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**Working Paper**

## As If It Weren't Hard Enough Already: Breaking down Hiring Discrimination Following Burnout

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## ABSTRACT

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# As If It Weren't Hard Enough Already: Breaking down Hiring Discrimination Following Burnout\*

Hiring discrimination towards (former) burnout patients has been extensively documented in the literature. To tackle this problem, it is important to understand the underlying mechanisms of such discrimination. Therefore, we conducted a vignette experiment with 425 genuine recruiters and jointly tested the potential stigma against job candidates with a history of burnout that were mentioned earlier in the literature. We found candidates revealing a history of burnout elicit perceptions of requiring work adaptations, likely having more unpleasant collaborations with others as well as diminished health, autonomy, ability to work under pressure, leadership capacity, manageability, and learning ability, when compared to candidates with a comparable gap in working history due to physical injury. Led by perceptions of a reduced ability to work under pressure, the tested perceptions jointly explained over 90% of the effect of revealing burnout on the probability of being invited to a job interview. In addition, the negative effect on interview probability of revealing burnout was stronger when the job vacancy required higher stress tolerance. In contrast, the negative impact of revealing burnout on interview probability appeared weaker when recruiters were women and when recruiters had previously had personal encounters with burnout.

**JEL Classification:** J71, I14, C83, C91

**Keywords:** hiring discrimination, burnout, statistical discrimination, taste-based discrimination

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# 1. Introduction

Across different regions and professions, researchers have discovered worrisome burnout numbers.<sup>1</sup> Besides compromising employee well-being, the relationship of burnout syndrome with turnover, absenteeism, and reduced job performance (Swider & Zimmerman, 2010) presents the 21<sup>st</sup> century's labour markets with tremendous challenges. In response to this problem, many researchers (primarily in the field of psychology) have studied the symptomatology and determinants of burnout across a wide span of occupations (Bakker & Costa, 2014; Lesener, Gusy & Wolter, 2019; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Still, little is known about labour market re-integration following burnout (Kärkkäinen, Saaranen, Hiltunen, Ryyänen & Räsänen, 2017) – a gap requiring attention given (i) the health and financial benefits of returning to work (Kessler et al., 2008; Stuart, 2006) and (ii) the difficulties patients experience throughout their re-integration trajectories (Boštjančič & Koračin, 2014; Kärkkäinen, Saaranen & Räsänen, 2019).

One obstacle (former) burnout patients could encounter is labour market discrimination (Purvanova & Muros, 2010; Sterkens, Rooman, Derous, Baert & Moens, mimeo; Waddel, Burton & Kendall, 2008).<sup>2</sup> For example, in a Belgian survey – conducted in the same region as our study population, *infra* – approximately 40% of ex-burnout patients explicitly feared being discriminated against upon re-entering the labour market (Sterkens et al., mimeo). This seems to be a realistic concern, given that hiring discrimination based on depression, another mental disorder, is well established in the literature (Baert, De Visschere, Schoors, Vandenberghe & Omey, 2016; Bianchi, Schonfeld & Laurent, 2015).

To tackle this obstacle, it is crucial to understand its driving forces. From a theoretical point of view, both the seminal theories of taste-based (Becker, 1957) and statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972) could explain hiring discrimination against burnout patients. In a framework of taste-based discrimination, the applicants' burnout could be regarded as a cost in collaborations due to a distaste

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<sup>1</sup> In the scientific literature, population estimates of burnout have relied on various self-reporting scales, thus limiting comparability between countries. However, notwithstanding the existing methodological discrepancies, burnout is widely present. For instance, 78.4% (88.5%) of the physicians in the US (China) report themselves suffering burnout symptoms (Jha et al., 2019; Lo et al., 2018). Moreover, according to Schaufeli (2018), in European countries such as the United Kingdom or Sweden, respectively 13.5% and 7.3% of the working population *always* feels exhausted at the end of the working day (i.e. burnout's core symptom). Lastly, more comprehensive burnout measures in the Belgian and Dutch populations indicate that 16.9% of the Belgian and 17.3% of the Dutch workers are either at a high risk of developing clinical burnout or currently experience one (Hoofman et al., 2019; Schaufeli, De Witte & Desart, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Following Grossi, Perski, Osika & Savic (2015), we define burnout patients as individuals suffering from 'clinically significant exhaustion and impaired performance, which motivates seeking professional help' (p.626).

for the applicant. Indeed, burnout patients struggle with acceptance within organisations (Boštjančič & Galič, 2020; Boštjančič & Koračin, 2014). Alternatively, following statistical discrimination theory, employers could interpret applicant burnout as a negative signal (Spence, 1973) for candidate productivity, therein evaluating individual applicants based on their stigmatic beliefs regarding burnout patients in general (Brouwers, 2020; Mendel, Kissling, Reichhart, Bühner & Hamann, 2015).

From an empirical point of view, survey and interview research (e.g. Bahlmann, Angermeyer & Schomerus, 2013; Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007) suggests, in line with statistical discrimination theory, that employers perceive burnout patients as being less productive due to lingering symptoms (Boštjančič & Galič, 2020; Boštjančič & Koračin, 2014), reduced professional autonomy (Boštjančič & Galič, 2020; Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007), trainability (Boštjančič & Koračin, 2014; Diksa & Rogers, 1996) and manageability (Laberon, 2014; Stuart, 2006). However, traditional survey and interview studies both have their limitations (i.e. employers downplaying stigmatisation – social desirability bias – or patient-employees accepting their a priori convictions as general truths). In addition, the ‘professional shape’ of the burnout stigma (i.e. productivity perceptions patients are branded with by employers) has only been investigated in a single experimental study by Mendel et al. (2015). In their research, German managers rated experimental vignettes on the prospective job performance of an employee who had returned from sick leave due to burnout. They found that returning burnout patients are perceived as being unable to handle pressure and satisfactorily fulfil leadership roles, being more likely to be absent due to relapses and requiring adaptations to the job.

In the current study, we contribute to the literature by empirically testing a structurally assembled body of employers’ candidate perceptions on burnout patients in relation to the likelihood of hiring. To this end, we conduct a state-of-the-art vignette experiment in which fictitious job candidates with and without a burnout experience are evaluated by subjects with genuine experience in recruitment. We extend the literature by (i) testing the empirical value of a broader spectrum of productivity-related stigma and (ii) determining candidate perceptions related to taste-based discrimination (e.g. how the employer or co-workers would appreciate their collaboration) as an alternative explanation for discrimination against former burnout patients. In view of the external validity of our study, we develop a more ecologically valid scenario to reveal a history of mental health problems than used previously in experimental hiring studies. In addition, hiring behaviours and candidate perceptions related to former burnout patients are studied across different job openings (instead of focussing on a single profession or sector as done in most of the previous research). Thereby, our experimental framework also allows us to

investigate how unfavourable treatment of job candidates with a burnout experience varies with job characteristics. Finally, we also investigate moderators of this treatment at both the candidate level (gender, age, timing and duration of the inactivity due to burnout and extracurricular activities) and the recruiter level (among which burnout knowledge and burnout encounters).

## 2. Experimental Design

A vignette experiment enables the analysis of human judgments and beliefs by integrating an experimental set-up in a survey (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). It is, therefore, frequently used to study hiring decisions and discriminatory behaviour (e.g. Auspurg, Hinz & Sauer, 2017; Kuziemko, Norton, Saez & Stantcheva, 2015; Van Belle et al., 2018; Van Borm & Baert, 2018). Specifically, in the context of hiring experiments participants evaluate candidate descriptions depicted in vignettes, for which the characteristics ('vignette dimensions', e.g. candidate gender) vary systematically or randomly over a number of categories ('vignette levels', e.g. male, female).

Because vignette experiments combine experimental and survey elements, they inherit favourable attributes of both: causal interpretations (experiment) and increased external validity (survey population). What makes vignette experiments particularly interesting in the context of hiring discrimination is the fact that, compared to traditional surveys, vignette experiments are more suitable for measuring sensitive issues (Auspurg, Heinz, Liebig & Sauer, 2014) because the multidimensionality of the experiment forces participants to make trade-offs between dimensions and, thus, diminishes socially desirable answering. In the following subsections, the vignette design, data collection and experimental procedure are described. We discuss the limitations of our design in section 4.

### 2.1 Vignette design

In our vignette experiment, participants passed a series of judgments on four fictitious job candidates ('vignettes') demonstrating a gap in their working history. The deliberate choice to exclusively present job candidates with a gap in working history was motivated by methodological concerns. In particular, by having all candidates feature a gap in working history – although with different explanations – no substantial correlations arose between vignette dimensions ('gap in working history' and 'reason for gap in working history', *infra*), thus following Auspurg and Hinz's guidelines (2014) for state-of-the-art vignette experiments.

Our job candidates varied systematically across five vignette dimensions on

pre-determined vignette levels and were presented in a tabular design (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). The employed vignette dimensions and their corresponding levels are displayed in Table 1.

<Table 1>

Two vignette dimensions are related to the candidate's gap in working history. Our main dimension of interest was the provided reason for the gap in working history – its crucial level being burnout – as compared to 'personal reasons', 'physical injury' and 'unemployment' (control levels). The control level 'personal reasons' was based on the feedback of HR professionals (see subsection 2.3), who remarked that candidates hiding sensitive information during a job interview often produce vague explanations instead (e.g. not having worked for 'personal reasons'). As a consequence, the level 'personal reasons' could additionally be interpreted – and analysed – as a more covert strategy for disclosing burnout. A second control reason was labelled 'physical injury' and was based on earlier comparisons of mental and physical health stigmas (e.g. Breen, 2018; Hipes, Lucas, Phelan & White, 2016; Lucas & Phelan, 2012; Stuart, 2006). Adding to the ecological validity of the experiment, our final control reason was labelled 'unemployment' (seeking a job).

