

**CLIENT SERVICE AND COURT SECURITY:
'SOFTENING THE BARRIER' TO ENHANCE COURT
SAFETY**

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the role that court staff play in helping create and maintain a safer court environment and thereby helping to ‘soften’ the security barrier that envelops most courts today. This study examines court safety from the vantage point of client service staff working in a major Federal court system in Australia by looking at the contribution they make to helping clients feel safer whilst at court. The study was conducted as part of an Australian Research Council funded national study of court safety (Reference Number LP9882179).

The study draws upon existing theory on court security, service quality and work-related stress but differs from existing research in terms of the study’s context, vantage point and the connections found to exist between court security, workplace safety and service quality.

Existing court security research literature has tended to emphasise the design of court rooms, court buildings and their surrounds, the use of security technology and the deployment of specialist security staff as strategies for improving court security. This study focuses on how a court’s boundary tier (consisting of those court staff who work between the court and its clients) can help to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the court’s clients and, thereby, contribute to a safe court environment.

Service industry and social science research literature tends to ignore courts as a research setting. This study makes a contribution to existing knowledge by exploring the relationship between employee commitment, job satisfaction and job performance amongst the court’s client service staff. In addition, contemporary service industry research also tends to promote the role of the ‘positive client’ in the co-creation of services. This study focuses on how complex situations and difficult clients are perceived by the court’s client service staff to be psychosocial stressors that act as factors that hinder their service performance.

This study is a case study of a court system with a complex service setting that includes numerous court registries and a moderately sized centralized national call centre. The study adopts a parallel, mixed research methods design and presents a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the court’s client service staff along with

qualitative data obtained from a sample of their team leaders, managers and some of their professional client contact colleagues.

This study demonstrates that the staff working in a court's boundary tier can make an important contribution to client safety, that an important relationship exists between court security, workplace safety and service quality, and that the relevance of a court's boundary tier to client safety can be influenced by the level of support provided to boundary staff to help them cope with complex situations and difficult clients.

This study will be of interest to any court administrator currently using, or thinking about using, their boundary staff to help improve client security.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter introduces the research problem, the research questions and the associated research propositions and briefly discusses the importance of the present study to service industry research. The chapter also establishes the justification for this study and the research methodology and research methods used. It presents an outline of the structure of the research report, the key definitions used in the report, delimitations of the study scope, its key assumptions and their justification, and a brief chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Research

Three things comprise the main background elements of this study. The first relates to the study being part of a national Court Safety Project. The second relates to the study's focus on the client service function in the family law courts in Australia. The third relates to the study's interest in the relationship that exists between client service and court safety in the family law courts that complements the Court Safety Project's much wider interest in understanding the factors that contribute to safer environments in all courts in Australia.

The National Court Safety Project

This study is part of a national industry-based study on court safety funded by the Australian Research Council (Reference Number LP9882179) whose formal title is *Fortress or sanctuary? Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes*.

The Court Safety Project is defined as “a comparative analysis of safety processes, practices and designs in five jurisdictions to document the safety experience and expectations of stakeholders and develop best practice guidelines for providing safer court environments” (Tait, 2008b, p.1). The present study complements the Court Safety Project in a number of different ways. The Court Safety Project aims to identify actual and perceived safety needs of various user communities. The present study examines the safety needs of those who work in the family law courts and the effect this has on the support they provide to the family law

courts' clients. The Court Safety Project aims to identify the features of people, places and processes that contribute to safer court environments. The present study explores how these features of the family law courts influence the work-related attitudes and behaviours of the family law courts' client service staff. The Court Safety Project aims to assess the impact of changes in court processes and designs on the safety of court environments. The present study examines how a fundamental shift in the delivery of client services in the family law courts was intended to contribute to maintaining a safer court environment. Finally, the Court Safety Project aims to develop best practice guidelines for improving the safety of court environments. The present study draws attention to the need for industry best practice to understand the importance of the relationship between client service, workplace safety and court security in order to optimize the effective contribution that court staff can make to helping create and maintain a safe court environment.

A Case Study Focus

This study adopts a case study approach to examining the influence of the family law courts' client service function on court safety. The fact that the family law courts are one of the five jurisdictions participating in the Court Safety Project influenced its choice as the case study organization for this study. Another motivating factor was the Family Court of Australia's interest in knowing whether a significant investment it had made between 2004 and 2006 in building the capabilities of its client service staff (Family Law Courts, 2009) had been effective in enabling these staff to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

The Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia together comprise the majority of the family law jurisdiction in Australia and provide the organizational context for this study. As both of these courts come under the responsibility of the same Chief Executive Officer, both share the same built environment and both are supported by the same integrated judicial and registry service (Family Court of Australia, 2010), for the purposes of this study they are considered to be the same organization. This study did not include the Family Court of Western Australia that operates under the Family Law Act 1975 but is administered separately by the Department of the Attorney General, Western Australia (Government of Western Australia, Department of the Attorney General, 2009).

Relevant Fields of Study

Four fields of study are directly relevant to this study. These fields of study are research into court security, family law and family violence, the boundary-spanning behaviours of service employees, and research into how behavioural attitudes of service employees influence their job performance and other work-related behaviour that, in turn, influence clients' satisfaction and service organization outcomes. The research on client services and court security relate directly to the two core themes of the present study. The relevance of research on family law and family violence relates to understanding the culture and service orientation of the family law courts. The relevance of research on the boundary spanning behaviour of service employees reflects the perceived importance of the family law courts fundamentally shifting their approach to client services to better support their vulnerable clients. The relevance of organizational behaviour research reflects the emphasis in the service industry on a 'causal chain of influence' between the attitudes of service employees, their service quality, the satisfaction of their customers/clients and service organization outcomes (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Saswer & Schlesinger, 1994). Each of these directly relevant fields of study is discussed in more detail to illustrate their relevance to this present study.

Court Security

Court security research underpins the focus and the design of the Court Safety Project. The Court Safety Project's funding proposal argues that most studies of safety and security in courts are limited to a relatively narrow part of the safety spectrum; in part because issues such as stress, social support and the ability to participate effectively in court processes are not always included in the definition of 'safety' issues (Tait, 2008b). The present study of client service and court safety in the family law courts examines these human needs for safety from the perspective of the courts' staff rather than from the perspective of the courts' clients and this partly determines the importance of the present study to the national Court Safety Project.

Court security research from the United States indicates that concern for court security has increased over the last few decades because violence in courts has become more of a daily reality (Raferty, 2007). The court security research highlights that there were twenty six general court-house shootings in the United States from 2005 to 2009 (Barrett, 2009, p.6) that included a mass court-house shooting in Atlanta Georgia and the murder of a Federal

court judge's family in Chicago Illinois (Raferty, 2007). In Australia there has been the murder of Family Court judge, Justice Opas, in 1980 and the murder of the wife of a second Family Court judge, Justice Watson, in 1984 (Rhoades, 2010). In New South Wales alone there were more than 300 security incidents reported each month across the courts (Sarre & Prenzler, 2011).

The court security research also indicates that responsibility for court security matters has shifted from being a primary concern of court security specialists, such as the Sheriff's office or security contractors, to being the concern of the judiciary and court administrators as well (Cooper, 2007). The court security research also indicates that the courts are now recognized as a high risk area of the public sector employment (Faust & Raffo, 2001; Warren, 2001) and that a concern of the judiciary is whether courts have now become hostage to violence and the threat of violence which ultimately influences the accessibility and equity of the judicial system (Geiger, 2001). The idea of the courts being a judicial institution and a place of work is an important consideration for research into the work-related behaviour of client services staff in the family law courts where the history of family violence dates back to the commencement of the Family Court of Australia in January 1976 (Swain, 2012).

Family Violence and Family Law

Australian social trend data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007) and associated research (Humphreys, 2006; Laing, 2008) highlights that partner-initiated violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women in Australia (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). In 2004, thirty-four per cent of the women who responded to the Australian component of an international survey on violence against women indicated they had experienced at least one form of violence by a current or former partner (Mouzos and Makkai, 2004 as cited in Grealy, Humphreys, Millard & Powers, 2008, p. 7). Family violence is also a prevalent feature of the family law system in Australia (Braaf & Sneddon, 2007).

In a speech on family violence and family law the Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Justice Faulks, describes family violence and abuse as an insidious problem for Australian society that has existed for some time and is likely to continue to be a problem for some time to come (Faulks, 2010a). From the Family Court of Australia's own analysis sixty-eight of ninety-one judicially determined cases dealt with by the Family Law

Court of Australia in 2003/04 involved issues of family violence (Family Court of Australia, 2004a). However, the Chief Justice of the Family Court, Justice Bryant, has stated publicly that providing the family law courts know about the risk of family violence beforehand they have the processes and procedures to deal with this risk (Bryant, 2009a).

The prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the family law courts is a salient feature of the service setting in the present study. It is also a key contributor to the motivation behind the decision by the family law courts to fundamentally shift their client service function to better support their vulnerable clients.

Boundary-spanning of Service Employees

Service employees form the boundary tier that operates between the service organization and its customers/clients. The boundary tier involves a range of roles including being gatekeepers, intelligence gatherers, quality assurers, and relationship managers (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). The research literature indicates that individual service employees seldom deliver the full service and they often work loosely or closely with others in service teams or units where a key issue to service effectiveness is the extent of the coordination and integration of their efforts (Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). Much still needs to be known about team boundary-spanning behaviour (Marrone, 2010) including how a service organization's boundary conditions influence the relationship between service employees and customers/clients (Mayer, Ehrhard & Schneider, 2009) and how this operates in different service settings (Rafaeli, Ziklik & Ducet, 2008). What is known is that the service industry and marketing research literature have tended to ignore the courts as an organizational context for research in relation to the influence of service employees' boundary-spanning behaviour on court user communities. The present study provides an opportunity to test and explore existing theory in an under-researched organizational context.

An important feature of the case study context of the present study is the role played by a network of external support agencies that work alongside of the family law courts to provide support for the wellbeing of vulnerable clients (involving issues of mental illness, substance abuse or family violence). The fuzzy nature of this boundary creates a challenge for the family law courts' client contact staff and is another important feature of the service setting of the case study organization.

Behavioural Attitudes and Service Performance

Service industry and social science research on the relationship between employee attitudes and job performance in the service industry is also of direct relevance to this study. Service industry and social science research helps to determine the types of quantitative data that are required to answer a question about whether, and how much, the attitudes of the family law court's client service staff affect their service performance. The service industry and social science research makes substantial claims about the relevance of various forms of work commitment to work-related behaviour and job performance (Cohen, 2003; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Riketta, 2002, 2008; Riketta & Van Dick, 2009). However, while these studies have been carried out in a variety of public sector organizations none of these studies have included the courts. Similarly, although job satisfaction is stated to be one of the most studied variables in relation to service employees' work-related behaviour (Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991; Wiley, 1996; Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000), none of this research has used the courts as the service setting. For these reasons, testing the relationship that exists between the work commitment and job satisfaction of the family law courts client service staff and their perception of their service performance has the potential to add to existing knowledge about the factors that influence court staff in general and the family law courts' client service staff in particular.

The next section presents a brief introduction to this study's research problem, the study's two research questions, the associated research propositions, and the importance of the present study to what is currently known about the relationship that exists between client service and court safety in the family law courts in particular and in other courts in general.

1.2 The Research Problem, Research Questions, Research Propositions and Importance of the Study

1.2.1 The Research Problem

The research problem that this study addresses is about how the family law courts' service orientation and perceived organizational support influences the extent to which the courts' client service staff contribute fully to helping create and maintain a safe court environment; particularly for those court clients assessed by themselves or others to be at risk of family violence whilst at court.

This study argues that the family law courts have fundamentally shifted the delivery of their client support services by expanding the role of their client contact staff to include supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients. This support involves, amongst other things, referring clients with special needs to a network of external support agencies and assessing whether clients are fearful for their safety whilst at court. This role expansion applies to all of the family law courts' client contact staff, including client service staff, and arose as a result of the courts' *2004/05 Family Violence Strategy* (Family Court of Australia, 2004b).

This study also argues that the nature and extent of organizational support provided to the courts' client service staff over time to build and sustain the level of their service skills also affects their confidence and competence in dealing effectively with difficult clients and complex situations encountered in the courts. Further, this study argues that the nature and level of perceived organizational support provided by the family law courts to their client service staff has a significant influence on the extent to which these staff are motivated and prepared to fulfil the safety-related requirements of their expanded service role.

1.2.2 The Research Questions

The study focuses on two specific aspects of the research problem. The first aspect concerns establishing whether, and to what extent front-line, non-professional client service staff in the family law courts do actually make a contribution to helping create a safer court environment; particularly for the courts' clients at risk of violence whilst at court. The second aspect concerns exploring the phenomenon of client service and court safety from the perspective of the courts' client service staff to better understand what factors influence their service performance including the safety-related behaviours associated with supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts vulnerable clients.

Accordingly, the present study addresses two separate but related research questions:

- Do the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients - particularly those assessed to be at risk of family violence whilst at court?

- What types of factors influence the confidence and competence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary-spanning role that includes them helping to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients?

1.2.3 The Research Propositions

There are six propositions underlying the research problem being addressed by this study. The first proposition relates to the view that the courts have a strong client service orientation that is consistent with it being a public sector human service organization that has shifted from taking a transaction-based approach to case management to taking a more client-service-oriented approach. The second proposition is that there is a prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the family law courts and that the courts have processes to deal with this if it is known about beforehand. The third proposition is that the family law courts have fundamentally shifted the approach to the delivery of their client services in a way that reflects an increasing concern in the family law courts and in society in general about the safety of clients coming before the family law courts. The fourth proposition is that the family law courts' client service staff occupy an important boundary role as part of the family law courts' service operations (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). This proposition reflects two key assumptions. The first is that the extension of the role of the courts' client service staff requires them to exhibit a different range of skills in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts clients. The second is that this role extension requires the client service staff to engage in an aspect of service that can involve them trying to meet the different expectations of their supervisors and managers and their clients (Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010). The fifth proposition is that the attitudes of the family law courts' client service staff towards their job influence their work performance. The sixth and final proposition is that the family law courts' service orientation and the level of organizational support provided to its client service staff has an influence on client service behaviour, client satisfaction and organizational outcomes.

1.2.4 Importance of the Study

The importance of the present study relates to the study's connections, context and vantage point. The study argues that a relationship does exist between client service and court security; albeit that no studies could be found that directly support this relationship. However, a recent study has suggested that the court administrators need to reconceptualise

court security strategy in a way that supports the present study's argument about the role of 'soft systems' in courts for creating a safer court environment (Wallace, Blackman & Rowden, 2013). The present study is important because while there is extensive research on the service industry in the public sector very little of this focuses on courts. Testing the relationship between job attitudes and service performance of the courts client service staff provides an opportunity to determine whether this relationship holds in a unique type of public sector service organization. Finally the present study is important because it adopts an 'inside out' research stance in trying to understand how the family law courts' client service staff experience the phenomenon of client service and court security that complements the 'outside in' research stance adopted by the national Court Safety Project.

The next section provides a brief justification of this study in terms of the gaps in the existing research on the relationship between client service and court safety in the courts it addresses.

1.3 The Justification for this Research

From a theoretical perspective this study addresses the relative neglect in service industry and social science research of the courts in general. It also addresses the tendency of court security research to focus on the court environment rather than on the people and process aspects of court security.

The relationship between the courts and the public has been stated to be incompletely researched and under-theorized in Australia and the question has been raised whether courts in general should be viewed as arms of government or service organizations or a unique blend of the two (Parker, 1998). One justification for this study is that it looks specifically at the conscious service orientation of the family law courts to determine how this influences its relationship with its user community and with its client service workforce. Another justification is how this study explores the importance of organizational support for court staff who perform an essential role in security risk management as part of their boundary-spanning behaviour.

Court security research has generally tended to focus more on the design of court rooms, courts and their surrounds, on the use of security technology and on the deployment of security specialists rather than on the role of court staff who are often exposed to the anger and frustration of clients who are unhappy with the judicial system (Nicholson, 2005). This

study shifts the focus of research on court security to encompass an examination of how court staff influence client's views about the support services they are provided and how safe they feel at court.

Family violence is a feature of the service setting in which the family law courts operate. The issue of family violence has long been recognized to be one of the major factors contributing to a lack of equity for women in the legal system in Australia. New programs providing court support services have been introduced to assist women to negotiate the legal system (Laing, 2000). However, research into court support services such as screening and risk assessment indicates these services are costly and difficult to implement (Frederick, 2008). In addition, the family law system has been criticised for undermining the pathways for recovery of women during a post-divorce period and is seen to fall short in meeting their post-divorce support requirements (Wilcox, 2012a, 2012b). What appears to be lacking in the areas of family violence research is an understanding of the role that court staff can play in mitigating the risk of family violence from occurring and how court staff facilitate and support clients' wellbeing and security concerns whilst they are at court. The closest study that relates to the work and workforce issues is associated with professional staff working in the family relationship services sector in Australia (Cortis, Chan & Hilferty, 2009).

In summary, justification of this study relates to its ability to fill the gaps created by the tendency of service industry and social science research to ignore the courts as a service setting, to the tendency of court security research to focus predominantly on the court environment as a strategy for improving court security, and to the tendency of family law and family violence research to focus on court support processes and not on those staff providing basic support services.

The next section presents a brief introduction to the choice of the research methodology and the research methods used in this study.

1.4 Research Methodology and Research Methods

This study adopts a mixed methods research design that involves five research methods: survey research, interviews, focus groups, non-participant observation and document analysis. This type of research design is selected because a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data is required to fully address the study's two research questions. In particular, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data is required because:

- The exploration of the family law courts' conscious service orientation and the nature and level of organizational support provided by the courts to their client service staff involves interviewing client service staff and their team leaders and managers.
- The exploration of the types of processes used by the family law courts to minimize the risk of family violence from occurring amongst the clients coming before the courts requires the analysis of court policy and procedural documents as well as other documents such as reports, speeches by judicial officers and the analysis of the courts' annual reports.
- The exploration of whether and to what extent the family law courts' client service staff are perceived to make an effective contribution to helping create and maintain a safe court environment requires interviews with a sample of the courts' client contact staff as well as the analysis of a range of court documents.
- Non-participant observation is used as the most cost effective way for the researcher to gain a first-hand understanding of how the court environment in small, medium and large court registries might be viewed by court staff and their clients from a service and security perspective.
- Finally, in order to test the extent to which job attitudes of the courts' client service staff influence their perceptions of their job performance it is necessary to survey them and to compare their responses with previous research on the relationship between job attitudes and job performance amongst service employees in other types of service organizations.

'NVivo' 8 was the tool used for coding and interpreting qualitative data collected from interviews, focus group meetings, and the open-ended section of the survey questionnaire.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was the tool used for coding and interpreting the data from the survey questionnaire that was sent on-line to all client service staff employed or engaged by the family law courts during a two week period in late 2010.

The next section provides a brief description of the structure of this research report.

1.5 Structure of this Report

There are five other chapters in this study report covering research issues; the choice and justification of the research methodology and the research methods used, presentation of the qualitative and quantitative results, a discussion of the study's key findings and the presentation of the study's main conclusions and their practical and theoretical implications.

Chapter 2 identifies a range of research issues and research propositions associated with three broadly relevant areas of research (safety and security, service industry and marketing and organizational behaviour) and four directly relevant areas of research (court security, family violence and family law, boundary-spanning behaviour of service employees and research related to two job attitudes (commitment and job satisfaction) and two job performance dimensions (service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)) amongst service employees.

Chapter 3 outlines the rationale for the choice of the research methodology and the five research methods used in this study. Chapter 3 also describes the steps taken to pilot the qualitative data collection protocols and to test the survey questionnaire and validate the associated data in a quasi-commercial public sector service organization that has a similar service setting to the family law courts. Chapter 3 also outlines how focus groups were used to modify the survey questionnaire used in the pilot survey and in the survey of the client service staff of the family law courts.

Chapter 4 presents the survey results obtained from 194 client service staff working in the family law courts in October 2010. This data was used to test the relationship that exists between work commitment and job satisfaction amongst the family law courts' client service staff and their perceptions of their service quality and OCB. A range of research literature is discussed in Chapter 4 to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the survey results.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the qualitative data collected from thirty individual and small group interviews and focus group meetings that involved over fifty participants and the data obtained from the open-ended section of the survey questionnaire. Chapter 5 also presents the results from non-participant observations conducted in seven large, medium and

small court registries and the analysis of documents relating to support services and court safety in the family law courts.

Chapter 6 takes the results from Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 and draws them together into a thematic discussion of the study's main findings and a discussion of the research literature on the emergent issue of work-related stress. The significance of one of the key research finding in the present study is explored in the discussion about how work-related stress arising from outside and inside of the family law courts appears to influence the boundary-spanning behaviour of the courts' client service staff in relation to the support they provide to clients assessed to be at risk of family violence whilst at court.

Chapter 6 also presents the study's main conclusions and highlights their relationship to the study's key findings and to the study's research problem and two research questions. Chapter 6 also outlines the implications of these conclusions for theory and practice in relation to court administration and suggests limited generalization of the study's findings and conclusions to other courts that are, or may be, contemplating using their court staff to enhance and sustain court safety arrangements may be possible.

The next section of this chapter provides a brief summary of the key definitions adopted in this report.

1.6 Key Definitions

The definitions adopted in service industry and marketing research and court security research are often not uniform. Consequently, the key terms used in this report are defined in order to establish a position that focuses, but does not overly restrict, the generalizations that may be made from this study's findings and conclusions (Perry, 2012).

A Three-Component Model of Commitment

“Commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 11).

Job Satisfaction

“Job satisfaction can be considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of the job” (Spector, 1997, p. 2).

Service Quality

Service quality is conceptualized and measured as a multidimensional, formative model of service-related behaviour using the SERVQUAL survey instrument (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988, 1991) modified by feedback from focus groups (Schneider & White, 2004).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

“Individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006, p. 3).

Security and Safety

Security is primarily concerned with the process of providing protection against known threats (Walker, 2009), whereas safety is more concerned with the outcomes achieved as a result of security processes (Burns, McDermid & Dobson, 1992) and may include issues such as stress, social support and the ability to function effectively in social settings (Tait, 2008b).

Court Security

“An integrated approach to the judicial process that ensures the integrity and safety of the court system and its participants, by effectively evaluating, planning and proactively managing threats and potential threats towards the court system” (Barrett, 2009, p. 11).

Servicescape

The physical and the social environment surrounding the provision of service that can shape and influence the quality of the service exchange experience, transaction or event (Bitner, 2000).

Service climate

“The shared employee perceptions of the policies, practices, and procedures and the behaviours that get rewarded, supported, and expected with regard to customer service and customer service quality” (Schneider & White, 2004, p. 100).

Service orientation

From an individual employee perspective this concept suggests “a set of attitudes and behaviours affecting the quality of interactions between an organization’s employees and its customers (Hogan et al., 1984, as cited in Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005, p. 500). As an organizational variable it identifies employees’ perceptions and beliefs about the policies, practices and procedures that are directed at supporting service delivery, customer satisfaction and service organizational outcomes (Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005).

Boundary-spanning Behaviour

Boundary-spanning behaviour is the service-related behaviour of service providers who work at the boundary between their service organization and its clients. These employees may work as part of a team or one of a number of groups involved in the provision of a service. Employees with a boundary-spanning role may find themselves caught between the expectations of their employing organization and the expectations of their clients (Bettencourt & Brown, 2003; Gracia, Citre & Grau, 2010; Marrone, 2010; Marrone, Tesluk & Carson, 2007; Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000).

It is acknowledged that some of the definitions adopted in the present study for key concepts are critiqued in the research literature. The first key definition, relating to work commitment, and the model of organizational commitment introduced by Meyer and Allen (1997) is acknowledged to represent only one of several three component models of organizational commitment widely used in the commitment research literature (Buchanan, 1974; Cook & Wall, 1980; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1994). The second key definition, relating to job satisfaction, is not in itself very controversial but the conceptualization of job satisfaction as either a facet measure or global measure and the various instruments used to measure job satisfaction in different occupations and in different service settings is widely debated in the research literature (Spector, 1997; Westover, 2011). The conceptualization and measurement of service quality in the present study using SERVQUAL is controversial albeit backed up by other research studies (Malhortra and Mukerjee, 2004) and the debate in the research literature around the conceptualization and measurement of service quality in general is touched on in Subsections 2.2.3 and 2.3.4 and discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Finally the conceptualization and measurement of the concept of organizational citizenship behaviour is also subject to some debate as discussed in

Subsections 2.2.3 and 2.3.4 of Chapter 2 (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). The definitions of other key terms that are used in this study report are presented in the research literature that is reviewed in Chapter 2 and in the research literature on the emergent theme of work-related stress that is discussed in Chapter 6.

The next section of this chapter discusses the boundaries associated with this study and the key assumptions relating to the study's research design.

1.7 Delimitations of Scope, Key Assumptions and Their Justification.

1.7.1 Boundaries

There are a number of specific boundaries associated with this study that place delimitations on the study's findings and conclusions additional to those associated with the definitions presented in the previous section. These boundaries include:

- The selection of the family law courts as the study context.
- The exclusion of the Family Court of Western Australia from the scope of the study.
- The focus of the study on the family law courts' client service staff and not on other court client contact staff.
- The boundaries (functional, physical and administrative) that exist between the family law court's client contact staff (client service staff, Registrars, Family Consultants and Associates and Deputy Associates).
- The boundaries that exist between the courts, its clients and the network of external support agencies that help support the courts' vulnerable clients.

The Family Court of Australia is a partner organization in the national Court Safety Project. This means they were amenable to participating in this study. However the choice of the family law courts as the research context could limit the generalizations of the study's findings and conclusions to other types of courts in Australia and elsewhere.

The Family Court of Western Australia was excluded from the study's scope because representatives of the Department of the Attorney General of Western Australia that

administers the Family Court of Western Australia did not accept an invitation to participate in the study. This may limit generalization of the study's findings and conclusions to that Court to the extent that it is structured and operates differently from the Family Court of Australia, even though it operates under the same legislation.

The family law courts' client service function was selected as the specific focus of this study. The courts' client service function is one part of the integrated judicial and registry services that supports the family law courts. The focus on the client service function as an embedded subsystem within the courts' integrated judicial and registry service may prevent the study's findings and conclusions from applying to the courts' other client contact staff such as Registrars and Family Consultants and the Associates and Deputy Associates. However, the courts' client service function is of a reasonable size (some 290 staff) and represents about 20 per cent of the Family Court of Australia's overall resources (Family Court of Australia, 2012a) so warrants being singled out for this study. It also represents a generic resource that would be present in most court systems in Australia and elsewhere.

Three types of boundaries were found to separate the family law courts' client contact staff (physical, functional and administrative). Nonetheless there was evidence to suggest that the courts devoted considerable administrative effort on the coordination and integration of the courts' judicial and registry services. The effectiveness of this coordination and integration was one factor influencing the effectiveness of the court's client service process.

The courts' registry services are located in a centralized call centre and nineteen court registries in the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and all States except Western Australia. While there were obvious differences in the built environment between family law courts in State capitals and some of the regional and Territorial-based courts nonetheless it was also evident that the courts have devoted considerable resources to ensuring that all courts have effective court security arrangements and adequate servicescapes. These differences in servicescape are a factor that has the potential to influence the attitude of court staff to their own safety as well as their clients' views about the services provided to support their wellbeing and security concerns.

Finally, an important feature of the present study was the boundary that exists between the courts' client contact staff, their clients and the network of external support agencies that are called upon by the courts to support clients with special needs (mental

health issues, substance abuse issues and family violence). The fuzzy nature of this boundary creates a challenge for the courts' client service staff who lack either the confidence or competence to identify and refer clients with special needs to these external support agencies (Grimshaw, Marchington, Rubery & Wilmott, 2011).

1.7.2 Key Assumptions

There are three key assumptions associated with the design of this study. The first concerns the structure and operation of the family law courts, the second concerns the court safety role performed by the courts' client service staff, and the third concerns the boundary-spanning behaviours of these staff that includes supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients.

The first key assumption is that the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia can be viewed as the same organization for the purposes of this research. The justification of this assumption is based upon four facts. Firstly, these two courts share the same legal jurisdiction (both are concerned with settling contested divorces and dealing with associated property and child custody matters). Secondly, the courts have the same Chief Executive Officer. Thirdly, the courts are supported by the same integrated judicial and registry service function. Fourthly the courts share the same built environment.

The second key assumption is that the family law courts are committed to having all court staff with a client contact role involved in helping to support the wellbeing and security concerns of their clients. This assumption is supported by several of the policy and procedural documents obtained from the courts that set out the courts' aims and the safety-related behavioural expectations of all of the courts' client contact staff.

The third key assumption is that the family law courts' client service staff perform boundary-spanning behaviour that makes an important contribution to client security at court. This assumption is supported by several of the policy and procedural documents obtained from the courts. These documents indicate that client service staff are regarded as the courts' public 'face', are seen to be instrumental in influencing clients' first impressions of the courts, and their services include playing an important role in channelling clients to the facilities that are available to support their security whilst they are at court and referring clients with special needs to a network of external support agencies.

The next section provides a brief summary of this chapter.

1.8 Summary

This chapter lays the basic foundations for this study report. It does this by providing background to the study introducing the research problem and the study's two research questions and the associated research propositions. The chapter discusses the study's importance and its justification. The chapter outlines the study's structure and defines the key terms used in the research report. The rationale for the choice of research methodology and the research methods used in this study is then presented. This is followed by a discussion of the delimitations of the study's scope, including those associated with its boundaries, the key assumptions underlying the study's research design and their justification.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed review of the broadly relevant and directly relevant research literature that underpins the identification of the research problem, research questions and research propositions associated with this present study.

Chapter 2 – Research Issues

This chapter reviews research literature that is broadly and directly relevant to the two core themes (client service and court security) of this study. The relationship between these two areas of literatures is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

The broad aim of the literature review is to identify key research issues that are worth researching as part of a study of the relationship between client service and court safety in the family law courts. This is illustrated and discussed in some detail in the theoretical framework presented in Section 2.4 of this chapter. The literature review also situates the present study in the relevant fields of study to which it relates. It also critiques this research literature to demonstrate how the present study makes a contribution to what is currently known about a specific sector of the service industry represented by the family law court. The present study contends that a key contribution is that it applies existing theory relating to client service and court security in a relatively under researched service context. In broad terms the present study is about the connection between what have traditionally been two quite distinct fields of study, one relating to the service industry and one relating to court security. The intersection between these two fields of study was identified as the focus in only a small number of research studies (Cooke, 2006; Cooper, 2007; Parker, 1998). More specifically the present study is also broadly about explaining the innovative manner in which the family law courts have used their boundary tier to help create a safer court environment for vulnerable clients. The present study contends that no other study takes this as its specific focus although one study was found that advocated that court security strategy needed to be reconceptualized to encompass a ‘soft systems’ approach to improving court security that is consistent with the focus of the present study (Wallace, Blackman & Rowden, 2013).

This chapter has six sections. Section 2.1 introduces a model that classifies two levels of research and theory that are broadly or directly relevant to this study. Section 2.2 introduces the first level of this model that covers three broad fields of study: security and safety research, service industry and marketing research, and organizational behavioural

research. Each of these fields of study has several associated research subthemes selected for their broad relevance to the core themes of client service and court safety. Each of these subthemes narrows the focus of the literature that is reviewed towards the four specific fields of study that are directly relevant to the present study.

Section 2.3 examines research and theory in four directly relevant fields of study: research on court security in Australia and elsewhere, research on family violence and family law in Australia, research relating to boundary roles and boundary-spanning behaviour of service employees in service organizations other than courts, and research associated with conceptualizing the relationship that exists between work commitment, job satisfaction and job performance (conceptualized as service quality and OCB) of service employees in service organizations other than the courts.

Section 2.4 introduces a broad theoretical framework derived from service industry and marketing research and court security research literature that is used to guide the choice of research methodology and research methods that are addressed in detail in Chapter 3.

Section 2.5 identifies six research propositions that are specific statements about the nature of the study context that required data to be collected in order to satisfactorily resolve the study's research problem and answer the two research questions as set out in Subsection 1.2.2.

Section 2.6 presents a brief summary of the major insights obtained from the research literature review and in particular draws out how this literature supports the present study's research problem and research questions and is related to the six research propositions. This summary illustrates the potential of the study to advance what is currently known about the courts and the public in Australia with specific reference to how the family law courts seek to utilize their client contact staff, including their registry staff, in helping to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

2.1 Modelling Broadly and Directly Relevant Fields of Study

The background presented in Subsection 1.1 briefly outlines the relationship between the present study and the national Court Safety Project. It clearly establishes that the present study's two core themes of client service and court safety have a direct relationship with the aims of national Court Safety Project that involves identifying the factors that help to

contribute to safer courts in Australia. Three broad areas of theory and research were identified to be broadly relevant to the context of the present study: client service, court security and organizational behaviour. These fields of study, illustrated in Figure 2.1 below, provide a set of concepts and theories that are broadly relevant for examining the types of factors that influence the manner and extent to which client services in the family law courts may influence their contribution to creating a safer court environment. As the model illustrates, each of these broad fields of study have a number of specific areas of research that focus the literature review presented in Section 2.2.

Four specific fields of study were identified as constituting the theories and concepts that are directly relevant to the present study’s research problem and research questions. These cover court security, family violence and family law, boundary spanning, and research on the relationship between job attitudes and job performance amongst service providers. The review of the research literature in these four fields of study helps to situate the present study and clarify its potential contribution in relation to what is currently known about the relationship between client service and court security in law courts in Australia and this literature is presented in Section 2.3 .

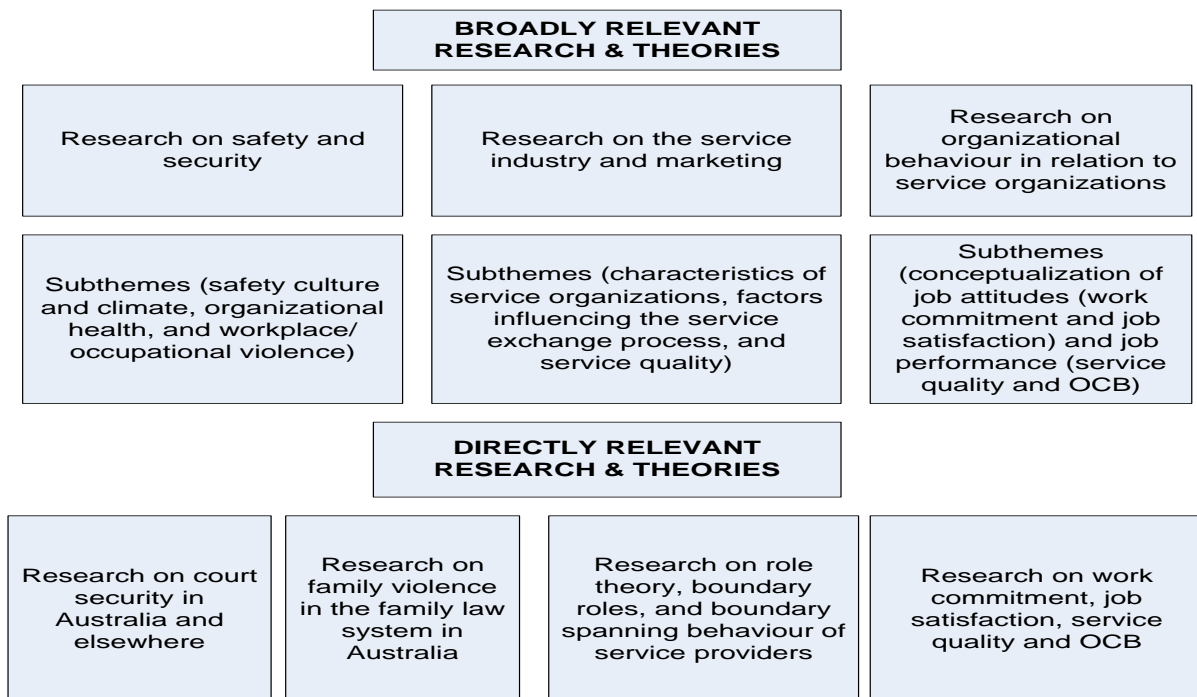


Figure 2.1 Research and Theories Relevant to a Study of Client Service and Court Safety

2.2 Broadly Related Research and Theories

The first area of research and theory that is reviewed covers the concepts of safety and security. This field of study has three subthemes that are all broadly related to the present study: research literature on the concepts of safety culture and safety climate, research on organizational health and research on workplace/occupational violence. The first subtheme of safety culture and safety climate covers some of the research literature on the parent concepts of organizational culture, organizational climate and psychological climate. Organizational culture and climate provide concepts for making sense of how the way that the family law courts' culture and climate can influence the work-related attitudes and behaviour of the courts' client service staff.

The second subtheme in the safety and security research area concerns organizational health. This concept is useful for understanding how employee-related factors (role conflict and role ambiguity) and organizational-related factors (staff turnover and absenteeism) may be seen as indicators of the health of the courts that in turn may influence the attitudes and behaviour of the family law courts' staff.

The third subtheme in the safety and security research area that is reviewed relates to workplace violence. This theme reflects the significance that client-initiated violence has for the family law courts' client service staff who face the abuse and intimidation of the courts' clients; some of whom are stressed as a consequence of being involved in a contested divorce process that is an accepted feature of the service setting.

The second area of broadly relevant research and theory that is reviewed comes from the service industry and marketing research literature. This literature has three research subthemes: service organization characteristics, factors influencing the service exchange process, and research on the conceptualization of service quality. The first subtheme relates to literature that distinguishes different types of service organizations that helps place the family law courts as a type of public sector human service organization. This literature not only provides the reasons to support the classification of the family law courts as a particular type of service organizations but also suggests the degree of confidence that can be applied to the generalization of the research results from the family law courts to other types of courts.

The second research subtheme concerns the factors that influence the service exchange process in service organizations generally and is divided into a further five

subthemes that are broadly relevant to this study (service climate, service orientation, service-related human resource management practices, servicescape, and service provider and service recipients' attitudes and behaviour). The third research subtheme coming from the service industry and marketing research area covers the literature associated with the conceptualization of service quality. This literature has an influence on the way that service quality is conceptualized in this present study that is examined in more detail in Section 2.3.

The third broad area of research that is reviewed is on organizational behaviour in service organizations. The focus is specifically on research relating to the conceptualization of variables (such as work commitment, job satisfaction and job performance amongst service providers) of interest to this study in relation to its exploration of how job attitudes amongst the courts' client service staff may influence their service performance.

2.2.1 Safety and Security Research

Central to the present study's interest in court security are the two related concepts of safety and security. Because the research literature related to these concepts is so broad, a set of specific questions was generated from the research literature to help scope this part of the literature review. There are at least three main questions that need to be considered in relation to the research literature around safety and security and their relevance for the family law courts. Firstly, how do service employees perceive their organization's safety-orientation influences their safety-related behaviour? Secondly, more generally, what are the factors that have been found to influence employee's safety-related behaviour? Thirdly, how does the research on safety and security help us to understand how client service staff in the family law courts perceive their own safety and the safety concerns of their clients whilst they are at court?

Safety Culture and Safety Climate

An examination of the research on safety culture should start with a review of the research on the concept of organizational culture (Zhang, Wiegmann, von Thaden, Sharma & Mitchell, 2002). The organizational culture research literature makes it clear that there is no accepted definition of this concept. Some researchers are of the view that because it is a concept borrowed from other disciplines (sociology, psychology and anthropology) there are such differences in conceptualization of the concept (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). One definition of organizational culture that is commonly accepted and used by other

organizational culture researchers will also be used in this study. This definition of the concept encompasses three dimensions that are claimed to relate to different levels of culture each with a differing degree of visibility. They are organizational artefacts, espoused beliefs, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 2004). This definition is intuitively appealing and is relatively simple to understand. Another cultural researcher (Antonsen, 2009) suggests that the many definitions of the concept of organizational culture simply provide different frames of reference through which researchers make sense of the conventions and actual patterns of behaviour, interaction and communication generated by organizations. Antonsen further suggests that there is one level of organizational culture that is observable and another level that is not visible that needs to be inferred through what can be observed from actual organizational behaviour. These two definitions of organizational culture provide similar frames of reference for understanding the organizational culture in the family law courts.

Court culture has been described as the beliefs and behaviours that shape the way things get done by judges, court administrators and court staff (Ostrom & Hanson, 2009). One expert on the courts in Australia observes that the culture of courts is often more about the benefits that are derived by judges from the courts than it is about the services that are provided to court users (Church, 1990). Another researcher of courts and the public in Australia suggests that while all courts are shifting their organizational culture in relation to their user communities the degree of change will vary depending upon the type of court and its judicial and administrative leadership (Parker, 1998). The Family Court of Australia is perceived to display an organizational culture that supports innovation and responsiveness to its clients (Cooke, 2006; Rhoades, 2010). This point is central to one of the six key research propositions presented in detail in Section 2.5 concerning the family law courts' service orientation.

Unlike research on organizational culture, the concept of organizational climate has a long history and has undergone several reconceptualizations. Organizational climate has a more widely accepted definition that has to do with the way that employees perceive business is being done in their organization as reflected in the organization's policies, practices and procedures (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Organizational climate is viewed by many researchers to be a manifestation of organizational culture (Antonsen, 2009; Guldenmund, 2000; Schein, 2004) that is more transient, more visible and easier to shift than organizational culture (Antonsen, 2009).

At an individual level, the concept of climate has been termed psychological climate to distinguish it from the concept of the climate of the organization (James & James, 1989). Psychological climate has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that can be used to assess how employees appraise their work environment and can be applied across different organizations, different occupations and different employee demographical characteristics (Hersberger, Lichtenstein & Knox, 1994; James & James, 1989; Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo, 1990).

The importance of the concepts of organizational culture and organizational climate to this study is in the influence that organizational culture and climate can have on employee work-related attitudes and behaviour that translates into organizational productivity, sustainability and effective performance (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo, 1990; Schneider, Brief & Guzzo, 1996; Ostroff, 1993). However, this present study is more interested in research that has extended the concept of organizational culture and organizational climate to perceptions of an organization's orientation to safety (Zohar, 1980) and its orientation to service (Schneider, 1980).

Safety culture is a concept that has emerged from the 'highly reliable industries', such as petroleum exploration and the utilities, where research studies have examined employees' safety commitment, safety knowledge and their impact on safety performance and productivity (Cooper, 2000; Cox, Tomas, Cheyne & Oliver, 1998; Harvey, Eroads, Bolan, Cox, Kennedy, & Gregory, 2002). It is noted, however, that there is an acknowledged disagreement amongst researchers as to how safety culture should be defined and whether or not safety culture is inherently a different concept to safety climate (Zhang, Wiegmann, von Thaden, Sharma & Mitchell, 2002). Aside from the somewhat distracting debate about the conceptualization and measurement of safety culture the literature does reveal a number of relevant research issues about employees' safety behaviour that are relevant to this study. These include how perceptions of trust, leadership, management action and organizational capacity for safety improvement can influence employees' safety-related behaviour (Cox and Cox, 1996; Cox, Tomas, Cheyne & Oliver, 1998; Ginsburg, Norton, Casebeer, & Lewis, 2005; Hughes & Lapane, 2006; Jeffcott, Pidgeon, Weyman & Walls, 2006). All of these issues are broadly applicable to a high risk area of public sector employment such as the family law courts where all client contact staff are responsible for supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of a difficult and often dysfunctional client group. This issue relates to

the second of the present study's six research propositions presented in Section 2.5 concerning the courts' difficult client group.

The safety climate research also raises relevant research issues about the factors shaping employees' safety-related behaviour. One is the finding that employee commitment to safety is far preferable to a reliance on compliance and bureaucratic control (Barling & Hutchinson, 2000; Cox & Flin, 1998). Another is the importance of supervisory direction and leadership on employees' safety-related behaviour (Clarke & Ward, 2006; Zohar, 2003; Zohar & Luria, 2005; Mearns, Whitaker & Flin, 2001). A third issue that is of direct relevance to a study of court safety is the relationship that exists between organizational citizenship behaviour and safety-related behaviour (Gyeke & Salminen, 2005; Hofmann, Morgenson & Gerras, 2003; Zohar, 2008). The relationship extends the traditional focus on task performance to encompass the importance of contextual performance for safety-related behaviour. A fourth contribution of the safety climate research arises through the efforts of various researchers to develop a theoretical framework that links safety climate, safety knowledge, safety commitment and safety performance (Flin, Mearns, O'Connor & Bryden, 2000; Neal & Griffin, 2002; Smith-Crowe, Burke & Landis, 2003). A final issue on safety climate that is relevant to the present study is the finding that a fear of an accident emerges as a major influence on employee behaviour; this is also reflected in workplace violence research literature. In safety climate research the issue of concern is about how the experience of an accident, either personally or vicariously, can influence an employee's perception of safety climate and how this in turn influences their safety-related behaviour (Clarke, 2006). The research issue relevant to the present study pertains to how the fear of future workplace violence can impact on an employee's wellbeing and ability to cope with other incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace (Mueller & Tschan, 2011).

The next part of this section covers a review of research literature on the concept of organizational health and illustrates how this concept is broadly relevant to the present study.

Organizational Health

Research on the concept of organizational health has close links with the research on organizational culture and safety culture (Cox & Cox, 1996; Cox & Fin, 1998). The organizational health research literature indicates that organizational health, viewed as a multidimensional concept, encompasses both employer and employee-driven behaviour that

is oriented towards effective job performance (both task and contextual) and organizational performance that requires effective coping capability and can influence both the wellbeing of the employee and the success of the organization (Golaszewski, Hoebbel, Crossley, Foley & Dorn, 2008; Tetrick & Campbell-Quick, 2011; Wolff, 2003; Orvik & Axelsson, 2012; Patnaik, 2011). Service industry research and organizational behaviour research also indicates that a relationship, albeit a complex one, exists between work commitment, job satisfaction, staff attendance and staff turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000; Lambert & Hogan, 2009; Safie, 1998; Somers, 2009) that can indirectly influence organizational performance.

The relevance of the concept of organizational health to this study relates to its use for conceptualizing and measuring the health of individual employees and the absence of role stressors (role conflict, role ambiguity, emotional exhaustion, job insecurity) and the overall health of the organization (staff turnover, absenteeism, occupational injury rates) (Wolff, 2003; Patnaik, 2011; Shaw & Delery, 2003). Some indicators of organizational health are selected for presentation in the quantitative results section of this report in Chapter 4 and are used to help extend the interpretation of the descriptive statistics obtained from survey respondents amongst the courts' client service staff and from the demographic statistics derived from interview and focus group participants.

The next part of this section reviews research literature on workplace violence and its relevance to this study.

Workplace Violence

Consensus about the definition of workplace violence is absent in the research literature. The lack of consistency in definition has led to some confusion and inconsistent results in the research literature (Barling, 1996). Nonetheless, a definition of the term workplace violence taken from the International Labour Organization that is suitable for this study is “any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, injured in the course of, or as a direct result of, his or her work” (Privitera, 2011, p. 6). The type of workplace violence research that is of direct relevance to a study of court safety focuses on the concept of “client-initiated-violence” (Mayhew, 2000, p. xi) that falls into one of the four levels of workplace violence that is

derived from typologies developed by the main occupational health and safety organizations in the United Kingdom and in the United States (Wassell, 2009).

The research on workplace violence indicates that the prevalence of this form of violence is significant, that it is growing in magnitude, and that it occurs in a consistent pattern across the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The research also indicates that some public sector workers are amongst the occupations at highest risk of violence, are often exposed to a frequent but low level of client aggression, and that the fear of future violence is key to the impact of workplace violence on employee wellbeing (Barling, 1996; Mayhew, 2000; Mayhew & McCarthy, 2005; Mueller & Tschan, 2011).

The family law courts figure strongly amongst public sector service organizations that have frequent face-to-face contact with clients who are stressed and who may be suffering from substance abuse or mental health issues. As a consequence, client aggression is an everyday experience for many of the courts' client contact staff (Bryant, 2009a).

The research on workplace violence indicates that the causes of workplace violence are many and varied and may arise from the service exchange process and from the personal characteristics of the clients (Mayhew, 2000). The impact of workplace violence can be related to a variety of factors such as the nature of the violence, its intensity, whether workplace conventions dictate hiding emotions, whether the worker has little influence over workplace safety or has low status, and whether there is a lack of support from supervisors and managers (Rugulies, Christensen, Borritz, Villadsen, Bultmann & Kristensen, 2007). All of these factors apply in varying degrees to client service staff in the family law courts.

Finally, in terms of the consequences of workplace violence there are a number of research findings of relevance to this study. The first is that the experience of workplace violence is complicated by the fact that individuals neither experience nor respond to the effects of workplace violence in the same way (Barling, 1996). The second is that the fear of future violence has been found to be a predictor of work-related behaviour (such as turnover intention) and of physical and psychological health impairment (Barling, 1996; Mayhew, 2000; Mueller & Tschan, 2011; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997). The third is that a safety compliance mindset can lead to client-initiated-violence being normalized (Mayhew & McCarthy, 2005). Finally, workplace violence research has found that constant verbal aggression from clients can lower the threshold where inappropriate behaviour from others

including co-workers can have a severe impact on the affected employee due to the cumulative effect of the stress arising from the violence (Mayhew & McCarthy, 2005). All of these findings have a degree of resonance in the experiences of client service staff who are known to deal with difficult clients and complex situations in the family law courts (Family Law Courts, 2009). This research literature suggests that client-initiated violence is a research issue that should be explored in relation to the relationship between client service and court safety in the family law courts.

The next part of this section reviews research literature coming from the service industry and marketing research fields.

2.2.2 Service Industry and Marketing Research

There are three subthemes in the service industry and marketing research literature that are of broad relevance to this study: service organization characteristics, factors influencing the service exchange process, and the conceptualization of service quality. The literature on each subtheme will be examined in terms of its relevance to this study. Given the breadth of the service industry and marketing research that is relevant to the present study, a set of questions that helps scope the research literature was generated from the research literature.

Service Organization Characteristics

Three questions help focus the review of the research on service organization characteristics. Firstly, what are the benefits of classifying different types of service organizations? Secondly, what are the main criteria that are used to classify different types of service organizations? Thirdly, how does the process of classifying service organizations by type help us to better understand courts in general and the family law courts in particular? Research around these questions helps to situate the family law courts as a unique mix of public sector service organization and judicial institution.

The literature identifies a number of research benefits associated with classifying organizational systems including being able to make comparisons between different types of organization, being able to help generalize research results between organizational types, and being able to identify research problems that may be neglected in particular types of service organizations (Webb, 1971). Several of these benefits, particularly the last one, apply to this

study because it focuses on a neglected organizational type in terms of main stream service industry research.

The literature on service organization characteristics highlights that there is a debate about which criterion should be used to classify different types of service organizations (Hall, Haas & Johnson, 1967). One criterion frequently used in the research is the nature of the customer/client being served. This can be defined in terms of whether the service organization serves the public-at-large or a distinct group of clients (Hall, Haas & Johnson, 1967; Mills & Margulies, 1980; van der Hart, 1990). Customers/clients can be further refined in terms of whether they want the service they receive and whether they pay for this service (Alford, 2009; Neshein, 1990). More commonly, a number of researchers have focussed on the nature and extent of the interaction between the customers/clients and the service employees who represent the service organization (Chase, 1978; Kellogg & Chase, 1995; van der Hart, 1990). The most encompassing set of criterion used to classify service organizations comprises the intangible nature of the service, the extent and frequency of the face-to-face interaction between customers/clients and service employees, the dynamic nature of the service, the degree of client service orientation of the service organization, and the simultaneous creation and consumption of the service which often occurs out of the sight of front line supervisors and managers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006; Vargo, Lusch & Morgan, 2006).

A model for classifying service organizations in terms of how they are structured to facilitate service delivery is offered by Schneider and Bowen (1995) in their concept of three tiers or layers of service operations. The first layer is the 'Customer Tier' that encompasses issues about who the customer/client is and defines the customers/clients' needs and service expectations. The second layer is the 'Boundary Tier' that encompasses issues such as the intangibility of the service, the level and medium of contact with customers/clients and the role played by those who work between the service organization and the customers/clients. The third layer involves the 'Coordination and Integration Tier' that encompasses the service creation and delivery process. This model makes a contribution to the present study by virtue of its simplicity and because it explicitly acknowledges the importance of the boundary-spanning nature of service employees who deal directly with clients. The boundary role and boundary-spanning behaviour of family law courts' client service staff is a key proposition

associated with this study and the relevant research literature associated with this concept is reviewed in Section 2.3 of this chapter.

Some service industry research on public sector service organizations puts forward the view that the term 'client' is more appropriate than the term 'customer' in public sector service organizations; so 'client' is the term used throughout this report (Alford, 2009). The view is also put in the research literature that whether the client wants the service or not will influence the degree of their cooperation and compliance and whether clients may actually seek to disrupt the service exchange process; all of which contribute to the complexity of managing the creation and delivery of services (Alford, 2009). In addition, some of the research literature makes the point that most public sector service organizations lack the incentives to be client service oriented. This is thought to influence the way that such organizations structure their service operations (van der Hart, 1990). Challenging this view, research on the courts and the public in Australia suggests there is some evidence to indicate that most courts in Australia are moving to be more client service oriented (Cooke, 2006; Parker, 1998). The fact that courts in general are service organizations does not appear to be in dispute. What is not clear is what type of service organization best represents the family law courts?

Some research on the classification of service organizations suggests that service organizations can be classified in terms of the technology they use in service delivery (Harvey, 1968; Perrow, 1967 as cited in Mills and Margulies, p. 258). An extension of this perspective is presented in relation to the technology used by social service organizations. This research suggests that human service organizations are characterized by the fact that people are the raw material affected by the service exchange process that fundamentally alters the state and wellbeing of their client (Jones & May, 1995). Examples include schools, hospitals and family relationship centres. A key proposition of this present study is that the family law courts represent a unique blend of judicial institution and public sector human service organization and that this influences their conscious service orientation.

The next part of this section reviews research literature on the factors that have been found to influence the service exchange process.

Factors Influencing the Service Exchange Process

Five factors that influence the service exchange process that are broadly relevant to this study are service climate, service orientation, service-related human resource management practices, the service setting, and the attitudes and behaviour manifested by service providers and service recipients during the service exchange process. The research literature in each of these areas is reviewed to highlight their broad relevance to this study. The question used to focus the literature review is the extent to which the literature helps to explain the types of factors that may influence the delivery of the family law courts' client service function.

Service Climate

There are three aspects relating to service climate research that are broadly relevant to this study. These relate to the definition of the concept, its causes and its consequences.

The concept of service climate is defined as “employees’ perceptions of the events, practices, and procedures and the kinds of behaviours that get rewarded, supported and expected in the service setting” (Schneider, 1990, p. 384). This definition can be extended to encompass the view that clients hold about a service organization. It has been described as “the sense that people who work for and/or come into contact with an organization have with regard to the service quality emphasis of the organization” (Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000, p. 21). Both of these definitions place significant emphasis on how service employees view their organization’s emphasis on service quality that is the third subtheme explored in this section of the chapter.

The service industry research literature explores a wide range of factors thought to influence a service organization’s service climate. Human resource management practices have been found to be a necessary but not sufficient condition to enhance the service climate (Rogg, Schmidt, Shull, & Schmitt, 2001). Consequently, service organizations are encouraged by researchers to also focus on other management factors such as the quality of service leadership, the features of the service setting, service recovery arrangements and service relationship management (Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhard & Holcombe, 2000; Schneider, White & Paul, 1998).

Some researchers have found that a positive relationship exists between specific service boundary conditions (the closeness of the service organization’s relationship to their

clients, the relevance of the service to clients' needs and the frequency of client contact) and the influence that service climate has on clients' satisfaction (Dietz, Pugh & Wiley, 2004; Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010; Mayer, Ehrhard & Schneider, 2009). Other service industry researchers have focussed on the relationship between service climate and service employees' work-related attitudes and behaviour (organizational commitment, affective commitment and job satisfaction) and the effect this has on client attitudes and behaviour (Paulin, Ferguson & Bergeron, 2006). The findings from these studies suggest that a positive relationship does exist between service employees and client attitudes that influences perceptions of service quality and client satisfaction (Yoon, Beatty & Suh, 2001). This relationship is the last factor to be reviewed in this section.

The rationale for service organizations to focus on their service climate relates to the belief that there is a direct relationship between an organization's concern for its clients and its concern for its service employees (Schneider, 1980; Schneider, 1990). An associated assumption is that the nature and level of a service organization's support for its service employees effects the quality of the services they deliver and this in turn influences consumer behaviour and service organization outcomes (Bowen & Waldman, 1999; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991; Schneider & Bowen, 1993, 1995; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000; Tornow & Wiley, 1991, Yoon, Beatty & Suh, 2001). The concept of the 'service-profit-chain' emerges as a view about how service organizations in the private sector need to manage all of the factors that drive firm profitability and success. However, given the influence that service employees are perceived to have on client satisfaction, service quality and service organization outcomes (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997), the research indicates that one of the most important factors to be managed is service employee satisfaction. Determining how the family law courts' client service staff view the courts' service climate was an important research issue for this study and this issue was used in shaping the interviews with the courts' client service staff.

Service Orientation

This study's interest in the concept of service orientation as a factor that influences the service exchange process arises from several sources. One is a speech on the consumer's perspective on courts that makes it clear that court users' interests are often subordinate to those of judges, court staff and lawyers in the way that many courts operate (Church, 1990).

In addition, the results of research on the courts and the public in Australia shows that while all the courts studied were seen to be taking steps to be more client oriented there was no one approach that lent itself to being described as best practice (Parker, 1998). Consequently, an assessment to determine if the family law courts are client oriented is a key purpose of this study and is one of the research propositions presented in Section 2.5 of this chapter.

The research literature on client service orientation supports the notion that service orientation is conceptualized and measured as an individual employee level concept as well as an organizational level concept (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Homburg, Hoyer, & Fassnacht, 2002; Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005). At the individual employee level service orientation is defined as a set of attitudes and behaviours that effects the quality of the interaction between service employees and clients (Lytle et al., 1998 as cited by Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005, p. 500) including how responsive service employees are in taking action on clients' needs (Daniel & Darby, 1997; Williams & Attaway, 1996 as cited by Kim & Ok, 2010, p. 36). At the organization level service orientation relates to the policies, practices and procedures intended to support and reward service-giving behaviour that helps to create and deliver superior service quality (Lytle et al., 1998 as cited in Lytle & Timmerman, 2006, p. 136).

The literature indicates there is some inconsistency in the way that researchers relate the concept of service orientation at the organization level to the concepts of organizational culture and climate. Some define service orientation as a facet of an organization's culture (Brady & Cronin, 2001), while others define it as part of the organization's service climate (Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005) and some define it as part of both (Homburg, Hoyer & Fassnacht, 2002).

One thing that does seem clear from the literature is that service orientation, at the employee level and/or at the organization level, is perceived to influence service employees' performance, the service quality they deliver and the clients' satisfaction with the services provided (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Dean, 2004; Grizzle, Zablah, Brown, Mowen & Lee, 2009; Kim & Ok, 2010; Rafaeli, Ziklik & Doucet, 2008; Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005). However, one study suggests that service orientation is a discretionary behaviour that is not part of the employee's formal job description (Rafaeli, Ziklik & Doucet, 2008; Saura, Contri & Taulet, 2005).

On the basis of research on the Family Court of Australia (Rhoades, 2010) there seems little doubt that from its inception this court has been seen to be very client service oriented. What is not known however, is how client service oriented the family law courts' client service staff are and how the family law courts' own conscious service orientation is perceived to influence their behaviour. Determining the link between the courts' service orientation and the work-related attitudes and service-related behaviour of the family law courts' client service staff is one of the purposes of this study and is one of the research propositions identified in Section 2.5.

Service-oriented Human Resource Management Practices

The research literature supports the view that a service organization's service-related human resource management (HRM) practices influence service employees' attitudes and behaviour, their service quality and their clients' satisfaction (Schneider, 1980; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider, 1990; Schneider & Bowen, 1993, 1995). However, the relationship is complex as some researchers have found an important link between the organization's service climate and its HRM practices, as well as with its service employees' attitudes and behaviour, their service quality and their client's satisfaction (Bowen & Waldman, 1999; Schneider, White & Paul, 1998; Rogg, Schmidt, Shull & Schmitt, 2001). A strategic perspective of a firm's HRM practices suggests that there is also an important link between a firm's organizational culture and climate, its HRM systems, its service employees' attitudes and behaviour and the firm's service outcomes (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo, 1990; Ostroff & Bowen, 2000; Wasti & Onder, 2009).

Some researchers have suggested that service organizations should do everything necessary to drive service outcomes including ensuring their service-related HRM practices are aligned to and support their service employees' performance (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart & Holcombe, 2000).

The research indicates that HRM practices can exert an influence on service employees in different ways. Examples are through their self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996), their employment status (tenured and non-tenured employment) (Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991), perceived procedural fairness (Bowen, Gilliland & Folger, 1999), the delivery of tailored staff training (Ellinger, Elmadag & Ellinger, 2007; Torrow &

Wiley, 1991) and building knowledge, skill and motivation (Liao, Toya, Lepak & Hong, 2009).

A key assertion associated with this present study is that the way that the family law courts supports their client service staff through their service-related human resource management practices can influence staff attitudes and behaviour and may also affect how clients perceive the courts' support services.

Servicescape

The concept of servicescape is a marketing research construct that is generally understood to refer to the physical environment in which the service exchange process occurs and the social aspects of this environment that promote interaction between clients and service providers (Bitner, 1992, 2000). Numerous studies have been published in the marketing research literature on the effects of the service environment on client behaviour (Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003). What is of interest to this study is how the concept of servicescape applies to courts in general and to the family law courts in particular.

Early research into the physical dimension of servicescape demonstrates that it has a direct and indirect influence on clients' satisfaction (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005) and that it may influence the service employees who work in the same environment (Baker, Berry & Parasuraman, 1988 as cited in Bitner, 1992, p. 57). Later research on servicescape indicates that the physical environment does influence service workers' attitudes and behaviour and the effects may vary according to the specific facilities in the physical environment and the nature and frequency of the contact between service employees and their clients (Parish, Berry & Lam, 2008).

Research on the attributes of servicescapes demonstrates that the visual elements dominate other physical attributes (Wagner, 2000), that the physical attributes are inextricably tied up with the social aspects (Cassidy, 1997 as cited in Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003, p. 448) and that the client's evaluation of the servicescape influences their evaluation of other aspects of service quality (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005). In some service organizations security and safety attributes are regarded as important dimensions of the physical environment and are thought to influence client satisfaction with the services received (Enz, 2009; Parish, Berry & Lam, 2008).

The research on court security in Australia indicates that those who design courts tend to place more emphasis on the physical aspects of court design than on the psychological aspects (Kennedy & Tait, 1999). The literature on architectural psychology suggests that this issue is under-researched and under-theorized in Australia and elsewhere (Missingham, Heywood & Brawn, 2002). Research on the courts and the public in Australia indicates that some court users and some court staff still feel insecure whilst they are at court and are concerned about threats of physical and psychological violence (Parker, 1998). Recently many courts have made significant efforts to ensure that to increase the safety of those working and using courts in Australia no one can enter a court without passing through security screening equipment (Sarre & Prenzler, 2010).

The service industry research literature on the concept of servicescape is very relevant to a study of client service and court safety. The present study used data on the courts' servicescape to explore how court users and court staff may view the physical, psychological and social aspects of the courts' registries from a service and security perspective.

The next part of this section reviews research literature that examines the factors that influence service employees' work-related attitudes and behaviours. This is the fifth and final factor that is a major influence on the service exchange process that is broadly relevant to the present study.

Service Employees' Work-related Attitudes and Behaviour

One of the key research propositions associated with this study is the view that the family law courts are a unique blend of judicial institution and public sector human service organization. We also know from the service industry research literature that courts, in general, provide services that are intangible in nature and the service recipients are cognitively engaged in the service delivery process (Lovelock, 1983 as cited in Schneider & White, 2004, p. 71). Because the services provided by the family law courts involve a contested divorce, we also know that the family law courts' clients may not always participate willingly in the service exchange process (Bryant, 2009a). We also know that these clients do not pay the full cost of the services they receive so their compliance with court processes may be difficult to manage (Alford, 2009). We also know that most courts in Australia are moving to be more client oriented (Parker, 1998) and that the Family Law Court is already thought of as being quite client focussed (Cooke, 2006).

What we still need to find out from the service industry and marketing research literature is more about the nature of the relationship that exists between service providers and their clients that might help to explain the dynamics of the relationship between the family law courts' client service staff and the courts' clients.

Research has established that a positive relationship exists between the satisfaction of service employees and their service quality and a relationship also exists between service quality and client satisfaction (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Bowen & Walden, 1999; Kehoe & Dicketer, 2006; Pugh, Dietz & Brooks, 2002; Yee, Yeung & Cheng, 2008). The research also indicates that service providers' self-efficacy, or capacity to service clients, also influences clients' perceptions of service quality (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Schneider, 1980; Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991; Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000) as does service employees' perceptions of their organization's performance (Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Tornow & Wiley, 1991).

The relative importance of the relationship between service employees' job satisfaction, their service quality and their clients' satisfaction with the service exchange process is further extended by research that finds that job satisfaction amongst service employees is also positively related to their organizational citizenship behaviour. This relationship is shown to influence service employees' job performance and their clients' perceptions of the service they receive (Bienstock, DeMoranville & Smith, 2003; Payne & Webber, 2006; Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, & Niles-Jolly, 2005; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart, & Holcombe, 2000). The research also indicates that a service organization's service climate and service-oriented HRM practices influence service employees' commitment and job satisfaction that in turn has a positive influence on their service quality (Brooks, Wiley & Hause, 2006; Chuang & Liao, 2010; Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010; Little & Dean, 2006; Yoon, Beatty & Suh, 2001). This literature is part of the evidence that supports the contention that organizational commitment and job satisfaction represent important job attitudes that influence the quality of the services and should be tested amongst the family law courts' client service staff. This research was used in the design of the survey methodology used in the present study that is discussed in Chapter 3.

Some of the service industry research models a linear relationship between service employees' job satisfaction and commitment, their service-related behaviour, service quality,

client satisfaction and loyalty, and firm profitability/effectiveness (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997; Allen & Grisaffe, 2001; Wiley, 1996). Other researchers highlight the existence of exogenous variables that may lead to this relationship not being linear or predictable and perhaps reciprocal in nature (Dean, 2004; Mayer, Ehrhard & Schneider, 2009).

The service operations management literature explores the potential for clients to become committed to, and involved in, the service exchange process. The notions of client participation and citizenship behaviour are associated with a school of thought that views clients as human resources (Yi, Natarajan & Gong, 2010). Other researchers simply extend the concept of organizational citizenship behaviour to clients (Johnson & Rapp, 2010; Groth, 2005). The research on client citizenship behaviour leads to consideration of the factors that facilitate client involvement in the co-production (Alford, 2009) or co-creation of services (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2006; Vargo, Lusch & Morgan, 2006). In the family law courts the rise of the self-represented client and the enhancement of information technology that enables all of the courts' clients to lodge their applications for divorce on-line and obtain information on the courts' processes have increased the degree to which the courts' clients are involved in the service exchange process. This trend is consistent with research that suggests that service organizations vary in the degree to which they are prepared to permit clients an involvement in the service delivery process (Bove, Pervan, Beatty & Shiu, 2009).

In contrast to the model of the 'positive service employee' and the 'positive client' there is also research that focuses on the dysfunctional employee (Patterson & Baron, 2010; Porath, Macinnis & Folkes, 2011) and the dysfunctional client (Fish, Grove, Harris, Keeffe, Daunt, Russell-Bennett & Wirtz, 2010). The research indicates that dysfunctional clients can be a source of work-related stress and emotional exhaustion for service employees and a source of high staff turnover (Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005; Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Poddar & Madupalli, 2012). The research suggests that client abuse of service employees stems from society's promotion of the notion of consumer sovereignty, the weak position of service employees and the higher social status of consumers over service employees (Korczyński & Evans, 2013). Other research highlights how a negative service exchange may spill over into subsequent clients and service employee relationships (Groth & Grandey, 2012). Some of the research on dysfunctional clients makes suggestions about how service managers can

better support their service employees in coping with dysfunctional clients (Gong, Yi & Choi, 2013).

A key issue that emerges from consideration of research on service provider attitudes and behaviour is that the relationship between service providers and service recipients is reciprocal rather than unidirectional (Dean, 2004). This issue is later shown to be important when considering industry best practice and the lack of consideration given to the impact of court staff dealing with dysfunctional court clients (National Centre for State Courts, 2013).

The Study of Service Quality

The present study is concerned with whether the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to helping to create a safer court environment and the types of factors that appear to influence their service performance. Consequently one of the research issues confronting the present study is how should service performance be defined and conceptualized in the context of the family law courts client service staff? Based upon the research literature on job performance that is reviewed in Subsection 2.2.3 it was decided that service quality should represent the 'in-role' or 'task' component of service performance for the family law courts' client service staff (Sonntag & Frese, 2002).

The focus of this part of the literature review is on research that is broadly related to the development of the concept of quality in the context of the service industry. Research literature on the concept of quality indicates that there is no universally accepted definition of quality and that definitions of quality differ according to circumstances and industry (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). The concept of quality has been of interest to researchers and academics for longer than the concept of service quality has been a field of study. As the importance of the service industry grew from the mid-1940s onward the domain of service quality studies has grown to a point where there are now several different approaches to defining service quality. These approaches include the concept of technical service quality (objective, tangible aspects of service quality) and a functional or 'user-based' concept of service quality (related to the customers' perceptions of the quality expected and received)(Reeves & Bednar, 1994; Schneider & White, 2004).

The service quality research literature identifies a number of other characteristics of the service quality concept. First, service quality is generally regarded as a multi-dimensional or a multi-attribute construct (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Gilmore, 2001; Gronroos, 2001; Kang

& James, 2004; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985, 1988). Second, it appears to be generally accepted that there are two main schools of thought about the dimensions of service quality. One school of thought is the 'American School' that adheres to a functional dimensions approach to defining service quality that is best exemplified by the model of SERVQUAL developed and refined by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985, 1988). The other is the 'European School' of thought that adheres to a functional and technical approach to defining the dimensions of service quality introduced by researchers such as Gronroos (1990) and Gummesson (1992) as cited in Kang and James (2004, p. 266). Third, it appears to be generally accepted that the study of service quality involves a range of different disciplines (marketing, operations management, human resource management, psychology, economics) and that over time there has been a trend towards a more inter-disciplinary and integrated approach to the study of service quality evident in the service industry and marketing research literature (Collier, 1990; Dean, 2004).

There are a number of reasons given by service industry and marketing researchers as to why the concept of service quality is so central to the study of services and the service industry. First, service quality is identified as one of the most meaningful constructs for explaining or predicting customer behaviour (Yoon & Suh, 2003). Second, the intangible nature of service provision is thought to make the conceptualization of service quality more critical and the task of its measurement more complex (Cook & Verma, 2002). Third, the interdisciplinary nature of the study of service quality has led to a number of different explanations about how service excellence is achieved. One is the concept of the 'service profit chain' that links internal service support systems to employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Heskett, Jones, Loveman & Sasser, 1994; Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). A second involves the service organization's service climate and human resource management practices and links these concepts to service quality and to customer satisfaction (Schneider, 1980, 1990; Schneider, White & Paul, 1998). A third focuses on customer relationship management (Narver & Slater, 1990; Rust & Zahorik, 1993; Zeithaml, 2000 as cited in Dean, 2004, p. 333). A fourth focuses on the role of the servicescape in the provision of service excellence (Bitner, 1992, 2000; Parish et al., 2008). The research literature is much less clear about the actual links that exist between organizational variables (such as HRM practices and service climate) and customer variables (such as customer satisfaction and customer buying behaviour). One study's findings point to the inherent complexity in many

of the claimed relationships, and the existence of non-linearity in many of these relationships (Dean, 2004). Nonetheless these theories proved to be useful for developing a theoretical framework for the present study (see Section 2.4).

Irrespective of the different approaches taken in the study of service quality one of the recurrent themes in the research literature is that many researchers appear to confine themselves to the ‘functional attributes’ approach to conceptualizing and measuring service quality and to the use of the attributes of the SERVQUAL model (Cook & Verma, 2002; Kang & James, 2004; Yoon & Suh, 2003) irrespective of the type of service industry segment being studied (such as call centres, hospitality and e-services) (Dean & Rainnie, 2004; Jaiswal, 2008; Ladhori, 2009; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004; Sousa & Voss, 2006).

The next part of the literature review on service quality describes some of the models developed by researchers to measure the various dimensions of service quality. This research literature supports an argument about why the ‘functional attributes approach’ and SERVQUAL was appropriate for use in the present study.

2.2.3 Organizational Behavioural Research

This Subsection of the literature review covers the third domain of research that is broadly relevant to the present study. This domain covers job attitude research, work commitment and job satisfaction research, and research on job performance. The research literature on job attitudes sets the broad theoretical context for the consideration of the research literature on the two attitudinal constructs deemed to be the most relevant for this study: work commitment and job satisfaction. The research literature on job performance is examined because it is one of the most significant outcomes studied in job attitudinal research and because it sets the broad theoretical context for considering the way that job performance should be conceptualized and measured for client service staff in the family law courts.

Job Attitudes Research

The research literature on job attitudes establishes how job attitudes are defined and how different conceptualizations of job attitudes have emerged from the research that has a bearing on the way that specific job attitudes such as work commitment and job satisfaction, are conceptualized and measured.

