
| Did Not Report Time in JAG | 1 | 3.70% |

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Alphas for All Study Variables

| | Mean | SD | Alpha (α) | Possible Values | Actual Values |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| DM – Child Pornography | 10.93 | 10.07 | --- | No Restriction | 0-40 |
| DM – Other Sexual Violence | 13.96 | 17.12 | --- | No Restriction | 0 - 70 |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 4.36 | 1.68 | .96 | 1-7 | 1.6 - 7.0 |
| Cynicism | 3.20 | 1.64 | .90 | 1-7 | 1.2 - 6.80 |
| Professional Efficacy | 5.69 | 1.12 | .88 | 1-7 | 3.5 - 7.0 |
| STS | 2.11 | 0.86 | .95 | 1-5 | 1.18 - 4.47 |
| Job Satisfaction | 4.15 | 1.17 | One Item | 1-5 | 1 - 5 |
| O’Driscoll Support | 2.00 | 0.69 | .90 | 1-5 | 2.0 - 5.0 |
| Emotional Support | 3.64 | 0.78 | .88 | 1-5 | 2.0 - 4.75 |
| Meaningful Work | 4.25 | 0.52 | .75 | 1-5 | 3.0-5.0 |
| Work Overload | 4.00 | 0.81 | .88 | 1-5 | 2.6 - 5.0 |

Note. DM = DM; STS = Secondary Traumatic Stress

Table 3. Inter-Correlations between all Study Variables

| | DM-OSV | DM-CP | EXH | CYN | PE | STS | OS | ES | JSAT | WL | MW |
|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|------|-------|-----|----|
| DM-OSV | - | | | | | | | | | | |
| DM-CP | .50** | - | | | | | | | | | |
| EXH | -.30 | -.23 | - | | | | | | | | |
| CYN | -.32 | -.23 | .64** | - | | | | | | | |
| PE | .25 | .47** | -.43** | -.68** | - | | | | | | |
| STS | -.04 | .02 | .60** | .53** | -.07 | - | | | | | |
| OS | .25 | -.04 | -.41 | -.52** | .29 | -.44** | - | | | | |
| ES | .31 | -.22 | -.41** | -.42** | .15 | .40** | .74** | - | | | |
| JSATIS | .08 | .17 | -.46** | -.76** | .48** | -.22 | .37* | .30 | - | | |
| WLOAD | -.14 | -.13 | .36* | -.08 | .25 | .44** | -.14 | -.23 | .18 | - | |
| MW | .28 | .40** | -.50** | -.74** | .72** | -.17 | .49** | .36* | .58** | .10 | - |

Note. * = Significant at .10 level; ** = Significant at .05 level; DM-OSV = DM – Other Sexual Violence; DM-CP = DM – Child Pornography; EXH = Emotional Exhaustion; CYN = Cynicism; PE = Professional Efficacy; STS = Secondary Traumatic Stress; OS = O’Driscoll Support; ES = Emotional Support; JSATIS = Job Satisfaction; WLOAD = Work Overload; MW = Meaningful Work

Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Moderating Effect of Social Support (Outcome = STS).

| <i>Predictor</i> | Exposure – Child Pornography | | | | Exposure – Child Pornography | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| | STS | | | | STS | | | |
| <i>Moderator</i> | Emotional Support | | | | O’Driscoll’s Support | | | |
| <i>Variable</i> | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
| Step 1 | .282* | | | | Step 1 | .343** | | |
| Exposure | | -.001 | .02 | -.01 | Exposure | .003 | .02 | .04 |
| Support | | -.34 | .21 | -.31 | Support | -.48 | .22 | -.39** |
| Workload | | .39 | .20 | .36* | Workload | .42 | .19 | .39** |
| Step 2 | .027 | | | | Step 2 | .047 | | |
| Exposure x Support | | -.02 | .02 | -.18 | Exposure x Support | -.03 | .02 | -.22 |

Note: * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; STS = Secondary Traumatic Stress