The second dimension of interest reflected the timing of the gap in working history and allowed us to evaluate whether the effects of gaps (due to burnout) were more or less severe when situated further in the past. The length of the gaps was fixed to 5 ( $\pm$  3) months and, thus, aligned with sick leave estimates of Flemish burnout patients (Rooman, Sterkens, Schelfhout, Baert & Derous, mimeo; Sterkens et al., mimeo). The gaps were placed at one of three time periods, at 0 (i.e. until the present), 2 or 5 years ago. These values were randomly adjusted  $\pm$  3 months to, again, maximise the ecological validity of the experiment.

The three remaining dimensions were common characteristics revealed during the selection procedure and were potential additional moderators in the relationship between revealing burnout and hiring chances. More concretely, the third dimension was sex (male, female). Because burnout could be perceived as a primarily female experience due to gender stereotypes (Eagly & Wood, 2016; Purvanova & Morus, 2010) and gender-incongruent behaviour is penalised by recruiters (Cohen & Bunker, 1975), hiring discrimination against burnout patients could be more common among male candidates. Similarly, men disclosing a depressive episode were less likely to be hired compared to women (Baert, De Visschere, et al., 2016).

As a fourth dimension, we incorporated candidate age into vignettes via three levels: 30, 40 and 50 (randomly adjusted  $\pm$  3) years. Hiring discrimination against



older burnout patients could be more outspoken compared to young workers, since older workers are expected to recover less easily from burnout compared to their younger counterparts (and conditional on level of burnout) due to age's signalling effect of worse health and reduced energy (Baert, Norga, Thuy & Van Hecke, 2016). Adding a history of burnout to a vignette of older candidates could, therefore, strengthen this perception and elicit hiring discrimination.

A fifth dimension was extracurricular activity (sports, association, volunteering, none) because this dimension is commonly featured in other vignette studies mimicking real-life hiring decisions (e.g. Di Stasio, 2014; Van Belle et al., 2018). Besides increasing ecological validity, one could argue that candidates with a history of burnout who practice sports are received more positively because practising sports signals good health (Schulte-Hostedde, Eys, Emond & Buzdon, 2012), thus counteracting negative burnout signals.

Our selection of dimensions and levels resulted in a 2 (gender) × 3 (age) × 3 (timing of gap in working history) × 4 (reason for gap in working history) × 4 (extracurricular activities) design of 288 unique vignettes (the 'vignette universe'). In a completely matched factorial design, participants would be exposed to all 288 stimuli, yet this was unachievable in terms of cognitive demands. The alternative, in which each participant would be presented with a single vignette, would have required an enormous sample to have each vignette rated by several recruiters. Therefore, following Auspurg and Hinz (2014), we randomly presented participants with a selection of four vignettes ('vignette decks'). More specifically, we selected (40 × 4 =) 160 vignettes from the vignette universe and stacked them in decks of four using the D-efficiency algorithm (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). A D-efficient design contains those selections of vignettes yielding the most precise parameter estimates in comparison to less efficient combinations. With a substantially high D-efficiency score of 98.347, a negligible covariance existed between vignette dimensions (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014).

## **2.2 Data collection**

The vignette experiment was administered online through Qualtrics to a sample of Flemish HR representatives (hereafter referred to as recruiters) who submitted vacancies with the Public Employment Agency of Flanders (PEAF) – Belgium's largest job site (Delbeke, 2019). E-mail addresses from eligible recruiters were collected in January 2020 by screening (i) the 500 most recent vacancies posted (in general) and (ii) up to 2000 of the most recent PEAF vacancies for one out of eight job types studied in our experiment (as discussed in subsection 2.3).

Following this search strategy, we collected and subsequently contacted a total

of 2,327 unique e-mail addresses through two points of contact (i.e. an initial invitation and one reminder). In view of avoiding non-response bias (Tourangeau, Conrad & Couper, 2013) due to a specific interest in mental health, we deliberately concealed the actual topic of study in the invitation. Additionally, to increase response quality (Tourangeau et al., 2013), we organised a raffle, with prizes having a total value of 750 euro, among participants who had submitted complete and accurate responses (i.e. passing an attention check in the post-experimental questionnaire). In total, 928 recruiters opened the web link, and 448 of them fully completed the experiment. Next, we filtered out participants who failed the attention check (Liu & Wronski, 2018), yielding 425 suitable responses (18.3%) and, thus, (425 × 4 vignettes =) 1,700 unique vignette observations.

Our sampling strategy, which led us to real-life and active recruiters, was preferable over alternative conceptualisations (i.e. students or the general Flemish population) in terms of external validity when studying hiring behaviours (Druckman, Green, Kuklinski & Lupia, 2011, p. 42).

### **2.3 Procedure**

The following paragraphs describe participants' trajectory from invitation to experiment completion. Study participation took approximately 15 minutes and consisted of four parts: (1) introduction, (2) job vacancy and instructions, (3) candidate evaluations and (4) a post-experimental questionnaire.

The first part of the experiment comprised two screens providing participants with an introduction to the study in terms of its duration, confidential data processing, participants' rights and raffle participation. After reading through the information and providing their consent, participants indicated whether they had a recent experience with one of the following vacancies: driver (and salesperson), welder, telemarketer, massage therapist, chemical engineer, researcher, ICT administrator or tutor (discussed *infra*). Indeed, 78.1% (332) of the sample reported having had a recent experience with one of the eight vacancies, thus indicating that our search strategy (subsection 2.2) was effective.

In the second part of the experiment, participants were presented with one out of eight fictitious job vacancies – according to their indicated hiring experiences, otherwise displaying one out of eight vacancies randomly (*infra*) – and received detailed experimental instructions. Our selection of eight vacancies was based on four underlying job characteristics that served as potential job-side moderators in the relationship between revealing burnout and hiring outcomes. First, vacancies varied according to their required level of education. Besides increasing the external validity of the study, the required education level could moderate the hiring chances

of burnout patients, with Stuart (2006) indicating that workers suffering from mental health problems were more likely to be employed in jobs requiring lower levels of education. Second, vacancies varied in required leadership because burnout patients might be perceived as being less capable of leading others (Mendel et al., 2015) and could, therefore, be at a disadvantage when applying for leadership positions (Brohan et al., 2012). A third dimension in which occupations differed was required level of stress tolerance. The explicit relationship between stress and burnout (i.e. cumulating exhaustion due to work stressors; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) could be reflected in lower suitability ratings for jobs requiring a high level of stress tolerance because those jobs could be perceived as being too demanding for re-integrating burnout patients. Fourth, the presented vacancies varied in their required emotional labour. On the one hand, burnout syndrome is typically more common in jobs with high emotional demands (e.g. teachers or physicians; Hooftman et al., 2019; Rotenstein et al., 2018) and could, therefore, be less disconcerting in these jobs for the experienced recruiters. On the other hand, because burnout patients experience emotional impairments (Schaufeli et al., 2019), employers might be more prone to discriminate against former patients for jobs requiring emotional labour due to fearing reduced performance.

To select jobs for our experiment differing in these four characteristics, we examined the corresponding O\*Net classifications per job characteristic.<sup>3</sup> More concretely, we matched education, leadership and required stress tolerance to their respective direct counterparts in O\*Net (named equally). The fourth factor, required emotional labour, was compiled by taking an average of the classifications 'Self-Control' and 'Concern for Others'. Here, our choice of characteristics was based on the concept of job-focussed emotional demands (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Next, as presented in Appendix Table 1, we isolated each characteristic in our job choices by constructing an (8 × 4) matrix varying the levels of job characteristics. More specifically, we searched for jobs requiring a low education level and jobs requiring a high education level that scored high on another characteristic but low on the remaining two characteristics. The classification of job scores was then based on its ranking among the 966 other occupations. We chose to assign occupations the label 'low' when ranked in the 242 lowest scores or 'high' when among the 242 highest scores (i.e. taking 25% margins). For instance, the occupation of driver and salesperson ranked third among the lowest leadership scores calculated by O\*Net; thus, it is labelled in our matrix as 'low' in terms of required leadership. Finally, the jobs driver and salesperson, welder, telemarketer, massage therapist, chemical engineer, researcher, ICT administrator, and tutor from the O\*Net database showed

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<sup>3</sup> O\*Net OnLine is an application developed by the U.S. Department of Labor. It features occupational information on, for example, required skills and work activities for over 900 occupations.

the best fit with our proposed job framework.

As aforementioned, participants were presented with the vacancy description of the job they indicated having experience with; otherwise, one out of eight vacancies was randomly assigned. Similar to the selection of jobs, the 'job descriptions' participants received (i.e. one out of the eight) were developed based on their respective O\*Net descriptions. After reading this job description, participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with three statements regarding the requirements for this job (i.e. leadership abilities, stress tolerance and emotional labour), thus collecting participant estimates of job requirements for further analyses. Consistent with (upcoming) scales throughout the experiment, statements were rated on response scales ranging from 0 'Fully disagree' to 10 'Fully agree' (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014).

After appraising the job vacancy on its underlying characteristics, the subsequent screen provided participants with an experimental context and more detailed instructions on the simulated hiring assignment. Specifically, participants were told that another colleague had one prior interview with several applicants. Before sending out invites for a second round in the selection procedure, participants were asked for their advice on a couple of candidates, herein relying on extracts of the colleagues' interview notes summarised in the organisation's HR software package (i.e. the vignettes described in subsection 2.1). In our opinion, and that of real-life HR professionals,<sup>4</sup> this description improved the ecological validity (i.e. the study context approximating the real-world situation that is being examined) compared to earlier correspondence and vignette experiments (e.g. Baert, De Visschere, et al., 2016; Hipes et al., 2016) in which personal information such as mental health problems was revealed on a candidate resume.