There is no universally agreed definition of attitude in the research literature but a popular expression of it is derived from the work of Eagly and Chaiken, 1993 as cited in Judge & Kammeyer-Muller (2012, p. 343). Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p. 16) state “we assert attitudes are manifested in cognitive, affective and behavioural responses and formed on the basis of cognitive, affective and behavioural processes”. The attitudinal research suggests there are two types of attitude. The first type is a general attitude towards physical objectives and the second type is an attitude towards performing specific behaviours with respect to an object or target (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Attitudes are thought to be strongest when the individual forming the attitude bases the attitude on behaviourally relevant information and has direct experience of the attitude object (Ajzen & Fishbein 1977; Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Research evidence indicates that individual behaviour in a particular context tends to be influenced not only by attitudes but also by a wide range of other factors (Glasman & Albarracin, 2006). Contemporary attitudinal research reflects the view that an attitude is a “complex, multidimensional construct comprising cognitive, affective and conative components” that is influenced by personal dispositions and situational factors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p. 177).

The attitude research literature also reflects a debate about the dominance of the cognitive versus the affective basis of job attitudes and the view that these factors may actually work together to influence how employees view their jobs (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012).

In organizational behaviour research, job attitudes are important variables because jobs are an important input to the production process and because workers derive part of their social identity from their work and the status attached to their jobs (Hogg & Terry, 2001). Job attitude also matters because measures of job attitude can be used to predict important work-related behaviours such as absenteeism, turnover and job performance. The three most commonly studied job attitudes in organizational behaviour research are organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012).

Debate in job attitude research includes whether behaviour shapes attitude or vice versa (Judge, Bono, Thoresen & Patton, 2001), the multidimensional nature of the attitudinal construct, the assumption that all three components (cognitive, affective and behavioural) must be consistent with one another, and the tendency of attitudinal researchers to ignore the

affective antecedents in employees' evaluation of their jobs and the impact of episodic events that happen on the job when measuring job attitudes (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012).

The dominant model for linking job attitudes to work-related behaviour is the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This theory includes the notion that intention to perform different kinds of behaviour can be predicted with a high degree of accuracy from attitudes towards those behaviours, subjective norms (prior experience) and perceived behavioural controls. Important considerations associated with the theory of planned behaviour include the idea that the contribution of the affective and cognitive components of job attitude will vary with the attitudinal object as well as be influenced by individual differences and situational factors. It also includes the idea that the level of specificity at which job attitudes are measured should be consistent with the level of specificity at which the behavioural objects are also measured (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein 2005; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). This research issue is discussed again in Subsection 2.3 in relation to the relationship between job attitudes and job performance.

Research on job attitudes has also found that a range of other factors influence behavioural intentions. These include a job's characteristics, organizational practices (particularly those associated with the concept of organizational justice) and a manager's leadership style (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). The research on specific types of job attitudes (such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction) has found that there is an important association between the job attitudes and employee's withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism and turnover (Huang, 2011; Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009). These findings are of general relevance to this study's second research question that seeks to identify the factors that influence the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff. Job attitude research also has a direct bearing on the fifth key research proposition set out in Section 2.5 concerning the relationship between job attitudes and job performance amongst the courts' client service staff and their boundary spanning safety-related behaviour directed towards supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

Work Commitment Research

Work commitment is one of the most widely studied job attitudes in service industry research and this literature is therefore of broad relevance to the present study. The review of the research literature and theory on work commitment is covered in two parts. This first part

reviews commitment research literature from 1960 through to 1990. This is thought to be a period that roughly covers the first stage of the introduction and elaboration of the construct of work commitment. The second part of the review of research on work commitment is presented in Section 2.3 and covers the later stages of the evolution and augmentation of the concept of organizational commitment (Reichers & Schneider, 1990). A historical perspective of research on the concept of organizational commitment suggests that this literature can be divided into three time periods that approximately follow the steps in the evolution of this concept (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009). This general approach to reviewing the historical evolution of a construct is consistent with Weick's history of sense making in organizations and Kuhn's study of scientific research paradigms (Kuhn, 1996; Weick, 1995).

This part of the literature review aims to understand the origins of the concept of commitment in its everyday sense, and the evolution of commitment as a variable of considerable interest to organizational behaviour research. It is of broad relevance to the present study.

The first contributions to the concept of commitment concern the meaning and significance of people identifying with an organization. This involves a range of ideas including employees adopting the goals of organizations as if they are their own (Kegan, 1958), the process of people accepting organizational influence (compliance, identification and internalization) (Kelman, 1958), the degree to which an individual's self-image includes organizational values (Gouldner, 1960), differentiation between making a commitment (acting in a certain manner) and being committed (being in such a state) (Becker, 1960) and a sociological perspective of the process by which an individual is bound to a social system through continuance, cohesion and control (Kanter, 1968, 1972).

The term commitment in everyday use is defined, from a psychological perspective, to mean "the pledge or binding of the individual to behavioural acts" (Kiesler, 1971, p. 31). The act of commitment is described as variable; where the greater the commitment the greater the effort and result, and where the greater the commitment to some behaviour the more difficult it is to change the behaviour, particularly if the commitment is consistent with one's personal beliefs (Kiesler, 1971).

One of the first studies of commitment to an organization defines the concept of commitment as the “perceived utility of continued participation in the employing organization”(Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972, p. 558). A more comprehensive definition of organizational commitment is “the strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). In this definition commitment is characterized by a strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization, a willingness of the individual to expend considerable effort on the organization’s behalf, and a desire by the individual to maintain membership in the organization (Porter et al., 1974).

Commitment research in the 1970s and 1980s introduced a variety of different ways to conceptualize and measure organizational commitment. The three components (identification, involvement and membership) of the model introduced by Porter et al., (1974) is reflected in other similar three-component models; such as the identification, involvement and loyalty in the model introduced by Buchanan (1974) and the organizational commitment scale introduced by Cook & Wall (1980). A growing body of commitment research at this time supports the view that organizational commitment is strongly related to the intent and desire of employees to remain a member of their organization (Porter et al., 1974; Steers, 1977). The rapidly expanding commitment research suggests that the reasons why the commitment construct important is because it is intuitively appealing, it aids understanding of the more general psychological processes by which people choose to identify with and remain a member of an organization and it is a fairly reliable predictor of certain work-related behaviours, especially turnover (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

An important contribution to the debate about the conceptualization of work commitment at this time was made by Morrow (1983) and Reichers (1985) who each suggested that employees could be committed simultaneously to different targets such as the community at large, clients/customers, professional associations, unions, managers and co-workers.

In terms of the debate about the base of commitment some researchers saw it as a psychological attachment or bond linking the individual to the employing organization (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986) while others saw it as a behavioural attitude (Meyer & Allen,

1984). Many more bases of work commitment emerged from the later theoretical and empirical commitment research (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009).

A new two component model of organizational commitment that reflects earlier research work on the conceptualization of commitment (Becker, 1960; Kagan, 1958; Kelman, 1958; Gouldner, 1960) and developments of organizational commitment as a multi-dimensional construct (Angle & Perry 1981; Porter et al., 1974; Steers, 1977) was introduced as Affective Organizational Commitment (associated with positive feelings of identification and attachment to, and involvement in the work of the organization) and Continuance Organizational Commitment (associated with the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving) (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

In the late 1980s researchers continued to study the effects of organizational commitment on different organizational outcomes such as turnover, tardiness, absenteeism, in-role and extra-role behaviour and organizational effectiveness (Randall, 1987). They also studied the degree to which organizational commitment was distinct from job satisfaction in its effect on organizational outcomes; most notably, turnover (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Foffin & Jackson, 1989).

In relation to research on work commitment the year 1990 is notable for several reasons. In particular, it is the year that saw the publication of a series of meta-analytical studies on organizational commitment research that helped to consolidate conceptual development of the concept of organizational commitment up to this point in time (Cohen, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990). It also saw the publication of a study that introduced a new three component model of organizational commitment (Affective, Continuance and Normative Organizational Commitment components) and its further refinement (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer, Allen & Gellatly, 1990). The meta-analytical study by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) establishes that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are predictors of job performance and this is directly relevant to this study. Job satisfaction research is the next job attitudinal variable of relevance to the present study that is reviewed.

Job Satisfaction Research

The aim of reviewing research literature on the conceptualization of job satisfaction is to better understand the nature of the construct and the types of factors that explain how

individual employees vary in their evaluation of their jobs. The review of research literature on job satisfaction is presented in two parts. This part presents various definitions of job satisfaction, identifies some reasons for job satisfaction's relative importance as a variable in organizational behaviour research and service industry and marketing research, and briefly discusses the sorts of factors that have been identified in the research to explain individual variations in job satisfaction. The second part of the literature review on job satisfaction is presented in Section 2.3 and covers a review of research on the relationships that exist between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job performance that are variables of direct interest to this present study.

Job satisfaction research has a long history and there continues to be strong interest in research on job satisfaction because of its relationship to other variables of interest such as absenteeism, turnover and job performance (Westover, 2011) and because of its perceived influence on service quality, client satisfaction and service organization outcomes (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). One study suggests that job satisfaction should be a service management objective in its own right because of the importance of its relationship to the effectiveness of the service exchange process (Kehoe & Dickter, 2006). Other researchers suggest that job satisfaction is not the aim of a service organization and that job satisfaction is not as important to service performance as is the organization's service climate (Brooks, Wiley & Hause, 2006).

As early as 1955 a narrative review of various research studies examining employee attitudes and work-related behaviour identified a proliferation of operational definitions of job satisfaction (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). Later, another researcher commented that most of the early job satisfaction research was without any theoretical explanation (Locke, 1969) and attempted to provide a general theory of job satisfaction by focusing on the concepts of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, value, emotion and appraisal, and define job satisfaction as "different degrees of pleasure or displeasure about different jobs and/or with different aspects of the same job" (Locke, 1996, p. 314).

Other definitions present job satisfaction as "an important force in the individual's participation decision" on issues such as turnover (Mobley, 1977, p. 167) and as "a positive emotional state reflecting an affective response to the job situation" where job satisfaction

can be distinguished from the cognitive belief state of psychological identification with one's job (Brooke, Russell & Price, 1988).

Research into explanations about how individual employees vary in their job satisfaction include various motivational theories such as the needs fulfilment model, the discrepancy model, the value attainment model, the equity model and the dispositional or genetic components model (Westover, 2011). The need fulfilment model views job satisfaction as being determined by the extent to which an individual's job enables them to fulfil their personal work-related needs. Research based upon the discrepancy model suggests that job satisfaction is determined by met or unmet expectations. Research based upon the value attainment model suggests that job satisfaction comes from the perception that an individual's job fulfils, or is consistent with, their personal values. Research based upon the equity model concerns how an individual employee perceives that they are treated in the work situation and whether they perceive the rewards are equitable compared to those distributed to their co-workers. Research based upon the dispositional model examines how individual differences act as determinants of job satisfaction (Westover, 2011). All of these models suggest that there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and work motivation.

Other researchers suggest that the best models for predicting variations in job satisfaction fall into two broad categories: those concerned with the job itself (the most popular example being Hackman & Oldham's (1975) five dimensional job characteristics model as cited in Westover, 2011, p. 22) and those that are concerned with factors that are associated with the job that include the working environment (Spector, 1997).

Research on job attitudes indicates that there is a relationship between personal disposition and job satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004). Research has quantified an individual's affectivity (negative or positive) and suggests that it can account for between 10 per cent and 25 per cent of the variation in the person's assessment of their job satisfaction (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000).

One researcher suggests that the dominant conceptualization of job satisfaction tends to focus predominantly on the 'affect' aspects of job satisfaction and tends to ignore an individual's personal belief about jobs in general and how this combines with their evaluation of various facets of their job and their overall evaluation of their job. This is one of the

reasons put forward to explain the weak relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Weiss, 2002). Other researchers advocate for refocusing the study of job satisfaction on individual dispositions to be able to account for differences in individual employee's sensitivity to the workplace and adverse events, to explain the speed at which individual employees are able to return to equilibrium after being exposed to adverse workplace events (Bowling, Beehr, Wagner & Libkuman, 2005), and their ability to maintain job satisfaction despite such events (Gerhart, 2005).

Other studies have found that a range of organizational and situational factors (organizational control structures, organizational work practices, organizational support, rewards, empowerment and training) directly or indirectly influence the level of an employee's job satisfaction (Beatson, Lings & Gudergan, 2008; Kim, 2002; Kim, Tavitiyaman & Kim, 2009; Mulinge, 2001; Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000; Voon, Beatty & Suh, 2001). A relationship has also been found between job satisfaction and an employee's psychological wellbeing (Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005).

It is evident from the foregoing research that the present study needed to explore the influence of the nature of the job and relevant situational factors if it is to explain variations in job satisfaction amongst the family law courts' client service staff that may influence their service performance, particularly their safety-related behaviour and how it affects their support of the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

Job Performance Research

The research literature on job performance that is reviewed defines the general concept of job performance, identifies the types of factors found to influence job performance and clarifies differences between two concepts of job performance: in-role and extra-role performance and task and contextual performance. The research literature about the way that job performance is defined in the present study is covered in Section 2.3. The research issues associated with how the service performance amongst the courts' client service staff is measured is covered in Chapter 3.

Defining Job Performance

Job performance has been suggested to be one of the most important dependent variable studied in organizational behaviour (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager, 1993). It is an important variable for the present study because it addresses that part of the research

problem that involves examining whether the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to court safety and what types of factors may influence their service performance. As a consequence, performance theory is broadly related to this study. The differentiation of the components of job performance is relevant to the way that this study conceptualizes the core and discretionary elements of job performance for the family law courts' client service staff.

Job performance is defined in the research literature as something that people actually do that can be observed, that is relevant to the goals of the organization, and that can be scaled in terms of proficiency (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager, 1993). Further "when conceptualizing performance one has to differentiate between an action aspect (behaviour) and an outcome aspect of performance (client satisfaction)" (Campbell, 1990 as cited in Sonnentag and Frese, 2002, p.5).

The performance model introduced by Campbell (1990) as cited in Sonnentag and Frese, 2002, p.5) identifies three key determinants of job performance: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skill, and motivation. Campbell's model of performance that is later refined in Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager, (1993) and in Campbell (1999) formalizes the relationship between ability, job knowledge and skill, and job performance where motivation (defined as direction, effort and persistence) is considered to be a major determinant of job performance (Motowidlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997). Job performance is characterised by other researchers as being multi-dimensional, dynamic, differs between individuals and is comprised of five types of task proficiency: job specific, non-job specific, written and oral communication, supervision, and management proficiency (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). A further refinement of the performance model introduced by Campbell et al., (1993) is the 'Ability, Motivation and Opportunity Model' advocated by Boxall and Purcell (2011) in their study of the relationship between human resource management practice and performance.

Factors Influencing Job Performance

The job performance research literature identifies a range of factors that influence job performance. The factors include motivation (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002), goal setting (Locke & Lathan, 2006) and leadership style (Chemers & Ayman, 1993; Locke & Lathan, 1990; Luthan & Youssef, 2007). Other factors that have been found to influence job performance

include job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), social information processing (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978 as cited in Grant 2008, p.108), negative and positive affectivity and organizational tenure (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman & Hayes, 2009), work orientation and psychological climate (Day & Bedeian, 1991). One way to categorize all of these influences on job performance is in terms of factors that relate to individual differences, factors that relate to situational differences and factors that relate to the regulation of performance (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

A series of meta-analytical studies have examined the relationship between organizational commitment (including its components), job satisfaction and job performance (defined variously in terms of in-role and extra-role performance, task and contextual performance, and task performance and OCB). The results suggest a positive relationship exists between organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job performance and with other work-related behaviour that can indirectly influence job performance such as turnover and absenteeism (Cohen, 1990; Cooper-Haskin & Viswesvaran, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Riketta, 2002, 2008; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Wright & Bonett, 2002).

In-role and Extra-role Performance and Task and Contextual Performance

Some researchers conceptualize job performance as having two main components: in-role and extra-role performance. In-role performance is conceived of as an individual's proficiency in performing activities prescribed by their job role, whereas extra-role performance is conceived of as including an individual's prosocial behaviour, spontaneous behaviour, and contextual performance that support the operation of the organization (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998).

Other researchers conceptualize job performance as comprising task and contextual performance (Motowidlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997). Task performance is conceived of as being relating to activities associated with the production of goods or the creation of services. Some researchers differentiate task performance in terms of activities that directly relate to the 'technical core' and activities that relate to 'servicing the technical core' (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Contextual performance is conceived of as activities that do not contribute to the organization's 'technical core' but relate to maintaining the "broader

organization, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core must function” (Motowodlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997, p. 75).

There are a number of different conceptualizations of contextual performance in the job performance research literature that can be seen to fall into two main types of behaviour. One type of behaviour is associated with the smooth functioning of the organization and the other type of behaviour is associated with proactive effort directed at changing and improving work processes and practices (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

A distinction has been drawn in the research literature between extra-role performance and contextual performance, and between contextual performance and OCB. Extra-role performance is seen in the research literature to be a broader concept than contextual performance in that it encompasses contextual performance as well as whistle-blower behaviour and constructive counter-productive behaviour. Contextual performance and OCB are seen to be similar in nature but to have different defining frameworks (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006).

This present study adopted service quality and OCB as the two dimensions of job performance to be treated as dependent variables to be tested against two forms of job attitude (work commitment and job satisfaction) amongst the family law courts’ client service staff. The aim was to determine the extent to which the job attitudes of the client service staff act as major influences of their job performance that includes supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the family law courts’ clients. The next part of the literature review examines research on the conceptualization of OCB, its antecedents and its relationship with organizational outcomes.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Research

This literature review of OCB is in two parts. This part focuses on the conceptualization of OCB, factors that have been found to influence OCB and the relationship found to exist between OCB and organizational outcomes. The second part of the literature review of OCB research presented in Section 2.3 briefly covers research relating to the measurement of OCB. More detail on the model used in the present study to measure OCB is presented in Chapter 3.

Closely linked with the theory of extra-role performance and contextual performance, organizational citizenship behaviour is conceived of as work-related behaviour that is not easily explained by organizational rewards designed to induce people to enter an organization or to gain their conformity and productivity when they are at work (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006).

Initially OCB research identified Altruism and Generalized Compliance as the two dimensions associated with citizenship-like behaviour (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). Research indicates that supervisors can distinguish between these two forms of citizenship-like behaviour and in-role performance (Williams & Anderson, 1991), and that managers can recognize that different dimensions of citizenship-like behaviour are distinct from objective performance activity such as selling products and services (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Fetter, 1993). This is not to suggest that there is universal agreement about the concept of citizenship-like behaviour. Some researchers suggest that employees may actually differ in what they personally define as in-role and extra-role behaviour and employees are more likely to exhibit citizenship-like behaviour if it is prescribed as in-role behaviour (Morrison, 1994).

Later research identified a total of five dimensions of citizenship behaviour (Altruism, Conscientiousness, Courtesy, Civic Virtue and Sportsmanship) (Organ, 1988) that form the basis of one of the most popular instruments used for measuring OCB (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990).

The most comprehensive definition of citizenship behaviour defines it as “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). By discretionary is meant that the behaviour is not an enforceable component of the job/role, that it is related to a person’s employment contract, that the behaviour is a matter of personal choice and that a failure to exhibit this behaviour is not punishable (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). The definition of OCB used in this present study is “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006, p. 3).

A meta-analytic study of fifty five studies of OCB found that job attitudes are robust predictors of OCB, that the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB is stronger than the relationship between job satisfaction and in-role behaviour (amongst non-managerial and non-professional groups) and that perceived fairness, organizational commitment, and leadership support all correlate with OCB at roughly the same levels (Organ & Ryan, 1995).

Another study found OCB to be positively related to ratings of employee performance and to reward allocation decisions and to be negatively related to turnover intentions, actual turnover and absenteeism (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume, 2009). Human resource management practices such as socialization, feedback and rewards and selection practices have been found to foster OCB (Morrison, 1996). Organizational justice practices that influence perceived organizational support have also been found to influence OCB (Moorman, Blakely & Niehoff, 1996).

When service employees have been the focus of the OCB, it has been shown that service employees' job satisfaction and trust in management are significantly related to OCB and service employees' active engagement in OCB in turn is positively related to perceptions of service quality (Yoon & Suh, 2003). Other researchers have found that the relationship amongst service employees who were co-workers is positively related to commitment to the customer and negatively related to turnover intentions (Paille, 2010).

Organizational citizenship behaviour is an important component of job performance and has been demonstrated to have a strong relationship to other variables of interest including job satisfaction (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983; Organ, 1988, Organ & Ryan, 1995), organizational commitment (Schappe, 1998; Organ & Ryan, 1995), and leadership style (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990). Organizational citizenship behaviour also influences the effectiveness of work groups (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997), is associated with turnover and organizational effectiveness (Organ et al., 2006) and customers' perceptions of service quality (Bell & Menguc, 2002). Organizational citizenship behaviour is an important variable worth measuring as one of the two components of job performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff.

2.2.4 Summary

The research issues identified in the literature that are relevant to the design of this study and are summarized below:

- An organization's orientation to safety, as reflected in its organizational culture and/or its organizational climate, may influence employees' safety-related behaviour that relates to their own safety and to the safety of their clients. This relates to the research proposition about how the family law courts' orientation and support can influence client service behaviour, client satisfaction and organizational outcomes.
- Dysfunctional clients can be a source of psychological stress for service employees and the stress may be amplified by the level and frequency of client contact. This relates to the second research question about the types of factors that may influence the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff. This issue also relates directly to one of the present study's research propositions.
- The family law courts can be described as a human service organization whose service orientation influences the service orientation of their staff and their clients' perception of the quality of the services they receive. This also relates to one of this study's research propositions.
- Service-oriented human resource management practices are a necessary but not sufficient condition for a service organization to achieve service quality. This also relates to the second research question about the types of factors that may influence the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff.
- Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are frequently used in service industry research to examine the relationship between job attitude and job performance amongst service employees. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have also been found to influence other work-related behaviour that also affects service performance such as turnover and absenteeism. This also relates to one of this study's research propositions.
- Service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour are the two dimensions of job performance that were measured amongst the courts' client service staff to determine whether and to what extent their job attitudes (job satisfaction and work commitment) influence their job performance.

The next section of this chapter reviews research literature in four areas of study that are directly relevant to this study. The review of this literature has the aim of situating the

present study and identifying the study's potential contribution to what is currently known about the relationship between client service and court security in the family law courts in particular and to other courts in general.

2.3 Directly Relevant Research and Theories

Three aspects of the present study make it unique: its vantage point, its context and the connection drawn between client service and court security in the family law courts.

The study explores the phenomenon of court security from the perspective of low status, non-professional, front-line client service staff in the family law courts. None of the service industry or court security research literature that was reviewed has examined court security solely from the perspective of front line client service staff in a court.

The study looks at the role of the court registry function and a centralized call centre and the role they play in helping to create a safer family law court environment in what is an under-researched and somewhat unique mix of public sector human service organization and judicial institution.

The study examines the relationship between the client contact staff (including the client service staff) who work in the courts and across a network of external support agencies to support clients with special needs and those who fear for their safety whilst at court.

These three aspects of the study (vantage point, context and connection) led to four fields of study being identified as being directly relevant to framing the present study's research problem and two research questions. These four fields of study are court security, family violence and family law, boundary spanning behaviour of service employees and research on the relationship between job satisfaction, work commitment, service quality and OCB amongst service providers.

In addition to reviewing each of these four fields of study the intertextual coherence of the present study in relation to the research literature being reviewed is demonstrated (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011; Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997). This is not only to situate the present study but also demonstrates the contribution of this study to what is currently known about how client services can influence court security in courts in Australia and elsewhere.

2.3.1 Court Security Research

Known in academia as ‘security studies’ (Sarre & Prenzler, 2011), the court security research literature reviewed is confined to research emanating from the United States, Australia and New Zealand. However, a number of the researchers cited state that the trends and issues they identify are global in nature. Given that practitioners are important contributors to this field of research some of the sources identified concern themselves with industry ‘best practice’ rather than taking a more academic-oriented approach to their research.

Three definitions of court security or courthouse security are sufficient to make the point that the focus of research interest in the literature is somewhat narrower than might be expected. “Court security is generally focussed on the protection of the courthouse and its occupants” (Cooper, 2007, p.1). Courthouse security is intended to mean “the feeling of safety combined with the measures taken to provide that feeling of safety...against personal injury, property damage and the loss of records housed in the courthouse” (Johnson & Yerawdeka, 1981 cited in Gould, 2007, p. 64). Court security “embraces a wide range of issues. It stretches from physical protection of judges to education and from workplace violence data integrity to architecture” (Campbell & Reinkensmeyer, 2007, p. 51). The definition of court security used in the present study is “an integrated approach to the judicial process that ensures the integrity and safety of the court system and its participants, by effectively evaluating, planning and pro-actively managing threats and potential threats towards the court system” (Barrett, 2009, p. 11).

The first question that needs to be answered by the court security research literature is what do the definitions of court security explicitly exclude that might be of interest to the present study? This question is partially answered in the national Court Safety Project’s funding application that states “most studies of safety and security are limited to a relatively narrow part of the security spectrum (Tong, 2006; Hathcock, 2002), those involving physical danger...issues of stress, and social support and the ability to participate effectively are not always defined as ‘safety’ issues. However, for courts, the symbolic aspects of safety are central for the credibility of justice in the community” (Tait, 2008, p.107). As discussed in Section 1.3 of Chapter 1 this study considered the human dimension of courts security as its central focus by examining whether the client service staff in the family law courts help to create and sustain a safer court environment for the courts’ vulnerable clients. What we find

from the court security research literature is that the challenge for court administrators is striking the right balance between maintaining the openness required of an equitable judicial system and the requirement of keeping everyone who uses courts safe.

The next question that needs to be answered from the court security research literature relates to the evidence that exists about the incidence of violence that warrant courts, in general, rethinking how they can create and maintain safe court environments. There is ample evidence of violence occurring in courthouses in the United States. The evidence ranges from general statements about the nature and extent of violent acts against judges and other court staff through to descriptions of specific serious incidents and some trend data about courthouse violence. Some researchers have declared that no workplace has a greater potential for violence than courts (Warren, 2001). Violence against the legal profession in the United States has increased nation-wide in the 1980s and 1990s while violent crime across that nation generally declined (Kelson, 2001). From 1990 to 2005 there were approximately twenty six courthouse shootings in the United States (Barrett, 2009) and the assassination of three Federal judges since 1949 (Vossekuil, Borum, Fein & Reddy, 2001).

The evidence of violence in courthouses in Australia and in New Zealand appears to be similar in nature to that occurring in court houses in the United States but not in the same intensity. A survey of courts in Australia found that some courts do not appear to be safe places; at least from the perspective of some staff and non-staff court users (Parker, 1998). In New South Wales the Attorney General's Department reported that, on average over 300 'security incidents' occurred each month in New South Wales courts. More compelling is the description of specific security incidents. In New Zealand violence in courthouses includes physical assaults and stabbings. In Australia there has been a siege in the South Australian Supreme Court and, more recently, a plot to murder two South Australian judges ("Murder Plot Arrests", 2014), a social worker threatened with a knife in a Victorian Children's Court, a female prosecutor attacked in the ACT Supreme Court, and in Perth in 2004 seven prisoners overpowered three unarmed security guards and escaped custody. On the 23rd of June 1980 an Australian Family Court Judge, Justice David Opas, was shot by an unknown assailant at his family home (Sarre & Prenzler, 2010) and in 1984 the wife of another Family Court Judge, Justice Watson, died when their home was bombed (Rhoades, 2010).

The next question that needs to be addressed in relation to the court security research literature relates to what the key issues are for court administrators, and what steps have been taken to improve court security in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere. There are a number of practical security strategies, such as security planning, risk assessment, and investment in infrastructure and technology, raised in the court security research literature (Nicholson, 2005). Three other issues stand out in terms of their broad security implications for courts generally. The first issue is about whether courts are perceived to be safer as a result of the steps taken to minimize the risk of violence. This point is highlighted by the following statement; “the justice system rests upon the acceptance of the impartiality, fairness, and independence of our judiciary. Too much security undermines that image if it appears that our courts are being held hostage by violence and threats of violence” (Geiger, 2001, p.102). The second issue relates to the lack of evidence to support the cost effectiveness of the investment in physical security, security technology and security staff that has gone into ‘hardening the target’ (Feiner, 2007; Gould, 2007). The third issue relates to how court staff are an important but often undervalued part of the court security equation; “even with the best, the newest, the most innovative technology, it all comes back to the human factor” (Zaruba, 2007, p. 47).

The court security research literature suggests that the primary focus of the last three decades has been about putting a substantial investment into aspects of physical security. “In 2001 the view of court security researchers in the United States was that efforts to improve court security have focussed mainly on enhancing the physical security measures in court houses” (Wax, 1992 as cited in Vossekul, Borum, Fein & Reddy, 2001, p. 79). In Australia and New Zealand over the last thirty years court administrators have taken similar steps to ensure that anyone who enters a court does so through a secure point of entry (Sarre & Prenzler, 2010). This investment in the court environment in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and elsewhere is thought to be closely linked to the aftermath of major security breakdowns rather than being part of a systematic approach to improving court security (Sarre & Prenzler, 2011).

There are a number of trends in thinking about court security that are evident in the security research literature. These include the idea that courts need to be viewed as both an institution of justice as well as a place of work (Weiner & Hardenberg, 2001), that the increased concern for court security tends to follow concerns about global terrorism (Cooper,

2007; Herdenbergh, 2004; Nicholson, 2005), that court security is no longer the sole concern of the Sheriff's Department or law enforcement staff but is also of concern to judicial officers and court administrators (Cooper, 2007), and the trend towards security risk management with its attendant focus on cost effectiveness and the contracting-in of security specialist staff (Sarre & Prenzler, 2011). Another shift in thinking about court security that has been missing from architectural psychology and court design in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere (Missingham, Heywood & Brawn, 2002) relates to court architecture and the design of courts and courtrooms being seen from the perspective of "a combination of the physical with the social and psychological experience people have in the court setting" (Kennedy & Tait, 1999, p. 1075). A related perspective is that significant changes to the role of court administrators in relation to court security is acting as a catalyst for debate about how court security needs to be viewed both "symbolically and practically" (Sarre & Vernon, 2013, p. 133).

The present study is situated, at least in part, in the field of 'security studies'. It is evident from the research literature that this domain has not given much indication of progressive coherence as the predominant focus has continued to be on the physical aspects of court security (Feiner, 2007; Gould, 2007; Sarre & Prenzler, 2010, 2011; Vossekul et al., 2001). However, a recent study demonstrates that because the focus of court security research has been largely reactive and focussed on physical security a need exists to reconceptualise security strategies for courts that encompass 'soft' measures that go to the human-side of the security equation (Wallace, Blackman & Rowden, 2013). The present study examined the innovative use of the family law courts' client contact staff to better support vulnerable clients. The research question that naturally arises from this focus is whether and to what extent low status, non-professional front-line client service staff can actually make an effective contribution to helping create a safer court environment. The present study relies on the metaphor of 'softening the barrier' that describes how the courts have taken a more humanistic approach to supporting its vulnerable clients that is absent in much of the court security research that is largely about 'hardening the barrier' through improvements in court buildings, court surrounds, and court security technology.

The final issue to be discussed in relation to court security research arises from a study of those who worked in the Family Court of Australia during its formative years that reflects the family law courts legacy. "In the face of very real threats to their safety, court personnel believe that they were left unsupported and blamed for the situation in which they

found themselves, rather than protected from what some later scholars have characterised as instances of terrorism” (Swain, 2012, p. 117). While this statement in no way reflects the current situation facing family law court users, staff and non-staff alike, it does reflect the impact that family violence has on the family law system and those who work in family law courts. This is the focus of the research literature that is reviewed in the next Subsection.

2.3.2 Family Violence and Family Law Research

The research literature on family violence and the family law system covers the definition of key terms, evidence of family violence in Australia, trends in thinking about family violence and family law in Australia and elsewhere, strategies adopted by the family relationship services sector and the family law system to deal with family violence, and the impact of the ongoing reform of the family law system in Australia on the family law courts.

The significance of the research literature on family violence and the family law system in Australia to this study is partly related to its role in context setting. However, the research is also important for gaining an understanding of how a shift in societal values about family violence has led to an increase in the obligations placed upon the family law courts to keep those at risk of family violence safe whilst they are at court (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009). The family violence research literature is also important in conveying an understanding of how the ‘spill over’ effect operates whereby the family law courts’ staff have to deal with clients who experience family violence, mental illness and substance abuse which can act to exacerbate the stress experienced by the courts’ clients during their participation in a contested divorce process (Bryant, 2009a). This in turn can lead to the family law courts’ staff experiencing a fear of client-initiated violence and/or emotional exhaustion as a result of the intensity and frequency of their contact with clients affected by family violence, substance abuse and mental illness.

Three definitions are sufficient to define what is meant by the terms family violence and domestic violence and to distinguish between them. “Family violence should be synonymous with abuse or substantial mistreatment of family members” (Jourites et al., 2001 as cited in Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2006, p. 560). “Domestic violence is a form of interpersonal assault that is grounded in inequity and is perpetrated primarily by men against female intimate partners” (Laing, 2008, p.19). “The term family violence includes domestic

violence and incorporates violence in other relationships, such as those involving children of the relationship, siblings, parents and other family members” (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009, p. 2).

There is an argument supported by data that family violence is a prevalent societal problem in Australia and elsewhere. The theoretical research literature on violence between intimate partners indicates that the incidence of partner-initiated violence may increase as a consequence of ending an intimate relationship (Ellis, 2000; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). However, society has been slow to recognize family violence as a major social problem (Tolan et al., 2006). One of the reasons for this may be the discrepancy perceived to exist between those who report an incidence of violence and the evidence that they are able to produce about it (Moloney, n.d.). It is more likely however, that it reflects society’s general ignorance of, or unwillingness to acknowledge or take seriously, the phenomenon of ‘violence-in-the-home’ (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). This perspective is reinforced by the slowness of the family law system to recognize the significance of family violence as revealed by a review of the Family Court of Australia’s formative years. “Following her review of the Family Courts first 20 years, Star (1996), concluded that during this period there had been an inadequate recognition of family violence in Australian law generally and in the Family Court in particular” (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009, p. 12).

In an Australian Bureau of Statistics study ‘Women’s Safety in Australia’ in 1996 it was found that 23 per cent of female respondents who had been married or in a de-facto relationship had experienced violence by a partner at some time during their relationship (Mulroney, 2003). In a more recent survey of ‘Personal Safety’, 5.8 per cent of women respondents reported that they had experienced violence in the past twelve months. This incidence of violence was down from 7.1 per cent reported in 1996 (Carrington & Phillips, 2003). In a 2005 ‘Crime and Safety Survey’ it was estimated that 4.8 per cent of the population had been assaulted in the previous twelve months and that in 73 per cent of cases in which the victim was female 19 per cent were assaulted by a current or former partner (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). The issue of family violence is said to be exacerbated by other factors as many separated families are also affected by mental health problems and issues linked to the misuse of addictive substances (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). An article on a review of deaths due to domestic violence in the Australian Capital Territory stated “In Australia, an average of one women is killed every

week by a current or ex-partner” (ABCNews, 2014, *Domestic Violence Deaths in ACT to be Reviewed*).

The family violence research literature identifies the family courts as an important component of the system set up in Australia to deal with family violence. However, the perception reflected in the research literature is that the family law courts still have some way to go in Australia to meet the needs of victims of family violence and abuse that come before the courts. Researchers have suggested that the family law system is an important but often unrecognized and poorly integrated part of the ‘mother and child protection system’ (Brown & Alexander, 2007 as cited in Laing, 2008, p.19). However as a result of the increasing incidence of family violence in the cases coming before family law courts generally, family courts are seen to be seeking ways of focusing limited resources on cases that require the most intervention by tailoring the courts’ responses and dispute resolution methods to each case (Fredrick, 2008). Other researchers advocate for a more sophisticated process of differentiating each family law case. The argument is made that each case has differences in parenting dynamics, that the context of each case is different and that the likely consequences for any children in the relationship may be different. However, at the same time, researchers acknowledge that family courts have limited resources that may not permit all of these factors to be adequately taken into account (Kelly & Johnson, 2008; Jaffe, Johnston, Crooks & Bala, 2008). In addition, the family law courts are not always viewed positively in relation to their role in dealing with the issue of family violence. A study of 40 Australian women who had experienced family violence determined that the respondents found the Family Court of Australia’s hearings to be intimidating and disempowering (Kaye, Stubbs, & Tolmie, 2003 as cited in Braaf & Sneddon, 2009, p.11). Other researchers suggest that, given the complexities involved, it is not surprising that the family law system continues to be criticised for failing to arrive at a proper balancing point between promoting on-going parent-child relationships and promoting safety (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009).

The family violence research literature highlights a number of strategies that have been used by the family law system in Australia and elsewhere to address the issue of family violence. Risk assessment and intervention is one such strategy (Humphrey, 2006; Tolan et al., 2006) and screening for family violence is another (Fredrick, 2008). Screening involves professionals or their organization asking a series of questions to determine whether a client is experiencing violence in their intimate relationship, whereas risk assessment involves a

process for assessing the risk of harm, injury or homicide (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009). However effective screening and risk assessment requires adequate levels of professional staffing, good training, and an orientation in the law towards dispute resolution (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009; Fredrick, 2006). In Australia it also requires an accessible and effective family relationship service that has its own workforce challenges (Cortis, Chan, Hilferty, 2009) and the close integration of this sector with the family law courts (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009).

Ongoing reform is a feature of the family law system in Australia. The Family Law Court of Australia is regarded as being the first ‘therapeutic court’ in Australia, but this experience is seen by some as a failed experiment (Rhoades, 2010). The separation of the ‘litigation arm’ from the ‘helping arm’ of the Court in 2006 is considered by many, including Family Court Judges, to provide a much needed sense of clarity and safety (Rhoades, 2010). Amongst the safeguards implemented as part of the 2006 Howard Government reforms of the family law system were the introduction of family violence screening and risk assessment processes designed to identify victims of family violence and to consider the future risk of harm to them (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009). More recently researchers have evaluated the 2006 reforms and concluded that while some parts of the legal sector appear to be better at identifying issues of family violence, child abuse, mental health and substance abuse issues the sector as a whole is still seen to have some way to go before being able to respond effectively to these issues (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). Other researchers have suggested that Professor Chisholm’s Report on the ‘Family Court Violence Review’ (Chisholm, 2009) provides a number of recommendations for overcoming the criticism that the family law system has at times undermined the pathways to recovery and wellbeing for victims of family violence (Wilcox, 2012a). Importantly several other studies of family violence and the family law system have argued that parts of the family law system (inside and outside of the family law courts) do not always adequately screen effectively for family violence or assess the risk (Kaspiew et al., 2009; Parkinson et al., 2010 as cited in Wilcox, 2012b).

Family Court Violence Review

In 2009 the then Federal Attorney-General commissioned a number of reviews on the issue of family violence and family law that provided external expert opinion on the effectiveness of the Courts’ security processes; particularly on how well they support clients

at risk of family violence as required under the reforms of the family law system in 2006 (Braaf & Sneddon, 2007). There were ten reports on this topic commissioned by the Federal Attorney-General's Department (Wilcox, 2012b). The report titled the *Family Court Violence Review* (Chisholm, 2009) is very relevant to the current study. It reports on a review "to consider whether the practices and procedures of the Courts encourage victims to disclose family violence and support best practice" (p. 4).

The *Family Courts Violence Review* is complimentary about the services provided by the Courts to support clients who have been exposed to family violence and these services were considered to be consistent with the role of the Courts as part of a contemporary family law system. In particular, the Courts' *Safety at Court Protocol* (Family Court of Australia, n.d.) was regarded as providing "an overarching direction for securing the safety of Court clients" (Chisholm, 2009, p 154).

However, the *Family Courts Violence Review* identified areas where there were insufficient resources to enable Court staff to adequately support clients at risk. The review concluded that "from the basic issue of feeling and being safe at court, to the resources available to investigate allegations and risk, and access to services to support victims of violence, the system is under-funded" (Chisholm, 2009, p. 161). This conclusion is interpreted by one family law researcher as "a call for more experience and expertise in family violence within the family law system" (Wilcox, 2012b, p. 5). The lack of resources in the Family Court of Australia was also flagged as a concern in an evaluation of the 2006 family law reforms (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009).

In November 2011 a Bill was passed by the Federal parliament that amended a number of key sections of the Family Law Act 1975 and included the widening of the definition of family violence in response to concerns expressed by the Family Law Council's report on the intersection of family violence and family law issues (Family Law Council, 2009). The amendments removed the disincentives for parents to report family violence, but the amendments also stipulated that the courts were required to ask parents if there was child abuse or a threat of abuse in the family relationship (Peatling, 2012). As a consequence, the courts' overarching duty of care for court security of clients subjected to family violence appeared to be increased rather than lessened. However, the 2011 family law reforms were regarded as being constrained by a lack of resources (Strickland, 2012).

The various reviews of family violence and the family law system indicated that the process of screening and risk assessment was, and continued to be, a complex matter for domestic violence practitioners working outside of the courts and professional service staff working inside of the courts. The reviews indicated that the changes to the Family Law Act 1975 should promote greater disclosure but it continued to place a significant onus on the courts to identify and act where abuse or a risk of violence is present amongst those who come before the courts. The need for up-skilling and ongoing training of court staff was flagged by several of the family violence and family law reviews (Wilcox, 2012b).

It is noteworthy that in 2012 the Family Court of Australia reported that it had taken steps to review the processes for family violence screening, that it had revised existing processes, and that it had developed and carried out training sessions for Family Consultants in each of the family law courts' registries (Family Court, 2012b). However, nothing was reported about improved training for other client contact staff other than improvements to the induction training provided to new registry-based client service staff (Family Court of Australia, 2012b).

It is clear that the family law courts have an obligation in law to introduce screening and risk assessment processes for victims of family violence coming before the courts (Braaf & Sneddon, 2009). More importantly, the issue of family violence is often complicated by clients also suffering from mental health and substance abuse (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2009). Despite efforts by the family law courts from their inception to provide a caring environment and to implement processes for supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of its clients some researchers are still saying the family law system needs to do more to support victims of family violence and abuse (Australia Institute of Family Studies, 2009; Chisholm, 2009; Wilcox, 2012a, 2012b). The literature provides an insight into the background and complexity of the family law courts' service setting and the importance of the decision by the courts to fundamentally shift the delivery of client services to help create and sustain a safer court environment.

Research on family law and reform of the family law system in Australia reinforces a central premise of this study that family violence is a complex and pervasive feature of the service exchange process administered by the family law courts. However what the research does not focus on is the impact that dealing with a difficult client group and working in a

complex service setting has on those engaged in the service exchange process. The present study adds value to what is currently known about the service industry by focusing on the inter-relationship between client service and court security in the family law courts. It also focuses on the factors that influence the service performance of the courts' low status, non-professional, front-line client service staff whose extended service role includes supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

The next part of this section concerns a review of research literature on boundary-spanning behaviour amongst service employees to identify any research issues that may be associated with the expanded service role of the family law courts' client service staff and that helps to further sharpen the contribution of the present study.

2.3.3 Role Theory, Boundary Roles and Boundary-spanning Behaviour

This part of the literature review focuses on research literature covering role theory, boundary roles and boundary spanning behaviour that together provide a perspective for interpreting the way that the courts' client service staff experience their extended service role.

Role Theory

This study's interest in role theory includes and goes beyond the traditional concept of role as a dramaturgical metaphor (Biddle, 1986) and takes an organizational behavioural perspective of role (Katz & Kahn, 1978) that is associated with employees occupying organizational roles that prescribe their tasks and often set out how these tasks are to be undertaken. It is also associated with job-related role stressors such as role ambiguity role conflict and role overload (Guirguis & Chewing, 2005). There is also an acknowledgement in some of the research literature that is reviewed of the tendency of more recent research to reinterpret role theory to make it more relevant to a contemporary service setting (Riley, 2007).

The direct relevance of role theory to this study includes its use in explaining how service organizations try to manage the gap that exists between role prescription (achieved through socialization processes, job descriptions, protocols and training), and role performance where much of this occurs outside the purview of supervisors and managers. The concept of role is also intuitively appealing and easy to explain even if the underlying assumptions around consensus, conformity and conflict are not always verified by the research findings (Biddle, 1986). This study was also able to use the concept of 'role sets'

(Katz & Kahn, 1978) to help establish which court staff needed to be included in the data collection process to ensure that a sample of all of those who have actual experience of the courts' service exchange process are provided an opportunity to explain their perspective of the relationship that exists between client service and court safety in the family law courts. Role theory was also used as a 'lens' for interpreting how individual client contact staff in the family law courts (client service staff, Registrars and Family Consultants) and well as judicial and registry service team leaders and managers experience the related phenomenon of client service and court security.

Several definitions of role theory are provided to ground the concept of role theory. "Role theory concerns itself with a triad of concepts: patterned and characteristic social behaviour, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants and scripts or expectations for behaviour patterns that are understood by all and adhered by the performer" (Guirgius & Chewning, 2005, p. 489). "Role theory concerns one of the most important features of social life, characteristic behaviour or roles. It explains roles by presuming that persons are members of social positions and hold expectations for their own behaviour and those of other persons" (Dev & Olsen, 1989, p. 67). The focus of the current study is on role behaviour that "refers to the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately inter-related with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 189).

Service industry and marketing research identifies that customer satisfaction is closely associated with service quality and that the quality of the service exchange process is influenced by the proficiency with which the service employee fulfils customers' needs and expectations (Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997). Role theory is thought by some researchers to provide a conceptual framework for examining the service exchange process in terms of the interaction of the service employee and their role, their interaction with their 'role set' (those they work with to fulfil their service role) and their interaction with their clients (Ashforth, Kulik & Tomiuk, 2008; Dev & Olsen, 1989; Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel & Gutman, 1985).

In terms of service quality and service organizational outcomes some researchers treat the interaction between the service employee and their clients as the relationship of greatest interest (Bitner, Booms, Mohr, 1994; Grove, Fisk & John, 2001). Other researchers examine

the determinants of role behaviour amongst service employees that are conducive to producing high quality service by service employees that promises to enhance positive client attitudes and behaviour (Chebat & Kollias, 2000).

Research using a theatrical metaphor can focus on the distinction between the ‘front-of-stage’ and ‘back-of-stage’ aspects of a service role (Grove & Fisk 1992; Grove, Fisk & Johns, 2001). The research by Grove et al. (2001) identifies four subthemes of interest: the service employee-role interface, the challenges that the client presents to the service enactment process, the distinctions that exist between ‘front-of-stage’ and ‘back-of-stage’ behaviour by service employees, and the mechanisms that service employees use to buffer the undesirable side effects of the service enactment process (Ashford, Kulik & Tomiuk, 2008).

One study identifies four different perspectives of role theory that are used in the research literature: the organizational perspective (focusing on organizational roles, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload), the symbolic interaction perspective (roles created through social interaction), the cognitive perspective (linking expectations and behaviour) and the functional perspective (describing the stable characteristics of roles) (Guirguis & Chewning, 2005). The organizational perspective is grounded in open systems theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and this perspective appears to have had a strong influence on work-related stress research that examines the relationship between formal work roles and job performance (Jex, 1998; Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic & Eatough, 2010). The social interaction perspective is evident in some of the research literature reviewed. One study examined how service employees re-interpret their role during the service exchange process particularly when the service exchange process is viewed as stressful (Riley, 2007). Another study examined how clients differ in their perception of the way service employees follow role scripts relating to the task aspects of their role and the relationship aspects of their role (Victorino & Bolinger, 2012). A third study examined the potential that exists for flexible service performance and the strategies that can be used to enable service employees to adapt their role behaviour to meet unexpected clients’ needs (Wilder, Collier & Barnes, 2014). The cognitive perspective is evident in research about how service employee and client expectations about service quality can influence perceptions about the quality of the service exchange process, particularly where there is a high degree of consensus between them (Guirguis & Chewning, 2005). The functional perspective is exemplified by research that sees role scripts as a tool for prescribing the way that a service is to be delivered and the

forms of emotion that are deemed acceptable to ensure high quality and consistent service delivery (Bitner, Booms & Mohr, 1994; Grove, Fisk & John, 2001).

The final aspect of role theory of interest concerns role stress that arises from three sources: role ambiguity (a lack of clarity about role requirements), role conflict (competing expectations in relation to one's role or competing demands between different roles), and role overload (differences between the employer's demands and the employee's capacity) (Cooper, Dew & O'Driscoll, 2011; Jex, 1998). Meta-analytical studies of the relationship between role stressors and job performance indicate that role ambiguity has a modest, yet stronger effect on task performance and OCB relative to other forms of role stress (Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic & Eatough, 2010).

In discussing the research on role stress Katz & Kahn (1978) highlight that positions "located near the skin or boundary of the organization were likely to be conflict-ridden" (p. 210). This is particularly relevant for the present study and the exploration of how dysfunctional clients can generate unfavourable experiences for client service staff who often work out of the line-of-sight of their team leaders in the family law courts. The research literature on boundary-roles and boundary spanning behaviour is the next directly relevant area of research literature to be reviewed.

Boundary Roles and Boundary-spanning Behaviour

The research literature on boundary roles and boundary-spanning behaviour of service employees is central to this study. One of the present study's research propositions is that the family law courts' client service staff occupy a boundary role that has been extended to include safety-related behaviours associated with supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients.

The research literature on the boundary-spanning behaviour of service employees provides insights into the antecedents and consequences of boundary-spanning work in a service context that may equally apply to client service staff in the family law courts and elsewhere.

In opens systems theory the concept of a boundary is viewed as a demarcation line or a region for defining appropriate systems activity such as the admission of new members and the importation of resources from other systems that involve crossing an organizational

boundary (Katz & Kahn, 1966 cited in Baker, 1973, p. 6). The behaviour of people in organizational boundary roles (those who work at the boundary between their organization and those outside their organization) is thought to be subject to two main influences: the expectations of members of their own organization and the expectations of their counterparts in other organizations (competitors, clients, suppliers and the like) (Katz and Kahn, 1978). The boundary tier of a service organization is defined as the point where the client meets the representative of the service organization who delivers them a service through a process that may be characterized by the frequency and intensity of contact with clients, the intangibility of the service that is delivered and the level of proficiency associated with the service delivery process (Schneider & Bowen, 1995).

The concept of boundary-spanning is often defined in the research literature in terms of the types of activities that boundary spanners (individuals or team members) are perceived to undertake and this can vary depending upon the service context and type of industry sector (healthcare, judicial, social service, retail) where the boundary-spanning activities take place. Boundary-spanning activities can include managing changing client requirements, negotiating a project's scope, acquiring key information from external parties, providing feedback and fostering collaboration (Marrone, 2010; Marrone, Tesluck & Carson, 2007; Pettus & Severson, 2006; Richter, West, Van Dick & Dawson, 2006; Schneider & Bowen, 1995). A definition of a boundary employee relevant to this study is "a boundary-spanning employee is any organizational employee who is engaged in job-related interactions with a person who is considered part of the environment, who is not a member of the organization" (Robertson, 1975, as cited in Edmondson & Bayer, 2013, p. 2186).

The results of the research on the antecedents of boundary-spanning behaviour amongst service employees is very similar to the results of research reviewed in Section 2.2.2, Service Industry and Marketing Research, in terms of the types of factors that influence the service exchange process. Antecedents found to influence boundary-spanning activity include supportive supervisors and other departmental support (Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000), the organizational environment (conceptualized as a multidimensional practice construct) (Singh, Verbeke & Rhoads, 1996), employee empowerment (Chebat & Kollias, 2000), supervisory communication practices (Johlke & Duhan, 2000), service climate (de Jong, de Ruyter & Lemmink, 2004), the degree of intergroup interaction and the level of group identification (Richter, West, Van Dick & Dawson, 2006), organizational service values and

client service competency (Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010), and procedural justice and interactional justice (Bettencourt, Brown & MacKenzie, 2005).

Research on the boundary-spanning activities of self-managing service teams has found that team members are unlikely to engage in boundary-spanning behaviour unless they see this as part of their role, and their performance of this type of behaviour is commonly influenced by their team members' expectations and by their own intrinsic motivation (Marrone, Tesluk & Carson, 2007). This finding is particularly relevant to the current study where the boundary role of the family law courts' client service staff has been extended to include safety-related behaviour. Safety-related behaviour includes referring clients with special needs to external support agencies and the screening and risk assessment of clients to identify those fearful for their safety whilst at court. One of the things that the research literature highlights is the need for this study to identify whether the family law courts' client service staff think their new safety-related duties are part of their core role responsibilities.

The basic premise underlying research into the boundary-spanning behaviour of service employees is that service employee and client perceptions of service quality are strongly interrelated. This relationship serves to focus research attention on the role of boundary spanners in service organizations where services are intangible and largely delivered out of the sight of supervisors and managers (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Bennis, 1970; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Thompson, 1967 as cited in Schneider, Parkington & Buxton, 1980, p.252). Effective boundary-spanning behaviour has been found to also have an impact on client satisfaction and client loyalty when service delivery is perceived to be effectively coordinated (Gittell, 2002), where there is a high degree of interdependence amongst service employees (Marrone, Tesluk & Carson, 2007), and where service employees demonstrate they are capable of anticipating and understanding client requirements (Lages & Piercy, 2012).

One of the main areas of research into the boundary-spanning activities of service employees concerns the influence of role stressors in the form of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload (Goolsby, 1992; Tubre & Collins, 2000). In particular, research has found that boundary spanners are particularly susceptible to burnout as a consequence of role stress (Singh, Goolsby & Rhoads, 1994). The research reveals there is a paradox about role stress where service employees undertaking boundary-spanning activities can experience increased

role pressure but the pressure is moderated by the employee's own job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bettencourt & Brown, 2003). This pressure is also influenced by the status and influence that employees gain from carrying out the boundary-spanning activity (Marrone, Tesluk & Carson, 2007) and individual differences in levels of optimism (Crosno, Rinaldo, Black & Kelley, 2009). Perceived organizational support has also been found to have a strong effect amongst boundary-spanning employees in relation to role ambiguity and role conflict as well as on related variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention (Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

There is an emerging research literature on the importance of the role of boundary spanners who work between different types of service organizations such as criminal justice and health care and who maintain and sustain a continuum of service for a particular client group such as former prisoners (Pettus & Severson, 2006). This literature is relevant to the situation faced by the family law courts that strive to maintain good relationships with various community-based organizations that provide support for clients coming before the courts who are found to suffer from mental health issues, substance abuse or family violence.

The issue of boundary spanning emerges from the research literature as a key research issue for the present study. The fundamental shift by the courts in their approach to the delivery of client services involved extending the role requirements and changing the role expectations placed on the courts' client service staff. A gap that is evident in the literature on boundary spanning is how changing role requirements and role expectations generate role stress. The present study contributes to what is currently known about the factors that influence the confidence and competence of boundary spanners who operate across organizational boundaries to help support vulnerable clients.

The next area of directly relevant literature to be reviewed covers research on work commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB that is to be measured to determine how job attitudes influence job performance amongst the courts' client service staff.

2.3.4 Measuring Job Attitudes and Job Performance

This section of the literature review has four parts corresponding to the two types of job attitude (work commitment and job satisfaction) and the two components of job performance (service quality and OCB) of interest to the present study. The literature review demonstrates that one of the contributions of the present study is the extension of existing

research into the relationship between job attitudes and job performance amongst service providers to the family law courts. A discussion of the reliability and validity of the models selected for measuring job attitudes and job performance amongst the courts' client service staff is covered in Chapter 3.

Work Commitment Research

The review of research on work commitment focuses on four specific questions derived from the research literature that are used to help focus this diverse and expanding field of research. The first is why measure work commitment? The second is what model of work commitment should be selected for measurement amongst the courts' client service staff and why? This question involves looking at what commitment scholars have to say about the most frequently used models of organizational commitment in terms of their relative strengths and weaknesses. The third question has two parts covering whether another form of work commitment should be measured in addition to organizational commitment and if so what form should this be? The fourth question is what does the commitment research literature say about the relationship that exists between organizational commitment and job performance? This is one of the relationships explored as part of this study's second research question about the factors influencing the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff.

Why Measure Organizational Commitment?

A number of reasons are provided in the commitment research literature as to why organizational commitment is now widely regarded as one of the most frequently examined constructs in the study of organizational behaviour. These reasons include:

- Organizational commitment is a relatively convenient variable to measure.
- Organizational commitment is perceived to have an association with a range of employee-related variables, such as tardiness, absenteeism, turnover intention, turnover and employee wellbeing, as well as a number of organization-related variables such as job performance, and organizational change.
- Organizational commitment is commonly studied across various disciplines that suggest commitment is now regarded as a fundamental concept for understanding human behaviour in the work context (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009).

Prominent commitment scholars, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest a number of other reasons why the study of organizational commitment is important. These include that small increments of employees' commitment to and involvement in their employing organization can impact on their organization's performance, that human behaviour is complex and the concept of commitment provides a theoretical framework for interpreting some aspects of this behaviour, that organizational commitment provides a focus for examining other types of factors that influence work outcomes, and that organizational commitment research has established that a moderate relationship exists between organizational commitment and organizational-related outcome.

Other commitment scholars suggest that the test of whether organizational commitment is an important variable rests on whether it can be established that organizational commitment affects major work outcomes (Cohen, 2006). Other researchers suggest that organizational commitment has become more important recently because knowledge-based workers are now viewed as critical human capital and that developing commitment amongst top talent can enable an organization to gain an advantage over their competitors (Brooks & Wallace, 2006). The commitment construct is also seen to have increasing relevance to the management of change as research indicates that diminished commitment can be an unintentional outcome of poorly managed large scale organizational change (Meyer, 2009; Shapiro, 2010).

Despite almost fifty five years of commitment research there is still an absence of consensus amongst commitment scholars about the conceptualization and measurement of organizational commitment. One commitment scholar ascribes this to the complexity of the construct (Meyer, 2009). Other commitment scholars reinforce this point of view by indicating that there are eight distinct conceptualizations of commitment referred to in the commitment research literature (as an attitude, as a force, as a bond, as a force versus a bond, as an investment or social exchange, as identification and as congruence in values) (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009). Given the innate complexity of the construct of organizational commitment and the lack of consensus around its conceptualization the next question is, what does the commitment research suggest is the most reliable model used to measure organizational commitment?

Measuring Organizational Commitment

Mathieu and Zajac's (1990) meta-analytical study of organizational commitment research across 200 published studies finds that the most commonly studied type of organizational commitment is 'attitudinal' that is most often measured by the organizational commitment scales developed by Mowday, Porter & Dubin (1974). The second most popular form of organizational commitment studied is 'calculative commitment' that is based on the 'side-bet' theory of Becker (1960). Another major form of organizational commitment referred to as the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) (Meyer & Allen, 1991) emerges; first as a two component model (Meyer & Allen, 1984), and later as a three component model.

One of the things that set the OCS apart is the view that each of the three components of organizational commitment represents a different 'mindset' about how the employee is committed to their employing organization. The three organizational commitment components comprise an affective commitment component (representing a desire to be a member of the organization), a normative commitment component (representing a sense of obligation in being a member of the organization) and a calculative commitment component (reflecting a need to continue to remain a member of the organization) (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997).

A range of commitment research literature tests the generalizability and reliability of the OCS and compares it with the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) which is one of the foremost scales for measuring organizational commitment introduced by Mowday et al. (1974). One such test of the OCS examines whether the three components of the Meyer and Allen (1991) model are distinguishable from each other and whether two forms of commitment (organizational and occupational commitment) based upon the same model (Meyer & Allen, 1991) are distinguishable from one another (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Other commitment researchers examined the construct's definition, its measurement scale and its construct validity (Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994; Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf, 1994; Irving, Coleman & Cooper, 1997; Meyer & Allen, 2000). Commitment researchers also test the discriminant validity of the OCS against the OCQ (Cohen, 1996) and they confirm its generalizability and reliability (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Gellatly, Meyer & Luchak, 2006; Stinglhamber, Bentein & Vandenberghe, 2002).

It is acknowledged in the commitment research that some technical limitations are associated with the Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment. These relate to the inter-correlation between the affective and normative commitment components and the question of whether the calculative or continuance commitment component has one or two dimensions (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Modifications to the OCS are recommended by several commitment scholars (Culpepper, 2000; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Over time several commitment researchers have found that there are also significant limitations associated with the OCQ and they conclude that the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model is the preferred model for measuring organizational commitment (Benkhoff, 1997; Kacmar, Carlson & Brymer, 1999).

Despite the development of a general model of organizational commitment around the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model and the provision of a new direction for commitment research in terms of commitment profiles (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001), there are still commitment scholars who perceive the need to reconceptualise the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment (Brooks & Wallace, 2006; Solinger, Olfen & Roe, 2008). However, despite its stated limitations the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment has recognized strengths such as good psychometric properties of the current scales, acceptable discriminant validity of the three components and acceptable context validity of the three components (Cohen, 2003). The originators of the three component model of organizational commitment point out that the reliability of the measurement of the three components has been assessed in virtually all of the studies that use the model (Meyer & Allen, 1991) and that reliability has been found to be within acceptable ranges (Allen & Meyer, 2000).

It is also evident that the three component model of organizational commitment has been used to measure commitment to an occupation or profession by substituting the profession's name in place of the organization (Coleman, Irving & Cooper, 1999; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993 as cited in Fields, 2002, p. 53). This is important to a study contemplating measuring more than one type of work commitment in addition to organizational commitment.

For the reasons discussed above, the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment modified by Meyer and Allen (1997) was selected to measure the organizational commitment amongst the family law courts' client service staff. It was also decided that focus groups would be used in a pilot study and in the family law courts to identify what other forms of commitment, in addition to organizational commitment, should be measured.

The next part of this section examines the commitment research literature that provides the rationale for measuring more than one form of commitment in the one study.

Forms of Work Commitment

The first part of the review of work commitment research literature presented in Section 2.2 of this chapter identified a general consensus amongst commitment scholars that individual employees can be committed simultaneously to different targets or objects in the work environment, and reference is made to the work of Morrow (1983) and Reichers (1985).

Morrow extended her earlier research (1983) on work commitment in her study about concept redundancy amongst some of the many forms of commitment being used in the commitment research and argues what she believes are five universal forms of work commitment (affective organizational commitment, continuance organizational commitment, work ethic endorsement, career commitment and job involvement) (Morrow, 1993). A complementary path was followed by Reicher (1985) who suggests that the concept of organizational commitment consists of a constellation of multiple commitments to various groups outside of an organization (clients, the community, professional associations, unions) and inside of an organization (managers, supervisors, co-workers).

Acknowledging the work of Morrow (1993) and Reicher (1985), subsequent commitment researchers examined a range of specific work commitment targets such as top managers, supervisors and the work group and suggest that these various forms of work commitment influence other work-related attitudes, perceptions and behaviours such as job satisfaction, turnover intention and turnover (Becker, 1992).

In testing the five universal forms of work commitment identified by Morrow (1993) another commitment researcher finds that a slightly different conceptualization better fits the

data where job involvement is seen to be an important mediator for organizational and career commitment (Randall & Cote, 1991 as cited in Cohen, 1999, p. 291).

Reference has already been made of the extension of the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment to occupational commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Another study tested the generalizability of the Meyer and Allen (1991) model to five foci of commitment (organization, occupation, supervisor, workgroup and customer). The study results indicate there is discriminant validity of the three components of each form of commitment and that the different forms of commitment contribute uniquely to the measurement of intention to employees to leave their job (Stinglhamber, Bentein & Vandenberghe, 2002).

Other studies tested an extension of the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment to organizational change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002) and extend the affective organizational commitment construct to affective commitment to supervisors and affective commitment to work groups (Vandenberghe, Bentein & Stinglhamber, 2004).

Finally, a meta-analytic study of commitment research literature involving various forms of work commitment examined relationships between work commitment and job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intention and turnover. The results suggest the presence of a common psychological construct underlying the various forms of work commitment (except for calculative commitment, continuance commitment and union commitment) and also suggest that there is little risk of construct redundancy amongst the various forms of work commitment tested and their dimensions and sub dimensions (Cooper-Haskin & Viswesvaran, 2005). Other commitment researchers appear to use multiple forms of commitment in their research studies in order to increase the reliability of the assessment rather than to improve their study's predictive power (Cooper-Hakin & Viswesvaran, 2005). Other researchers suggest that it is important that the form of commitment measured is relevant to the way that employees actually experience commitment in their work situation (Randall, Fedor and Longenecker 1990).

Organizational Commitment and Job Performance

A series of meta-analytic studies were used to examine how thinking amongst commitment scholars about the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance has changed over time.

The first finding is that the relationship between organizational commitment and work outcomes is generally found to be weak but positive, with the strength of the relationship varying depending upon the type of outcome variables that are under study (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990). The second finding is that the affective organizational commitment component has the strongest relationship to organizational-related variables such as attendance, job performance and OCB (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). A third finding is that employee tenure has a strong, non-linear effect on the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance that decreases over time (Wright & Bonett, 2002). The fourth finding is that correlations between organizational commitment and job performance tend to be stronger in relation to extra-role performance than to in-role performance for white collar workers than for blue collar workers, and stronger when studies use self-rating of performance rather than supervisory ratings or objective performance measures (Riketta, 2002).

Another meta-analytical study of job attitudes and job performance that controls for base line performance established that a weak but significant relationship exists between job attitudes and job performance that is slightly stronger for organizational commitment than it is for job satisfaction and reinforces earlier findings (Judge et al., 2001) that job attitudes predict job performance and not the other way around (Riketta, 2008).

One commitment researcher suggests that the weak correlation consistently found to exist between organizational commitment and job performance “has led some researchers to consider the possibility that examining the relationship between multiple commitments and outcomes improves the prediction of behaviour at work by commitment forms” Cohen (2003, p. 163). This statement reflects the rationale for the present study to measure a form of work commitment in addition to organizational commitment and the need to consult with a representative sample of client service staff to identify what this second form of work commitment should be.

In summary the research literature on work commitment establishes that one of the most widely used models for conceptualizing and measuring organizational commitment is the 'Three Component Model' introduced and refined by Meyer and Allen (1984, 1991). The research literature also makes it evident that this model is not without its detractors albeit that some see Meyer and Allen's (1991) model to be superior to other models that are frequently used by commitment researchers (Benkhoff, 1997; Kacmar et al., 1999). What is evident in the commitment research literature reviewed is any research on the courts albeit that commitment researchers have selected other public sector service organizations such as the police force (Dunham, Grube & Castaneda, 1994), healthcare (Cohen, 2000; Gellatly, Meyer & Luchak, 2006; Stinglhamber, Bentein & Vandenberghe, 2002; Vandenberghe, Bentein & Stinglhamber, 2004), correctional institutions (Lambert & Hogan, 2008, 2010; Lambert, Hogan & Griffin, 2008; and Lambert & Paoline, 2008), and the public service in general (Camilleri & Heijden, 2007; Rosete, 2006).

The present study not only extends existing commitment research to the courts but also goes beyond testing the relationship between job attitudes and job performance by also exploring the types of factors that better explain the variations in individual service performance amongst the courts' client service staff than can be explained by survey research alone.

Job Satisfaction Research

This part of the literature review examines research on job satisfaction and focuses specifically on three research issues derived from the research literature of direct relevance to the present study: the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance, and some of the key research issues associated with measuring job satisfaction. These issues help to scope the literature review and focus on what is known about how job satisfaction acts to influence work-related behaviour. Research literature dealing with the reliability and validity of the instrument used to measure job satisfaction amongst the courts' client service staff is covered in Chapter 3.

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

A small number of research studies from an extensive field of job satisfaction research are used to illustrate key aspects of the relationship found to exist between job

satisfaction and organizational commitment in a variety of organizational contexts other than in the courts that helps to justify its inclusion in the present study.

The first finding is that respondents are able to distinguish between the extent to which they are satisfied in their job (job satisfaction) and the degree of their attachment and loyalty to their employing organization (organizational commitment) and their involvement in their job (job involvement) (Brooke, Russell, & Price, 1988; Mathieu & Farr, 1991). The second is that job satisfaction and organizational commitment vary in the degree to which they predict other variables of interest such as turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993). The third is that factors such as personal disposition and personality, as well as situational variables, may combine differently to influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Meyer, Irving & Allen, 1998). The fourth is that job satisfaction and organizational commitment are related (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) although there is no consensus about the direction of causality (Curry, Wakefield, Price & Mueller, 1986; Huang & Hsiao, 2007; Mathieu, 1991, Vandenberg & Lance, 1992). The fifth is that the antecedents of job satisfaction and organizational commitment are different (Glisson & Durick, 1988). The sixth is that in regard to the three component model of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), the affective commitment component is a stronger predictor of service quality than is job satisfaction (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004).

Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

Three meta-analytical studies are frequently referred to in the job satisfaction and job performance research literature that have a bearing on whether or not job satisfaction is regarded by researchers as being a strong predictor of job performance. Two studies (Petty, McGee & Cavender, 1984 and Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985) were directly responsible for many subsequent researchers dismissing job satisfaction as an important predictor of job performance. A third meta-analytical study has had some success in shifting researchers' views back to valuing job satisfaction as an important predictor of job performance. This third study illustrates that due to the limitations of prior meta-analytical studies and the misinterpretation of their findings, the true corrected population correlation between job satisfaction and job performance is positive but moderate (Judge, Bono, Thoresen & Patton, 2001). The work by these job satisfaction scholars (Judge et al., 2001) also made another important contribution by clarifying that the direction of causality between job satisfaction

and job performance indicates that job satisfaction causes job performance and not the other way around.

Other job satisfaction researchers suggest that the weakness in the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance can be attributed largely to whether the instrument used to measure job satisfaction has a cognitive rather than an affective orientation. Of the two widely used heterogeneous measures of job satisfaction, the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale (OJS) (Brayfield & Rother, 1951) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss, Davis, England & Lofquist, 1967, as cited in Schleicher, Watt, Greguras, 2004, p. 167), it is the MSQ that has a more cognitive orientation. No reference is made in the MSQ scales to the types of feelings associated with the facet of work being measured nor is any reference made to the degree to which the facet of work being measured evokes positive or negative emotions (Moorman, 1992, as cited in Schleicher, Watt, Greguras, 2004, p. 167). An instrument for measuring job satisfaction with a cognitive orientation may be perceived to be more desirable where the study emphasis is on finding out how individual employees think about their job rather than on how they feel about their jobs.

Job satisfaction researchers studying the relationship between job satisfaction and employee citizenship-like behaviour demonstrate that job satisfaction tends to have a stronger relationship to OCB than is typically found in the job satisfaction and job performance research (Bateman & Organ, 1983, Organ 1977, 1988). A meta-analytical study of OCB research supports the conclusion that the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB is stronger than the relationship between job satisfaction and in-role performance; at least amongst non-managerial and non-professional groups (Organ & Ryan, 1995).

The research on job satisfaction demonstrates its value as a correlate of organizational commitment and an important factor that can influence work-related behaviour that should be explored in the present study as a key factor that could explain variations in service performance amongst the courts' client service staff. The absence of any study of job satisfaction amongst court staff is a gap in the research that the current study addresses.

Measuring Job Satisfaction

Measures of job satisfaction are based upon the assumption that it can be inferred from an individual employee what their attitude is towards their job by using a measurement scale designed to provide an index of satisfaction of different facets of their job (Brayfield &

Rothe, 1951). Job satisfaction researchers are generally not prepared to accept estimates of job attitude from anyone other than the individual employee themselves (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). This leads to job satisfaction measurement instruments being designed for self-rating. At the same time job satisfaction researchers acknowledge the controversy that exists about whether job satisfaction should be measured as a fixed value or as a sum of ratings of facets of the job (Ewen, 1967 as cited in Brayfield & Rothe, 1951, p. 330).

From his work on a general theory of job satisfaction Locke (1996, p. 330) defined overall job satisfaction as “the sum of the evaluations of the discriminable elements of which the job is composed”. However, some job satisfaction researchers conclude that a global measure of job satisfaction is not equivalent to a sum of facet measures of job satisfaction where the facet measures may ignore major determinants of an employee’s satisfaction (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983). Other job satisfaction researchers have been more concerned with introducing and validating the extrinsic and intrinsic facets of a job and with differentiating between the concept of ‘total job satisfaction’ as the sum of all separate facets of a job and a single measure of ‘overall job satisfaction’ (Warr, Cook & Wall, 1979). Literature that reviews one of the mostly frequently used global scales for measuring job satisfaction, the Minnesota Survey Questionnaire (MSQ), along with its relative strengths and weaknesses is discussed in Chapter 3.

The next part of the literature review focuses on four different models for conceptualizing and measuring service quality.

Models of Service Quality

The first part of the literature review on service quality research presented in Subsection 2.2.2 of this chapter addresses the research issues associated with the conceptualization of service quality. This part of the literature review focuses on a brief introduction to three models for conceptualizing and measuring service quality to illustrate how different approaches to conceptualizing service quality are reflected in the different models used in its measurement.

The first model to be introduced exemplifies the ‘European’ School of thinking about the dimensions of service quality and was developed by Gronroos (1992) as cited in Schneider and White (2004, p. 33). This model perceives service quality as the matching of expected quality of service with the perceived quality of the service where service quality

comprises three dimensions: technical quality, functional quality and image (Gronroos, 1982, 1984 as cited in Brady and Cronin, 2001, p. 35). Gronroos developed a six criteria model for 'experiencing service quality' that related to both functional quality and technical quality. While the functional quality dimensions proposed by Gronroos are similar in some respects to those of the SERVQUAL model there are also significant differences in the technical quality dimensions and the concern with the image of the service (Schneider & White, 2004). Reflecting on his model of perceived service quality Gronroos speculated that if he had defined his model in terms of 'perceived service features' rather than 'perceived service quality' "this may have minimized a lot of the debate about how the features of a service differ from what customers perceive they expect and receive from a service" (Gronroos, 2001, p.151). A review of Gronroos' service quality model compared to SERVQUAL in a call centre found that Gronroos' model of perceived service quality provides a more appropriate representation of the service quality dimensions in this service context than does SERVQUAL. However the survey data collected also indicated that the SERVQUAL model was a reliable framework for measuring service quality and that the results replicated the five factor structure of SERVQUAL suggested by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988) (Kang & James, 2004).