Table 5. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Moderating Effect of Social Support (Outcome = STS).

| <i>Predictor</i> | Exposure – Other Sexual Violence | | | | Exposure – Other Sexual Violence | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|--------|
| | STS | | | | STS | | | | |
| <i>Moderator</i> | Emotional Support | | | | O’Driscoll’s Support | | | | |
| <i>Variable</i> | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | |
| Step 1 | .291* | | | | Step 1 | .351** | | | |
| Exposure | | .01 | .01 | .10 | Exposure | | .01 | .01 | .10 |
| Support | | -.37 | .21 | -.34 | Support | | -.51 | .22 | -.41** |
| Workload | | .40 | .20 | .37* | Workload | | .42 | .19 | .39** |
| Step 2 | .118* | | | | Step 2 | .033 | | | |
| Exposure x Support | | -.03 | .01 | -.63* | Exposure x Support | | -.02 | .01 | -.22 |

Note: * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$

Figure 4. Interaction between Exposure to DM and Social Support (Emotional Support) on STS

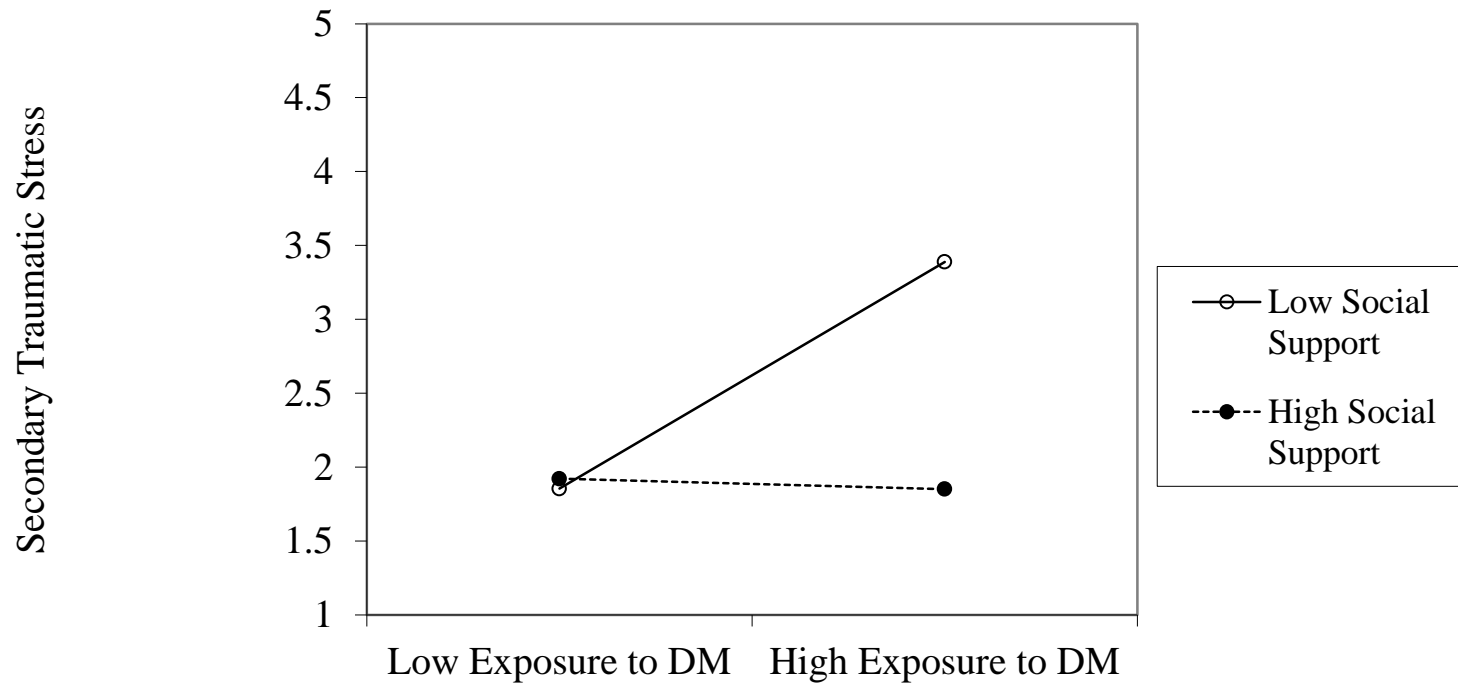


Table 6. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Moderating Effect of Social Support (Outcome = Emotional Exhaustion).