In the third part of the experiment, participants were randomly assigned to one deck consisting of four job candidates (vignettes) each and shared hiring advice on each candidate. That is, they assessed candidates employing two sets of evaluative statements (again, using 11-point response scales). In the first set of statements, they indicated the probability with which they advised (i) to invite the candidate for the second phase of the solicitation procedure (a 'proximal hiring outcome') and (ii) to hire them (a 'distal hiring outcome').

Next, a set of statements estimated potential signals emitted by the different candidate profiles. All statements employed for candidate evaluations are presented

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<sup>4</sup> Both a Flemish organisation specialising in labour market re-integration and eight recent graduates in organisational psychology (both experienced in HR functions and knowledgeable about burnout) approved of the described scenario and our experimental set-up.

in Table 2 below. Ten of these ‘signalling statements’ reflected potential sources of statistical discrimination. Seven represented distinct productivity perceptions derived from prior research mentioned in section 1. More specifically, we asked whether the recruiters thought that applicants had sufficient (i) leadership abilities (Mendel et al., 2015), (ii) autonomy (Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007), (iii) ability to work under pressure (Mendel et al., 2015; Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007), were sufficiently (iv) manageable (Laberon, 2014; Stuart, 2006), had sufficient (v) learning abilities (Boštjančič & Koračin, 2014; Grossi et al., 2015; Öhman, Nordin, Bergdahl, Birgander & Neely, 2007) and were perceived as sufficiently healthy in terms of both (vi) current health and (vii) the likelihood of future sick leave (Laberon, 2014; Mendel et al., 2015) to perform well in the job. The remaining three statements related to statistical discrimination gauged for estimations on adaptational requirements in terms of work context, conditions and job content for the candidate to perform well in the job (Brohan et al., 2012; Laberon, 2014). The last three statements stemmed from the theory of taste-based discrimination and gauged taste for collaboration with the candidate from three different perspectives (i.e. the employer, co-worker and client).

Based on principal component analyses (PCA) and items’ theoretical underpinnings, the three statements measuring adaptational requirements ( $\alpha = 0.865$ ) and the items related to taste-based discrimination ( $\alpha = 0.902$ ) were combined into scales; they were used in item form in robustness checks discussed below, however. To avoid additional variance (‘noise’) from different statement formulation and order-effects, all items were wordily aligned, and their order was randomised across participants.

<Table 2>

The fourth and final part of the experiment comprised a post-experimental questionnaire investigating variables that served as (potential) participant-side moderators in the relationship between revealing burnout and hiring outcomes. To encourage accurate responses, participants completing the post-experimental questionnaire were explicitly reminded of anonymous data processing underneath this question.

Three potential demographic moderators were gender (‘male’ or ‘female’), age (20–67 years) and education level (‘no tertiary education’, ‘Bachelor level tertiary education’ or ‘Master level tertiary education’). Compared to their female colleagues, male recruiters were expected to show more discriminatory tendencies because men support stronger stigmatic perceptions when evaluating job applicants (Cole, Feild & Giles, 2004). Further, because older employers (aged over 60 years) were reported to have a more negative attitude on the expected productivity of

applicants with mental health problems (Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007), discrimination against burnout patients could be more common among older recruiters.

A first potential psychographic moderator was burnout knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Although it was generally expected that higher levels of (public) knowledge could decrease discriminatory behaviours (Brouwers, 2020), the literature is thus far indecisive on the impact of (burnout) knowledge on hiring discrimination (Brohan et al., 2012; Brouwers, 2020). Recruiter encounters with burnout syndrome ('none', in their 'professional' life, 'personal' life or as a former 'patient') was a second potential psychographic moderator surveyed in the post-experimental questionnaire. Based on Allport's (1979) 'in-group contact hypothesis', recruiters with more personal burnout encounters would actually be increasingly likely to hire candidates with a history of burnout. A third potential psychographic moderator is risk-taking. When a history of burnout emits negative productivity signals (as discussed *supra*), hiring a former burnout patient could represent an elevated risk for employers (Spence, 1973), which recruiters more prone to risk-taking might be willing to take. We assessed risk-taking using the validated Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006). The scale describes six actions containing a professional risk; for example, 'investing 10% of your annual income in a new organisation'. Following Baert's (2018a) application in the study of hiring discrimination against gay men, participants rated the likelihood with which they would behave that way on a scale from 1 'extremely unlikely' to 7 'extremely likely'. Afterwards, item scores were averaged into a single risk-taking score.

Next, the post-experimental questionnaire surveyed participant characteristics in view of robustness analyses. Our series of robustness checks (discussed in section 3) was based on both the patterns in recruiters' professional experiences and their response tendencies. Specifically, in the post-experimental survey, we asked participants for their general hiring experience in terms of frequency ('daily', 'weekly', 'monthly', 'once per semester', 'once a year', 'less frequent') and tenure ('less than a year', 'one to five years', 'greater than five years'). Moreover, we asked

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<sup>5</sup> Because there did not appear to be a validated scale on burnout (mis)conceptions in the literature, we developed a scale ourselves. The scale comprised 10 statements rated from 0 'Fully disagree', 5 'Neutral' to 10 'Fully agree'. Addressing shortcomings from earlier misconception scales (Bensley & Lilienfeld, 2017; Bensley, Lilienfeld & Powell, 2014; Gardner & Brown, 2013), we allowed participants to express uncertainty by introducing the central point of the scale as a neutral option. Participants' correct responses (i.e. scores between 0 and 4 for incorrect statements and between 6 and 10 for correct statements, here printed in *italics*) were added to form a single knowledge score. Specifically, the statements surveyed burnout symptomatology (*exhaustion, cognitive problems, psychological distance from work and reduced self-efficacy*), differentiation from other conditions (overstrain and lacking motivation), the main determinant (sleep deprivation) and misperceptions on adequate treatment (taking a holiday) and occurrence (*contagiousness within organisations and the possibility of relapses*). An example statement is: 'People with burnout often feel exhausted'.

for prior experiences with hiring candidates suffering from mental health problems ('yes' or 'no'). Lastly, social desirability was measured through the shortened Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale developed by Reynolds (1982) and validated across different contexts (Baert, 2018a; Beretvas, Meyers & Leite, 2002; Sârbescu, Costea & Rusu, 2012; Van Borm & Baert, 2018). This scale contained 13 items expressing behaviours that are either socially sanctioned or approved (e.g. 'I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.') and participants indicated whether these items applied to them (score 1) or not (score 0). Afterwards, participants' total social desirability scores were calculated by summing up all item scores – these numbers were then standardised by subtracting the sample mean and dividing the result by the sample standard deviation.

Finally, participants were thanked for their time and were able to leave an e-mail address if they wanted to participate in the announced raffle or in case they were interested in being kept updated concerning the research results.

## **2.4 Data description**

In this subsection, we explore the experimental data collected. Based on our experimental design, no correlations were expected between vignette dimensions and job characteristics (discussed *supra*), thus enabling us to unravel the effects of both candidate (vignettes) and job characteristics. Indeed, the insignificant t-tests (and chi-squared tests in case of discrete variables) shown in Panel A of Table 3 indicate that the randomisation of vignettes across vacancies was successful. Similarly, Panel B indicates that no correlations existed between candidate (vignette) and participant characteristics, thus adhering to the experimental logic proposed in Auspurg and Hinz (2014).

In addition, Panel B shed light on the sample characteristics. Both male and female (71.9%) recruiters participated, with an average age of about 38 years. Adding to the representativeness of our sample, participants differed substantially in their level of education. Where 43.8% of the sample did not enjoy any tertiary education, respectively 18.6% and 37.6% of the sample followed Bachelor or Master level tertiary education, respectively. Our sample was comparable in both age and gender distribution with HR professionals from the European Social Survey (ESS)<sup>6</sup> but was slightly more educated (i.e. 12.7 percentage points more participants enjoyed Master level tertiary education). Participant's (i) considerable knowledge of burnout – as indicated by the average scores (7/10) on the burnout knowledge scale

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<sup>6</sup> We consulted data from the 2018 wave to compare our sample distribution of recruiters to the European HR professionals in terms of gender and education level. Survey respondents were selected according to the ISCO-08 occupation codes of 1212 (Human resource managers), 2423 (Personnel and careers professionals), 3333 (Employment agents and contractors) and 4416 (Personnel clerks).

discussed in subsection 2.3 – and (ii) encounters with the syndrome further support the sample’s eligibility. More specifically, no less than 88.4% of our participants have had an encounter with burnout in their private or professional lives.

<Table 3>

### 3. Results

To investigate whether, how and when revealing burnout affects hiring likelihood, we conduct three consecutive series of linear regressions in Stata/MP (version 15) where the error terms are consistently corrected for the clustering of the observations (‘vignette evaluations’) at the participant level. In all cases, ordered logistic regressions yield equal results.

#### 3.1 Effect of revealing burnout on hiring chances

We first set the stage by investigating the total effect of revealing burnout on hiring outcomes (displayed in Appendix Figure 1 and referred to as path *c*). As such, Table 4 presents the results of hiring outcomes regressed on combinations of (i) candidate, (ii) job and (iii) participant characteristics. In eight regressions, we assess the stability of relationship between revealing burnout and hiring outcomes by comparing regression results from different control specifications (‘reasons for gaps’) and independent variables.