A second model of service quality that is widely used by marketing researchers is that of SERVQUAL that was referred to briefly in Subsection 2.2.2. This model conceptualizes service quality as a function of the difference between clients' expectations of service quality and the service they perceive they experience which is described as a 'gap' in perceived quality. SERVQUAL conceived service quality to comprise five dimensions (responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and tangibles) (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985, 1988).

Some marketing researchers have argued that a 'perception-only' measure of service quality does not have the same statistical limitations as the 'gap' model that underpins SERVQUAL that attempts to capture the difference between perceptions of the quality customers expect and the quality they perceive that they receive (Schneider & White, 2004). A third model of service quality, SERVPERF, was developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992) to conceptualize and measure a perception-only model of service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). However, the research indicates that SERVQUAL and SERVPERF are both widely used in service industry and marketing research. "A review of the extant literature points to

SERVQUAL and SERVPERF as being the two most widely advocated and applied service quality scales” (Jain & Gupta, 2004, p.25).

Although only three models for conceptualizing and measuring service quality have been discussed these are just a few of those that are actually available for use (Martinez and Martinez, 2010). One study surveyed nineteen different models for measuring service quality and concluded that the models used tended to vary across the studies examined and to be highly dependent upon the type of service setting, the situation, the time and a variety of other factors (Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005).

The rationale for the choice of SERVQUAL for conceptualizing and measuring service quality amongst the courts’ client service staff and a review of the research literature on measuring service quality using this model that critiques its strengths and weaknesses is present in Chapter 3.

Organizational Citizenship Behavioural Research

The first part of the literature review of research on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) presented in Subsection 2.2.3 of this chapter addresses issues associated with the conceptualization of OCB and its relationship to other key organizational variables of interest in this study. This part of the literature review focuses briefly on research issues associated with different models for OCB measurement. A brief discussion of the reliability and validity of the model selected for measurement of OCB amongst the courts’ client service staff is covered in Chapter 3.

Measuring OCB

The studies of OCB and its measurement highlight some conceptual difficulties that potentially limit the concepts construct validity (Le Pine, Erex & Johnson, 2002; Organ, 1977, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). These issues concern how many dimensions the construct has, how these dimensions are defined, how these dimensions relate to the overall construct of OCB, and how the construct and its dimensions relate to its antecedents, correlates and outcomes (Law, Wong & Chen, 2005; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Pain & Bachrach, 2000; Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006).

The nature of these conceptual and measurement issues has led some OCB researchers to suggest that OCB can be defined either under a 'latent model' where OCB exists at a deeper level than its dimensions or it can be defined under a 'aggregate model' where OCB is viewed as a composite of its dimensions (Law, Wong & Chen, 2005). Other OCB researchers suggest that the solution lies in selecting an existing OCB scale that has the minimum apparent gap between the construct's definition and the scales used to support it (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006).

The most frequently used models for measuring OCB were examined to establish a rationale for supporting the model of OCB to be used in this present study. Eleven models for measuring OCB were considered in terms of conceptual definition, scale development procedures, scale items, content validity and psychometric properties. The majority of studies support the instrument comprising the five factor structure developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) that builds upon the work of Organ (1988) and that has been shown to be fairly reliable over a range of studies (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). Accordingly, the Podsakoff et al. (1990) model was selected to measure OCB amongst the family law courts' client service staff as a global measure of their citizenship-like behaviour.

2.3.5 Summary

A number of research issues emerge from the literature reviewed in this section that are directly relevant to the design of this study. These issues are summarized below:

- There is a tendency in the court security research literature to focus predominantly on issues of physical security, such as the design of courthouses and court rooms, the use of security technology and the deployment of specialist security staff, as strategies for improving the safety of the court environment. This research tends to ignore the role of court staff in court security arrangements, albeit that recent research suggests the need to reconceptualize courts security strategy by focusing on 'soft' system approaches (Wallace et al., 2013). The focus of the present study on the relationship between client service and court safety in the family law courts is consistent with a 'soft' system approach to court security and this one of the main contributions of this study.
- The incidence of family violence and the pervasive nature of its influence on the family law system in Australia is evident in the research literature that supports, the

research proposition that the family law courts can deal effectively with family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts if this situation is known about beforehand.

- The research literature on screening and risk assessment indicates that to be an effective deterrent to family violence in the courts, the courts' staff who perform this role need to be well resourced, trained and supervised. This issue relates directly to the research proposition about the family law courts' decision to fundamentally shift the delivery of its client services in order to better support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients.
- Role theory and the concept of 'role sets' (Katz & Kahn, 1978) provide a rationale for some of the family law courts' client service staff and other court client contact staff being asked for their perspective on the relationship that exists between client service and court safety in the family law courts. Role theory provides a 'lens' for interpreting the way that the courts' client service staff experience their extended service role.
- Consistent with the research on the boundary-spanning behaviour of service providers the extension of the role of the family law courts' client service staff to encompass safety-related behaviours changes their role interface with their clients and their role expectations in a way that could be a source of role conflict and role overload.
- Models for measuring job satisfaction, organizational commitment, service quality and OCB in this study were identified from the research literature. Research on the relationships between these variables in a variety of service contexts other than in the courts supports the contention that the testing of these variables in the family law courts is a contribution of this study.
- The research literature on the measurement of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, service quality and OCB provides support for a decision to treat all four variables as global constructs and to use the focus group as the research method for modifying the service quality measures to better reflect the courts' service setting.
- The research literature indicates that the model used to conceptualize service quality influences how it is measured. The literature supporting the use of SERVQUAL for measuring 'perceived service quality' amongst the family law courts' client service

staff will be examined in detail in Chapter 3 as will the literature supporting the courts' client service staff self-rating their perceived service quality.

The next section of this chapter presents a theoretical framework, developed from the research literature reviewed in Section 2.2 and Section 2.3 of this chapter that illustrates the relationship between this study's two core themes of client service and court security.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This section presents a theoretical framework that illustrates the relationships that are thought to exist between client service and client satisfaction with the service and security support provided by the family law courts. This theoretical framework is used to illustrate how the research and theory reviewed in Section 2.2 and Section 2.3 of this chapter comes together to support this study's focus on the two research questions and six research propositions presented in Chapter 1. This is not a conceptual framework as this study's aim is to extend existing theory to a relatively under researched service context rather than to develop new theory.

The theoretical framework is presented in two parts. Part one of the framework is illustrated in Figure 2.2. Part two of the theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 2.3. Figure 2.2 illustrates the basic elements of the framework and the relationship that is thought to exist between each element of the framework. In this study each relationship was either being tested (using quantitative data) or was being explored (using qualitative data). The specifics of the data required and the data collection methods are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Figure 2.2 also illustrates the link between each element of the framework and this study's two research questions.

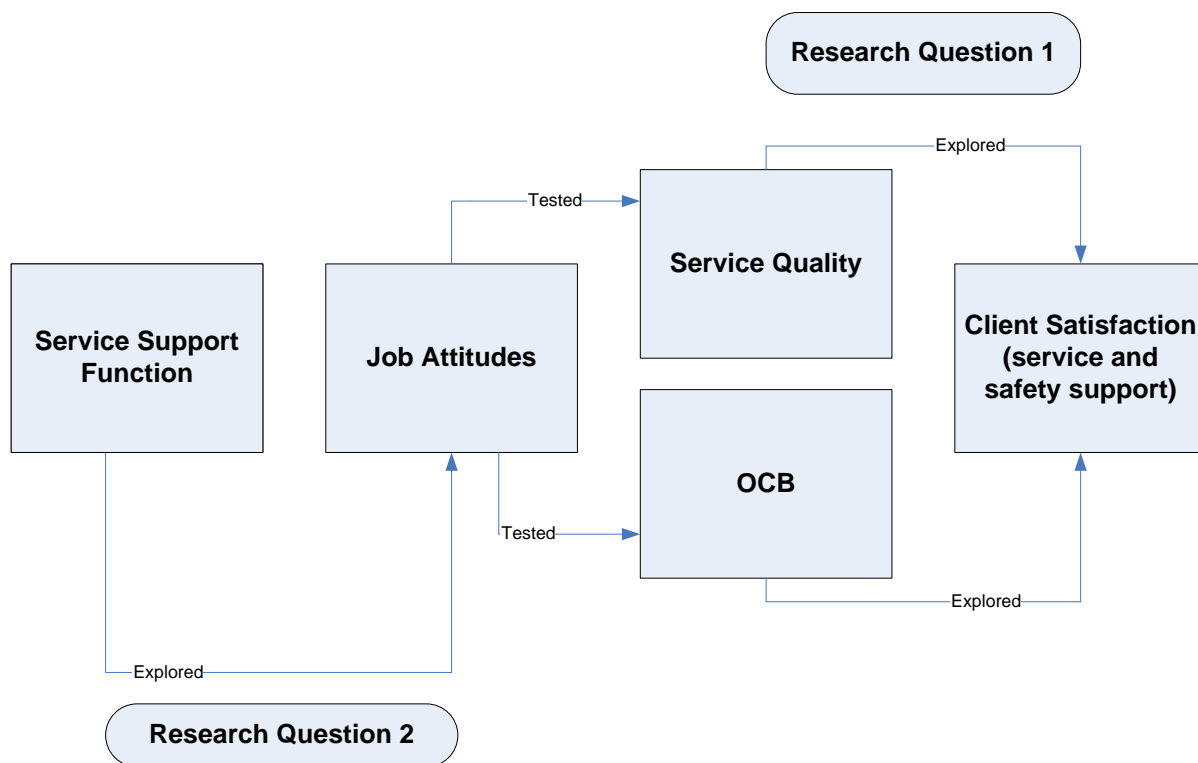


Figure 2.2 – The Theoretical Framework of a Study of Client Service and Court Safety - Part 1

From a theoretical perspective Figure 2.2 can be viewed as a ‘perceptual and behavioural chain of influence’ (Lariviere, 2008) that draws upon models from service industry research such as the ‘service-profit chain’ (Heskett, 1987, Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997) that was developed to apply to private sector service organizations but that could equally apply as a ‘service-value chain’ in the public sector (Vargo, Lush, 2004, 2006) in a human service organization such as the family law courts.

This study’s first research question concerns whether the family law courts’ client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts’ clients. This is illustrated in Figure 2.2 as the relationship between the delivery of perceived service quality provided by the courts’ client service staff and their citizenship like behaviour displayed towards their work colleagues and the satisfaction of the courts’ clients with the service and security support provided by the courts.

This study’s second research question concerns the types of factors that influence the confidence and competence of the family law courts’ client service staff in relation to their boundary-spanning behaviour. This behaviour involves them in referring clients with special needs to external support agencies and in screening and assessing clients at risk of family

violence whilst at court. Figure 2.2 reflects that the confidence and competence of the courts' client service staff to perform their extended service role is likely to be reflected in their job attitudes. Figure 2.2 also reflects that there is a relationship between the courts' service support function, the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff, their service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour and their clients' satisfaction with the services they received (including support for their wellbeing and security concerns).

Figure 2.3 illustrates the theoretical framework in more detail and in doing so it does three things. Firstly it illustrates one boundary aspect of the study design discussed briefly in Subsection 1.7.1 of Chapter 1. This boundary aspect is the one that exists between the courts' client service staff and the courts' clients. Figure 2.3 also introduces two other client contact groups, the courts' Registrars and Family Consultants, who figure predominantly in the provision of support services to the court clients from inside of the courts, and the external support agencies that also play an important role in assisting the courts' clients with special needs from outside of the courts.

The theoretical framework is entirely consistent with the six research propositions discussed in Section 2.5. Four of these propositions relate to the courts' unique service context that plays a large role in shaping the services provided to support the courts' clients and the way these services are delivered and by whom. Two of these propositions concern the relationship that exists between the job attitudes and the job performance of the courts' client service staff and the influence that the courts' service orientation (client-related practices) and the courts' support for their client service workforce (employee related-processes) has on their service performance.

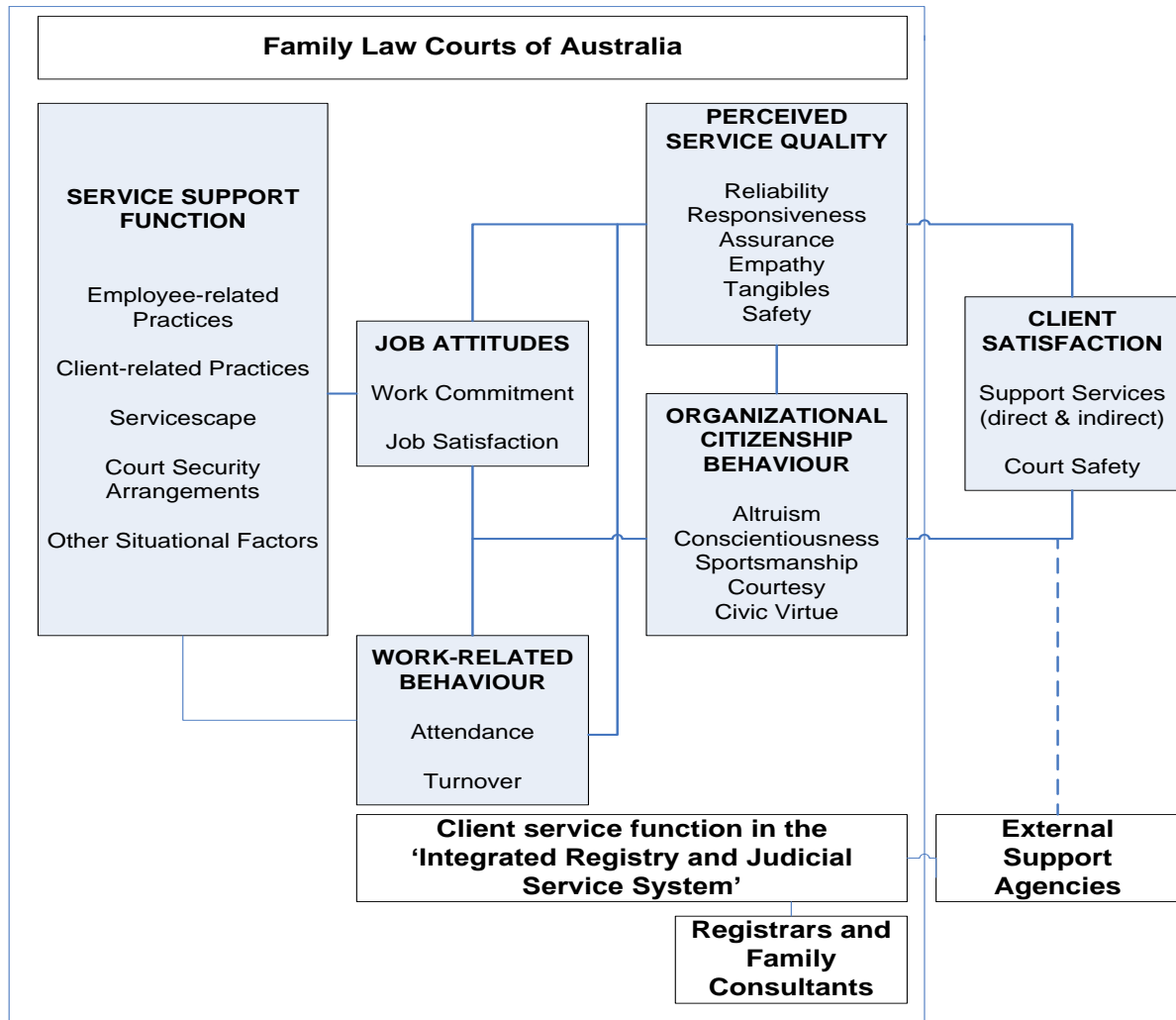


Figure 2.3 – The Theoretical Framework of a Study of Client Service and Court Safety - Part 2

2.4.1 Elements and Dimensions of the Theoretical Framework

Figure 2.3 illustrates the dimensions of each of the element of the theoretical framework. This section provides a brief rationale and justification for each of these dimensions.

The Service Support Function

The first component of the courts’ service support function concerns service employee-related practices. The inclusion of this component draws upon research literature considered in Subsection 2.2.2 that indicates that a service organization’s human resource management practices exert an influence on service employees’ attitudes and work-related behaviours (Schneider, 1980; Schneider & Bowen, 1985; Schneider, 1990; Schneider & Bowen 1993, 1995). This research literature establishes that these practices are necessary but

not sufficient conditions to enable high quality service and that service organizations also need to focus on client-related practices (Chuang & Liao, 2010).

The second component of the service support function concerns research literature covered in Subsection 2.2.2 on service organizations' client-related practices. The service industry research literature establishes that the way that service employees perceive what behaviour is expected and rewarded in the service setting has a direct influence on service employees' job attitudes and job performance (Schneider, 1990; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart & Holcombe, 2000). This research also finds that a service organization's service orientation (reflected in the policies, practices and procedures intended to support and reward service-giving behaviour amongst service employees) helps to create superior service quality. Through their practices service organizations can also influence service employees' attitudes and behaviour and may indirectly influence their clients' satisfaction as well (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Homburg, Hoyer & Fassnacht, 2002; Lytle & Timmerman, 2006; Saura, Contrí & Taulet, 2005).

The third component of the service support function draws from the research on the service environment (covered in Subsection 2.2.2) that has found that how clients perceive the service environment in which the service exchange process takes place will influence their satisfaction and their existing and future consumption behaviour (Bitner, 1992, 2000; Wagner, 2000). It may also affect the job attitudes and behaviour of service employees (Parish, Berry & Lam, 2008).

The fourth component of the service support function draws upon the court security research, the research on family law and family violence, and the research on workplace violence covered in Subsection 2.2.1. There are three features of this research that highlight possible issues to be explored in relation to the court security arrangements in the family law courts. The first feature is that the focus of court security research has traditionally tended to be on physical security (Vossekuil, Borum, Fein & Reddy, 2001) and on the role of specialist security staff (Cooper, 2007) as key strategies for improving court security, and tends to undervalue the role played by court staff in the security function. The second feature is that the increased incidence of violence in the courts in Australia and New Zealand has led to a significant investment being made in physical court security (Sarre & Prezler, 2010) and the introduction of targeted support programs, some of which are aimed at mitigating the risk of

family violence from occurring in family courts (Braaf, & Sneddon, 2007; Frederick, 2008). The third issue is the research finding that the true incidence of workplace violence is underreported (Privitera, 2011) and that a degree of workplace violence can become normalized as part of organizational culture (Schein, 2004). The key question to be explored is whether these trends are also evident in the court security arrangements in the family law courts and how these security arrangements influence the safety-related attitudes and behaviour of the courts' client service staff.

The last component of the service support function reflects service industry research covered in Subsection 2.3.3 that indicates that there are other situational factors, such as role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload, that influence the job attitudes and job performance of service employees performing a boundary-spanning role, (Goolsby, 1992; Tubre & Collins, 2000; Singh, Goolsby & Rhoads, 1994) and that may emerge amongst the courts' client service staff particularly as a result of their expanded service role.

Job Attitudes

The job attitudes element of the theoretical framework has two components: work commitment and job satisfaction. Their inclusion is supported by the service industry and marketing research covered in Subsection 2.2.2 and organizational behaviour research covered in Subsection 2.2.3.

Organizational commitment is amongst the most frequently researched concepts in organizational behaviour (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009) and the 'organizational commitment scale' developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) is amongst the most popular and most frequently used scales to measure organizational commitment (Benkhoff, 1997; Kacmar, Carlson & Brymer, 1999; Cohen, 2007; Meyer & Allen, 2000). The literature also shows that commitment researchers frequently measure more than one form of work commitment in the same study in order to increase the reliability of the assessment rather than to improve the predictive power of their studies. A modest, positive and statistically significant relationship has been found to exist between organizational commitment and job performance (Riketta, 2002, 2008) and in a number of private sector call centres organizational commitment has been found to be a stronger predictor of service quality than job satisfaction (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004).

The service industry research covered in Subsection 2.2.2 indicates that service employees' work-related attitudes and behaviour influence service quality, client satisfaction and service organization outcomes (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Schneider, 1980; Schlesinger & Zornitsky, 1991; Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000). Other service industry research has focused specifically on the relationship between service employees' job satisfaction and commitment and their service-related behaviour, and the influence these job attitudes have on their service quality, their clients' satisfaction, their clients' loyalty and their firm's profitability (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, Schlesinger, 1994; Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1997; Allen & Grisaffe, 2001; Wiley, 1996). Service industry and marketing research also finds that job satisfaction amongst service employees is positively related to their organizational citizenship behaviour that, in turn, influences their service performance and their clients' perceptions of service quality (Bienstock, DeMoranville & Smith, 2003; Payne & Webber, 2006; Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer & Saltz; Niles-Jolly, 2005; Schneider, Bowen, Ehrhart & Holcombe, 2000).

Work-Related Behaviour

Two work-related behaviours are included in the theoretical framework and comprise attendance and turnover. The organizational health research literature reviewed in Subsection 2.2.3 indicates that these are two of the most frequently measured indicators for assessing organizational health that have also been found to influence organizational effectiveness (Wolff, 2003; Patnaik, 2011; Shaw & Delery, 2003). Although these indicators were not measured in the present study their inclusion acknowledges their influence and they are explored for the Family Courts' workforce as a whole in the descriptive statistics presented in Chapter 4. Their inclusion also reflects findings from the service industry and marketing research and organizational behaviour research (covered in Subsection 2.2.3) that indicates that a relationship, albeit a complex one, exists between work commitment, job satisfaction, staff attendance and staff turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000; Huang, 2011; Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009; Lambert & Hogan, 2009; Safie, 1998; Somers, 2009) and can indirectly influence organizational performance.

Perceived Service Quality

The service industry and marketing research covered in Subsection 2.2.2 indicates that service quality is one of the most important variables for explaining clients' future behavioural intentions that impact on service organization effectiveness (Yoon & Suh, 2003).

The theoretical framework in Figure 2.3 illustrates that the five dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988) were chosen to be used to measure service quality (Martinez & Martinez, 2010). Other features of the adaptation of the SERVQUAL model in the present study to fit the service setting experienced by and the safety-related behaviours required of them as well as the rationale for them to self-rate their service quality is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

The theoretical framework illustrates the relationship that exists between the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff and their organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and that their citizenship-like behaviours have an influence on their service quality and the clients' satisfaction. The research findings covered in Subsection 2.2.3 and Subsection 2.3.4 indicate that service employees' job satisfaction and trust in their managers are related to their OCB and their active engagement in OCB relates to their clients' perceptions of their service quality (Yoon & Suh, 2003). Meta-analytical studies have established that OCB has an association with job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and that job satisfaction is related to job performance and OCB when measured at the work unit level (LePine, Erez & Johnson, 2002; Gyekye & Salminen, 2005). The theoretical framework illustrates the five dimensions of OCB developed by Organ (1988) and refined by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter (1990) that were used to measure OCB as a global construct in this current study (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006).

Boundary Role and Boundary-spanning Behaviour

The theoretical framework illustrates the boundary that exists between the family law courts and its clients that places the Integrated Registry and Judicial Services System inside this boundary and the courts' external support agency network outside of this boundary. The research literature covered in Subsection 2.3.3 indicates that an important role is played by boundary-spanning service employees in facilitating their clients' access to other service providers (Pettus & Severson, 2006). The research literature also indicates that the boundary-spanning nature of service providers' roles can be the source of work-related stress that can arise, at least in part, from differing expectations of service providers by their supervisors and managers and their clients about the service quality they expect and experience (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2011; Jex, 1998).

The theoretical framework also illustrates that a relationship exists between the courts' client service staff and other court client contact staff such as Registrars and the Family Consultants. This representation of the relationship is consistent with the research on boundary-spanning units that finds that a single service employee seldom provides a full range of services and that the interface between groups working together to deliver a full range of services is an important role of boundary-spanning employees (Garcia, Cifre & Grau, 2010; Marrone, Tesluk & Carson, 2007) and has a relationship with client satisfaction (Gittell, 2002; Schneider, Parkington & Buxton, 1980).

Client Satisfaction

The research literature covered in Subsection 2.2.2 indicates that client satisfaction is thought to be a separate construct from the concept of service quality (Taylor & Baker, 1994) and the separation of these two concepts is illustrated in the theoretical framework in Figure 2.3. In addition, the five dimensions that form SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1991) are supplemented with an additional dimension on safety that is consistent with the security dimension that was originally identified in an early version of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1985, as cited in Schneider & Bowen, 1985 p. 28).

The next section briefly summarizes the six key research propositions that were used in the present study to contextualize the study and to better explain the logical relationship amongst the basic concepts illustrated in broad terms in the theoretical framework in Figure 2.3.

2.5 Research Propositions

The 'perception and behavioural chain of influence' (Lariviere, 2008) concept illustrated in Figure 2.3 helps to situate the present study's two research questions in relation to existing theories from the extant research but says nothing about the case study context. To address this, six research propositions were developed to identify key aspects of the study context and the key relationships being studied. An illustration of these six research propositions is presented in Figure 2.4.

1. The family law courts can be viewed as public sector human service organizations that have a strong client service orientation
2. There is a prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the family law courts in Australia and they have the processes to deal with it if the risk of family violence is known about beforehand.
3. The family law courts fundamentally shifted the delivery of their client services to better support the well-being and security concerns of their clients.
4. The family law courts' client service staff occupy a boundary role that has been extended to include safety-related behaviours associated with supporting the well-being and security concerns of the courts' clients.
5. The job attitudes of the family law courts' client service staff effects their job performance that includes their safety-related behaviours.
6. The family law courts' orientation and support can also influence client service behaviour, client satisfaction and organizational outcomes

Figure 2.4 Key Research Propositions in the Study of Client Service and Court Security

The first research proposition concerns the type of service organization that best describes the family law courts and indicates it is seen to have a strong client service orientation. The relevance of this proposition concerns the extent to which any findings about the relationship between client service and court security found to exist in the family law courts can be generalized to other courts in Australia and elsewhere.

The second research proposition highlights an important feature of the client group served by the courts and distinguishes the family law courts from other court jurisdictions. This may limit the extent to which generalization can be made.

The third and fourth propositions focus on the courts innovative use of their boundary tier to better support the wellbeing and security concerns of its vulnerable clients. These research propositions sharpen the context of the present study by focusing on the boundary spanning behaviour of the courts' client contact staff and in particular on their safety-related behaviours.

The fifth and sixth research propositions are suggested by research findings of the types of factors that influence the service quality of service providers in other service settings and that should be able to be applied to the courts.

2.6 Summary

The first two sections of this chapter introduce a model that classifies two levels of research and theory that is broadly or directly related to this study. The second section of this chapter discusses research literature in three broadly relevant fields of study: the areas of

safety and security research, service industry and marketing research and organizational behaviour research across ten research subthemes. The third section of this chapter discusses research and theory that is directly relevant to the present study on court security, family violence and family law, role theory, boundary roles and boundary-spanning behaviour of service providers and research on the conceptualization and measurement of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB. The fourth section presents a theoretical framework that illustrates the relationships that exist between the courts' service support function, the job attitudes and behaviour of the courts' client service staff and their clients' satisfaction with the services that they receive that includes the service that client service staff provide to support their wellbeing and security concerns. The fifth section presents six research propositions that address key aspects of the study context and the relationships tested or explored amongst the courts' client service staff.

The next chapter presents a justification of the research methodology and research methods used in this study to obtain a mixture of the data required to answer the present study's two research questions. It explains how the various research methods combine to cover all aspects of each research question. The next chapter also addresses the research issues associated with the unit of analysis underlying this study, the procedures followed for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, the testing of the reliability and validity of the constructs used to conceptualize and measure the job attitudes and job performance of the courts' client service staff, and the delimitations and limitations of the research methodology and research methods.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter describes and explains the research methodology and the research methods used in this study. The chapter is divided into five sections dealing with the study's research design, the qualitative research strand, the quantitative research strand, the mixing of data between research strands, the delimitations and limitations and the relevance, reliability and validity of the research methods used in this study.

Section 3.1 broadly describes the reasons behind the decision to use a mixed research methods design for this study. This section also discusses the added considerations associated with the choice of the unit of analysis and the steps taken to manage ethical aspects of the study including ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all survey respondents.

Section 3.2 begins with a brief discussion about quality in qualitative research and how the issues of validity influenced the design of the qualitative strand of this study. Consideration is then given to the rationale behind the sampling strategy adopted in the qualitative strand and a detailed justification of each of the four qualitative research methods used is provided. This section also discusses the piloting of the protocols for three of the four qualitative research methods in a commercially-oriented Branch of the ACT Public Service. The rationale associated with the use of NVivo for coding and data interpretation of the study's qualitative data is then discussed. The section concludes with a brief summary of the criteria that are used to demonstrate the quality of the design of the qualitative strand of this study.

Section 3.3 focuses on the survey questionnaire used in the present study. This section discusses issues associated with validity and reliability in quantitative research as they apply to this study, the sampling strategy used in the survey of the courts' client service staff, a brief restatement of the reasons supporting the decisions behind the conceptualization and measurement of the independent survey variables, the selection of the dependent variables used in the survey questionnaire and the design of the survey questionnaire. This section also discusses the two pilots of the survey questionnaire; one undertaken in the ACT Public Service and one undertaken in the family law courts. There is then a detailed discussion of

the reliability measures and validity testing undertaken in relation to the survey data that was collected from the family law courts' client service staff. The section ends with a brief summary about the reliability measures and validity tests of the questionnaire used to survey the family law courts' client service staff.

Section 3.4 describes how the data collected using the four qualitative research methods and the data from the survey of the courts' client service staff can be used to address all the elements of the study's two research questions.

Section 3.5 provides a summary of the delimitations and limitations associated with the methodology and research methods used in the present study that may limit any generalizations about the study's findings.

Section 3.6 provides a brief summary of the relevance of the qualitative and quantitative research methods to the six research propositions and two research questions. This section includes a brief restatement of the contention about the reliability and validity of the research methods used.

3.1 The Research Design

This section begins with a discussion of the research strategy that guided the design of the study. The research design used in this study stems directly from the two research questions formulated to address the research problem presented in Chapter 1.

3.1.1 The Research Strategy

The research design the present study includes choices relating to the research problem to be investigated and the research questions to be answered. It also includes the logic used to develop new knowledge (epistemology), the procedures used to generate data (research methods and techniques), and the philosophical and theoretical ideas about how the phenomenon of interest was to be studied (methodology). It also includes the researcher's stance (inside/outside learner) in relation to the phenomenon under study and the researcher's assumptions about reality and how it can be studied (Blaikie, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 1, the present study's research problem concerns the phenomenon of court security and its relationship with court support services. The research questions concern whether, and to what extent, the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to helping make the courts' environment safe, and what types

of factors influence their service performance that includes their safety-related behaviour directed towards supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

None of the traditional (classical or postmodern) paradigms/theoretical perspectives or worldviews outlined in the research methodology literature (Blaikie, 2009, Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) appeared to offer an acceptable solution as to how best to design the present study other than one element (that of Pragmatism) of the four worldviews posited by Creswell (2009). The espoused characteristics associated with Pragmatism, according to Creswell, concern the consequences of action, being problem-centred, being pluralistic and taking a real-world practice orientation. All of these characteristics aligned well with the present study's research problem and research questions. Further examination indicated that Pragmatism is regarded by many researchers as an ideal partner for a mixed research methods design (Greene & Caracelli, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashkкори & Teddlie, 2003).

The choices of other features of the research design (Blaikie, 2009; Morgan, 2007) for the present study included:

- A research strategy that was abductive (encompassing some deductive reasoning associated with interpreting quantitative data and inductive reasoning associated with interpreting qualitative data as well potential data mixing between research strands).
- A 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' approach to investigating the phenomenon of interest.
- The researcher adopting the stance of being an expert (albeit being a cautious realist in that perspective) and looking at the case study organization and the phenomenon of interest from the inside out.

Considerations relating to the types of data needed to answer the present study's two research questions and the research issues associated with a mixed research methodology are addressed in the next two subsections of this chapter.

3.1.2 The Research Matrix

A research matrix was developed at an early stage of the design of this study to facilitate a dialogue with research supervisors and to clarify the types of data that would need to be collected to answer the study's two research questions.

A copy of the research matrix developed for this study is presented at Appendix A of this report and is based upon a 'HERDSA Guide' (Smyth & Maxwell, 2009) for supervision of higher degree research. The matrix reflects that a mixture of different types of qualitative and quantitative data would be needed to answer the study's two research questions.

To answer the present study's first research question concerns collecting data about whether the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients whilst at court. This required a mixture of interviews, focus groups, documentation review and observations. In addition, it was decided that another court system, the courts in South Australia, that have a reputation for being client service oriented (Parker, 1998), would be used as a comparator in relation to the strategies and practices used in the family law courts to support the wellbeing and security concerns of their clients. This comparator with the family law courts was expected to provide richness to the analysis of the security policies and practices operating in the family law courts.

To answer the present study's second research question concerns collecting data to identify the types of factors that influence the confidence and competence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary-spanning role. This was thought to require a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data. Data would also be gathered from focus groups to modify the survey questionnaire to better reflect the service setting.

The outcome of the development of the research matrix and a review of some of the literature on mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) led to a decision to use a mixed research methodology and to explore further the particular research design that would best suit this type of study.

3.1.3 Use of a Mixed Research Methodology

The research literature indicates mixed methods can provide opportunities for collecting rich data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) that enables a better understanding to be gained of complex research problems (Greene & Caracelli, 2003). However, the research literature also suggests that this type of research design might also lead to a mixing of epistemologies and philosophical assumptions that could lessen, rather than enhance, research rigor. One way to address this research issue was to adopt ‘pragmatism’ as the theoretical perspective for selecting inquiry methods (Maxcy, 2003). A definition of pragmatism as a theoretical perspective means using whatever works and deciding upon research methods on the basis of best fit to the study’s research questions and relying on an inductive-deductive inquiry cycle (Morgan, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This philosophical perspective aligns well with the present study that seeks to understand the relationship that exists between two real-world phenomenon, client service and court security, and to explore this phenomenon first hand from the perspective of a number of the parties directly involved in the phenomenon rather than relying only on one party (Menand, 1997). The use a mixture of other types of data also prevents over reliance on participants’ views (Teddlie & Tashkkori, 2009).

The decision to adopt a mixed research methodology left a number of issues associated with the priority, timing and degree of mixing of the data collection process to be determined (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The research design that was adopted is described as a multiple stranded, parallel, mixed research methods design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). There are two strands, one qualitative and one quantitative, and there is limited mixing of data between the two strands. With the exception of the documentation review the two strands occur within a limited time from one another. Although a parallel mixed research methods design has been shown to be complex to conduct due to the time and effort involved (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) this is offset by minimizing the disruption to the family law courts’ support service operations. This was an important consideration in the family law courts decision to participate in this study (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003).

3.1.4 The Unit of Analysis

There are a number of different descriptions given to the term ‘unit of analysis’ in the literature that seem to reflect whether the description relates to quantitative or qualitative

research and whether it relates to a particular discipline or field of study. There is little doubt, however, about the importance of the unit of analysis in a research project (Trochim, 2006).

The unit of analysis is considered to be the most basic element of a research project (Long, n.d.). The unit of analysis is relevant to both qualitative and quantitative research, and can be defined as “the individual case or group of cases that the research wants to express something about when the study is completed and is therefore the focus of all data collection efforts” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.169).

In general terms, the unit of analysis should be particular to the study and the choice of the unit of analysis can be influenced by a variety of factors that include the studied phenomenon, the researcher’s focus, the audience of the research, and the research participants (as opposed to them being the objects of the research) (Matusov, 2007).

Ideally the unit of analysis should be at the level at which generalizations should be possible (Matusov, 2007) and where the range of choices can include individuals, groups, artefacts, geographic units, social interactions, production processes or services (Trochim, 2006). In this study the unit of analysis is the individual client service officer working as part of the family law court’s *Integrated Judicial and Registry Service* (in the the courts’ registry service or the centralized call centre). Given the commonality of registry services within all court systems, it is at this level that generalization about the phenomenon under study (the relationship between court support services and court security) may be possible albeit that the service setting is in a unique type of court system.

The next section outlines the ethical considerations there were managed in a systematic manner.

3.1.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval for this study was obtained under a national ethics application submitted by the Court Safety Project to the University of Western Sydney. The application was approved by the University of Western Sydney’s Committee for Ethics in Human Research (reference number EC00314). The current study was also separately approved by the relevant committee of the Family Court of Australia under its own ‘Research Policy and Guidelines’ (Family Court of Australia, 2008).

A number of steps were taken to obtain the informed consent of all participants and to protect the confidentiality and privacy of respondents in all aspects of the data collection process including the pilots conducted in the ACT Public Service and in the family law courts (Ryen, 2011). All interviews and focus group meetings held in the pilot in the ACT Public Service and in the family law courts required participants to complete consent forms (see Appendix E). In addition, all interview and focus group participants in the pilot in the ACT Public Service and in the family law courts were provided with a copy of the complaints handling protocol (see Appendix F). In relation to survey respondents, the preamble to the survey questionnaire used in the pilot in the ACT Public Service and in the survey of all of the client service staff in the family law courts made it clear that participation in the survey was voluntary and that participation implied that respondents had given their consent to their responses being used as part of the study data (see Appendix I).

An additional step taken to protect individual survey respondent confidentiality in the family law courts involved the use of a numerical identifier instead of the respondent's name, and all responses for individual family law court registries were aggregated into the relevant region to ensure that responses from small registries could not be singled out and identified. No survey questionnaires received from respondents in the pilot conducted in the ACT Public Service and in the family law courts contained any information that could be used to identify individual respondents.

In order to create and maintain the trust of the family law courts in the conduct of the study senior Family Court of Australia executives were briefed, logistical arrangements associated with the data collection phase were developed in consultation with the Family Court of Australia's Regional Registry Managers, regular status reports were provided to the Executive Director, Client Services, of the Family Court of Australia, and the time to collect the data was kept to a minimum to limit the disruption to the family law courts' client service function.

Because it is also important to ensure that qualitative data collected from respondents is kept confidential during the study, the following additional steps were taken:

- Information gathered from interviews and focus group meetings was kept confidential.

- Coded identifiers were given to interview transcripts to protect the identity of the participants.
- All tapes were destroyed after the interview and focus group transcripts were typed and were uploaded using *SpeechExec Dictate Pro. Version 5.0*.
- Electronic data was stored on a computer that required a password for access.
- Raw data was stored in locked filing cabinets.
- The researcher did not pass on any sensitive information that could be attributed to any particular individual or area of the pilot study or in the family law courts.
- Anonymity was maintained for all interviewees and focus group participants involved in the pilot conducted in the ACT Public Service and for participants involved in all interview and focus groups conducted in the family law courts.

3.1.6 Summary

A major strength of the research design for this study was the collection of a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research data and the limited but useful mixing of data between the qualitative and quantitative strands. It was originally thought that the dominant or primary source of data for this study would be the quantitative strand. However, as the study progressed it soon became evident that while the quantitative strand did address an important issue about the relationship between the job attitudes and job performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff it did not go beyond that relationship. In contrast, the qualitative strand of the study's design offered breadth and depth in terms of a mixture of different types of qualitative data that not only amplified the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study but also led to the emergence of a factor that had been identified from the service industry literature but was not associated with the study context at that stage. This factor (work-related stress) was found to influence service performance amongst some of the courts' client service staff and is covered in more detail in Chapter 6.

3.2 The Qualitative Research Strand

This section of the chapter has seven subsections. Subsection 3.2.1 covers issues about quality in qualitative research and the implications for the design of this study. Subsection 3.2.2 outlines the sampling strategy used in the quantitative strand of this study.

Subsection 3.2.3 provides a detailed discussion of the piloting of the protocols associated with three of the four qualitative research methods used in this study in a Branch of the ACT Public Service. Subsection 3.2.4 provides a detailed justification of the four research methods used in the qualitative strand. Subsection 3.2.5 outlines the reasons for the choice and use of NVIVO for coding, data management, and data interpretation of transcripts of interviews and focus groups conducted in the family law courts. Subsection 3.2.6 briefly refers to one delimitation and one limitation associated with the qualitative research methods used in this study. Subsection 3.2.7 provides a brief summary of the relative strengths of the qualitative stand of this study in terms of the criteria commonly used to assess the validity of qualitative research.

3.2.1 Validity Issues in Qualitative Research

Validity in research can generally be viewed as “the state or quality of being sound, just and well-founded...which are all reasonable components of all investigations, be they qualitative or quantitative or mixed” (Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001, p.523). Another definition of validity in qualitative research suggests that “traditionally, validity in qualitative research involves determining the degree to which researchers’ claims about knowledge corresponds to the reality (or research participants’ construction of reality) being studied” (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, as cited in Cho & Trent, 2006, p.320).

The terms reliability and validity are understood to be located in the contemporary scientific research paradigm (Seale, 2002) and that the initial conceptualizations of validity in qualitative research have been applied directly from reliability and validity standards developed for quantitative research. The perceived incompatibility of these terms with the underlying assumptions and principles associated with good quality qualitative research is understood to have led to these standards being translated by using an interpretative perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Whittemore, Chase & Mantle, 2001, p. 523).

A distinction between primary and secondary validity criteria in qualitative research is advanced by one study based upon a synthesis of contemporary validity criteria development (Whittemore et al., 2001). Two of the four primary validity criteria concern the credibility and authenticity of the research. The first criterion concerns the extent to which the research results reflect the experiences of the participants, or the context or both in a believable way. The second criterion concerns the interpretations given to research results that appear

trustworthy, whether differences in perspective are evident and whether there are multiple, socially constructed and sometimes conflicting realities exposed by the research (Whittemore et al., 2001). The third and fourth validity criteria are criticality and integrity. Criticality concerns whether the research design demonstrates evidence of critical appraisal that searches for alternative meanings for the phenomenon under study. Integrity concerns whether the result demonstrates there is evidence of critical reflection and analysis of findings that should also be evident in the process of interpretation (Whittemore et al., 2001).

A second study defining validity criteria in qualitative research stresses that qualitative researchers do not need to be able to demonstrate they can reconcile the different positions of different authors on the issue of quality in qualitative research before they can benefit from engaging in a discussion about how the issues effect their own research efforts. It highlights that trustworthiness is at the heart of discussion of validity in qualitative research (Lincoln & Gruba, 1985, as cited in Seale, 2002, p.107).

A third study describes two different processes, labelled ‘transactional’ and ‘transformational’ validity, for achieving quality in qualitative research. Transactional validity is achieved through an interactive process being followed by the researcher and their research participants to achieve a higher level of accuracy in the interpretation of their research results that can involve member checking, bracketing and triangulation. Transformational validity is achieved through a deeper, more self-reflective and empathetic understanding being demonstrated while working with research participants (Cho & Trent, 2006).

The research literature on quality in qualitative research highlights a number of research issues relevant to this study. The first is that all research involves interpretation and judgement at all stages (research design, data generation, data analysis and interpretation) and at all phases of the analysis and interpretation process (from pre-understanding through to explanation of the qualitative or quantitative data). The second is that research should involve more than a description of results and should offer some form of ‘conceptualization and condensation’ of the results. This resonates strongly with the way the findings and conclusions chapter of this research report are approached (Gummesson, 2003). The third is a caution about researchers seeing quantitative research as the ‘gold standard’ and the

importance of understanding how qualitative research allows the researcher to go beyond the causal/mechanical relationship to the factors that shape the relationship (Maxwell, 2004).

3.2.2 The Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy for qualitative research should meet a number of requirements. It should flow logically from the research questions, it should follow the assumptions underlying the sampling technique(s) used and it should generate a thorough data base for addressing the research questions. It also needs to allow the researcher to draw inferences from the data collected, involve a data collection process that is both feasible and efficient and allow for the transferability of the findings and conclusions derived from the results (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In this present study purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used. In relation to the interview phase of the data collection process a purposive sample was devised that involved two dimensions, the role of the participant and the location of the court registry where they worked. Five employment positions were identified for the interview phase: client service officers, judicial and registry service team leaders and operational managers, Regional Registry Managers, Registrars and Family Consultants. These position types were selected to obtain different perspectives on the relationship that existed between the courts' support services and court security. Another consideration was that the 'role set' of a client service officer includes their colleagues, their team leaders and managers, Registrars and Family Consultants, and their clients (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Seven court registries that represented a representative sample of large, medium and small court locations were selected from the nineteen registries operated by the family law courts. In addition, the family law courts' national enquiry centre was also included in the sample. The same purposive sample was used for conducting non-participant observations of the court environment in the seven locations to assess those locations from a service and a security perspective.

A convenient sampling strategy was used for selecting focus groups from a representative sample of client service officers in four of the seven court registries used for the interview and non-participant observation phases of the qualitative data collection process.

3.2.3 The Piloting of the Qualitative Research Protocols

The data collection protocols developed for interviews, focus groups and non-participant observations for use in the family law courts were piloted in a non-court public sector service organization before they were used in the courts.

The pilot study organization is a specialist, commercially-oriented service organization in the ACT Public Service. The pilot site was selected because it operates a large centralized call centre and four service sites of reasonable size. In addition, the call centre in the pilot site has an information dissemination role and a transaction processing role similar to that operating in the family law courts' national enquiry centre. The roles of the client service staff working in the four service sites and the call centre are broadly similar to those of staff working in the family law courts' client service areas. The pilot organization was also selected because of its proximity and familiarity to the researcher and because of the willingness of the responsible senior executive to allow the researcher access to the organization to test the qualitative and quantitative research protocols to be used in the family law courts.

One of the two main aims of the pilot study was to test the interview, focus group and non-participant observation protocols before they were used in the family law courts. The pilot study was not intended to collect data for the study albeit that some of this data was used for comparison purposes in validity test of the survey of the family law courts' client service staff. Not using the data from the pilot study minimizes the possible limitation of data contamination and bias commonly associated with this study (van Tijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

The interview, focus group and non-participant observation protocols used in the pilot study were similar to those used in the family law courts. Informed consent was obtained and the confidentiality of interview and focus group respondents was assured. The pilot study involved: three focus groups, two small group semi-structured in-depth interviews, and one semi-structured in-depth interview with a small sample of client service staff, operational managers and the Senior Executive responsible for the pilot site. The pilot study also included non-participant observations in the pilot site's call centre and two of the pilot organization's four service sites.

Following the pilot study a number of modifications in form and content were made to the interview, focus group and non-participant observation protocols, before they were used in the family law courts. The main benefit of the piloting of the qualitative protocols was in promoting the researcher's reflection on and confidence in the use of these protocols.

3.2.4 The Research Methods

This section discusses the rationale behind the choice of the four qualitative research methods used in this study: interviews, focus groups, non-participant observations and documentation review.

Interviewing

The interview technique used in this study was the 'semi-structured interview' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The intention in using this technique was to have a pre-defined set of discussion topics as interview questions (with slight modification depending upon the role of the participants) but to allow sufficient flexibility for issues to emerge during the interview process and for these issues to be followed up during the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Flick, 2002; Fontana & Fey, 2005). These interviews were 'in-depth' because the interpretation of the resultant data occurred during the interview process, throughout the field stage of the data collection process, and then during the coding of the interview transcripts (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2007; Richards, 2009).

Scope of the Interviews

The first phase of the interview process involved two senior representatives from the family law courts and a senior representative of the Court Administration Authority of South Australia. The latter representative was selected because his organization had a reputation for being innovative in court security and for being very client service oriented (Parker, 1998). These three interviews focused on obtaining information about the types and features of support services offered by these courts and the security arrangements designed to help their clients feel safe and secure whilst at court.

The second phase of the interview process involved twenty seven separate individual and small group interviews comprising fifty one participants. The interview participants covered the five role sets identified in the sampling strategy. Participants consisted of a sample of client service staff from three of the family law courts' registries (Sydney, Parramatta, Adelaide), and the family law courts' national enquiry centre in Parramatta, a

sample of their team leaders and operational managers from seven court registries, the four Regional Registry Managers and a sample of the Registrars and Family Consultants from four family law courts' registries (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide). The total number of interviews conducted and the number of interview participants is provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Interview Participants

Role	Number of Interviews	Total Number of Participants Interviewed
Client Service Officers (or those in equivalent roles)	4	19
Team Leaders, Operational Managers and Regional Registry Managers	15	16
Registrars	4	8
Family Consultants	4	8
Senior Executives	3	3
Total	30	54

The team leaders, operational managers and Regional Registry Managers, and the senior court executives mainly participated in one-on-one interviews whereas the client service staff, Registrars and Family Consultants mainly participated in small group interviews. The interviews with client service staff, team leaders, operational managers, Registrars and Family Consultants were face-to-face and were held in one or more of seven locations: Sydney, Parramatta, Newcastle, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Darwin. These locations were selected by the Family Court of Australia as being representative of large, medium and small Court registries serving a diverse group of constituents. The Regional Registry Managers were interviewed either by telephone or face-to-face - whichever arrangement was most convenient for them.

Other than for the senior court representatives and the Regional Registry Managers, the interview participants were selected by the office of the family law courts' four Regional Registry Managers with the researcher nominating the desired role sets, the locations and the suggested numbers of staff to be interviewed. This is a delimitation associated with the way

the interview scope was determined and is discussed under delimitations and limitations associated with the presents study's methodology and research methods in Section 3.5.

Some descriptive statistics on the client service staff who participated in interviews and focus groups are provided at Appendix C. This data shows that the client service staff interviewed were predominantly female, the majority were middle aged, most had secondary school education and the majority had ten or more years of service in the family law courts. As discussed in Chapter 5, this profile closely matches the profile of those who completed the study's on-line survey questionnaire in the family law courts.

The Registrars who were interviewed were an equal mix of women and men, all had tertiary education, and most had significant work experience with five to ten years of experience working in the family law courts. The Family Consultants who were interviewed were mainly female, all had tertiary education and all had five to ten years of work experience in the family law courts. One similarity between the client service staff, the Registrars and the Family Consultants who were interviewed was their considerable length of service with the family law courts. The main differences between them were the level of education and the fact that the Registrars and Family Consultants all had a professional status within the family law courts and with their clients whereas the client service staff did not.

The Interview Protocols and Interview Questions

Two protocols were developed for managing the interview process. One was developed specifically for use in the interviews with the senior executive court representatives from the Family Court of Australia and the Courts Administrative Authority of South Australia and one was developed for use with the remainder of the interview participants. Copies of the two interview protocols are provided at Appendix D and Appendix E. The associated 'Consent Form' and the 'Complaint Handling Procedure' used in all interviews are provided at Appendix F and Appendix G respectively.

The protocol developed for use with the senior court representatives was drawn in part from the relevant courts' Annual Reports and the descriptions they provided of the types of client support services offered to court clients (Family Court of Australia, 2010a; Courts Administration Authority, 2008) and in part from the comparative study of Australian courts and the public undertaken by Parker (1998). The interview protocol was explorative and thematic in nature (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The actual interview approach for the senior

executive court representatives took into account subtleties relating to interviewing elites (Kvale, 2007). The information that was sought in these interviews related to both of the research questions and followed comparison and contrast of the different emphases given to strategies for creating and sustaining a secure court environment that included various types of client support services.

The protocol for the interviews of client service staff, their team leaders and managers and the Registrars and Family Consultants was also thematic and explorative in nature. The protocol drew primarily from the research literature on client service, court security and family violence. Depending upon the roles performed by the interview participants, the interviews tended to vary in the emphasis placed upon the two research questions and associated themes and subthemes. The interests of Registrars differed somewhat from those of the Family Consultants and the interests of the client service staff differed from those of their team leaders and managers. To some extent the interview protocol provided the broad framework for discussion but the interests of the interviewees dictated some aspects of the discourse (Kvale, 2007). In one group interview there were both Registrars and Family Consultants present but in all other interviews only staff performing the same role were included. This role separation meant that the functional roles performed by interview participants (Biddle, 1986) guided the interview discourse to some extent and this was significant in the data analysis and interpretation process that followed (Richards, 2009).

Focus Groups

The research literature on focus groups indicates that it is unusual to mix interviews and focus groups in the same qualitative research design but that it can be done when the need arises (Barbour, 2007). As illustrated in the research matrix (Appendix A), the present study had multiple data collection purposes that required the inclusion of focus groups with their interactive aspect of data collection (Flick, 2002). The primary purpose was to have an “organized discussion with a select group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic” (Gibbs, 1997, p.1). The focus group was selected for this study for five reasons:

1. To gain a better understanding of how the family law courts’ client service staff saw the concept of service quality.

2. To get the family law courts' client service staff to help refine the language adapted from the SERVQUAL part of the survey questionnaire to be used for measuring service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988).
3. To get the family law courts' client service staff to select two targets of work commitment that they considered were the most relevant to them. This data served to further customize the survey questionnaire to the service setting.
4. To obtain the views of the family law courts' client service staff about whether they saw safety planning as a core or as a non-core responsibility.
5. To better understand what focus group participants thought about the factors that influence service provider performance, and the extent to which they contributed to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the family law courts' clients.

Scope of the Focus Groups

Four focus group meetings with various members of the family law courts' client service staff were held in the courts' registries in Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle and Darwin. These locations were selected on the same basis as that used to select the locations for the interviews (size and representativeness). The number of participants in each focus group ranged from three to seven. All participants of the focus groups were client service staff and they were selected by the office of the relevant Regional Registry Manager. The discussions with focus groups were conducted face-to-face. The descriptive statistics on the profile of the client service staff who participated in the focus group meetings was similar to those who participated in the interviews and this data is provided in combined form at Appendix C.

Focus Group Protocol and Questions

The protocol developed for focus group meetings presented at Appendix H has five sections that roughly align with the five purposes of the focus group meetings. The data from the focus group meetings was used in addressing both of the study's research questions and to refine aspects of the study's survey questionnaire.

The first part of the focus group protocol used two different ways to encourage participants to express their general views about the characteristics of service quality. One involved them discussing a list of predefined characteristics of service quality derived from

the service industry research literature (Schneider & White, 2004). The other involved the use of a critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) to get participants to talk about their experience in relation to either very good or very bad service exchanges (Bitner, Booms & Mohr, 2001; Bitner, Booms & Tetreault, 1990).

The second part of the focus group protocol involved participants reading through a handout that listed the standard nineteen SERVQUAL script items (see Appendix J) covering the five dimensions of Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness and Tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991) and getting them to make suggestions about modifying the language to remove any ambiguity and to identify any gaps.

After the concept of work commitment had been explained to them, the third part of the focus group protocol involved asking participants to identify the two most important targets of their commitment from a predefined list.

The fourth part of the focus group protocol involved participants in a discussion about safety and security at court that touched on issues relating to safety culture and safety climate (Antonsen, 2009; Flin, Mearns, O'Connor & Bryden, 2000).

The fifth part of the focus group protocol made use of a series of topics from service industry research to stimulate discussion about the factors perceived to influence service providers' attitudes and behaviour in the family law courts.

Non-participant Observation

The third qualitative research method was non-participant observation. Non-participant observation (Handley, 2011) was the method selected for collecting data on how the family law courts' registries work as servicescapes from a physical and social perspective (Bitner, 1992, 2000) and in terms of the architectural features (Kennedy & Tait, 1999) and how they aspects influence service quality and court security arrangements (Barrett, 2009).

Observation as a research method, whether it is undertaken as a participant, non-participant or the middle ground, presents a number of research issues. These include choices about where and how the observation is done and the steps taken by the researcher to avoid being swamped by the amount of available data and how the researcher maintains consistency between observations at different physical sites (Creswell, 2007).

Non-participant observation, with the researcher as the observer, was selected because the researcher made no claims to be a participant or to understand the setting and what was being observed (Handley, 2011). Non-participant observation was also selected because it enabled the researcher to study, albeit superficially, those who worked in some of the family law courts' registries and in the national enquiry centre in their "natural setting" (Baker, 2006, p. 171) and to see how the clients accessed the family law courts' registries and to better understand how the courts' staff and the courts' clients might see the courts' built environment from a client service and a court security perspective.

Observation is considered to be part of an array of 'unobtrusive' qualitative research methods so described because the research participants are not aware that they are being studied (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2007). Despite its strengths in terms of being simple to implement and a cost-effective data collection methods there are some disadvantages associated with observation. These include the possibility of bias entering into the selection of the sites or situations being observed, difficulties of ensuring what is being observed is really what the research participants are perceiving, and the difficulty of some aspects of the phenomenon being studied not being visible when the observation takes place (Flick, 2002; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2007).

Scope of Non-participant Observations

As indicated in the sampling strategy, non-participant observations were carried out in each of the seven family law court registries (Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Parramatta, Newcastle and Darwin) that were visited to conduct interviews and/or focus group meetings.

Unless an opportunity was provided to tour the whole of the court building all non-participation observations, except the one conducted in the national enquiry centre, were undertaken in the public foyer of the courts' registry and in the registry area. A tour of the whole of the court building was offered and taken up in three of the family law courts' locations (Adelaide, Newcastle and Darwin).

The Non-participant Observation Protocol

To gain a degree of consistency, structured non-participant observation (using a prescribed format for capturing data generated from the observation process) was used in preference to unstructured non-participant observation. The research literature indicates that

structured observations tend to rely on prior theory or research (Sage Research Methods Online, n.d.). In the present study, the basic protocol used to conduct and document the non-participant observations was initially developed for use in the national Court Safety Project as a ‘user jury’ checklist. Consequently this checklist already had a degree of legitimacy for use as a non-participant observation tool in courts in general. The non-participant observation protocol that was developed for use in the family law courts (presented at Appendix I) was first used in the pilot study in the ACT Public Service to test its general usefulness in both shop fronts and a call centre. The protocol was then modified to make it more suitable for use in the courts’ registries and call centre.

The non-participant observation protocol included standard data categories such as the layout of the building, the nature of the services being observed, the various ways that the services being observed were provided (face-to-face, telephone, via websites), the layout of the registry, the foyer and the waiting room, the location of external agencies providing support services and the location and type of security facilities in the building surrounds, the screening equipment, the disposition of security staff, and the existence of CCTV equipment.

Research Benefits of Non-participant Observation

The research suggests there are a number of benefits of participant and non-participant observation. One benefit is that they provide a mechanism to obtain a rich source of data in a way that involves limited time and effort (Sage Research Methods, n.d.). The use of non-participant observation also enables a better understanding of the context in which studies are being undertaken (Cooper, Lewis & Urquhart, 2004). It was also useful in providing a broader perspective of the phenomenon of client service and court security that was being studied (Jorgensen, 1989). In addition, non-participant observation was useful as an aid in understanding how the family law courts’ service orientation could be displayed in the architecture of its registries from the perspective of them being viewed as a servicescape and the way that this tends to vary between large, medium and small court registries.

Documentation Review

The fourth qualitative research method used in the present study falls into the category of document analysis but was more akin to a literature review that involved a range of policy, procedural and practice documents that related to the operation of the family law courts and court security arrangements in other court systems. The review process that was

used had a semi-structured, systematic dimension and an unstructured, non-systematic dimension. Both types of approach are consistent with the theory relating to document analysis (Bowen, 2009). The semi-structured, systematic dimension of the documentation review process was linked to a formal request from the national Court Safety Project to all project partners, which included the family law courts, to document various aspects of their operation from a court safety and security perspective. The documents obtained from the family law courts were supplemented by an unstructured, non-systematic process of collecting documents from various sources on the themes of client service, court security and family violence. While document content is an important source of data and deserves systematic analysis it is acknowledged that focusing on document content alone is limited by not knowing how, when and where the documents were produced and how these documents influence human interaction in the organization under study (Prior, 2011).

Scope of Documentation Review Process

A wide range of different types of documents were obtained and analysed included documents on public sector administration, work-related stress in the public sector, court administration, court safety, family violence, court reform, contemporary issues in family law, community issues in family law and court security, service quality, and human resource management policies and procedures.

Approach to Documentation Review

The research literature on document analysis in social science research suggests that the focus of this form of analysis could either be on the content of the documents or on the use and the functions of the documents being analysed (Prior, 2011). The primary approach to documentation review used in the current study was to focus on how the documents were intended to be used as they related to client service and court security in the family law courts.

The documentation review process helped address both research questions but more specifically it provided insights into the strategies being used to help create and sustain a safer court environment and some of the factors that may influence the job attitudes and job performance of the family law courts' client service staff. Of particular relevance was a series of documents commissioned by the Federal Attorney General's Department concerning

the impact of family violence on the family law system in Australia that led to further changes to the Family Law Act (1975).

Research Benefits of Documentation Review Process

The research literature indicates that in some research designs, document analysis may be treated as a supplementary or secondary source of research data (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011; Bowen, 2009). The documentation reviewed in this study was a secondary but nonetheless useful source of data, and the process of collecting and reviewing documents continued as new sources of relevant material were identified.

3.2.5 The Use of NVivo

The decision to use computer software to aid in the analysis of the qualitative data was made with the nature of the data rather than the methodological considerations foremost in mind (Flick, 2002). Prior consideration was not given to the delimitations associated with using a logical, hierarchical computer generated structure for coding and storing data, nor was any prior consideration given to the possibility of the software distracting the researcher from reading and understanding the text derived from the data (Flick, 2002). Rather, consideration was primarily given to the benefits of using a computer program for logically organizing and storing text data and use of the software's search and inquiry tools for facilitating comparative data analysis (Bazeley, 2003).

Considerable thought was given to the approach that was to be followed using NVivo 8 for analysing the qualitative data. The research design included the adoption of a thematic analytical approach focused on the study's two research questions concerning the relationship between client service and court security and the factors influencing service performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff.

The two research questions were expanded into an array of themes and subthemes identified in the research literature review process (Rapley, 2011). The themes underlying the two research questions were used, prior to coding the interview and focus group transcripts, to set up a series of nodes. Other nodes were created as the coding process progressed (Richards, 2009). Coder reliability was mainly achieved by the researcher being the sole coder and the researcher periodically recoding a section of various transcripts and checking that the coding was consistent over time. In addition, in some parts of the analysis the researcher revisited the un-coded transcripts to gain a perspective on the key themes and

comparison with the reports on the most frequently reported topics from the coded transcripts.

The identification of the roles of participants was used as a way of organizing the interviews and focus groups and this enabled comparisons to be made between different perspectives on the same theme or subtheme when the transcripts were coded (Richards, 2009). The potential theoretical bias arising from using the themes of client service and court security and the subthemes identified from the research literature was offset by the interpretive coding process that was facilitated by the use of NVivo 8. The interpretive coding process allowed the researcher to be both 'in the detail' of the text and 'to be removed' from the text (Richards, 2009).

The specific advantages of using NVivo 8 to code and analyse the interview and focus group transcripts lay in three key features of the NVivo 8 software: the flexibility it allowed for interpretive coding, the facility it provided for the management of ideas through the nodal structure, and the capacity it provided to generate enquiries and reports on the most frequently discussed topics (Bazeley, 2007). The final advantage of using NVivo 8 was that it was freely available and widely used within the University of Canberra (where the researcher was located). In addition, it is widely used by other Australian tertiary institutions so that training and support was readily available when it was needed.

3.2.6 Summary

The research literature suggests that qualitative researchers need to be explicit about how and why they choose specific criteria for legitimizing the robustness of their inquiry (Tobin & Bagley, 2004). The contention of this study is that the qualitative strand of the study had quality both in its design and in its execution.

A systematic approach was taken to the design of the qualitative strand through the careful selection of the research methods used. The sampling strategy that was used ensured a diversity of perspectives was obtained while balancing considerations of time, effort and the cost of data collection. A significant effort was made to test the protocols before they were used in the family law courts. The researcher read about and reflected on each research method used as the data collection process was underway. This not only provided added insights about the research methods but also helped support the trustworthiness of the interpretation of the data collected.

In the interview phase, a conscious effort was made to establish confidence in the breadth and depth of perspectives obtained on court support services and court security. This was achieved by comparing and contrasting perspectives amongst different senior executive court representatives and by seeking to distinguish between differences in perspectives amongst five role sets that included client service staff, their team leaders, their operational and Regional Registry Managers, Registrars and Family Consultants. The semi-structured, in-depth nature of the interview process allowed new themes and subthemes to emerge that were not anticipated from the literature review.

The focus groups enabled different meanings and experiences of the participating client service staff to emerge that reflected their lived experience in relation to positive and negative aspects of the delivery of court support services, provided them with a choice of the forms of work commitment that were most relevant to their work experience in the courts, and allowed them to modify the way that perceived service quality was measured that reflected the language relevant to their service setting.

The use of NVivo for coding and interpretation of the transcripts for the interviews and focus group meetings commenced with predetermined themes derived from the literature review process but allowed for new themes and subthemes to emerge through the reading of the transcripts and through the generation of reports on the most frequently discussed topics.

The richness of the data obtained from interviews and focus group meetings was supplemented by non-participant observations and documentation review as well as from data obtained from the open-ended section of the survey questionnaire. An effort was made to remain faithful to the description of lived experience of participants by relying on the verbatim transcript to identify themes and subthemes of relevance.

3.3 The Quantitative Research Strand

This section of the chapter covers issues associated with the survey questionnaire used in the quantitative strand of the research. In particular, this section covers the design of the survey questionnaire, the conceptualization and measurement of work commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). This section covers the choice of demographic and organizational variables, the piloting of the survey questionnaire in the ACT Public Service and in the family law courts, information about the survey population and the response rates achieved in the survey of all of the family law

courts' client service staff. This section also covers reliability measures and validity testing of the survey data from the family law courts' client service staff, delimitations and limitations associated with the design and implementation of the survey questionnaire. Finally the section presents a summary on how the survey questionnaire used in this study is seen to be 'fit for purpose'.

3.3.1 Reliability and Validity Issues in Quantitative Research

In the discussion of reliability and validity issues relevant to this study's quantitative research strand it is acknowledged that there are theoretical, perceptual, conceptual, demographic and practical issues that can influence whether quantitative research data collected during this study can be considered reliable and valid.

A survey questionnaire is considered reliable if its repeated use results in consistent scores from survey respondents when there is consistency in the constructs being measured (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003). Of the four types of reliability the one most applicable to the survey undertaken in this study is 'internal consistency reliability'. This type of measurement reliability is relevant when you want to know whether the items on a survey questionnaire measure only one construct (Salkind, 2011). Internal consistency reliability is relevant to the survey questionnaire used in this study because this questionnaire measures a number of constructs that use a number of statements or items that are summed to form a total score for the construct (work commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB). The coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha) is commonly used for testing for internal consistency reliability and ranges in value from 0 to 1 with values >0.6 regarded as acceptable (Hair et al., 2003).

In addition to internal consistency reliability there are a number of other considerations that can influence measurement reliability such as whether there is a minimum of three items in the scale used to measure a particular construct and whether the items in a particular measurement scale are positively correlated with each other.

To assess measurement validity, researchers commonly use three approaches: content validity, construct validity and criterion validity (Hair et al., 2003). Each of these three approaches was used to establish the validity of the scales used to measure all of the key survey variables in this study and the results are discussed in Subsection 3.3.3.

The conceptual issues that can influence measurement reliability and validity of the key survey variables used in this study's survey were first discussed in Subsection 2.3.4 of the preceding chapter and are again discussed briefly in Subsection 3.3.3 of this chapter. The issues of reliability and validity were upper-most in the choice of the models and scales used to measure these key survey variables in this study.

The pattern of a respondent's scores on a survey questionnaire can help researchers understand the meaning given to a particular construct. Factor analysis was used to examine whether a multidimensional construct, such as organizational commitment, was being interpreted in a consistent manner by all survey respondents. Factor analysis was used in relation to four of the five key survey variables measured in this study's survey: organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour. No factor analysis was undertaken of the measurement of overall job satisfaction using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. This is because this measurement scale has been shown to be valid across a range of research studies and because the present study had no interest in distinguishing between the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of this scale (Fields, 2002, Spector, 1997).

The use of self-rating for all key survey variables has implications for the validity of this study's survey results. The research literature suggests that it is commonplace for organizational behavioural researchers to have survey respondent rate their own job attitudes and that it is often more desirable to have supervisors, peers, or even clients rate their job performance if other more objective forms of performance data are not readily available. However, even self-rating of job attitudes has been questioned (Goffin & Gellatly, 2001). The use of self-rating and its implications for the validity of the survey results in this study's survey is discussed in more detail in Subsection 3.3.7 of this chapter.

3.3.2 The Sampling Strategy

The courts' client service staff numbered 291 employees employed or engaged in the courts' client service function across its nineteen court registries. The courts had a history of regularly using 'Survey Monkey' to develop and administer staff surveys. Because the courts' allowed the researcher to use 'Survey Monkey' to survey the courts' client service staff for this study it was not necessary to develop a survey sampling strategy as the whole of

the courts' client service workforce was accessible via an on-line survey questionnaire using 'Survey Monkey'.

Subsection 3.3.6 of this chapter briefly discusses the administration of the survey, the survey population, how incomplete survey responses were dealt with and what the final survey response rate was. Section 4.1 of Chapter 4 analyses the demographic and organizational characteristics associated with the survey respondents and argues that the survey results should be able to be generalized to the whole of the population from which they were drawn.

3.3.3 Conceptualization and Measurement of the Survey Variables

This part of the section recaps on the reasons that support the decisions made about the measurement of work commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB and provides a definition of the components or dimensions of the models used. The reasons for the choice of the demographic and organizational variables used in the study's survey questionnaire are also provided.

Work Commitment

Two forms of work commitment were measured in this study; organizational commitment and co-worker commitment using the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment.

Organizational Commitment

The rationale behind the conceptualization and measurement of organizational commitment is seldom discussed in any detailed way in the organizational research literature. This is surprising given that there are at least eleven well known and different models of organizational commitment currently being used by organizational researchers (Fields, 2002). Five of these models of organizational commitment were examined before a choice was made about the most appropriate for use in this study. The five models of organizational commitment that were considered in detail were those developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972), Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974).

The organizational commitment research literature suggests that, over time, the three component model of organizational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) has

acquired dominance over the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Benkhoff, 1997) first introduced by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) (as cited in Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009, p. 6). The Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment was selected for this study because it is one of the most frequently used models of organizational commitment in organizational research (Solinger, Olffen, & Roe, 2008). This is not to imply that there is consensus amongst organizational researchers about the conceptualization and measurement of organizational commitment but merely to indicate that the Meyer and Allen (1991) model has become one of the most commonly used models for measuring this construct.

The three components of the Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment to an organization refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their organization. Continuance commitment to an organization concerns awareness of the costs associated with leaving an organization. Normative commitment to an organization concerns an employee's feeling of obligation to continue employment in their organization. Affective, continuance and normative commitment are regarded as components rather than types of commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Based on the research on this model by Culpepper (2000), the most up-to-date version of the script items for the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment (Fields, 2002) was used in the survey questionnaire for this study. The choice of the Meyer and Allen model of organizational commitment implies acceptance that commitment is viewed as a psychological 'state of mind' (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and a force that creates a bond between employees and their employing organization (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009). Meyer and Allen note that common to the various definitions of organizational commitment is "the view that commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 11).

Co-worker Commitment

The decision to measure two forms of work commitment was strongly influenced by the work of commitment researchers such as Reichers (1985) and Morrow (1983; 1993). The

commitment research literature indicates that individual survey respondents can commit to multiple targets simultaneously (Klein, Molloy & Cooper, 2009; Redman & Snape, 2005). Other researchers report that the use of multiple foci of commitment can increase the reliability of the assessment but not necessarily of their predictive power (Cooper-Haskim & Viswesvaran, 2005). The commitment research also suggests that there is merit in ensuring survey respondents are able to determine their own targets of commitment to increase their relevance to the workplace being studied (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

The four focus groups conducted with a sample of the family law courts' client service staff generated data to identify two targets of commitment that were important to these staff. The two targets of commitment that were almost universally identified across all four focus groups were organizational commitment and co-worker commitment. Participants explained that while commitment to their supervisors would normally have been more important to them than commitment to co-workers, the frequent turnover of staff in these positions had led to a lack of rapport with, and loyalty to, their supervisors.

Using the assumption that commitment to the organization can also be used to measure commitment to other targets (Cohen, 2003; Jaros, 2009) a measurement scale for co-workers' commitment was devised using the latest version of script items for the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model of organizational commitment. This approach was consistent with a study of organizational commitment and occupational commitment that used the Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993).

In the model of co-worker commitment used in this study, affective co-worker commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, and identification and involvement with, their co-workers. Continuance co-worker commitment refers to an employee's awareness of the costs associated with leaving their co-workers. Normative co-worker commitment refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to continue working with their co-workers.

Job Satisfaction

A review of the research literature on job satisfaction indicates that there are in excess of 20 separate instruments being used for conceptualizing and measuring job satisfaction (Fields, 2002; Spector, 1997). These instruments comprise two broad categories of measures;

those that measure satisfaction in terms of specific facets of a job and those that measure overall job satisfaction that is sometimes segmented into extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions (Buitendach & Rothermann, 2009).

The research literature indicates that in relation to the 'job in general scale' and measures of 'job satisfaction', summed facet scales and global measures are not equivalent (Highhouse & Becker, 1993; Ironson, Brannick, Smith, Gibson & Paul, 1989). A global measure of job satisfaction was selected because what is of primary interest to this study is the influence that overall job satisfaction has on job performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff rather than the influence of employees' satisfaction with specific aspects of their job.

A global measure of job satisfaction was also chosen because the research literature on job satisfaction indicates that some researchers using the facet models of job satisfaction have often found that the facets tended to correlate positively with each other, and researchers end up summing the specific facets to construct an overall measure of job satisfaction (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). This means that the facets of job satisfaction tend to be strongly associated with each other so that the global measure is sufficient for answering the research question about whether, and to what extent, the overall job satisfaction of the family law courts' client service staff influences their perceived service quality and their OCB.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), developed by Weiss et al., 1967 (as cited in Spector, 1997, p.15), was selected as the measurement instrument for assessing the overall level of job satisfaction amongst the family law courts' client service staff (Fields, 2002; Spector, 1997). Coefficient alpha values for the 20 item MSQ scale taken from a number of research studies range from 0.85 to 0.91 and this model of job satisfaction has been extensively used by other organizational researchers. Overall job satisfaction measured by the MSQ has been validated in relation to a range of correlates such as organizational commitment and job involvement (Mathieu & Farr, 1991) and occupational commitment (Scarpello & Vandenberg, 1992, as cited in Fields, 2002, p.7).