| <i>Predictor</i> | Exposure – Child Pornography | | | | Exposure – Child Pornography | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|--------|
| <i>Outcome</i> | Emotional Exhaustion | | | | Emotional Exhaustion | | | | |
| <i>Moderator</i> | Emotional Support | | | | O’Driscoll’s Support | | | | |
| <i>Variable</i> | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | |
| Step 1 | .323** | | | | Step 1 | .308** | | | |
| Exposure | | -.05 | .03 | -.28 | Exposure | | -.04 | .03 | -.21 |
| Support | | -.91 | .40 | -.42** | Support | | -.93 | .44 | -.38** |
| Workload | | .48 | .39 | .23 | Workload | | .60 | .38 | .28 |
| Step 2 | .031 | | | | Step 2 | .053 | | | |
| Exposure x Support | | -.03 | .03 | -.20 | Exposure x Support | | -.06 | .04 | -.24 |

Note: ** $p < .05$

Table 7. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Moderating Effect of Social Support (Outcome = Emotional Exhaustion).

| <i>Predictor</i> | Exposure – Other Sexual Violence | | | | Exposure – Other Sexual Violence | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|
| <i>Outcome</i> | Emotional Exhaustion | | | | Emotional Exhaustion | | | | |
| <i>Moderator</i> | Emotional Support | | | | O’Driscoll’s Support | | | | |
| <i>Variable</i> | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | |
| Step 1 | .270* | | | | Step 1 | .292* | | | |
| Exposure | | -.02 | .02 | -.16 | Exposure | | -.02 | .02 | -.17 |
| Support | | -.65 | .42 | -.30 | Support | | -.80 | .45 | -.33* |
| Workload | | .57 | .40 | .27 | Workload | | .62 | .38 | .29 |
| Step 2 | .009 | | | | Step 2 | .000 | | | |
| Exposure x Support | | -.02 | .03 | -.18 | Exposure x Support | | -.001 | .03 | -.01 |

Note: * $p < .10$

Table 8. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Moderating Effect of Meaningful Work (Outcome = Job Satisfaction).

| <i>Predictor</i> | Exposure – Child Pornography | | | | Exposure – Other Sexual Violence | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|
| <i>Outcome</i> | Job Satisfaction | | | | Job Satisfaction | | | | |
| <i>Moderator</i> | Meaningful Work | | | | Meaningful Work | | | | |
| <i>Variable</i> | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | ΔR^2 | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | |
| Step 1 | .354** | | | | Step 1 | .356** | | | |
| Exposure | | -.004 | .02 | -.03 | Exposure | | -.004 | .01 | -.06 |
| Meaningful Work | | 1.30 | .43 | .59** | Meaningful Work | | 1.31 | .40 | .59** |
| Workload | | .16 | .25 | .11 | Workload | | .16 | .25 | .11 |
| Step 2 | .017 | | | | Step 2 | .013 | | | |
| Exposure x Meaningful Work | | .04 | .06 | .17 | Exposure x Meaningful Work | | .02 | .02 | .13 |