<Table 4>

In confirmation of burnout patients’ fears (Sterkens et al., mimeo), candidates revealing a history of burnout are at a severe disadvantage during the hiring process. As model (1) and model (5) demonstrate, when a gap in working history is explained by burnout, candidates receive lower ratings (i.e.  $\beta = -0.589$  for interview probability and  $\beta = -0.619$  for hiring probability when controlling for job and participant characteristics) compared to all other gap explanations together (i.e. personal reasons, a physical injury and unemployment). Moreover, out of the four explanations for gaps in working history, the coefficient estimates of model (2) show that burnout has the largest negative impact on interview probability (burnout:  $\beta = -0.984$ , personal reasons  $\beta = -0.697$  ( $p = 0.039$ ), unemployment  $\beta = -0.431$  ( $p < 0.001$ ) and physical injury ( $p < 0.001$ , as the reference category)). Compared to candidates with a gap due to a physical history, the chance of a recommendation for a second job interview is 9.8 percentage points lower for (former) burnout



patients.<sup>7</sup> Estimation results are very equal when controlling for job and participant characteristics, which is not surprising given our experimental design (subsection 2.4).

These findings resonate well with earlier research on hiring discrimination by Hipes et al. (2016), which stated mental health patients have a stronger disadvantage in the labour market when compared to applicants with a history of physical illness. Still, in our opinion this makes for an interesting addition to the literature because to the best of our knowledge we are the first to empirically test hiring discrimination against former burnout patients. Moreover, as an occupational disorder (WHO, 2019), burnout syndrome takes a highly specific position among mental health problems. More specifically, in contrast to, for example, depression or anxiety, burnout has an explicit work-related dimension that could influence employer perceptions. Burnout's (recent) definition even states that patients 'have worked productively and without problems for a long period to the satisfaction of themselves and others' (Schaufeli, De Witte & Desart, 2019; p. 29). Although Bahlmann et al. (2013) suggest that burnout might be a label carrying little stigma – perhaps due to patients' history of successful employment – our findings illustrate that patients are even at a more severe disadvantage compared to the aforementioned gap explanations, including physical injury.

### **3.2 Driving signals of hiring discrimination against burnout patients**

Next, we dive more deeply into the effect of revealing burnout on hiring outcomes by examining what proportion of the total 'burnout effect' (calculated in subsection 3.1) can be ascribed to the candidate perceptions operationalised in subsection 2.3. That is, the total burnout effect can be decomposed into indirect effects via signals and attitudes (paths  $a \times b$ ; see Appendix Figure 1) and a remaining 'direct' effect of burnout (path  $c'$ ) via multiple mediation analyses (Hayes, 2017). To do so, we jointly estimate 10 regression models. Nine of these models regress our candidate perception scales (i.e. perceived (i) leadership abilities, (ii) autonomy, (iii) ability to work under pressure, (iv) manageability, (v) learning abilities, (vi) current health, (vii) future sick leave, (viii) adaptational requirements (3 items) and (ix) collaboration (3 items)) on the same independent variables as adopted in Table 4 (i.e. the candidate characteristics, job and participant characteristics collected throughout the experiment). The tenth model regresses the interview probability on the same variables as well as the perception scales (i–ix).

Appendix Table 2 presents the full estimation results. Revealing a history of burnout clearly emits several negative signals to employers. More specifically,

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<sup>7</sup> This interpretation is adequate because our response scales ranged from 0 to 10 (subsection 2.3).

compared to candidates with a gap due to physical injury, burnout patients are perceived as having lower (i) leadership capabilities ( $\beta = -0.887$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (ii) autonomy ( $\beta = -0.518$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (iii) ability to work under pressure ( $\beta = -1.806$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (iv) being less manageable ( $-0.411$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (v) having less learning abilities ( $\beta = -0.325$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (vi) worse current health ( $\beta = -0.696$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (vii) an increased probability of future sick leave ( $\beta = 0.702$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), (viii) requiring increased adaptational requirements ( $\beta = 0.319$ ;  $p = 0.003$ ) and (ix) collaboration with them is regarded more negatively ( $\beta = -0.425$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, these estimation results provide empirical evidence for all potential burnout signals we identified in the literature (subsection 2.3). In particular, the effect on perceived ability to work under pressure is substantial: compared to candidates with a gap due to physical injury, burnout patients score about 18 percentage points lower on the related scale.

Our analyses allow us to discuss the signalling effects of the control gaps as well. A gap in working history due to a physical injury appears to be the most favourable situation for job candidates, except for perceived current health (higher score for those with a gap due to job seeking) and required adaptations (lower score for those with a gap due to job seeking or personal reasons). Moreover, our results align well with earlier stigma research. For instance, similar to Correll (2007), we find that women are perceived to be less autonomous in a working context ( $-0.176$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). In addition, the fact that older job candidates are perceived as less trainable corroborates with Van Borm, Burn and Baert (2019). This neat differentiation between candidate characteristics supports our data quality because it suggests that participants did not experience cognitive overload throughout the experiment – in which they would have resorted to less-differentiated responses ('satisficing'; Bethlehem & Biffignandi, 2011).

Even though we provide evidence for multiple burnout signals, not all of these signals necessarily drive hiring discrimination against burnout patients, as recruiters might not take each signal into account when making hiring decisions. Panel D of Appendix Table 2 indeed provides evidence for perceptions with respect to leadership abilities, learning abilities, adaptational requirements and taste to collaborate not to be taken into account to the same extent as the other candidate perceptions. To test the investigated signals' potential as mediators, we calculate, in line with Hayes (2017), the indirect effects of burnout on hiring outcomes via the signals over a bootstrapping procedure with 500 reps.<sup>8</sup> More concretely, these

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<sup>8</sup> Following the mediation literature, we speak of mediation 'effects'. However, a causal effect from signals on hiring outcomes cannot be demonstrated from the current study design because the signals could correlate with unobserved causal mechanisms (path *b* in Appendix Figure 1). Hence, mediation effects should be interpreted as associations – nonetheless, supported on a theoretical basis. In

indirect effects are estimated by multiplying the regression coefficients from (i) burnout to the signal (path *a* in Appendix Figure 1) with (ii) coefficients from the signal to interview probability (path *b* in Appendix Figure 1) (Hayes, 2017). Table 5 below provides an overview of the percentages of the total burnout effect on interview probability as explained by each of the investigated signals.

<Table 5>

Five signals emerge as significant mediators of the relationship between burnout and interview probability. Most importantly, the lion's share of the burnout effect can be explained by the candidate's perceived ability to work under pressure (i.e. no less than 45.1%). By consequence, perceptions of reduced stress tolerance represent a major obstacle for job candidates with a history of burnout. The remaining four statistically significant mediators – perceived probability of future sick leave (10.9%), perceived autonomy (9.9%), perceived current health (9.6%) and perceived manageability (6.8%) – all explain proportions of the effect that are lower but still substantial.

Our proposed mediation model fully mediates the effect of revealing burnout on interview probability because the (remaining) direct effect of revealing burnout is no longer significant when controlling for indirect effects via mediators ( $\beta = -0.069$ ,  $p = 0.517$ ; path *c'* in Appendix Figure 1).

Theoretically, our data show the strongest match with the framework of statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972) as compared to taste-based discrimination (Becker, 1957). Indeed, we conclude that more than 90% of the burnout effect on interview probability can be explained by signals residing under statistical discrimination, whereas a statistically insignificant 1.3% is explained by the perceived employer, co-worker and customer attitudes on collaboration with patients.

Because the present study is, to our knowledge, the first to delineate hiring discrimination against burnout patients into its underlying stigmatic perceptions, direct comparisons to other burnout studies are impossible (for now). Nonetheless, where in Van Borm et al. (2019) age discrimination's driving perceptions leave 35% of the (direct) age effect unexplained, following a similar statistical framework, we find that discrimination against burnout is remarkably well captured by our proposed stigma framework. We return to the practical consequences of these findings in section 4.

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contrast, our experiment does allow for causal interpretations of the total effect of burnout on (i) hiring outcomes (path *c*) and (ii) on candidate perceptions (path *a*). We return to this point in section 4.

Next, to investigate the robustness of our results, we conduct similar mediation analyses with (i) hiring probability as a dependent variable and (ii) single items for perceptions on adaptational requirements and collaboration as mediators (instead of the scales comprising three items in our benchmark analysis). The main results of the additional mediation analyses are presented in Appendix Table 3. Again, indicating robustness, the following mediation effects are statistically significant across conceptualisations: perceived ability to work under pressure, perceived current health, perceived future sick leave and perceived autonomy, with the first perception being the most important driver. Somewhat in contrast, where perceived manageability is a significant mediator for interview probabilities of burnout patients, only weak significance is found for hiring probabilities. Furthermore, when all separate items are used as mediators, an additional significant mediator is found with respect to expected fruitful collaboration with the employer of hiring probabilities.

As additional robustness checks, we redo our mediation analysis relying on more homogeneous subsamples of participants identified in subsection 2.3. More specifically, we developed subsamples of recruiters characterised by (i) experience with the vacancy, (ii) experience at hiring candidates with mental disorders, (iii) a hiring frequency of at least once per month, (iv) a hiring tenure greater than one year and (v) a low or average social desirability tendency (i.e. a score on the social desirability scale lower than the sample average plus one standard deviation). In Appendix Table 4, the decomposition of the burnout effect is once more presented, this time at the level of these five subsamples. Again, our main mediator – the perceived ability to work under pressure – consistently remains the dominant explanation, thus indicating the robustness of our results. Only slight deviations occur between subsamples. That is, for recruiters experienced at hiring candidates with mental disorders, perceived future sick leave is only a weakly significant mediator and perceived manageability is no longer a statistically significant mediator. In addition, for candidates with low or average social desirability scores, perceived leadership abilities become a significant mediator.