The short form version of the MSQ that involves a 20 item scale was selected over the long form that involves a 100 item scale. This allowed the survey questionnaire to be kept to a reasonable length given that an overly long questionnaire could negatively affect the response rate to the survey (Dillman et al., 2009). The 20 item MSQ scale was used in its

unaltered form as the research literature indicates that efforts to revise the MSQ have not improved its validity or reliability (Hirschfeld, 2000). Although some researchers using the short form of the MSQ have reported acceptable internal consistency reliabilities for an extrinsic and intrinsic subscale, the lack of clear discriminability in other studies led to a decision to only use the MSQ as a global measure of overall job satisfaction (Spector, 1997).

An examination of the literature on the MSQ not only indicates that it is one of the most widely used models for measuring job satisfaction across occupations and industries (Brown, Hardison, Bolen & Walcott, 2006) but that its reliability and validity compares well with other widely used measures of job satisfaction such as the Job Description Index (Brown et al., 2006, Hancer & George, 2003). It is, however, acknowledged that there is some debate about the factors structure of the MSQ (Hancer & George, 2003; Hirschfeld, 2000; Spector, 1997) that is avoided in the present study's use of the MSQ as a global measure of job satisfaction.

Using SERVQUAL for Measuring Service Quality

The model of service quality selected for use in the present study was SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1991) which is a model that has been used in a variety of different service settings, industry sectors and countries (Mauri, Minazzi & Muccio, 2013). The SERVQUAL survey instrument developed, tested and refined by Parasuraman et al., (1988, 1991) is not without its critics. In the years immediately following its introduction, SERVQUAL was tested and critiqued by researchers who raised a number of issues about its reliability and validity:

- The descriptors of the service quality dimensions measured by SERVQUAL may need to be varied depending upon the services under study.
- Debate about whether SERVQUAL should be viewed as a global construct or in terms of the five separate dimensions.
- Concerns about the face validity of the SERVQUAL instrument given the degree of inter-correlation found between some of the items in the model's five dimensions.
- The limitations associated with the negative wording of some script items.

- A view about relying on the measurement of clients' perceptions of service quality rather than measuring both expectations and perceptions of service quality and calculation of the gap (Bakakus & Boller, 1992; Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Tayler, 1992; Teas, 1993, 1994).

Over the three decades since its introduction, SERVQUAL has proven to be robust and has been modified for use in a variety of service settings in the public and private sectors (Etgar & Fuch, 2009; Frost & Kumar, 2000; Headley & Miller, 1993; Kanning & Bergmann, 2009; Kulasin & Fortuny-Santos, 2005; Kumar, Kee & Manshor, 2009). The SERVQUAL research literature suggests that there is nothing in the original model to indicate that service quality in one service setting should be entirely applicable to service quality in another service setting, and so having to modify the instrument to fit the service context under study should be an expected feature of its use (Schneider & White, 2004).

A survey of research literature on the use of SERVQUAL shows that while there is still some controversy about the model, its strengths are its relative simplicity, its linearity and the rationality for action that it conveys (Mauri, Minazzi & Muccio, 2013). A review of the conceptualization of different service quality measures provides the insight that SERVQUAL is a multi-dimensional reflective model where the service quality construct is formed by its dimensions and does not exist separately from its dimensions. This conclusion indicates that SERVQUAL should be used to attain a global measure of service quality (Martinez & Martinez, 2010).

The reasoning behind the selection of SERVQUAL as the model for measuring service quality in this present study is only partly based upon its wide use in marketing research. The main reason is that this model is also used by several service quality researchers for measuring 'employee's perceived service quality'. This concept of service quality is thought to be appropriate to a study where recourse to forms of performance data other than self-rating is not available.

The first of these studies of 'employee's perceived service quality' has strong parallels to the design of this present research. The study involves testing the relationship between organizational commitment, job satisfaction and service quality amongst customer contact employees in four call centres of a United Kingdom retail bank (Malhota & Mukherjee, 2004, p. 168). The authors of this study cite the work of Boshoff and Mels

(1995), Churchill et al., (1985) and Pym and Auld (1965) to argue that self-rating is valid in certain research circumstances and claim that self-rating correlates highly with other measures of performance such as peer appraisal, supervisor evaluation and consumer evaluation. These authors also point to research by Boshoff and Mels (1995) to support the view that customer contact employees are well aware of the challenges facing them in their customer/client interactions and that service industry research has established that strong links exist between customer contact employees' perceptions about the service quality they deliver and their clients' perceptions about the service quality they receive (Schneider & Brown, 1985 as cited in Malhota & Mukherjee, 2004, p. 168). The study by Malhota and Mukherjee uses an eleven item short version of SERVQUAL and only measures service employee's perception of the service quality they deliver (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). A limitation of the study by Malhota and Mukherjee (2004) was the limited dimensions of service quality that were tested by using a short version of the SERVQUAL scale items.

A second study used SERVQUAL for measuring employee's expectations and perceptions of service quality and was also undertaken in call centres. This study explored the factors predicting front-line service employee satisfaction and behavioural intentions (employees' willingness to recommend their call centre and their intention to stay in the organization) and their perceived service quality. This study differs from the study undertaken by Malhota and Mukherjee (2004) in that it used the whole of the SERVQUAL instrument's nineteen items and five dimensions with only minor modification and it also measured expectations and performance (Ramseook-Munhurrun, Naidoo & Lukea-Bhiwajee, 2009). This study suggested that three factors, rather than the five proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1991), best fit the data and that pilot testing of the survey instrument and modification of the wording of some items and deletion of others was needed to adjust the survey instrument to the service setting under study.

Three other studies were also identified that used SERVQUAL or other models for measuring 'employee's perceived service quality' in the health care industry (Bonias, Bartram, Leggat & Stanton, 2010; Chan, Entekin & Anderson, 2003; Slatten, 2009).

There is a degree of support in the research for measuring service quality in the public and private sector using front-line service employees to rate the service quality that they

perceive they deliver and that self-rating of perceived service quality is a valid method of measuring service quality in a variety of different service settings.

A number of research issues relevant to this current study emerge from the research literature on the conceptualization and measurement of service quality using SERVQUAL. The first is that while SERVQUAL has proven to be adaptable to different service settings the standard survey instrument may need to be modified in terms of the items used to define service quality in the family law courts. There is a view that as the construct of service quality measured by SERVQUAL is not separate from its dimensions then all five dimensions should be measured to obtain construct validity (Martinez & Martinez, 2010). It has also been suggested that, as the focus group was used to develop SERVQUAL in the first place it is also a suitable research method to use to modify the survey instrument for the particular nature of the service setting under study (Schneider & White, 2004). The second issue is the view that SERVQUAL measures a global construct of service quality (Martinez and Martinez, 2010) and this has implications for the way that the job attitudes measured by this study are also viewed (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977, 1980). The third is that it has been argued by many service quality researchers that it is valid to only measure the perception of quality of the services received using SERVQUAL rather than measuring expectations as well as perceptions (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). Finally, there is also an acknowledgement in the research literature that the dimensions of SERVQUAL used and the wording of the items of each dimension, may limit generalization of the study's results (Ekinci, 2002).

Measuring Service Quality in the Family Law Courts

The decision to adopt SERVQUAL as the model to conceptualize and measure service quality amongst the family law courts' client service staff involved two separate steps. The first step involved a review of the research literature on the conceptualization and measurement of service quality (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Buttle, 1996; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Dabholkar, Shepherd, & Thorpe, 2000; Martinez & Martinez, 2010; McDougall & Levesque, 1994; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994; Seth, Deshmukh & Vrat, 2005). The second step involved an examination of the results of two service industry research studies by Malhorta and Mukherjee (2004) and Ramseook-Munhurrun, Naidoo and Lukea-Bhiwajee (2009) that used SERVQUAL to enable service providers to self-assess the quality of their service (albeit their studies were in call centres in the private sector). In

addition, a study that used a different form of client satisfaction survey instrument to enable service providers to rate the quality of their service (albeit in the healthcare industry) (Bonias, Bartram, Leggat, & Stanton, 2010) lent some extra weight to the decision to use SERVQUAL for the same purpose in the present study (in the absence of an industry standard client satisfaction survey instrument).

Originally SERVQUAL was a 22 item survey instrument (Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, 1988) that was later scaled back to 19 items (Parasuraman, Zeithmal & Berry, 1991) . The 19 item scale of SERVQUAL made up the foundations of the ‘perceived service quality’ measurement scale used by the present study. The service quality research literature indicates that “if the SERVQUAL dimensions provided an adequate coverage of the service themes revealed in focus groups then the SERVQUAL items could be used and no further work needed to be done” (Schneider & White, 2004, p. 56); otherwise focus groups could be used to modify the survey instrument to reflect the service setting.

Four focus groups were conducted in the pilot study in the ACT Public Service to determine how the 19 item SERVQUAL scale needed to be modified to fit that service setting. An exploratory factor analysis was then undertaken on the pilot survey results. These results provided support for a 3 factor structure of the SERVQUAL model. The individual script items that varied from the 5 factor structure were noted and highlighted in the four focus groups with a representative sample of client service staff from the family law courts that were used to finalize the script items for the final survey instrument. This approach was consistent with the use of exploratory factor analysis of the service quality dimensions of the SERVQUAL model as recommended by Schneider and White (2004, p. 58).

The original and revised versions of the SERVQUAL survey instrument had five dimensions for assessing service quality: tangibles (physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of personnel), reliability (ability to perform the promised service), responsiveness (willingness of the service provider), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of the service provider), and empathy (the service provider’s caring behaviour) (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Based upon the feedback from the four focus groups held in the family law courts and following consideration of the two research studies that use SERVQUAL to enable service providers to rate their own service quality (Malhorta & Mukherjee, 2004; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Naidoo, & Lukea-Bhiwajee, 2009), four significant changes were made to the

script items for SERVQUAL before the survey questionnaire was used for measuring service quality amongst the family law courts' client service staff:

1. The wording of individual script items was modified to remove any ambiguity in terminology and to reflect the type of service terms used in the service setting.
2. The five factor model developed and refined by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988, 1991) was collapsed into three factors to reflect the findings of the study by Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2009).
3. One scale item on 'work environment comfort and attractiveness', that was part of the 'Tangibles' factor in SERVQUAL, was split into two separate script items 'workplace attractiveness', and 'waiting area attractiveness' to reflect that the waiting area was a significant feature for the court registries but not for the call centre.
4. Two new script items were added to reflect the safety protocol governing screening and risk assessment of clients and the safety-related behaviour that client service staff are required to exhibit in their extended service role.

It is acknowledged that a confirmatory factor analysis could have been used on the resulting survey results. However an exploratory factor analysis was undertaken because the service setting was novel and the survey instrument had been modified significantly from the original 19 item scale (Schneider & White, 2004).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

As discussed in the review of the research literature presented in Chapter 2, OCB is the construct used to conceptualize and measure contextual or non-task performance in this study (Penny & Borman, 2005). As also indicated in this literature review, the model of OCB developed and tested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990) was selected for use in this study. The scale of 24 script items covering five dimensions of OCB (altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue) have individually achieved coefficient alpha values ranging from 0.66 to 0.76 with a coefficient alpha of 0.94 being achieved for overall OCB using this model (Fields, 2002). These dimensions have been

shown to correlate positively with one another and with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, (Lam et al., 1999; Moorman, 1993, as cited in Fields, 2002, p. 242).

The five dimensions of the OCB model used in this study, that was built upon the work of Organ (1988), were altruism (helping a specific other), conscientiousness (going well beyond the minimum role requirements), sportsmanship (helping others to tolerate less than ideal conditions), courtesy (preventing work-related problems), and civic virtue (concern about the life of the firm) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990).

Although the five dimensions of the Podsakoff et al. (1990) model of OCB have been found to tap the relevant aspects of the domain of the construct that they are intended to measure there are some acknowledged problems associated with this model (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). These include a few of the script items loading on factors other than the hypothesized one in one study, and other studies not supporting the model's five dimensions (Organ et al., 2006). However, "the majority of tests of this scale have used factor analysis, which is a more rigorous test of the hypothesized factor structure than the exploratory factor analysis technique used to test some of the other scales.... Thus, overall, empirical research indicates the scales are fairly reliable"(Organ et al., 2006, p. 255).

Demographic and Organizational Variables

A standard set of demographic and organizational variables was selected for use in this study's survey questionnaire to help describe the survey sample. The demographic and organizational characteristics were selected on the basis of those commonly used in a wide range of organizational commitment research (Cohen, 1992; Cohen, 2003; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Randall, 1990). In relation to the demographic characteristics selected, age, gender, education and location of work are all fairly obvious choices that would help to distinguish between survey respondents. In relation to the organizational variables selected, current job, total work experience and experience in current job, employment status and job classification were also all logical choices for describing the survey respondents in this study.

3.3.4 The Survey Questionnaire Design

This subsection has three parts that cover the relationship between theory, concepts and measurement scales used in this study's survey questionnaire for all key survey variables,

the format and layout of the survey questionnaire, and the measurement scale used for all key survey variables.

Relationship between Theory, Concepts and Measurement Scales

The survey questionnaire consisted of five key survey variables: organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The relationship between the theory, and each concept being measured and the scale used to measure each variable is presented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 - The Relationship between Theory, Concepts and Measurement Scales

Theory	Concept	Pre-existing Scale	Modified Scale
Job Attitudes	Organizational Commitment	The revised organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997) (Fields, 2002)	
	Co-worker Commitment		A slightly modified version of the organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997) to accommodate the research topic.
	Job Satisfaction	The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Short-form) (Fields, 2002)	
Service Quality	Perceived service quality		A slightly modified version of SERVQUAL developed and refined by Parasuraman et al., (1988,1991) to accommodate the research topic and service setting.

Performance	Organizational citizenship behaviour	The organizational citizenship behaviour scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) (Fields, 2002)	
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The main feature of the relationships between the theories, concepts and measurement scales used in this study's survey questionnaire that is illustrated in Table 3.2 is that only two of the scales are not those that have been used in a wide range of organizational behavioural studies. The scale used to measure co-worker commitment is a slightly modified version of a measurement scale that has been shown to be highly reliable in the measurement of organizational commitment. It has also been shown to be very reliable in a modified form to measure other targets of commitment (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). The SERVQUAL scale used to measure perceived service quality amongst the courts' client service staff has also been shown to be very reliable when used in this way, albeit in private sector service organizations (Malhorta & Mukherje, 2004; Ramseook-Munhurrun, Naidoo & Lukea-Bhiwajee, 2009). The use of focus groups in this study to modify the wording of the script items of the SERVQUAL questionnaire to accommodate the service setting was consistent with the way in which the SERVQUAL instrument was originally developed (Schneider & White, 2004).

The Layout and Format of the Survey Questionnaire

The layout of the survey questionnaire used to survey all of the courts' client service staff has seven parts. An illustration of the structure and content of the survey questionnaire is provided in Figure 3.3 and a full version is provided at Appendix J. A definition of the components of the scales used to measure organizational and co-worker commitment and the dimensions used to measure service quality and OCB was presented as in Subsection 3.3.3.

Table 3.3 Survey Questionnaire Variable Matrix

Part/Type of Variable	Variable Components/Dimensions
Part 1 – Statements about the respondent's organization	
Organizational Commitment	Global Commitment
	Affective Commitment

	Normative Commitment
	Continuance Commitment
Part 2 – Statements about the respondent’s co-workers	
Co-worker Commitment	Global Commitment
	Affective Commitment
	Normative Commitment
	Continuance Commitment
Part 3 – Statements about the respondent’s job	
Job Satisfaction	Global Job Satisfaction (the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions were not differentiated)
Part 4 – Statements directly related to the respondent’s work	
Service Quality	Global Service Quality
	Assurance items
	Empathy items
	Reliability items
	Responsive items
	Safety items
Part 5 – Statements indirectly directly related to the respondent’s work	
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Global Organizational Citizenship Behaviour
	Altruism items
	Conscientiousness items
	Sportsmanship items
	Courtesy items
	Civic virtue items
Part 6 – Demographic and organizational information	
Demographic characteristics	Gender
	Age in years
	Highest level of education
	State or Territory

Organizational characteristics	Current job
	Years of total work experience
	Years of service in current job
	Current employment status
	Current job classification
Part 7 – Opened Ended Section	Unstructured

The seven parts of the survey questionnaire were preceded by a preamble containing background information about the survey and the rationale for the study. In addition, the preamble provided information about the respondents' participation in the survey being voluntary and the steps being taken to ensure their confidentiality. The layout of the survey questionnaire distinguished between questions relating to the respondent's organization, their co-workers, their job, their work, and themselves. The demographic and organizational questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire as suggested in the literature (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009; de Vaus, 1985).

An open ended section that provided for unstructured responses was included at the end of the survey questionnaire to capture additional information from survey respondents that is relevant to the survey but that goes beyond the actual survey questions themselves.

The wording of the survey questionnaire was taken in an unaltered form from the script items developed for the models used to conceptualize and measure organizational commitment, job satisfaction and OCB - as explained in Section 3.3.2 below. The wording of the script items used to measure co-worker commitment were a modified version of the script items for organizational commitment. The survey questions for the model used to conceptualize and measure service quality were based upon the SERVQUAL survey instrument (Parasurman et al., 1988, 1991) but were modified by feedback from focus groups to reflect the service setting.

The Measurement Scale

A seven point Likert-type scale was used in the survey questionnaire for all survey variables other than the demographic and organizational variables. This scale was selected because it is one of the measurement scales most commonly used in organizational research

and is the scale used for much of the research reviewed in Chapter 2 on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The literature on measurement scales indicates that although the seven point Likert-type scale is slightly less consistent than the five point Likert-type scale it is nonetheless highly reliable (Cummins & Gullone, 2000; Teichmann & Zins, 2009).

3.3.5 Piloting the Survey Questionnaire

Two pilots of the survey questionnaire were undertaken before it was used to survey all of the family law courts' client service staff. The first pilot was conducted amongst client service staff working in a commercially-oriented service organization in the ACT Public Service. A second smaller specialized pilot was conducted in the family law courts to test an on-line version of the survey questionnaire.

The Pilot in the ACT Public Service

The piloting of the survey questionnaire in a service organization in the ACT Public Service had two main aims. The first was to test the layout and format of the survey questionnaire (van Tijlingen & Hundley, 2001) and the second was to test the scale used for measuring the key survey variables (Sage Research Methods On-Line, n.d.) and, particularly, the script items to be used for measuring service quality. Three focus groups, each comprising four client service staff, were conducted as part of the qualitative strand of the pilot study in the ACT Public Service to provide input for modifying the survey questionnaire before it was used in the pilot site.

ACT Public Service Pilot Survey Population and Response Rate

One hundred and one client service staff were employed or engaged by the Branch of the ACT Public Service when the pilot survey was undertaken in May 2010. Descriptive statistics on the pilot study survey respondents are provided at Appendix K. These statistics indicate that the majority of pilot study survey respondents were female (81.4%), were 40 years of age or younger (55.2%) and the majority (75.9%) had less than 4 years of work experience in their current job. In summary, pilot study survey respondents were relatively young and inexperienced.

Survey questionnaires were distributed by hand to the pilot organization's four shop fronts and the pilot organization's central call centre. The completed questionnaires were collected one week later. Sixty-seven completed questionnaires were returned and coded.

Eight other questionnaires had incomplete responses and were not coded. This represents a final response rate of 66.3 per cent and can be regarded as an acceptable response rate for a survey of this nature (Baruch & Holtom, 2008).

Layout and Format of the ACT Public Service Pilot Survey Questionnaire

A systematic evaluation of the layout and format of the completed survey questionnaires was conducted along the lines of an approach developed by de Vaus (1995). Overall, the pilot study survey questionnaire was very similar to the final questionnaire used in the survey of all of the family law courts' client service staff (see Appendix J). The layout and format of the questionnaire were found to work well with a low rate of incomplete responses to individual survey questions. Following this evaluation some minor modifications were made to the questionnaire layout to make the preamble more succinct and to make the layout of the questionnaire easier to follow. Some changes were also made to the scales used to measure survey respondent demographic characteristics and to widen the range of characteristics and changes were made to the organizational variables to reflect the different organizational context (the Federal public service rather than the ACT public service and different job titles).

ACT Pilot Study Survey Results

The primary purpose of conducting a pilot survey of client service staff working in the pilot study organization was to test the format and layout of the survey questionnaire and the survey protocol and to provide the researcher with experience in coding and interpreting the survey results. A detailed examination of the validity of the measures being used in the survey was planned to be undertaken using the results of the survey of all of the courts' client service staff (discussed in the Subsection 3.3.6). These tests were not actually undertaken at the time that the data was collected from the pilot study organization. Consequently this is now perceived to be a delimitation that is discussed in Section 3.5 of this chapter

Reliability Testing of ACT Public Service Pilot Study Results

A summary of the pilot study survey results (the correlation coefficients) for each of the survey's key variables is provided at Appendix L. This table provides the means, standard deviations, Cronbach alphas measures and correlation coefficients for the association between the key survey variables from the data obtained from the ACT pilot study survey. The measures of internal consistency reliability for each of the key survey

variables range from 0.56 (poor) for continuance organizational commitment through to 0.89 (very good) for service quality. All of the Cronbach alpha measures demonstrate a reasonable degree of internal consistency or reliability.

Summary

The piloting of the survey questionnaire in the ACT Public Service provided useful information that was used to modify the questionnaire's format, layout and content. This pilot also provided an opportunity to ensure that the key survey variables, and in particular the constructs being measured, demonstrated they had internal consistency reliability in this service setting.

The next part of this section discusses the conduct of the second pilot of the survey questionnaire in the family law courts that was needed to test the conversion of the survey questionnaire into an on-line version using 'Survey Monkey'. An on-line version was needed due to the geographic dispersion of the family law courts' client service staff.

The Pilot in the Family Law Courts

Four respondents from different family law court registries were recruited by the family law courts' Information Technology Unit to receive and provide anonymous feedback on the format and layout of the survey questionnaire and the ease of the arrangements for on-line response. The feedback received led to some minor modifications being made to the format and layout of the questionnaire. It also led to a decision to lengthen the survey period to two weeks and to develop an associated communication strategy.

The next subsection provides details on the implementation of the survey of all of the client service staff in the family law courts and the results of the reliability measures and validity tests conducted on the survey data.

3.3.6 Survey of Client Service Staff, the Family Law Courts

Survey Communication Strategy

Correspondence to explain the purpose of the survey and the relevance of the survey to the study was sent to all survey participants through the relevant Regional Registry Managers prior to the survey period commencing. In addition, a reminder notice was automatically sent out to all participants at the end of the first week of the survey period to encourage non-respondents to participate in the survey. In addition, a separate letter was sent

to Regional Registry Managers at the end of the first week of the survey period to inform them of response rates region by region to encourage each region to increase their participation rates.

The Survey Population and the Survey Response Rates

The on-line survey questionnaire was made available for a two-week period during the last two weeks of October 2010. It was sent directly to 291 client service staff in the family law courts' nineteen registries located around Australia and to those working in the family law courts' national enquiry centre that is located in Parramatta.

To protect their confidentiality, each survey respondent was automatically allocated a unique numerical identifier and respondents were requested not to include their name on their completed survey form. All responses were identified by their region rather than their court registry thereby further minimizing the possibility of responses from small States or Territorial court registries being singled out and individual respondents being identified.

Two hundred and twenty nine responses were received by the close of the survey period. However, 29 survey responses that were incomplete were not coded. The final valid response rate was 66.5 per cent. This level of response for an on-line survey compares favourably with the final response rate of the pilot survey conducted in the ACT Public Service and more generally with the response rates in other organizational research studies (Baruch, 1999; Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007).

Reliability and Validity Testing

Reliability measures and validity test results are presented in this part of the section for the five key survey variables: organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB to demonstrate that the measures used adequately represented the constructs they were intended to measure.

Organizational and Co-worker Commitment

Construct Reliability and Validity Issues

The organizational commitment research literature indicates that a number of measurement issues are associated with the Allen and Meyer (1990) measurement scale and highlight some of the issues that the researcher needed to be mindful of when examining reliability measures and validity test results. These issues include:

- The potential for convergence to occur between the affective organizational commitment and normative organizational commitment components (Cooper-Haskin & Viswesvaran, 2005);
- The view that the formulation of normative organizational commitment has not kept pace with the changing world of work and adds little predictive value beyond that attributed to the affective organizational commitment component (Bentein, Vandenberghe, Vandenberghe & Stinglhamber, 2005; Bergman, 2006; Cooper-Haskim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Jaros, 2009);
- A possible context-effect whereby the meaning and implications of the commitment components may vary in different study contexts (Gellatly, Meyer & Luchak, 2006); and
- The debate about whether the continuance organizational commitment component has one or two dimensions (Allen & Meyer, 2000; Blau, 2003; Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Reliability Measures

The coefficient alpha values for the three components of organizational commitment, calculated from the results obtained from the survey of all of the family law courts' client service staff, were compared with results obtained from a range of other commitment research studies using the same three component model of organizational commitment (Fields, 2002) and with the results obtained from a sample of client service staff in a Branch of the ACT Public Service where the survey questionnaire was piloted. This demonstrates that the results are not only within the desired range but that they are also comparable to the reliability results achieved by other researchers using the same measure of organizational commitment.

The comparative results are provided in Table 3.4 below. Table 3.4 indicates that the reliability measures obtained for organizational commitment are moderate to good, range from 0.61 to 0.71, and are comparable to the reliability measures achieved by other researchers using this model of organizational commitment and with the reliability measures obtained for this construct in the pilot in the ACT Public Service.

Table 3.4 Coefficient Alpha – Components of Organizational Commitment

Source	Affective Organizational Commitment	Continuance Organizational Commitment	Normative Organizational Commitment
Fields (2002)	0.77 to 0.88	0.61 to 0.84	0.65 to 0.86
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.74	0.56	0.80
This study	0.69	0.71	0.61

Table 3.5 below provides the coefficient alpha results obtained for co-worker commitment. Table 3.5 indicates the reliability measures are good to very good and range from 0.76 to 0.88 and are also comparable with the reliability measures obtained for this construct from the pilot survey in the ACT Public Service.

Table 3.5 Coefficient Alpha – Components of Co-worker Commitment

Source	Affective Co-worker Commitment	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	Normative Co-worker Commitment
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.77	0.69	0.81
This study	0.76	0.79	0.88

Validity Testing

To determine the content validity of the Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment scale items, four academic sources that contained a wide range of commitment research using the Meyer and Allen (1991) model were examined (Cohen, 2003; Fields, 2002; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Vandenberghe, 2009). These sources show that the Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment scale has a reasonably high degree of content validity. It is reasonable to assume that any model of commitment to another target, such as co-workers, based upon the Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment scale would also benefit from a similarly high degree of content validity.

To establish the construct validity of the model being used to measure organizational commitment two separate tests, one for establishing convergent validity and the other for establishing discriminant validity, were conducted (Salkind, 2011). The convergent validity of the Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment scale items was determined by reference to other commitment research using other comparable scales for measuring

organizational commitment as analysed in Fields (2002). The Meyer and Allen (1991) scale items were found to have a high degree of convergent validity.

The discriminant validity of the Meyer and Allen (1991) organizational commitment scale items was tested by examining the correlation coefficients for the association between the three components of organizational commitment as shown in Table 3.6. Table 3.6 shows that there is not a strong association between these components. It is reasonable to conclude that the model displays a reasonable degree of discriminant validity between organizational commitment and its components.

Table 3.6 Inter-correlation of Organizational Commitment Components

Source	Affective Organizational Commitment to Continuance Organizational Commitment	Affective Organizational Commitment to Normative Organizational Commitment	Continuance Organizational Commitment to Normative Organizational Commitment
Somers (1995)	0.13*	0.38**	0.19**
Cohen (1996)	0.02	0.54**	0.06
Chen & Francesco (2003)	0.32**	0.64**	0.37**
Herscovitch & Meyer (2002)	0.01	0.59**	0.12
Somers (2009)	0.18**	0.72**	0.24**
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.05	0.55**	0.21
This study	0.20	0.37**	0.14*

Notes: All measures are correlation coefficients. There may be minor variations due to different versions of the Meyer and Allen (1991) measurement scale being used in some of the studies cited. *Significant at $p < .05$ (Sig. two tailed). **Highly significant at $p < .001$ (Sig. two tailed).

Discriminant validity of the three components of co-worker commitment is presented in Table 3.7 below. Table 3.7 shows there are no strong associations between co-worker commitment and its components. From this it is also reasonable to conclude that there is a degree of discriminant validity evident between co-worker commitment and its components.

Table 3.7 Inter-correlation of Co-worker Commitment Components

Source	Affective Co-worker Commitment to Continuance Co-worker Commitment	Affective Co-worker Commitment to Normative Co-worker Commitment	Continuance Co-worker Commitment to Normative Co-worker Commitment
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.10	0.17	0.20
This study	0.10	0.35**	0.27

Notes: ** Highly significant at $p < .001$ (Sig. 2 tailed) level of confidence.

In terms of discriminant validity, the correlation coefficients for the association between organizational commitment and co-worker commitment and between organizational commitment and the components of co-worker commitment are presented in Table 3.8. Table 3.8 indicates that the strength of the association between organizational commitment and co-worker commitment is moderate ($r=0.64$ with $p < .001$, Sig. two-tailed), the association between organizational commitment (global) and normative co-worker commitment is small but definite ($r=0.25$ with $p < .001$, Sig. two-tailed) and the associations between organizational commitment (global), and affective co-worker commitment and continuance co-worker commitment respectively are moderate ($r=0.43$ and $r=0.54$ respectively with $p < .001$, Sig. two-tailed). This is an expected result and suggests a reasonable degree of discriminant validity can be attributed to these measures.

Table 3.8 Correlation of Organizational Commitment to Co-worker Commitment and its Components

Organizational Commitment (Global)	Affective Co-worker commitment	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	Normative Co-worker Commitment	Co-worker Commitment
Pearson Correlation	0.43**	-0.54**	0.25**	0.64**

Notes: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 (2 tailed) level of confidence.

Testing for criterion validity for organizational commitment involves examining the correlation between organizational commitment and related, but distinct, constructs such as job satisfaction (Mathieu & Farr, 1991; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Irving & Allen, 1998). Table 3.9 presents a comparison between the correlation coefficients for the association between organizational commitment and its components and overall job

satisfaction. A comparison of correlation coefficient values between organizational commitment and its components and job satisfaction where researchers used the Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment (Ricketta & van Dick, 2009) are provided along with the correlation coefficient values obtained from the pilot study conducted in the ACT Public Service. The results presented in Table 3.9, whilst not identical, are comparable. As expected, affective organizational commitment has a moderate association with overall job satisfaction ($r=0.45$, $p<.001$, Sig. two-tailed). The association between continuance organizational commitment and job satisfaction is slight, almost negligible and not significant ($r=-0.04$ with $p=.61$ Sig. two-tailed) and the association between normative organizational commitment and job satisfaction is small but definite ($r=0.35$, $p<.001$, Sig. two-tailed).

Table 3.9 Correlation of Organizational Commitment Components and Job Satisfaction

Source	Affective Organizational Commitment	Continuance Organizational Commitment	Normative Organizational Commitment	Organizational Commitment (Global)
Ricketta & Van Dick (2009)	0.60*	0.12*	0.36*	na
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.46**	-0.02	0.28*	0.36*
This study	0.45**	-0.04	0.35**	0.30**

Notes: *Significant at $p<.05$ (Sig. two-tailed). ** Highly significant at $p<.001$ (Sig. two-tailed).

Table 3.10 presents the correlation coefficient measures for the association between co-worker commitment and its components with overall job satisfaction. Table 3.10 presents these measures for this study and for the pilot in the ACT Public Service. The coefficient measures indicate that the association between affective co-worker commitment and job satisfaction is moderate as expected ($r=0.52$ with $p<001$, Sig. two-tailed). The association between normative co-worker commitment and job satisfaction is small but definite ($r=0.28$, $p<001$, Sig. two-tailed) and the association between continuance co-worker commitment and job satisfaction is slight almost negligible and not significant ($r=0.03$, $p=.694$, Sig. two-tailed).

Table 3.10 Correlation of Co-worker Commitment and its Components and Job Satisfaction

Source	Affective Co-worker Commitment	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	Normative Co-worker Commitment	Co-worker Commitment (Global)
The pilot study in the ACT Public Service	0.39*	0.29*	0.16	0.29
This study	0.52**	0.03	0.28**	0.40**

Notes: *Significant at $p < .05$ (2 tailed) and ** highly significant at $p < .001$ (2 tailed).

The final validity test of the organizational commitment and co-worker commitment scale items involved the use of a factor analysis to examine the performance of individual scale items to identify the underlying pattern or factors. Both measures were expected to show three (or at most four) separate factors. This test is useful for determining whether respondents were able to distinguish between one or two dimensions of continuance organizational commitment that was suggested to be one of the construct validity issues associated with the Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment (Stinglhamber, Bentein, & Vandenberghe, 2002). This test was also useful for determining whether the scale items used to make up the co-worker commitment measure performed as expected.

An oblique rotated factor analysis was used for organizational commitment given the small but definite inter-correlation between affective and normative organizational commitment in Table 3.6. An Exploratory Factor Analysis was used on the basis that worker commitment was being measured in an untested organizational context. The results of the factor analysis for all three components of organizational commitment for each scale item, are presented in Table 3.11 below.

Table 3.11 Factor Analysis of Organizational Commitment (Global)

Item	Factor Name and Script Item Description	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
	Affective Organizational Commitment					
AOC 1	Happy to spend rest of career in the organization	0.33	0.19	0.19	-0.29	0.13
AOC 2	Enjoy discussion of the organization	0.14	-0.04	0.73	-0.07	-0.13
AOC 3	I feel organization's problems are my own	0.05	0.07	0.63	-0.12	0.25
AOC 4	Easily attached to another organization	-0.20	0.00	0.53	0.29	-0.23

AOC 5	Do not feel part of the family	0.01	-0.09	0.02	0.84	-0.10
AOC 6	Do not feel emotionally attached to the organization	-0.10	-0.01	0.07	-0.91	0.04
AOC 7	Personal meaning of the organization	0.33	0.05	0.40	-0.39	0.23
AOC 8	Do not feel strong sense of belonging to the organization	-0.00	-0.11	-0.07	-0.85	-0.08
	Continuance Organizational Commitment					
COC 1	Not afraid if I quit the organization	0.05	-0.12	0.09	0.22	0.76
COC 2	Too hard to leave the organization right now	0.19	0.64	-0.35	-0.12	-0.03
COC 3	Too much in my life would be disrupted to leave the organization right now	0.15	0.71	-0.31	-0.07	0.04
COC 4	Too costly for me to leave the organization now	0.20	0.01	0.09	0.05	-0.77
COC 5	Right now staying is a matter of necessity as much as desire	-0.17	0.74	0.05	0.06	-0.10
COC 6	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	-0.16	0.83	0.13	0.09	-0.01
COC 7	There is a scarcity of available alternatives	-0.14	0.74	0.20	0.09	-0.17
COC 8	Leaving this organization would require a considerable personal sacrifice	0.23	0.66	0.08	0.10	0.09
	Normative Organizational Commitment					
NOC 1	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	0.59	-0.06	-0.02	-0.27	-0.05
NOC 2	I do not feel it would be the right time to leave	0.87	-0.05	-0.08	0.15	0.01
NOC 3	I would feel guilty if I left the organization	0.93	-0.02	-0.07	0.17	-0.08
NOC 4	This organization deserves my loyalty	0.72	0.06	0.13	-0.16	0.00
NOC 5	I would not leave the organization now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	0.87	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02
NOC 6	I owe a great deal to this organization	-0.69	-0.07	-0.18	0.12	0.05

Notes: * Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Direct Oblim with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in twelve iterations. AOC= affective organizational commitment; COC=continuance organizational commitment; NOC=normative organizational commitment. Items were presented in the recommended order in the survey questionnaire. Reverse coded items (Fields, 2002) were reverse coded prior to data analysis. The highest scores (ignoring the +/- sign) are highlighted in bold in this table.

There are four points of significance evident in Table 3.11 above.

1. The eight scale items associated with affective organizational commitment loaded onto three factors. A single factor structure was the expected result.

This suggests that respondents did not perceive all of these scale items to be measuring the same aspect of commitment towards the family law courts.

2. The first scale item for affective organizational commitment was not reliable (Hair et al., 2003).
3. Most of the scale items measuring continuance organizational commitment, except for COC 1 and COC 4, loaded onto one factor suggesting that most respondents did not distinguish between the two theorized dimensions of continuance organizational commitment (representing high sacrifice and low employment alternatives).
4. All script items for normative organizational commitment loaded onto one factor as was expected.

An oblique rotated factor analysis was also used to test the factor structure for co-worker commitment. The results of the factor analysis for all three components of co-worker commitment for each scale item, are presented in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12 Factor Analysis of Co-worker Commitment

Item	Factor Name and Script Item Description	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
	Affective Co-worker Commitment					
ACWC 1	Happy to spend rest of career with co-workers	0.36	0.12	0.52	-0.16	-0.02
ACWC 2	Enjoy discussion with co-workers	0.20	0.22	0.23	-0.46	0.09
ACWC 3	I feel co-workers problems are my own	0.25	0.08	0.32	-0.46	-0.10
ACWC 4	Easily attached to another co-worker	0.12	-0.12	0.55	-0.27	0.36
ACWC 5	Do not feel part of the family of co-workers	-0.01	-0.08	0.79	0.08	0.31
ACWC 6	Do not feel emotionally attached to co-workers	0.02	0.02	0.84	-0.10	-0.06
ACWC 7	Co-workers have no personal meaning	0.22	0.06	0.64	-0.26	-0.03
ACWC 8	Do not feel strong sense of belonging to co-workers	-0.07	-0.13	0.83	0.04	0.01
	Continuance Co-worker Commitment					
CCWC 1	Not afraid if I quit the co-workers	0.15	0.07	0.11	0.77	-0.08
CCWC 2	Too hard to leave co-workers right now	0.51	0.48	0.10	0.19	0.02

CCWC 3	Too much in my life would be disrupted to leave co-workers right now	0.28	0.66	0.02	0.05	-0.17
CCWC 4	Too costly for me to leave co-workers now	0.06	-0.05	-0.08	0.04	-0.84
CCWC 5	Right now staying is a matter of necessity as much as desire	0.07	0.58	-0.04	0.39	0.30
CCWC 6	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my co-workers	-0.14	0.87	-0.07	-0.01	0.14
CCWC 7	There is a scarcity of available alternatives	-0.10	0.87	-0.03	-0.11	0.01
CCWC 8	Leaving my co-workers would require a considerable personal sacrifice	0.10	0.74	0.01	-0.09	-0.23
	Normative Co-worker Commitment					
NCWC 1	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current co-workers	0.64	-0.12	0.16	0.29	0.05
NCWC 2	I do not feel it would be the right time to leave my co-workers	0.76	0.13	-0.12	0.04	-0.17
NCWC 3	I would feel guilty if I left my co-workers	0.94	0.02	-0.11	0.02	0.00
NCWC 4	My co-workers deserves my loyalty	0.59	0.04	0.23	-0.31	0.05
NCWC 5	I would not leave my co-workers now because I have a sense of obligation to them	0.91	-0.01	-0.05	0.05	0.00
NCWC 6	I owe a great deal to my co-workers	0.61	0.02	0.20	-0.29	-0.02

Notes: * Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Direct Oblim with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in eleven iterations. ACWC= affective co-worker commitment; CCWC=continuanace co-worker commitment; NCWC=normative co-worker commitment. Items were presented in the recommended order in the survey questionnaire. Reverse coded items (Fields, 2002) were reverse coded prior to data analysis. The highest scores (ignoring the +/- signs) are highlighted in bold in this table.

There are three points of significance evident in Table 3.12.

1. Two of the scale items for affective co-worker commitment did not load on the same factor as the other scale items for this component - this was not an expected result.
2. Four of the scale items for continuance co-worker commitment (COC 1 to COC 4) loaded onto four factors suggesting inconsistency in the way in which these scale items were interpreted by respondents.
3. Normative commitment scale items loaded onto a single factor as expected.

The results from the factor analysis of organizational and co-worker commitment can, at least in part, be interpreted to reflect the view that the meaning and implications of the commitment components of the Meyer and Allen (1991) model of organizational commitment may vary in different contexts (Gellatly, Meyer & Luchak, 2006). However, it is also recognized that a degree of caution needs to be applied to the interpretation of the survey data because of the inconsistent manner in which some survey respondents interpreted some of the script items for measuring some of the components of organizational and co-worker commitment.

Job Satisfaction

Reliability Measures

The coefficient alpha value for the 20 item Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) measurement scale that was used in this study to measure overall job satisfaction amongst all of the family law courts' client service staff was high at 0.83. This coefficient alpha value compares well with the coefficient alpha values obtained from the MSQ measurement scale for a range of other job satisfaction research studies (Fields, 2002) where the values ranged from 0.85 to 0.91.

As indicated in Subsection 3.3.2 there was no intention in this study to differentiate between the theorized intrinsic and extrinsic subscales of the MSQ short form. Consequently it is not necessary to examine the reliability measures for these two subscales.

Validity Testing

In terms of validity testing for the job satisfaction measure, the MSQ short form was expected to be distinct from correlates such as organizational commitment, occupational commitment and job involvement (Fields, 2002). Table 3.13 provides the correlation coefficient values for the associations between overall job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, service quality and OCB. The strength of these associations are all small but definite as expected ($r = 0.30, 0.40, 0.40$ and 0.26 respectively with $p < 0.001$, Sig. two-tailed) and these measure can be said to demonstrate a reasonable degree of discriminant validity amongst these correlates and overall job satisfaction.

Table 3.13 Correlation of Job Satisfaction with Other Key Survey Variables

Organizational Commitment	Co-worker Commitment	Service Quality	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour.
0.30**	0.40**	0.40**	0.26**

Notes: ** Highly significant at $p < 0.001$ level, (Sig. two-tailed).

Service Quality

Reliability Measures

The coefficient alpha values for the service quality measure used in the survey of all of the family law courts' client service staff range from moderate to very good (0.64 through to 0.95) across the hypothesized dimensions of this formative measure.

Validity Testing

As the service quality measurement scale used is a formative rather than a reflective scale (Martinez & Martinez, 2010), no attempt was made to determine the degree of inter-correlation between the individual dimensions as the overall measure of service quality is regarded as being sufficient to determine how client service staff perceive the quality of the services they deliver.

However, it is important to ensure that the scale being used to measure service quality is distinct from the concept being used to measure OCB that was being conceptualized as a separate aspects of job performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff. The correlation coefficient for the association between service quality and OCB was moderate ($r = 0.42$ with Sig. $p < .001$, two tailed). Given that the correlation between service quality and OCB is low we can assume that the measure for service quality exhibits discriminant validity to OCB.

In order to determine the underlying pattern or factor structure of the service quality measure used in the survey of all of the family law courts' client service staff, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed (see Table 3.14). This technique was justified on the basis of the changes made to the wording of some of the SERVQUAL script items and the addition of several new script items.

Table 3.14 Factor Analysis of Service Quality

Item	Factor Name and Script Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
	Assurance					
SQ 1	My behaviour generated confidence in my clients	-0.05	-0.03	0.08	-0.95	-0.04
SQ 2	My clients have confidence in the service that I provide	-0.04	-0.04	0.05	-0.96	-0.00
SQ 3	I am consistently courteous to our clients	0.46	0.11	-0.16	-0.40	-0.13
SQ 4	I have access to the required knowledge to answer our clients' questions	0.20	0.05	0.73	-0.18	0.02
	Empathy					
SQ 5	I give individual attention to our clients	0.22	-0.05	0.01	-0.10	-0.78
SQ 6	I act in the clients' best interests where appropriate	0.15	-0.02	0.05	-0.05	-0.83
SQ 7	I try to understand the specific needs of our clients	0.34	-0.02	0.04	-0.14	-0.63
	Reliability					
SQ 8	When I promise to do something by a certain time I do so	0.82	0.14	-0.19	-0.02	-0.13
SQ 9	I show sincere interest in solving our clients' problems	0.67	0.03	-0.04	-0.17	-0.28
SQ 10	I try to perform the service right the first time	0.79	0.13	-0.15	-0.13	-0.14
SQ 11	I provide the service at the time I promise to do so	0.82	0.15	-0.17	-0.07	-0.17
SQ 12	I try to provide accurate information to our clients	0.77	0.08	-0.12	-0.16	-0.15
	Responsiveness					
SQ 13	I provide prompt service to our clients	0.83	-0.09	0.38	0.04	-0.00
SQ 14	I am always willing to help our clients	0.76	-0.09	0.43	0.04	-0.03
SQ 15	I am never too busy to respond to our clients' requests	0.81	-0.12	0.39	0.02	0.01
	Tangibles					
SQ 16	The hours that we work are convenient for our clients	-0.03	0.20	0.51	-0.17	-0.10
SQ 17	We have effective equipment to assist us in our work	-0.22	0.35	0.48	-0.03	-0.24
SQ 18	Our workplace is comfortable and visually appealing	0.03	0.77	-0.00	0.09	-0.07
SQ 19	Our waiting area is comfortable and visually appealing	-0.19	0.71	0.02	0.08	-0.28
	Court Safety					
SQ 20	The court's safety policies, procedures and processes help our clients to feel safe whilst at court	0.16	0.73	-0.01	-0.22	0.19
SQ 21	The court's safety policies, procedures and processes help our staff to feel safe whilst at court	0.11	0.84	0.11	-0.02	0.16

Notes: *Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in twenty three iterations. Five factors extracted. Items were presented in the recommended order in the questionnaire with some minor regrouping; two items (SQ 18 and 19) were used in lieu of one item and two new items (SQ 20 and 21) were added. The highest scores (ignoring the +/- sign) are highlighted and are shown in bold.

Six points of significance are evident in the underlying factor pattern presented in Table 3.14:

1. The results loaded onto a five factor structure albeit with some divergence from the five factor structure named by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991).
2. The four scale items associated with the factor 'Assurance' (i.e. SQ 1 to SQ 4) loaded across three factors and this was not expected. This implies a degree of inconsistency in the way that respondents interpreted these script items.
3. The three scale items associated with the factor 'Empathy' (i.e. SQ 5 to SQ 7) loaded on one factor as expected.
4. The eight scale items associated with the two factors 'Reliability and Responsiveness' (i.e. SQ 8 to SQ 15) loaded on the same factor and showed no distinctness. This was regarded as acceptable given that the study by Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2009) also found that these items loaded onto one factor.
5. The four scale items associated with the factor 'Tangibles' (SQ 16 to SQ 19) loaded on two factors and this was not expected but reflects (in hindsight) a differentiation by respondents between the perceived importance of hours of work and the features of the servicescape and could be described as the 'service environment'.
6. The two new scale items, SQ 20 and SQ 21, associated with a new factor, 'court safety', loaded on the same factor as SQ 18 and SQ19. This suggests the associated factor (SQ 18, 19, 20 and 21) could best be described as the 'service environment'.

The factor analysis presented in Table 3.14 demonstrates that survey respondents were able to discriminate between most dimensions of the original five factor structure introduced and later refined by Parasuraman et al. (1988, 1991). It also indicates that additional modification of the wording of the scale items associated with the factor 'Assurance' could improve the instrument's overall reliability in a service setting that involves service sites and a call centre.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Reliability Measures

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) was the construct chosen to conceptualize and measure contextual performance (Penny & Borman, 2005) in the current study. The model being used for the measurement of OCB has already been discussed in Subsection 3.3.2.

In terms of the reliability of the OCB measurement scale used, coefficient alpha values obtained across the five theorized dimensions of the OCB scale compare well with the values obtained from other research studies using the same model (Podsakoff et al., 1990). This comparison is presented in Table 3.15. The results in Table 3.15 suggest an acceptable level of reliability exists for the OCB scale items used in this study.

Table 3.15 Coefficient Alpha Values for OCB Dimensions

Source	Altruism	Sportsmanship	Courtesy	Civic Virtue	Conscientiousness
Fields (2002)	0.67 to 0.91	0.76 to 0.89	0.69 to 0.86	0.66 to 0.90	0.79
This study	0.91	0.73	0.89	0.95	0.77

Validity Testing

In terms of the validity of the OCB scale items used (Podsakoff et al., 1990) this model of OCB has been shown in other research studies to be distinct from related concepts such as organizational justice and organizational commitment (Fields, 2002). Table 3.16 shows that the OCB scale items used in this study have a weak (almost negligible) association with organizational commitment (global) and were not significant ($r=0.05$, $p=.53$, Sig. two-tailed) had a weak (almost negligible) association with co-worker commitment (global) and were not significant ($r=0.05$, $p=.75$ at Sig. two-tailed) have a small but definite association with job satisfaction ($r=0.26$, $p<.001$, Sig. two-tailed) and a moderate association with service quality ($r=0.42$, $p<.001$, Sig. two-tailed). So the OCB measure used was distinct from each of these constructs but the expected association with organizational commitment and co-worker commitment did not exist.

Table 3.16 Correlations of OCB with Other Key Survey Variables

	Organizational Commitment (Global)	Co-worker Commitment (Global)	Job Satisfaction	Service Quality
The Pilot in the ACT Public Service	0.03	0.06	0.23	0.40*
This study	0.05	0.05	0.26**	0.42**

Notes: Correlation is significant where * $p < .05$, Sig. (2 Tail) and highly significant where ** $p < 0.001$, Sig (two tailed).

To check whether the scale items of the OCB model used in this study loaded on the hypothesized five dimensions a factor analysis was undertaken. The results are presented in Table 3.17.

Table 3.17 Factor Analysis of OCB

Item	Factor Name and Script Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
	Altruism					
OCB 1	I help my co-workers who have heavy workloads	0.88	0.02	-0.01	0.11	-0.04
OCB 2	I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me	0.89	-0.06	-0.07	0.02	-0.08
OCB 3	I help others who have been absent	0.99	0.02	0.11	0.03	-0.07
OCB 4	I am willing to help others who have work-related problems	0.70	0.06	-0.10	-0.06	0.18
OCB 5	I help orient new people even though it is not required	0.59	-0.02	-0.08	-0.03	0.27
	Conscientiousness					
OCB 6	I am one of the most conscientious employees	0.26	0.05	-0.13	0.06	0.55
OCB 7	I believe in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay	0.35	-0.14	-0.15	-0.08	0.49
OCB 8	I think that regular attendance at work is above the norm	-0.01	0.04	0.15	0.09	0.56
OCB 9	I do not take extra breaks	-0.06	-0.04	-0.08	-0.02	0.81
OCB 10	I obey business rules, policies and regulations even when no one is watching	.09	-.11	.10	-.03	.70
	Sportsmanship					
OCB 11	I am the classic 'squeaky wheel' that always needs greasing	0.00	-0.64	-0.02	-0.04	-0.07
OCB 12	I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters	-0.04	-0.86	-0.07	-0.02	0.07
OCB 13	I tend to make 'mountains out of molehills' at work	-0.05	-0.92	-0.00	0.02	0.03
OCB 14	I always focus on what is wrong rather than focus on the positive side of things	0.00	-0.88	0.01	0.08	0.00

OCB 15	I always find fault with what the organization is doing	0.08	-0.89	0.10	0.00	-0.02
	Courtesy					
OCB 16	I try to avoid creating problems for co-workers	-0.04	-0.00	-0.91	0.01	-0.05
OCB 17	I consider the impact of my actions on co-workers	-0.02	-0.03	-0.94	0.03	-0.05
OCB 18	I do not abuse the rights of others	0.03	-0.03	-0.88	-0.02	0.02
OCB 19	I take steps to try and prevent problems with other employees	0.01	0.04	-0.93	0.08	0.01
	Civic Virtue					
OCB 20	I am mindful of how my behaviour effects other people's jobs	0.05	0.02	-0.90	0.01	0.02
OCB 21	I keep up with changes in the organization	0.09	-0.11	-0.17	0.60	0.15
OCB 22	I attend meetings that are not mandatory but are considered important	0.01	0.08	-0.04	0.85	0.00
OCB 23	I attend functions that are not required but help the organization's image	0.06	0.01	0.05	0.81	-0.15
OCB 24	I read and keep up to date with organizational announcements, memos and information.	-0.06	-0.13	-0.06	0.65	0.27

Notes: *Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations. Five factors extracted. Items were presented in the recommended order in the questionnaire. The highest scores (ignoring the +/- signs) are highlighted and are shown in bold.

One point of significance is evident in the underlying factor structure presented in Table 3.17. Table 3.17 shows that all scale items of the OCB model used in this study loaded on one of five hypothesized dimensions as expected (albeit that the scale item OCB20 did not load on the expected factor).

The next section presents a brief summary of the research issues associated with the survey questionnaire used in the quantitative strand of this study.

3.3.7 Summary

The questionnaire used to survey the family law courts' client service staff was demonstrated to be sufficiently reliable to allow testing of the relationships between job attitude and job performance that were of interest. This assessment is based upon the fact that the Cronbach alpha measures for all of the key survey variables were in the range of good to very good.

In most respects the key survey variables measured what they were expected to measure—and all of the models used to conceptualize and measure the key survey variables were found to have content validity.

The components of organizational commitment and co-worker commitment were found to demonstrate convergent validity and the measurement of organizational commitment

demonstrated discriminant validity. In addition, all key survey variables have criterion validity.

The factor analysis of the scale items used for measuring the components of organizational commitment and co-worker commitment identified some inconsistencies in the way that respondents interpreted some of the scale items associated with the affective and continuance commitment components of both measures. Further modification of the wording of some scale items would be needed to improve its validity in this study context. The validity testing indicates a measure of caution needs to be applied to the interpretation of the survey results.

The factor analysis of the service quality scale demonstrated that while respondents were able to discriminate between most dimensions of the original SERVQUAL structure some modifications of the wording of some scale items is still needed. The use of an Exploratory Factor Analysis rather than Confirmatory Factor Analysis may influence the strength of any generalizations that can be made about the survey results.

The factor analysis of the OCB scale items demonstrates that it had a five dimensional structure as expected and that most scale items loaded upon the hypothesized dimension.

Overall the reliability measures and validity tests demonstrate the key survey variables measure what they were expected to measure. This means that some limited generalizability of the survey results is possible - albeit that the family law courts represent a unique service context (see Chapter 5 from the qualitative strand of this study). However, the concerns expressed about the results of the factor analysis of organizational and co-worker commitment suggest that a degree of caution needs to be applied to the interpretation of the survey results and limits any potential generalization of these results to other courts.

The next section of this chapter draws together the key research issues arising from the qualitative and the quantitative strands of this study and, in particular, their relevance for the study's research propositions and research questions.

3.4 Relationship between the Research Strands

This Section of the chapter discusses how the mixed research methods design selected for this study and the particular research methods used enabled this study not only “to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic” (Morse, 1991, p.122 as cited in Creswell

& Plano Clark, 2007, p. 62) but to also bring together the different strengths of each research method to address the study's two research questions.

The triangulation design that best describes this study is a 'validating quantitative data model' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). It is a parallel mixed research methods design where the qualitative results are used to validate the quantitative results. The main difference in the present study is that the qualitative results also allowed this study to not only postulate an interpretation of the quantitative results but also allowed the study to go beyond the association being tested by the quantitative data. In this study a significant theme emerged from the qualitative data that was not anticipated as a research issue.

In addition there was a limited amount of data mixing that occurred between the quantitative strand and the qualitative strand. This is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

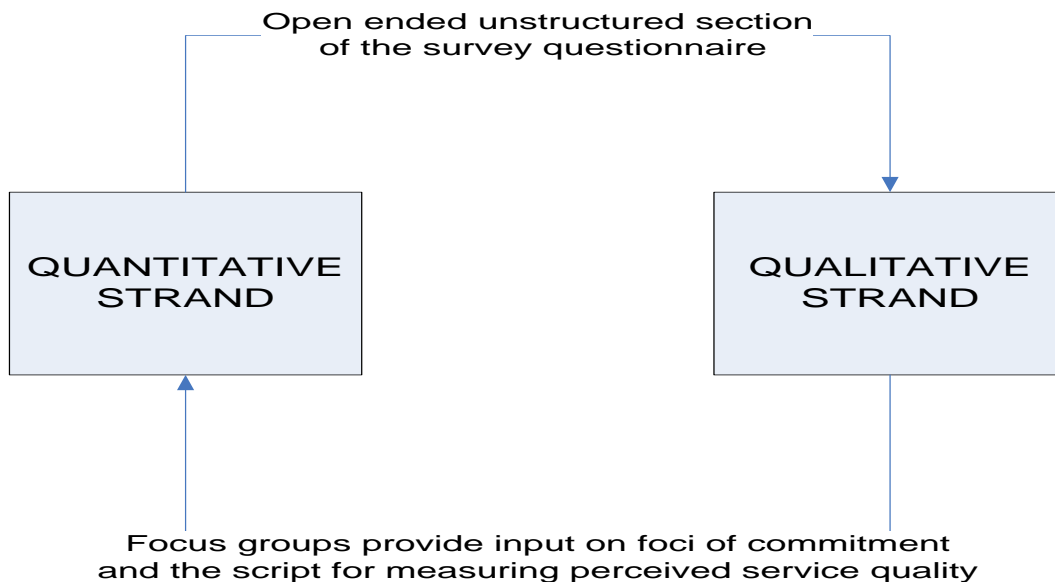


Figure 3.1 Limited Data Mixing in Parallel Mixed Research Design

As indicated in Subsection 3.1.2 of this chapter and illustrated in Figure 3.1 the data mixing between the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study occurred in two ways. The first was data from focus group meetings being used to help refine aspects of the survey questionnaire. This involved the selection of the two foci of work commitment to be measured by this study and the slight modification of the standard script items for SERVQUAL to accommodate the research topic and the service setting.

However, the most important form of relationship between the quantitative and qualitative strands of this study involved the complementarity of the data for answering the study’s two research questions. This feature of the study was established by the ‘research matrix’ described in Subsection 3.1.2 and presented in Appendix A. The way in which the complementary data collected contribute to answering each of this study’s two research questions is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.

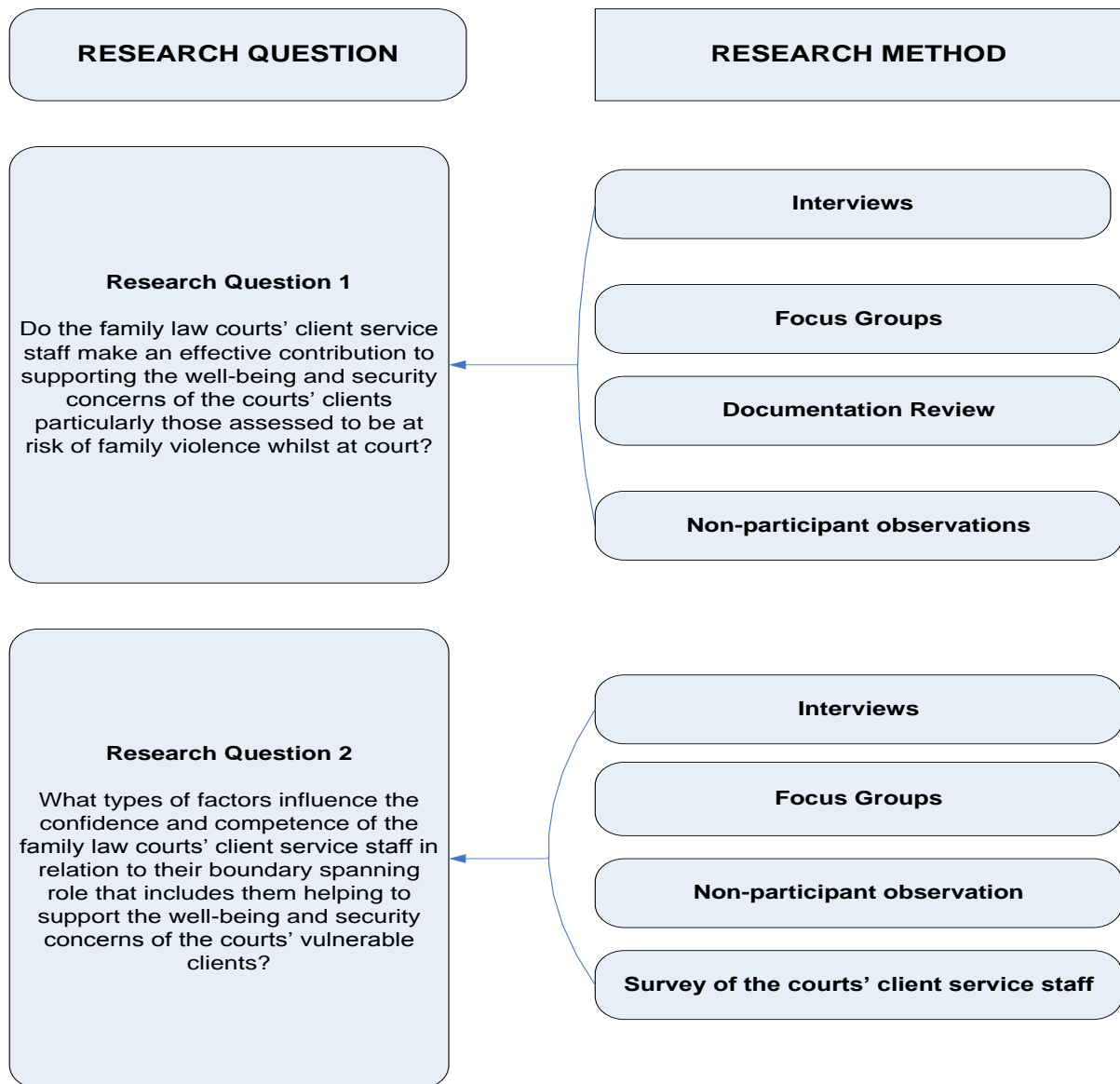


Figure 3.2 Alignment of Research Method to Study’s Research Questions

It is difficult to interpret Figure 3.2 without referring back to the theoretical framework for this study illustrated in part in Figure 2.2 of the preceding chapter. For ease of reference the theoretical framework is reproduced below as Figure 3.3. Figure 3.2 identifies

the primary relationship between each research method and the study's two research questions. In contrast, Figure 3.3 illustrates the relationship between the elements of the theoretical framework and this study's two research questions.

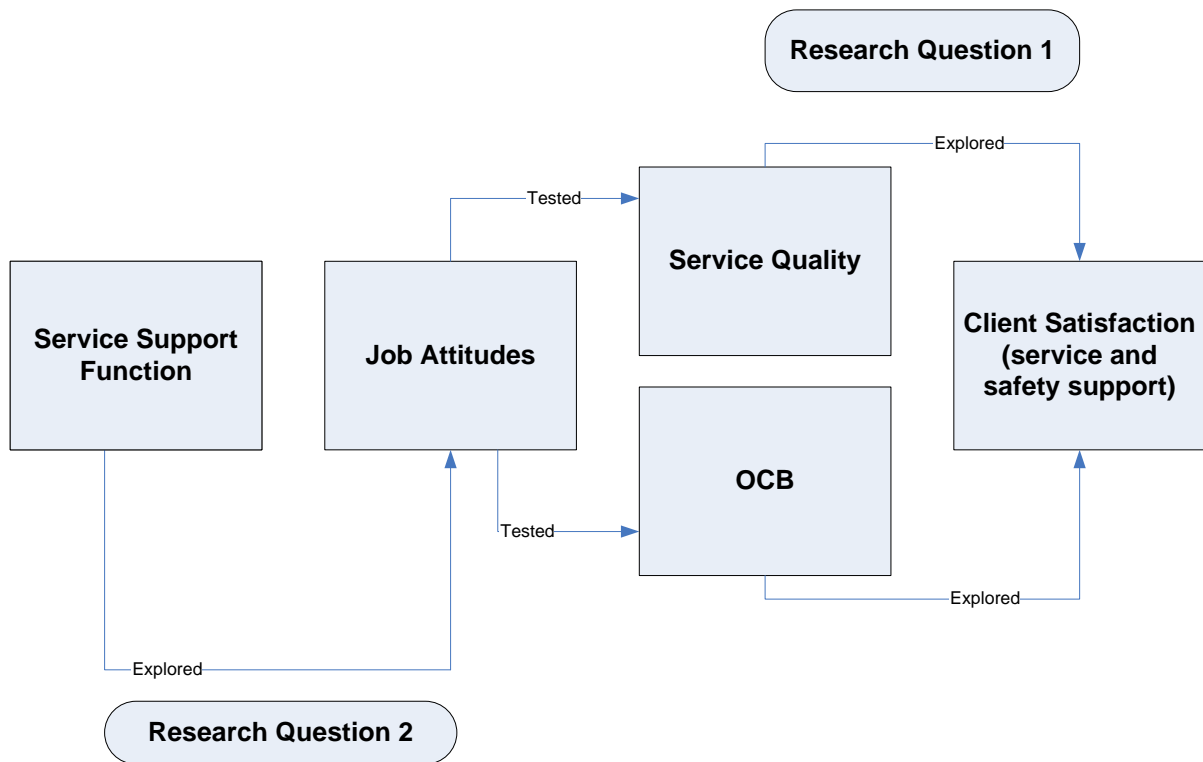


Figure 3.3 – The Theoretical Framework of a Study of Client Service and Court Safety (Part 1)

Figure 3.3 illustrates that the relationship between perceived service quality and the citizenship behaviour amongst the courts' client service staff and client satisfaction with the service and safety support provided by the courts was explored using qualitative research methods. Figure 3.2 illustrates the four qualitative research methods used to collect data to explore the relationship thought to exist between the role of the courts' client service staff in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients.

Figure 3.3 also illustrates the relationship between the courts' service support function and the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff that was explored using qualitative research methods while the relationship between the job attitudes and service performance of the courts' client service staff was tested using a quantitative research method. Figure 3.3 illustrates the three qualitative research methods used to explore how the courts' service support function influence the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff, while the survey

of the courts' client service staff was used to test the relationship between job attitudes, perceived service quality and OCB.

The next section of this chapter outlines a number of delimitations and limitations with the use of a mixed research methodology and the five research methods used in the present study.

3.5 Delimitations and Limitations

The main delimitation associated with the use of a mixed research design for this research was the selection of a parallel rather than a sequential design. The latter would have afforded a greater opportunity for data mixing but at the expense of greater disruption of the operation of the family law courts' client service function.

An inability (due to difficulty and time involved) to check the accuracy of the transcripts with the interview and focus group participants is a source of delimitation that may lessen the accuracy of resulting analysis and interpretation (Cho & Trent, 2006). The use of NVivo 8 to logically and hierarchically generate analysis arising from the interview and focus group transcripts and the distraction this may have generated that limited the researcher from reading and understanding the text of these transcripts is another source of delimitation.

A limitation of the qualitative strand of the study is associated with the purposive sampling strategy used for the interviews. This limitation arose there was no stipulation that a random approach should be used in the selection of interview participants. As a consequence some degree of bias may have arisen through staff with particular points of view volunteering to participate in the interviews. The semi-structured in-depth interview approach used, and the apparent interest evident from most interview participants, may lessen any bias associated with the lack of a random selection process.

A delimitation of the survey questionnaire is the similarity of the two constructs of work commitment that were measured. This similarity led to very similar outcome results and did not increase the usefulness of these measures to explain variations in job performance albeit that they may be seen to have increased the reliability of these measures. Another delimitation is that the wording of each of the script items of each dimension of SERVQUAL was modified to fit the service setting. As a consequence this may act to limit the

generalizations that can be applied to the survey results to other similar service settings (Ekinici, 2002).

Another delimitation associated with the survey questionnaire relates to the choice of self-rating for all key survey variables including service quality and OCB that could lead to some degree of common methods bias being present in the survey results. The decision to use self-rating was made with an awareness of this potential delimitation (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003) and the relative strengths associated with self-rating (Mabe & West, 1982). The main reason for using self-rating for service quality and OCB was a pragmatic one. The decision was based upon an assessment of the practical difficulties of gaining access to supervisor and/or peer ratings for measures of service quality and OCB for the family law courts' client service staff who are geographically dispersed (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) and where agreement for access to supervisors for this purpose had not been negotiated when the access agreement was settled. Self-rating was used for the two models of commitment and job satisfaction on the basis that the research literature indicates that respondents are best placed to rate their own job attitudes.

A final delimitation is associated with the use of an Exploratory Factor Analysis rather than Confirmatory Factor Analysis to test the factor structure of work commitment and service quality. While the use of this technique was thought to be justified for several reasons it may act to limit the confidence that can be placed upon the survey results.

The limitations associated with the survey questionnaire used in this study are the lack of a detailed examination of the factor structure of key survey variables used in the pilot survey in the ACT Public Service and the lack of validity tests being conducted on the pilot survey data before the survey questionnaire was finalized for use in the family law courts. Perhaps too much confidence was placed on the use of widely used models for measuring organizational commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has presented and justified the research design and the administration of the qualitative and quantitative strands of this study. In particular, there is evidence of sound piloting of the qualitative and quantitative research methods and sound choices in relation to the models used to conceptualize and measure the key variables in the survey of the family law courts' client service staff.

The information presented on the four research methods used in the qualitative strand of this study demonstrates the methods used are relevant to answering the study's first research question concerning whether the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients thought to be at risk of family violence whilst at court.

The qualitative research strand of this study has been shown to be relevant to answer part of this study's second research question concerning the types of factors, other than job attitudes, that influence the competence and confidence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary-spanning role. An argument has also been presented that the qualitative research strand of this study demonstrates acceptable validity across a range of commonly used criterion that supports the trustworthiness of the study's qualitative results.

The questionnaire used to survey the family law courts' client service staff is relevant to answering part of the study's second research question concerning the influence that the job attitudes of the family law courts' client service staff have on their service performance (including the performance of their safety-related behaviour as part of their extended service role). The survey questionnaire was also demonstrated to be reliable and to have acceptable validity.

This chapter discussed the complementary nature of this study's five research methods in terms of how the data collected addresses the study's two research questions and how data mixing between the study's two research strands adds to each strand's relative strengths. Finally this chapter discusses the delimitations and limitations of the study's research methods and suggest that limited generalization of the study results may be possible but also indicates that a measure of caution needs to be applied to the interpretation of the study results.

The next chapter analyses and interprets the quantitative data obtained from the survey of the courts' client service staff.

Chapter 4 – The Quantitative Results

This chapter presents an analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the survey of the family law courts' client service staff. The chapter develops two central arguments; one about the survey respondents and the other about the survey data. As part of the first argument, the contention is that the survey respondents are representative of the courts' client service workforce as a whole. This is important because the intention of this study is to generalize any inferences made about the results obtained from the survey respondents to the courts' client service workforce as a whole. The contention made as part of the second argument is that an association exists between the job attitudes and job performance amongst the courts' client service staff. This contention relates to the intent to use the survey results to answer part of the study's second research question concerning the factors that influence the service performance of the courts' client service staff.

This chapter has six sections. Section 4.1 analyses the demographic and organizational variables used to capture basic data about the survey respondents. The actual data is presented in Appendix B. This data is used to support the contention that the survey respondents are representative of the population from which they were drawn.

Section 4.2 presents an analysis of the descriptive statistics relating to the way that survey respondents rated their organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The frequency distribution of respondent ratings of the key survey variables are then analysed to determine the degree to which these ratings conform to a normal distribution and what this means in relation to the strength of the rating given to each variable.

Section 4.3 examines whether the predominance (74%) of females amongst the survey respondents made any difference to overall survey results and whether the female respondents rated each of the key survey variables differently to the male respondents. The data to test this proposition is provided in Appendix N.

Section 4.4 tests a series of research hypotheses about the associations that exist between survey respondent's job attitudes and their perceptions of their service quality and their OCB. The results from this section are summarized in terms of which measures of job

attitude have predictive power to explain variations in service performance amongst the courts' client service staff.

Section 4.5 extends the analysis of the relationship found to exist between job satisfaction, service quality and OCB amongst the Courts' client service staff to test the strength of this relationship using regression analysis.

Section 4.6 provides a summary of the chapter by drawing together key aspects of the survey results into four main points. First it is argued that the survey respondents can be seen to be reasonably representative of the population from which they were drawn. Second some specific inferences are made of the courts' client service workforce as a whole based upon the demographic and organizational characteristics of the survey respondents. Third an argument is made about the relationship that exists between some of job attitude and some aspects of job performance amongst the courts' client service staff. Finally some generalizations are made about how job attitudes amongst the courts' client service workforce as a whole appear to influence the perceived quality of the services delivered by the courts' client service staff to the courts' clients that includes supporting clients' wellbeing and security concerns.

4.1 Demographic and Organizational Variables

This section of the chapter reiterates some basic facts about the survey population, the survey response rate, and the nature of the demographic and organizational variables used to collect basic data about the survey respondents. The section then analyses data on the demographic and organizational characteristics of the survey respondents and makes reference to similar characteristics of the client service staff who participated in interviews and focus groups and to the staffing profile of the Family Court of Australia as a whole.

Survey Population and Survey Response Rate

An on-line survey questionnaire was sent directly to 291 client service staff working in the family law courts' nineteen registries located around Australia and in the courts' national enquiry centre located in Parramatta. Two hundred and twenty-three responses were received by the close of the survey period. However, twenty-nine survey responses were incomplete and were not coded. The final valid response rate, representing 194 survey questionnaires out of 291 potential respondents, was 66.5 per cent of the survey population.

Demographic and Organizational Variables

A fairly standard set of demographic and organizational variables was selected for use in this study's survey questionnaire. The demographic characteristics covered age, gender, highest level of education and location of work, and the organizational variables covered current job, total work experience and experience in current job, employment status and job classification.

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic and Organizational Variables

A series of nine tables are presented in Appendix B in order to make some observations about the characteristics of the survey respondents. Some tables present data on single attributes such as gender or age to help highlight the underlying pattern associated with an attribute of the survey respondents. Other tables present a key attribute along with the respondent's gender to enable observations to be made about the similarities and differences between female and male respondents. A series of nine tables are also presented in Appendix C in order to make some observations about the profile of the courts' client service staff who participated in interviews and focus group meetings. These two sets of tables are combined with some workforce profile data for the family law courts' as a whole to support the argument that the client service staff who responded to the survey questionnaire are representative of the population from which they were drawn.