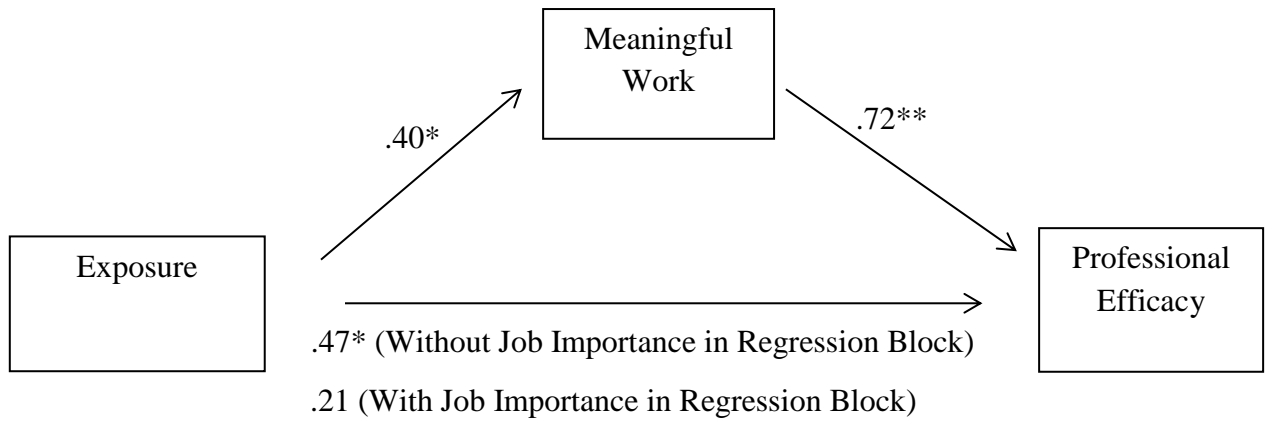
Note: ** $p < .05$

Table 9. Summary of Regression Analyses Testing the Mediating Effect of Meaningful Work on the Exposure -Professional Efficacy Relationship.

| | <i>Predictor (s)</i> | <i>Outcome</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | <i>β</i> |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Step 1 | | | | | |
| | Exposure | Professional Efficacy | .05 | .02 | .47** |
| Step 2 | | | | | |
| | Exposure | Meaningful Work | .02 | .01 | .40** |
| Step 3 | | | | | |
| | Meaningful Work | Professional Efficacy | 1.54 | .30 | .72** |
| Step 4 | | | | | |
| | Exposure | Professional Efficacy | .02 | .02 | .21 |
| | Meaningful Work | | 1.36 | .32 | .63** |

Note: ** $p < .05$; Exposure = Exposure to Child Pornography

Figure 5. The Mediating Effect of Meaningful Work in the Exposure-Professional Efficacy Relationship.



Note: * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; Exposure = Exposure to Child Pornography

Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of exposure to DM on a number of negative outcomes among a group of military lawyers in the JAG corps. Specifically, past research suggests that those who are exposed to DM will experience negative outcomes, such as secondary traumatic stress and emotional exhaustion (Morales, 2012; Perez et al., 2010). However, other studies suggest that individuals who are employed in positions with exposure to traumatic stressors also experience high levels of job satisfaction (Alkus & Padesky, 1983; Holt & Blevins, 2011; Johnson et al., 2005) and do not feel the reduced sense of professional efficacy commonly seen in burnout (Morales, 2012; Perez et al., 2010). Thus, I also examined some possible explanations for these findings: social support and job meaningfulness. Social support was examined as a potential buffer between the exposure to DM and the negative outcomes of STS and burnout, as researchers have found social support can reduce the experience of negative outcomes (Burns et al., 2008; Halbesleben, 2006; Morales, 2012; Stephens & Long, 2000). Furthermore, the relationship between exposure and job satisfaction was explored in the current study with regards to job meaningfulness. Job meaningfulness was examined as a potential moderator and mediator in the exposure-job satisfaction relationship.

Summary of Findings

Although past studies have shown that exposure to DM is related to outcomes such as STS and burnout (Morales, 2012; Perez et al., 2010), these results were not found in the current study. There are a number of factors that may have influenced these non-

significant findings. One of the key factors that likely contributed to the null findings is the small sample size. Given that only 26 participants were included in this study, the analyses simply lacked the statistical power to detect these significant findings.