### **3.3 Moderators in the relationship between revealing burnout and hiring outcomes**

We conclude the analyses with an exploration of potential moderators (introduced in section 2.3) of hiring discrimination against burnout patients. This is achieved by means of moderation analyses where interview probabilities are regressed on (i) candidate, (ii) job and (iii) participant characteristics as well as (iv) their interactions with revealing burnout as an explanation for one's gap in working history. Yet, the current experiment does not allow for a causal interpretation of moderators at the

job and participant level and, thus, demands caution during interpretation. Table 6 presents the results of our moderation analysis. The first three models test two-way interactions separately for candidate, job and participant characteristics. Then, a fourth regression jointly tests all possible interactions.

<Table 6>

While no evidence emerges for two-way interaction effects between revealing a history of burnout and other candidate characteristics in model (1), there are significant interactions with both job and participant characteristics in models (2) and (3). When conducting the joint test of interaction effects in model (4), no notable differences are found compared to the separate tests. In what follows, we refer to the coefficients of the latter model.

First, a significant interaction effect between revealing burnout and the job's required stress tolerance indicates that burnout patients are additionally disadvantaged when applying for jobs that require higher stress tolerance ( $\beta = -0.133$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ). The statistical significance of this interaction is in accordance with our expectations from subsection 2.3 because the stress-related nature of burnout syndrome (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) is clearly comprehended by recruiters – as is reflected in their familiarity with burnout (subsection 2.1) and the perceived burnout signal of a reduced ability to work under pressure (described in subsection 3.2).

Second, and in line with the predictions from subsection 2.3, there is marginal evidence that female recruiters are more likely to invite former burnout patients for a job interview compared to their male counterparts ( $\beta = 0.427$ ,  $p = 0.083$ ).

Third, as suggested in subsection 2.3, statistical evidence is found for an interaction effect between revealing burnout and recruiters' encounters with burnout, where recruiters with more personal burnout encounters (i.e. in their personal lives ( $\beta = 0.971$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ), or as a former patient themselves ( $\beta = 1.150$ ,  $p = 0.021$ )) are more likely to invite candidates with a history of burnout for a job interview.

A final notable result is the absence of an interaction effect between participant's burnout knowledge and candidates' history of burnout on hiring decisions ( $\beta = -0.024$ ,  $p = 0.740$ ). Whereas both Brohan et al. (2012) and Brouwers (2020) point out that the effect of employer's knowledge on subsequent hiring behaviours remains a topic of debate, our findings steer in the direction that there is no effect of current burnout knowledge on hiring evaluations of ex-burnout patients.

## 4. Conclusion

To explain hiring discrimination against burnout patients in terms of underlying stigma, we conducted a vignette experiment in which genuine recruiters evaluated fictitious job applicants with different explanations for a gap in their working history, among which burnout. More concretely, these recruiters rated four applicants for one out of eight job vacancies on a total of 13 statements related to all dominant explanations for hiring discrimination against burnout patients derived from the scientific literature. Besides being the first to empirically test the theoretical body of burnout stigma and its role in explaining hiring discrimination, we contributed to the scientific literature in various aspects. More specifically, we explored potential candidate, job and employer-side moderators of hiring discrimination against burnout patients and developed a more ecologically valid scenario to reveal a history of mental health problems in experimental hiring studies.

Revealing a history of burnout during a selection procedure reduces the candidate's subsequent hiring chances. More so, the negative effect of burnout on hiring likelihood is larger than the negative effects of physical injury, unemployment or personal reasons as reasons for a gap in working history. Perhaps most striking is that approximately half of this adverse effect of revealing burnout can be captured by employer perceptions of reduced stress tolerance. Moreover, our results indicate that the negative impact of revealing a burnout could be more prominent for jobs requiring higher levels of stress tolerance. Conversely, the disadvantageous interview likelihood of burnout patients might be less pronounced when recruiters previously encountered burnout in their personal lives or when the recruiter is female. The adverse hiring outcomes of former burnout patients are additionally explained by candidate perceptions of increased future sick leave, lower autonomy, worse current health and reduced manageability. Although not directly associated with hiring outcomes in our experiment, burnout patients are also perceived as having lower leadership abilities, learning abilities, requiring job adaptations to work productively, and the collaboration with them is regarded more negatively.

These results have practical implications for the three parties (in)directly involved in the employment relationship: burnout patients, employers and policy-makers.<sup>9</sup> First, when burnout patients make the crucial decision on disclosing their

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<sup>9</sup> Because data collection took place before the Covid-19 pandemic, the disadvantageous position of burnout patients is most likely worsening in the less tight labour markets resulting from the economic downturn (Baert, Lippens, Moens, Sterkens & Weytjens, 2020). This provides employers with more opportunities to take stigma against burnout patients into account when making hiring decisions, thus increasing the relevance of our study's implications.

burnout to potential employers, they should be aware of the potential negative signals they are 'transmitting' in doing so. If they decide to remain transparent on their history of mental health – as employers often expect them to do (Brouwers, 2020; Mendel et al., 2015) – it is mandatory that they underline their renewed stress tolerance and improved health to counteract negative perceptions based on their burnout history.

Second, in their efforts to optimise hiring decisions, employers should ideally be aware of ungrounded negative perceptions they have about job candidates with a history of burnout. When employers incorrectly deduce candidate characteristics based on a history of burnout, sub-optimal hiring decisions could be made (Travis, 2002). After all, burnout patients were productive employees before they fell victim to the syndrome (Schaufeli et al., 2019). In addition, burnout is not necessarily indicative of a candidate's unsuitability because the determinants of burnout are primarily situated in the (prior) workplace rather than with potentially unfavourable individual characteristics (Alarcon, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Third, as we did not find main or interaction effects of burnout knowledge on hiring decisions for candidates revealing burnout, when combating hiring discrimination against burnout patients, policy-makers should not solely base interventions on educating employers on burnout (Gronholm, Henderson, Deb & Thornicroft, 2017). Instead, as suggested by moderation analyses, more personal encounters with the syndrome and its patients are associated with less negative perceptions and are, therefore, a promising route to explore.

We conclude our article by acknowledging our study's limitations and formulating suggestions for future research. First, whereas the experimental set-up of our study allows for a clear causal interpretation of the effect of revealing burnout on (i) hiring outcomes and (ii) candidate perceptions, it cannot claim causality for the associations between candidate perceptions and hiring outcomes.

A second limitation, or rather caveat, of this study is in the decision to disclose mental health problems. We are aware that whether a job candidate reveals a history of mental health problems is often a choice when applying for a job. For one, applicants could hide their history of burnout to avoid a negative backlash – or at least in the short term (Brouwers, 2020; Rüsçh et al., 2018). There are, however, many reasons why applicants reveal prior burnout: to obtain crucial work adjustments, serve as a role model for others, having positive experiences with disclosure, to obtain employer's support, build an authentic working relationship, as an explanation for their own behaviour and to avoid the stress accompanying concealment (Brohan et al., 2012; Brouwers, 2020). Furthermore, we carefully developed our experimental instructions to approximate a realistic hiring context in

which burnout was revealed, thus enhancing ecological validity.

Also a final limitation is related to the laboratory setting in which the experiment was organised. Because participants were fully aware that they were partaking in an experiment, the set-up could have induced a certain degree of measurement bias. In acknowledgment of this limitation, our vignette experiment approximated the complexity of hiring decisions – within experimental boundaries – by simultaneously varying candidate characteristics besides revealing burnout (e.g. sex and extra-curricular activities). Indeed, research has demonstrated that decisions made in vignette experiments are highly correlated with actual behaviour (Baert & De Pauw, 2014; Hainmueller, Hangartner & Yamamoto, 2015; Van Belle et al., 2018). Moreover, we performed several robustness checks to test for potential measurement errors. In particular, analyses on a sub-group of participants with low-to-average social desirability scores yield similar results. Future research could nonetheless complement our findings by estimating the exact magnitude of hiring discrimination against burnout patients in the field, for instance through a traditional correspondence test (Baert, 2018b).

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## Appendix

<Appendix Table 1>

<Appendix Table 2>

<Appendix Table 3>

<Appendix Table 4>

Table 1. Vignette dimensions and levels presented in experimental materials

<b>Vignette dimensions</b>	<b>Vignette levels</b>
Sex	{Male; Female}
Age (years)	{30 ± 3 years; 40 ± 3 years; 50 ± 3 years}
Timing of gap in working history	{5 ± 3 months, until present; 5 ± 3 months, 2 years ago; 5 ± 3 months, 5 years ago}
Reason for gap in working history	{Burnout; Personal reasons; Physical injury; Unemployment}
Extracurricular activity	{Sports; Association; Volunteering; None mentioned}

Notes. As described in subsection 2.1, 160 candidate profiles (i.e. combinations of five vignette dimensions) were systematically bundled in 40 decks of four candidate profiles. Participants were then randomly assigned one deck to evaluate. The values of 'age' and 'timing of gap in working history' were randomly adjusted: ± 3 years (age) or ± 3 months (timing of gap in working history) across vignettes. In the dimension 'timing of gap in working history', the gap duration was fixed to 5 ± 3 months.