The characteristics of the survey respondents presented in Tables 1 to 9 in Appendix B can be analysed in at least two ways. The first relates to the pattern evident in the attributes themselves and what this suggests about the survey respondents presented in Appendix C. The second relates to comparing and contrasting the profile of the survey respondents and the profile of those who participated in interviews and focus groups with some of the basic features of the Family Court of Australia's staffing profile.

In relation to gender, the majority of survey respondents are female. The only question that arises from this is whether gender is a factor in influencing the way in which the survey respondents rate their job attitudes and their service performance. This question is answered in Section 4.3 of this chapter by examining the results from a number of t-tests for independent samples that compares the mean ratings of the survey variables for male and female respondents. It eventuates that there is no statistically significant difference in the way

that female and male respondents rated key survey variables in the survey of the Courts' client service staff.

In relation to the age profile of the survey respondents, the research literature on career management suggests that an employee's working life can be divided into four different stages of career development. Using the model proposed by Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk (2010) it is possible to establish that on the basis of the age profile of the survey respondents (Table 2 of Appendix B) that a large proportion of respondents can be regarded as being at an early stage of their working life (27.6% are under the age of 30). However, a significant proportion of the survey respondents (72.4%) are at a midcareer or a late career stage of their working life. This suggests some staff may be conservative in their views toward their job and their organization and they may be more resistant to change (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010).

In relation to employment status, the majority of survey respondents (79%) were either in permanent full-time or permanent part-time employment. However, those in non-ongoing employment (21%) represented almost a quarter of the respondents. This is a significant number of employees in precarious employment who lack a sense of job security. This may be a factor influencing how these survey respondents rated their commitment and their job satisfaction.

The majority (79.6% of male respondents and 78.2% of female respondents) of survey respondents have less than 10 years of work experience in their current job. It is evident that a large percentage of respondents (38.5%) have less than 10 years of total work experience. This suggests that a large percentage of respondents have only ever worked in the courts.

The majority of survey respondents work at the operational level (APS 3). The number of respondents at higher levels of job classification decline markedly as the level of classification rises above the APS 5 level. This suggests that there may be a potential lack of advancement opportunity for staff within the courts' client service function. This also suggests that the family law courts could experience a high turnover rate amongst its client service workforce. However, given that the annual staff turnover rate for the Family Court of Australia as a whole was a modest 13.1 per cent of total staff as at 30 June 2012 (Family Court of Australia, 2012a) it suggests that, despite the apparent lack of advancement

opportunity, client service staff continue to work in the courts. The implication is that some of these staff may have become ‘entrenched’ in their jobs (Blau, 2001).

A high proportion (35.2% of females and 28.6% of males) of the survey respondents held tertiary qualifications. Given the routine nature of much of the work being performed by client service staff and the fact that few (6.3% of females and 6.1% of males) of the respondents are at the managerial level such as EL1 or EL2. This suggests that some staff are overqualified for the work that they perform.

A comparison of the profile of the survey respondents with the client service staff who participated in interviews and focus groups in terms of gender, age, current job title and highest level of educational attainment (see Appendix C) indicates that the two groups are reasonably similar in terms of their overall profile.

In relation to the Family Court of Australia’s workforce as a whole two points of comparison can be made. In relation to gender, the majority (75%) of survey respondents are female and the majority (70%) of the Family Court of Australia’s 601 employees at 30 June 2012 were also female. In terms of employment status, the majority (79%) of survey respondents are employed in a permanent full-time or part-time capacity and a similar proportion (82%) of the Family Court of Australia’s 601 employees at 30 June 2012 were also permanent full-time or part-time (Family Court of Australia, 2012a). There is therefore some evidence to support the argument that the survey respondents are representative of the population from which they were drawn.

The next section of this chapter presents descriptive statistics for each of the key survey variables.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Key Survey Variables

This section presents an analysis of the descriptive statistics relating to the key survey variables that form an important foundation for the statistical testing that is presented in the next two sections. Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the descriptive statistics for the key survey variables and a series of observations based upon this data are then provided for each variable.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Key Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Minimum Values	Maximum Values	Skewness (S)	Kurtosis (K)	Standard Deviation
Affective Organizational Commitment	4.29	4.37	4.63	1.50	6.13	-0.54	1.35	0.74
Continuance Organisational Commitment	3.95	4.00	3.75	1.25	7.00	0.13	1.38	0.84
Normative Organisational Commitment	3.99	4.00	4.00	0.00	5.50	-3.88	28.17	0.55
Affective Co-worker Commitment	4.45	4.56	5.00	1.13	6.00	-0.91	1.76	0.80
Continuance Co-worker Commitment	3.96	4.00	4.00	1.00	7.00	-0.14	1.11	0.88
Normative Co-worker Commitment	3.98	4.17	4.17	0.00	6.00	-2.27	9.60	1.16
Job Satisfaction	4.92	4.85	4.70	3.05	7.00	0.91	5.66	0.65
Service Quality	5.52	5.55	5.00	0.00	7.00	-2.46	15.60	0.77
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	5.49	5.50	5.88	0.00	6.88	-1.97	14.10	0.75

Based upon Table 4.1 observations can be made about how respondents rated each variable in terms of the average, middle and most frequent rating, whether the distribution is skewed right or left and how far the tail values are from the average rating. As discussed in Subsection 3.3.4 of Chapter 3 a seven point Likert type of measurement scale that ranged from 1 for ‘Very Strongly Disagree’ to 7 for ‘Very Strongly Agree’ with 4 being ‘Neutral’ was used for each key survey variable. Summary observations about the frequency distribution for the ratings given to each key survey variable are provided below.

Affective Organizational Commitment

- Has a mean of 4.29, a median of 4.37 and a mode of 4.63 with a distribution that is skewed left (S=-0.54) with some clustering (K=1.35) around the mean with a standard deviation of 0.74. Data for the individual scale items for affective organizational

commitment shows that only three of the eight scale items had a mean above 4.5. The histogram for this component shows several respondents rated the component 'Very Strongly Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' that accounts for the skewness to the left.

Continuance Organizational Commitment

- Has a mean of 3.95, a median of 4.0 and a mode of 3.75 with a small skew to the right ($S=0.13$) with some clustering ($K=1.38$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.84. Overall the scale items are rated negative to neutral with the seventy-fifth percentile at 4.50.

Normative Organization Commitment

- Has a mean of 3.99, a median of 4.0 and a mode of 4.0 with a distribution moderately skewed left ($S=-3.88$) with values highly clustered around the mean (28.17) with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.55. Overall the scale items are rated negative to neutral with the seventy-fifth percentile at 4.30.

Affective Co-worker Commitment

- Has a mean of 4.45, a median of 4.56 and a mode of 5.0 with a distribution that is slightly skewed left ($S=-0.91$) with some clustering ($K=1.76$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.80. The mean scores for all scale items is close to neutral but positive with the seventy-fifth percentile at 5.0.

Continuance Co-worker Commitment

- Has a mean of 3.96, a median of 4.0 and a mode of 4.0 with a distribution that is slightly skewed left ($S=-0.14$) with some clustering ($K=1.11$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.88. Overall the scale items are rated negative or neutral with the seventy-fifth percentile at 4.50.

Normative Co-worker Commitment

- Has a mean of 3.98, a median of 4.17 and a mode of 4.17 with a distribution that is moderately skewed left ($S=-2.27$) and strongly clustered ($K=9.6$) around the mean with a reasonably large standard deviation from the mean of 1.16. Overall the scale items are rated from negative to weakly positive with the seventy-fifth percentile at 4.3. Job Satisfaction.

- Has a mean of 4.92, a median of 4.85 and a mode of 4.70 with a distribution that is slightly skewed right ($S=0.91$) with strong clustering ($K=5.66$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.65. The majority of scale item scores are rated above 5 (Agree) with the strongest rated items ‘Work Independently’ (5.68), ‘Steady Employment’ (5.42), ‘Do Things for Others’ (5.45) and ‘Keep Busy’ (5.44). Overall the scale items are rated moderately positive with the seventy-fifth percentile at 5.25.

Service Quality

- Has a mean of 5.52, a median of 5.55 and a mode of 5.0 with a distribution that is slightly skewed left ($S=-.2.46$) with strong clustering of values ($K=15.60$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.77. Most scale items are rated moderately positive with only a small number of measures below 4.0.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

- Has a mean of 5.49, a median of 5.5 and a mode of 5.88 with a distribution that is slightly skewed left ($S=-1.97$) with much clustering of values ($K=14.10$) around the mean with a standard deviation from the mean of 0.75. The twenty-fifth percentile was at 5.0 with the seventy-fifth percentile at 5.10.

A number of overall observations can be made about the data presented in Table 4.1. Firstly the mean, median and mode for the components of organizational commitment and co-worker commitment, except for affective organizational commitment (4.29, 4.37 and 4.63 respectively) and affective co-worker commitment (4.45, 4.56 and 5.0 respectively), indicate that respondents rated the continuance commitment and normative commitment components as neutral or negative. Secondly, survey respondents rated their overall job satisfaction positively with a mean of 4.92, a median of 4.85 a mode of 4.70 and with a reasonably high degree of clustering of values ($K=5.66$) around the mean. Finally, respondents rated their service quality, with a mean of 5.52, a median of 5.55 and a mode of 5.00, and their OCB with a mean of 5.49, a median of 5.50 and a mode of 5.88 as moderately positive with both measures showing strong clustering of values ($K= 15.60$ for service quality and 14.10 for OCB) around the mean.

Summary

The data suggests that most respondents are not strongly committed to their organization or to their co-workers that respondents have a reasonable degree of job satisfaction and that respondents rated their service quality and OCB as moderately positive. Tests of the association between the key survey variables will be presented in Section 4.4. The next section answer a a question about whether the gender of survey respondents appears to influence how respondents have rated their job attitudes and their job performance?

4.3 The Association between Respondent Gender and Key Survey Variables

The majority of survey respondents were female. There were some differences in the demographic and organizational characteristics of male and female survey respondents. Consequently, a question arises about whether female respondents rated their job attitudes and/or their service performance differently from male survey respondents.

Before this relationship was examined, bivariate hypothesis testing using cross tabulations was used to establish whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the gender of survey respondents and their other demographic and organizational characteristics. These results are presented in Appendix M and they indicate that no statistically significant associations exist and the demographic and organizational variables are statistically independent of gender in the population from which the survey respondents were drawn.

The t-test for independent samples is a way of examining the relationship amongst variables where the independent variable, gender, is measured by nominal or ordinal data and the dependent variables (commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB) are measured by interval data (Acton, Miller, Fullerton & Maltby, 2002). The level of confidence to be applied to the t-tests for independent samples was $p < .05$ (Salkind, 2011). Simply put, the question examined was whether female survey respondents viewed their commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB differently from male survey respondents.

Appendix M presents the t-tests for independent samples of the mean rating given to organizational commitment, co-worker commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and OCB by the gender of the respondents.

Tables 1 to 5 in Appendix N indicate that the predominance (74%) of females amongst the survey respondents did not significantly influence how survey respondents rated the key survey variables. In addition, the ‘size effect’ for each relationship tested is small and ranged from 0.02 through to 0.20 (Salkind, 2011).

The next section tests for the association that exists between the ways that survey respondents rate their job attitudes and their job performance.

4.4 The Association between Job Attitudes and Job Performance

This section of the chapter discusses the testing of a series of research hypotheses about the association that is thought to exist between organizational commitment, co-worker commitment and job satisfaction amongst the family law courts’ client service staff and their perceptions of their service quality and their OCB. In effect we are testing whether differences in how client service staff rate their job attitudes predict differences in how they rate their service performance. Whereas a null hypothesis is a statement of no relationship between variables and refers to the survey population, a research hypothesis is a definite statement that there is a relationship between the variables and refers to the survey sample (Salkind, 2011). The existence of a relationship between job attitudes and job performance is supported by the research literature reviewed in Subsections 2.2.3 and 2.3.4 of Chapter 2.

The correlation coefficient is used to determine whether there is a real relationship between survey variables measured using interval or ratio scales. A two tailed test of significance was used with $p < .05$ to determine whether each association is statistically significant (Salkind, 2011).

Table 4.2 summarizes the correlation coefficients for the association between organizational commitment (and its components), co-worker commitment (and its components) and job satisfaction with service quality and with OCB. A series of observations about the correlation coefficient measures for each variable then follows.

Table 4.2 Correlation Coefficients for Key Survey Variables

Variable		Service Quality	OCB
Affective organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.24	0.12
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.09
Continuance organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	-0.04	-0.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.62	0.60
Normative organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.13	-0.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.07	0.79
Organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.17	0.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.02	0.54
Affective co-worker commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.23	0.12
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.10
Continuance co-worker commitment	Pearson Correlation	-0.02	0.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.84	0.75
Normative co-worker commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.17	-0.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.02	0.66
Co-worker commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.18	0.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	0.37
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.41	0.26
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00

N=194 in all cases.

Organizational Commitment

Table 4.2 indicates that the research hypothesis that there is a relationship between organizational commitment and its components and service quality and OCB is supported only in relation to the affective organizational commitment component and service quality

($r = 0.24$ with Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .00$) and in relation to overall organizational commitment and service quality ($r = 0.17$ with Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .02$). The strength of the relationship between affective organizational commitment and service quality is small but definite, whereas the relationship between overall organizational commitment and service quality is slight almost negligible. This is an expected result although the association is somewhat weaker than expected (Cohen, 2003; Vandenberghe, 2009).

Co-worker Commitment

Table 4.2 indicates that the research hypothesis that there is a relationship between co-worker commitment and its components and service quality and OCB is supported in relation to the association between affective co-worker commitment component and service quality ($r = 0.23$, Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .00$), between normative co-worker commitment component and service quality ($r = 0.17$, Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .02$) and between overall co-worker commitment and service quality ($r = 0.18$, Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .01$). However, as with organizational commitment, there is no statistically significant association between co-worker commitment and its components and OCB. The strength of the relationship between affective co-worker commitment and service quality is small but definite, the relationship between normative co-worker commitment and service quality is slight almost negligible, and the relationship between overall co-worker commitment and service quality is slight almost negligible. This is also an expected result although the association is somewhat weaker than expected.

Job Satisfaction

Table 4.2 above indicates that the research hypotheses that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and service quality ($r = 0.41$, Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .00$) and that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and OCB ($r = 0.26$, Sig. (2-tailed) $p = .00$) are both supported. The strength of the relationship between job satisfaction and service quality is moderate whereas the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB is small but definite. This is an expected result and is of the size expected (Judge et al., 2001; Westover, 2011).

Summary

The correlation coefficients data provided in Table 4.2 indicates that the observations drawn from the descriptive statistics about the distribution of respondent ratings of the key survey variables were largely accurate. While an association does exist between organizational commitment (and affective organizational commitment) and service quality it

is at best a weak relationship. This is not an entirely unexpected result. However, the lack of a statistically significant relationship between organizational commitment (and affective organizational commitment) and OCB is not an expected result.

Table 4.2 indicates that a relationship does exist between co-worker commitment and two of its components (affective co-worker commitment and normative co-worker commitment) and service quality. This relationship can also be regarded as weak. Again the relationship between co-worker commitment (and its components) and OCB is not statistically significant and this is an unexpected result. The similarity in the results between the two forms of work commitment is due, at least in part, to the similarity of the two commitment measures given that the script for measuring co-worker commitment was developed from the script for measuring organizational commitment.

Table 4.2 indicates that the associations between job satisfaction and service quality and between job satisfaction and OCB are moderate and small respectively and this is an expected result. The next section explores the strength of the relationship found to exist between job satisfaction, service quality and OCB amongst the Courts' client service staff using regression analysis.

4.5 The Strength of the Association between Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

This section presents the results of a bivariate regression analysis of the association between job satisfaction, service quality and OCB amongst the Courts' client service staff. A bivariate regression analysis was used to test the nature and strength of the relationship found to exist through correlation coefficient data (Hair et al., 2003).

A regression of job satisfaction and service quality provided R squared = 0.09; adjusted R squared = 0.08, $F(1, 19) = 18.79$ with Sig (2-tailed) = 0.000 or statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. The unstandardized coefficient = 0.36 and the standardized coefficient = 0.30, $t = 4.34$ with Sig (2-tailed) = 0.000.

A regression of job satisfaction and OCB provided R squared = 0.07; adjusted R squared = 0.06, $F(1, 192) = 13.67$ with Sig (2-tailed) = 0.000 or statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. The unstandardized coefficient = 0.30, and the standardized coefficient = 0.26, $t = 3.70$ with Sig (2-tailed) = 0.000.

The regression results for job satisfaction and service quality explain 0.9% of the variation in service quality and the strength of the relationship is positive and small but definite. Combining the analysis of the correlation coefficients and the regression results indicates that job satisfaction is a stronger predictor of job performance amongst the Courts' client service staff than either form of work commitment measured. This is the reverse of what was reported by researchers using the same models of organizational commitment and service quality albeit in a private sector call centre (Malhortra & Mukerjee, 2004). The regression results for job satisfaction and OCB indicate the relationship is positive and small but definite, explains 0.7% of the variance in OCB and is largely as expected based upon other research involving these two variables (Organ, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Witman, Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2010).

Aside from the unexpected aspects of some of the survey results the small amount of variation explained by job satisfaction and the fact that it is a stronger predictor of perceived service quality and OCB than either form of work commitment that was measured (including their components) suggests the present study needs to go beyond the association between job attitude and job performance to explore the factors that may have a greater influence over the courts' client service staff.

The next section provides a brief summary of the implications of the survey results for the preent study's second research question.

4.6 Summary

The data presented in Section 4.1 demonstrates support for the contention that the survey respondents were reasonably representative of the population from which they were drawn and this in turn supports the argument that inferences drawn from the characteristics of the survey respondents can be applied to the courts' client service workforce as a whole. The demographic and organizational characteristics of the survey respondents suggest at least five things about the staffing profile of the courts' client service workforce:

1. Fifty per cent of client service staff are in the latter stages of their working life and this may influence how they view their organization, their co-workers and their jobs.
2. A large percentage (28.6% of male respondents and 35.1% of female respondents) of client service staff hold tertiary qualifications and as a consequence they may be

considered over qualified for the work that they perform. This could in turn lead to unintentional work-related behaviour such as tardiness, and absenteeism.

3. A significant percentage of client service staff (79.6% of male respondents and 78.2% of female respondents) have less than 10 years of work experience in their current job and for many (38.5%) of these people their only work experience has been in the courts. This suggests a stable workforce with limited turnover during the first 10 years of work experience in the courts.
4. Twenty one per cent of client service staff are in precarious employment and lack job security. This could lead to a lowering of their commitment and job satisfaction.
5. There is an evident lack of advancement opportunity in the client service function above the APS 5 level that again could lead to low commitment and job satisfaction and a feeling of job entrapment.

Overall these five features of the profile of the survey respondents when applied to the courts' client service workforce as a whole, suggest there are a number of challenges in managing this type of workforce, particularly in relation to their extended service role that encompasses supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients.

The data presented in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 indicates that there is limited support for the argument that job attitudes have a strong association with job performance amongst the courts' client service staff. In particular, job satisfaction has been found to have a stronger association with variations in service quality than organizational commitment or co-worker commitment and there is no statistically significant association between organizational commitment or co-worker commitment and OCB. Because of the relatively weak association between work commitment, service quality and OCB the strength and direction of the association was only tested in relation to job satisfaction using regression analysis. Job satisfaction was found to explain only a small percentage of the variation in service quality and OCB. Although the relationship was found to be small it was positive and definite.

The implications of the data presented in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 are twofold. First the courts' client service staff are moderately satisfied with their job but are not strongly committed to either their organization or to their co-workers. The lack of work commitment has implications for job performance. The second implication is the need for the present

study to look beyond the association between job attitude and job performance in order to understand what factors other than job attitude (such as the service setting, the courts' service orientation and the nature of the courts' clients) may explain perceived service quality and OCB amongst the courts' client service workforce.

The next chapter concerns the results obtained from the quantitative strand of this study.

Chapter 5 – The Qualitative Results

This chapter presents an analysis of the results obtained from interviews, focus groups, non-participant observations and documentation review used in the qualitative strand of this study. Use is also made of responses from the open ended section of the on-line survey questionnaire.

The data gathered by these research methods are displayed in a variety of ways using text, conversational narrative, figures and visual images. A number of different organizational roles played by the respondents were identified in the conversational narrative that was obtained from interviews and focus groups. This was done to establish whether respondents' work roles influence their perspectives as suggested by the literature on role theory (Biddle, 1986; Katz & Kahn, 1978). In addition, three subthemes of people, process and place that emerge from the court security research literature are also referred to as a way of thinking about, and comparing and contrasting the issues of client service and court security.

This chapter addresses some of the gaps identified in service industry and court security research literature. First, the qualitative data highlights the impact of inappropriate client behaviour on client service staff perceptions and attitudes. This challenges court administrators who may take a unidirectional view of the service exchange process that tends to be reflected in some of the service industry research literature (Walsh, 2011) and in the practitioner literature on best practice in court administration (National Centre for State Courts, 2008). Second, in contrast to the tendency in much of the court security research literature to focus predominantly on the court environment as a key strategy in court security (Barrett, 2009), the present study focused on the views of those working inside of the family law courts and how their perceptions and attitudes affect how they think and feel about court security. This chapter also extends the very limited research on the relationship between client service and court security in Australia (Cooke, 2006; Nicholson, 2005; Parker, 1998) by presenting an argument for the family law courts to be seen as a public sector human service organization as well as a complex, dynamic and innovative mix of two separate but closely related judicial institutions that strives to serve a number of competing objectives concerning service quality, affordability and accessibility. The results presented in this

chapter also acknowledge that the Family Court of Australia has a history of optimism, trauma, and violence (Swain, 2012) that, at least in part, may explain why the family law courts shifted their client service delivery to better support clients coming before the courts who are at risk of family violence.

There are four themes and a number of subthemes that emerge from the analysis of the qualitative data discussed in this chapter. The four sections each deal with one of the four themes: client service, court security, situational factors and HRM practices. Figure 5.1 provides an illustration of the four themes and their associated subthemes.

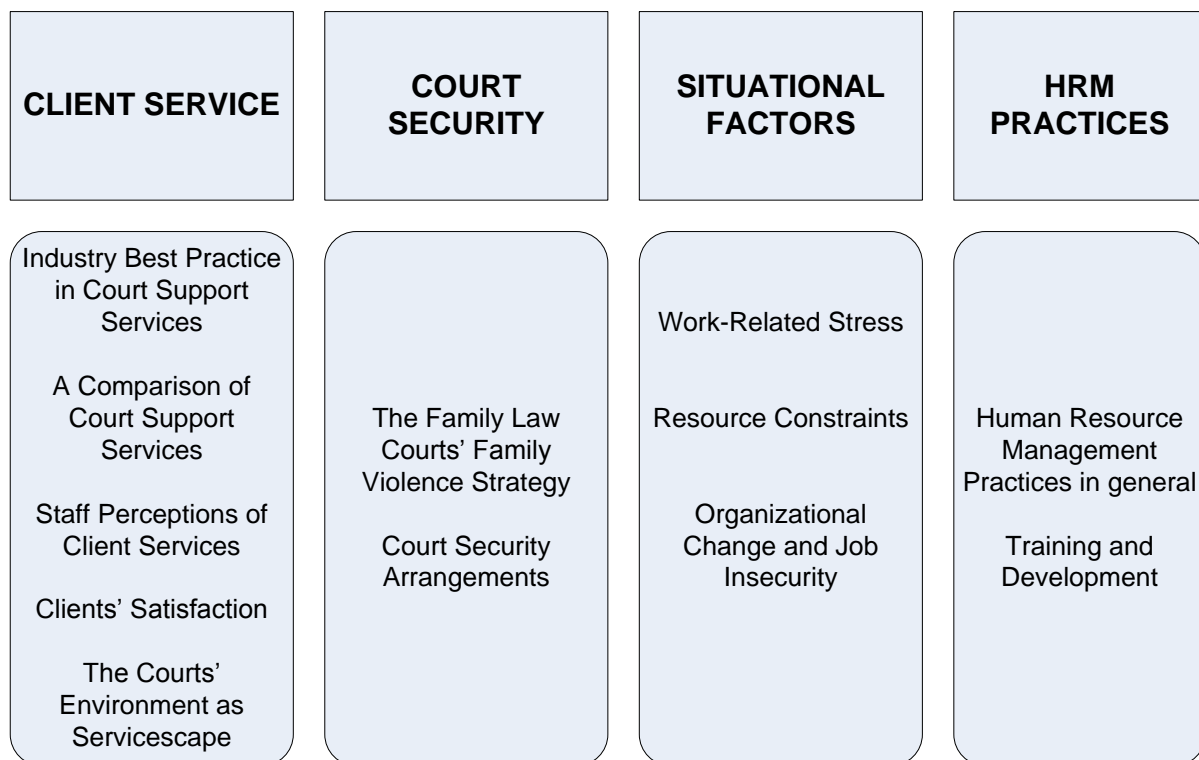


Figure 5.1 Themes and Subthemes in the Qualitative Data

Section 5.1 draws upon data from interview and focus group transcripts, non-participant observations and the documentation review and addresses the research proposition that the family law courts can be viewed as a public sector human service organization that has a strong client service orientation. Section 5.1 also reveals something about the Courts' organizational culture by reflecting on the way that the family law courts deal with their clients' support and security (Ostrom & Hanson, 2009, 2010).

Section 5.2 describes the family law courts 'Family Violence Strategy'. An analysis of this strategy reveals its role in providing the motivation for the family law courts to shift their client service delivery function to better support their clients' wellbeing and security concerns. This section also addresses staff perceptions of formal court security arrangements, including the protocol for safety planning that led to client service staff being directly involved in the screening of clients at risk of family violence whilst at court. This section highlights staff perceptions about a mix of issues, such as client-initiated violence, the nature of the court environment and the use or lack of use, of debriefing and counselling to support staff after stressful service events which are indirectly related to court security arrangements.

Section 5.3 concerns the types of situational factors (resource constraints, organizational change) reported by the family law courts' client service staff at interview and in focus groups that relate to part of the second research question about factors, other than job attitudes, that influence the service performance of the courts' client service staff. The theme of work-related stress was identified in the research literature but it was not known to be prevalent amongst the family law courts' client service staff so it was not singled out as a core research issue in the design of the present study. The issue of work-related stress emerges from the qualitative data about the way that the courts' client service staff experience their extended service role. This section also addresses the specific research proposition about the boundary role of all of the courts' client contact staff (client service staff, Registrars and Family Consultants) and how proximity to a difficult client group can affect staffs' perceptions and attitudes about their clients and their service role.

Section 5.4 concerns staff perceptions about the courts' staff management practices that were seen to either facilitate or inhibit service performance. It also concerns the issue of training and development of client service staff. The importance of the national 'Integrated Client Service Development Program', and the apparent lack of follow up to this national staff development initiative amongst existing client service staff also emerges as another important factor influencing how the courts' client service staff perceive their service role.

Section 5.5 provides a summary of how the data generated by the four qualitative research methods and the responses to the open-ended section of the on-line survey questionnaire relate to the study's two research questions and six research propositions. This section highlights the emergent issues of boundary spanning (the extended service role) and

role stress amongst the courts' client service staff as possible constraints on service performance and as an influence on other work-related behaviour such as staff absenteeism.

5.1 Client Service

All four qualitative research methods generated data that was useful for exploring how the services offered by the family law courts are perceived to support the wellbeing and security concerns of their clients. The evidence that was assembled from these four data sources supports the contention, introduced in Chapter 2, that the family law courts should be regarded as a public sector human service organization with a strong service orientation. As explored in later sections of this chapter, the family law courts' service orientation emerges as an important factor in explaining why the courts' client service function includes involvement in processes for creating and sustaining a safer court environment.

This section of the chapter is divided into five parts with each part representing a separate perspective on the family law courts' service orientation:

1. An examination of aspects of the operation of the family law courts' client service function and consideration of best practice in court support services based upon a documentation review.
2. A comparison of the court support services of the family law courts and the Court Administration Authority of South Australia based upon interview transcripts.
3. An examination of how the family law courts' client contact staff perceive the services they provide on behalf of the courts based upon interview and focus group transcripts.
4. A review of client satisfaction with the services offered by the family law courts based upon documentation review.
5. A summary of key features of the family law courts' built environment, seen as a servicescape (Bitner, 1992, 2000), which is based upon non-participant observations in seven of the family law courts' registries.

5.1.1 Industry Best Practice in Court Support Services

A review of documentation was used to highlight key aspects of the structure and function of the family law courts' client service operations and in order to identify aspects of its operating culture (Ostrom & Hanson, 2009, 2010). The following detail, taken from the Family Court of Australia's Annual Reports in 2011 and in 2012 (Family Court of Australia, 2011, 2012a) indicates the relative prominence of client service in the strategy and structure of the Family Court of Australia's operations.

The Family Court of Australia argues that its overarching goal is to deliver excellence in client service. The Family Court of Australia has service excellence as part of its mission statement; one of the court's four programs of work involves the provision of effective and efficient client service, one of the court's seven senior executives was the Executive Director, Client Services, and the Family Court of Australia reported that the resources used for client services represented approximately 20 per cent of the court's total resources.

In addition to client service delivery featuring in its structure and strategies, the family law courts reported that they had initiated a number of key service reforms over recent years that included a new priority case management process when child abuse was made known in cases coming before the family law courts (the 'Magellan Case Management System' as cited in Family Court of Australia, 2011, p.58), service improvements to reflect the diversity of the courts' user community (the 'Living in Harmony Partnership Project' as cited in Family Court of Australia, 2010a, p. 43), and the introduction of the 'Commonwealth Courts' Portal' that provides for electronic document exchange and e-filing (Family Court of Australia, 2011).

The family law courts also reported on innovations in developing the skills of its client service workforce, first through the 'Mental Health Pilot Support Project' (Family Court of Australia, 2006) and then through the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' (Family Courts of Australia, 2009a). These training initiatives, that were reported as unique amongst Australian court administration entities (Family Court of Australia, 2009a), were designed to help build the competence and confidence of the family law courts' client service staff and to help extend safety screening procedures to each and every court event (Family Court of Australia, 2012a).

The Family Court of Australia had a troubled early history because of a combination of under resourcing and a lack of interest by the Federal government of the day. On the announcement of her resignation, the first Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia described the Family Court of Australia as “the court of faded dreams” (Family Court of Australia, 2003, p. 3). During its early years the Family Court of Australia had a history of violent acts committed against the courts’ premises and against the Court’s users who were also violent towards each other and towards the Court’s judges (Harrison, 2007). This violence led to the death of one Family Court of Australia’s judge and the death of the wife of another (Registry History, 1976-2003; Family Court of Australia, 2004c; Harrison, 2007). A study of the experience of those who worked in the Family Court of Australia in its early years states “they all shared, directly or indirectly, in an experience of trauma, as the optimism surrounding the Court’s foundation was eroded by media criticism and finally shattered by acts of violence never before seen in the Australian legal system” (Swain, 2012, p. ix). The Family Court of Australia was also the subject of intense external scrutiny in the form of a Federal government efficiency audit of its client service operations (Australian National Audit Office, 2004) that led to improvements such as the establishment of a national call centre (Family Court of Australia, 2006).

Despite its difficult early history the Family Court of Australia has acquired a reputation for reform and innovation (Parker, 1998) that includes the Family Court of Australia being Australia’s first therapeutic court that provided family counselling as part of its services (Rhoades, 2010). One of the family law courts’ key judicial reforms includes the innovative ‘Less Adversarial Trial Processes’ (Harrison, 2007) and an administrative transformation process in the early 1980s saw the family law courts shift from a case management transaction-based approach to a more client-focused service oriented approach to service delivery (Cooke, 2006).

From an examination of several of the Family Court of Australia’s Annual Reports (Family Court of Australia, 2011, 2012a) and the industry best practice guide, *The International Framework for Court Excellence* (National Centre for State Courts, 2008) it is evident that there are several areas where the family law courts’ operations meet or exceed a number of the dimensions of industry best practice including those relating to court management and leadership, comprehensiveness of court policies, client needs and satisfaction, and the affordability and accessibility of court services. A quote by one of the

family law courts' representatives interviewed about the courts' client support services indicates that the courts use the industry best practice guidelines to audit their own performance and to identify areas for ongoing improvement:

The International Court Excellence Framework...we have sat down and looked at the areas we are hitting...what it has done is identify the areas we think we are short in terms of the strategic plan and the service charter...now it is time for us to revisit this again [client satisfaction study]. Because we are now going on tiny bits of feedback that we have had and that we get regularly, but this is more anecdotal rather than systematic (FCA1).

The examination of aspects of the operation of the family law courts' client service function contributes support for the proposition that the courts can be viewed as having a strong client service orientation and that this orientation influenced the courts' decision to fundamentally shift its approach to client services.

5.1.2 A Comparison of Court Support Services

Three one-on-one interviews were held with representatives of the family law courts and the Courts Administration Authority of South Australia to gain an understanding of the nature of the support services offered by these two court systems. The Courts Administration Authority of South Australia has responsibility for the provision of services and processes to support the proper administration of justice in all courts operating under the jurisdiction of the South Australian Government (Courts Administration Authority, 2008). The Authority has a reputation for being strongly client service oriented (Parker, 1998). The Authority was also one of the partner organizations to the national 'Court Safety Project' which helped the researcher gain access to a senior representative of that organization for research purposes.

Interviews were held with the Sheriff of the Courts Administration Authority of South Australia, with the Marshal of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia and the Family Court of Australia, and with the Director, Human Resource Management of the Family Court of Australia. Discussions at these interviews focused on issues relating to service quality and court security. In order to differentiate between each interviewee's comments about these issues their comments are designated as 'CAA' when referring to the comments made by the representative of the Courts Administration Authority and 'FLC1' and 'FLC2' when referring

to comments made by the representatives of the family law courts. All quotes taken from interview transcripts are placed in italics.

Although there were some similarities in the way that the interviewees spoke about their organization's client support functions there were also some notable differences. The South Australian perspective on key client support services was seen to be linked to the South Australian courts' role in educating the public and in their deliberate shaping of their staffs' service orientation through staff training.

Example 5.1 Support Services and Organizational Culture

CAA

It really is about trying to dispel the myths about the court, to have people more relaxed.

Having groups of the judiciary...to actually meet with the local community to not only educate the community but to also educate the judiciary.

I think that the culture has changed over time...if you look at all jurisdictions in South Australia you can say the culture has changed from the past to where we now provide a lot more support for clients...from 'take it or leave it' to targeted, flexible and responsive support...it is really about trying to meet the client's needs.

The perspective of the family law courts' representatives on client support services tended to be more about the need to maintain a high standard of client service in the face of various challenges as illustrated by the following comment:

Example 5-2 Support Services and Organizational Culture

FLC1

Culture is an interesting one. As I have said, we moved from an output culture to an outcome culture...In the current environment we are going through efficiency dividends... We have been asked to do more with less and morale issues are affected in the overall service delivery.

In terms of process-related aspects of client support services, the expanded use of technology and changing business systems were identified as trends in service innovation in both court systems, as indicated in the following comments:

Example 5-3 Support Services, Technology and Business Systems

CAA

If we try and do what we do and new technology is introduced without changing those processes we are setting ourselves up to fail.

FLC1

The previous priority given to processing has been overtaken by a priority given to case management from a client perspective...The case management pathways were changed a few years ago to respond to clients who wanted to get before a judicial official for a decision to be taken more quickly and this also provides for a more secure environment.

FLC1

That is why things like the Commonwealth portal and e-filing etcetera are providing an alternative service so that we can deal with the pressure in one particular area and build in another area that is supported differently.

A common issue in relation to the performance of client support services was obtaining feedback from clients about their satisfaction with service quality. While all interviewees indicated that this type of data was being used for gauging effectiveness and for tailoring business strategies, the CAA representative indicated that budget uncertainty and resource constraints were an ever present challenge to system improvements:

Example 5-4 Support Services and Client Feedback

CAA

We looked at client feedback in the Magistrates Court last year... we also have our monthly jury studies...our Magistrates Court also has its service focus group. We had a staff study in 2007 with the results published in 2008 but as yet we do not know about what the budget cuts will mean.

FLC1

The International Court Excellence Framework...we sat down and looked at the areas we were hitting...what it has done is identify the areas we think we are short in terms of the strategic plan and the service charter...now it is time for us to revisit that again [client satisfaction study]. Because we are now going on tiny bits of feedback that we have had and that we get regularly but this is more anecdotal than systematic.

None of the interviewees discussed the role of place or servicescape (Bitner, 2000) in the provision of client services. This may be partially explained as a ‘taken-for-granted’ aspect of the family law courts’ service culture (Schein, 2004).

In South Australia, court education of clients and other stakeholders, staff training, and the use of in-house security staff were all seen to be important factors that assisted the Courts Administration Authority to create safer courts. The following comments illustrate this:

Example 5-5 Court Security and Court Staff

CAA

We now have Sheriff Officers trained in non-violent crisis intervention so it is much more about bringing things down before there is an escalation...It is also about the training that we provide to call centre operators and to front counter staff about how to deal with those persons [aggravated clients].

Our Sheriff Officers are multi-skilled in the three areas of prisoner security, court management and precinct security...where there is the greatest need we can put the greatest number of staff when required.

Major changes include...you have got a better training program...a better calibre of person as a Sheriff's Officer...our recruitment program shows that...it is about court support programs and how they are being delivered and it is about getting things refocused...10 years ago it was a lot more about learning on the job.

The judiciary goes out to the community and to the prisons as well...it seems to promote trust and reciprocation between the judiciary and the community that it is serving.

Two people-related court security issues discussed by the family law courts' representatives were staff training and the risk of staff becoming desensitised by being constantly exposed to client-initiated violence. Client-initiated violence was perceived to be linked directly or indirectly to family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts.

Example 5-6 Court Security and Court Staff

FLC1

There was a training program dealing with querulous clients [a course delivered across the Courts in 2010]...while the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' [a program delivered across the Courts between 2006 and 2008] was a lot more about client service staff dealing with their own personal development. Whereas this [training dealing with querulous clients] is more about how you are dealing with the difficult client over the counter.

FLC2

Against the background of family violence in the community at large, and family violence being experienced by those coming before the courts there is a general risk of everyone being somewhat desensitised to client-initiated violence in the courts.

Support for early intervention programs and the increased use of technology for delivering support services were the two main process-related issues that were discussed in relation to having safer courts in South Australia:

Example 5- 7 Court Security and Court Processes

CAA

Being proactive in support services with regard to early intervention is an important feature of court security.

Video conferencing is used for vulnerable witnesses...it is also used to eliminate the need to move prisoners between locations and both of these uses make the courts safer places.

The main issue about the family law courts' security processes raised by the courts' two representatives concerned the courts' 'Family Violence Strategy 2004-05' (Family Court of Australia, 2004b), and the associated 'Safety at Court Protocol' (Family Court of Australia, n.d.).

Example 5-8 Court Security and Court Processes

FLC1

I think there is a double effect there and while they are preparing the Safety Plan for a court user they are actually giving some sense of the services that are available for them.

FLC2

The Safety Plan works well...it is essentially a client service function...it is perceived to be a day-to-day operational matter...it is essentially the sort of thing that has always been done but now it is much more formalized as a strategy to deal, in an anticipatory manner, with the potential for violence to arise on site.

Place-related issues associated with court security were only raised at interview by the family law courts' two representatives.

Example 5-9 Court Security the Court Environment

FLC1

Airport style security is the number one...I do not think without the physical security we would have been able to get the open planned nature of our registries introduced.

FLC2

In terms of physical premises, the Family Law Courts range from flagship premises to a very small, shared premise with security arrangements varying from several dedicated security guards and a full range of security arrangements to one guard, electronic screening and limited security facilities. So the Family Law Courts really do cover the entire spectrum of accommodation requirements with security arrangements varying widely between them.

The comparison between the family law courts and the Courts Administrative Authority of South Australia of court support services, including securing safe court environments, highlighted some differences as well as some similarities in the way they go about supporting their clients. Both court systems appear to share a strong client service orientation as part of their service culture. Not surprisingly given its difficult client group the physical nature of court security was an important issue for the family law court representatives. However their comments also reflect that enhanced physical security arrangements enabled improvements to the servicescape to be put into place.

5.1.3 Staffs' Perceptions of Client Services

Transcripts of interviews and focus group meetings were used to identify what the family law courts' client contact staff and their managers thought about the quality of the services they delivered. When direct quotes are provided from an interview or focus group transcript, the organizational role of the interviewee is identified and the quote is placed in italics. The three organizational roles that are distinguished are client service staff, client service team leaders and managers, and professional service staff (Registrars and Family Consultants). These roles are differentiated as 'CSO' (client service staff), 'Mgr.' (team leaders and managers) and 'Prof.' (Registrars and Family Consultants) respectively. These roles are further distinguished by designating quotes from different respondents as CSO 1 and CSO 2 etcetera. These role distinctions were used to highlight any difference in perspective due to organizational role (Biddle, 1986; Katz & Kahn, 1978). This distinction is important because the service industry research literature indicates that service providers and their managers do not always see 'eye to eye' on the factors influencing service quality (Kennedy

& Corliss, 2008; Liao, Toya, Lepak, & Hong, 2009). It is also assumed that differences may exist between non-professional and professional service providers working in the same service environment and that the full service is seldom provided by a single client contact employee. It then follows that the degree of integration and coordination is critical to service quality amongst boundary-spanning employees (Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010). The boundaries within the courts between client contact staff and between them, networks of external support agencies and the courts clients were also issues explored in relation to the courts' delivery of support to vulnerable clients (Marchington, Grimshaw, Rubery & Willnot, 2011).

Eight most frequently discussed topics in relation to client service were identified from the interview and focus group transcripts. These topics were.

1. The clients and other stakeholders.
2. Ideas about service quality.
3. Attitudes to service.
4. Knowledge, skill and experience of service providers.
5. The family law courts' service culture and climate.
6. Role clarity and multi-skilling.
7. Coordination and integration of service delivery.
8. The use of technology in service delivery.

There was a discernible difference of opinion in the interview and focus group transcripts on the issue of the client's influence on the service exchange process that was evident between client service staff and service professional staff on the one hand and team leaders and managers on the other. The latter saw the onus of responsibility for service quality (to ensure that the service experience was a satisfactory one consistent with the family law courts' 'Service Charter' (Family Court of Australia, 2010b)) being the responsibility of client service staff rather than clients. In contrast, client service staff and service professional staff thought that there was a tendency for the family law courts to be too tolerant of inappropriate client behaviour that was perceived to have become a permanent feature of the courts' service context that impacted on the quality of the service exchange process.

Some of the family law courts' client service staff indicated that they lacked the confidence and/or the competence to ask clients questions about their wellbeing or safety concerns, as required by the family law courts' 'Safety Plan' protocol (Family Court of Australia, n.d.; Family Law Courts, 2010). Other client service staff indicated that they were quite comfortable asking the sort of questions required to assess whether clients had a reason to fear for their safety whilst at court or whether they needed referral to an external support agency. Professional services staff emphasized the importance of client service staff being 'attuned' to how vulnerable clients felt about their safety whilst at court.

Example 5-10 Clients and Other Stakeholders

CSO

Most of the time it is sort of just the frustration [of the client] with the organization and not with us personally.

Mgr. 1

I think some clients that come in will be aggressive regardless of who they are dealing with but I think a lot of it has to do with the client service officer who is interacting with them.

Mgr. 2

The client was quite aggressive to the person...the person who was dealing with him, it was really just their approach...Like we will not tolerate any abuse...we had to call security...so it escalated but I think it was just the way...

Mgr. 3

The challenge these days is that the frontline staff, particularly, having to deal with ongoing difficult people, I think we are starting to get to a point where they are 'pushing back' a bit.

Mgr. 4

They are not violent here but it was the psychological impact that the client's behaviour was having on other clients that really made me think about it.

Mgr. 5

You have an organization that has gone from working principally with the legal profession as a client to now a mix of legally represented and self-represented clients.

Prof. 1

I think they see an administrative person over the counter and they think I'm going to push it a bit.

Prof. 2

I do not think that there is an acknowledgement at a higher level that we are dealing with a difficult client group and we are dealing with more stressful situations.

Prof. 3

The difficult situations are where clients are uncertain, or unassertive, or lack the confidence to come forward and yet when asked, the person does say they are concerned, or presents as anxious and concerned, and then the staff member suggests it [the Safety Plan]. That is where we are relying on the client service staff member to be attuned.

The characteristics associated with good service performance arose from a discussion about what constituted service quality. Client service staff offered a long list of attributes that for them defined what good quality service was all about. A small sample is provided below.

Example 5-11 Service Quality

CSO 1

Meeting and exceeding expectations is my big thing. Doing more than what is expected.

CSO 2

Like listening and getting an understanding of what the enquiry is all about and adding value.

CSO 3

When you get too involved, you might start to give help that is not appropriate, by going beyond that boundary.

CSO 4

You have to be caring and compassionate towards them to a degree. I mean you cannot go overboard with it because some of them would play on it.

CSO 5

Getting them what they need as quickly and as effortlessly as possible and with as little stress as possible.

CSO 6

I think a seamless sort of flow-through of Court events so that people come here for a conference; things are prepared so that chaos is kept to an absolute minimum.

Registry and judicial service team leaders and managers had a different perspective from client service staff about what they expected to see from staff in relation to service quality. Their expectations tended to reflect the family law courts' 'Service Charter'. For example, they were concerned with issues such as whether the client was given accurate and consistent information and how long it took for the client to be served.

Example 5-12 Service Quality

Mgr. 1

We are very much the public face of the family law courts for our clients.

Mgr. 2

Asking the right questions of somebody who comes in to ascertain exactly what they need and to provide an explanation, not just to give them something and then sending them away.

Mgr. 3

Well they [client service staff] are integral, they are the first point of contact in here the whole time. So everything we do has to have that in mind.

Mgr. 4

Not everyone is up-to-date and you will find you can go to two or three staff and get two or three different responses and that comes down to us again, managers and team leaders, trying to get the information out there and understood.

Mgr. 5

Well I think for me personally it is the understanding of how the client is feeling, especially when they come into this environment. They are already distressed. They have all got personal issues in their life relating to their children and their property and we need to endeavour to treat them sensitively.

The family law courts' professional service staff, particularly the Family Consultants, tended to be more empathetic about the challenges that they and the client service staff experienced in their day-to-day, face-to-face dealings with clients. They acknowledged that client service staff had adopted the tendency to 'push back' a bit with difficult clients. This

implies a tendency for some staff not to tolerate inappropriate behaviour, and in some cases to complain about dealing with some types of clients. Some professional staff attribute this to client service staff not being seen by some clients as ‘persons of authority’. This is consistent with the research literature on dysfunctional customers (Gong et al., 2013) that suggests that there is often an issue of unequal power that exists between customers and service providers where it is the customer and not the service provider who has authority over the service exchange process.

Example 5-13 Service Quality

Prof. 1

We are just dealing with ‘widgets’...there is no differentiation of, well perhaps we are dealing with something a bit more complex and we need to put more effort into it.

Prof. 2

I look at our client service staff as being at the ‘coalface’. They are the people who would be dealing with our clients initially, whether it is by telephone or whether it is face-to-face.

Prof. 3

You need to have someone who is knowledgeable and has the right attitude and behaviour when dealing with clients.

Prof. 4

The behaviour of the client or the aggressiveness of the clients that the client service officers have experienced, perhaps all day, difficult clients...there is a gap in what we could be providing...I think our staff do an absolutely fantastic job but I think there is a gap there.

Two hundred individual interviewee comments about the importance of service provider attitudes to service quality were identified. Attitudes of client service staff tended to vary from a ‘just do it’ transaction-oriented approach to a ‘going the extra mile’ relationship-orientated approach, particularly in regard to their role of referring clients when necessary to the network of external support agencies set up in each region by the family law courts. There was awareness amongst client service staff of the need to focus on the client at hand rather than on the size of the queue, but this was not everyone’s view. One comment that seems to convey how confidence and attitude went together in service provision was: *I think with attitude, confidence has got to be there as well. So if you are not confident in what you know,*

your attitude is just going to be very blasé (CSO). A sample of some of the other views on attitude to service expressed by the family law courts' client service staff is provided below:

Example 5-14 Attitude to Service

CSO 1

I really think attitude is very important. Because if you go out there [the registry counter] in a bad mood, you are going to take it out on everyone.

CSO 2

There is a disparity in work attitude here. And there is disparity within the group itself and it is very frustrating.

CSO 3

The less they remember us the better...so if they get on with what they are doing and get out and go away...because we have done it with no fanfare, we just do it.

Team leaders and managers tended to have a negative view about the attitude to service held by some client service staff. Some managers thought that client service staff saw it as just a job and that some client service staff lacked the empathy required to relate to the emotional state of their clients; *It is directly affecting their lives [the client's life]...so service quality is a very important issue from the point of view of the client* (Mgr.). Their views also tended to reflect a perceived inclination about how attitude to service is linked to a client service officer's length of service. This is evident in some of the comments provided below. The views expressed by team leaders and managers about the attitude to service exhibited by some client service staff illustrates the challenges faced at times in managing a workforce that is not highly engaged or motivated.

Example 5-15 Attitude to Service

Mgr. 1

It is an attitude that is fairly inflexible, based on length of experience and 'this is the way we have done things around here'.

Mgr. 2

Some feel the pressure of having big waiting lists...they feel they cannot spend the extra time with people.

Mgr. 3

There are a lot of people around here with 15, 20, or 30 years of experience ...they may be less resilient and less...just their perceptions...are less flexible.

Mgr. 4

More experienced staff are less likely to 'grin and bear' certain behaviours or certain attitudes towards them and I think that affects the way they interact with other people.

Mgr. 5

But that is all you need...it only takes one [where there is a negative attitude] and it makes such a difference on the ground floor that has so few staff...it might not be a problem if there was not the constant change...as well as the downward pressure and the changing staffing levels.

Mgr. 6

As a manager how do I actually keep them engaged for 20 plus years with the work they are doing, rather than them just turning up, being here and leaving? ...I have people we want to move up and do not necessarily have the skill. So they are quite hard to keep engaged as well...It becomes a problem or could become a problem if that level of engagement comes to such a level...not value adding to the service that we give to the clients.

Mgr. 7

Staff who do not want to move up and do not necessarily have the skills are hard to keep engaged...you sort of feel, sometimes, that you are not really connecting with them on a level, because they are just, they are just so non-engaged.

The professional service staff spoke mainly about their own attitudes to service. However, one Family Consultant made the point that keeping harmony across the 'service continuum' (consistent with the family law courts' notion of pathways where the service experience is affected by all of the family law courts' staff with a client contact role) is a constant challenge for the courts, particularly in an environment where resource limitation is a factor. This is illustrated by the following comment:

Example 5-16 Attitude to Service

Prof.

I think they all share the same sort of values around here...and it is a difficult balancing act to keep all those things in harmony in such a way that you can foster the right kind of client service attitude from all of those that are involved in the chain of events, particularly in the current environment where we have been required to cut our cloth a bit.

The importance of client service staff having the right levels of knowledge, skills and experience to do their job received about half as many comments as client service staff needing to have ‘the right attitude’ to service. An important theme emerged from client service staff, team leaders and managers and professional service staff is the ability of client contact staff to be able to deal effectively with a difficult client group. Extracts from the comments that were made follows:

Example 5-17 Knowledge, Skills and Experience

CSO 1

Things have changed a lot and not everyone is up-to-date...I feel sorry for the newer employees because when we started there were definite guidelines...Now you can sort of do it this way if you want or you can do it that way...Everybody is doing it a different way.

CSO 2

What makes it more approachable and seemed less daunting to them [the clients] is something that our guys are really skilled at communicating with them.

Mgr. 1

You can have somebody who is knowledgeable and has a...has the right attitude and behaviour when dealing with clients. That is the thing that satisfies clients most.

Mgr. 2

The knowledge base has changed so dramatically and...and that is a constant.

Mgr. 3

As times change, there is a greater focus on client service and probably less of a focus on the technical side of the role...the challenge these days is that the frontline staff are having to deal with ongoing difficult people.

Mgr. 4

Our interpersonal skills, our ability to respond to complex situations are what counts. That to me is, you know, more the crux of it. And to have staff who are resilient over time given that one way or another most of us are going to encounter some pretty challenging situations in this jurisdiction each year.

Prof. 1

Yeah, I think ...that is a skill that you need to learn when you come into this context because everybody who walks in the door is ‘pissed off’.

Prof. 2

A lot of what is involved in dealing with clients who are experiencing fear or anxiety is...it is not just what you do, it is the interpersonal reaction.

The foregoing comments emphasize the importance of client service staff having the confidence and competence to deal with clients who may be stressed and who may express this stress negatively towards the family law courts or their staff. This leads on to considerations about the influence that clients can have on the service exchange process and on the level of emotional skill that service providers need to have to deal effectively with dissatisfied or unfriendly clients and the unique aspects of stress experienced by service providers working in human service work.

Comments about the family law courts' service culture and service climate were predominantly about the way in which support services are delivered and the philosophy and value set involved. There were also some references to the artefacts of culture (Schein, 2004) such as strategy and organizational structure. A range of different views on this issue are illustrated by the following comments:

Example 5-18 Service Culture and Climate

CSO

There is a culture out there of the solicitors who just think they can walk in here and they want this and they want that...they have no respect for us beyond that.

Mgr. 1

The climate of the place [the registry]...It is hard to manage. You know, the red flashing light reflects that... [Referring to the light on the office phone that indicates a message has been left. Normally it is from a staff member who has called in early to say they will not be in to work].

Mgr. 2

Five years ago it was a time of innovation and trying new things...now it is very much more about prudential and fiscal matters.

Mgr. 3

I have always looked at the court as a fiefdom, a monarchy...you have kings and queens and princes...you can have the lowest employee highly aligned with the judiciary.

Mgr. 4

I think that safety and service are equal but I think most staff would say that it is service that is more important because that is their core business.

Prof. 1

The culture on level 5, which is the Family Consultant's floor...they share the same sort of values.

Prof. 2

What is our professional work culture like? Frazzled, frenzied. You have to just get on with it.

Prof. 3

I think as professionals there is a difference between the sort of culture that we [the professional staff] have and the one that the client service staff have. We cannot just take a day off as we have commitments to our clients...and I think that is a terrible culture to perpetuate.

A mixture of different issues was discussed under the subtheme, the 'characteristics of the service function'. One such issue relates to the way that Registrars operate as 'go to persons' and 'legal experts' for the client service staff. For example, in large metropolitan registries the contact that client service staff have with the Registrars is facilitated by having a 'Duty Registrar' located on the ground floor next to the registry. In another registry, a characteristic of the client service function was seen to be much more about the shift from 'the case management system' to a 'client oriented system', that was the focus of the following comment: *So that [the change from case management to client orientation] was a big step for a lot of people so we had to change our thinking. It was not only me pushing that change (Mgr.).*

Another characteristic of the service function discussed by a senior manager was about there being two courts [the Federal Circuit Court of Australia and the Family Court of Australia] served by the one 'Integrated Judicial and Registry System': *It stems from the differences between the two courts, one quicker, cheaper, less complex and more flexible and one that has a more structured case management pathway (Mgr.).* The family law courts' client service function was also characterised by the 'service continuum' that was illustrated, in part, by the following comment: *I mean, we perform a number of functions, but part of our function is a client service function. So to that extent I think we are all part of client services*

in a broad sense when we are doing that initial contact and the screening (Prof.). This notion of a 'continuum of service' is reinforced by comments by another Family Consultant: We are all part of the broader client service team...we sort of work as a team to produce those sorts of outcomes (Prof.). These comments supported the contention that the family law courts' client contact staff form a boundary tier providing a range of support services to the courts' clients (Schneider & Bowen, 1995).

Role clarity and multi-skilling were other issues that received a high level of response and met with a mixed reaction from client service staff. The introduction of multi-skilling was mostly supported by team leaders and managers and was of no apparent interest to the professional service staff. It appears that those most affected by the family law courts' multi-skilling initiative, that is to say the client service staff in a specialist role such as case coordinators and court support officers, are not active agents of the change process to introduce multi-skilling, and some client service staff may actually resist change. This is illustrated by the following comments:

Example 5-19 Role Clarity and Multi-skilling

CSO 1

There are a lot of people saying no they do not want to do that [be rotated into another job]...there are certainly people who do not want to be Case Coordinator.

CSO 2

I think that people specialise in different things and you should utilize their skills.

CSO 3

Every time they bring up the word multi-skilling I shudder...it looks good on paper, but when it comes down to actually working in a situation and giving the client the best service there is nothing like a specialist.

Mgr. 1

Different registries are approaching the notion of multi-skilling differently ...It is definitely a good thing for flexibility but there is a problem with...well if you do not have...you have already got a set of staff who have been employed in specialist roles...they have been here for a while and they are used to doing what they do.

Mgr. 2

It just seems to be forever evolving and changing and going back to the way things were and then changing again.

Mgr. 3

They all want to be specialists because they are in their comfort zone.

Mgr. 4

I was amazed at the number of people who have sat in the same job for a number of years and doing the same job because they have the attitude, you need to be a specialist and not a generalist.

The issue of coordination and integration of service processes across the courts' boundary tier (client service staff, Registrars and Family Consultants, and Associates and Deputy Associates in judicial chambers) was discussed mainly by registry and judicial services team leaders and managers and by a few Family Consultants. One manager was of the view that the inter-relationship between the family law courts' client contact staff was complicated to varying degrees in each family law court registry by three types of separation: physical, functional, and administrative. A common integration mechanism in the larger registries is by means of a 'Regional Registry Management Committee' that comprises representatives of all client contact groups. Although some gaps in coordination arrangements were identified, the efforts of local managers to make the process of coordination and integration of judicial and registry service work as well as possible were indicated by the following comment:

Example 5-20 Coordination and Integration of the Courts' boundary tier

Mgr.

I do not see there are any issues with the relationship...Yep, I do think the teams work well together...I think those relationships work really well but we have minimal contact with Family Consultants...Case Coordinators deal more with the Family Consultants but I know that their relationship doesn't work as well as it should...I think there is a residual hangover from the view that Case Coordinators do not work for Family Consultants... We just want everything to work and you know, we identified that the Case Coordinators are there to provide the same service to the Family Consultants that we provide to the Registrars...It is just the attitude that one or two have...and if they do not get over it they will not be Case Coordinators.

The increasing use of technology in client service delivery was seen by most client service staff, team leaders and managers and professional service staff in a negative light. This is probably due to the stage of the evolution of business systems, as illustrated by the following comments:

Example 5-21 Use of Technology

CSO 1

It has doubled the time for taking a phone call.

CSO 2

E-filing and remotely done stuff takes us out of the equation when it comes to dealing with people face-to-face.

Mgr. 1

The new portal, the introduction of e-filing, the on-line initiation of applications...the upgrading of the systems...it all makes for more work.

Mgr. 2

We have to educate them [clients] in how to use their computers to get into the portal.

Mgr. 3

So we have a mixture of systems. We have paper files and we have electronic files, so to marry them all up, that work has still got to be done.

Prof.

The push for technology could be moving us away from being able to provide that face-to-face interaction, where we need to make the judgement to be able to screen and identify those potentially at risk.

The views of how the family law courts' client contact staff perceived the services they delivered differed amongst the client contact staff and between them and the client service team leaders and managers. Nonetheless, it is evident that most respondents thought that the family law courts delivered a high level of client support services in the face of considerable challenge. This view is also supported in the data presented in the next subsection.

5.1.4 Clients' Satisfaction with Court Support Services

There is extensive service industry research literature on the conceptualization and measurement of customer/client satisfaction in service organizations in the private sector (Martinez & Martinez, 2010) and in the public sector (Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996; Sullivan & Estes, 2007). Industry best practice in court administration also identifies the gathering and analysis of data on client satisfaction as an important part of best practice (National Centre for State Courts, 2008).

The family law courts reported that they support two processes for gathering feedback from clients: they maintain a system for facilitating and managing client complaints that conforms to the Australian Standards for *Complaints Handling* and the Commonwealth Ombudsman's *Guide for Complaint Handling Best Practice* (Family Court of Australia, 2012) and they had undertaken two comprehensive surveys of client satisfaction in the last decade (in 2004 (Family Court of Australia, 2004d) and again in 2011 (Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court of Australia, 2011)).

Key issues identified by the family law courts in the 2004 user satisfaction survey were the need to improve the targeting of services to other 'at risk' groups, such as men, and the need to improve the levels of advice and support made available to all clients (Family Court of Australia, 2005). The 2011 user satisfaction survey identified that improvements were needed in clarifying, for litigants, the process used for handling their cases, in improved timeliness in case management, and in making more resources available to speed up document filing processes in the family law courts' registries. In the 2011 user satisfaction survey the family law courts were judged by clients to have performed best in relation to the courts' buildings (whereby family law court users felt safe in the court room) and there was a general satisfaction with the family law courts' client contact staff (Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court, 2011).

The methods for gathering data on satisfaction from the family law courts' users improved between 2004 and 2011. In 2004 the user satisfaction survey (Family Court of Australia, 2004d) was based upon the concept of procedural fairness (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005) and involved a mail survey of a stratified random sample of clients that resulted in a very small final response rate. The 2011 user satisfaction survey (Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court, 2011) involved a standardized questionnaire used

to collect data face-to-face from over 1300 court users that generated data across a wide range of features of the service exchange process including client services, family law court facilities and court processes.

The examination of clients’ satisfaction with the family law courts’ support services in a comprehensive and systematic manner adds additional weight to the contention that the courts’ have a strong client service culture.

5.1.5 The Court Environment as Servicescape

Non-participant observations were undertaken in seven of the family law courts’ registries to explore how well the built environment in these registries worked as a servicescape (Bitner, 1992, 2000) and how the courts’ buildings and surrounds were perceived to help create a safer court environment for the courts’ clients and their staff.

Some of the main features of the family law courts’ registries that were observed are summarized in Figure 5.2 below. Most of the family law courts’ registries seemed to operate fairly well from a physical and social perspective (Bitner, 2000). However, there were some differences between the seven State capital, regional capital and Territorial capital family law court registries in the quality of the courts’ built environment.

Figure 5.2: Observations of a Sample of Family Law Court Registries – Salient Features

Feature	Illustration	Salient Features Observed
Court design – public areas	Public foyers, registries and waiting areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The larger municipal registries appeared to be purpose built and well designed. They had ample waiting areas often providing meeting spaces and office equipment. • In the larger State capitals the public foyers of the family law courts appeared to be more symbolic in their design (Sydney family law court) but they were also perceived to facilitate the smooth flow of the Courts’ clients through security screening (Melbourne family law court) and then orient them towards the court rooms or the registry. • The smaller regional family law court registries that were observed were located in shared commercial buildings. The foyers were limited to security screening and the waiting areas were located upstairs with the registry area.

The symbolism of court design	Public buildings reflect political and social values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a marked disparity between the modern, purpose-built, large municipal Commonwealth Law Court buildings and those where the family law courts were housed with other building tenants. These latter buildings were perceived to be nondescript commercial premises with no symbolic significance of their own.
Spatial enclosure	The way internal spaces are designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose-built Commonwealth Law Court buildings had separate access and egress for judicial officials, and separate internal circulation spaces, with professional staff and conference and meeting rooms located on separate floors. • The larger family law court buildings had dedicated child care and observational facilities (the Adelaide family law courts). • In one regional registry there was only one way in and one way out and this was flagged by the registry manager as causing problems when family law court clients wanted to avoid meeting with their former partner.
Openness and access to open space	The use of open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commonwealth Law Court buildings were perceived to be designed to provide a good use of open space (Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide family law court registries being prime examples). • A disparity was evident between the large municipal family law court buildings and those located in smaller regional centres where space was at a premium and functionality was the main feature of the court environment.
The psychological impact of court design	Understanding of the emotional impact of the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ambience, the presence of natural light, the nature of the furnishing, the openness of the design, the ease of access and flow all contributed to a feeling of comfort. The best example of this was the family law court building in Parramatta. • The introduction of sit down counters in the registries in the metropolitan family law court buildings was the main example of a more client-oriented approach to the servicescape.
Special needs	The special needs of court users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koori courts were located in the purpose-built family law court building in Adelaide and in the family law court in Darwin.

The location and proximity of the court	Whether it is in a central location and/or collocated with other similar institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the municipal family law court buildings were centrally located and many had cafes that were easily accessed - particularly in Brisbane and Adelaide which had cafés on the ground floor or across the street. • While the family law courts were reasonably easy to access in Newcastle and Darwin they were simply part of the commercial sector and were not that easy to find. • The Parramatta family law court was part of a State court precinct and was co-located with various State court and police buildings. Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane family law courts are all in an area of the city where State courts are also located.
Safety needs	Whether spatial design encourages people to act in a certain manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sit down counters and removal of safety glass from the Commonwealth Law Court registries in the municipal capitals was the best example of how spatial design was used to reduce clients' stress. They looked more like professional office premises. The registry in Darwin used the more traditional safety glass in registry counters. The registry in Newcastle did not appear to have sit-down counters but did not use safety glass either. • In the purpose built Commonwealth Law Court buildings the registry tended to be on the same level as the security staff and this was perceived by family law court staff to be reassuring. This was not the situation in Newcastle or in Darwin where security screening took place in the building foyer whereas the registry was located upstairs. • The space and design of waiting areas and the use of receptionists in some courts all helped to present a friendly 'public face' to court users.
Communications	Information services, signage, feedback processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family law court registries all provide a substantial range of information brochures in their waiting areas in easy-to-access locations. • The family law courts provide all clients with information through the registries about the family law courts' processes including the operation of the <i>Safety Plan</i>.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the old and the new registry counters at the Parramatta family law court registry to illustrate the removal of safety glass and the introduction of 'sit down'

counters. These Figures illustrate a point frequently made by the family law courts' client contact staff that the single most important change to the courts' servicescape that had a bearing on court security, was the removal of the safety glass from some of the family law courts' registries and the introduction of sit-down counters.



Figure 5.3 Parramatta Family law Court Registry – Old Service Counter With Security Glass



Figure 5.4 Parramatta Family Law Court Registry – New 'Sit-Down' Counters Without Safety Glass

There were some differences between the family law court registries in terms of the quality of the registry's built environment. However, there was also some evidence in each court registry that the courts had gone to considerable effort to shape the servicescape and security arrangements to meet the diverse needs of their user community. This further demonstrates a strong client service orientation.

5.1.6 Summary

This section of the chapter has presented a range of qualitative data that was used to explore the family law courts' conscious service orientation. This was done by examining the structure, strategies and resourcing of client service in the family law courts and the Family Court of Australia's reputation for service innovation and reform as viewed against industry best practice for court administration (National Centre for State Courts, 2008). This section considered how the services offered by the family law courts to support the wellbeing and security concerns of their clients compared with those of one other Australian court system that has a reputation for being client service oriented. It also examined a range of other qualitative data on how the family law courts' client contact staff regarded the services they offered on behalf of the courts, the feedback generated by the courts' user surveys, and non-participant observations conducted at seven of the courts' registries.

The evidence presented supports the contention that the family law courts should be regarded as a public sector human service organization with a strong service climate. This evidence goes some way to explaining the Courts' motivation to shift their approach to client service delivery by directly involving their client service staff in offering clients referrals to external support agencies and in the screening of clients thought to be at risk of violence when they come before the courts.

A theme emerged from the qualitative data on client service is the way that the boundary spanning of the courts' client contact staff exposed them to additional role stress. Another theme is the way that the client service and court security functions are inter-related. This was best illustrated by the changes made to hardening the security barrier (i.e. the introduction of permanent security staff and electronic detection equipment) and the removal of the security glass and introduction of sit down counters in some court registries.

It is important to examine what other factors, aside from the courts' client service orientation, may have motivated the courts to changing the role of their client service staff in this way. The information to address this proposition and the first research question concerning whether, and to what extent, the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to helping to create and sustain a safer court environment is presented in the next section of this chapter.

5.2 Court Security

This section of the chapter addresses two separate but related subthemes: the family law courts' 'Family Violence Strategy' and staff perceptions of the courts' security arrangements. Each of these subthemes contributes to an understanding of the motivation of the courts to fundamentally shift their client service function and extend their staff service role to encompass safety-related behaviours.

5.2.1 The Family Law Courts' Family Violence Strategy

In 2004, when launching the *Family Violence Strategy 2004-05* (Family Court of Australia, 2004b), the then Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia described family violence as one of the biggest problems affecting family breakdowns in Australia, and stated that "this means providing adequate security and implementing processes that protect clients and litigants who are at risk. It also means that people working at the Court, in whatever capacity, need to be sensitive to, and aware of, family violence issues" (Family Court of Australia, 2004a, p. 1). This statement makes it clear the intention was to involve all of the courts' client contact staff in detecting the presence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts.

The current Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia delivered speeches in 2008 and 2009 on the theme of family violence and family law (Bryant, 2008, 2009). In these speeches the Chief Justice outlined the steps taken by the Family Court of Australia to address the issue of family violence in the family law courts' processes. The Chief Justice acknowledged there were some limitations to the Family Law Act 1975 (the Act) that made the task of the family law courts' Judges and Magistrates more difficult and flagged that a review of the Act would occur in late 2009. Speaking at a conference on the theme of family violence in 2010, the then Deputy Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia chose the theme 'Condemn the Fault not the Actor' (Faulks, 2010a, p. 9) to make the point that "where the Family Court is made aware of allegations of family violence and abuse" it has the powers and processes to deal with it.

The family law courts' processes for addressing the issues of family violence amongst those litigants coming before the courts are described in the *Best Practice Principles for use in Parenting Disputes when Family Violence or Abuse is Alleged* (Family Court of Australia, 2009b) and the 'Safety at Court' protocol (Family Court of Australia, n.d.b). The latter

document prescribed the steps that are to be followed by all of the family law courts' client contact staff in relation to clients who are identified as being concerned about their safety when attending the courts.

The family law courts undertook two staff training initiatives between 2004 and 2008 that were designed to build the confidence and competence of its client service workforce to enable them to refer clients who were identified as having mental health concerns to external support agencies and to identify clients who may be at risk of violence whilst at court and prepare 'Safety Plans' for these clients. These initiatives were the 'Mental Health Support Pilot Project' (Family Court of Australia, 2006) and the 'Integrated Client Service Delivery Program' (Family Law Courts, 2009a) that went beyond training of client service staff, as indicated below. Both of these initiatives were funded by the then Department of Health and Ageing under an agreement in relation to the Department of Health and Ageing's 'National Suicide Prevention Strategy'.

An evaluation report on the 'Integrated Client Service Delivery Program' outlined the steps taken as part of this Program to support the family law courts' clients (Family Law Courts, 2009a). These steps included:

- Developing a referral network of community support agencies.
- Making self-help brochures widely available.
- Introducing protocols that set out the Courts' expectations of their staff in a range of client situations.
- Implementing a national training program for staff that encompassed mental health, family violence, diversity, special client needs and non-judgemental communication.

The family law courts reported that they had improved "registry support so that staff better understood what was expected of them in client service provision, and in turn, understood the support available to them during and after difficult interactions with clients" (Family Law Courts, 2009a, p. 4). In the evaluation report on the 'Integrated Client Service Delivery Program' the Courts also indicated that they were committed in the long-term to building the confidence and competence of their client service workforce (Family Law Courts, 2009a).

The foregoing makes it clear that there was a strategy to involve all of the family law courts' client contact staff, irrespective of their role, directly in identifying and supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients. The family law courts acknowledge the need for their client service staff to have the skills necessary for this new role and to have support from the courts to help them deal with difficult clients. The family law courts also made it clear that they were committed to building the capability of their client service workforce in the long term to enable them to take on their new role. What was not clear, however, was how effective the courts' client service staff were in fulfilling their new role, nor whether the courts supported them in their new role in the long-term. The present study explored these issues two years after the Integrated Client Service Delivery Program had concluded (Family Court of Australia, 2009a).

5.2.2 Court Security Arrangements

This subsection addresses the present study's first research question concerning the extent to which the family law courts' client service staff were perceived by their team leaders, managers and professional colleagues to be effective in contributing to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients. This subsection draws upon interview and focus group transcripts that reveal how the courts' client contact staff perceived court security and their role in helping to create a safer court environment.

Six topics were identified as the most frequently discussed topics about court security arrangements. The six topics were: staff attitudes to clients and other stakeholders, screening and risk assessment processes, preparation of a 'Safety Plan', debriefing and counselling, client-initiated violence, and the court environment.

The first issue presented concerns the effect that inappropriate client behaviour has on some client contact staff. Some client service staff stated that querulous clients were a source of work-related stress. Other staff indicated that they identified readily with these types of clients and had little difficulty in applying the steps prescribed in the 'Safety Plan' protocol (Family Court of Australia, n.d. b) relating to the identification of clients potentially at risk of violence whilst at Court.

Example 5-22 Clients and Other Stakeholders

CSO 1

Some clients are possibly going through the worst time of their life...other clients ...they have been through family violence or something and the stress levels ...they are arguing all of the time.

CSO 2

I do not want to open up a can of worms. Sometimes I pretend that I haven't heard things because if I hear that I have to take some action and do a security report and all that...I do not want to deal with that because then all of this other work is going to come my way.

CSO 3

Some staff, I think, it is just a cultural thing. What I would see as somebody who is dangerous, another person may not see that.

CSO 4

From a client service point of view we get clients who are angry and we also get clients who are very concerned about their safety. So for those, the second category, we just create a Safety Plan.

There was some acknowledgement by managers that there was a culture of tolerance towards inappropriate client behaviour. This was seen as a factor that could influence staff attitudes to their role of supporting their clients' wellbeing and safety concerns, as indicated by the following comments:

Example 5-23 Clients and Other Stakeholders

Mgr. 1

Sometimes you have to coerce somebody [a staff member who has experienced a querulous client] into filling in an incident report because, you know, the point that I try and make is that it might not matter to them but it could matter to the next person in contact with that client.