However, the effect size of the correlation was moderate, suggesting that exposure to DM is likely contributing to negative outcomes such as STS and burnout. A key factor that may have contributed to the non-significant results was the way in which exposure to DM was measured. In the current study, exposure was measured with a free item response, asking participants to report the number of cases that he or she worked with that involved DM. A potential issue with this approach of measuring exposure is the reliance on the participant's memory. Past research has reported the potential for error when individuals are asked to recall specific details of past events, particularly when a considerable amount of time has passed since the event occurred (Schacter, 1999). Given that most of the individuals in the sample (i.e., 89%) reported having at least two or more years of experience in the JAG Corps, it is likely that participants were unable to recall the exact number of cases that they worked on, thus resulting in error in the measurement of exposure. Furthermore, the number of cases an individual worked on may not be an accurate reflection of an individual's exposure. For example, the amount of DM in any given case can vary dramatically. One case could utilize hundreds or thousands of DM images as pieces of evidence, whereas other cases may incorporate far less. Given the amount of variability that can potentially exist between cases in DMDM, the measurement of exposure to DM with number of cases may not serve as an accurate reflection of one's involvement with DM. Additionally, the intensity of any particular session involving exposure to DM may not be captured when exposure is simply

measured by number of cases. For instance, one case may focus on a photograph as a piece of evidence, whereas another case may include a video with DM. The video could potentially have more of an effect on an individual in comparison to the photograph, as the video may contain more details. However, this difference of exposure could not be accurately identified by simply asking an individual to report the number of cases he or she worked with involving DM.

The analyses for hypotheses two and three examined the moderating role of social support in the exposure- strain relationship; using STS or emotional exhaustion as strain outcomes. Although I hypothesized that social support would serve as a buffer to help reduce the experience of these negative outcomes among workers exposed to DM, this hypothesis was only partially supported. Neither instrumental nor emotional social support from co-workers moderated the relationship between exposure to child pornography and emotional exhaustion or STS. However, emotional support did appear to influence the relationship between exposure to “other sexual violence” (as opposed to child pornography) and STS. The positive relationship between DM exposure and STS was much stronger for those who did not have emotional support, while those who had high levels of emotional support were less affected by exposure. However, the measure of instrumental social support appeared to have no buffering effect in the exposure-strain relationship.

Although the type of support (e.g., instrumental versus emotional support) was not emphasized in the current study, it should be noted that the two measures of social support appeared to have varying effects on the symptoms of STS among the sample of JAG employees. It is possible that the task-oriented assistance among this sample of

JAG employees did not have a buffering effect on the exposure-strain relationship because the difficulties associated with this work are more emotional than practical. If so, assistance with the workload or other facets of the job itself will not help an individual cope with those emotional side effects. For example, a lawyer could potentially help a colleague file paperwork for a case; however, this assistance does not help the individual mentally process what they have seen and heard, or help them cope with the symptoms of secondary traumatic stress, such as trouble sleeping or the experience of reliving the trauma of a victim. In line with the Job Demands-Resource Model, perhaps the job demands of exposure to DM places more of a toll on an individual's psychological resources. Accordingly, emotional support helps the individuals cope with the psychological demands of working with DM but instrumental support does not.

Although social support did not serve as a statistically significant moderator in terms of statistical analyses, it is apparent in other findings that social support does, in fact, play a significant role for those involved with DM work. Specifically, social support was negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and STS in the current study. Similar results have been reported in other studies that have examined the relationship between support and negative outcomes among those who are exposed to DM (Morales, 2012). Furthermore, qualitative results from Perez and colleagues (2012) noted that approximately one-third of the participants cited social support as a means of coping with exposure to DM. Although the results of this study suggest that case load may not have a direct effect on these negative outcomes in this study, it is apparent that

those with more support in the workplace experience lower levels of STS and emotional exhaustion.