Table 2. Statements employed for candidate profile evaluations

<b>Evaluative dimension</b>	<b>Statement</b>
<b>A. HIRING ADVICE</b>	
Interview probability	'My advice is to invite this candidate for the second phase of the solicitation procedure.'
Hiring probability	'There is a high chance I will advise to hire this candidate.'
<b>B. CANDIDATE PERCEPTIONS ON PRODUCTIVITY</b>	
Perceived leadership abilities	'I think this person has sufficient leadership abilities to perform well in this job.'
Perceived autonomy	'I think this person is sufficiently autonomous to perform well in this job.'
Perceived ability to work under pressure	'I think this person is sufficiently able to work under pressure to perform well in this job.'
Perceived manageability	'I think this person is sufficiently manageable to perform well in this job.'
Perceived learning abilities	'I think this person is able to learn at a sufficient pace to perform well in this job.'
Perceived current health	'I think this person is sufficiently healthy to perform well in this job.'
Perceived future sick leave	'I think that in time, this person will often be absent due to illness.'
<b>C. CANDIDATE PERCEPTIONS ON ADAPTATIONAL REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Estimated required adaptations to work context	'I think the employer will need to adapt the working context in order for the candidate to perform well in this job.'
Estimated required adaptations to working conditions	'I think the employer will need to adapt the working conditions in order for the candidate to perform well in this job. (Examples of working conditions are: pay, work schedules and flexibility agreements.)'
Estimated required adaptations to job content	'I think the employer will need to adapt the job content in order for the candidate to perform well in this job.'
<b>D. CANDIDATE PERCEPTIONS ON COLLABORATION</b>	
Attitude towards collaboration with employer	'I think I would enjoy collaborating with this person.'
Attitude towards collaboration with other employees	'I think other employees would enjoy collaborating with this person.'
Attitude towards collaboration with clientele	'I think clients or other third parties would enjoy collaborating with this person.'

Notes. Each item was rated on a scale from 0 (Completely disagree) to 10 (Completely agree).



Table 3. Data description, sorted by fictitious candidate's reason for gap in working history

	Control reasons					Difference (1)–(2) [p-value]
	Burnout as reason	All	Personal reasons	Physical injury	Unempl.	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
<b>A. JOB(S) (CHARACTERISTICS)</b>						
Driver and salesperson	0.188	0.182	0.184	0.178	0.185	0.006 [0.800]
Welder	0.125	0.134	0.132	0.135	0.136	-0.009 [0.622]
Telemarketer	0.071	0.070	0.071	0.072	0.068	0.001 [0.936]
Massage therapist	0.027	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.029	0.002 [0.829]
Chemical engineer	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.095	0.000 [0.975]
Epidemiologist	0.076	0.069	0.071	0.068	0.068	0.007 [0.609]
ICT administrator	0.107	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.109	-0.001 [0.931]
Tutor	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.316	0.311	0.000 [0.981]
Req. leadership (o)	5.661	5.685	5.679	5.698	5.679	-0.024 [0.814]
Req. stress tolerance (o)	6.399	6.408	6.405	6.419	6.399	-0.009 [0.882]
Req. emotional labour (o)	6.601	6.615	6.611	6.627	6.606	-0.014 [0.886]
Req. education level (o)	0.589	0.585	0.586	0.586	0.583	0.004 [0.865]
<b>B. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS</b>						
Female	0.719	0.718	0.718	0.716	0.719	0.001 [0.952]
Age	37.946	37.792	37.833	37.737	37.806	0.154 [0.787]
Tertiary education: none	0.440	0.437	0.438	0.437	0.437	0.003 [0.917]
Bachelor	0.190	0.185	0.186	0.181	0.187	0.005 [0.807]
Master	0.371	0.379	0.377	0.383	0.376	-0.008 [0.763]
Burnout knowledge	7.058	7.075	7.071	7.080	7.075	-0.017 [0.846]
Burnout enc.: none	0.116	0.115	0.115	0.116	0.114	0.001 [0.952]
Professional	0.366	0.371	0.369	0.369	0.374	-0.005 [0.864]
Personal	0.442	0.439	0.440	0.439	0.439	0.003 [0.922]
Patient	0.076	0.075	0.075	0.077	0.073	0.001 [0.955]
Risk-taking	0.005	0.000	0.000	-0.002	-0.003	0.005 [0.896]
N	448	1,252	425	415	412	

Notes. Abbreviations used: unempl. (unemployment), req. (required) and enc. (encounters).  $\chi^2$ -tests (binary characteristics) and t-tests (continuous characteristics) were performed to test whether differences between the subsamples by reason for gap in working history are significantly different from 0. \*\*\* (\*\*) (\*) indicates significance at 1% (5%) ((10%)) significance level. P-values of tests are in squared brackets. The total sample of candidate evaluations was 1,700. Job characteristics described in subsection 2.3 followed by '(s)' refer to the participants' estimates. When followed by '(o)', job characteristics indicate O\*Net scores.

Table 4. Regression results with interview and hiring probabilities as outcome variables

	Interview probability				Hiring probability			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<b>A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS</b>								
Female	-0.215** (0.092)	-0.212** (0.090)	-0.213** (0.092)	-0.211** (0.091)	-0.221** (0.088)	-0.219** (0.087)	-0.222** (0.088)	-0.220** (0.087)
Age	-0.014** (0.006)	-0.015*** (0.006)	-0.014** (0.006)	-0.015*** (0.006)	-0.016*** (0.006)	-0.016*** (0.006)	-0.015*** (0.006)	-0.016*** (0.006)
Months since end of gap	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)	0.005** (0.002)
Duration gap	-0.073*** (0.028)	-0.069** (0.027)	-0.080*** (0.028)	-0.075*** (0.027)	-0.045* (0.027)	-0.040 (0.026)	-0.047* (0.027)	-0.042 (0.026)
Reason for gap (ref. = physical injury)								
Burnout	-0.598*** (0.110)	-0.984*** (0.120)	-0.589*** (0.110)	-0.970*** (0.120)	-0.623*** (0.104)	-1.114*** (0.120)	-0.619*** (0.104)	-1.039*** (0.120)
Personal reasons		-0.705*** (0.116)		-0.697*** (0.116)		-0.767*** (0.116)		-0.763*** (0.116)
Unemployment		-0.439*** (0.119)		-0.431*** (0.119)		-0.487*** (0.114)		-0.481*** (0.115)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = none)								
Sports	0.322** (0.130)	0.303** (0.128)	0.328** (0.130)	0.310** (0.128)	0.307** (0.124)	0.286** (0.122)	0.307** (0.124)	0.286** (0.122)
Association	0.257* (0.132)	0.272** (0.131)	0.261** (0.133)	0.276** (0.132)	0.189 (0.127)	0.206* (0.125)	0.189 (0.127)	0.206 (0.125)
Volunteering	0.237* (0.130)	0.208 (0.128)	0.242* (0.131)	0.213* (0.129)	0.210* (0.121)	0.177 (0.119)	0.210* (0.122)	0.178 (0.119)
<b>B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS</b>								
Req. leadership (s)			-0.047 (0.033)	-0.047 (0.034)			0.017 (0.030)	0.018 (0.030)
Req. stress tolerance (s)			0.025 (0.051)	0.025 (0.051)			0.001 (0.043)	0.001 (0.043)
Req. emotional labour (s)			0.056 (0.038)	0.055 (0.038)			0.051 (0.033)	0.049 (0.033)
Req. education level (o)			0.373* (0.206)	0.371* (0.207)			0.450** (0.187)	0.448** (0.187)

C. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Female	0.182 (0.171)	0.183 (0.171)	0.072 (0.149)	0.073 (0.149)
Age	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.015** (0.008)	-0.015* (0.008)
Tertiary education (ref. = none)	-0.205 (0.218)	-0.201 (0.218)	-0.106 (0.206)	-0.102 (0.206)
Bachelor	0.149 (0.182)	0.147 (0.182)	-0.019 (0.166)	-0.022 (0.166)
Master	0.149 (0.182)	0.147 (0.182)		
Burnout knowledge	0.008 (0.051)	0.008 (0.051)		
Burnout enc. (ref. = none)				
Professional life	0.232 (0.280)	0.232 (0.281)		
Personal life	0.380 (0.275)	0.380 (0.275)		
Patient	0.570 (0.369)	0.570 (0.369)		
Risk-taking	0.038 (0.077)	0.038 (0.077)	-0.046 (0.073)	-0.046 (0.073)
N	1,700		1,700	

Notes. Abbreviations used: req. (required), ref. (reference category) and enc. (encounters). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with their standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of observations at the participant level. \*\*\* (\*\*) (\*) indicates significance at 1% (5%) ((10%)) significance level. Job characteristics described in subsection 2.3 followed by '(s)' refer to the participants' estimates. When followed by '(o)', job characteristics indicate O\*Net scores.

Table 5. Mediation analysis: Percentages of burnout effect on interview probability explained by each mediator

<b>Mediators</b>	<b>% of total burnout effect on interview probability explained by mediator</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Perceived leadership abilities	8.4%	0.079
Perceived autonomy	<b>9.9%</b>	0.000
Perceived ability to work under pressure	<b>45.1%</b>	0.000
Perceived manageability	<b>6.8%</b>	0.000
Perceived learning abilities	0.5%	0.799
Perceived current health	<b>9.6%</b>	0.000
Perceived future sick leave	<b>10.9%</b>	0.000
Perceptions on adaptational requirements <sup>a</sup>	0.3%	0.859
Perceptions on collaboration <sup>a</sup>	1.3%	0.546
N	1,700	

Notes. P-values are corrected for clustering of observations at participant level. Percentages related to p-values below 5% are in bold. <sup>a</sup> indicates mediators with scales comprising multiple items.