Mgr. 2

We are a bit too tolerant...I had a client who developed an obsession for me and I do not want anyone else to experience that...I did not have a very sympathetic boss at the time which made it worse.

Mgr. 3

With the desensitization you become so used to something that you do not see the problem anymore. And that is one of my big concerns.

Mgr. 4

When I read the security incident report [about a recent incident where a client intimidated a staff member] I think it was because he was not told at a very early stage that his behaviour was unacceptable...I do not expect client service staff to put up with intolerable levels of abuse...you need to be mindful that you are looking after other clients and your colleagues too.

Mgr. 5

There is a question about whether the expectations of what client service staff can do in relation to difficult clients are realistic.

The issue about the family law courts' client contact staff becoming desensitized by constant exposure to clients who have been subjected to abuse or violence in their family relationship was of particular concern to professional staff, particularly Family Consultants, as indicated by the following comments:

Example 5-24 Clients and Other Stakeholders

Prof. 1

We were actually talking about us, the Family Consultants, becoming desensitized to family violence, and all sorts of horrible things, because you are dealing with it so much...So it is a delicate balance between maintaining sensitivity and yet balancing that up against those other factors [family violence and child abuse].

Prof. 2

It is up there and it is increasing [the prevalence of family violence in matters that come before the Courts]. This is not a good sign! I myself think it relates back to a range of things, including resourcing levels, reviews and the nature of the work. We are getting more difficult clients. Like I said before, we still do 'Safety Plans' for them, regardless of being concerned as opposed to extremely concerned, they still get a 'Safety Plan', but it has more impact on staff if there is a high level of anxiety involved.

Prof. 3

Family violence. I cannot remember that last time I did a conference with someone who did not have some issues.

Prof. 4

You only see bad behaviour, so it all becomes normal.

Prof. 5

It is not only inappropriate behaviour from the clients. What about the solicitors? I mean, sometimes they are a big part of the problem. Today I had two lawyers yelling at me. And you just have to sit there and it is draining.

Prof. 6

People get angry or distressed, etcetera, if we shut them down, you know, shut them right down, where does that anger and angst and...well, where does it go?

Prof. 7

In recent times incidents generally relate to threats or aggressive behaviour other than physical violence, although there are occasionally occurrences of this and this has taken us to another level of concern about safety.

Prof. 8

We have a higher proportion of clients who are suffering high levels of stress, mental illness, drug and alcohol problems and family violence. Those problems are over-represented in our client group compared to the general population by the nature of the work that we do.

Another people-related issue associated with court security that was frequently discussed had to do with staff attitudes to the role of security staff. Security staff were obtained from one of two security companies that provided a range of security services under contract to the family law courts. Staff attitudes toward the role and function of security staff varied and were linked to the level of trust that they had in the courts' duress alarm system, as indicated by the following comments:

Example 5-25 Security Staff

CSO 1

I do not have an issue with security glass or no security glass...but my main concern is how quickly security does or does not respond. Because we have had incidents in the past where someone hit the duress alarm and security did not turn up.

CSO 2

Security are not allowed to actually remove anyone from the building...so they can try and de-escalate the tension but they cannot physically...they cannot really ask them to leave...it was different with the Federal police [who previously provided Court security].

CSO 3

I do not have full confidence in our security staff, and that is no particular individual. But I do not have full confidence in the security and I do not have full confidence in the system that they have set up in relation to duress alarms.

CSO 4

The security staff can just come and stand around and that can actually create more frustration in the minds of the clients. So we avoid that course if possible.

Managers also held a range of views about court security staff that included a concern about whether they had the necessary authority to physically remove clients from the family law courts when clients acted inappropriately. This was not an issue for most professional staff who thought security staff played an important support role as indicated by the following comments:

Example 5-26 Security Staff

Mgr. 1

I do not think they [client service staff] trust the security staff. There is probably only one guy there that I would trust and do trust and he has probably been there the longest out of all of them.

Mgr. 2

We have our security guards who do a great job but if we get into it, you know, they put themselves in a vulnerable position because of the lack of authority.

Mgr. 3

I do not know if it is because we are a large registry...they have had a few staff changes [amongst the security staff] especially at the team leader level...and that can certainly have an effect...that can be disrupting.

Prof. 1

It has got to the point where I will not use the duress alarm...I get up and I go...the response time I think would be a lot slower from a duress button than it would be for me just going out [out of the meeting room]. That is probably the only way to get them to be responsive because as I said there is not a lot of trust in the duress system at the moment.

Prof. 2

If we need security to come and escort people out they will be here in a jiffy. We have got much more security than we used to have...They are always around as a presence.

The next issue presented relates to the screening and assessment of clients thought to be at risk of violence whilst at family law courts. This issue was mainly discussed by Registrars and Family Consultants. Their comments suggested that the client service staff role in the screening and risk assessment process, while useful and supportive of their own role, was sometimes overshadowed by the role played by Associates and Deputy Associates who worked in the Federal Circuit Court of Australia's chambers where the majority of the cases coming before the family law courts are handled.

Example 5-27 Screening and Risk Assessment

Prof. 1

When there isn't any forewarning of the risk of violence...I think from a Family Consultant's point of view, I think we are not prone to be risk takers.

Prof. 2

It is the Federal Circuit Court of Australia's Magistrates that have to make that first call before a screening and assessment is carried out on a client, whereas in the Family Court of Australia it is the Registrar or the Family Consultant who makes that call.

Prof. 3

So either the client will express a concern or the Family Consultant will enquire and obtain information...the Registrar might also have played some role in assessing the potential for violence...Although I would not say that is the most common instigator...It is fairly easy when the client comes forward and says...

Prof. 4

So unless the client themselves has raised it, or their solicitor has raised it and asked for a 'Safety Plan', it is unlikely to be identified by court staff prior to that first day.

Prof. 5

What we endeavour to achieve is that those who have early contact with each case will identify any security risk, or if the security risk becomes apparent at a later stage then whoever notices it will flag it.

Prof. 6

So I often find that it is a Family Consultant who first puts up the flag about security or mental health risk. Equally a Registrar might.

Prof. 7

Registry staff are not as well placed to identify security and safety risks...it might be more the case with the Circuit Court chamber's staff.

The next set of comments relates to the actual preparation of a 'Safety Plan'. The 'Safety Plan' is the protocol that sets out the steps that all court client contact staff are required to follow when a client is fearful for their safety at court. In essence the 'Safety Plan' involves decisions about how the court registry's security facilities are to be used to protect clients who fear for their safety while they are at court.

The first comments came from staff and managers at the family law courts' National Enquiry Centre (the call centre). The main issue they raised was whether the call centre should be involved in preparing 'Safety Plans' at all and whether their role in preparing 'Safety Plans' should be proactive or reactive.

Example 5-28 The Safety Plan

CSO

We do not ask people if they have any issues. It is for them to tell us.

Mgr. 1

There are two parts to it. The 'Safety Plan'...So the 'Safety Plan' that we do is for when someone is coming to Court and they want security to help. We would probably do one or two of them a day. Then you get a call at the extreme end of the spectrum where people...it doesn't happen often...where she says she is going to kill someone.

Mgr. 2

If the client service staff member thinks the client is at serious risk they should be thinking about that before someone just out of the blue asks, 'is there a risk and it is a serious risk'.

Mgr. 3

I think the Court should get the registries to take over the 'Safety Plan' instead of having the call centre do the paperwork...the registries should focus on the 'Safety Plan' for the clients.

More than 500 other comments were made during the interviews and focus group meetings about the family law courts' safety policies, procedures and practices. Most of this discussion was about the preparation of 'Safety Plans' as stipulated in the 'Safety at Court Protocol' (Family Court, n.d.b). Views differed between client service staff, professional

service staff and team leaders and managers about the importance of the role played by client service staff in relation to the screening and risk assessment process and the preparation of a 'Safety Plan'. Four issues were identified from the interview/focus group discussions about the preparation of 'Safety Plans' by registry-based client service staff:

1. A degree of inconsistency existed in whether staff thought the 'Safety Plan' was intended to be used for a single court event or whether it was intended to remain active for the life of a client's case.
2. A difference existed about whether client service staff thought that they needed to be proactive or reactive in relation to identifying whether a court client was thought to be at risk of violence whilst at court.
3. The problem of clients, family lawyers and support persons not take responsibility for notifying the courts when a client feared for their safety.
4. The downplayed escalation process that was used when a less experienced client service staff member referred a querulous client to a more experienced staff member for support and resolution.

After the interviews and focus groups had identified these inconsistencies in approach to the use of the 'Safety Plan', the Family Court of Australia's 2010-11 Annual Report (Family Court of Australia, 2011) reported that there had been some inconsistency of view detected about the use of 'Safety Plans' and that steps were being taken to keep the Plans relevant for every occasion a client assessed to be at risk of violence attended the courts. This serves to reinforce the view expressed by the client service staff and several regional managers that differences in operational practice can and do emerge in different court registries that often go unnoticed by the courts' staff in the national office in Canberra.

Example 5-29 The 'Safety Plan'

CSO 1

It would be nice if they gave us a bit more time instead of ringing up on the day before...They have to request the security if they want a 'Safety Plan' put into place...The 'Safety Plan' is event driven. We do not have a process in place. We do not have a register that is automatically going to bring up every time that someone comes in for a hearing, it is in my head...there is no automated process that you can use and it would be helpful to have

but I have it on my Excel spread sheet to show what matters there are...but sometimes you can miss them.

CSO 2

I always think that as soon as I am on the counter or I have got someone and I know they are scared for their safety I really drive it home that this is what they need to do and these are the steps they need to take.

CSO 3

I heard the manager talking about a 'Safety Plan' yesterday. It is a rare thing that we get them here [a comment from a regional registry client service staff member].

CSO 4

And then when it became official, so that all Courts were doing it, then it became another way of putting it onto a Court file, rather than just having emails.

CSO 5

Yeah, the solicitors have got...well, the clients have to tell us there is an issue otherwise we will not do it...It is up to them. It is putting the responsibility back on the client that if they fear for their safety they need to notify the Court that they need something put into place.

CSO 6

I do not understand how they [family law solicitors] do not know that their client is under threat or their client is scared.

CSO 7

A 'Safety Plan' is more than a piece of paper. It involves coordinating a whole series of events in the background and in order to do that, giving us as much leeway as possible...You just do not have the capacity to do everything...It is a source of some frustration for us and the clients.

CSO 8

If I know that there is a 'Safety Plan' in place then I'll observe that, make sure that security know that they are in the precinct and I go out myself and check on them.

CSO 9

I think as part of the process of developing a 'Safety Plan', the talking to the client probably alleviates some of their fears a little bit because you are talking them through what facilities are available.

CSO 10

I am sort of more in an escalation type role...I'm am a senior client service officer and I am the next point of contact for our less experienced client service staff...I need to attend to assist...it probably lessens the likelihood of the client then escalating the issue and it becoming a safety or a security issue for our staff.

The next set of comments relating to 'Safety Plans' were made by team leaders and managers. Some perceived that the role played by client service staff in developing a 'Safety Plan' was an important part of their extended service role while others did not see it as being very important. Some managers thought that the process of developing 'Safety Plans' was important for making clients aware of the security facilities that are available for their safety and for making Family Consultants and Registrars aware of the potential of any security risk. This idea relates to there being a 'continuum of service and safety' in operation amongst the family law courts' client contact staff where the support provided to a client at risk of family violence is a function of the combined effort of a number of client contact staff.

Example 5-30 The 'Safety Plan'

Mgr. 1

We tell them where they can get help and so on but you know, that is fairly infrequent given all of the clients that we deal with that would have been subjected to some sort of violence...we do 'Safety Plans' and so on but that is all client generated, by and large.

Mgr. 2

We need to be aware of what the security issues are and what issues parties might be facing...such as if there is an Intervention Order in place when we prepare a safety plan.

Mgr. 3

How important is the role played by client service staff in the safety and security arrangements of the court system? Well they are integral, they are the first point of contact in here the whole time.

Mgr. 4

I do not think that the client service staff necessarily has the support to ensure that the registries really push the issue of completing safety plans.

Mgr. 5

So it is a question mark about whether legitimately you can expect client service staff to do a lot in relation to assessing whether clients fear for their safety as opposed to the Family Consultant who is skilled in that or to a lesser extent the Registrar.

The next set of comments on the preparation of 'Safety Plans' was made by Family Consultants and Registrars. Their views varied about whether they thought the efforts of client service staff to identify clients at risk and to prepare a 'Safety Plan' made a significant contribution to court security. Some thought 'Safety Plans' definitely contributed to a safer court environment while others thought such plans played a supportive role at best.

Example 5-31 The 'Safety Plan'

Prof. 1

A lot of clients do not [have a 'Safety Plan'] and that happens quite often. So unless the clients themselves have raised it, or their solicitor has raised it and asked for a 'Safety Plan', it is unlikely to be identified by court staff prior to that first day at court.

Prof. 2

While it is the responsibility of the client in the first instance...thereafter if we identify that there is a need then the responsibility obviously is ours.

Prof. 3

The client service staff do the best job they can but they do not get a lot of information; sometimes the application is lodged by a solicitor or a solicitor's clerk and you are not going to get a lot from them.

Prof. 4

So the Registrar will usually be the first person to have the opportunity to delve into those safety issues and also deal with the safety issues very often blind and just sort of work them out as the parties are coming into the conference.

Prof. 5

In relation to the Federal Circuit Court...Then Circuit Court staff start to play a much more active role, alongside of client services; and in fact, probably supersedes any role

that the client services plays, by and large. It becomes a Circuit Court's management function as opposed to a client service function.

Prof. 6

We focus on the safety of all...that is certainly part of our practice...and when I say 'we' I am confident that the professional arm of the Courts does that very well, and I think client service staff are highly responsive when we request assistance from them in ensuring that systems are put in place for the safety of clients.

Prof. 7

There are two starting points in my view [to the preparation of a 'Safety Plan']. They are most commonly instigated when a client service staff member is dealing with a client... and when a Family Consultant meets clients and asks them...we ask standard questions about how people feel about their safety.

Prof. 8

The area where I think it isn't happening as much is where the clients are coming to the Courts' premises and not dealing directly with the client service staff...because when they come to Court they do not interact with the Court officer at all [the self-represented litigant, or where a solicitor's clerk lodges an application].

Prof. 9

In theory the idea of the 'Safety Plan' is a very good one...the problems are in the practice. The abuses of 'Safety Plans' by clients, those who do not know about it and do not use it concern me. Those who use it and shouldn't be...using it for leverage, where we do not have the same person following a matter from beginning to end, there is no forewarning of problems.

The next set of comments covers three issues directly or indirectly related to court security arrangements: the issue of client-initiated violence, perceptions about court safety in relation to the court environment, and debriefing and counselling of client service staff after a stressful service exchange with a client.

The Family Consultants had a good appreciation of the complexity of client-initiated violence and how it could impact on court staff and the effect of stressful service exchanges that occurred outside of critical incidents. This was revealed in the comment: *I would have a different response to your question about the most pervasive ongoing stress on staff that is outside of critical incidents if you spoke about client-initiated violence (Prof.).*

Example 5-32 Client-initiated Violence

Prof. 1

We used to do all that work with families that is now done out in the community sector. So the range of people that we use to see was much broader. So we might think...Gosh, everything has gotten so much worse in the last ten years, but that is, I think, because of these changes [the introduction of Family Relationship Centres].

Prof. 2

That might have taken away some of the satisfaction of being able to see easily resolved matters as opposed to matters that are prolonged, complex, and maybe there is no...did we get it right or wrong?

Prof. 3

Especially when people are aggressive or angry or they are accusing or they have got a tone of voice like they do not want to see you and they hate the fact that they are here.

Prof. 4

We often hear Family Consultants say, 'oh my God, it is just about every matter I get that there is a mental illness, there is family violence, there is drugs, there is child abuse and it just gets overwhelming at times.

Prof. 5

Even from our discussions amongst ourselves at times my impression is that the Registrars are continually monitoring the capacity of each party to engage in the process. It could be a whole range of things, but violence is one of them.

Prof. 6

It has always been in my head that there has been a whole lot of family violence, so to a certain extent it is like, 'what is this all about' ...culturally we live and breathe awareness of violence.

Although the issue of place was not mentioned by interviewees in relation to discussions about client service, it was briefly discussed in relation to court security. Client service staff and professional service staff had the most to say about this issue.

Example 5-33 The Court Environment

CSO 1

I have been in the Court for twenty-two years. We have come from the stage where we had no security, no guards, to the stage where we have security guards everywhere....I

honestly think glass [security glass] was a kind of protection...Even though we do not have the glass at the moment, I actually feel more comfortable having a client sitting in front of me than having that barrier.

CSO 2

A more open area and less confronting area for the clients to come in, often means they will not act in that way. Whereas if you beef up security that gets people on edge straight away.

CSO 3

I actually think they are kind of more relaxed when there is no glass between you and them.

Mgr.

Where people would stand up at the counter, and now I guess from a psychological point of view sitting down with a client actually puts them more at ease.

Prof. 1

You are really getting an incomplete picture of the security arrangements if you are only in the regional and municipal registries...in a lot of areas they are using State courts.

Prof. 2

Generally speaking this building is designed in such a way that we have enough facilities to ensure people can be safe in the precinct of the building.

Prof. 3

The waiting area that we now have has a significant effect on defusing emotions. There is no doubt about it.

The issue of debriefing and counselling support may not appear to fit well with the discussion of the court security arrangements as it is more related to the overarching issue of occupational health and safety of court staff. However, the views expressed by client service staff suggested that debriefing of staff was closely related to their perception of whether they felt safe at work and whether they were supported when they experience a stressful service exchange. The evidence suggests that debriefing of staff was informal and was the exception rather than the rule. Client service staff also thought that team leaders and managers should be more involved in arranging for counselling and that referral to an EAP counsellor should not rely on the employee's self-referral.

Example 5-34 Debriefing and Counselling

CSO 1

Yeah, even just popping your head over the screen and going, 'you will not believe it'. Or by sticking it in 'chit chats' [a local work-based communication system].

CSO 2

I had a debriefing after the first week with my team leader. I have had other situations since but I have never had a debriefing session. Actually I do not think that I have ever seen anyone really have a real debriefing with anyone.

CSO 3

The Family Consultant came and made sure that we were alright...but from the other perspective that was the only time we were offered this assistance.

CSO 4

Yeah. Ring them [the Employee Assistance Provider] if you need help. Not 'we will get someone to come in and talk to you'.

CSO 5

You are often reluctant to take yourself off-line and leave the one other person who is on the counter to carry on with everyone else out there.

CSO 6

Is someone going to debrief you and say 'look you put up with that person'?...No, you are going to pick up your bags and take it [the stress] home at the end of the day.

CSO 7

Generally if I have had a difficult client or something it is debriefing with a colleague who deals with the same thing that makes the difference.

As indicated in the following comments, team leaders and managers expressed a different view to client service staff about the role of debriefing and counselling for staff who experienced inappropriate client behaviour:

Example 5-35 Debriefing and Counselling

Mgr. 1

Those security incident reports are really helpful to them [the client service staff]. They feel that they are reporting it to an official. That would definitely be a potential debriefing?

Mgr. 2

We have a peer support person here at the NEC [the Courts' call centre].

Mgr. 3

I had a debriefing with the Registry Manager and then I took the afternoon off...to get me off the premises before he [the aggressive client] was expecting me to come out.

Mgr. 4

I know the NEC, they used to have a peer support officer... We do not have that here. I suppose the role of team leader sort of absorbs the peer support process.

Mgr. 5

Debriefing is good and we tend to do that anyway because that is human nature that you do that, but I think we should develop a lower level of tolerance to the bad behaviour.

Family Consultants and Registrars had little to say about debriefing and counselling in the workplace although some Family Consultants commented that they saw debriefing as a normal part of their professional practice.

Example 5-36 Debriefing and Counselling

Prof. 1

I think probably the client service people on the counter get more of that stuff [abusive clients] than we do. As an example last week we had someone go totally berserk and we had to get an ambulance for the client.

Prof. 2

We are in a reform cycle...a constant question mark exists about whether we are doing it well enough...whether family violence is more prevalent. I mean it clearly is harder...I mean pressures from society have made it more difficult or could it be that we [society in general] are more combative.

Prof. 3

The professionals have a tendency to control the process and if it is getting out of hand then the process will be stopped.

Prof. 4

As a professional we would be more likely to go to a debriefing with a colleague much more than they [client service staff] would.

The next subsection provides a brief summary of the perceptions expressed about the family law courts' 'Family Violence Strategy' and about the courts' security arrangements in terms of how these were perceived by court staff to affect the safety and security of the courts' clients and themselves.

5.2.3 Summary

The review of the family law courts' family violence strategy and public comments made by some of the courts' judicial officials about the prevalence of family violence in the family law courts suggest that a fairly strong link exists between the high incidence of family violence and the courts' decision to shift their client service function to offer better support for the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients.

This link supports two of this study's research propositions. The first proposition concerns the courts' decision to extend the role of client service staff and other client contact staff by making them responsible for identifying clients at risk of family violence whilst at court. The second proposition concerns the motivation for this change being linked to the prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts and the claim that the courts had the processes to deal with this family violence if it was known about beforehand.

The interview and focus group transcripts were also useful in providing data to address this study's first research question that concerns the extent to which the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution in helping to create and sustain a safer court environment. While the views were mixed the dominant view expressed by the Registrars and Family Consultants was that their contribution was supportive at best.

The interview and focus group transcripts also provided some insights into factors, that included how they felt about security staff, duress alarms and arrangements for debriefing and counselling after incidences of inappropriate client behaviour, that were perceived to influence service performance amongst some client service staff.

All three dimensions (people, process and place) are evident in the comments made by interview and focus group participants. What is striking about these comments is the disparity of views expressed by the client service staff and their professional service colleagues on the one hand and those expressed by the team leaders and managers on the

other. This raises the question about whether, and to what extent, client service staff felt they were adequately supported in performing their extended service role.

5.3 Situational Factors

This section of the chapter presents and analyses comments from interviews and focus groups where the discussion concerned situational factors such as resourcing constraints and job insecurity arising from ongoing organizational change. Situational factors and their relationship to work-related stress was not a predefined topic for discussion at the interviews and focus groups. Rather, this issue emerged from the analysis of the discussions about client service and court security issues. This is consistent with the notion that ideas will emerge while analysing and interpreting research data (Gummesson, 2003; Richards, 2009). The resulting data is useful for addressing part of the second research question that concerns identifying factors other than commitment and job satisfaction that are perceived to influence service performance amongst the family law courts' client service staff.

The issues presented start with comments about work-related stress in general and then go on to consider views about resource constraints, organizational change and job insecurity.

5.3.1 Work-related Stress

The following comment from a senior Family Consultant captures the feeling about the general issue of work-related stress amongst the courts' client contact staff:

We have a higher proportion of clients who are suffering high levels of stress, mental illness, drug and alcohol problems and family violence. Those problems are over represented in our client group compared to the population at large. I think this increases the need for staff to be trained in it...to be supportive and to deal with the impact on staff, whatever you call it, of stress, burnout, vicarious trauma, whatever you want to call it, it is all of those things (Prof.).

A summary of other general comments made by those interviewed and by focus group participants about work-related stress follows:

Example 5-37 Work-related Stress

CSO 1

It can be very stressful and intense...so it is important to find the right people who can actually do the tasks but also have the right mentality and attitude to work in this environment.

CSO 2

I had one this morning [an abusive client]. I am still stressed over that person, so you get that and for weeks and months you might not even have one.

CSO 3

We do not have time to think. You are basically put out there, you are supposed to be a robot and not take anything personally and then someone comes to you and tells you all of their problems.

Mgr. 1

I get a lot of calls escalated to me and I just deal with them and I do not feel any sort of...they do not make me upset but some of these people out here [the call centre] get really upset about it.

Mgr. 2

The people who have the most difficulty here are the people who have been here quite a long time. It is not the length of service that wears them out, it is personality. It is how they deal with things.

Mgr. 3

There was one person who went on stress leave straight after that other incident at the start of the year...it was quite a stressful period.

Mgr. 4

When we are in danger, it is not from physical violence but psychological effects of having people being rude and threatening and so on.

Prof. 1

But if you have got staff who are psychologically stressed, if they are de-motivated by anxiety or vicarious trauma, I think we deal with that stuff quite well...the key factor when you are dealing with a client who has concerns is how well the staff member who is dealing

with them is attuned to it...but if they are burned out or they are stressed or distressed ...their performance will diminish as well as their ability to be tuned in.

Prof. 2

And the corporate culture of course is to get as much work out of people as they can. And you know, we all understand that. But these days it is a recipe for burnout.

5.3.2 Organizational Change and Job Insecurity

Change management-related issues, such as how staff cope with change and resistance to change, received the third highest number of references of all the situational factors discussed by interviewees. A reorganization of the family law courts' client service function had begun a year before this study commenced and reportedly had another year to run. Staff expressed a range of concerns such as the way that staff consultation about change was occurring, the perceived loss of advancement opportunities, anxiety associated with position or job loss, and the impact of the organizational change on service performance. Job insecurity, as a work-related stressor, was perceived to have the most negative impact on client service performance irrespective of whether it was being experienced by ongoing or non-ongoing staff, as indicated by the comments below:

Example 5-38 Change and Job Insecurity

CSO 1

When we were getting reviewed...I think it made the staff feel unsafe...you do not know what is going to happen or what you are going to do or if you are going to have a job.

CSO 2

I am currently doing higher duties which I will lose.

CSO 3

There was consultation but no-one was really listening to what we had to say.

CSO 4

I mean they look after certain people, right, they get looked after, their jobs are safe...the threat of the two team leaders and only one position...It was almost like they just had to put them through this stress to be seen to be...

CSO 5

My attitude has changed definitely...it is a lot of uncertainty plus I think sometimes we are not valued for our contribution.

Mgr. 1

The job has changed but their attitude has remained the same. So I feel that they are not the right fit for the job as it is now.

Mgr. 2

It makes it very hard for the team when you have got that sort of uncertainty. It is very disturbing...It has been nine or ten different people including myself acting as team leader...So there is someone acting as team leader, and someone who is acting in their role and someone is acting in theirs...it is the flow-on effect.

Mgr. 3

I have never seen the Court implement so many changes as they have done in the last three years since I have been here...and the insecurity with employees because they do not know...they just do not know where they are going to end up, so you lose some staff motivation.

Mgr. 4

And it is an attitude that is fairly inflexible based on the length of service and this is the way we have done things around here.

Mgr. 5

It is hard to weed out people who are no longer happy. You know if I wasn't happy I would go elsewhere.

Mgr. 6

The client service staff I observe do not feel secure in the positions they have...multi-skilling is also on the agenda...along with changes in court filing levels [workload] and a possible reduction of judicial officials whom they work for [which would reduce staffing requirements].

Mgr. 7

It is the uncertainty of the job because of the change...I think they enjoy their job but those other issues continue to put in their mind some resistance to the organization even though they will not think of leaving.

Mgr. 8

In our own registry we do have staff who are non-ongoing staff and we did not know if they were going to be here for a week or a month. As it turned out most of them have been here for over six months now...they have not undertaken it [training] as we do not generally

undertake it when people are here for such short periods of time...So this time around it has probably been the worst because we have had to keep non-ongoing staff on a month-by-month basis waiting to see what is happening with the review.

5.3.3 Resource Constraints

Three inter-related issues were identified in the discussions at interviews about the types of resourcing constraints faced by staff working in the family law courts' registries. These are declining staffing levels, increasing workloads, and a high level of staff absenteeism. Concerns were expressed by client service staff about the 'dwindling away' of staffing levels, and the increasing use being made of non-ongoing staff for long, undefined periods. Managers express frustration that although some staff indicated that they are unhappy and feel overworked, at times this is not reflected in the workloads actually being handled. There was also discussion about absenteeism that is perceived by some staff to have a negative effect on staff morale and on work unit performance. Some staff expressed the view that they feel frustrated that managers do not appear to use a systematic approach to get to the 'root cause' of staff absenteeism and get absenteeism under control. A comment from one manager at interview sums up the frustration felt by client service staff and managers alike about staff who were seen to misuse their leave entitlements: *I believe one of the major factors in negative job satisfaction is absenteeism. I believe that staff 'play' the system and put undue stress on those who constantly have a good attendance record (Mgr.).*

Example 5-39 Resource Limitations

CSO 1

Like it is survival each day [due to unplanned staff absences], and I said this to one of my managers, I do not know, from day to day, how we survive. One day we had one quarter of our staff off on leave.

CSO 2

Morale. What is going on? And it is like these issues [absenteeism] do not seem to be dealt with or looked at in close detail. We look at them, yeah that is an issue, but what is behind it? What is really going on?...Or July comes along and they say, that is past, now we will be fine again and do not have to do anything.

CSO 3

Well, it is alright, you know. It gets busy, it gets not so busy. Just take it how it comes.

CSO 4

I don't think management wants to address the problem [workload balancing]...no one seems to be pulled into line with some things [unscheduled absences] yet team leaders can only do so much.

Mgr. 1

So I guess what we are doing is looking at what are the causes [of absenteeism], trying to work out what the causes are. A lot of it is winter and people do get sick.

Mgr. 2

The routine nature of the job – that is the main cause of staff taking unscheduled leave.

Mgr. 3

For me personally, when I come into the office in the morning, the first thing I do is I look at my phone to see if the little red light is on...who has called in sick...Because if it is on, it is going to be that much harder...coping with the workload.

Mgr. 4

There were four of us out of twelve so that was horrific...we managed...and we got through it...senior staff whinged about how slow everything was but they weren't willing to help.

Mgr. 5

In a lot of locations we have staff who have been there for a long time in one job and that in itself creates tiredness of thinking...no longer getting the satisfaction back from the job.

Mgr. 6

We do have quite high personal leave. And when we give it a bit more analysis it seems to be...particularly for our standard client APS 3s, the ones who aren't necessarily attached to a Registrar, for instance, and do not have that connection where they have a responsibility to someone else.

The resource constraint issue is also reflected in interview comments by professional service staff. The following comment presents one point of view on this issue: *our staff numbers are extremely low for the work level that we are doing...there are not enough of us to go around...we have come to the view that we have to slow down...quality is better than quantity...safety is more important than process (Prof).*

In relation to observations about resource constraints and the client service workforce, another professional service staff member put it this way: *I think the registry has problems with unplanned absences...that is not a good sign...it relates back to a range of things, including resourcing levels, reviews, the nature of the work...getting more difficult cases...this has more impact on staff if it creates a high level of anxiety* (Prof).

5.3.4 Summary

This subsection examines what the family law courts' staff had to say about situational factors that have the potential to influence the service performance of the courts' client service staff. These factors include the stress associated with inadequate staffing levels, increasing workloads and high staff absenteeism, and the stress associated with job insecurity arising from organizational change. These factors might be perceived to be normal aspects of stress in human service work. However, they are complicated by client service staff experiencing the cumulative effect of several different forms of stress simultaneously. What is not in doubt is the existence of work-related stress for some of the family law courts' client service staff and some of their professional service colleagues.

The emergence of psychosocial stressors in the form of a difficult client group, declining staffing levels, high levels of staff absenteeism, organizational change and job insecurity offer a possible explanation for the low level of commitment reported by client service staff in relation to the courts and their co-workers that was discussed in Chapter 4.

5.4 Human Resource Management Practices

The service industry and marketing research literature presented in Subsection 2.2.2 of Chapter 2 makes claims that the relationship that exists between a service organization's human resource management (HRM) policies, procedures and practices influences employees' job attitudes and job performance. So the HRM practices of the family law court were considered to be a factor that was likely to influence the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff. What follows is an extract from comments about staff management and comments about training and development of client service staff.

Example 5-41 Staff Management

CSO 1

Often I feel that the work we do is not appreciated by management. We do not get any positive feedback from our managers. No matter how hard you work it is never enough, or never accurate enough.

CSO 2

We have no meetings and it is rare that a supervisor even talks to any person in the section. We virtually work without any supervision as we know our jobs. Any concerns...are usually not acted upon or followed through immediately.

CSO 3

Regarding staff meetings; we have not had them in over two years. It would be nice to air some difficulties and put forward some suggestions regarding improvements for the organization.

CSO 4

I feel that the court offers a fragmented approach to the way that its managers and supervisors treat staff...At staff meetings when issues or complaints come from the staff...staff have no right of objection or ability to feedback...they just have to wear it.

CSO 5

I love the actual work involved in my position with the Court but I cannot equally attest to loving my job. This is due to very low levels of staff morale in this registry generated by team leaders and managers treating staff like children and not providing any positive feedback or encouragement or appreciation for our efforts.

CSO 6

I feel that some staff are square pegs in round holes because there is a move here to make everyone multi-skilled and cross-trained...I feel that there are people who are not really working to their strength...I feel multi-skilling is a double edged sword.

CSO 7

Team leaders are seen as unsupportive, not a lot of support and there hasn't been any for many years...the first thing they do is apologise to the solicitor...not support us...the frustration that we all get from the team leader level.

CSO 8

If the Court does not make a commitment to staff...then staff are not going to make a commitment to the Court.

There were some differences and some similarities in the comments made by team leaders and managers about staff management practices.

Example 5-42 Staff Management

Mgr. 1

The rolling nature of the organizational review process creates ongoing uncertainty that some staff are better able to cope with than others.

Mgr. 2

The job of being a client service staff member has changed but staffs' attitudes have remained the same. I do feel sometimes that some of them are not the right fit for the job as it is now. It is very hard to change the person.

Mgr. 3

We have had team leaders away...we have had changes in management...a lot of changes in management...for them [client service staff] they were probably feeling there was not a reliable person they could go to...that means a lot...a good team leader.

Mgr. 4

The knowledge base has changed so dramatically and this is a constant and there is the changing nature of the client population...leading to an increase in the complexity of the matters dealt with by the Courts...and a constantly complex workload that staff are facing.

Mgr. 5

It is the uncertainty of the job because a lot of the change...I think they enjoy their job but those other issues that continue to put in their minds some resistance to the organization even though they will not be leaving.

Mgr. 6

My biggest beef here is people have sat in the same job because they had the attitude you needed to be a specialist not a generalist...that is why we rotate staff around.

Registrars and Family Consultants had the least to say about the way that staff management impact on the courts' client service staff but they did have something to say about what might termed perceived organizational support in relation to the effects of reorganizational change.

Example 5-43 Staff Management

Prof. 1

I mean in this institution people have been for years suffering from fatigue and had this constant spectre of change, restructuring and uncertainty for your job...it is something that staff feel more acutely from time to time.

Prof. 2

We do not support our own people and that is one of the things that in theory...we say but we do not put it into practice...they [client service staff] are the ones who cop it.

Training and Development

The evaluation of the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' indicated a high degree of participant satisfaction and evidence of changes in client perceptions of the quality of service performance amongst those who attended (Family Law Courts, 2009a). A senior manager described the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' as a vehicle for assisting client service staff to respond more effectively to higher risk behaviours from clients by helping client service staff feel more comfortable about making referrals or by asking leading questions so that they could assist clients who might present certain at-risk behaviours. A different perspective on the courts' general approach to staff training and development was put by a senior regional Family Consultant: *The difficulty this organization has, and I will be blunt, with training is continuing it. We develop good training packages and implement them and then forget about them* (Prof.).

Example 5-44 Training and Development

CSO 1

The staff training here is very poor [registry client service training] and so much of it is not relevant and they are wishy washy about whether you get any...you do not know the correct information yourself or you haven't been trained properly...It is very difficult and very frustrating for clients as it is for us as well.

CSO 2

A couple of years ago we had the mental health training [the Mental Health Pilot Support Program] and there was an expectation, that we... if a client had disturbing symptoms then we would say, okay, we will need to refer you to ...or we will make a phone call on your behalf...I think the reality, though, once again, is do we have the time to go into that much detail with the client?

CSO 3

That is not emphasised as much as it used to be [technical knowledge]. I have never seen dedication to training in the Courts. I know that people have found it a lot harder to get up to speed than I did and it certainly takes longer. You are dependent upon the strength of your supervisor and their approachability.

CSO 4

The training [the Integrated Client Service Development Program] was interesting...but it still doesn't lead me to want to get into that space [seeking personal information from clients].

CSO 5

That five days of training [the Integrated Client Service Development Program] we had, I do not really think I really...there were certain questions I think we had to ask and I do not think I really feel comfortable asking that.

CSO 6

It is two years in total since we had our training [the Integrated Client Service Development Program], I feel as if we have had our training, but there has been no follow-up, not even a follow-up conversation about it.

CSO 7

We get temporary staff in through the year and it is like...here is your training, go and watch someone on the counter, bang, you are ready to go on the counter now.

CSO 8

I think it is good to do refresher courses to keep you up to speed...it [the Integrated Client Service Development Program] was really great but it has been two years and a refresher wouldn't hurt.

The dominant view about staff development and training amongst the courts' service staff is that not enough is being done by the courts to build and sustain their confidence and competence in dealing with complex situations and a difficult client group. This view was not supported by team leaders and managers as indicated in the following comments.

Mgr. 1

We provide a lot of training, six weeks training, before they start [call centre operators]. So that gives them full insight of...because it is a National Enquiry Centre. We need to be focussed nationally.

Mgr. 2

The previous training [the Integrated Client Service Development Program]...was designed to assist our client service officers to respond effectively to high risk behaviours by way of feeling more comfortable about making referrals or asking leading questions so that we might better assist a person who might be presenting with certain risk factors.

Mgr. 3

I think you would find that a lot of new staff that have missed out on that training [the Integrated Client Service Development Program] and therefore they do not have...have not been shown the technique of identifying a client at risk...unless the client puts up their hand.

Mgr. 4

I do not agree with what they may have said about being thrown in at the deep end...here staff who have been here for quite a long time feel that the new staff are getting a lot more training than they used to get...a lot more handholding before they have to actually go out and do it themselves.

Mgr. 5

You hear about supporting our staff in training initiatives and we are happy to send people to courses. But I do know that quite a number of my staff have asked for training and they have been told “no”.

Mgr. 6

We are almost shying away from saying...we did all this training and we have got these people out there who never learnt anything...we need other competencies developed.

Professional services staff support the client service staff view that the courts needed to do more to sustain the skill levels and confidence of client service staff rather than relying exclusively on developing these staff ‘on-the-job’ after they have been appropriately inducted.

Prof. 1

It tends to be mostly on-the-job learning and relies on the support and guidance of the team leaders and the staff around them. Which, if they have been trained, is good but over time the impact of this training fades.

Prof. 2

I think more training and more ongoing training...dealing with our client group...they [the Courts’ clients] are not what I would call standard public service clientele. We have a high proportion of clients who are suffering high levels of stress, mental illness, drug and alcohol problems.

Prof. 3

There is a need for greater training in leadership and in mentoring of staff...there is also a generational issue.

5.4.1 Summary

The strongest theme emerging from the discussion about the courts' staff management practices and the training and development provided to the client service workforce is the perceived lack of continuity in training given to existing experienced client service staff, and the impact this has had on their feeling about whether the courts remain committed to them and to their continued development. This is directly relevant to the research proposition concerning how the family law courts' orientation and support can influence client service staff behaviour.

The next section provides a brief summary of this chapter covering interview and focus group participants' perceptions of client service, court security, situational factors, and the staff management practices and training provided to client service staff and their relevance to this study's two research questions and six research propositions.

5.5 Summary

Section 5.1 of this chapter provides five different perspectives on the family law courts' service orientation. The evidence strongly supports the contention that the courts have a strong service culture and are highly client service oriented. This also supports one of this study's research propositions and grounds the context of the present study in a dynamic, innovative but resource constrained service organization that seeks to address competing objectives of service quality, accessibility and affordability while workloads fluctuate and resource levels decline.

Section 5.2 provides evidence to support the link between the courts' decision to shift the delivery of its client service function to offer better support for the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients to the courts' 'Family Violence Strategy'. This evidence also supports this study's third research proposition about the motivation behind the courts' decision to fundamentally shift their approach to client services. Section 5.2 also provides evidence that relates directly to this study's first research question concerning whether the family law courts' client service staff are perceived to help contribute to creating and sustaining a safer court environment for the courts' clients. The evidence suggests that the client service staff play an important but supportive role in this process. The evidence also supports the view that a link exists between client support service and court security. Section 5.2 also provides some evidence about the impact of client-initiated violence and a perceived

lack of a systematic approach to debriefing and counselling that may influence how committed client service staff are to performing their extended service role with its associated safety-related behaviour.

Section 5.3 presents a range of evidence to support the existence of work-related stress amongst the courts' client service staff that is generated by internal factors such as resource constraints and increasing workloads, the stress associated with organizational change and job insecurity, and the role stressors associated with having to deal with a difficult client group. These factors are directly relevant to the first part of this study's second research question concerning the types of factors that may influence the service performance of the family law courts' client service staff. It is suggested these factors could also offer an explanation for the low level of commitment to the courts and to co-workers reported by some client service staff in the on-line survey.

Section 5.4 provides evidence on how client service staff, their team leaders and managers and Registrars and Family Consultants see the courts' staff management practices and the influence they may have on job attitudes and job performance amongst the courts' client service staff. While there are a mixture of different views, most notably between the client service staff and their team leaders and managers, the evidence is that there is a lack of commitment between some client service staff and the courts as a result of the less-than-expected level of training support provided by the courts for its client service workforce.

The next chapter draws the results of the qualitative and quantitative strands of this study together with the literature review presented in Chapter 2 and provides a thematic discussion of this study's key findings and conclusions. It also examines the extant research literature on work-related stress to add support to the key finding that emerged from the qualitative data about how role stress and situational factors both appeared to impact on the family law courts' boundary spanning staff whose service role was extended to encompass safety-related behaviour.

Chapter 6 - Findings and Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the key findings and main conclusions that emerged from the study results. The chapter has two parts and ten sections. Part one introduces the present study's five key findings and Part two introduces the study's three main conclusions

Section 6.1 demonstrates how the present study's six research propositions (first introduced in Subsection 1.2.3 of Chapter 1 and illustrated in Figure 2.1 of Chapter 2) relate to perceived gaps in the research literature. Each of these six research propositions is later linked to the present study's five key findings to illustrate how this study addresses a number of perceived gaps in the extant research literature. Section 6.2 introduces and analyses the research literature on work-related stress. This theme emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data presented and interpreted in Chapter 5. Section 6.3 uses the extant research on work-related stress to enable a better understanding of the present study's findings in terms of the three main types of stressors reported by the courts' client service staff. The first type of stressor relates to the inappropriate behaviour of some of the courts' clients. Court clients are often highly stressed as a consequence of engaging in a contested divorce process. This feature of the courts' clients serves to distinguish the courts as a unique type of public sector human service organization. The second type of stressor relates to situational factors such as organizational change and resourcing constraints that client service staff experienced by working in the family law courts. The third type of stressor relates to a perceived less-than-expected level of commitment being shown by the courts towards their client service workforce. Section 6.4 provides a brief summary of the present study's four key findings.

The second Part of this chapter introduces the present study's three main conclusions. These conclusions are based on and derived from the study's five key findings. Section 6.5 introduces the present study's three main conclusions. Section 6.6 discusses the implications of these conclusions for existing theory about client service, court security and work-related stress. Section 6.7 discusses the implications of this study's conclusions for policy and practice in court administration in and beyond the family law courts. Section 6.8 makes brief comment about the approach taken in this study to conceptualize and measure perceived service quality that is the main contribution to methodology made by this study. Section 6.9 highlights the strengths of this study's research design, recaps on the various delimitations

and limitations of the study's design and implementation and makes suggestions about future research into the relationship that exists between boundary spanners in courts, court security and work-related stress. As this study report began with a statement about how this study fits into the national Court Safety Project, Section 6.10 concludes with a brief summary of the present study's contribution to the research aims of that project.

The central argument running throughout the present study's findings and conclusions has four components. First the change in the delivery of client services by the courts not only extended the role of client service staff but also changed the role expectations placed upon these staff and the behaviours required of them to perform this extended role. Second, in light of this change in service delivery approach, the courts recognized that the importance of building the confidence and competency of its client service workforce. This was reflected in the courts undertaking an organization-wide 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' and stating their intention to continue to support the development of client service staff in the long-term. However, this level of support proved difficult to sustain due to internal resource constraints. Third, situational factors existing outside and inside of the courts combined to generate work-related stress that in turn influenced client service staffs' job attitudes and work-related behaviour. Fourth, managing service delivery across the courts' service boundary in supporting vulnerable clients requires sustained investment and support particularly because of the complexity of the service setting and the difficulty of of the clients being served. It is therefore not surprising that this study found that while the courts' client service staff can make an important contribution to helping to create a safer court environment the potential of their contribution was found to be limited by a lack of confidence, competency that was exacerbated by the existence of work-related stress.

6.1 Study Research Propositions

Figure 6.1 illustrates the way that the present study's six research propositions address the gaps that exist in what is currently known about the relationship between client service and security in the courts in Australia.

Research Propositions	Research Theme	Extant Research Literature
The family law courts can be viewed as a public sector human service organization that has a strong client service orientation	Client Service	Limited research into court culture and industry best practice in courts. No known research into courts as human service organizations
There is a prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the family law courts and the courts have the processes to deal with this situation if they know about it beforehand	Court Security	There is research on the relationship between family violence and family law, and there has been recent public policy examination of this issue but there has been limited examination of the role played by court staff in creating a safer court environment
The family law courts fundamentally shifted the delivery of their client services to better support the well-being and security concerns of their clients	Court Security	Some of the research literature on the family relationship sector has addressed workforce issues but no known research in the courts outside of research into the psychology of court design
The family law courts' client service staff occupy a boundary role that has been extended to include safety-related behaviour	Client Service	Extensive research in service organizations but no known research that specifically examines the boundary spanning roles and behaviour amongst court staff
The job attitudes of the family law courts' client service staff affects their job performance that includes their safety-related behaviours.	Client Service	Extensive research on this relationship in the public and private sector but no known research in the courts
The family law courts' orientation and support can influence client service staff behaviour, client satisfaction and organizational outcomes	Client Service	Extensive research in the public and private sector on perceived organizational support and service climate. None of this research has been done in the courts

Figure 6.1: Relationship of this present Study's Research Propositions to the Research Literature

Figure 6.1 indicates that even though there is considerable research on each of the six research propositions that there has been little research on the courts in relation to the issues of interest, and it appears that no research has been undertaken expanding these issues from the perspective of low status, non-professional court support staff and the contribution they make to court security arrangements. It is in this area that this study makes its main contribution to knowledge of court administration and court security by examining the relationship that exists between client service and court security in the family law courts. The present study also extends what is currently known about the relationship between the family law courts and the public by exploring how a strategy of ‘softening the barriers’ between the courts and their vulnerable clients has the potential to enhance the safety of clients who have special needs or who fear for their safety whilst they are at court.

Figure 6.1 does not include the theme of work-related stress that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative research data that relates to the influence that a difficult client group and complex service situation can create for the courts’ client service staff that has been indicated to have the potential to challenge as well as hinder their service performance. The research literature and findings in relation to the theme of work-related stress is discussed in detail in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this chapter.

The next section discussed the six research propositions and relates them directly to the extant literature and indirectly to the present study’s key findings.

6.1.1 The Courts’ Conscious Service Orientation

Chapter 5 presents qualitative data from five separate sources to examine the research proposition about the courts’ conscious service orientation that was suggested by the research on the court and the public in Australia (Parker, 1998). The data presented in Section 5.1 of Chapter 5, along with the review of the service industry research literature presented in Chapter 2, supports the contention that the family law courts can be viewed as a unique type of human service organization (Jones & May, 1995) as well as a unique blend of judicial institutions. This contention relates to the argument that the courts’ service orientation and its service culture strongly influence how the courts perceive the role of their client contact staff when it comes to the issue of protecting vulnerable clients who have special needs or who fear for their safety whilst at court.

Data generated from interviews with two senior representatives of the family law courts and a senior representative from the Courts Administration Authority of South Australia, presented in Subsection 5.1.2, demonstrates the similarities and the differences that exist between these two court systems in terms of the types of services they provide to support their clients' access to judicial services. This data indicates that both court systems can be viewed as having a strong client service orientation.

Data is also presented from four other sources in Subsection 5.1.3 through to Subsection 5.1.5 that is taken from interviews with the courts' client contact staff, from a review of two comprehensive surveys of the courts' clients, from non-participant observations of seven of the courts' registries, and from a review of the courts' client service strategies, structure and practices that are compared to industry best practice on court excellence (National Centre for State Courts, 2008). All of this data supports the view that the family law courts can be seen to be a client centric service organization. However to meet the definition of a human service organization the courts must materially affect their clients through the services they provide them. The courts settle contested divorces, work out property settlements, and determine child custody arrangements in situations where the litigants cannot reach agreement by themselves or through conciliation (Family Court of Australia, 2012a). These services have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the courts' clients. In addition, the courts' referral of clients with mental illness to external support agencies and its support of clients subjected to family violence also exert a strong influence on their clients' psychological wellbeing. The combined effect of the courts' services and their support of vulnerable clients indicate that the courts do meet the definition of being a human service organization (Jones & May, 1995).

From the research literature presented in Chapter 2, it is evident that the way that the family law courts organizes client services and court security arrangements also display other characteristics of relevance. This includes the courts being seen as dynamic, innovative and transformational service oriented judicial institutions (Cooke, 2006; Harrison, 2007; Rhoades, 2010). They are also found to be constrained in the way that they try to balance competing objectives such as delivering secure and quality services that are also affordable, credible and accessible (Chisholm, 2009; Family Court of Australia, 2012b). In relation to industry best practice, it is not known precisely how the family law courts' practices align to all of the dimensions of the international 'Court Excellence Framework' (National Centre for State

Courts, 2008) but it is known, from the extract of the interviews presented in Subsection 5.1.2, that the courts use this standard as a framework for reviewing and revising their corporate strategies. The research literature on court culture suggests that it is the alignment of all of the dimensions of industry best practice that leads to a court being viewed as having a high performance culture (Ostrom, & Hanson, 2010). It seems reasonable to assume that if the courts are not currently viewed as having a high performance organizational culture they are working towards having one. The importance of this is reflected in research on courts that indicates that it is a court's organizational culture that determines their administrative practices (Nardulli, Eisenstein & Fleming, 1988) that would include client services and court security arrangements.

These findings about the courts' conscious service orientation and its service culture extend what is known from existing research (Parker, 1998) about the family law courts and its relationship to the user community that it serves.

6.1.2 Family Violence and Family Law in Australia

In Subsection 5.2 the review of documentation on the courts' strategies, policies and practices relating to family violence supports the contention that the family law courts have long held a concern about the increasing level of family violence exhibited by clients coming before the courts (Family Court of Australia, 2005). This concern was found to be a major factor motivating the courts to fundamentally shift the delivery of their client services and to involve all client contact staff, irrespective of their role, in identifying clients thought to be at risk of violence whilst at court (Family Court of Australia, 2005). It is also evident that the courts have confidence in being able to deal effectively with any threat of family violence to the courts' clients if the threat is known about beforehand (Bryant, 2008, 2009; Faulks, 2010a, 2010b). The courts' concerns about the high incidence of family violence amongst its clients preceded the significant reforms of the Australian family law system in 2006 and again in 2011. These reforms included a formal obligation for the courts to be proactive in assessing whether the fear of family violence experienced by clients coming before the courts was reasonable and to actively work to mitigate the risk of violence from occurring whilst these clients were at court (Braaf & Sneddon, 2007).

An examination of review documents relating to the impact of family violence on the Australian family law system commissioned in 2009 by the Federal Attorney-General's

Department presented in Chapter 2 suggests that the courts' duty of care for the wellbeing and security of their clients has increased (Wilcox, 2012a). It also demonstrates that resource constraints in the Australian Public Service created a situation whereby the courts were underfunded, at the time of data collection for this study, for the task of comprehensively addressing the security concerns of all of their clients thought to be at risk of family violence (Chisholm, 2009).

Separately, Subsection 5.2 highlights the evaluation (conducted between 2004 and 2006) of the steps taken by the courts to build and sustain the confidence and competence of their client service staff to help them to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients. The evidence indicates that the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' was funded under the then Department of Health and Ageing's 'National Suicide Prevention Program' (Family Law Courts, 2009). The finite nature of this funding arrangement explains, at least in part, why it appears from staff comments that the courts' intention to invest in building the skills of its client service workforce over the long-term has not been maintained at the level originally intended. An extract of interview transcripts provided in Example 5-44 indicates that a lack of follow-up training is perceived by some client service staff to demonstrate a lack of organizational support by the courts for their client service staff. This lack of a sustained investment by the courts in building the competence and confidence of client service staff is an important feature of the courts' 'service support function' that has been found by other service industry researchers to influence service providers' service quality albeit in call centres (Dean & Rainnie, 2009).

Subsection 2.2.1 of Chapter 2 indicates there has been limited research into the way that court staff can help to create a safer court environment albeit that the external reviews commissioned by the Federal Attorney General's Department about family violence and the Australian family law system have promoted some recent research into the impact of reforms in this area (Wilcox, 2012a, 2012b). However, this present study looked specifically at the contribution that low status, non-professional front-line court staff make to help create a safer court environment for clients with special needs and those who fear for their safety whilst at court. The finding relating to the contribution made by the courts' client service staff to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients is addressed in the next part of this section.

6.1.3 Client Wellbeing and Security Concerns

The analysis of an extract of interview and focus group transcripts presented in Subsection 5.2.1, a review of the courts' processes for dealing with family violence (Family Court of Australia, 2009b, Family Court of Australia, n.d.b) and an examination of the report 'Family Court Violence Review' (Chisholm, 2009) presented in Subsection 2.3.2 all indicate that the courts' client service staff play an important but secondary role in helping to support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients relative to the contribution made by the courts' Family Consultants and Registrars and, to a lesser extent, to the contribution made by the courts' Associates and Deputy Associates.

The research evidence presented in Subsection 5.2.1 and Subsection 5.2.2 and the research literature presented in Subsection 2.2.3 all indicate that the courts' client service staff can be seen to be performing their referral, screening and risk assessment tasks as part of a broader boundary-spanning group (Gracia, Cifre & Grau, 2010) that includes all of the courts' staff who have some contact with clients. This finding reinforces the view that what really matters about the way that the courts provide support for their clients' wellbeing and security concerns is about sustaining the combined effectiveness of the whole of the courts' boundary group (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). This view is consistent with the idea of a 'continuum' of service and safety support being provided by the courts to their clients that is mentioned in the interview transcripts (Example 5-16 and Example 5-31). The findings relating to the boundary-spanning behaviour amongst the courts' client contact staff that relates to this study's fourth research proposition are discussed in the next part of this section.

6.1.4 Boundary-spanning amongst the Courts' Client Contact Staff

There is no doubt from the evidence presented in Subsection 5.1.3 that all of the courts' client contact staff, including the courts' client service staff, operate as boundary spanners in jobs that involve them interacting with clients and often out of the sight of supervisors and managers.

The research literature presented in Subsection 2.3.3 on boundary-spanning acknowledges that the types of boundary-spanning activities performed by service employees differ depending upon the service context, the industry sector, and where the boundary-spanning activities take place (Marrone, 2010; Marrone, Tesluck & Carson, 2007). It may also differ depending upon whether the boundary spanners are low status, non-professional

service employees or professional staff and this can be influenced by their employment relationship as well as their organization's service support function'' (Ogbonna, 2011). The research literature also suggests that supportive supervisors and other forms of departmental support are important antecedents to effective performance amongst boundary spanners (Sergeant & Frenkel, 2000). Another important feature of the research literature on boundary spanners is the influence of role stressors that arise from those staff working at the outer edge of their organization often without adequate support (Goolsby, 1992; Tubre & Collins, 2000). Another area of the research on boundary spanners that is directly relevant to the role performed by the courts' client service staff relates to their responsibility for referring clients with special needs to external support agencies that creates a fragmented or 'fuzzy boundary' between the courts and court users (Grimshaw, Marchington, Rubery & Willmott, 2011) . This feature of the courts' service continuum that operates in conjunction with a network of external support agencies, functions in much the same way as it does in other public sector support programs that are coordinated by different public agencies where boundary-spanning staff perform an important 'gate keeper' role (Pettus & Severson, 2006). The significance of this issue for the present study is how a fuzzy boundary between service providers and service recipients modifies service role requirements, service role expectations and the types of stressors that boundary spanners experience in a complex service setting.

The idea of boundary-spanning creates a different lens for viewing the expanded service role played by the courts' client contact staff, in particular for viewing the way that they support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients and has implications for the way that the courts manage their client service workforce.

The next part of this section presents this study's findings about the limited relationship that exists between the job attitudes and perceptions of job performance amongst the courts' client service staff that relates to this study's fifth research proposition.

6.1.5 Job Attitudes and Job Performance

The research literature reviewed in Subsection 2.2.3 and Subsection 2.3.4 indicates that despite the extensiveness of organizational behaviour research on job attitudes and job performance there has been no research about job attitudes and job performance in the courts.

The data obtained from the on-line survey of the courts' client service staff presented in Chapter 4 demonstrates that although the measurement of multiple forms of commitment may improve the reliability of the results, it contributes little to explain the association between organizational commitment and co-worker commitment, service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) amongst the courts' client service staff albeit that the similarity of commitment measures used may account for the fact that together they contribute little more than they do as separate measures.

What the survey results presented in Chapter 4 do demonstrate is that job satisfaction amongst the courts' client service staff has a stronger association with both service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour than either of the forms of commitment measured including their affective components. Some of the research literature suggests that job satisfaction may also be more likely than commitment to have a positive impact on other work-related behaviours such as turnover intention (Huang, 2011; Westover, 2011) although we do not know if this is the case in relation to the family law courts, albeit that the courts do experience a reasonably low turnover of staff generally (Family Court of Australia, 2012b). The overall finding from the on-line survey about the association that exists between job attitudes and job performance amongst the courts' client service staff is consistent with the service industry research literature that suggests that service employees' job satisfaction should be treated as a service management objective in its own right. One of the reasons for this relates to the potential impact that service employees' job satisfaction has on client satisfaction, quite apart from the influence that job satisfaction can have on co-workers through its relationship to their OCB (Brooks, Wiley & Hause, 2006).

This finding is different to the results of a study of call centre employees that also used SERVQUAL, albeit in a shortened form, to enable service providers to self-report the quality of their service (Malhortra & Mukherjee, 2004). In that study, organizational commitment was found to be a stronger predictor of service performance than job satisfaction (Malhortra & Mukherjee, 2004). The apparent contradiction in the findings, between the study conducted by Malhortra and Mukherjee (2004) and the present study is consistent with other commitment research that has found that the relationship between job attitudes and work outcomes is not necessarily linear and that it may differ between different types of service occupation and different types of service organization due to an organization's characteristics and practices (Dean, 2004).

The next part of this section presents findings relating to the relationship between the courts' service orientation and the organizational support provided to the courts' client service staff and their service performance that relates to this study's sixth research proposition. This finding reinforces the important of 'context' in the present study. It also highlights the present study's inherent strength of going beyond the association between job attitudes and job performance amongst service providers to explore the types of factors that appear to influence their boundary spanning behaviours.

6.1.6 Orientation, Organizational Support and Service Performance

The evidence presented in Section 5.3 about situational factors indicates that the stress associated with face-to-face and telephone contact with a difficult client group in a complex service context is considered by some of the courts' client contact staff to be an impediment to their service quality. The prevalence of work-related stress relating to dealing with dysfunctional client behaviour is complicated by stress arising from a perceived progressive reduction in staffing level, the increased use of temporary staff for indeterminate periods, and a high, seasonally effected level of paid unscheduled absences amongst many of the courts' registry staff. For other client service staff it is more about the stress relating to staff feeling insecure about their jobs as a result of an ongoing and long-term process of organizational change and the simultaneous introduction of multi-skilling. The work-related stress research suggests that the cumulative effect of staff experiencing multiple stressors can make work-related stress more difficult to cope with depending upon how they are supported (Walsh, 2011).

Other sources of work-related stress identified in this study included the perceived less-than-expected level of support provided by the courts to their client service workforce. There is evidence for this in the comments made by client service staff (see Section 5.3) about all of the situational factors that they encountered and the perceived lack of ongoing intensive staff development opportunities evident in the comments from interviews (Section 5.4). This leads on to a finding about how service organizations need to sustain their investment in supporting boundary spanners where their roles involve different sorts of behaviours and generates new expectations about their performance in a complex service situation.

Consistent with the research on the concept of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), the types of situational factors that were cited by client service staff that relate to a less-than-expected level of organizational support includes a culture of tolerance of inappropriate client behaviour, a lack of a systematic debriefing processes for staff following dealings with difficult clients, the absence of peer support arrangements in some of the courts' registries, the self-referral nature of the Employee Assistance Program, and a lack of follow up on the intensive client service training undertaken between 2004 and 2006. Consistent with the findings of this study, work-related stress research suggests that some of these factors may influence client service staff commitment to their organization and to their co-workers (Dollard, Dormann, Boyd, Winefield & Winefield, 2003; Jex, Bachrach, Adams & Sorenson, 2003). A recent meta-analysis of perceived organizational support research indicates that employees place more importance on what the job provides them by way of resources and support "than on the stressful aspects of the job" (Kutessis et al., 2015, p. 26).

6.1.7 Summary

Work-related stress emerges from comments by all of the courts' client contact staff in relation to staff perceptions of the courts' client services presented in Subsection 5.1.3, in relation to staff perceptions of the courts' security arrangement presented in Subsection 5.2.2 and particularly in relation to staffs' comments about situational factors presented in Section 5.3. Work-related stress is an unexpected and significant finding for this study. This finding is significant because:

- It holds the potential to explain variations in service quality amongst some of the courts' client service staff who report that situational factors influence their capability to support their clients' wellbeing and security concerns.
- It holds the potential to explain, at least in part, the reasons for the low level of commitment reported by the courts' client service staff in relation to the courts and their co-workers (Dollard, et al., 2003).
- It offers an alternative explanation to the workforce demographic issues associated with job performance (Backes-Fellner, Schneider & Veen, 2011) that were raised by some of the client service team leaders and operational

managers who spoke at length in interview about an aged, change resistant and difficult to manage client service workforce.

- It opens up an entirely different dimension of the employment relationship between the courts and their client service workforce (Ogbonna, 2011) to explore that influences the relationship between court support services, the courts' boundary tier, and its relationship with court security processes (Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Wallace et al., 2013).

The next section of this chapter reviews the research literature on work-related stress. This review is undertaken to establish whether the issues raised by the courts' client service staff about the factors impinging upon their service performance has been found to effect service quality in studies of other types of service organizations.

6.2 Research on Work-related Stress

The research literature on work-related stress was not covered in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 because stress was not identified in the design of this study as one of this study's core themes. It is acknowledged that normally all relevant research literature is covered in the literature review section of the study report. However in this study work-related stress is an emergent issue and the research literature is directly relevant to assisting in the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data that gave rise to this emergent issue. The two core themes of client service and court security that were identified from the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 were used for, amongst other things, structuring the interview and focus group protocols (Appendix D, E, and F) and for developing the nodes for coding the resultant transcripts (Bazeley, 2007). The issue of work-related stress arose out of the discussion on how the courts' client contact staff experienced a difficult client group and a complex service setting.

The review of the work-related stress research literature covered in this section of the chapter has two main aims. The first involves identifying an appropriate theoretical framework for analysing and interpreting the various situational factors that the courts' client service staff reported had a negative impact on the quality of their service performance. The second involves examining the work-related stress research in relation to three particular issues that were seen to be prevalent in the comments made by the courts' client contact staff:

1. The influence of dysfunctional clients as a source of stress for service providers (Dollard et al., 2003).
2. The influence of situational factors generally as sources of stress and their effect on job performance and other work-related behaviour (Jex, 1998; Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic & Eatough, 2010).
3. The influence of work-related stress generally on the relationships between job attitudes and job performance, particularly in service organizations (Dollard et al., 2003; Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Lambert & Paoline, 2008; Privitera & Arnetz, 2011).

Recent narrative reviews of approaches to work-related stress in the literature indicate that interactional (structural) stress theory and transactional (process) stress theory are the two main approaches used in this field of study today (Cox & Griffiths, 2010; Ganster & Perrewe, 2011). Interactional stress theory has an immediate intuitive appeal, focusing as it does on the different types of models that have been used to explain the way that individual employees interact with different aspects of their work environment (such as the job demands-control model (Karasek, 1979) and the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996)). However, interactional stress theory was thought to be too narrow an approach for use in this study because it ignores the importance of how individual employees differ in their ability to appraise and cope with stressors that can act to moderate the effects of the 'stress and strain' relationship (Cox & Griffiths, 2010).

Interview and focus group discussions with the courts' client service staff, presented in Subsection 5.3.1, indicate that there are individual differences amongst the courts' client service staff about how they perceive their work and their work environment (Motowidlo, 1996). Section 5.3 indicates there are also differences of view on these issues between the courts' client service staff and their team leaders and managers on the one hand and between the client service staff and the Family Consultants and Registrars on the other.

Transactional stress theory describes the processes by which individual employees appraise and cope with particular types of workplace events or workplace characteristics (Ganster & Perrewe, 2011). In transactional stress theory, work-related stress is not embedded in the individual employee or in their work environment but arises from the

conjunction between the event or the situation and the process of individual appraisal and coping (Cox & Griffiths, 2010). The appraisal and coping process as a skill set underlying transactional stress theory (Cox & Griffiths, 2010; Ganster & Perrewe, 2011; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is identified in the service industry literature to be a facet of effective service provision that is as important as any other skill, ability and attribute in customer service work in a stressful service context (Vance, 2006). Accordingly, transactional stress theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) was selected as the perspective for analysing and interpreting the situational factors that the courts' client service staff reported existed outside and inside of the courts that they perceived had a negative impact on their service quality.

The extracts of the interview transcripts presented at Section 5.3 indicate that the courts' client service staff spoke about the difficulties that they faced in their service role and acknowledged that some aspects of their work could at times be stressful (Example 5-37). In contrast, the Family Consultants and, to a lesser extent, the Registrars spoke explicitly about work-related stress (Example 5-32 and Example 5.37) and about issues such as vicarious trauma, emotional exhaustion and burnout (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993) that they perceived to be associated with dealing on an ongoing basis with a highly stressed client group. The form of stress experienced by the courts' clients could reasonably be termed 'life event' stress (Aldwin, 2007).

Research into organizational behavioural and performance theory offers different explanations for the types of situational factors that can influence individual and organizational performance. Organizational behavioural research suggests that the organizational context contains "situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as well as the functional relationships between variables" (Johns, 2006, p. 386). Performance theory research suggests that individual employee performance is influenced not just by the individual employee's knowledge, skill and motivation (Campbell, McCloy, Scott, Oppler & Sager, 1993; Campbell, 1999) but also by situational factors that have the potential to either facilitate or constrain their job performance (Baclarach & Bamberger, 1995; Kane, 1993; Peters, O'Connor & Rudolf, 1980; Peters & O'Connor, 1988; Schoorman & Schneider, 1988; Villanovu & Roman, 1993).

The transactional stress research literature identifies a range of situational factors existing outside and inside of organizations that individual employees may perceive as stressors. Depending upon how these factors are appraised they can impact positively or negatively on employees' job performance (Cox and Griffiths, 2010; Jex, 1998; Koslowsky, 1998; Leka & Cox, 2010; Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic & Eatough, 2010). Early research on transactional stress theory introduced a classification of stressors as being either harmful, threatening or challenging (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This was later modified to become the 'Challenge-Hindrance Model of Occupational Stress' that is now widely used in transactional stress research (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling & Boudreau, 2000; Webster, Beehr & Christiansen, 2010; Webster, Beehr & Love, 2011; Widmer, Semmer, Kalin, Jacobshagen & Meier, 2012).

Work-related stress research that utilizes the 'Challenge-Hindrance Model' found that challenge and hindrance-related stressors are differentially related to job performance (LePine, Podsakoff & LePine, 2005), turnover intentions and withdrawal behaviour (Podsakoff, LePine & LePine, 2007), job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour (Webster & Beehr, 2011; Webster, Beehr & Christiansen, 2010). The limitation of this research is that it has ignored the courts as a type of a human service organization that presents interesting issues for low status, non-professional front-line client service staff working with difficult clients in a complex service setting.

The link between the concepts of situational factors in research on organizational behavioural and performance theory and the 'Challenge-Hindrance Model' in transactional stress theory is the individual appraising and coping process (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This relationship is modelled in Figure 6.2 using examples provided by the courts' client service staff at interviews and focus group meetings. The resultant model also draws indirectly upon several other classification systems of work-related stressors (Cooper & Marshall, 1976 cited in O'Driscoll, Brough & Kalliath 2009, p. 238; Johnson, 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Faragher, Cooper & Cartwright, 2004; Leka & Cox, 2010).

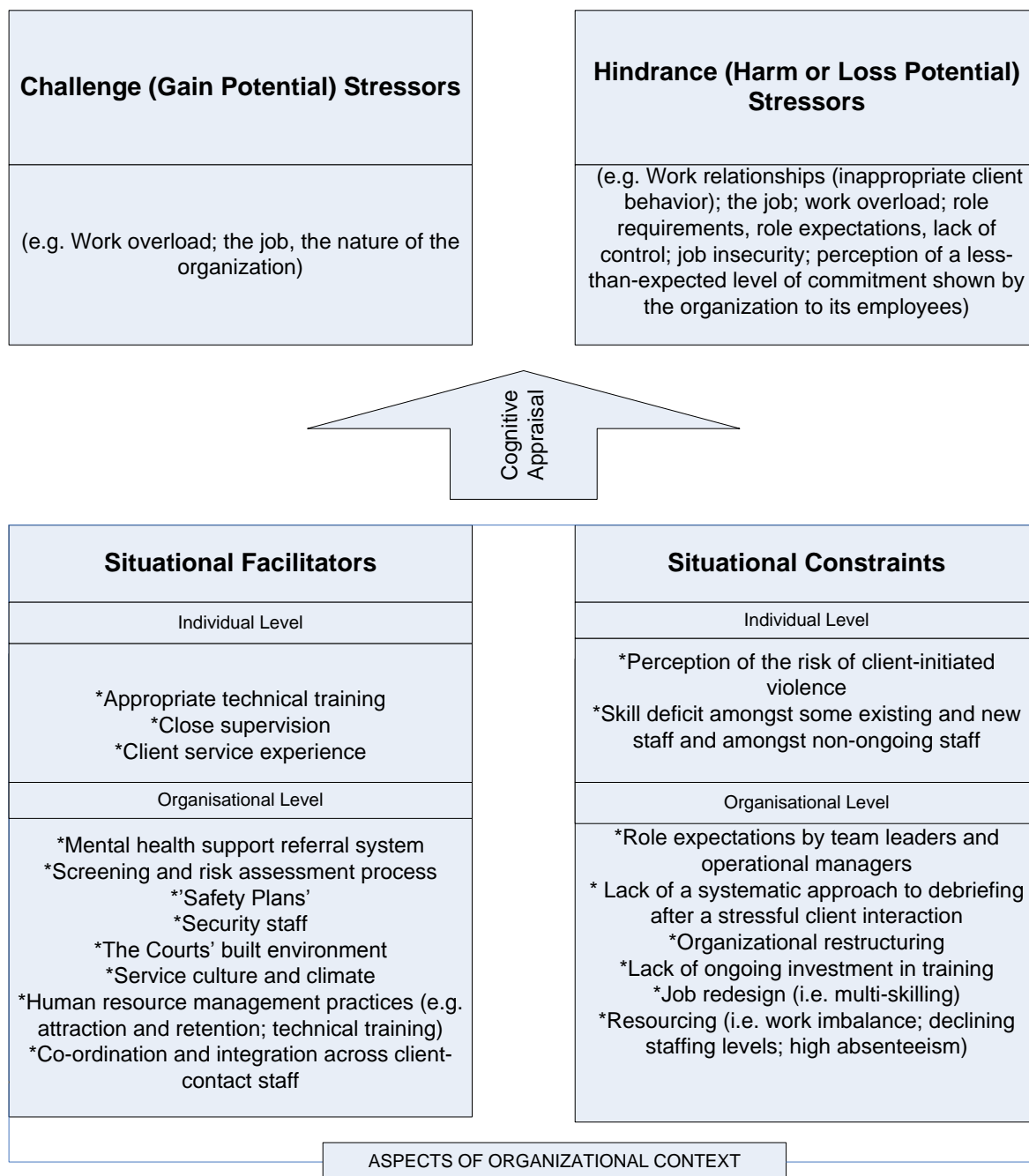


Figure 6.2 Situational Factors and the Challenge-Hindrance Model of Occupational Stress

An assumption underlying the model in Figure 6.2 is that client service staff appraise the various situational factors they identify at interview and in focus group meetings differently (Lazarus & Folkman, 1994; Motowidlo, 1996). Figure 6.2 also assumes that the outcome of this appraisal process will be that some of these situational factors will be perceived as challenge-related stressors whilst others will be perceived as hindrance-related stressors, and some may be perceived as both (e.g. work overload) (Webster, Beehr & Love, 2011; Widmer, Semmer, Kalin, Jacobshagen & Meier, 2012).

Summary

Three types of situational factors reported in interview and focus group transcripts presented in Subsection 5.3 stand out from the other comments. The first is the inappropriate behaviour displayed by some of the courts' clients and the prevailing culture of tolerance of this type of behaviour. The second is the range of different situational factors, such as resource constraints, absenteeism, organizational change and job insecurity that are reported to constrain the service quality of some client service staff. The third is the less-than-expected level of commitment displayed by the courts towards their client service workforce that is perceived by some staff to constrain their motivation and their work performance. An example of this perceived lack of organizational commitment between the courts and its client service workforce given in interview transcripts is the lack of follow up training for experienced client service staff following the conclusion of the organization-wide 'Integrated Client Service Development Program'.