The analysis for hypothesis four explored the moderating role of job meaningfulness in the exposure-job satisfaction relationship. Specifically, when exposure to DM is high, individuals who feel that their work makes a difference were expected to report higher levels of job satisfaction than individuals with low levels of job meaningfulness. This hypothesis was not supported in the moderation analyses. One of the potential factors that may have contributed to these null findings was the way job meaningfulness was measured in the study. Particularly, the meaningful work items placed an emphasis on the JAG Corps and how one's work affected the unit (e.g., "I am making a real contribution to accomplishing the JAG Corps mission", "My job is an important part of my unit's success"). Perhaps those who work with DM derive a sense of meaning and importance from helping the victims and those involved with case, as opposed to the JAG Corps itself. Furthermore, the participants in the current study may place less on an emphasis on how their work affects their unit, as the participants working within the JAG Corps may work on these cases on more of an individual basis. Therefore, the meaningfulness derived from one's work involving DM may not have been properly reflected with the measure that was used for the current study. Although moderation analyses with exposure and job meaningfulness did not result in significant results, exploratory analyses revealed the relationship between exposure and professional efficacy was mediated by job importance. Exposure to DM was statistically significant predictor of professional efficacy; however, when exposure and meaningful work were both examined simultaneously as predictors, exposure to DM was no longer a significant

predictor of professional efficacy. These results suggest that job meaningfulness can play an important role in reducing the experience of burnout among employees exposed to DM; specifically, deriving a sense of meaning from one's work will help prevent an individual from experiencing a lack of professional efficacy. A key implication of this finding is that organizations can promote awareness among employees regarding the importance of their role, thus increasing the experience of professional efficacy among these employees.

Limitations

Although this study provided a greater understanding of those working with DM, the limitations in the current study should also be noted. One of the limitations of the current study was the relatively small sample of participants. As previously stated, a total of 27 participants was retained for the final analyses of the study, making statistical significance difficult to achieve in any of the analyses. Related to the concern of the small sample of the study was the large number of analyses that were conducted. Specifically, the probability of type one error increases when more analyses are conducted. Therefore, future studies on DM should examine larger sample sizes to help increase the stability of the results. This may require sampling from multiple organizations as it is unlikely many organizations have a large enough number of people doing this sort of work.

Additionally, the data collection for the study was cross-sectional in nature. All of the study variables were collected from participants at one point in time. Accordingly, causal inferences cannot be drawn from the current study. Future studies should

incorporate a longitudinal methodology to data collection, thus providing greater insight into the relationship of the variables over time.

Finally, the measure of exposure to DM used in this study (i.e., reporting the number of cases an individual worked with that involved DM) may have included a substantial amount of error. This method of measuring exposure could have been inaccurate for several reasons, including potential errors in recalling specific case numbers, a lack of detail regarding the amount of evidence that was viewed for each case that involved DM, as well as uncertainty regarding the severity of each instance of exposure.

Future Research

In addition to the limitations previously mentioned, future studies should incorporate a number of different factors to help increase the understanding of those who work with DM. As previously noted, social support may have varying effects on the exposure-strain relationship when different types of DM are examined. Future research should examine this relationship to determine when social support serves as a resource to an individual (or perhaps a hindrance). For example, does social support only serve as a buffer in the exposure-strain relationship when the DM does not include child pornography? Future studies should explore the exposure-strain relationship with different types of DM to determine when social support may serve as a potential buffer.

The current study focused on social support as a resource to help reduce the negative effects associated with exposure, but new research on DM can explore other resources that may help individuals cope with the strain of viewing these images. For example, several of the participants reported that exercise helps them cope with the work

involving DM. New research should examine the potential benefits of physical activity to determine if exercise can help reduce the negative effects of exposure. Additionally, researchers can explore potential strategies to help individuals psychologically detach themselves from the work with DM, as several participants in the current study suggested that detachment from the work itself helps them cope with their work.

Furthermore, an additional area of research for new studies on exposure to DM can evaluate the role of personality in the exposure-strain relationship. Perhaps certain personality traits or a combination thereof may help to determine the individuals who are the more susceptible to the effects of exposure to DM, both positive and negative. For example, perhaps individuals that are high in conscientiousness can derive a greater sense of achievement and meaningfulness in the work that they do, or perhaps extraverts are more likely to seek the support of those around them to help them cope with the effects of exposure. Future research can provide a richer understanding of the effects of personality among DM workers.