Table 6. Regression results with interview probability as the outcome variable, two-way interactions included

	Interview probability			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<b>A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS</b>				
Female	-0.165 (0.115)	-0.214** (0.091)	-0.210** (0.090)	-0.168 (0.115)
Age	-0.014** (0.007)	-0.015** (0.006)	-0.015*** (0.006)	-0.014** (0.007)
Months since end of gap	0.001 (0.003)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)
Duration gap	-0.096*** (0.035)	-0.074*** (0.027)	-0.077** (0.027)	-0.098*** (0.035)
Reason for gap (ref. = physical injury)				
Burnout	-1.032 (0.775)	-0.257 (0.546)	-1.617** (0.686)	-1.071 (1.156)
Personal reasons	-0.704*** (0.115)	-0.697*** (0.116)	-0.697*** (0.116)	-0.704*** (0.116)
Unemployment	-0.443*** (0.120)	-0.431*** (0.119)	-0.432*** (0.119)	-0.443*** (0.120)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = none)				
Sports	0.198 (0.159)	0.313** (0.127)	0.315** (0.126)	0.204 (0.158)
Association	0.330** (0.156)	0.279** (0.132)	0.296** (0.131)	0.339** (0.156)
Volunteering	0.116 (0.154)	0.207 (0.129)	0.215* (0.127)	0.117 (0.154)
Burnout x Female	-0.219 (0.266)			-0.225 (0.266)
Burnout x Age	-0.010 (0.015)			-0.010 (0.015)
Burnout x Months since end of gap	0.002 (0.005)			0.001 (0.005)
Burnout x Duration gap	0.069 (0.065)			0.074 (0.064)
Burnout x Sports	0.390 (0.379)			0.404 (0.386)
Burnout x Association	-0.199 (0.360)			-0.148 (0.366)
Burnout x Volunteering	0.379 (0.373)			0.369 (0.377)

## B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS

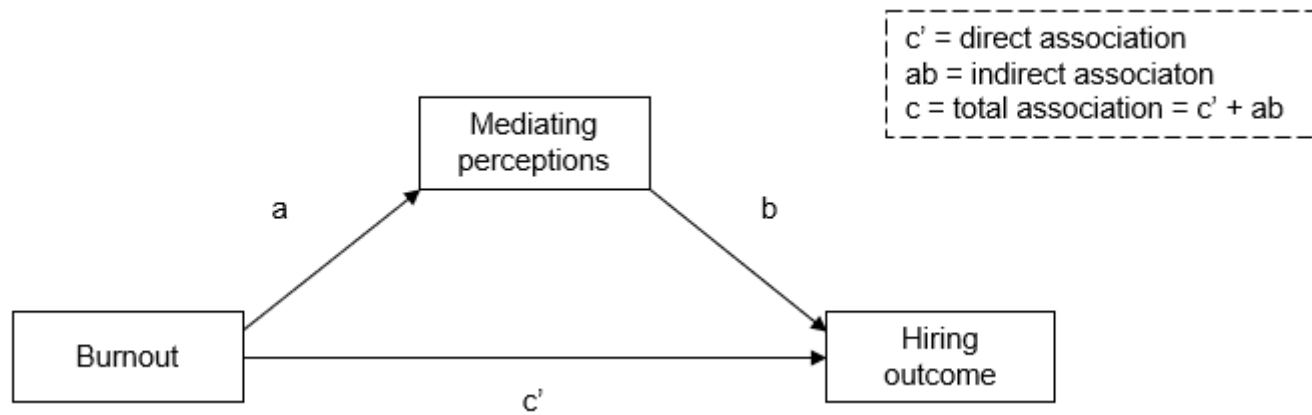
Req. leadership (s)	-0.043 (0.033)	-0.058* (0.035)	-0.046 (0.034)	-0.059* (0.035)
Req. stress tolerance (s)	0.026 (0.051)	0.056 (0.055)	0.025 (0.051)	0.060 (0.055)
Req. emotional labour (s)	0.051* (0.038)	0.047 (0.040)	0.056 (0.038)	0.044 (0.041)
Req. education level (o)	0.361 (0.207)	0.460** (0.214)	0.373* (0.207)	0.436** (0.219)
Burnout × Req. leadership (s)		0.044 (0.051)		0.062 (0.053)
Burnout × Req. stress tolerance (s)		-0.120* (0.064)		-0.133** (0.063)
Burnout × Req. emotional labour (s)		0.028 (0.054)		0.030 (0.056)
Burnout × Req. education level (o)		-0.340 (0.267)		-0.280 (0.290)

## C. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Female	0.181 (0.171)	0.183 (0.171)	0.062 (0.178)	0.067 (0.179)
Age	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)
Tertiary education (ref. = none)				
Bachelor	-0.211 (0.218)	-0.202 (0.219)	-0.248 (0.235)	-0.255 (0.236)
Master	0.148 (0.182)	0.146 (0.183)	0.147 (0.191)	0.149 (0.191)
Burnout knowledge	0.005 (0.052)	0.007 (0.052)	0.016 (0.055)	0.012 (0.055)
Burnout enc. (ref. = none)				
Professional life	0.226 (0.282)	0.233 (0.281)	0.083 (0.315)	0.063 (0.314)
Personal life	0.374 (0.275)	0.381 (0.276)	0.133 (0.305)	0.118 (0.303)
Patient	0.543 (0.370)	0.570 (0.370)	0.267 (0.412)	0.236 (0.413)
Risk-taking	0.036 (0.077)	0.039 (0.077)	0.019 (0.082)	0.018 (0.082)
Burnout × Female			0.452* (0.245)	0.427* (0.246)
Burnout × Age			-0.005 (0.011)	-0.005 (0.012)
Burnout × Tertiary education: Bachelor			0.172 (0.327)	0.169 (0.342)
Burnout × Tertiary education: Master			0.005 (0.242)	-0.002 (0.244)
Burnout × Burnout knowledge			-0.030 (0.072)	-0.024 (0.073)
Burnout × Burnout enc.: professional life			0.554 (0.405)	0.619 (0.406)
Burnout × Burnout enc.: personal life			0.918** (0.373)	0.971*** (0.367)

Burnout × Burnout enc.: patient		1.122** (0.492)	1.150** (0.496)
Burnout × Risk-taking		0.068 (0.112)	0.071 (0.112)
N	1,700		

Notes. Abbreviations used: req. (required), ref. (reference category) and enc. (encounters). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the participant level. \*\*\* (\*\*) (\*) indicates significance at 1% (5%) ((10%)) significance level. Job characteristics described in subsection 2.3 followed by '(s)' refer to the participants' estimates. When followed by '(o)', job characteristics indicate O\*Net scores.



Appendix Figure 1. Core mediation framework outlined in section 3



Appendix Table 1. Jobs and corresponding job characteristics used in the experiment

<b>Job</b>	<b>Req. level of education</b>	<b>Req. leadership</b>	<b>Req. stress tolerance</b>	<b>Req. emotional labour</b>
Driver and salesperson	Low	Low	Low	Low
Welder	Low	High	Low	Low
Telemarketer	Low	Low	High	Low
Massage therapist	Low	Low	Low	High
Chemical engineer	High	Low	Low	Low
Epidemiologist	High	High	Low	Low
ICT administrator	High	Low	High	Low
Tutor	High	Low	Low	High

Notes. Abbreviation used: req. (required). Jobs were selected and categorised based on data provided by O\*Net, as described in section 2.

Appendix Table 2. Mediation analysis with interview probability as the outcome and nine mediators

	Mediators									Interview probability
	Perceived leadership abilities	Perceived autonomy	Perceived ability to work under pressure	Perceived manageability	Perceived learning abilities	Perceived current health	Perceived future sick leave	Perceptions on adaptational requirements <sup>a</sup>	Perceptions on collaboration <sup>a</sup>	
A. CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS										
Female	-0.162** (0.075)	-0.176*** (0.063)	-0.137* (0.078)	-0.002 (0.064)	-0.109 (0.068)	-0.053 (0.081)	0.038 (0.091)	0.176** (0.077)	-0.014 (0.048)	-0.113 (0.069)
Age	0.012** (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.016*** (0.004)	-0.030** (0.004)	-0.011** (0.005)	0.007 (0.006)	0.010** (0.005)	-0.005* (0.003)	-0.011** (0.005)
Months since end of gap	0.003* (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.008*** (0.002)	-0.004** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	0.000 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)
Duration gap	-0.005 (0.020)	0.005 (0.020)	0.009 (0.021)	-0.006 (0.020)	0.011 (0.021)	0.003 (0.022)	0.036 (0.026)	0.012 (0.029)	0.005 (0.016)	-0.071*** (0.022)
Reason for gap (ref. = physical injury)										
Burnout	-0.887*** (0.100)	-0.518*** (0.088)	-1.806*** (0.113)	-0.411*** (0.091)	-0.325*** (0.090)	-0.696*** (0.115)	0.702*** (0.128)	0.319*** (0.107)	-0.425*** (0.065)	-0.069 (0.106)
Personal reasons	-0.627*** (0.096)	-0.508*** (0.082)	-0.734*** (0.098)	-0.452*** (0.087)	-0.364*** (0.090)	-0.089 (0.112)	0.157 (0.125)	-0.390*** (0.100)	-0.398*** (0.065)	-0.245*** (0.090)
Unemployment	-0.415*** (0.088)	-0.382*** (0.087)	-0.519*** (0.092)	-0.242*** (0.083)	-0.243*** (0.080)	0.406*** (0.104)	-0.144 (0.117)	-0.640*** (0.104)	-0.228** (0.056)	-0.228** (0.098)
Extracurricular activities (ref. = none)										
Sports	0.182* (0.099)	0.145 (0.094)	0.276*** (0.100)	0.037 (0.085)	0.126 (0.087)	0.208* (0.111)	-0.322*** (0.121)	-0.243** (0.098)	0.128*** (0.060)	0.109 (0.097)
Association	0.231** (0.101)	0.117 (0.087)	0.197* (0.103)	0.032 (0.093)	0.058 (0.091)	-0.044 (0.115)	-0.144 (0.128)	-0.117 (0.099)	0.201* (0.066)	0.157 (0.100)
Volunteering	0.059 (0.094)	0.087 (0.089)	-0.050 (0.103)	-0.016 (0.084)	-0.064 (0.085)	0.055 (0.102)	-0.156 (0.114)	-0.090 (0.095)	0.082 (0.065)	0.173* (0.095)
B. JOB CHARACTERISTICS										
Req. leadership (s)	0.086*** (0.025)	0.028 (0.025)	0.053** (0.024)	0.069*** (0.026)	0.047* (0.024)	0.007 (0.028)	0.025 (0.031)	0.020 (0.038)	0.041* (0.024)	-0.083*** (0.026)
Req. stress tolerance (s)	-0.046 (0.036)	0.037 (0.036)	0.035 (0.028)	-0.009 (0.037)	0.022 (0.035)	0.026 (0.039)	0.017 (0.042)	-0.076 (0.050)	0.021 (0.027)	0.013 (0.043)
Req. emotional labour (s)	0.022 (0.029)	-0.008 (0.029)	0.015 (0.028)	0.019 (0.029)	0.025 (0.027)	0.026 (0.030)	-0.043 (0.038)	0.020 (0.042)	0.030 (0.026)	0.036 (0.032)
Req. education level (o)	0.313** (0.151)	0.339** (0.147)	0.337** (0.140)	0.096 (0.150)	0.190 (0.140)	0.524*** (0.168)	-0.258 (0.174)	-0.043 (0.205)	0.269* (0.146)	0.061 (0.160)

C. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

Female	-0.090 (0.133)	0.003 (0.128)	0.002 (0.135)	-0.028 (0.131)	-0.078 (0.128)	0.052 (0.144)	-0.078 (0.164)	-0.146 (0.192)	-0.230* (0.120)	0.183 (0.135)
Age	-0.013** (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.010* (0.006)	-0.003 (0.006)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.007)	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.024** (0.010)	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.003 (0.008)
Tertiary education (ref. = none)										
Bachelor	0.135 (0.171)	0.011 (0.171)	-0.046 (0.169)	-0.003 (0.179)	0.043 (0.166)	0.256 (0.175)	-0.193 (0.219)	-0.180 (0.263)	0.002 (0.164)	-0.269 (0.170)
Master	0.043 (0.135)	0.061 (0.135)	-0.049 (0.132)	0.033 (0.141)	-0.022 (0.133)	0.092 (0.148)	-0.113 (0.166)	-0.117 (0.195)	0.011 (0.120)	0.108 (0.144)
Burnout knowledge	0.078 (0.048)	0.055 (0.050)	0.048 (0.046)	0.053 (0.050)	0.056 (0.045)	0.053 (0.052)	0.030 (0.056)	0.043 (0.057)	0.062 (0.045)	-0.035 (0.041)
Burnout enc. (ref. = none)										
Professional life	0.046 (0.195)	-0.130 (0.204)	0.062 (0.220)	-0.072 (0.206)	-0.042 (0.199)	0.044 (0.233)	0.002 (0.273)	-0.105 (0.303)	0.012 (0.183)	0.243 (0.215)
Personal life	0.063 (0.186)	-0.048 (0.194)	0.084 (0.209)	-0.052 (0.199)	0.019 (0.190)	0.057 (0.218)	-0.231 (0.255)	-0.181 (0.279)	0.137 (0.175)	0.323 (0.216)
Patient	0.160 (0.269)	0.269 (0.275)	0.184 (0.297)	0.229 (0.264)	0.194 (0.255)	0.127 (0.298)	-0.106 (0.359)	0.026 (0.376)	0.499** (0.249)	0.373 (0.291)
Risk-taking	0.052 (0.056)	0.046 (0.060)	0.105* (0.061)	0.055 (0.061)	0.071 (0.056)	0.075 (0.063)	0.018 (0.070)	0.018 (0.085)	0.077 (0.051)	-0.020 (0.061)
D. MEDIATORS										
Perceived leadership abilities										0.092* (0.049)
Perceived autonomy										0.186*** (0.057)
Perceived ability to work under pressure										0.242*** (0.040)
Perceived manageability										0.160*** (0.051)
Perceived learning abilities										0.016 (0.048)
Perceived current health										0.134*** (0.038)
Perceived future sick leave										-0.151*** (0.030)
Perceptions on adaptational requirements <sup>a</sup>										-0.008 (0.029)
Perceptions on collaboration <sup>a</sup>										0.030 (0.066)

N 1,700

Notes. Abbreviations used: req. (required), ref. (reference category) and enc. (encounter). The presented statistics are coefficient estimates and their standard errors in parentheses for the mediation model outlined in subsection 3.2. Standard errors are corrected for clustering of the observations at the participant level. \*\*\* (\*\* (\*)) indicates significance at the 1% (5%) ((10%)) significance level. Job characteristics described in subsection 2.3 followed by '(s)' refer to the participants' estimates. When followed by '(o)', job characteristics indicate O\*Net scores. <sup>a</sup> indicates mediators with scales comprising multiple items.

Appendix Table 3. Mediation analysis: Mediators conceptualised as factors versus items

Mediators	Interview probability				Hiring probability			
	Model: factors as mediators		Model: items as mediators		Model: factors as mediators		Model: items as mediators	
	% of total burnout effect explained by mediator	p-value	% of total burnout effect explained by mediator	p-value	% of total burnout effect explained by mediator	p-value	% of total burnout effect explained by mediator	p-value
Perceived leadership abilities	8.4%	0.079	<b>8.5%</b>	0.048	<b>10.2%</b>	0.001	<b>9.8%</b>	0.001
Perceived autonomy	<b>9.9%</b>	0.000	<b>10.1%</b>	0.000	<b>8.8%</b>	0.017	<b>8.8%</b>	0.013
Perceived ability to work under pressure	<b>45.1%</b>	0.000	<b>45.5%</b>	0.000	<b>27.7%</b>	0.000	<b>28.2%</b>	0.000
Perceived manageability	<b>6.8%</b>	0.000	<b>6.4%</b>	0.001	3.1%	0.085	2.9%	0.123
Perceived learning abilities	0.5%	0.799	0.5%	0.799	3.3%	0.111	3.2%	0.106
Perceived current health	<b>9.6%</b>	0.000	<b>9.4%</b>	0.000	<b>8.9%</b>	0.000	<b>8.8%</b>	0.000
Perceived future sick leave	<b>10.9%</b>	0.000	<b>10.8%</b>	0.000	<b>8.3%</b>	0.000	<b>8.1%</b>	0.000
Perceptions on adaptational requirements <sup>a</sup>	0.3%	0.859			0.6%	0.596		
Estimated required adaptations to work context			0.1%	0.874			0.2%	0.728
Estimated required adaptations to working conditions			1.2%	0.329			1.4%	0.456
Estimated required adaptations to job content			2.2%	0.356			1.5%	0.393
Perceptions on collaboration <sup>a</sup>	1.3%	0.546			6.8%	0.080		
Attitude towards collaboration of employer			0.6%	0.863			<b>4.5%</b>	0.013
Attitude towards collaboration of other employees			0.6%	0.066			3.2%	0.362
Attitude towards collaboration of clientele			2.2%	0.421			0.3%	0.903
N	1,700		1,700		1,700		1,700	

Notes. P-values are corrected for clustering of observations at participant level. Percentages related to p-values below 5% are in bold. <sup>a</sup> indicates mediators with scales comprising multiple items.

Appendix Table 4. Robustness checks: Mediation analysis with interview probability as the outcome and nine mediators

Mediators	% of total burnout effect on Interview probability explained by mediator				
	Experienced with vacancy [p-value]	Experienced at hiring candidates with mental disorders [p-value]	Hiring frequency of at least once per month [p-value]	Hiring tenure greater than one year [p-value]	Low or average social desirability [p-value]
Perceived leadership abilities	4.6% [0.368]	12.9% [0.055]	8.5% [0.124]	8.2% [0.080]	<b>10.9%</b> [0.023]
Perceived autonomy	<b>8.7%</b> [0.023]	<b>13.4%</b> [0.010]	<b>10.0%</b> [0.007]	<b>10.4%</b> [0.002]	<b>10.4%</b> [0.006]
Perceived ability to work under pressure	<b>49.4%</b> [0.000]	<b>51.7%</b> [0.000]	<b>52.1%</b> [0.000]	<b>41.6%</b> [0.000]	<b>46.5%</b> [0.000]
Perceived manageability	<b>6.8%</b> [0.021]	3.5% [0.253]	<b>6.2%</b> [0.031]	<b>7.5%</b> [0.005]	<b>7.3%</b> [0.007]
Perceived learning abilities	0.1% [0.941]	2.9% [0.325]	1.1% [0.614]	3.4% [0.989]	0.1% [0.945]
Perceived current health	<b>7.3%</b> [0.030]	<b>7.9%</b> [0.050]	<b>8.3%</b> [0.025]	<b>8.0%</b> [0.014]	<b>9.7%</b> [0.003]
Perceived future sick leave	<b>15.6%</b> [0.000]	4.5% [0.084]	<b>10.3%</b> [0.002]	<b>8.0%</b> [0.001]	<b>9.5%</b> [0.001]
Perceptions on adaptational requirements <sup>a</sup>	0.4% [0.705]	0.6% [0.563]	0.1% [0.918]	0.6% [0.540]	0.1% [0.930]
Perceptions on collaboration <sup>a</sup>	0.7% [0.836]	0.9% [0.822]	0.4% [0.889]	0.8% [0.786]	0.9% [0.765]
N	1,328	1,104	1,472	1,580	1,548

Notes. P-values are corrected for clustering of observations at participant level. Percentages related to p-values below 5% are in bold. <sup>a</sup> indicates mediators with scales comprising multiple items. Observations are categorised as 'Low or average social desirability' if participants scored socially desirable answering tendencies below the sample mean increased by one standard deviation.