The next section analyses this study's findings relating to the work-related stressors that the courts' client service staff reported they encountered in comparison to what is reported in the literature about these types of work-related stressors in other types of service organization. The review of research literature on work-related stress in this section is an essential part of the analysis and interpretation of the study's results that led to this core theme emerging from the qualitative data.

6.3 Client Service and Work-related Stress in the Courts

This section presents the research evidence from Chapter 5 along with the relevant research literature on work-related stress in three Subsections dealing with three particular types of stressors: dysfunctional client behaviour, difficult work environmental factors, and a less-than-expected level of commitment shown by the courts to their client service workforce.

6.3.1 Client Behaviour and Work-related Stress

A small sample of the several hundred comments made in interview and focus group transcripts about the inappropriate behaviour of some clients and their support persons, including their family law solicitors, is presented in Subsection 5.3.1. Some client service staff spoke about how some of their colleagues had adopted a general attitude of not showing respect for clients who did not show them respect. Some client service staff explained that a contributing factor to this type of general attitude was the perception that uncivil client

behaviour was accommodated too much by some team leaders and managers with the result that some client service staff thought that they had to do something about it themselves. Some client service staff stated that they felt unsupported when they ‘stood up’ to an abusive client. Some reported that their team leaders and managers often automatically took the client’s side when there was any noticeable tension in the service exchange process, particularly if the client happened to be a family law solicitor. The client service staff perceived this situation to be disempowering.

The evidence presented in Subsection 5.3.1 indicates that some client service team leaders and managers acknowledged that client service staff often had to accommodate uncivil client behaviour. However, in some of these discussions the view was expressed that client service staff needed to exhibit more flexibility in such situations. As illustrated in Subsection 5.3.1 there is a view that difficult clients are an accepted part of the service context. Consequently, the way that a difficult client is handled by a client service staff member is the factor that determines whether the service exchange process is perceived by the client to be satisfactory or not. This is particularly the case where, due to the attitude and actions of the service providers, any tension in the service exchange process is exacerbated to the point that a more senior client service staff member or a security staff member has to become involved.

As also indicated in the evidence presented in Subsection 5.3.1 Family Consultants and Registrars acknowledge that client service staff occasionally tend to ‘push back’ a bit with difficult clients. They state that the client service staff are often not treated appropriately by their clients because they are not seen as ‘persons of authority’, and that the way the staff are treated sometimes adversely affected their sense of social identity (Hogg & Terry, 2001). Registrars and, to a lesser extent, Family Consultants indicated that they could impose sanctions, such as terminating the service exchange process, when a client or their support person(s) acted inappropriately. However, a client service staff member could only step away from the service exchange process by getting someone more senior to take over the process. This type of situation was also seen as disempowering by some client service staff.

Two fields of study covered in the literature reviewed in Subsection 2.2.1 are relevant to the types of situations relating to inappropriate client behaviour that were reported by the courts’ client contact staff. The first is research on workplace/occupational violence (Bowie,

2002; Privitera & Arnetz, 2011) and the second is service industry research that focuses on dysfunctional client behaviour (Fish et al., 2010).

The research literature on workplace violence defines consumer-related violence as aggressive acts by clients against staff of a service organization (Bowie, 2002, Chappell, 2008). Research into workplace violence in mental health and general healthcare settings found that while workplace violence is known to be prevalent in these service settings it is also thought to be vastly under-reported (Privitera & Arnetz, 2011). This research is consistent with the evidence presented in Subsection 5.1.3 where client service staff indicated that a degree of inappropriate client behaviour is tolerated in the courts, where managers may favour clients over staff when a dispute arises, and where some staff have to be encouraged to lodge incident reports about adverse client behaviour when it is accepted as the norm. The types of situations reported by the client service staff are also consistent with an organizational culture where client contract staff report that they are at risk of becoming desensitized to uncivil client behaviour simply because it is such a common occurrence (Example 5-32).

The workplace client-initiated violence research literature indicates that there is a continuum of workplace violence ranging from verbal abuse to overt physical violence and even homicide (Mayhew, 2002; Mayhew & Chappell, 2007; Mayhew & McCarthy, 2005). While acts of physical violence may be a rare occurrence in the family law courts we know from the courts' history that one Family Court judge and one judge's family member have been killed by aggrieved family court litigants (Family Court of Australia, 2004c). Client-initiated violence is defined as one of four main categories of workplace violence and includes vicarious trauma that arises from service employees being exposed over a prolonged period to those who are experiencing distress (Bowie, 2002; Devilly, Wright & Varker, 2009; Mayhew & Chappell, 2007; Nelson & Tonks, 2004; Wassell, 2009). Client/customer aggression can be caused by many individual factors relating to the demographic characteristics of the client/customer, their health and mental state, as well as characteristics associated with the service exchange process and the servicescape (Chappell, 2008). Some of the courts' clients were reported to suffer life-event stress (Aldwin, 2007) associated with them being involved in a contested divorce that could sometimes be compounded by family violence, substance abuse or mental illness (Bryant, 2008; 2009). As one Family Consultant

put it: “*when was the last time I had a case that did not involve family violence*” (Example 5-32).

Because of the lack of emotional intensity in most of their client service interactions vicarious trauma did not appear to be something that the courts’ client service staff were often likely to experience (Hartel, Gough & Hartel, 2008). However, several Family Consultants raised it as a risk that they thought they faced and they expressed the concern about the potential impact upon client service staff who they thought were not well enough equipped to deal with it (Example 5-37).

The workplace violence research literature presented in Subsection 2.2.1 suggests that workplace violence has a range of adverse workforce outcomes, such as staff having a lower threshold at which any form of inappropriate workplace behaviour could have a severe impact (Mayhew & McCarthy, 2005), physical and psychological strain and negative emotions at work (Kessler, Spector, Chang & Parr, 2008; Spector, Coulter, Stockwell & Matz, 2007), lessened job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Leather, Lawrence, Beale & Cox, 1998), emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Kalliath, O’Driscoll & Gillespie, 1998), and staff turnover intentions (Chapman, Styles, Perry & Combs, 2010).

Some industry research literature focuses on dysfunctional customer behaviour. However, there appears to be little agreement in the literature about how dysfunctional behaviour should be defined, what facets of this behaviour should be studied, or how it should be studied (Fish et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the literature does provide some useful insights into how and why managers should protect their service employees from dysfunctional customers (Gong, Yi & Choi, 2013; Harris & Reynolds, 2003). Protecting service employees from dysfunctional clients/customers is important because dysfunctional customer behaviour is found to be a drain on customer service employees emotionally and causes emotional exhaustion that is negatively related to job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment and turnover intention (Poddar & Madupalli, 2012). One study found that dysfunctional customer behaviour, even in its mildest form, could be stressful when the victim was not entitled to respond (Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005). This is consistent with the tendency of some of the courts’ client service staff to ‘push back’ a bit when treated inappropriately by a client. Another study of dysfunctional customers demonstrated that aggressive or angry customer behaviour arising from their perceptions of distributive or

outcome injustice was more likely to be targeted at the service organization, whereas anger arising from interactional or process injustice was more likely to be targeted at the service employee (McColl-Kennedy, Sparks & Nguyen, 2011). This is also consistent with some of the courts' client contact staff reporting (see Subsection 5.3.1) that angry clients are often more likely to vent their frustration at the legal system or at the courts than at them personally thus making such behaviour easier to cope with.

The literature indicates that dysfunctional customers/clients can be a source of stress for service providers in service organizations generally (Dormann & Zapf, 2004; Grandey, Dickter & Sin, 2004; Walsh, 2011) and human service organizations in particular (Dollard, Dormann, Boyd, Winefield & Winefield, 2003). Cross occupational studies of stress in the service industry found that customer service is one of the six occupations that report the worst average scores on each of the indicators comprising the ASSET work-related stress survey questionnaire (Johnson et al., 2005).

The extant literature and the comments at interview about client service and court security highlight how customer-oriented violence and dysfunctional customer behaviour can adversely affect service provider attitudes and behaviours. One of the features of the family law courts' service setting that is somewhat unusual is that many of their clients do not want the services they are being provided with, and do not want to be involved in a contested divorce proceeding that will alter their marital status, remove financial assets from their control and restrict their access to their children.

This present study argues that there is a reasonable likelihood that inappropriate client behaviour has an adverse effect on some of the courts' client service staff. However, the significance of this source of work-related stress, for a wide array of client service staff, seems to be associated with the existence of several other sources of work-related stress existing simultaneously inside of the courts.

The next subsection discusses the evidence from interview and focus group transcripts presented in Section 5.3 that indicates that situational factors inside of the courts may act to amplify the negative effects of dysfunctional clients for some client service staff. This evidence is compared with the work-related stress research literature, much of it specifically focused on the relationship between work-related stress and job performance (Jex, 1998; Rosen et al., 2010).

6.3.2 Complex Situations and Work-related Stress

This subsection discusses four specific situational factors that the courts' client service staff reported as constraints on the quality of their service. The research literature on these situational factors is also discussed. The four situational factors covered are:

1. The lack of a systematic approach to debriefing after difficult, potentially stressful service exchanges and the absence, in some court registries, of a dedicated peer support arrangement.
2. Resource constraints comprising declining staffing levels, high levels of staff absenteeism and the increasing use of non-ongoing employees for indeterminate periods.
3. A skills deficit amongst some existing and some new client service staff.
4. The stress associated with an ongoing, long-term organizational restructuring process and the simultaneous introduction of multi-skilling.

Debriefing and Peer Support

Issues associated with stressful service exchanges, critical incidents and debriefing processes were raised in almost 100 separate references in interview and focus group transcripts. Extracts are illustrated in Example 5-35 through to Example 5-37. These comments indicate that some staff thought more needed to be done by the courts to support client service staff who experienced psychological stress, through abuse or intimidation caused by a client, as part of their service role. Stressful service exchanges were reported to be a common occurrence whereas critical incidents (where a staff member is assaulted or threatened by a client and/or where the situation requires the involvement of outside personnel such as ambulance officers and/or the police) were reported to occur less frequently and to be managed satisfactorily by court personnel.

Several registry-based client service staff stated that they had experienced some form of formal debriefing with a team leader or manager after a stressful service event but that this did not occur on a regular basis when similar events like this reoccurred. Workload pressure, illustrated in Example 5-39, is cited by client service staff as one of the main reasons why registry-based staff are unable to stop their work and seek debriefing assistance from a team leader, manager or peer after a stressful service exchange at the registry counter. This means

that there is then little likelihood of client service staff being able to be debriefed by a colleague or a manager before the end of the working day. As one staff member put it: “*you just pack up your stress and frustration and take it home with you*” (CSO).

The existence of peer support arrangements mentioned by a manager (Example 5-35) in the courts’ national call centre was explored with some of the registry-based team leaders who were interviewed. Some stated that they thought this role had been absorbed into the team leader’s responsibilities. The Family Court of Australia’s *2009-10 Annual Report* states that a peer support network was in the process of being established across all of the courts’ registries and in the National Support Office “to lessen the risk of stress in the workplace” (Family Court of Australia, 2010a, p. 126). While this acknowledges the existence of work-related stress a peer support network is not the only type of response required by the courts to provide better support for client service staff stressed by dysfunctional clients and this opens up the question of what other things the courts might consider that is covered in the practice implications of this research that is discussed in Section 6.7 of this chapter.

The absence of a systematic organization-wide approach to debriefing of client service staff after a stressful service exchange was perceived to be exacerbated in some instances by the tendency of some team leaders to appear to be unsupportive of client service staff who experienced a stressful client interaction, and also by their tolerance of inappropriate client behaviour as a normal feature of the service setting. This situation is consistent with the service industry research that identifies a ‘perceived lack of support’ from supervisors or managers as a source of work-related stress (Bosoff & Mels, 1995; O’Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). This situation is also consistent with research on how work-related stress can hamper job performance (Jex, 1998; Rosen et al., 2010). It is also consistent with research on coping mechanisms that come into play in influencing how individual employees react to work-related stressors when there is an absence of organizational support (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus, 1999; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Winstanley & Whittington, 2002).

Comments by client service staff in Subsection 5.2.2 indicate that the courts appear to rely upon an external Employee Assistance Program provider as the main source of formal support and counselling for staff who experience work-related stress. This practice is consistent with the research literature on stress management interventions (Bion, Cooper &

Bond, 2009; Semmer, 2011) and the research literature on psychological debriefing (Cotton & Hart, 2003; Devilly & Cotton, 2003). The literature on psychological debriefing differs between those who advocated the benefits of psychological debriefing and those who question the significance of its impact (Deville & Cotton, 2003; Robinson & Mitchell, 1995). Nonetheless, the use of psychological debriefing is reported to have expanded over the years with many public and private sector organizations now outsourcing psychological services to private firms through an Employee Assistance Program (Deville & Cotton, 2003; Kirk & Brown, 2003).

In Subsection 5.2.2 some client service staff were critical of the exclusively self-referral nature of the courts' Employee Assistance Program, (Example 5-34) albeit that this is understood to be the norm prevailing amongst such schemes that operate across the public sector. The finding about self-referral to the Employee Assistance Program provider is consistent with the health and safety research literature that questions the extent to which individual employees should be expected to reasonably act on their own behalf in coping with work-related stress (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2011). The research literature on stress management intervention suggests that many organizations use outsourced psychological services as one of the main aspects of tertiary prevention to assist in the recovery and rehabilitation of stressed employees (Cooper et al., 2011). However, other health and safety researchers emphasize that the use of Employee Assistance Program providers, whilst desirable, should not be regarded as a sufficient condition for an organization to meet its health and safety obligations in terms of the management of the conditions generating work-related stress amongst their employees (Barrett, 2007; Cox & Griffiths, 2010).

The foregoing discussion indicates that there is evidence to support the concerns expressed by some client service staff that not enough is being done to support them in their day-to-day interactions with a difficult client group. Nonetheless, the continued presence of an Employee Assistance Program and the promise of a new peer support network would go some way towards ameliorating their concerns.

The apparent lack of support for service providers by some team leaders and managers is one of the factors that the research literature suggests could adversely influence service providers' attitudes and work-related behaviour. Another factor that can create negative affectivity amongst service providers is resource constraints and the associated

conflict that arises about workloads and workload balancing. The next subsection discusses resourcing issues associated with the client service function and how this is perceived to generate work-related stress amongst some client service staff.

Resource Constraints

Two types of resource constraints were identified by client service staff at interview and in focus group meetings: increased workloads combined with reduced staffing levels and a high level of paid unscheduled absence. These issues attracted almost 400 separate references with extracts presented in Subsection 5.3.3.

Some client service staff thought that their workloads had increased and that more was being done by fewer staff. Managers expressed frustration that staff indicated that they were unhappy and felt overworked at times but that this was not reflected in the workloads that were being handled. Staffing levels were perceived by some client service staff to be ‘dwindling away’ through cutbacks and there were thought to be an increased use being made of short-term, non-ongoing staff.

A factor complicating the declining staffing levels was a high level of staff absenteeism (Australian Public Service Commission, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013). One team leader spoke about the red light on his phone at work flashing when he arrived in the morning; this signalled that at least one staff member had called in early to report that they would not be coming to work. This meant that the team leader had fewer staff to cover the priorities for that day. Some client service staff spoke about ‘just surviving’ during these periods of high staff absenteeism. Others spoke about being frustrated at the apparent inability or unwillingness of managers to address the causes of this absenteeism. Managers spoke about staff ‘playing the system’ by putting undue stress on those who consistently had a good attendance record and about the frustration they experienced at not having the flexibility to move staff around to provide them with some relief from the more routine aspects of their work. Managers identified that staff absenteeism as highest amongst registry-based client service staff whose role is not directly linked to supporting a Registrar or a Family Consultant (like the role of a Case Coordinator) or a member of the judiciary (like the role of a Court Support Officer).

The courts reported that they had experienced staff absenteeism at a rate of between fourteen and sixteen days per annum per employee in 2008-09 (Australian Public Service

Commission, 2009). This rate of staff absenteeism was in the top quartile of the Federal public service departments and agencies that reported their staff absenteeism rates that year (Australian Public Service Commission, 2009). Although the level of staff absenteeism amongst the courts' staff had dropped to eleven and a half days per annum per employee in 2011-12 (Australian Public Service Commission 2012) it has risen to over twelve days per annum per employee in 2012-13 (Australian Public Service Commission 2013). For a workforce of the size of the family law courts this amounted to a loss of staff productivity that equated to almost thirty full-time equivalent staff during the year which denotes that absenteeism was a significant management issue for the courts.

Research on work-related stress indicates that workload imbalance is a subjective stressor that can influence job performance (Koslowsky, 1998). The research literature also indicates that the relationship between workload and job performance is complex and difficult to interpret (Darr & Johns, 2008; Johns, 2009). Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that the workload increases and resource constraints that some client service staff reported would cause some of them to temporarily withdraw through absenteeism, whereas others might lessen the level of their commitment to the courts (Fedor, Caldwell & Herold, 2006; Neves & Caetano, 2009). Workload imbalance could also lead to turnover intention, or actual turnover, if more attractive employment opportunities became available (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

The issue of workload imbalance links to the issue of skills deficit. Some existing and some new client service staff reported the lack of adequate staff training opportunities that they thought demonstrated a lowering of commitment by the courts towards its client service workforce. The issue of skills deficits is discussed in the next part of this section.

Skills Deficits

Over 300 separate references about issues associated with client service staff training and staff development were identified in interviews and focus group transcripts, a sample of which is presented in Example 5-44. The prevailing view presented in Section 5.4 is that the courts had not fulfilled their stated commitment to sustain the investment in building the skills of its client service workforce that had been promised at the conclusion of the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' that was conducted across all of the courts' nineteen registries between 2004 and 2006 (Family Law Courts, 2009). The perception

amongst the courts' client service staff of a skills deficit related not only to the extension in their service role but to the change in their role requirements and to the different role expectations arising from their team leaders and operational managers (Example 5-44).

Evidence from interviews with client service staff presented in Subsection 5.4 indicates there is wide spread dissatisfaction at the lack of ongoing, intensive client service staff training. Experienced client service staff expressed concern about the lack of any kind of follow-up or refresher program. New client service staff expressed concern about the nature of the induction training offered. Some staff stated that the training provided was too technically focused and that much of it is e-based or on-the-job rather than being provided in a dedicated, supportive environment by accredited training staff. Other staff stated that the increased use being made of non-permanent staff meant that the skill level of some registry-based staff was actually declining.

The evidence presented in Subsection 5.4 indicates that the team leaders and managers interviewed did not share the view that client service staff lacked sufficient training to perform their role. Some managers suggested that the level of training available to new staff actually exceeds what had been available in the past. An evaluation of the courts' 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' shows that it is a priority for the courts to continue to build the capability of its client service workforce on a long-term basis in order to ensure staff have the competence and confidence to deal with a range of complex situations and difficult clients (Family Law Courts, 2009).

In the 'Family Court's 2009-10 Annual Report' (Family Court of Australia, 2010a) the courts identified the training of new and existing client service staff as a future operational priority. In the 'Family Court's 2010-11 Annual Report' (Family Court of Australia, 2011) there is no reference to client service training. In the Family Court of Australia's '2011-12 Annual Report' (Family Court of Australia, 2012a) there is a reference to a new induction training package for new client service staff, but there is still no mention of any form of 'up skilling' of existing client service staff.

The identification of a skills gap as a potential source of work-related stress amongst service providers is consistent with the research on stress and job performance (Jex, 1989; Rosen et al., 2010). It is also consistent with performance theory research where researchers differentiate between levels of knowledge, skill and motivation as prime determinants of

individual job performance (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager, 1993) that translates directly into the service context (Vance, 2006). The training and development issue also relates to a wider issue about how well the courts' human resource management practices in general are valued by the courts' staff. The service industry research reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests that a service organization's human resource management practices can influence service employee attitudes and that these attitudes flow through to customer satisfaction and service organization effectiveness (Bowen, Schneider & Kim, 2000; Chaung & Liao, 2010; Liao, Toya, Lepak & Hong, 2009; Rogg, Schmidt, Shull & Schmitt, 2001).

The theme about a lack of perceived support for service providers that arises in relation to the issue about skills deficits flows through to the next subsection that examines the implications of job insecurity that some client service staff report they experience in conjunction with an organizational change and job redesign process.

Organizational Change and Job Redesign

Work to reorganize the courts' 'Integrated Judicial and Registry Service' function as part of the courts' efforts to meet budget constraints (Family Court of Australia, 2012a) was being undertaken in stages when this study commenced in late 2010. Over 300 references about coping and resistance to change were recorded in interview and focus group transcripts and an extract of these comments is provided in Subsection 5.3.2. This reorganization was reported to have another year to run before it was completed. The prolonged nature of this change process may have had something to do with the pervasive impact that this change process appears to have had on so many of the courts' client service staff who participated in interviews or focus group meetings as evidenced by the comments made in Subsection 5.3.2. Organizational change is also flagged as one of the reasons cited by team leaders and operational managers for the low level of staff morale that exists amongst the client service staff they manage (Example 5-38).

The evidence presented in Subsection 5.3.2 indicates that a number of client service staff also spoke with a high degree of cynicism about the multi-skilling initiative being implemented by the courts. Some staff stated that multi-skilling was threatening their role identity (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Others saw multi-skilling as negating the importance of staff being specialists in some aspects of the client service delivery process (Example 5-19). Team leaders and managers stated that they saw one of the main benefits of multi-skilling being the

flexibility it offered them in rostering staff and expressed frustration that some of the more experienced client service staff appeared to be resisting this change because, as they put it: *these changes have the potential to remove staff from their comfort zone* (Mgr.).

The main concerns expressed by staff in the evidence presented in Subsection 5.3.2 about the organizational and job redesign change processes were reserved for the reorganization process and the potential this process had to create job insecurity for some client service staff. Over 120 separate references were made in the interview and focus group transcripts about job insecurity. An extract of the comments made on the reorganizational process provided in Subsection 5.3.2 includes:

- A concern about procedural fairness in relation to the way that consultation about the organizational changes was being carried out.
- A perceived loss of promotional opportunity and/or the potential for job or position loss to occur.
- An anxiety felt vicariously by some staff who had been exposed to work colleagues who had experienced position loss.
- Observations about the impact of the organizational changes on the achievement of service unit performance targets.
- A tendency for staffing gaps to be filled by redeployed staff or non-permanent staff that in turn was perceived to close off opportunities for some permanent staff to act in higher positions or to delay permanent filling action.

All of the concerns associated with the courts' reorganization of the 'Integrated Judicial and Registry Service' that were identified by client service staff at interview or in focus group meetings presented in Subsection 5.3.2 are consistent with the change management literature and its treatment of resistance to change (Graetz, Rimmer, Lawrence & Smith, 2006). The change management literature suggests that the impact of perceived loss or pain due to change, the nature of the change (be it fundamental or incremental) and the way that change is introduced (be it participative or non-participative) influences how employees respond to change (Graetz et al., 2006). The change management literature also indicates that organizations that seek to achieve common or standardized change outcomes

across a decentralized organizational structure are more likely to encounter staff cynicism, scepticism, and resistance (Bommer, Rich & Rubin, 2005; Stanley, Meyer & Topolnytsky, 2005).

The change management literature also suggests that a common cause of resistance to change is the potential it holds for job loss. The literature on job insecurity suggests that this is a major source of work-related stress that can have a negative effect on employee health and wellbeing because of the higher burnout rates and increased irritation and anxiety experienced by employees (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2007). The literature on job insecurity also shows that it leads to lower job satisfaction (Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990; Probst, 2004), higher turnover intentions, and lower organizational commitment (Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989).

There appeared to be a pronounced level of disaffection amongst many of the client service staff who were interviewed and who participated in the focus group meetings about organizational change and the associated job insecurity that arose from this organizational change process.

The next subsection discusses how some of the workplace environment factors discussed above coalesces into a view about a less-than-expected level of commitment perceived to be displayed by the courts towards its client service workforce.

6.3.3 Commitment by the Courts to its Client Service Workforce

The last part of this section addresses the evidence from interview and focus group transcripts presented in Subsection 5.3 and the research literature presented in this chapter that supports the contention that a perceived less-than-expected level of commitment displayed by the courts towards their client service staff can adversely affect staff job attitudes and their work-related behaviour. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter the present study was carried out after the courts' decided to shift the approach to client service delivery, and after an organization-wide effort to build the confidence and competence of the client service workforce, at least in part, to deal with their extended client service role. The inability of the courts to sustain its intended long-term investment in the ongoing development of the client service workforce was one of the factors that client service staff identified as a source of stress.

A less-than-expected level of organizational support can be viewed using two different but related theories. One way is to view the perceived lack of commitment by the courts towards their client service staff as a source of work-related stress that has the potential to adversely affect staffs' job performance and other work-related behaviours (Donald, et al., 2005). Another way is to view this less-than-expected level of commitment by the courts towards its client service workforce in terms of the concept of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

The first interpretation has the potential to explain, at least in part, the low level of affective commitment to the courts and to co-workers that was reported by respondents of the this study's on-line survey. The second interpretation can also explain the low level of employee commitment reported by the courts' client service staff but it also provides a theoretical perspective that could help the courts to review and modify their workforce strategies for developing and sustaining the commitment, job satisfaction and engagement of its client service workforce. The research literature implies that these two theoretical perspectives are not mutually exclusive (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011).

The various situational factors discussed by client service staff in the evidence presented in Section 5.3 are interpreted to be sources of work-related stress. These factors, covering dysfunctional client behaviour and a range of complex workplace environmental factors, taken together can be viewed as providing some evidence of a less-than-expected level of commitment being displayed by the courts towards its client service workforce. To paraphrase a comment from a client service staff member participating in a small regional focus group meeting: *it is difficult to be committed to an organization if you do not think the organization is committed to you*. The specific workplace environment factors mentioned in the evidence presented in Section 5.3 that could contribute to this type of perspective are:

- The culture of tolerance for uncivil client behaviour that is perceived to be a workplace norm in many of the courts' registries.
- The perceived lack of support shown by some client service team leaders and operational managers, outside of the courts' national enquiry centre, towards client service staff who are having difficulty coping with complex service situations and/or difficult clients.

- The lack of a systematic approach being taken, outside of the courts' national enquiry centre, to providing debriefing support for client service staff who have experienced a stressful service exchange process; albeit that critical incidents appeared to be handled effectively.
- The exclusively self-referral nature of the courts' Employee Assistance Program that is perceived by some client service staff to place the primary onus of responsibility for those seeking referral for counselling for work-related stress on the shoulders of the individual staff member.
- The apparent lack of follow-up to the intensive client service skills training program conducted across the Courts' registries from 2004 to 2006 for existing client service staff.
- The perceived increasing use of non-permanent employees that some staff viewed as causing a decline in the skill levels amongst registry staff that contributes in some registries to a degree of workload imbalance.

These types of workplace factors are consistent with the findings of work-related stress research that examines the relationship between work-related stress and productivity. One study (Donald, et al., 2005) found that the perceived commitment of an organization to its employees, as rated by survey respondents, is a stronger predictor of employee productivity than respondents' rating of their own commitment to their organization. The commitment research literature also indicates that organizational commitment can have a buffering effect on the relationship between work-related stress and an employee's psychological wellbeing that in turn has a positive relationship to job satisfaction and job performance (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004, 2007; Wright, 2010; Hosie, Willemyns & Sevastos, 2012). Although the results from this research are mixed there is some support for the proposition that employees who report low affective organizational commitment are more likely to be adversely affected by work-related stress than those who report high levels of affective organizational commitment (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). The commitment research indicates that many organizations tend to ignore situations where affective organizational commitment is shown to be low amongst its workforce (Morrow, 2011). This suggests that such organizations may also ignore situations where a low level of affective commitment amongst their workforce is

due to a perception about a lack of commitment being demonstrated by the organization towards its employees.

The research literature on perceived organizational support (POS) suggests there is a close correspondence between the types of workplace environment factors reported by the courts' client service staff that were seen to constrain their service performance and the categories of situational factors associated with POS; namely supervisor support and favourable job conditions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The POS research literature suggests, amongst other things, that:

- POS is a unidirectional concept that is distinguishable from employee commitment (Hutchison, 1997; Shore & Tetick, 1991).
- An employee can develop social exchange relationships with supervisors and their organization that leads to the development of POS (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997).
- Only perception of the social exchange from the organization to their employees has a direct effect on employees' commitment to their organization (Hutchison, 1997).
- Perceived organizational support has been found to mediate perceived situational factors and affective organizational commitment (Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar & Nalakath, 2001).
- That a perception of supportive human resource management practices leads to increased POS that mediates the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003).

A meta-analysis of twenty years of POS research indicates that POS has been generally found to have a strong, positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, a moderate but positive effect on job performance, and a negative effect on intention to leave (Riggle, Edmondson & Hansen, 2009).

The significance of the POS research literature to this present study is that it points to the importance, not only of perceived supervisor support and favourable job conditions, but also to the importance of perceived fairness of organizational processes and of organizational rewards (including feeling valued at work) (Kurtessis et al., 2015; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) as factors that organizations can use to positively influence employee attitudes and

work-related behaviour. This is found to be particularly relevant where affective commitment is low amongst an organization's workforce (Morrow, 2011).

Recent POS research on boundary-spanning roles suggests that there are good reasons for managers intent on improving organizational performance and achieving better workforce outcomes to ensure that supervisor support is provided to boundary-spanning employees (Edmondson & Bayer, 2013) and to ensuring an expected level of commitment is displayed by the organization towards its employees (Dollard et al., 2003; Donald et al., 2005).

Recently research that reconceptualizes security strategies for courts highlights that the effective involvement of court staff in court security processes will be more effective if these staff are treated as 'valued assets who are an integral part of the security system' (Wallace et al., 2013, p. 7). This is consistent with a wide range of research on organizational support theory that indicates "there are various ways of conveying to employees that the organization cares about their wellbeing and values their contribution" (Kurtessis et al., 2015, p. 25). This adds further weight to the argument that perceived organizational support is critical to harnessing the efforts of court staff in helping to create a safer court environment.

6.3.4 Summary

The research literature presented in this chapter and the research evidence presented in this section of the chapter and in Chapter 5 suggests that there is some support for the view that a perceived less-than-expected level of commitment by an organization towards its employees can be viewed by staff as a stressor and that this can impact adversely on some employee's psychological wellbeing, job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. These same outcomes can also be interpreted as a result of a perceived lack of organizational support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) and the outcomes are the same.

What the research literature on work-related stress reviewed so far does not expose is the debate surrounding how organizations should handle stress management interventions where this can occur at the individual, work unit and organizational level. Given the complexity of the phenomenon of work-related stress and the numerous and different ways that an organization can intervene to reduce the exposure of their staff to multiple stressors there is no easy solution to the problem of how this situation should be handled. It is evident however that it requires sustained and long-term investment possibly at multiple levels. However,

there is no agreement in the research literature about what level of intervention is the most effective in any given situation (Biron, Cooper & Bond, 2009; Semmer, 2011).

The evidence presented clearly indicates that low status, non-professional front-line client service staff who take on an extended service role that involves them in dealing with a difficult client group in a complex service situation requires their service organization to provide sustained and systematic support to enable them to operate effectively in their role as boundary spanners contributing to existing court security processes in a way that helps create a safer court environment.

6.4 Study Findings

This section presents this study's five key findings. Each of these findings is directly related to the study's six research propositions presented at the beginning of this chapter.

The first key finding is that the family law courts' conscious service orientation and service culture led to a fundamentally shift in the delivery of client services to better support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients at risk of family violence whilst at court. The evidence presented in Section 5.1 from five different sources supports the view that the family law courts' service orientation and service culture led to a fundamental shift in the delivery of client services. The aim of this change was to enable the courts' client service staff, along with other client contact staff, to be active in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients. This study finding extends what is currently known about the family law courts and their user community. It also extends what is known generally about the relationship between a court's client service function and a court's security processes.

The second key study finding is that the courts made innovative use of their boundary tier in trying to create a safer court environment for the courts' vulnerable clients. The evidence presented in Chapter 5 indicates that the courts deliberately extended the role of their client service staff (and other client contact staff). This role extension involved the referral of clients with special needs to a network of external support agencies and the systematic screening and risk assessment of clients who feared for their safety whilst at court. This study finding relates to the prevalence of family violence in the family law system in Australia and to the family law courts' growing legal obligation to minimize the risk of family violence from occurring amongst clients coming before the courts. This finding is

supported by the documentation reviewed in Chapter 2 and by the evidence presented in Section 5.2. The courts' 'Family Violence Strategy' (Family Court of Australia, 2004a, 2004b) and the two reforms of the Australian family law system in 2006 and 2011 have all served to amplify the courts' obligations to better support their clients' wellbeing and security concerns. This study finding fills a gap in what is currently known about how boundary spanning court staff can perform safety-related behaviour that can make a contribution to the security of vulnerable clients whilst they are at court.

The third key study finding is that work-related stressors experienced by the courts' client service staff have three sources: dysfunctional clients, a complex set of situational factors and a perceived less-than-expected level of commitment being shown by the courts towards their client service staff. This research finding relates to the research proposition about the boundary-spanning role performed by the courts' client service staff and reveals how work-related stress can be a major influence on the job attitudes and work-related behaviour of some court staff. This study finding fills a gap in what is known about the influence of work-related stress and client service staff in the family law courts.

The fourth key finding is that job satisfaction amongst the family law courts' client service staff is a stronger predictor of service quality and organizational citizenship behaviour than either of the forms of work commitment that was measured (or their affective components). This study finding draws upon the research results presented in Chapter 4 and relates to the research proposition about the way that job attitudes amongst the courts' client service staff are expected to influence their job performance. This study finding extends what is currently known about the relationship between job attitudes and job performance amongst service providers in public sector human sector service organizations like the family law courts. This finding highlights the importance of organizational behavioural research going beyond studying the relationship between job attitudes and job performance to explore the types of situational factors that influence this relationship in a specific service setting (such as in the family law courts) amongst specific occupations (such as front-line client service staff).

The fifth study finding is that the courts' approach to softening organizational boundary to enable client contact staff to work with external support agencies to better support vulnerable clients not only requires a different set of skills and role behaviours but it also

changes role expectations amongst team leaders and operational managers. This change in service delivery also generates additional work-related stress as a result of client contact staff having to deal differently with a difficult client group in a more complex service setting. This study finding relates to the research proposition that the courts' organizational support for their client service workforce needs to be sustained. Any lessening of this support can adversely affect client service staff attitudes and behaviour, client satisfaction and organizational outcomes. This study finding emphasises the importance of ensuring that nonprofessional front line client service staff who work in the courts can make an important contribution to helping create safer court environment providing they are treated as valued asset in this process.

The next part of this chapter presents three main conclusions that draw out the significance of the study's five key findings. There is also a brief discussion of the potential that exists to generalize these findings and conclusions to other court systems that current use or are attempting to use their boundary tier to help soften their physical security barrier in order to help create a safer court environment.

6.5 Study Conclusions

Figure 6.3 illustrates how this study's five main findings relate to the study's two research questions and three main conclusions.

KEY FINDINGS	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	STUDY CONCLUSIONS
<p>Key Findings (1 & 2)</p> <p>The Family law courts' conscious service orientation and service culture led the courts to respond to the prevalence of family violence amongst clients coming before the courts by extending the role of its client contact staff to include supporting the well-being and security concerns of the courts' clients that is an innovative use of its boundary tier.</p>	<p>Do the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the well-being and security concerns of the courts' clients particularly those assessed to be at risk of family violence whilst at court?</p>	<p>It is the courts' boundary spanning group that makes an effective contribution to the service and safety continuum offered by the courts to support its vulnerable clients. This continuum relies on harmony across the group and the effective boundary spanning behaviour of all members of the group.</p>
<p>Key Findings (3 & 4)</p> <p>The courts' client service staff occupy a boundary spanning role that is stressful due to a difficult client group and complex service setting. The job satisfaction amongst the courts' client service staff has a stronger association with service quality and OCB than either form of work commitment that is measured.</p>	<p>What type of factors influence the competence and confidence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary spanning role that includes them helping to support the well-being and security concerns of the courts' clients?</p>	<p>The cumulative effect of work-related stressors perceived to exist outside and inside of the family law courts has the potential to limit the contribution that client service staff are able to make to helping achieve a safer court environment for the courts' vulnerable clients.</p>
<p>Key Finding 5</p> <p>The softening of the boundary between the courts and its vulnerable clients changed role requirements and role expectations for the courts' client service staff. A perceived lack of ongoing organizational support became a source of stress and potential hindrance to effective performance for some of these staff.</p>	<p>What type of factors influence the competence and confidence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary spanning role that includes them helping to support the well-being and security concerns of the courts' clients?</p>	<p>The courts' decision to involve all client contact staff (including client service staff) in supporting the well-being and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients works as long as these staff are treated as 'valued assets' contributing to improved court security processes.</p>

Figure 6.3 Study Findings, Research Questions and Study Conclusions

The first conclusion illustrated in Figure 6.3 draws directly from the first two of this study's five key findings summarized in Section 6.4. These findings relate to the family law courts' service orientation and service culture and to the prevalence of family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts. Section 6.1 demonstrated that the family law courts' service orientation, service culture and the family violence amongst the clients coming before the courts led to the courts' decision to extend the service role of the courts'

client contact staff by involving them in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients. The first of this study's three main conclusions is that it is the whole of the courts' boundary-spanning group, comprising all of the courts' client contact staff, that matters most in relation to the courts achieving their goal of providing more effective support for the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients. However, it is acknowledged that some members of the courts' client contact staff may make a more significant contribution to the goal of supporting the courts' vulnerable clients than is made by others members of this boundary-spanning group. In addition, this study concludes that the effectiveness of this boundary-spanning group depends upon harmony being maintained across the group and upon all of its members having the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities and motivation to undertake their boundary-spanning role. This entails group members being able to handle the referral of clients with special needs to a network of external support agencies and being able to undertake the screening and risk assessment of clients who fear for their safety whilst at court. The courts' client contact staff also need to be prepared to develop a 'Safety Plan' for clients who fear for their safety whilst at court. The 'Safety Plan' is an overarching strategy that helps mitigate the risk of family violence from occurring whilst vulnerable clients are at court by ensuring the courts security facilities are used to best effect in providing clients with appropriate safety arrangements.

This study's second main conclusion draws directly from the study's third and fourth key findings summarized in Section 6.4. These findings relate to how the courts' client service staff, along with other court client contact staff, occupy a boundary role that involves them interacting with a difficult client group and encountering complex service situations often out of sight of their supervisors and their managers and often without adequate psychological support from the organization, their managers, and their supervisors. The stress arising from the boundary-spanning nature of the role performed by the courts' client service staff is directly associated with them having to deal with dysfunctional clients, complex workplace environmental factors and a perceived less-than-expected level of commitment from the courts towards their client service workforce. All of these factors help to explain the low level of commitment recorded by the courts' client service staff to the courts and to their co-workers that was discussed in Chapter 4. The research literature presented in Chapter 6 supports the contention that these types of stressors either individually or in combination have the potential to adversely influence the relationship that exists

between job attitudes and job performance amongst service providers who work at the boundary of their service organizations.

This study's third main conclusion is that the softening of the boundary between the courts and its vulnerable clients not only changed the role requirements and role expectations of boundary spanners but also changed the boundary spanners' behavioural requirements. This related to them being required to refer clients with special needs to external support agencies and to screening, risk assessment and safety planning for clients who feared for their safety whilst at court. The difficult nature of the client group, the complexity of the service setting and staff perceptions about less-than-expected level of support from the courts for their extended service role led some client service staff to experiencing work-related stress. The present study concludes that the courts' decision to involve all client contact staff (including their client service staff) in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients works as long as all client contact staff are treated as valued assets contributing to the courts security processes.

The next section of this chapter looks at the implications of these three main conclusions for existing theory as it relates to the relationship between client service, court security and work-related stress in the family law courts.

6.6 Implications for Theory

Figure 6.3 provides a slightly modified version of the theoretical framework for the present study that was first introduced in Figure 2.3 of Chapter 2. Two main modifications have been made to the framework as a result of the present study's findings and conclusions:

1. Work-related stressors arising from sources outside and inside of the courts have been identified as factors that directly influence the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff and indirectly influence their other work-related behaviours; both of which have the potential to influence their service performance and OCB.
2. A visual representation of the 'softening of the barrier' between the courts and their clients has been added. This reflects the extended boundary spanning role of client contact staff referring clients with special needs to external support agencies and their screening and assessment of clients to identify those at risk of family violence whilst at court.

Work-related stress is perceived to flow through the job attitudes of the courts' client service staff to their perceived service quality and their OCB and to their other work-related behaviours that in turn have the potential to adversely impact on client satisfaction. The expanded boundary spanning role performed by the courts' client contact staff involves them providing a more supportive environment for the courts' clients. The effectiveness of the efforts of the courts' client contact staff to 'soften the barrier' and increase client satisfaction about service and safety relies, at least in part, on how well the courts support these client contact staff in coping with the external and internal stressors that they face on a daily basis.

The new insights gained from this study's three main conclusions relates to what is currently known about the way that the boundary tier in the family law courts is used to help support the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients. The reconceptualising of court security processes to emphasise the importance of psychological and well as physical dimensions of court security draws attention to the way that the courts manage the relationship with their staff that are involved in spanning the boundary between the courts, external service providers and vulnerable clients. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 6.4.

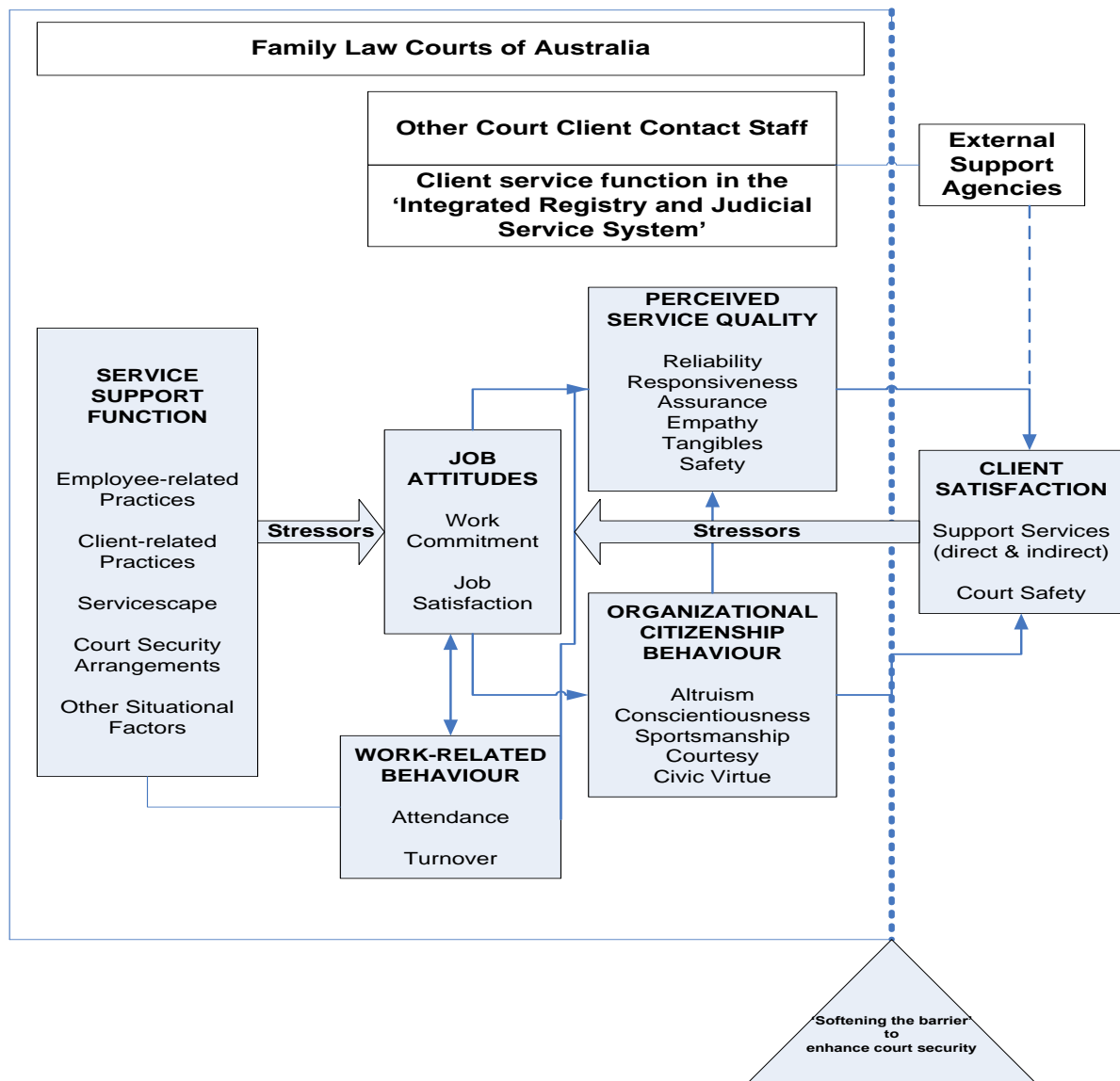


Figure 6.4 Modified Theoretical Framework

In Figure 6.4 the courts’ service support function is identified as a source of psychosocial stressors. These stressors relate in particular to employee-related practices, client-related practices and other situational factors. They represent the intra-organizational stressors reported by the courts’ client service staff that were seen to either challenge or hinder their service performance that was illustrated in detail in Figure 6.2 of this chapter. Figure 6.4 also identifies that the courts’ clients are a stressor for some client service staff and that dysfunctional clients have the potential to negatively influence the perceived service quality and the OCB of some client service staff that in turn can negatively influence client satisfaction with the service provided.

The expanded boundary spanning role of the courts' client contact staff is an integral feature of the courts' support services that along with the network of external support agencies is designed to increase the psychological safety of vulnerable clients. This boundary spanning role with its emphasis on service referral, screening and risk assessment and safety planning goes well beyond the traditional service-related boundary spanning activities such as managing first impressions, getting and giving information and making assessments that influence later stages of the service exchange process. Boundary spanning by the courts' client contact staff helps to make the courts' judicial processes more accessible and equitable as well as helping to ensure the safety of vulnerable court clients.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study makes five separate but related contributions to knowledge about client service and court safety. This study:

1. Adds to existing research on court safety in Australia and elsewhere by demonstrating how the boundary-spanning behaviour of the courts' client contact staff can contribute to the psychological safety of court clients who have been identified as having special needs or to be at risk of family violence whilst at court.
2. Extends existing theory on boundary-spanning amongst service employees to the family law courts, particularly in relation to how the boundary-spanning roles of the courts' client contact staff exposes them to range of work-related stressors arising from dealing with a difficult client group and complex service situations.
3. Extends existing research on work-related stress in public sector human service organizations by using transactional stress theory to interpret how the family law courts' client service staff perceive work-related stressors outside and inside of the courts that are perceived to hinder and/or challenge their service performance.s
4. Extends existing organizational behavioural and service industry research by establishing the strength of the relationship that exists between the job attitudes and job performance of the courts' client service staff.
5. Extends existing service industry research by using SERVQUAL in a modified form to enable service providers working in shop fronts and in a centralized call centre to self-rate their perceived service quality.

Figure 6.1 of this chapter presents the relationship between each of the six research propositions underlying this study and the extant research literature. Figure 6.1 indicates that gaps do exist in the extant research on client service and court security. These gaps are partially addressed by the present study. In particular, the present study contributes to what is known about the family law courts in Australia as a unique form of public sector human service organization. The study also contributes to existing knowledge about the courts and the public by adding to the limited research that has been undertaken into the role performed by low status non-professional front-line court support staff who have a direct role in helping clients to feel safer whilst at court. This study also adds to the limited research on workforce management issues associated with court staff working in at the boundary between the courts and their clients.

Each of the five contributions to knowledge identified in Section 6.1 is important. However, three make a particularly important contribution to knowledge about court administration where boundary spanners work across fragmented or fuzzy boundaries involving multiple service providers supporting vulnerable clients. The first is to highlight the importance of the whole of the boundary spanning group in making an effective contribution to the service and safety continuum offered by the courts to support its vulnerable clients. The second is to highlight the relationship that exists between court support services and court security in the family law courts and how this relationship can be influenced by the presence of work-related stressors. The third is to highlight how extending a boundary spanner's service role requirements not only changes the skill mix and the role expectations but, given the likelihood of stress arising from these changes, this type of change requires sustained support for these staff on the part of the service organization. These contributions add to existing research on court security by emphasising the importance of the human dimension of court security present in the role played by front-line client support staff in the family law courts. The family law courts have gained benefits by using their front-line client service staff to help 'soften the barrier' established by a court's physical security thereby helping to create a safer court (from a psychological perspective) particularly for clients who have special needs or fear for their safety whilst at court. Other courts may gain benefits from similar arrangements in relation to extending the role of their court support staff in relation to existing court security processes.

The present study highlights that the change in the boundary spanning role undertaken by the courts' contact staff is an integral feature of the services provided by the courts to support vulnerable clients and constitutes a shift in the courts' security strategy in general terms not just in strengthening its family violence strategy. This type of change has significant implications for both policy and practice.

6.7 Implications for Policy and Practice

The family law courts appear to have fulfilled their formal obligations to their client service workforce by providing them with a secure, well-functioning servicescape, with adequate induction training, supervision and management, and with terms and conditions of employment that are very competitive in relation to those offered by the State and Territorial court systems. However, a shortfall appears to exist in a less-than-expected level of perceived organizational support being provided by the courts to their client service workforce over time.

Many of the courts' client service staff who were interviewed and who participated in focus groups as well as many of their supervisors and managers acknowledged that the coordination and integration amongst the courts' boundary spanning group worked reasonably well despite there being physical, functional and status differences between different group members. However, coordination and integration of the courts' boundary group has been highlighted to be critical to how well this group supports clients' wellbeing and security concerns. This should prompt the courts to reappraise the effectiveness of existing coordination and integration mechanisms across boundary spanning groups in each of the courts' registry given the differences in operational practices that were noted to exist in things like security planning.

The lack of follow up of the 'Integrated Client Service Development Program' was flagged by many client service staff as being indicative of the perceived lack of organizational support. However, there were other perceived shortfalls in the courts' human resource management practices. The specific human resource management practices that appear to warrant attention by the courts include the predominantly self-referral nature of the courts' Employee Assistance Program and the lack of a systematic approach being taken by supervisors to debriefing client service staff who experience stressful service encounters. The lack of systematic debriefing of staff after stressful service encounters suggests that

additional training may be required for team leaders and operational managers around the sources and symptoms of work-related stress, and the role of critical incident debriefing. It may also require an evaluation of the effectiveness of the courts' Employee Assistance Program and the feasibility of introducing management-referral as well as self-referral.

As discussed previously many of the psychosocial stressors identified by the client service staff are features of the courts' service support function. The research literature on stress management intervention touched on at the end of the Chapter 5 suggests that changing the workplace environment to protect staff from the exposure to work-related stressors is neither the only choice for improving the occupational health and safety nor necessarily the most effective solution, as changes at the work unit level and at the individual level may also be required. The complexity of the interrelationship between work-related stress, job attitudes and job performance may challenges the courts. However, stress management intervention clearly needs to be addressed in order to enable the client contact staff to optimize their efforts to support the courts' vulnerable clients. The courts could draws from the extant research literature in this area as well as draw assistance from Comcare to identify the most appropriate strategy for staff working in the 'Integrated Judicial and Registry Service'.

The final practice implication of the present study's key findings and main conclusions relates to the combined challenge of court support staff working across organizational boundaries with a difficult client group in complex service situations. The workforce management challenges of this service setting include the demographic of the courts' client service workforce, the difficulties of sustaining knowledge, skill and motivation across a large and decentralized low status, non-professional workforce and the perceived lack of supervisory experience amongst some of the courts' team leaders and operational managers. Nonetheless, if the courts are to achieve the benefits of its innovative use of the boundary tier in court security processes a sustained higher level of investment and level of support appears to be needed for its client service workforce to enable them to fulfil their extended service role.

6.8 Implications for Methodology

The use of SERVQUAL in the present study for conceptualizing and measuring perceived service quality may be regarded in itself as unexceptional. The use of

SERVQUAL for allowing service providers to self-rating their perceived service quality may also be regarded as unremarkable. However the use of SERVQUAL in this way in a public sector human service organization with service providers working in nineteen different registries and in a moderately sized centralized call centre has made a contribution to the service industry research literature. SERVQUAL was shown to provide reasonably reliable survey results in this unique service setting albeit with the delimitations associated with common methods bias and with the limitations of SERVQUAL as a framework for conceptualizing and measuring service quality.

The modified survey instrument used in the on-line survey of the courts' client service staff (Appendix J) provides a potentially useful contribution to future research on service providers in other public sector human service organizations where access to supervisory, or peer ratings of performance or more objective performance data is not readily available.

The next section addresses the relative strengths and the perceived delimitations and limitations of the approach taken to design and implement the present study. Some directions for future research on the relationship between court support services, court security and work-related stress that have the potential to add value to what is currently known about client services and court security in courts in Australia and elsewhere are suggested.

6.9 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This section has three parts. The first part is a restatement of the relative strengths of the design and implementation of this study that recaps on Section 3.1 of Chapter 3. The second part is a brief summary of the delimitations and limitations associated with the design and implementation of this study that have already been identified in other chapters of this study report. The third part covers some suggestions about directions for future research into the relationship between court support services and court security inside and outside of the family law courts.

Relative Strengths

There are a number of strengths in the design and in the implementation of this study that are worth restating at this point. These include:

- The fact that this study was comprehensively piloted in a commercially-oriented public sector service organization in the ACT Public Service before the qualitative

data collection protocols and survey questionnaire were used in the family law courts.

- Focus groups were used to tailor the survey questions for the service setting in the family law courts and the on-line version of the survey questionnaire was also piloted in the courts before use.
- This study's mixed research methods design had the advantage of enabling the study to look beyond the relationship between the job attitudes and job performance of the courts' client service staff in order to explore the types of factors, other than job attitudes, that were perceived to influence their service performance.
- The study's survey of the courts' client service staff achieved a very strong final response rate and this supports the argument put forward in Chapter 4 that the survey results could be generalized to the whole of the courts' client service function. This was important given that the unit of analysis was the individual client service employee working in the courts 'Integrated Judicial and Registry Service'.
- A range of complementary qualitative research methods were used with each research method making its own contribution to the overall trustworthiness of results of the qualitative strand of the study.
- The qualitative strand of the present study was important in not only identifying the emergent theme of work-related stress but in providing the main basis for answering both of the study's research questions. In particular, the qualitative data was strengthened by the use of a cross section of client contact staff that provided different views on the issues of client service and court security from a service provider's perspective.
- The use of a vertical slice of team leaders, operational managers and all of the Regional Registry Managers also provided a range of different views on the issues of client service and court security from a both a service provider and managerial perspective.
- The use of document review and non-participant observations added further depth and breadth to the research results arising from the qualitative strand of this study.

- The timing of this study provided an ideal opportunity to explore the relationship that exists between client service and court security in the family law courts where a hiatus was found to have emerged in the nature and level of ongoing organizational support for client service staff involved in a fundamental shift in approach taken by the courts' to address its growing concern for its vulnerable clients.

The next part of this section summarizes the delimitations and limitations relating to the design and implementation of the present study.

Delimitations and Limitations

The introduction to the study report included a discussion of the delimitations of the study's scope, the key assumptions used that were additional to those associated with the definition of key terms presented in the Introduction and throughout other chapters of the report. The description and analysis of the study's methodology and research methods included a discussion of the delimitations associated with the study's design, particularly the perceived delimitation associated with the use of a parallel rather than a sequential mixed research methods design. It also included a discussion of the delimitations and limitations associated with the qualitative strand and the delimitations associated with this study's approach to survey research.

The implications of these delimitations and limitations are acknowledged but they are not seen to detract from the significance of the study's findings and conclusions, some of which have limited generalization beyond the family law courts. However, it is also recognized that the study context may also act to narrow the scope for such generalization.

Directions for Future Research

The features that are seen to distinguish this study from previous research are the study's context, its vantage point and the connection drawn between client service, work-related stress and court security. Each of these features is discussed to suggest some possible directions for future research into the relevance of court support services for court security in and beyond the family law courts.

In terms of context, the family law courts have been the setting for various types of research that includes reviews of the implications of legislative reform in relation to the family law system in Australia, innovation in legislative and administrative practices in the

Family Law Courts and a recent chronology of the historical origins of the Family Court of Australia. However, the family law courts and other court systems in Australia do not seem to have attracted much organizational behavioural research interest. For example, none of the numerous commitment research studies that were reviewed used the courts as a research context. However, these studies do cover other types of public sector service organizations so an opportunity exists for courts in general to figure more prominently in future organizational behavioural research, particularly given the significant public investment in courts and the recent shift in courts towards a more client-service orientation as well as the impact that information technology has had on court processes.

The other aspect of context in the present study that points towards further research relates to public sector human service organizations rely on multiple service organizations and fuzzy organizational boundaries in the provision of services to their clients. From the perspective of low status, non-professional client service staff this service context has highlighted the impact of work-related stress that arises both inside and outside of the service organization. It has also highlighted how expanding the boundary spanning role requirements not only changes the skill requirements but also the role expectations placed upon service providers. There is a need for additional research into the way that organizations support boundary spanners in this type of complex service situation. The value of such research would relate to reassessing the importance of the employment relationship in supporting the psychological wellbeing of low status, non-professional front line client service staff in the courts and well as whether professional court support staff have different training and support requirements as suggested by the extant literature.

In terms of vantage point this study only focused on one component of the family law courts' boundary group, specifically the role played by the courts' client service staff, but it is clear that work-related stress was being experienced right across the courts' boundary spanning group. It became apparent that there is an opportunity to focus further work-related stress research in the courts on professional client contact staff either in the family law courts or in other court systems. One reason for this would be the higher level of emotional impact that professional court staff are perceived to experience in their dealings with difficult clients. This has been a feature examined in other organizational behavioural research in public sector service organizations such as healthcare, custodial services and the police force. Research on job attitudes, work-related stress and job performance suggests that professionals

in public sector service roles are more at risk of experiencing vicarious trauma and emotional exhaustion that can have a deleterious effect on their service responsibilities as well as their physical and psychological wellbeing.

Finally this study has drawn an important connection between client service, court security and workplace safety in the form of work-related stress. Broadening the conceptualization of court security by going beyond the physical aspects of the court environment to the psychological dimensions highlights the gap that exists in the research about boundary spanners in courts in general and the family law courts in particular. There is merit in further research into this relationship in other court systems, particularly in relation to boundary spanning behaviour of court staff who provide support to vulnerable clients including those with ‘gate keeper’ roles working with external support agencies. In particular such research could focus on work-related stressors that may operate to limit the potential effectiveness of client contact staff in their role as boundary spanners in maintaining a safe court environment. There is also merit in future research adopting a multilevel perspective to work-related stress and stress management intervention that would permit work-related stress to be examined at an individual, work unit and organizational level.

This section makes some final remarks about the contributions that this study makes to the national Court Safety Project.

6.10 Final Remarks

As part of the introduction to this study report Subsection 1.1 discusses how this study fits into the national Court Safety Project. Chapter 1 makes it clear that the present study is a legitimate research project in its own right but Chapter 1 also makes it clear that the present study is also required to make a contribution to the research aims of the national Court Safety Project. It is appropriate that this study report to conclude with some final remarks about what has been achieved in this regard.

One general way that the present study contributes to the national Court Safety Project is by fulfilling its own research aims as set out in Section 1.2 of Chapter 1 and in the form of the key findings presented in Section 6.4 and the main conclusions presented in Section 6.5 of this chapter. Another general way that the present study contributes to the Court Safety Project is through the key features of this study’s research design. These relate to the study’s context, the vantage point and the connections made between client service,

court security and work-related stress that complement the examination of court safety and security from a court user's perspective adopted by other facets of the Court Safety Project.

The national Court Safety Project aims to identify the actual and perceived safety needs of various court user communities and this present study specifically examines how the workplace health and safety needs of the courts' client service staff influence their contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients. In addition, by examining through the eyes of the courts' client service staff and other court client contact staff, how the safety needs of the courts' user community are supported by the courts the present study extends the scope of the national Court Safety Project's examination of court safety strategies and practices amongst Australian and New Zealand court systems. The present study's first main conclusion about the relevance of the courts' boundary-spanning group in creating and maintaining a safer court environment holds potential interest for all courts using or considering using their front-line support staff in this way.

The national Court Safety Project aims to identify features of processes, practices and designs that contribute to safer courts. The present study looked specifically at the family law courts' decision to fundamentally shift their approach to client service. This decision involved all of the courts' client contact staff in referring clients with special needs to external support agencies and in a safety planning process for assessing and minimising the risk of violence amongst its clients and for alleviating their fears by preparing a 'Safety Plan' when needed. The present study also draws attention to the types of workplace environment factors existing outside and inside of the courts that are perceived to either challenge or hinder the effectiveness of the courts' client service staff in supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' vulnerable clients. These findings led to the present study's second main conclusion about how work-related stress influenced the relationship that was found to exist between client service and court security in the family law courts.

The national Court Safety Project aims to measure the impact of changes in court processes, practices and designs on the safety of court environments and developing best practice guidelines for court administrators. The present study demonstrates that the courts' decision to involve all of its client contact staff in referring clients with special needs to a network of external support agencies and in identifying clients at risk of violence is effective in helping to maintain a safe court environment and could be regarded as industry 'best

practice'. However, the present study also found that the courts' efforts to enhance client security in this way may be limited if some of their client contact staff are not strongly committed to the courts and to their co-workers, if there is lack of harmony across the boundary-spanning group or if some group members do not have the requisite skills, knowledge, ability and motivation to fulfil their extended service role.

The present study highlights that 'softening the barrier' between a court and their clients by supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of vulnerable clients has the potential to enhance their access to judicial processes. The present study also demonstrates that if this is done in a sustainable manner it can also enhance the long-term effectiveness of existing court security processes as well. The present study argues that 'safety is a service' that is not only central but integral to the way that courts provide services for clients in a dynamic and often complex set of service settings.

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Appendix A

The Research Matrix

Research Question 1: Do the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients particularly those assessed to be at risk of family violence whilst at court?

Sub questions	Data needed to answer the questions	Sources of data/Who to contact	Methods of data collection	Methods of data analysis	Links to the research literature
Explore the use made of information collected by client service staff in the family law court on court users who are perceived to be at risk of family violence whilst at court	Information on the use of the <i>Safety Plan</i> including how many are prepared, who receives them and how they are used	Sample of client Service staff, team leaders, and operational managers, sample of Registrars and Family Consultants Marshall of the Family Court of Australia	Semi structured interviews	Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo	Court security research literature, research on family violence and family law in Australia
Explore how the courts' support function facilitate client service staff helping to create and sustain a safer court environment	Information about the way the courts' service orientation and safety and service culture support service performance amongst clients service staff	Documents, clients, staff and from observing court registries	Documents, interviews, focus groups, observations	Text analysis Structured non-participant observations Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo	Research on court excellence, research on court security and research on family law and family violence. Service industry & marketing research
Explore how the client service function in another Australian court system supports court users to feel safer whilst at court	Information on the operation of client support services in courts in South Australia	Rep. from SA Courts Admin. Authority	Semi structured interviews	Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo	Research on court security in Australia
Strategies that courts use to address the wellbeing and security concerns	Information on court security in the family law courts and in SA courts	Representatives from the family law courts and SA courts	Semi structured interviews	Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo	Research on court security in Australia

of court users		Annual Reports	Web research	Text analysis	
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The Research Matrix

Research Question 2: What types of factors influence the confidence and competence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary spanning behaviour that includes them helping to create and maintain a safe court environment?

Sub questions	Data needed to answer the questions	Sources of data/Who to contact	Methods of data collection	Methods of data analysis	Links to the research literature
Identify core and discretionary work-related behaviours of client service staff	Information that defines core and discretionary client service behaviours for shop front and call centre operations in the family law courts' client service function	A sample of Client Service Officers employed in the family law courts	A series of focus group meetings to be run in a sample of shop front locations (large, medium and small) and in the national call centre in Parramatta, Sydney	Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo Modification of the script items of SERVQUAL survey instrument	SERVQUAL (Malotra & Mukherjee, 2004; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2009) Service industry research on service orientation
Test the relationship between key foci of work commitment and job performance	Data that reliably measures the nature and strength of the foci of work commitment selected and that objectively measures job performance by self-rating	Client Service Officers in the family law courts	Survey instrument using tested and validated scales for work commitment and job performance	Correlation analysis using SPSS	Scale for measuring organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) Scale for measuring service quality (SERVQUAL instrument developed by Parasuraman et al.,(1988) Scale for OCB (Fields, 2002)

Test the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance	Data that reliably measures the nature and strength of global job satisfaction	Client Service Officers in the family law courts	Survey instrument using a tested and validated scale	Correlation analysis using SPSS	Scale for measuring global job satisfaction (Fields, 2002)
Identify the types of factors other than job attitudes that influence service provider behaviour in the family law courts	<p>Information on employee perceptions amongst the family law courts' client service staff about factors influencing service performance.</p> <p>Information on perceptions of those who manage the client service function in the family law courts about factors influencing service performance of the courts' client service staff.</p> <p>Information on the perceptions of those who work with the client service staff and who also support court users about factors influencing the service performance of the courts' client service staff</p>	<p>Client service staff in the family law courts</p> <p>Team leaders, operational managers and Regional Registry Managers</p> <p>Registrars and Family Consultants</p>	<p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p> <p>Semi structured interviews</p>	<p>Coding transcripts and interpretation using NVivo</p>	<p>Service industry and marketing research literature including on boundary spanning behaviours of service providers</p> <p>Organizational behavioural research literature</p> <p>Research literature on work-related violence and work-related stress</p>

Appendix B

This appendix provides a series of tables covering the demographic and organizational variables associated with the client service staff working in the Family Law Courts that responded to the survey questionnaire.

Table 1 presents data on the gender of respondents. Table 4.1 indicates that the majority of respondents (74.3 %) were female.

Table 1 Gender of Survey Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Male	49	25.7
Female	142	74.3
Total	191	100.0

Note: 3 responses were missing

Table 2 presents data on the age of respondents. Table 2 indicates that exactly half of respondents (50%) were 40 years of age or younger, that the majority of respondents were under the age of 50 (75%) but that almost a quarter of respondents (24.5%) were 51 years of age or older.

Table 2 Age of Survey Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
20 to 30	53	27.6
31 to 40	43	22.4
41 to 50	49	25.5
51 to 60	37	19.3
➤ 60	10	5.2
Total	192	100.0

Note 2 responses were missing

Table 3 presents data on survey respondents by age and gender. Table 3 indicates that more female than male respondents were 40 years of age or younger (54.2 % for female respondents compared to 38.7% for male respondents), and more male than female respondents were 51 years of age or older (30.6% for male respondents compared to 21.8% for female respondents).

Table 3 Distribution of Survey Respondents by Age and Gender

Age	Male Percent	Female Percent
20 to 30	22.4	29.7
31 to 40	16.3	24.8
41 to 50	30.6	23.3
51 to 60	24.5	17.7
>60	6.1	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4 presents data on the highest level of education attainment and the gender of the survey respondents. Table 4 indicates that overall the majority of respondents, male and female, either held a High School Leaving Certificate or a Diploma/Certificate (71.4% for male respondents and 67.7% for female respondents) and that more female than male respondents held tertiary qualifications (35.18% for female respondents compared to 28.6% for male respondents).

Table 4 Highest Level of Education by Gender of Survey Respondents

Highest level of Education	Male Percent	Female Percent
High School Leaving Certificate	44.9	30.3
Diploma/Certificate	26.5	34.5
Bachelor Degree	28.6	30.3
Master's Degree	0	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 5 presents data on the job title and the gender of the survey respondents. Table 5 indicates that there is a reasonably even distribution across all job titles by gender although more female than male respondents (51.4% for female respondents compared to 46.9% for male respondents) worked in one of the courts' 19 registries. In addition Table 5 indicates that more male than female respondents work as Team Leaders (14.2% for male respondents compared to 8.5% for female respondents) and as Court Officers (10.2% for male respondents compared to 4.9% for female respondents).

Table 5 Job Title and Gender of Survey Respondents

Current Job Title	Male Percent	Female Percent
Client Service Officer, Registry Services	36.7	45.1
Sn. Client Service Officer, Registry Services	10.2	6.3
Team Leader, Registry Services	14.2	8.5
Court Officer	10.2	4.9
Case Coordinator	4.0	10.6
Client Service Officer, National Enquiry Centre	8.2	10.6
Sn. Client Service Officer, National Enquiry Centre	4.1	1.4
Team Leader, National Enquiry Centre	2.0	0
Total	89.6	87.4
Missing and System Error	10.4	12.6
Overall Total	100.0	100.0

Note 7 responses were missing

Table 6 presents data on the years of work experience in the current job by the gender of survey respondents. Table 6 indicates that the majority of respondents had between 0 to 10 years of work experience in their current job (79.6% for male respondents and 78.2% for female respondents).

Table 6 Years of Work Experience in Current Job by Gender of Survey Respondents

Years of Work Experience in the Current Job	Male Percent	Female Percent
0 to 10	79.6	78.2
>10 years	14.3	16.2
Total	93.9	94.4
Missing and Systems Error	6.1	5.6
Overall Total	100.0	100.0

Note 8 responses were missing

Table 7 presents data on the total work experience of respondents. Table 7 indicates that the majority of respondents (38.5%) had between 0 and 10 years of work experience. Table 7 also indicates that a significant proportion of survey respondents (38%) had 21 years or more of total work experience.

Table 7 Total Work Experience of Survey Respondents

Years of Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0 to 10	72	38.5
11 to 20	44	23.5
21 to 30	43	23.0
31 to 40	19	10.2
➤ 40	9	4.8
Total	187	100.0

Note 7 responses were missing

Table 8 presents data on the employment status of respondents. Table 8 indicates that while the majority of survey respondents were permanent employees, either full-time or part-time (79%), that almost a quarter of respondents were non-ongoing (21%).

Table 8 Employment Status by Gender of Survey Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Permanent Full-time	124	66.7
Permanent Part-time	23	12.4
Non-Ongoing Full-time	28	15.0
Non-Ongoing Part-time	11	5.9
Total	186	100.0

Note 8 responses were missing

Table 9 presents data on the job classification and gender of the survey respondents. Table 9 indicates that approximately the same proportions of male and female respondents are at the entry level of APS 2 (16.3% for male respondents and 14.8% for female respondents). Table 9 also indicates that the majority of survey respondents work at the operational level of APS 3 (36.7% for male respondents and 38.0 % for female respondents), that no male respondents work as case coordinators at the APS 6 level, and that slightly more female than male respondents (6.3% for female respondents compared to 6.1% for male respondents) work at the Executive Level (EL 1 or EL 2).

Table 9 Job Classification by Gender of Survey Respondents

Job classification	Male Percent	Female Percent
APS 2	16.3	14.8
APS 3	36.7	38.0
APS 4	26.5	15.5
APS 5	6.1	15.5
APS 6	0	4.9
EL1	4.08	4.9
EL2	2.04	1.4
Total	92.0	90.1
Missing and systems Error	8.0	9.9
Overall Total	100.0	100.0

Note 5 responses were missing

Appendix C

Descriptive Statistics – Client Service Participants in Interviews and Focus Groups, the Family Law Courts

Table 1 presents data on the gender of participants. Table 1 indicates that the majority of participants (59%) were female.

Table 1 Gender of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Male	16	41
Female	23	59
Total	39	100.0

Table 2 presents data on the age of participants. Table 2 indicates that less than half of participants (38.5%) were 40 years of age or younger, that the majority of participants were under the age of 50 (66.7%) but that over a quarter of participants (33.3%) were 51 years of age or older.

Table 2 Age of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
20 to 30	7	17.9
31 to 40	8	20.5
41 to 50	11	28.2
51 to 60	11	28.2
61 to 70	2	5.1
Total	39	100.0

Table 3 presents data on survey participants by age and gender. Table 3 indicates that more female than male participants were 40 years of age or younger (14 for female participants compared to 12 for male participants), and more female than male participants were 51 years of age or older (9 for female participants compared to 4 for male participants).

Table 3 The Count of Participants by Age and Gender

Age	Male Number	Female Number
20 to 30	3	4
31 to 40	1	7
41 to 50	8	3
51 to 60	3	8
>60	1	1
Total	16	23

Table 4 presents data on the highest level of education attainment of the participants. Table 4 indicates that overall the majority of participants either held a High School Leaving Certificate or a Diploma/Certificate (73%) and that a significant percent held a tertiary qualification (27%).

Table 4 Highest Level of Education of Participants

Highest level of Education	Frequency	Percent
High School Leaving Certificate	13	35.1
Diploma/Certificate	14	37.8
Bachelor Degree	8	21.6
Master's Degree	2	5.4
Total	37	100.0

Note. 2 responses were missing

Table 5 presents data on the job title of participants. Table 5 indicates that most of the participants were client service officers working in one of the courts' registries (64.1%). In

addition Table 5 indicates that only a small percent of participants worked as Team Leaders (7.7%) and as Court Officers (7.7).

Table 5 Job Title of Participants

Current Job Title	Frequency	Percent
Client Service Officer, Registry Services	17	43.6
Sn. Client Service Officer, Registry Services	8	20.5
Court Officer	3	7.7
Case Coordinator	8	20.5
Team Leader, (Registry Services or Registry and Judicial Services)	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0

Table 6 presents data on the years of work experience in the current job amongst the participants. Table 6 indicates that overall the majority of participants, male and female, had between 0 to 10 years of work experience in their current job (76.9%).

Table 6 Years of Work Experience in Current Job of Participants

Years of Work Experience in the Current Job	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	4	10.3
1 to 2 years	2	5.1
3 to 5 years	13	33.3
6 to 10 years	11	28.2
11 to 20 years	8	20.5
21 to 30 years	1	2.6
Total	39	100.0

Table 7 presents data on the total work experience of participants. Table 7 indicates that almost a quarter of participants (20.5%) had between 0 and 10 years of work experience.

Table 7 also indicates that a significant proportion of participants (51.1%) had 21 years or more of total work experience.

Table 7 Total Work Experience of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 5 years	1	2.6
6 to 10 years	7	17.9
11 to 20 years	9	23.1
21 to 30 years	13	33.3
31 to 40 years	7	17.9
Total	39	100.0

Table 8 presents data on the employment status of participants. Table 8 indicates that while the majority of participants were permanent employees, either full-time or part-time (92.3%), that only a small percent were non-ongoing (7.8%).

Table 8 Employment Status of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Permanent Full-time	33	84.6
Permanent Part-time	3	7.7
Non-Ongoing Full-time	3	7.7
Total	39	100.0

Table 9 presents data on the job classification of the participants. Table 9 indicates that the majority of participants were at the operational level of APS 3 (48.7%) or at the APS 4 level (30.8%).

Table 9 Job Classification by Participants

Job classification	Frequency	Percent
APS 2	4	10.3
APS 3	19	48.7
APS 4	12	30.8
APS 5	3	7.7
APS 6	1	2.6
Total	39	100.0

Summary

The descriptive statistics collected from the family laws courts' client service staff who participated in interviews or focus groups indicates that they were predominantly female, that while many (38.5%) were 40 years of age or younger a substantial percent were 41 years or older (61.5%), a significant percent held tertiary qualifications (27%), most participants working in registry services, many had significant total work experience and significant work experience in their current job, the majority worked either at the APS 3 or APS 4 level (79.5%) and the majority were permanent employees (92.3%).

Appendix D

Interview Protocol for Senior Representatives of the Courts and One Other Court System

Steps in one-on-one interview process:

- On commencement introduce yourself and ask them to introduce themselves.
- Discuss the objectives of the study and what stage the data collection process is up to.
- Hand out/email the ‘Consent Form’ and explain how the signed cover is detached and returned separately from the demographical and organizational data and point out the one page description of the project. The signed ‘Consent Form’ and completed particulars information is then placed in an envelope.
- Hand out/email the ‘Complaints Procedure’ and explain its purpose.
- Explain why the discussion will be audio recorded and seek permission for this to occur and then set the recorders in motion. Take a moment to enter time and place details into the recording.
- Establish that the researcher may occasionally take notes of the discussion in order to complete a preliminary summary for the national Court Safety Project team leader.
- Start by gaining some background on the interviewee such as their role and responsibilities.
- Emphasise that the interview is a semi-structured discussion to enable the researcher to better understand the participant’s views on the role that front line client support services plays in court safety.
- Emphasise you are seeking concrete everyday work life examples that illustrate their perspective on the extent to which client service excellence contributes to client satisfaction and potentially to court safety.
- At the end of the discussion clarify again what will happen next: i.e. discussion will be transcribed and analysed and verified with them.
- Thank the participants for their contribution.

Specific Research Question to which this interview applies:

There are two research questions. The first question concerns whether the family law courts' client service staff make an effective contribution to supporting the wellbeing and security concerns of the courts' clients particularly those assessed to be at risk of family violence whilst at court? The second research question concerns the types of factors influence the confidence and competence of the family law courts' client service staff in relation to their boundary spanning behaviour that includes them helping to create and maintain a safe court environment?

General areas of questioning:

- What are the main features of the key court support services offered by their organization (a map of these features drawn from the organization's Annual Report was provided as a handout prior to the interview).
- What are the specific court support services that relate to (i) family law-related court matters (ii) client and staff feeling safer whilst at court?
- What are the key service improvements that directly or indirectly would make clients and staff feel safer whilst at court?
- What are the trends and developments in the delivery of support services?
- How do we know when a particular support service or an array of support services are effective?

Map of Support Services:

Each participant is asked to discuss the key characteristics of the support services map that was provided prior to the interview. This covers:

- The organization's service culture and climate.
- Whether and how service employee perceptions and attitudes are measured.
- Whether and how client satisfaction is measured.
- The nature of HRM support.
- Service operational management issues.
- Trends and developments in support service delivery.

- Any issues relating to trends in thinking about court security particularly how client support services support the wellbeing of clients.
- Security concerns of the partner organizations' clients.

Appendix E

Interview Protocol for One-on-One and Small Group Interviews

Steps in One-on-one and small group Process:

- On arrival introduce yourself and ask them to introduce themselves.
- Discuss the objectives of the study and the current stage of the data collection process.
- Hand out the ‘Consent Form’ and explain how the signed cover is detached and returned separately from the demographical and organizational data and point out the one page description of the project. The signed ‘Consent Form’ and completed particulars information is then placed in an envelope.
- Hand out the ‘Complaints Procedure’ and explain its purpose.
- Explain why the discussion will be audio recorded, seek permission for this to occur and then set the recorders in motion. Take a moment to enter time and place details into the recording.
- Establish that the researcher may occasionally take notes of the discussion in order to complete a preliminary summary for the national Court Safety project team leader.
- Start by gaining some background on the interviewee such as their length of service and experience in the family law courts.
- Emphasise that the interview is a semi-structured with the aim of the researcher trying to better understand views about court safety and client service and their inter-relationship.
- Emphasise that what is being sought is concrete everyday examples that illustrate the extent to which client service excellence contributes to client satisfaction and potentially to court safety.
- Remind participants that the aim of the conversation to explore the link between client service and court safety or how client support services are seen to contribute to a safer court environment?
- These themes may need to be modified depending upon the role of the participant being interviewed (client service staff, team leader, operational manager, Regional Registry Manager).

- At the end of the discussion clarify again what will happen next (the discussions will be transcribed and analysed).
- Thank the participants for their contribution.

Possible Themes:

By way of background it is noted that the family law courts' have one outcome "serving the interests of the Australian community by ensuring that families and children in need can access effective, high quality services" (Family Court of Australia, 2010).

Family Violence

- How does family violence manifest itself in the courts?
- What do participants think about the courts' safety and security policies, procedures and processes, particularly the protocol about screening and assessing clients potentially at 'risk' of violence while at court?
- Ask participants if they have any evidence that suggests that the number of incidents of family violence whilst at court is greater or lesser over the last few years?

Safety and Security at Court

- Ask participants about this statement: "The extent to which the client service function includes explicit and implicit activities that are designed to assist clients feel safer whilst at court" (Family Court of Australia, n.d.)?
 - From your perspective.
 - From the client's perspective
 - From the client service provider's perspective (in the broad)
 - Issues of coordination and integration
 - Service climate versus safety climate (are they complementary or conflicting)

Client Service

- Ask what participants think about whether the courts are managing client satisfaction in contrast to where the courts were as an organisation in 2004 when the last client satisfaction survey was last undertaken?
- Ask participants whether they think that the courts' clients get 'process fairness' (i.e. fair and equitable access for all) across all of our services?

- Ask how important the role played by client service staff is in the safety and security arrangements of the court system?
- Ask whether most client service staff seem to demonstrate an appropriate attitude and perception about safety and service issues that are conducive to the provision of high quality services – provide illustrations if possible?
- Ask what the inter-relationship and communication is between Registrars, Family Consultants, security staff and client service staff?
- Ask how the ‘continuum of service and safety operates (i.e. how effective is the integration and coordination of services)?

Skills and Experience:

Ask participants what their views are on the following issues:

- Experienced staff versus staff turnover.
- Progressive introduction of multi-skilling.
- ‘Build’ versus ‘buy’ alternatives to staffing.
- Recruitment and retention processes and issues.
- Psychological wellbeing of service staff being sustained and maintained?
- Any other related issue.

The Impact of Organizational Change

- Ask participants what the impact of the ongoing organizational change process is likely to be on commitment to the organisation, co-workers and supervisors and their job satisfaction?

Appendix F

Consent Form for Interviews and Focus Groups

I have read the Information Sheet (copy attached) relating to the study: *Client Service and Court Safety*, and understand my rights in relation to my participation in a small group interview, a focus group meeting or a one-on-one interview. I have agreed to participate on this basis and have signed this form on that basis.

A general description of the study is provided at Attachment A.

If you agree to participate could you also please take a few moments to complete the demographical and organizational details in the Attachment B? This is entirely voluntary and if you don't feel comfortable providing this information then don't.

Signed

Name

Date

Note:

This research project is covered by the Ethics Application lodged by the Court Safety Project with the University of Western Sydney. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research please use the guidelines on the sheet provided.

Attachment A

Client Service and Court Safety – Study Description

This study is being undertaken in fulfilment of a PhD in Management at the University of Canberra. Amongst other things this study seeks to explore the relationship between employee attitudes and job performance. This present study involves a case study of the client service function in the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates' Court and is part of a larger national study of court safety.

Specifically, this study looks at the client service function in the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates' Court and its role of assisting court users that includes helping them to feel safer whilst at court. This study also looks at the influence that commitment and job satisfaction have on the performance of this role. This study uses a variety of research methods that includes: a series of individual and small group interviews and focus group meetings involving client service staff, a survey of client service staff on employee attitudes about commitment, job satisfaction and job performance, interviews with a range of employees and managers in the Family Court, non-participant observation of the interactions between the courts' client service staff and court users, and an analysis of a range of documentation from the courts relating to security, client service and workforce issues.

This study involves five main phases. Phase 1 involved an extensive literature review and study design. Phase 2 involved field testing. Phase 3 involves data collection. Phase 4 involves data analysis and interpretation. Phase 5 involves the write up. Phase 1 is ongoing but has been completed from the perspective of the study design point of view. Phase 2 was undertaken in an organization with a large multi-purpose client service operation. Phase 3, and Phase 4 will be undertaken in the third and fourth quarters of 2010 and Phase 5 will commence in early 2011. This study seeks to contribute new knowledge about how service provider attitudes influence service excellence in courts in Australia. It also seeks to gain a better understanding of the types of factors perceived to influence the delivery of client services including their role of helping clients to feel safer whilst at court.

Two things make this study timely and relevant, its context and its vantage point. The majority of the research literature on the relationship between employee attitudes and job performance has either been undertaken in the private sector or if in the public sector it has not been carried out in a court. The study also examines a potentially novel approach to the courts' use of its client service staff in a proactive manner to attempt to pre-empt the level of family violence in court by identifying court users who are perceived (either by themselves or others) to be potentially at risk of violence whilst at court, and to use this information to mediate their experience of the court and its processes.

This study is being undertaken with the approval and full support of the Family Court of Australia but the study outcomes will in no way represent their views or opinions.

Attachment B

Demographical and Organizational Data (for Research Purposes Only)

Demographical Data

QUESTION	EXPLANATION	RESPONSE
Gender	1=Male; 2=Female	
Highest Level of Education	1=High School Leaving Certificate 2=Diploma or Certificate 3=Bachelor Degree 4=Masters' Degree 5=Doctorate Degree	
State/Territory	1=NSW & ACT 2=Vic. & Tas. 3=Qld. 4=SA & NT 5=NEC	

Organizational Data

QUESTION	EXPLANATION	RESPONSE
Current Job	1=Client Service Officer, Registry Services 2=Senior Client Service Officer, Registry Services 3=Court Officer 4=Case Coordinator 5=Team Leader (Registry or Registry & Judicial Services) 6=Client Service Officer National	

	<p>Enquiry Centre (NEC)</p> <p>7=Senior Client Service Officer NEC</p> <p>8=Team Leader NEC</p> <p>9=Manager NEC</p> <p>10-Registry Manager</p> <p>11=Regional Registry Manager</p> <p>12=Registrar</p> <p>13=Family Consultant</p>	
Years of Work Experience	<p>1=Less than 1</p> <p>2=1 to 2</p> <p>3=3 to 5</p> <p>4=6 to 10</p> <p>5=11 to 20</p> <p>6=21 to 30</p> <p>7=31 to 40</p> <p>8=>40 years</p>	
Years in Current Job	<p>1=Less than 1</p> <p>2=1 to 2</p> <p>3=3 to 5</p> <p>4= 6 to 10</p> <p>5=11 to 20</p> <p>6=21 to 30</p> <p>7=31 to 40</p> <p>8=>40 years</p>	
Current Employment Status	1=Permanent Full-time	

	2=Permanent Part-time 3=Non ongoing Full-time 4=Non ongoing Part-time	
Current Job Classification	1=APS 2 2=APS 3 3=APS 4 4=APS 5 5=APS 6 6=EL1 7=EL2 8=SES 1 9=SES 2	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix G

Complaints Handling Procedures

Contact Details for Information on the Study and Independent Complaint Procedures

The following study has been approved by the Committee for Ethics in Human Research, University of Western Sydney as part of the national Court Safety Project.

Project Title: Client Service and Court Safety **Project Number:** LP0882179

Researcher: Doug Jackman

As a participant or potential participant in research, you will have received written information about this study. If you have questions or problems which are not answered in the information you have been given, you should consult with the researcher or (if the researcher is a student) the research supervisor. For this study the appropriate people are:

Research Supervisor: Professor Deborah Blackman

Contact Details: Deborah.blackman@canberra.edu.au; telephone 02 6201 5076.

Researcher: Mr. Doug Jackman

Contact Details: Doug.jackman@canberra.edu.au; telephone 02 6201 5896.

If you wish to discuss with an independent person a complaint relating to: Conduct of the study; Your rights as a participant; or University policy on research involving human participants you should contact the Secretary of the University Research Committee: telephone 02 6201 2466, University of Canberra 2601.

Providing research participants with this information is a requirement of the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans, which applied to all research with human participants conducted in Australia. Further information on University of Canberra research policy is available in University of Canberra Guidelines for Responsible Practice in Research Dealing with Problems of Research Misconduct and the Committee for Ethics in Human Research Human Ethics Manual. These documents are available from the Research Office at the above address or on the University's web site at <http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/respprac.html> (Research Guidelines) and http://www.canberra.edu.au/secretariat/ethics/human_ethics/manual.html (Human Ethics Manual).

Appendix H

Focus Group Protocol

Steps in Focus Group Process:

- On arrival introduce yourself.
- Discuss the 'Information Sheet' and the 'Consent Form' and ensure that the signed 'Consent Form' is completed and put in a sealed envelope.
- Explain to participants that they do not have to reveal their name if they don't want to. They can either use their first name only or a chosen name/nickname. Explain that in the transcript each participant will not be personally identified and their responses will not be retraceable to them. Explain that the transcript will be kept confidential and under lock and key, and that only an extract of the transcript will be used for data analysis purposes.
- Explain why the discussion will be audio recorded and which procedures are in place to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Set the recorder in motion. Place the recorder in front of the participants and ask them to ensure they speak loudly and clearly so the recorder can pick them up.
- Establish that you may occasionally take notes of the discussion in order to clarify key ideas and to assist in transcribing the recorded discussion.
- Explain the role of the focus group co-facilitator.
- Encourage participants to discuss the topic with each other and not address their contribution just to the researcher. Suggest some 'ground rules' for the discussion (e.g. listen to each other; allow each person to express their view; keep the discussion about critical incidents 'within these walls').
- Start by introducing yourself and one aspect about yourself.
- Explain how a focus group differs from a 'group interview' and use the attached themes for general guidance only.

- Proceed from the general to the specific starting with the opening question – ‘what do you think is important to achieving service excellence’?
- At the end of the discussion clarify again what will happen next; there are a series of visits to other registries in September; an on-line survey of client service staff in October and a series of regional one-on-one interviews.
- Thank the participants for their contribution.

Themes

Part1

General Characteristics of Service Quality

In relation to good quality service how important to you are the following:

- The attitude and behaviour of the service provider? How would you know when you saw the right/wrong attitude being displayed by yourself or your co-workers?
- The skill, knowledge and aptitude of the service provider?
- Whether the service provider cares about their job?
- Whether the service provider is motivated to do the job right the first time?
- Whether the service provider is flexible in their approach to service provision?
- Whether your reputation and credibility with customers is important?
- How important is it to involve the customer in the service process?
- Is team work important to a good quality service outcome?

Critical Incident in Service Quality

Participants to identify examples of a critical event (good/bad) in service exchange:

- The event
- The location
- Any features of the service experience that stand out
- Time of day the event occurred
- Any special conditions associated with the event
- The general type of service activity involved
- Specific behaviours observed of client/service provider

Part 2

Examination of the 19 script items of Service Quality. A separate handout on the 19 items of SERVQUAL survey instrument is to be given out and feedback sought on additions, deletions and modifications.

Part 3

Commitment

Participants are to be asked to discuss what work-related commitment means to them. They are also asked to whom or to what are they most committed to in relation to their current job. It may be helpful to suggest that commitment can be thought of as a form of psychological bond to something related to your work. *“Commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 11).* Participants are to be asked to identify to what or to whom are they most committed at work (top 2 or 3)? Some of the possible choices to consider are:

- Family Court
- The region you work in
- Your registry you work in
- The shop front your work in
- The team you work for
- Your registry manager
- Your customers
- Your work colleagues
- Your supervisor
- Your job
- Your occupation.
- Others – please specify

Part 4

Safety and Security at Court

Acknowledge that the researcher is familiar with the *Family Court’s Family Violence Strategy 2004/05* (Family Court of Australia, 2004) and the *Safety Planning Protocol* (Family

Court of Australia, n.d.). Ask if we can discuss the role of client service staff in helping the family law courts to be a safer environment? For example:

- What does safety and security in the workplace mean from their perspective (i.e. it could be seen from an OH&S perspective and it could be seen in relation to the risk of violence perspective or both)?
- How do participants think that they contribute to their own safety and to the safety and security of their clients?
- Do participants feel that they have the skills and experience necessary to identify if a court user is potentially at risk of family violence whilst at court?
- How do participants think that the courts' safety planning process contributes to client service staff and to the courts' users feeling safer whilst at court?
- Ask what other ways does the client service function help to support court users who may be at risk of family violence whilst at court?

Safety Culture and Climate

- Management – Ask participants what they understand to be their manager's commitment to safety in relation to other organisational goals. Ask if safety is a most recurrent theme in the organisation, ask what they understand to be the commitment of senior, middle and first line managers to safety in the courts?
- Safety system – this refers to various aspects of the safety system within organizations and includes perceptions of safety policies, equipment that permits safe work systems. Accident and incident reporting would fall into this category as would systems based auditing of risk and risk mitigation planning?
- What is the attitude to the risk of violence in the courts? This includes perceptions and attitudes towards risk and safety both in regard to service providers and customers.

Part 5

Can we discuss what factors you perceive influence the quality of your service quality such as:

- Key skills and experience required of client service officers.
- The roles & responsibilities of client service staff (i.e. core and non-Core).

- Organizational change and its impact on commitment. In particular have the range of change initiatives in the Family Court of Australia that have occurred recently had any significant or lasting influence on how participants feel and think about their commitment to the courts, their co-workers, and their job? Is there any actual intent to leave the organization and if so why. Have staff left recently and to what extent is the recent organizational change a factor?
- Job Satisfaction.
 - How important is it to be satisfied with your job?
 - What aspects of the job do you find most satisfying?
 - Do you think your expectations of the job were realized after you started working?
 - Has anything happened to make you 're-evaluate' the worth of your job?
- Motivation – Intrinsic and/or Extrinsic
- The courts' human resource management policies and practices:
 - Ask how good the courts are in providing client service staff with the equipment and support they require and in providing them with an attractive and productive working environment? How good are various HR policies and practices such as recruitment, selection, induction, training (including refresher training), feedback on development and performance, reward and recognition, and equity?
- Leadership
 - How important is leadership to an effectively functioning registry?
 - What best describes the style of leadership that is evident in the registry at the present time?
 - Is the leadership from the National Support Office evident and helpful?
- Service Climate
 - Service leadership – this includes the extent to which leaders of the organisation display service-oriented behaviours to their employees (e.g. leading by example with regard to service).
 - Service vision – this includes the extent to which leaders have and espouse a vision for being a service-oriented organisation.

- Customer treatment – this includes the degree to which employees have responsibility and authority to meet customer needs
- Service training – this includes training in teamwork, problem solving, interpersonal skills that contribute to the delivery of quality services
- Service rewards – this includes the extent to which employees are recognized, rewarded and compensated to deliver quality service
- Service failure prevention – this includes the extent to which existing practices prevent service failure
- Service failure recovery – this includes the practices that function to respond effectively to customer complaints
- Service technology – this includes the courts use of technology-based systems to service customers (e.g. the law courts portal, e-filing processes).

Other Matters

- Is there anything that has not been covered from the participant's point of view about service quality that they think we need to know about?

Appendix I

Non-Participant Observation Protocol

- On arrival introduce yourself to a site representative.
- As discretely as possible sit in the waiting area and observe the shopfront/call centre for a period of approximately 45 minutes to an hour using the format attached.
- Observation is done by the researcher.
- Insert date and time on the observation sheet to be retained as a record.
- Impressions are also important about the way the spaces and facilities work to facilitate effective client service and create a safe court environment.
- Remember throughout you are attempting to see the court from the perspective of clients and members of staff. So examine all aspects of the facility from a client service and court safety perspective.
- On completion summarise the key distinguishing features.
- Summarise the notes by site for later retrieval relating these to the themes being explored.

Site Location:

Site Representative [if applicable]:

Date & Time:

<p>Features of the Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area outside of the court entrance• Entrance to building• Screening facilities inside building• Signs, notice boards and other guides to navigation• General waiting areas• Waiting areas in registry• Lifts, stairs, and escalators• Access• Registry areas• Meeting rooms• Courtroom entrances• Courtroom spaces• Any other public spaces• Other	
<p>Services provided to clients including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding valuables (e.g. prams)• Information about times and places of hearings or other activities• Information about process before, during and after matter• Advice about services available and referrals• Process and manage applications (e.g. intervention orders)• Interpreters and translations• Victim support• Disability support• Childcare• Support for indigenous persons• Counselling• Food and drinking facilities• Bathrooms and changing rooms for infants.• Other to be determined	
<p>Forms of services delivery and the extent of coverage, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-line (i.e. email)	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone • Face-to-face • Letter • Other (e.g. kiosk, videos etcetera) 	
<p>Features of the layout of the service area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A work environment that is comfortable and attractive • Resources in the work area that are visually appealing • Ways of handling excessive numbers of clients simultaneously • Quiet space for clients and professional staff to converse in • Private space for clients and professional staff to converse in • Secure client premises • Access to secure documents by the client • Ambience is appropriate for the purpose • Layout and furnishings are appropriate • Signage is clear and easy to read 	
<p>Service quality dimensions to be observed in the interaction between service providers and clients including (to the extent it can be observed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour that instils confidence in clients • Behaviour that would engender trust by clients • Consistently courteous treatment of clients • Appear to have the required knowledge to answer clients' questions • Give individual attention to clients • Appear to have clients' best interests at heart • Appear to understand the specific needs of clients • Appear to do something by a certain time • Appear to show sincere interest in solving client's problems • Appear to provide prompt services to our customers • Appear willing to help clients • Don't appear too busy to respond to clients requests 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have modern-looking equipment • Have resources in the workplace that are visually appealing • Have a work area that is comfortable and attractive. • Waiting area is comfortable & attractive 	
<p>Key Distinguishing Features – The Physical Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form and space • Light, colour, texture • Ambience • Function • Design and layout • Size • Proximity of customers to each other and to service areas • Signage 	
<p>Key Distinguishing Features – The Social Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Degree of control over the work flow • Appearance and behaviour of employees • Cues in the environment can provide indirect guidance regarding expected behaviours • Other 	
<p>Key Distinguishing Features – The Security of the environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening • Wands • No. of Guards present (static or mobile) • Guard station is observable • Cameras (CCTV) • Secure areas • Screening of employees from clients • Locked rooms for meetings • Duress alarms available • Information available on security arrangements • Doors to court on turnstile or similar • Security arrangements in the courts • Other 	

General Observations:	
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Appendix J

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Staff Member,

The Family Court of Australia has agreed to participate in a study focussed on its client service function. This study is part of a much larger, nationally funded, research project entitled *Fortress or sanctuary? Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes*. This project is being coordinated by the University of Western Sydney and involves academics and consultants from a number of different universities and firms across Australia. Partner organizations, in addition to the Family Court of Australia, include courts in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and New Zealand.

This study on the client service function will involve a PhD student from the University of Canberra collecting data from court staff through an on-line survey questionnaire on client service delivery and through a series of group and individual interviews and focus group meetings on a range of issues perceived to influence client service delivery and court safety. This student will also be visiting a number of registries and reviewing a range of literature provided by the courts on its client service function. One of the purposes of this present study is to better understand the ways in which the attitudes of client service staff influence service delivery and the extent to which this may influence how clients perceive those services particularly where family violence has been identified as an issue.

Completion of this questionnaire shouldn't take you more than about 15 minutes. The questionnaire deals predominantly with how you see client service delivery from a number of perspectives. There are two parts to the survey questionnaire. The first part asks you about what you think and feel about the Family Court of Australia, your co-workers, your job, and your performance directly and indirectly in relation to your job. The second part seeks information on some generic demographical and organizational characteristics about you as the respondent for research purposes only. This information is important to enable the researcher to determine whether these factors appear to influence your perspective so please don't leave them out. Please answer each question to the best of your ability. If there are questions that you don't want to or feel you can't answer, please leave them blank.

Through the on-line survey process, the data from your completed questionnaire, not the questionnaire itself, goes automatically into a summary database. This data will be taken as evidence of your informed consent to participate in this stage of the study. The anonymous nature of the survey ensures that your confidentiality as a survey respondent is assured.

The first part of the questionnaire uses a series of different statements that concern different aspects of how you think and feel about the Family Court of Australia, your job and your performance in your job and in relation to the work that you do. The second part of the questionnaire seeks some demographic and organizational data about the respondent.

There is a rating scale for the first part of the questionnaire that goes from 1 to 7. Please rate your answers as follows:

1=Very Strongly Disagree; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Agree; 6=Strongly Agree; 7=Very Strongly Agree

PART 1

1. Statements about Your Organisation (i.e. Family Court of Australia):

1=Very Strongly Disagree; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Neutral; 5=Agree; 6=Strongly Agree; 7=Very Strongly Agree

I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think that I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This organisation deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not leave the Family Court right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I owe a great deal to this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organisation right now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Right now staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that leaving would require a considerable personal sacrifice – another organisation may not match the overall benefits that I have here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Statements about Your Work Colleagues

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy talking about my work team with people outside of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I really feel as if this work team's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think that I could easily become as attached to another work team as I am to this one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel like "part of the family" in my work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I do not feel “emotionally attached” to this work team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This work team has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my work team now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel guilty if I left my work team now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This work team deserves my loyalty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would not leave my work team right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I owe a great deal to this work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am not afraid of what might happen to this work team if I quit my job without having another one lined up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It would be very hard for me to leave my work team right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my work team now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my work team right now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Right now staying with my work team is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this work team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
One of the few serious consequences of leaving this work team would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

One of the major reasons I continue to work in this work team is that leaving would require a considerable personal sacrifice – another work group may not match the overall benefits that I have here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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3. Statements about Your Job:

I value the chance to work independently.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I look forward to doing different things from time to time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like the chance to be “somebody” in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate the way my boss handles his/her staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe that my supervisor is competent in making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate being able to do things that don’t go against my conscience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My job provides for steady employment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have the chance to do things for other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have the chance to tell people what to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate the chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am happy with the way the organisational policies are put into practice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am satisfied with the pay and the amount of work that I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have the chance for advancement on this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have the freedom to use my own judgement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like the chance to try my own methods of doing the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am happy with the working conditions (i.e. the office environment)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate the way my co-workers get along with each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I receive praise for doing a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I gain a sense of accomplishment from the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate being able to keep busy all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Statements Directly Related to Your Work:

My behaviour generates confidence in my clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My clients have confidence in the service that I provide	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am consistently courteous to our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have access to the required knowledge to answer our clients' questions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I give individual attention to our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I act in the clients' best interests where appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to understand the specific needs of our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I promise to do something by a certain time, I do so	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I show sincere interest in solving our clients' problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to perform the service right the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I provide the service at the time I promised to do so	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to provide accurate information to our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I provide prompt service to our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I am always willing to help our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am never too busy to respond to our clients' requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The hours that we work are convenient for our clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
We have effective equipment to assist us in our work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our workplace is comfortable and visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our waiting area is comfortable and visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Court's safety policies, procedures and processes help our clients to feel safe whilst at court	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The Court's safety policies, procedures and processes provide a safe work environment for staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Statements Indirectly Related to Your Work:

I help my co-workers who have heavy workloads	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I help others who have been absent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to help others who have work-related problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I help orient new people even though it is not required.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am one of the most conscientious employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I think that regular attendance at work is above the norm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not take extra breaks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I obey business, rules, policies and regulations even when no one is watching.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am the classic 'squeaky wheel' that always needs greasing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I tend to make 'mountains out of molehills' at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always focus on what's wrong, rather than focus on the positive side of things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I always find fault with what the organisation is doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I try to avoid creating problems for co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I consider the impact of my actions on co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not abuse the rights of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I take steps to try and prevent problems with other employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am mindful of how my behaviour affects other people's jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I keep up with changes in the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I attend functions that are not required that help the organisation's image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I read and keep up to date with organisational announcements, memos and information by other means.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

NB The on-line version on SURVEY MONKEY included an open ended section inviting survey participants to provide comments on any item relevant to the survey.

PART 2

Demographic and Organizational Information:

The purpose of this part of the survey questionnaire is to gather demographical and organizational data for research purposes only. Please provide the information requested as it will assist the researcher in determining whether these factors influence the survey response.

Demographical Data

Question	Explanation	Response
Gender	1= Male; 2=Female	
Age in Years	1=up to 30; 2 = 31 to 35; 3 = 36 to 40; 4 = 40 to 55; 5 = older than 55	
Highest Level of Education	1= High School Leaving Certificate 2=Diploma or Certificate 3=Bachelor Degree 4=Master's Degree 5=Doctorate Degree	
State/Territory	1=N.S.W. & A.C.T. 2=Vic. &TAS. 3=Qld. 4=S.A. & N.T. 5=N.E.C	

Organizational Data

Question	Explanation	Response
Current Job	1=Client Service Officer, Registry Services 2=Senior Client Service Officer, Registry Services	

	3= Court Officer 4= Case Coordinator 5 = Team Leader, Registry Services 6= Client Service Officer, NEC 7= Senior Client Service Officer, NEC 8= Team Leader, NEC	
Years of Total Work Experience	1= up to 4 years. 2= 5 to 8 years. 3= 9 years or more	
Years of Service in Current Job	1= up to 4 years. 2= 5 to 8 years. 3= 9 years or more	
Current Employment Status	1= Permanent Full-time 2= Permanent Part-time 3= Non-ongoing Full-time 4= Non-ongoing Part-time	
Current Classification of your Job	1= APS 2 2= APS 3 3= APS 4 4= APS 5 5= APS 6 6= EL1 7= EL2	

Appendix K

Descriptive Statistics on Respondents to the ACT Public Service Pilot Survey

Table 1 presents data on the gender of participants. Table 1 indicates that the majority of participants (81.4%) were female.

Table 1 Gender of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Male	11	18.6
Female	48	81.4
Total	59	100.0

Table 2 presents data on the age of participants. Table 2 indicates that more than half of participants (55.2%) were 40 years of age or younger.

Table 2 Age of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
0 to 30	25	37.3
31 to 35	5	7.5
36 to 40	6	9.0
40 to 55	15	22.4
56 and above	3	4.5
Missing	13	17.9
Total	67	100.0

Table 3 presents data on the years of work experience in the current job amongst the participants. Table 3 indicates that overall the majority of participants had between 0 and 4 years of work experience in their current job (75.9%).

Table 3 Years of Work Experience in Current Job of Participants

Years of Work Experience in the Current Job	Frequency	Percent
0 to 4	44	65.7
5 to 8	6	9.0
9 and above	58	86.6
Total	58	86.6
Missing	9	13.4
Total	67	100.0

Summary

The descriptive statistics collected from client service staff who participated in pilot survey in the ACT Public Service indicates that respondents were predominantly female, that while many (81.4%) were 40 years of age or younger (55.2%), and the majority (75.9%) had between 0 and 4 years of work experience in their current job.

Appendix L

Correlation Coefficients for all Key Survey Variables, ACT Public Service Pilot Survey

ACT Pilot Study – Summary Survey Results

N o.	Variable	M	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Affective Organizational Commitment	4.34	0.91	1(.75)										
2	Continuance Organizational Commitment	4.00	0.74	0.05	1 (.56)									
3	Normative Organizational Commitment	3.94	1.08	0.55**	0.21	1 (.80)								
4	Organizational Commitment (global measure)	4.11	0.65	0.78**	0.54**	0.83**	1(i)							
5	Affective Co-worker Commitment	4.51	0.84	0.62**	0.05	0.45**	0.54* *	1(.77)						
6	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	3.87	0.94	0.03	0.47**	0.11	0.26*	0.10	1(.69)					
7	Normative Co-worker Commitment	3.77	0.99	0.33*	0.24*	0.48**	0.48* *	0.17	0.20	1(.81)				
8	Co-worker Commitment (global measure)	3.88	0.94	0.45**	0.38*	0.47**	0.60* *	0.60* *	0.76* *	0.73* *	1 (i)			
9	Job Satisfaction	5.02	0.65	0.46**	-0.02	0.28*	0.36*	0.39*	0.29*	0.16	0.41* *	1(.78)		
10	Service Quality	5.48	0.80	0.33*	-0.14	0.01	0.12	0.33*	0.23	0.02	0.13	0.39*	1(.89)	
11	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	5.36	0.57	0.21	-0.13	-0.05	0.03	0.24	0.06	-0.20	0.06	0.23	0.40*	1(.88)

Notes: N =67, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, * Correlation is significant at $p < .05$ (Sig. 2 tailed), ** Correlation is highly significant at $p < .001$ (Sig. 2 tailed). Bracketed figures are Cronbach alpha measures. The figure (i) indicates derived item where a coefficient alpha measure is not provided.

Appendix M

Bivariate Hypothesis Testing Using Cross-Tabulations, Respondent Data from the Survey of the Family Law Courts

It is reasonable given the proportion of women to men in the family law courts' client service workforce (i.e. 75%) to hypothesize that there is an association between gender and other demographic and organizational data.

A note about using bivariate hypothesis testing and cross tabulations is provided at the end of this appendix.

The variable gender (which is nominal and dichotomous) was chosen as the independent variable in these tests and it was used with seven dependent, ordinal variables (age, education level, job type, total work experience, job work experience, employment status, and job classification). As indicated in the tables that follow no statistically significant associations were found. Accordingly it is reasonable to suggest that these variables are statistically independent of each other in the population from which they were drawn.

Age and Gender of Respondent

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Age of respondent	20 to 30	Count	11	42	53
		% within gender of respondent	22.4%	29.8%	27.9%
		Adjusted residual	-1.0	1.0	
	31 to 40	Count	8	35	43
		% within gender of respondent	16.3%	24.8%	43
		Adjusted residual	-1.2	1.2	

41 to 50	Count	15	33	48
	% within gender of respondent	30.6%	23.4%	25.3%
	Adjusted residual	1.0	-1.0	
51 to 60	Count	12	25	37
	% within gender of respondent	24.5%	17.7%	19.5%
	Adjusted residual	1.0	-1.0	
➤ 60	Count	3	6	9
	% within gender of respondent	6.1%	4.3%	4.7%
	Adjusted residual	.5	-.5	
Total	Count	49	141	190
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	3.730*	4	0.444
Likelihood Ratio	3.762	4	0.439
Linear-by-linear Association	2.767	1	0.096
N of Valid Cases	190		

- 1 cell (10.0%) has expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.32

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.140	0.444
	Cramer's V	0.140	0.444
N of Valid Cases		190	

Education Level and Gender of Respondent

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Highest level of education of respondent	High School Leaving Certificate	Count	22	43	65
		% within gender of respondent	44.9%	30.3%	34.0%
		Adjusted residual	1.9	-1.9	
	Diploma or Certificate	Count	13	49	62
		% within gender of respondent	26.5%	34.5%	32.8%
		Adjusted residual	-1.0	1.0	
	Bachelors	Count	14	43	57
		% within gender of respondent	28.6%	30.3%	29.8%
		Adjusted residual	-.2	1.0	
	Masters	Count	0	7	7
		% within gender of	0%	4.9%	3.7%

	respondent			
	Adjusted residual	-1.6	1.6	
Total	Count	49	142	191
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	5.452 *	3	0.142
Likelihood Ratio	7.085	3	0.069
Linear-by-linear Association	3.168	1	0.075
N of Valid Cases	191		

- 1 cell (12.5%) has expected counts less than .5. The minimum expected count is 1.80

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.169	0.142
	Cramer's V	0.169	0.142
N of Valid Cases		191	

Job Type and Gender of Respondent

		Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender		
		Male	Female	Total	
Job Title of	Client Service	Count	19	66	85

Respondent	Officer Registry Services	% within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	42.2% -1.2	52.4% 1.2	49.7%
	Senior Client Service Officer Registry Services	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	5 11.1% .8	9 7.1% -.8	14 8.2%
	Team Leader Registry Services	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	7 15.6% 1.1	12 9.5% -1.1	19 11.1%
	Court Officer	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	5 11.1% 1.3	7 5.6% -1.3	12 7.0%
	Case Coordinator	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	2 4.4% -1.4	15 11.9% 1.4	17 9.9%
	Client Service Officer NEC	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	4 8.9% -.6	15 11.9% .6	19 11.1%
	Senior Client Service Officer NEC	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	2 4.4% 1.1	2 1.6% -1.1	4 2.3%
	Team Leader	Count % within gender	1	0	1

NEC	of respondent	2.2%	.0%	.6%
	Adjusted residual	1.7	-1.7	
Total	Count	45	126	171
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	9.955*	7	0.191
Likelihood Ratio	9.804	7	0.200
Linear-by-linear Association	0.351	1	0.553
N of Valid Cases	171		

*7 cells (43.8%) have expected counts less than 5. The minimum expected count is .26.

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.241	0.191
	Cramer's V	0.241	0.191
N of Valid Cases		171	

Total Work Experience and Gender of Respondent

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Total work experience of respondent	0 to 10	Count	17	54	71
		% within gender of	36.2%	39.1%	

	respondent Adjusted residual	-0.4	0.4	
11 to 20	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	10 21.3% -0.5	34 24.6% 0.5	44 23.8%
21 to 30	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	11 23.4% 0.0	32 23.2% 0.0	43 23.2%
31 to 40	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	5 10.6% 0.2	13 9.4% -0.2	18 9.7%
➤ 40	Count % within gender of respondent Adjusted residual	4 8.5% 1.3	5 3.6% -1.3	9 4.9%
Total	Count % within gender of respondent	47 100.0%	138 100.0%	185 100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	2.022*	4	0.732
Likelihood Ratio	1.832	4	0.767
Linear-by-linear Association	1.018	1	0.313
N of Valid Cases	185		

*2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.29

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.105	0.732
	Cramer's V	0.105	0.732
N of Valid Cases		185	

Job Work Experience and Gender of Respondent

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Years in current job	0 to 10	Count	0.39	111	150
		% within gender of respondent	84.8%	82.2%	82.9%
		Adjusted residual	0.4	-0.4	
	11 to 20	Count	6	15	21
		% within gender of respondent	13.0%	11.1%	11.6%
		Adjusted	0.4	-0.4	

	residual			
21 to 30	Count	1	7	8
	% within gender of respondent	2.2%	5.2%	4.4%
	Adjusted residual	-0.9	0.9	
31 to 40	Count	0	1	1
	% within gender of respondent	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%
	Adjusted residual	-0.6	0.6	
Total	Count	46	135	181
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*1 cell (.6%) was miscoded.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	1.523*	4	0.823
Likelihood Ratio	2.124	4	0.713
Linear-by-linear Association	0.248	1	0.618
N of Valid Cases	181		

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.092	0.823
	Cramer's V	0.092	0.81

N of Valid Cases		181	
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Employment Status of Respondent and Gender

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Employment Status of Respondent	Permanent full-time	Count	34	88	122
		% within gender of respondent	75.6%	63.3%	66.3%
		Adjusted residual	1.5	-1.5	
	Permanent part-time	Count	3	20	23
		% within gender of respondent	6.7%	14.4%	12.5%
		Adjusted residual	-1.4	1.4	
	Non- ongoing full-time	Count	7	21	28
		% within gender of respondent	15.6%	15.1%	15.2%
		Adjusted residual	0.1	-0.1	
	Non- ongoing part-time	Count	1	10	11
		% within gender of respondent	2.2%	7.2%	6.0
		Adjusted residual	-1.2	1.2	

Total	Count	45	139	184
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	3.801*	3	0.284
Likelihood Ratio	4.331	3	0.228
Linear-by-linear Association	1.773	1	0.183
N of Valid Cases	184		

- 1 cell (12.5%) has expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.69

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.144	0.284
	Cramer's V	0.144	0.284
N of Valid Cases		184	

Job Classification of Respondent and Gender

			Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender	
			Male	Female	Total
Job classification	APS 2	Count	8	0	1
		% within gender of respondent	17.4%	0.0%	0.6%
		Adjusted residual	1.7	-1.7	

APS 3	Count	8	21	29
	% within gender of respondent	17.4%	15.6%	16.0%
	Adjusted residual	0.3	-0.3	
APS 4	Count	18	54	72
	% within gender of respondent	39.1%	40.0%	39.8%
	Adjusted residual	-0.1	0.1	
APS 5	Count	3	22	25
	% within gender of respondent	6.5%	16.3%	13.8%
	Adjusted residual	-1.7	1.7	
APS 6	Count	0	7	7
	% within gender of respondent	.0%	5.2%	3.9%
	Adjusted residual	-1.6	1.6	
EL 1	Count	2	7	9
	% within gender of respondent	4.3%	5.2%	5.0%
	Adjusted residual	-0.2	0.2	
EL 2	Count	1	2	3
	% within	2.2%	1.5%	1.7%

	gender of respondent	0.3	-0.3	
	Adjusted residual			
Total	Count	46	135	181
	% within gender of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- 1 cell (.6%) miscoded

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	10.459*	7	0.164
Likelihood Ratio	12.178	7	0.095
Linear-by-linear Association	1.650	1	0.199
N of Valid Cases	181		

- 6 cells (37.5%) have expected counts of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .25

Symmetric Measures

Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.240	0.164
	Cramer's V	0.240	0.164
N of Valid Cases		181	

Notes about the Chi-square statistic

“One of the simplest methods of describing a set of relationships is cross-tabulations. A cross-tabulation is a frequency distribution of responses to two or more sets of variables” (Hair et al., 2003, p. 262). The Chi-square statistic allows researchers to test whether an association exists between two groups of data. Cross-tabulation has a number of useful features (Acton et al., 2002). Cross-tabulations permit examination of the association between

two nominal/ordinal variables that have a relatively small number of categories. It allows observation to be made about an association, if researchers are interested in drawing conclusions about the relationship between the sample and the population from which the sample was drawn we rely on the Chi-square statistic. The Chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size so researchers use either the phi (for a 2 by 2 table) or the Cramer's V statistic where one variable is nominal and at least one of the variables is not dichotomous to determine the strength of the association. If the Chi-square statistic is statistically significant researchers will tend to observe that there is an association (i.e. the variables are dependent) and if the Chi-square statistic is not statistically significant researchers will tend to observe that there is no association (i.e. the variables are statistically independent) (Hair et al., 2003).

Appendix N

Independent Sample Tests for Gender and Key Survey Variables, Respondent Data from the Survey of the Family Law Courts

Table 1 Independent Samples Test for Organizational Commitment and Gender

Group Statistics

Gender of respondent	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	49	4.07	0.34	0.05
Female	142	4.09	0.45	0.04

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig.	t	df
Organizational commitment Equal variances assumed	1.17	0.28	-0.31	189
Organizational commitment Unequal variances not assumed			-0.35	108.17

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference

Organizational commitment	0.76	-0.02	0.07
Equal variances assumed			
Organizational commitment	0.73	-0.02	0.06
Unequal variances not assumed			

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means	
	75% Confidence	Interval of the Difference
	Lower	Upper
Organizational commitment	-0.16	0.12
Equal variances assumed		
Organizational commitment	-0.14	0.10
Unequal variances not assumed		

Table 1 indicates the mean rating of male survey respondents for organizational commitment was 4.07 and the mean rating of female survey respondents was 4.09. Table 1 above also indicates that with $t = -0.31$, $df = 189$, Sig. (two-tailed) $p = .76$, the results are not significant at Sig.(two-tailed) $p < .05$, therefore it can be deduced that there is not a significant difference in the average rating of organizational commitment between female and male survey respondents. Table 2 presents a t-test for independent samples of the mean rating given to co-worker commitment by the gender of the respondents.

Table 2 Independent Samples Test for Co-worker Commitment and Gender

Group Statistics

Gender of respondent	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	49	4.08	0.49	0.07
Female	142	4.17	0.57	0.05

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig.	t	df
Co-worker commitment Equal variances assumed	1.0	0.32	-0.96	189
Co-worker commitment Unequal variances not assumed			-1.03	95.53

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Co-worker commitment Equal variances assumed	0.34	-0.09	0.09
Co-worker commitment Unequal variances not assumed	0.31	-0.09	0.08

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means	
	75% Confidence	Interval of the Difference
	Lower	Upper

Co-worker commitment	-0.27	0.09
Equal variances assumed		
Co-worker commitment	-0.26	0.08
Unequal variances not assumed		

Table 2 indicates the mean rating for male survey respondents of co-worker commitment was 4.08 and the mean rating of female survey respondents was 4.17. Table 2 also indicates that with $t = -0.96$, $df = 189$, Sig. (two-tailed) $p = .34$, the results are not significant at Sig. (two-tailed) $p < .05$. Therefore it can be deduced that there is not a significant difference in the average rating of co-worker commitment between female and male survey respondents. Table 3 presents a t-test for independent samples of the mean rating given to job satisfaction by the gender of the respondents.

Table 3 Independent Samples Test for Job Satisfaction and Gender

Group Statistics

Gender of respondent	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	49	4.8	0.46	0.07
Female	142	4.9	0.69	0.06

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig	t	df
Job Satisfaction	3.25	0.07	-1.57	189
Equal variances assumed				
Job Satisfaction			-1.90	124.67
Unequal variances not assumed				

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Job Satisfaction Equal variances assumed	0.12	-0.17	0.11
Job Satisfaction Unequal variances not assumed	0.06	-0.17	0.09

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means	
	75% Confidence	Interval of the Difference
	Lower	Upper
Job Satisfaction Equal variances assumed	-0.38	0.04
Job Satisfaction Unequal variances not assumed	-0.34	0.00

Table 3 indicates the mean rating of male survey respondents for job satisfaction was 4.8 and the mean rating of female survey respondents was 4.9. Table 3 also indicates that with $t = -1.57$, $df = 189$, Sig. (two-tailed) $p = .12$, the results are not significant at Sig. (two-tailed) $p < .05$ and therefore it can be deduced that there is not a significant difference in the average rating of job satisfaction between female and male survey respondents.

Table 4 presents a table for an independent samples test for service quality and the gender of the respondents.

Table 4 Independent Samples Test for Service Quality and Gender

Group Statistics

Gender of respondent	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	49	5.5	0.59	0.08
Female	142	5.5	0.68	0.06

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-tests for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig	t	df
Service Quality Equal variances assumed	1.10	0.29	-0.08	189
Service Quality Unequal variances not assumed			-0.09	95.92

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Service Quality Equal variances assumed	0.93	-0.01	0.11
Service Quality Unequal variances not assumed	0.93	-0.01	0.10

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means	
	75% Confidence	Interval of the Difference
	Lower	Upper
Service Quality Equal variances assumed	-0.23	0.21
Service Quality Unequal variances not assumed	-0.21	0.19

Table 4 indicates the mean rating of male survey respondents for service quality was 5.5 and the mean rating of female survey respondents was 5.5. Table 4 also indicates that with $t = -0.08$, $df = 189$, $\text{Sig. (two-tailed)} p = .93$, the results are not significant at $\text{Sig. (two-tailed)} p < .05$. Therefore it can be deduced that there is not a significant difference in the average rating of service quality between female and male survey respondents. Table 5 presents a t-test of independent samples for the mean rating given to service quality by the gender of the respondents.

Table 5 Independent Samples Test for OCB and Gender

Group Statistics

Gender of respondent	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	49	5.4	0.57	0.08
Female	142	5.5	0.66	0.06

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of	t-tests for Equality of Means

	Variances		t	df
	F	Sig		
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Equal variances assumed	2.51	0.12	-1.05	189
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Unequal variances not assumed			-1.1	95.77

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Equal variances assumed	0.29	-0.11	0.11
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Unequal variances not assumed	0.26	-0.11	0.09

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means	
	75% Confidence	Interval of the Difference
	Lower	Upper
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Equal variances assumed	-0.32	0.09
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Unequal variances not assumed	-0.31	0.08

Table 5 indicates the mean rating of male survey respondents for OCB was 5.4 and the mean rating of female survey respondents was 5.5. Table 5 also indicates that with $t = -1.05$, $df = 189$, Sig. (two-tailed) $p = .29$, the results are not significant at Sig. (two-tailed) $p < .05$. Therefore it can be deduced that there is not a significant difference in the average rating of OCB between female and male survey respondents.

Appendix 0

Paper Presented to 2011 ANZAM Conference in Wellington New Zealand

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Position: PhD Candidate in Management

Paper Title: ‘Client Service and Court Safety’

Stream: Organizational Behavior

Key Words: Attitudes, Perceptions, Stress and Stress
Management, Work Performance

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Introduction

The ‘Client Service and Court Safety’ study (the Study) is part of an industry-based, federally funded national research project examining safety in five participating Australian and New Zealand court systems entitled: “Fortress or sanctuary? Enhancing court safety by managing people, places and processes” (Tait, 2008). This Study explored factors perceived to influence client service provider behaviors and performance in one Australian federal court system by examining an array of quantitative and qualitative data from the perspective of an embedded case study (Yin, 2003). The research purpose was to better understand how factors other than service provider attitudes influenced service provider behaviors (intended and unintended) and potentially influenced client outcomes in the study context (i.e. client satisfaction, client safety and procedural fairness). This was seen to be important because service performance in the study context included client service staff helping court users perceived to be at risk of violence to feel safer whilst at court.

Literature Review

Client Service

The service management and marketing research literature has identified a large number of factors as key determinants of service quality in public and private sector service organizations. These include but are not limited to the characteristics of the service organization (Alford, 2009; Chase, 1978; Mills & Margulies, 1980; Nesheim, 1990; Van der Hart 1990), service culture and climate (Dietz et al., 2004; Johnson, 1996; Kim et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2009; Schneider & Bowen, 1993, 1995), service orientation (Bowen et al., 1989;

Bowen et al., 1990; Dienhart et al., 1992; Hurley 1998; Homburg et al., 2002; Homburg et al., 2002; Rafesli et al., 2008), service operations management (Chase & Haynes, 2000; Chase & Apte, 2007; Heineke & Davis, 2007; Machuca et al., 2007; Wright & Mechling, 2002;), servicescape (Bitner, 1992; Bitner, 2000; Ezeh & Harris, 2007;Wagner, 2000), service foundation issues (Chase, 1978; Heskett 1987; Heskett et al., 1994; Schneider 1980; Schneider & Bowen, 1993), and service performance management (Bowen et al., 1990; Schneider & White, 2004). While all of these dimensions were relevant to this Study, staff attitudes and service orientation were considered to be central to the Study's core research interests.

Court Security

Understanding the dominant paradigms underlying court security was integral to this Study. The literature reviewed indicated that thinking about court security in the early part of the 21st century was focused primarily on physical security, protection of the judiciary inside and outside the court and on the importance of threat assessment in security planning (Faust & Raffo 2001; Greacen & Klein, 2001; Griebel & Phillips, 2001; Jenkins, 2001; Vossekuil et al., 2001; Warren, 2001; Weiner et al., 2000; Weiner & Hardenberg, 2001). In response to changes in the general environment a much more prudential point of view has been advocated more recently that focused on the costs and benefits of the investment in security as well as the need for improved accountability for ensuring security planning was reflected in actual security arrangements (Campbell & Reinkensmeyer, 2007; Feiner, 2007; Gould, 2007; Pines, 2007; Zaruba, 2007). Cooper (2007) writing on the evolving concept of court security noted that while previously court security had been regarded as a specialist function carried out by the Sheriff's Office and/or specialist security staff, it was now more commonly seen to be an

integral part of the responsibility of the judiciary and court administrators who also manage workplace safety.

Workplace Safety

According to Sarre and Prenzler (2010) there has been a general increase in the level of violence in Australian courts in the last decade. Weiner and Hardenbergh (2001) suggested that researchers needed to distinguish between the court as an institution and the court as a workplace in order to understand the nature and prevalence of violence in the court system. Mayhew and Chappell (2007) stated that workplace violence could be conceived of as a continuum of severity ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence and even homicide. Workplace violence (real or perceived) can be a source of stress for those working in the courts, where litigants, who are important stakeholders, are subject to some form of fundamental loss of benefit such as incarceration, loss of child custody or loss of property. As one interviewee in this Study put it ‘our clients all have relationship problems’. This tension often flows over to those dealing face-to-face with court users (Nicholson, 2005). As Privitera stated, “violent clientele characteristics include people who have a great deal of anger, resentment and feelings of failure” (Privitera, 2011, p9). Mayhew and Chappell (2007) stated “Data indicate that the occupational groups at highest risk (of work-related violence) are employed in healthcare, community services, police and other criminal justice system jobs” (Mayhew & Chappell, 2007, p333). This can certainly be extended to those working in a face-to-face capacity in law courts in Australia and elsewhere (Barrett, 2009; Nicholson, 2005).

Work-Related Stress

This study has adopted a transactional or process oriented perspective where stressors are events or properties of events that are encountered by employees in the work environment and where strain is the individual's response to those events or event-related properties (Cooper et al., 2001; Cox & Griffith, 2010). An important source of work-related stress, relevant to this Study, was significant change particularly when accompanied by job losses. Research into employee attitudes, such as organizational commitment, has demonstrated that organizational change can be reflected in reduced commitment as well as withdrawal behavior manifested in higher absenteeism rates and turnover intentions (Cappelli, 2000; Fedor et al., 2006; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer, 2009; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). The literature on job insecurity (perceived or real) was also found to be a key determinant in causing organizational stress (Ashford et al., 1989; Helgren & Sverke, 2003; Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Graetz et al., 2006; Kinnunen et al., 2000; Probst, 2004; Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). The final dimension of work-related stress that was relevant to this Study was the chronic stress associated with work roles. These dimensions include work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity and lack of autonomy (Cooper et al., 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). This form of stress was found to be particularly relevant for service employees who were less well educated, who work in non-professional occupations or who may lack tenure, all of whom were present in the case study organization.

Psychological and Subjective Wellbeing

Ryan and Deci (2001) stated that employee wellbeing was a complex construct that had two distinct perspectives, one focused on happiness and satisfaction and the other on meaning and self actualization, and that these two perspectives often gave rise "to different research foci and bodies of knowledge that is in some areas divergent and in others complementary" (p. 141). Authors such as Donald et al. (2005); Faragher, Cooper, and

Cartwright (2004); Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005); Robertson and Flint-Taylor (2009); Wright and Cropanzano (2004, 2007); Wright and Bonett (2007); and Wright (2010) have all suggested that a relationship existed between job satisfaction and organizational health and individual employee psychological wellbeing (PWB) where, amongst other things, a high level of both will result in a positive effect on job performance and a reduction in staff turnover. Wright and Cropanzano (2004) found “that when happiness is measured as PWB, it is consistently and positively related to various measures of job performance” (p343). Faragher, Cass, and Cooper (2005) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and health through a meta-analysis and found that job satisfaction was an important factor in influencing the health of workers. Wright and Cropanzano (2007) found “job satisfaction did predict performance, but only if the employees also had a high level of PWB” (p 292).

Theoretical Proposition

The research literature just reviewed suggests that three main perspectives are relevant to understanding job performance in the Study context, namely work-related stress (Jex, 1998; Rosen et al., 2010), service employee attitudes (Malhtra and Mukherjee, 2004; Ramseeook-Munhurrun et al., 2009), and service employee wellbeing (Luthans & Church, 2002; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Luthans et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Robertson & Flint-Taylor, 2009). Figure 1 at Attachment B draws these three discrete fields of study into a conceptual framework (Leshem & Trafford 2007). This framework may help court administrators to better understand how the relationships between work-related stressors and strain, service employee attitudes and salient service provider behaviors all have the potential to impact on court user outcomes, either directly or indirectly.

Research Methods

This Study used a dual strand; parallel mixed research methods design with some mixing between strands (Teddlie & Tashakorri, 2009). A confirmatory phase addressed a research question dealing with the relationship between service employee attitudes and behaviors and collected data by means of an on-line survey. An exploratory strand addressed a research question about the effectiveness of the client service function's contribution to court safety and collected data by means of focus group meetings, and individual and small group in-depth interviews. In addition, secondary research methods that involved non-participant observation and document analysis were used to gain a better understanding of the Study context. Data was collected over a three month period. The on-line survey involved the case study organization's entire client service workforce whilst the focus group meetings and interviews involved a representative sample of the client service and professional workforce in seven of the case study organization's nineteen separate service locations around Australia.

Confirmatory Phase

The on-line survey used a questionnaire with a 7 point Likert-type scale and sought information on organization commitment, co-worker commitment, job satisfaction, service quality, and organizational citizenship behavior along with a fairly standard set of demographical and organizational variables. The measurement of commitment used the three component model introduced and validated by Meyer and Allen (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; and Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Job satisfaction was measured using the global 20 item Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Fields, 2002). Service quality was measured using a modified and extended version of the standard set of 18 scale items of SERVQUAL introduced and validated by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988,

1991, 1994). The modifications to the scale items were made following four focus group meetings involving some 24 participants. The aim was to validate a scale that could be used to enable service providers to self assess the quality of their service performance in a national call centre and nineteen separate court registries based upon the work of Malhorta and Mukherje (2004) and Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2009). Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using the instrument developed and introduced by Podsakoff et al. (1990). Out of a survey population of 291 client service staff employed or engaged across all case study locations a total of 194 useable responses were obtained representing a response rate of 67 percent (Baruch & Holtom, 2008).

Exploratory Phase

Twenty nine individual and small group semi-structure, in-depth interviews were undertaken across seven sites involving a total of some fifty participants in the exploratory phase of the Study. The focus group meetings also contributed to the exploratory data. The analysis of data from the focus group meetings and interviews was undertaken in three steps. Using NVIVO 8, a preliminary nodal structure was established by the researcher using the literature review as a basis. This structure was then refined during the descriptive coding process (Richards, 2009). Following coding of all transcripts, data on frequency was used to separate out the themes most commonly discussed. Each of these nodes was then further analyzed using role theory (Ashforth et al., 2008; Biddle, 1986; Dobрева-Martinova et al., 2002; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Solomon et al., 1985). This provided a basis for assessing how service providers in different roles perceived the same issues relating to client service and court safety. The different roles were client service staff; client service team leaders and managers; and professional staff (i.e. those involved in mediating and advising the judiciary on various issues relevant to the judicial process). From these role summaries data

interpretation was undertaken, which in turn led to a further exploration of the literature around the types of topics and issues that emerged from the data, to prevent ‘premature closure’ (Kaplan, 2009).

The Results

The three main tests for validity (i.e. content validity, construct validity and criterion validity) (Hair et al., 2003) were examined and indicated that a reasonable degree of validity existed for all key Study variables (i.e. commitment, job satisfaction, service quality and organizational citizenship behavior). In terms of respondent reliability, coefficient alphas ranging from .61 to .88 were achieved across all key Study variables. Factor analyses were run for the multi-dimensional measures of organizational and co-worker commitment and service quality to assess whether their components acted in the manner expected. The Direct Oblim factor rotations (Action et al., 2002) of organizational commitment and co-worker commitment indicated that respondents did not differentiate between the high sacrifice and low alternatives components of continuance commitment (Jaros, 2009; Powell and Meyer, 2004; Stinglhamber et al., 2002) and that some elements of the script for affective organizational and co-worker commitment didn’t work as expected (Culpepper, 2000). The majority of script items used to measure service quality operated in a manner that was expected or acceptable.

A standard range of statistical tests covering measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, hypotheses testing using cross tabulations, independent samples t tests, and analysis of variance as well as correlation and regression analysis were carried out in relation to the survey data. Descriptive statistics, based upon the array of demographical and organizational variables collected, indicated that the survey workforce was predominantly female; between 31 and 50 years of age; with diploma/certificate level education; with most

employees having more than 11 years of work experience and with most of this in their current job. They were predominantly permanent-full time or permanent part-time employees and held middle level Australian Public Service classified administrative positions. Only a small number of statistically significant relationships were found to exist between the demographical, organizational and key Study variables.

Inter-correlations for the key Study variables are shown in Table 1 at Attachment A. As expected, a positive and moderate association existed between affective organizational commitment, affective co-worker commitment and job satisfaction. However, no statistically significant association existed between global organizational commitment or global co-worker commitment and job satisfaction, service quality or organizational citizenship behavior. Job satisfaction was positive but weakly associated with service quality and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior was positively and strongly associated with service quality. A summary of the regression analyses of the relationships between the key Study variables is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Results of Regression Analysis on Key Study Variables

Independent Variable	Component	Service Quality+	Organisational Citizenship Behavior+
Organisational Commitment	Affective Organisational Commitment	.150*	.123
	Continuance Organisational Commitment	.047	-.038
	Normative Organisational Commitment	.053	.037
	Global Organisational Commitment	.122	.046
Co-worker Commitment	Affective Co-worker Commitment	.187**	.120*
	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	.054	.023
	Normative Co-worker Commitment	.009	-.046
	Global Co-worker Commitment	.110	.041
Job Satisfaction	Global	.299***	.258***
Organisational Citizenship Behavior	Global	.758***	

Notes: N=194; + the Standardized Coefficient Beta is reported; *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 2 indicates that there was not a strong, statistically significant relationship either at component level or globally between organizational or co-worker commitment, service quality and organizational citizenship behavior. There was however, a positive and modest significant statistical relationship between job satisfaction, service quality and organizational citizenship behavior. There was also a positive, strong and statistically significant relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and service quality. In summary, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior were much better predictors of service quality than either organizational or co-worker commitment.

The dominant themes from the interviews concerned staff perceptions about an increasingly complex client group, resourcing issues (i.e. staff capacity and capability), job insecurity due to an overly long job and organizational restructuring initiative, and the perceived risk of client-initiated violence. Motivational difficulties were experienced by those staff whose work was of a fairly routine nature where they perceived they had limited control over client demands on their time. All of these issues have been identified from the research literature as factors contributing to work-related stress (Cooper et al., 2001; Koslowski, 1998). The view that there was a perceived lack of organizational support (Eisenberger and Stinglhamber, 2011) in some registries was expressed by some staff in terms of managers who were seen to be either too remote or didn't fully understand what it was like to be on the 'front-line'. Perhaps as a result of all of these factors the case study organization experienced a high level of paid unscheduled leave and found itself in the top quartile of absenteeism rates for federal public service organizations in 2008-09 (Australian Public Service Commission, 2009) whilst experiencing a very low staff turnover rate at the same time.

Discussion

In relation to the confirmatory phase, the first finding from this Study was that whilst overall the scripts used to measure the key Study variables had reasonably high reliability and validity, one component of the commitment measures lacked good consistency. The script items for affective organisational and co-worker commitment did not operate as expected. The second finding was that aside from two script items associated with the factor “Assurance” the remainder of the script items comprising the service quality measure operated in a way that was expected or acceptable. A related finding in line with studies by Brown et al. (2002) and Hogan et al. (1984) was that the script items for service quality actually measured service orientation and not service performance. As such, they provided a proximal indicator of service performance and a lead indicator of client satisfaction. A third finding related to the weak power of commitment and the contrasting strength of organisational citizenship behavior in predicting service quality. This was not entirely unexpected.

Riketta (2008) found that based on 16 studies of the causal relationship between job attitudes and job performance the effects of job attitudes (i.e. organisational commitment and job satisfaction) was weak but statistically significant, with the predictive effect for affective commitment being slightly stronger than for job satisfaction. The reverse was found in this Study. In contrast, Jex (1998), citing the work of Organ and Ryan (1995), stated that “job satisfaction is the strongest and most consistent correlate of many forms of organisational citizenship behavior” (Jex, 1989, p.31). This finding was confirmed in this Study.

In terms of the exploratory phase of this Study, the qualitative data pointed unambiguously to the existence of a range of work-related stressors. Work insecurity, arising from staff views about the risk of client-initiated violence (real or perceived) and views about

job insecurity, arising from staff perceptions about current job redesign and an overly long series of organizational restructuring initiatives, appeared to be influencing employees' sense of commitment but not their job satisfaction. This effect might be explained, at least in part, by what Koslowsky (1998) referred to as the 'hypothesis of progressive withdrawal' where absenteeism appears before staff turnover increases. For other employees, particularly front line supervisors, stress arose from staff shortages, caused at least in part by high levels of absenteeism which were compounded by progressive staff reductions.

All these factors were seen by staff to make the task of dealing with a complex and increasingly diverse client group to be even more difficult. As one staff member stated "we are very much focused on our clients but occasionally we don't support our own people well enough". A commonly expressed view was that toleration of verbal abuse from clients was the norm rather than the exception and that some client service staff were perceived by their supervisors and managers to be 'pushing back at clients a bit' which sometimes led to an escalation of inappropriate behavior by staff and their clients.

Conclusions

The first conclusion researched from this Study was that undue reliance was placed upon the affective commitment script items and that further investigation is warranted to determine whether these items, in their current form, are suitable without modification, for use in public sector service organizations. The second conclusion was that whilst further refinement was needed to improve the reliability of the instrument used to measure service quality it proved to be a reliable and valid basis for service employees to self assess the quality of their service performance in a public sector call center and a number of service centers. However, this was actually seen to more accurately represent an assessment of their service orientation. The orientation of service providers is worth measuring as a set of

individual behaviors that if exhibited appropriately and consistently can lead to high levels of client orientation and satisfaction (Saxe & Weitz, 1982). The use of focus groups, to modify the original instrument, based upon SERVQUAL, was supported by reference to Schneider and White (2004). They suggested that as this was the method used to develop the instrument in the first place it was a suitable basis for its modification.

The third conclusion relates to a perceived gap that exists in the research literature concerning the study of courts as workplaces that are subjected to both chronic and acute work-related stressors. It also relates to the gap identified by Jex (1998) and confirmed by Rosen et al. (2010) about a lack of research into the interactive effects between chronic and acute stressors. The fourth conclusion relates to the fact that despite the case study organization's client service staff rating their job satisfaction as positive but weak and strongly rating the quality of their service performance, the Study found that the presence of three type of stressors appeared to have a combined, negative effect on how client service staff spoke about and rated their relationship with their employing organization and their co-workers. As a result, the Study makes an effort to link theory from work-related stress, service provider attitudes (i.e. commitment and job satisfaction) and service employee-well being to theory about job performance (in-role and extra-role). This was done to suggest possible ways that court administrators could reframe their workforce management strategies to provide more emphasis to employee wellbeing. It is recognized the inclusion of employee wellbeing in behavioral science research is not without its own challenges. As Brunetto et al. (2011, p. 148) stated "wellbeing has multiple definitions, conceptualizations and measurements". However, like the other constructs used in this Study, increased use may lead to improved conceptualization and measurement including the wider use of mixed research method approaches to such investigations (Schonfeld & Farrell, 2010). A

presentation by Page (2011) at the Industrial and Organizational Psychology Conference in Brisbane this year demonstrated the potential benefits of taking a ‘positive psychology’ approach to promoting the wellbeing for staff subjected to aggressive behavior at work.

The final conclusion reached was that whilst the case study organization was regarded as a leader in the field of court administration in Australia (Parker, 1998) the apparent prevalence of work-related stress, as perceived by some client service staff, suggested that aspects of the organization’s current approach to workforce management would benefit from being reframed. It may involve re-examining specific initiatives designed to address work-related stress in terms of whether they are primary, secondary or tertiary preventative strategies (Lundberg & Cooper, 2010) and ensuring a balance of all three levels of strategy are in place. It may involve fine tuning workforce composition, training and development or situational factors (Wright, 2010). It may also involve renewing the commitment from the organization to its employees (Donald et al., 2005; Faragher et al., 2004; Robertson & Flint-Taylor, 2009) where the focus of attention is, and is seen to be as much about the wellbeing of service providers as it is about the wellbeing of the clients they serve.

ATTACHMENT A

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability and Inter-correlations amongst Study Variables

	Variables	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Affective Organizational Commitment	4.29	.738	(.69)										
2	Continuance Organizational Commitment	3.96	.842	-.020	(.71)									
3	Normative Organizational Commitment	3.91	.893	.368* *	.143*	(.61)								
4	Global Organisational Commitment	4.09	.423	.665* *	.612* *	.720* *	(i)							
5	Affective Co-worker Commitment	4.45	.801	.661* *	-.035	.393*	.491 **	(.76)						
6	Continuance Co-worker Commitment	3.97	.883	-.007	.737* *	.304* *	.539 **	.100	(.79)					
7	Normative Co-worker Commitment	3.97	.780	.364* *	.105	.589* *	.554 **	.351* *	.274* *	(.88)				
8	Global Co-worker Commitment	4.15	.547	.454* *	.384* *	.579* *	.713 **	.715* *	.647* *	.818* *	(i)			
9	Job Satisfaction	4.92	.646	.447* *	-.037	.352* *	.364 **	.520* *	.028	.349* *	.402* *	(.82)		
10	Service Quality	5.52	.769	.150*	.047	.053	.122	.187* *	.054	.009	.110	.299* *	(ii)	
11	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	5.49	.745	.123	-.038	.037	.046	.120	.023	-.046	.041	.258* *	.758 **	(iii)

Notes: N=194; Correlation is significant at * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed); Correlation is significant at ** $p < 0.001$ (2-tailed); M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; (i) Derived variables; (ii) Coefficient Alpha ranges from .79 to .95 for the components of Service Quality; (iii) Coefficient Alpha ranges from .73 to .95 for the components of Organisational Citizenship Behavior.

ATTACHMENT B

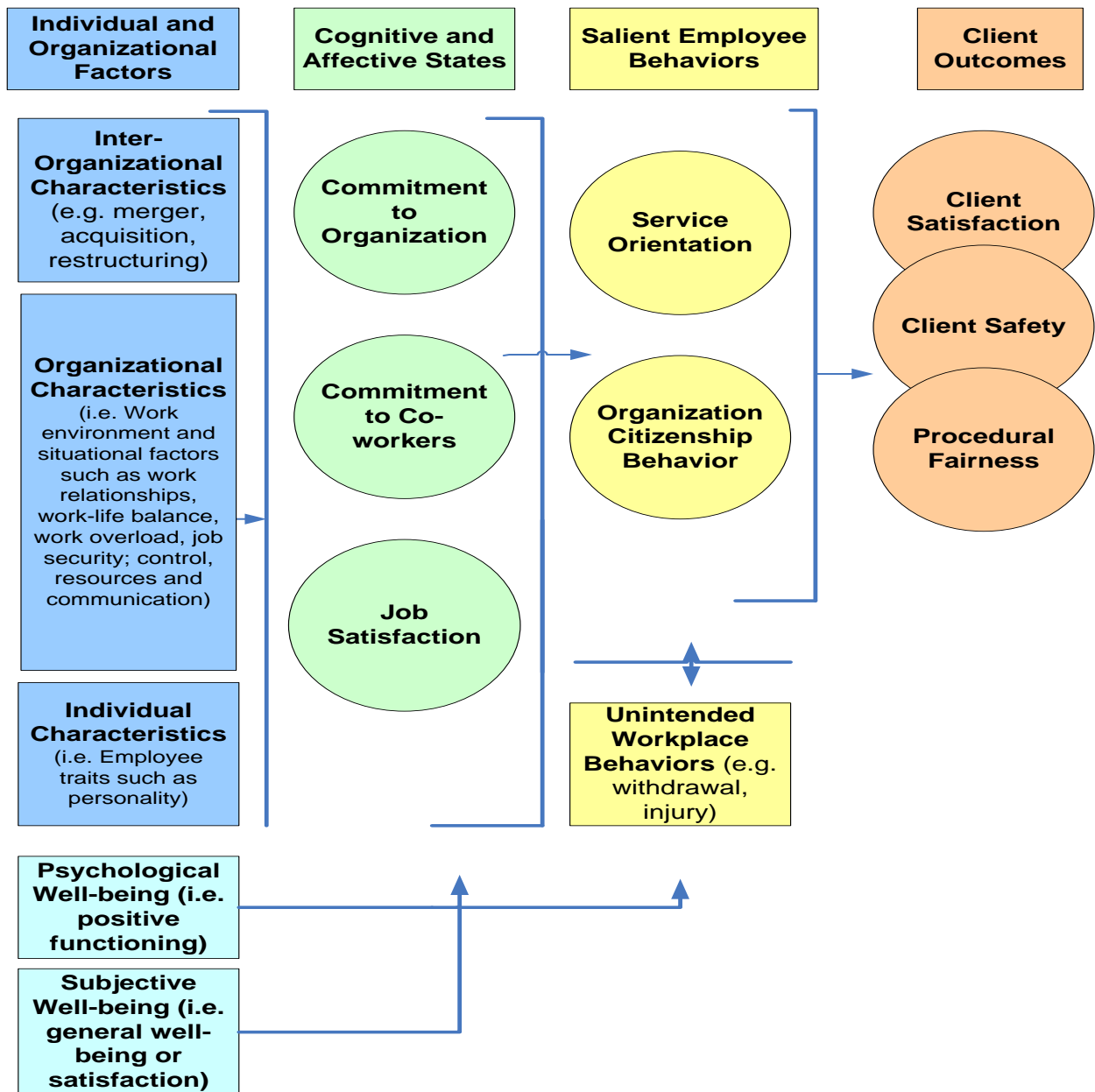


Figure 1: A Model of Factors Related to Work-Related Stress, Service Provider Attitudes, and Service Provider Behaviors that Influence Service Outcomes

ATTACHMENT C

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