Finally, as previously mentioned, new research should incorporate other ways of measuring DM exposure, as simply reporting the number of cases an individual has worked with can introduce potential measurement errors. For example, perhaps future research should utilize a more qualitative approach to data collection, such as a diary study. This method of data collection could help reduce the error in memory recall that was potentially introduced in this study, as study participants would be tracking their reactions to DM exposure on a continual basis. Furthermore, this method of data collection could potentially enrich our understanding of the effects of DM exposure by

examining the individual's more detailed responses, as opposed to simply evaluating quantitative results.

Conclusion

The current study provided important insight into the effects of exposure to DM among employees, specifically within the JAG Corps. Social support can potentially serve as a resource in helping workers cope with the strain of working with DM. Furthermore, those who work with DM have the potential to experience increased levels of importance in the work they do, which in turn can provide them with a sense of professional efficacy. Given the relatively small body of literature that exists on the subject of DM, it is clear that more research needs to be conducted on this unique group of individuals.

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APPENDIX - Measures

Exposure to Disturbing Media

In the course of investigations and trials, you may be exposed to disturbing media. Disturbing media images include photographs, video, or other media containing child pornography and other forms of sexual violence. Have you ever been exposed to these types of disturbing media in your work as a military lawyer?

- Yes
 No

How many of these cases involved the following:

Child Pornography
 Other Forms of Sexual Violence

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Please read each statement and indicate how frequently the statement was true for you in the past seven days.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Very Often |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. I feel emotionally numb. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. My heart starts pounding when I think about my work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. It seems as if I relive the trauma(s) or stress experienced by victims or those with whom I am to protect. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I have trouble sleeping. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I feel discouraged about the future. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Reminders of my work upset me. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I have little interest in being | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

around others.

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 8. I feel jumpy. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I am less active than usual. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I think about my work when I don't intend to. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I have trouble concentrating. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I avoid people, places, or things that remind me of my work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I have disturbing dreams about my work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I want to avoid working on some cases. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. I am easily annoyed. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. I expect something bad to happen. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. I notice gaps in my memory about cases. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

The following statements refer to your reactions to your work with disturbing media. Disturbing media images include photographs, video, or other media containing child pornography and other forms of sexual violence. If any of these questions do not apply to you, please leave them blank. Please read the following statements. Respond to each statement by rating how strongly you agree or disagree with it using the scale below.

O'Driscoll's Measure of Social Support

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. My colleagues provide helpful information or advice about my work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. My colleagues provide sympathetic understanding and advice. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. My colleagues provide clear and helpful feedback about my work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. My colleagues provide practice assistance at work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Emotional Support

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. At work, people show little interest in each other's work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. | When I encounter a problem at work, I usually seek help from my coworkers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. | My coworkers help me cope with the work that I do here. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. | My coworkers provide me with the strength that I need to get through a difficult day of work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. | When I am having a difficult day at work, I can count on my coworkers to make me feel better. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Note: Item one was removed from the analyses due to its low item-total correlation.

Meaningful Work

- | | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | I am making a real contribution to accomplishing the JAG Corps mission. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. | My job is an important part of my unit's success. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. | I consider what I do on my job personally important. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. | Other members of my work group believe in the importance of what I do. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. I play an important role in this mission.

Note: Item five is not included in the original measure of meaningful work from Britt, Adler, and Barton (2001).

Job Satisfaction

- | | Strongly
Disagree | Disagree | Neither
Agree nor
Disagree | Agree | Strongly
Agree |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Workload

Please read the following questions carefully and answer them regarding your work as a military lawyer.

- | | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Often | Very
Often |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. How often does your job require you to work very fast? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. How often does your job leave you with little time to get things done? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. How often is there a great deal to be done? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. How often do you have to do more work than you can do well? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. How often does your job require you to work very hard? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |