

**Employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st
century world of work**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Commerce
in the subject

Human Resource Management

at the
University of South Africa

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January 2017

DECLARATION

I, Khatoon Gani, student number 44261772, declare that this dissertation entitled **Employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work** is my own work. All the sources that I have used or have quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. The work has not in part or whole been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the most kind, the most merciful, the most beneficial. All praises are due to Allah, the Almighty who has blessed me with the knowledge and guidance to complete this task.

My husband, Nazeer Hoosen for his unconditional support. You always encouraged me to continue, even at times when I felt like giving up. Your support and commitment helped me to overcome all my challenges and believe in myself.

To my parents, Fayzool and Naseema Mahomed for their perseverance to study further. Dad you always believed in us and pushed us to study further. Without both your sacrifices, this would not have been possible.

To my siblings Rehana, Salma and Muhammad Saleem, along with my nieces and nephews thank you for all your support, care and motivation. Your advice and words of knowledge means everything to me.

Professor Ingrid Potgieter, for being an admirable supervisor, colleague and friend. You always offered support and perseverance to assist me in completing my studies. You guided me from the very start and showed me what I could achieve by putting in effort.

Professor Melinde Coetzee, your feedback has taught me so much. You were always approachable and ever ready to assist me where needed. Thank you very much for taking the time to teach me what is expected of me and being patient as I learnt and made mistakes along the way.

ABSTRACT

Employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work

by

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This research focuses on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors within the context of staff retention in the 21st century workplace. A cross-sectional quantitative research approach was followed, and a probability stratified sample ($N = 311$) of mainly black and female participants participated in the study. A canonical correlation analysis indicated a significant overall relationship between the employability attributes/organisational commitment canonical variate and the retention factor canonical variate. Inferential statistics revealed significant differences between ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level regarding these variables. The study also confirmed a positive relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Recommendations are made for use by human resource professionals in terms of the retention of valuable staff.

KEY TERMS

Employability attributes, organisational commitment, retention factors, 21st century world of work.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors within the context of staff retention in the 21st century workplace. The 21st century workplace is a very current topic and there is a great need for such research, as will be explained in the background to the study. The aim of this chapter is to provide the background to and motivation for the intended research, which led to the formulation of the problem statement and research questions. The aims of the research are stated next. Lastly, the manner in which the chapters will be presented is explained. The chapter concludes with a summary of the scientific overview.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The context of this research is the retention of employees in the 21st century world of work. More specifically, the research focused on investigating the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. An examination exploring the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors has become fundamental in the light of the changing nature of careers and the global skills scarcity. The potential relationship will also play an important role in enhancing the retention of knowledge workers.

The 21st century workplace is changing and, as a result, individuals entering the workplace are faced with a number of challenges, including reduced employment opportunities, lower job security and evolving technology (Clarke, 2013; Marock, 2008). Lent (2013) supports this view and identifies technology, the global economic environment and demographics as some of the factors that have led to a change in the world of work. The world of work has become faster paced, more diverse and less predictable for many workers (Lent, 2013). Ferreira, Basson and Coetzee (2010) explain that there has been a shift in focus, from being employed to being employable. Organisations are phasing out the notion of long-term employment, therefore an individual may have multiple careers and occupations (Bezuidenhout, 2010). Sutherland and Jordaan (2004) assert that, along with the changing nature of the world of work, employees and employers no longer expect long-term commitment. Employees in the 21st century world of work are primarily responsible for the management of their own careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; De Vos & Cambré, 2016). Clarke (2013) goes on to mention that a core characteristic of contemporary careers in the 21st century world of work is that they have become less predictable, thus making career management more challenging for organisations. Ribeiro

(2015) describes the 21st century workplace as flexible, heterogeneous and complex. Ribeiro (2015) goes on to say that the workplace has changed significantly, and that these changes have reshaped individual careers. As a result of these changes, individuals have to construct and develop their own careers (Ribeiro, 2015). Rodrigues, Guest, Oliveira and Alfes (2015) are of the opinion that employees who take ownership of their careers are more confident in their ability to find a new job and report higher levels of job satisfaction.

From the above discussion it appears that the world of work has changed drastically in the 21st century. The 21st century workplace has led to increased mobility and created a major concern for organisations, as they are now losing knowledge workers who play a crucial role in the success of the organisation (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). Alvesson (2000) describes a knowledge worker as an intellectual and qualified individual who forms a significant part of the workforce. Horwitz, Heng and Quazi (2003) add that a knowledge worker has both individual and personal knowledge, and organisations in the 21st century world of work are pursuing ways of transferring this knowledge into shared social knowledge arrayed for organisational goals. Organisations in the 21st century world of work value knowledgeable workers, as they are continuously learning and developing and this results in increased organisational competitiveness (Vanthournout, Noyens, Gijbels & Van den Bossche, 2014).

Ferreira (2012) found that the challenges of work in the 21st century have an impact on staff retention and therefore employers need to adopt a dynamic approach when developing retention practices within the organisation. Shekhawat (2016) describes the 21st century world of work as being very complex and competitive and goes on to say that retention has become very challenging for organisations. The concept of employee retention can be defined as the effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives (Döckel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). Retention is simply the ability of an organisation to retain its valuable employees (Shekhawat, 2016). Hong, Lam, Kumar, Ramendran and Kadiresan (2012) mention that, by retaining employees, organisations can be rewarded with several benefits including saving recruitment costs, less training to be conducted for new staff, increased productivity and increased employee performance, which will lead to higher profits and the reaching of organisational goals. Haider et al. (2014) add that it is essential for organisations to retain talented staff in order to reach organisational goals, as well as to maintain the success of the organisation in the long term. Ghosh, Satyawadi, Joshi and Shadman (2013) say that it is important to retain employees to create a stable workforce and to ensure work is done effectively. Human resource professionals need to focus on retaining talented employees and keep them actively engaged in their work (Fredric, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004).

South Africa is currently facing the ongoing problem of a shortage of skilled workers (Department of Labour, 2014). These skills shortages are one of the major constraints to sustainable economic growth in the country (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). The report on the state of skills in South Africa confirms that there is a demand for skilled workers across all sectors (Department of Labour, 2014). Domingos Mateus, Allen-Ile and Gervase Iwu (2014) have found that South Africa faces severe skills shortages in almost every sector of the economy. Domingos Mateus et al. (2014) mention that, although South Africa has a large number of graduates in different fields, the country still suffers from a skills shortage, as many of these graduates lack the relevant and crucial skills needed. Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) suggest that the development and retention of skilled people in a country contribute to the growth of that country. It therefore can be confirmed that the retention of knowledgeable workers in the new world of work is a key strategy that must be adopted by organisations in order to remain competitive (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). Domingos Mateus et al. (2014) recommend training programmes to help the country improve literacy and numeracy programmes. Domingos Mateus et al. (2014) also believe this will help to improve the skills shortage problems facing South Africa.

The changing nature of work has resulted not only in the need for employers to implement retention strategies to retain valuable employees, but employees are required to approach their careers with adaptability and flexibility due to the limited employment opportunities available (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Included in the changing nature of work are rapid technological changes and increased customer demands, and organisations have to apply accommodating work structures to manage these changes effectively (Bezuidenhout, 2010). As a result, an unpredictable business environment has been created and therefore employees can no longer be guaranteed life-long employment; this has resulted in a shift in careers taking place – from careers within a restricted number of organisations to boundaryless careers comprising many positions in multiple organisations and sometimes multiple occupations (Fugate et al., 2004). These shifts have forced employees to take responsibility for the management of their own careers, which involves the management of their employability (Bezuidenhout, 2010). The changes in the workplace have led to organisations adopting contemporary career types, characterised by increased self-directedness, flexibility and the aim of career success (Herrmann, Hirschi, & Baruch, 2015). As result of these changes, the career development of the employee has shifted from being the responsibility of both the employer and the employee to being primarily the responsibility of the employee. Kovalenko and Mortelmans (2014) propose that organisations in the 21st century adopt the new theory approach. Within this approach, employees are more flexible to the labour markets and have higher career mobility and therefore take responsibility for

their career development (Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2014). Employees in the 21st century world of work have adopted proactive career behaviours whereby they direct their current and future career paths (Herrmann et al., 2015). The employees in the 21st century world of work choose to take advantage of the flexibility in the labour market and utilise their specific career capital, rather than viewing the organisational instability negatively (Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2014). Dorenzo, Greenhaus and Weer (2015) add that employees within the 21st century world of work take greater control of their career management in order to remain employable in a highly volatile and competitive labour market.

Fugate et al. (2004) define employability as a psycho-social construct that represents particular features that encourage adaptive cognition and behaviour and positively affect the individual. Employability can be understood as the ownership of basic core skills or an extended set of generic attributes specified by an employer (Harvey, 2001). Marock (2008) adds that life-long employability is the ability to be equipped with current competencies and hold a rewarding job. Highly employable employees are described as those individuals who have spent less than two years in their current function and are likely to be moved to a new function in the probable future (Van der Heijden, De Lange, Demerouti & Van der Heijde, 2009b). In the 21st century world of work characterised by globalisation and mobility, employability is seen as an important asset to ensure that adequate opportunities are available in the labour market (Van Der Klink, Van der Heijden, Boon, & Van Rooij, 2014)

Fugate et al. (2004) have developed a psycho-social model of employability that enables individuals to cope with unemployment better, as it allows them to realise that their employability can be self-improved (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe & Hall, 2007). According to Fugate et al. (2004), employability consists of three interrelated dimensions: personal adaptability, career identity and, finally, human and social capital. Adaptability refers to those individuals who have a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; career identity refers to the way in which individuals define themselves in the career context; and human capital refers to personal variables that may affect an individual's career advancement (Fugate et al., 2004; McArdle et al., 2007).

The definition of employability is extended to include not only work-related skills, but also interpersonal skills (Zinser, 2003). Bozionelos et al. (2016) define employability as an individual's work-centred adaptability that improves his/her ability to find and use job and career opportunities. Employees with employability attributes who lose their jobs are likely to find new jobs more easily than employees who do not have these attributes (Boselie, 2010). Employability enhances an individual's likelihood of gaining and sustaining employment and

facilitates movement between jobs (Fugate et al., 2004). Marock (2008) noted that employability attributes are skills that are not limited to gaining employment, but also skills that allow self-development and that contribute to the success of the organisation. In order for individuals to succeed in the 21st century world of work, they must be educated, as well as have the skills that enable them to think logically and solve problems independently (Kivunja, 2015).

Within the 21st century world of work, people are regarded as competence traders and therefore their employability attributes extend from their ability to be employable and perform well in their jobs to their constant ability to fulfil, create or acquire work through skills and abilities that facilitate them to become self-directed learners and proactive agents in the management of their careers (Coetzee, 2008). Potgieter and Coetzee (2013) place emphasis on the importance of individuals being proactive in developing their employability to manage their career development in a changing occupational world.

Skills and abilities such as behavioural adaptability, identity awareness and sense of purpose, self-esteem and emotional intelligence are known as career meta-competencies. These competencies are critical to the career development process (Coetzee, 2008). Potgieter (2012) found that career-meta competencies and work-related capabilities are factors that influence employability. Fugate et al. (2004) support this view by mentioning that people with a wide range of career meta-competencies (psychological career resources) show higher levels of employability, as these individuals are more adaptive and flexible and better able to accommodate career transitions. Tladinyane, Coetzee and Masenge (2013) mention that employees depend more on their psychological and social capacities, rather than depending on career arrangements.

Fugate et al. (2004) believe that it would be beneficial to both the organisation and employee to stimulate employability throughout the career cycle. Although older employees are motivated to acquire new skills and knowledge, management lacks focus in facilitating employability and career success across these employees' working life (Van der Heijden et al., 2009b). In her study, Potgieter (2012) found that employability is affected by biographical data such as age, gender and culture. Age gives an individual an opportunity to gain experience, which allows for the development of skills and competencies that increase his/her employability. Employability skills can be taught effectively and, as a result, career development courses should include employability-enhancing content that focuses on improving employability attributes (Potgieter, 2012). Van der Klink et al. (2014) mention that the concept of life-time employability implies that individuals are more accountable for

investments in their own human capital and career development. As employees get older, their level of employability will depend on individual and institutional factors (Froehlich, Beausaert & Segers, 2016). Older employees thus show interest in developing and sustaining their employability based on the remaining opportunities available to them (Froehlich et al., 2016).

Research has shown that organisational commitment is a key psychological factor that is affected by employability (Benson, 2006; Ferreira et al., 2010). Employees view skill development and training as benefits contributing to their commitment to remain with the organisation (Benson, 2006). According to Ferreira et al. (2010), career meta-competencies provide a valuable background for analysing how psychological career resources relate to organisational commitment levels. Employees feel more emotionally attached to the organisation if they believe they have the skills to manage their career goals in creative and original ways (Ferreira et al., 2010). Benson (2006) confirms this relationship by pronouncing that employability serves as a pledge to employees that they will have the skills to seek new employment if required and also enhances long-term job security by allowing employees to develop a sense of organisational commitment. He also believes that employees will feel more committed and remain with the organisation if the organisation reduces the employee's uncertainty about finding another job.

According to Shah, Strerret, Chesser and Wilmore (2001), employability also plays a role in affecting the retention of employees. The changing work/life balance has introduced feelings of insecurity amongst employees, and these employees no longer feel obligated to remain loyal to the organisation and would easily quit when alternative opportunities come along (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen & Mäkikangas, 2011). An investment in improving the skills of employees through training can help an organisation attract and retain the best talent for the company (Shah et al., 2001). Deery (2008) supports this view by mentioning that training new employees and providing them with the necessary attributes diminishes their desire to leave the organisation. Employers feel obligated to train their employees, since they understand that continuous development is a necessity to retain knowledgeable workers (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Employee development can affect organisational commitment either positively or negatively, depending on whether employees are rewarded when they gain new skills (Benson, 2006).

Changes within the 21st century workplace, such as mergers, re-engineering and organisational downsizing, have created an area of concern for organisations as employees are no longer guaranteed job security. As a result of this uncertainty, organisations need to

develop new ways of retaining employees and inspiring organisational commitment (Benson, 2006). The aforementioned changes are causing individuals to question what is meant by job satisfaction, and their commitment seems to be determined by how well they feel they have been treated during those changes (Ferreira et al., 2010). Benson (2006) notes that in recent years a greater number of South African workers are employed by small businesses, employed as subcontractors, work part-time or have their own businesses. He also mentions that the diversity of the workforce in South Africa has increased significantly and that these changes have an impact on organisational commitment.

In the light of the economic events and changes, as discussed, human resource practitioners together with managers have shown a great deal of interest in investigating the factors that influence an employee's psychological attachment to the organisation (Ferreira et al., 2010). Employee commitment is vital for organisations to retain valuable staff (Mehta, Kurbetti, & Dhankar, 2014). Committed employees help to build a dedicated workforce, to lower recruitment as well as training and development costs, and to increase the retention of knowledgeable employees (Benson, 2006). Employee commitment leads to improved work performance, reduced turnover and increased productivity (Mehta et al., 2014). Maheswari and Krishnan (2014) believe that organisations in the 21st century world of work are looking for possible ways to motivate and increase employees' attachment to an organisation and do so by showing employees that they are valued by offering them adequate retention factors.

Previous studies suggest that an employee's feelings, goals and values in the job could have an effect on organisational commitment (Ferreira et al., 2010). Colquitt, LePine and Wesson (2009) trust that committed employees often have strong constructive feelings regarding particular aspects of their job.

Organisational commitment can be defined as an employee's wish to remain a role player within the organisation. The decision of an employee to stay a member of the organisation or to leave to seek alternate employment is affected by organisational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2009). Allen and Meyer (1996) define organisational commitment as a psychological relationship between an employee and an organisation that increases an employee's voluntarily purpose to stay with the organisation. Slocum and Hellriegel (2004) define organisational commitment as a work-related attitude in terms of which an employee identifies with the organisation and strives to maintain a relationship with that organisation. According to Passarelli (2011), the desire of an individual to increase his/her commitment to the organisation, identify with the organisation and accept the organisational goals and values are key characteristics of organisational commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) were the main contributors to the field of organisational commitment and have developed a three-component model for understanding organisational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), commitment binds an individual to the organisation and decreases the chances of turnover. The three components are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment to the organisation.

Affective commitment can be defined as a desire to remain a role player in an organisation due to work experiences that create feelings of comfort and personal competence (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is an individual's affective connection to, recognition with and participation in the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1996). According to Ferreira et al. (2010), individuals will view their relationships with their organisation as pleasant and satisfying if they are psychologically committed to their organisation. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) are of the opinion that employees with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organisation because they want to do so.

The second component, continuance commitment, is defined as a need to remain with the organisation and results from the recognition of the costs associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The individual employee is conscious of the costs associated with leaving the organisation and lacks of alternative job opportunities; as a result, this state of mind is considered to be calculative (Ferreira et al., 2010). Allen and Meyer (1996) found that these individuals remain with the organisation because of the money they may lose by leaving the organisation and their time spent with the organisation. These employees do not stay with the organisation because they want to do so, but rather because they have to do so.

Normative commitment is the final component of organisational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) define normative commitment as an individual's obligation that binds him/her to remain with the organisation. These individuals consider the benefits, advantages and rewards they have received throughout their years of service and feel that they owe their loyalty to the organisation (Ferreira, 2010). These employees remain with the organisation due to their loyalty to the organisation.

Ferreira et al. (2010) note that organisational commitment is affected by an individual's feelings, values and goals in the job he/she is currently performing. Organisational commitment is therefore identified by an individual's acceptance of organisational goals and his/her willingness to help achieve those goals and contribute to the success of the organisation (Manetje & Martins, 2009). It thus can be concluded that employees who can

identify with the organisation are more likely to develop a sense of belonging to that organisation and thus become committed to the organisation.

Ferreira et al. (2010) concluded that organisational commitment is not affected by race and gender, although age does affect commitment. They found that, as employees get older, they develop a stronger sense of commitment to the organisation.

Employees no longer feel that they can rely on their organisation for job security and this has caused many individuals to feel less loyal and more willing to leave for another organisation (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). As a result of the increasing rate of uncertainty relating to job security, organisations are looking at developing new ways of inspiring commitment amongst employees and retaining these workers (Benson, 2006). Organisations are constantly faced with the challenge of replacing departing employees and, as these costs continue to increase, they are determined to find and keep the right employees (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Turnover can be harmful to an organisation and replacement costs are often very high, therefore organisations must prioritise the retention of talented staff (Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière & Raymond, 2015). The changing nature of work and global demands have made retaining scarce skills more difficult (Netswera, Rankhumise & Mavundla, 2005). The global skills shortage requires organisations not only to understand the reasons for employee turnover, but also to identify and understand the factors that influence the turnover and retention of staff (Coetzee, Oosthuizen & Stoltz, 2015). Research has shown that an employee's turnover intention, which is his /her intention to leave an organisation, is influenced by job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Joao & Coetzee, 2011). Hausknecht, Rodda and Howard (2009) note that employees who are committed to the organisation are expected to understand and believe in the goals and values of the organisation and, as a result, they will remain with that organisation. If an organisation can develop strategies that reduce the uncertainty of finding a new job, then employee will be more committed to that organisation (Benson, 2006). Organisational commitment thus has been found to be a strong predictor of intent to remain with the organisation, and low organisational commitment is generally associated with high turnover (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Van Dyk, Coetzee and Takawira (2013) assert that organisations must identify and recognise the factors that attract and retain talented staff and ensure that they comply with these factors. Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) found that retention factors contribute to reduced voluntary turnover, lower intentions to leave, increased productivity and more committed employees. Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) add that employees with high levels of organisational commitment are unlikely to pursue alternative job opportunities.

When an employee leaves the organisation, the employer loses what the employee has learnt, together with the investment in that individual's career (Shen & Douglas, 2009). Organisations also have to deal with the costs associated with turnover, which involve high recruitment and training costs (Ton & Huckman, 2008). An organisation's ability to remain competitive will decline if it fails to retain high performers, since it will be left with understaffed and less skilled workers (Hausknecht et al., 2009).

One of the crucial concerns that organisations are faced with is the issue of retaining top talent (Hausknecht et al., 2009; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016). Fredric et al. (2004) define retention as an effort by an employer to keep talented individuals in order to meet business objectives. Retention refers to the ability of an organisation to hold on to those employees that the organisation wants to keep (Shoaib, Noor, Tirmizi & Bashir, 2009). Organisations do so by striving to decrease employee turnover, which will result in decreased recruitment costs, training costs and loss of skilful employees (Bhatnagar, 2007). Organisations develop several strategies, which range from monetary incentives – including increased compensation, benefits, incentives and promotions, to non-monetary benefits – including flexible work arrangements, skills development and control to retain their employees (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Ferreira (2012) adds that, in some cases, management rewards employees for performing their jobs effectively, ensures pleasant work relations and maintains a healthy working environment in order to retain employees. Potgieter, Coetzee and Ferreira (2016) highlight the importance of retaining talented and employable individuals who are committed to the organisation in the competitive job market.

Döckel et al. (2006) describe the following six factors as crucial factors that need to be considered in the retention of highly skilled professional and managerial employees in the South African context: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies.

Money was found to be the main incentive that attracts professionals to join an organisation, and it draws in highly skilled professionals (Ferreira et al., 2010; Netswera et al., 2005; Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn & Rojniruntikul, 2014). Once the pay level has been reached, the employee will become more interested in the additional benefits offered, including career, supervisor support and work and family balance (Döckel et al., 2006). Managers must bear in mind that most employees expect salaries and benefits, and that these may not be sufficient reasons for an employee to remain with the organisation (Kemelgor & William, 2008). Tangthong et al. (2014) identified a positive relationship between compensation and retention and found that employees who were satisfied with their pay and benefits felt a

stronger desire to remain with the organisation. Haider et al. (2014) are of the opinion that compensation reveals the level of commitment and intention an organisation has towards its employees and is thus an important factor in attracting and retaining valuable staff.

Turnover can be defined as the unplanned loss of employees who voluntarily leave the organisation; reference is made particularly to those employees that the organisation would like to keep (Fredric et al., 2004). Hausknecht et al. (2009) use the model of turnover developed by March and Simon (1985) to explain an employee's motive to leave the organisation, which proposes that employees are more likely to remain with an organisation when they are pleased with their jobs and believe that they have a limited number of alternative opportunities.

Organisations aim to develop strategies that contribute to the retention of their most valued employees (Hausknecht et al., 2009; Potgieter et al., 2016). They must ensure that their employees are happy with their current work situations and understand the goals and expectations of the organisation. Research suggests that, if an organisation can help its employees develop a set of employability attributes, this will reduce the individual's fear of finding another job when required, and they will feel more committed and remain with the organisation (Benson, 2006). Employability serves as a replacement for job security and employees are then free to develop organisational commitment and willingness to remain with the organisation. Employability adds value to an organisation's competitiveness and has a positive effect on organisational commitment (Potgieter et al., 2016)

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the aforementioned background, this research study aimed to extend research on the retention of employees in the 21st century workplace by exploring the link between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The research literature has shown that theoretical models do not clarify the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in one integrated study. It is evident from the theoretical background discussed that the understanding of the variables relating to employability attributes and retention factors may influence an individual's commitment or loyalty to the organisation. It would appear that research on the relationship dynamics between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors will contribute to the discipline of human resource management, particularly with regard to the retention of staff. Finally, the empirical results could be generalised to

other institutions to facilitate the possible implications for retention in the 21st century workplace.

A review of the current literature on employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors indicates the following research problems:

- Theoretical models do not clarify the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in one single study.
- Human resource practitioners lack knowledge about the theoretical and empirical relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, particularly in the South African context.
- An empirical investigation of the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors and the implications of utilising employability attributes and retention strategies to enhance organisational commitment are not known in full, hence the need for further investigation.

It would appear that research on employability attributes and retention factors that influence an employee's psychological attachment to the organisation would make a significant contribution to the discipline of human resource management. Finally, the results could be generalised to certain populations to help industries with the development of retention strategies and the development of employee commitment within organisations.

From the above, the following research questions were formulated in terms of the literature review and empirical study:

1.2.1 Research questions relating to the literature review

- **Research question 1:** How are the three constructs of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors conceptualised and explained by theoretical models in the literature?
- **Research question 2:** Does a theoretical relationship exist between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, and how can this relationship be explained?

Sub-question 2.1: What is the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment and employability attributes?

Sub-question 2.2: What is the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors?

Sub-question 2.3: What is the theoretical relationship between employability attributes and retention factors?

- **Research question 3:** What are the theoretical implications for organisational retention practices?
- **Research question 4:** What is the effect of biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level) on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors?
- **Research question 5:** What are the theoretical implications for organisational retention practices?

1.2.2 Research questions relating to the empirical study

- **Research question 1:** What is the statistical nature of the relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors as manifested in a sample of participants employed in a typical South African organisational setting?
- **Research question 2:** What is the nature of the overall statistical relationship between the employability attributes and organisational commitment construct variables as the set of latent independent variables and the retention factors as the set of dependent latent variables?
- **Research question 3:** What are the differences that exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level)?
- **Research question 4:** What conclusions and recommendations can be formulated for the development of organisational commitment and the development of retention strategies, as well as possible future research in the field of human resource management?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

From the above research questions, the following aims were formulated:

2.1.1 General aim of the research

The general primary aim of the study was to explore the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work.

The secondary aim was to investigate the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, with specific reference to culture, age, gender, job category and qualification level, to see if they differ in relation to the three variables.

2.1.2 Specific aims of the research

The following specific aims were formulated for the literature review and the empirical study:

(a) Literature review

In terms of the literature review, the specific aims were:

- **Research aim 1:** To conceptualise careers and the retention of staff in the 21st century workplace.
- **Research aim 2:** To conceptualise the three constructs, namely employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research aim 3:** To identify and explain the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of explanatory theoretical models.

Sub-aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 3.2: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

- **Research aim 4:** To conceptualise the effect of biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level) on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.
- **Research aim 5:** To critically evaluate the theoretical implications for organisational retention practices.

(b) Empirical study

In terms of the empirical study, the specific aims were:

- **Research aim 1:** To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of staff employed at the University of South Africa.
Sub-aim 1.1: To empirically investigate the relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment.
Sub-aim 1.2: To empirically investigate the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors.
Sub-aim 1.3: To empirically investigate the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors.
- **Research aim 2:** To empirically investigate whether the employability attributes and retention factors as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables.
- **Research aim 3:** To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level).
- **Research aim 4:** To draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention and possible future research based on the findings of the research.

2.1.3 Hypotheses

A hypothesis is described as a prediction – a statement about relationships that have not yet been verified (Mathison, 2011). Punch (2014) defines a hypothesis as a predicted answer to a research question. In quantitative research, hypotheses are generally established provided there has been adequate prior research on the topic to make predictions (Davis, 2012).

Research hypotheses were formulated for the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors to allow the empirical testing of the relationship between these variables.

The following research hypotheses were formulated with a view to achieving the objectives of the research study and meeting the criteria for the formulation of the hypotheses:

Ha1	There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.
Ha2	The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.
Ha3	Individuals from various ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factor satisfaction levels.

1.4 POTENTIAL VALUE ADD

The concept of retention factors is a significant researchable topic that has received much attention in recent years. Scholars have not researched the association between retention factors, organisational commitment and employability attributes as these variables manifest in the South African context in a single study. This research is a starting point in seeking a relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

This study may be useful due to the relationships found and may serve as a useful source of information for human resource practitioners in determining the psychological and human resource-related aspects that play a role in increasing employability attributes and organisational commitment in order to enhance satisfaction with retention factors. This study may potentially help companies and HR practitioners to retain valuable employees.

The findings may also be useful to future researchers interested in studying these variables. The research results may potentially contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with psychological and human resource-related factors that could influence the retention of valuable staff members.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

Miller (2013) defines a research design as a plan according to which research participants are obtained and information is collected from them. Terr Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) state that a research design is much like a strategic framework that links research questions with the actual implementation of the research. The term research design means all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project, from identifying the problem to reporting the results (Punch, 2014). The framework for the research is discussed in the following paragraphs.

For the purpose of this study, a cross-sectional quantitative research method was used to investigate the relationship dynamics between the variables employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The study provides quantitative measures of employability attributes, an individual's commitment to the organisation and retention factors at a specific point in time, and how individuals from different biographical backgrounds (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level) differ regarding these variables. Quantitative research is empirical research in which the data is in the form

of numbers (Punch, 2014). In a quantitative study, researchers use theory to explain or predict relationships (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research is also classified as a more structured approach to research and involves exploring relationships, confirming theories or quantifying problems (Kumar, 2011).

A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect the data. The research techniques of descriptive, correlational and canonical correlation were used to analyse the data. The advantages of using questionnaires include confidentiality of the respondents, it is easier to analyse and interpret into quantitative results, and they can be distributed to a larger number of participants. Questionnaires also have several disadvantages, such as they do not offer interaction with the respondents and they offer only a limited depth to which the researcher is able to probe the respondents (Hofstee, 2006).

1.5.1 Descriptive research

Descriptive research aims to discover and explain an observable fact in more detail (Wisker, 2008). It helps the researcher to understand more about the fact. Mouton (2008) defines descriptive research as an in-depth description of the individual, situation, group, organisation, culture, subculture, interactions or social objects. He contends that the main aim of this type of research is to describe issues as precisely as possible.

In the literature review, descriptive research was applicable to the conceptualisation of the constructs employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. In the empirical study, descriptive research was applicable with reference to frequencies (sample characteristics), means, standard deviations and internal consistency reliability coefficients, in terms of the constructs employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

1.5.2 Exploratory research

The main purpose of exploratory research is to gain information from a reasonably unfamiliar field (Mouton, 2008). Wisker (2008) explains that exploratory research is often useful when new knowledge is required or when certain actions, behaviours and events need exploration. This research was exploratory in that it compared various theoretical perspectives on employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

1.5.3 Explanatory research

Explanatory research seeks to look at cause-and-effect relationships (Wisker, 2008). Mouton (2008) adds that this type of research extends from merely indicating that a relationship between the variables exists to seeking the direction of the relationship. It should be noted that, in the context of the present study, due to the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the focus was not on establishing cause-effect relationships. The focus was on assessing the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationships between the variables.

By using explanatory research, a conclusion was formulated regarding the relationship between the constructs employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables of employability attributes, retention factors and organisational commitment. Canonical correlation analysis was used to ascertain whether employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of latent variables significantly predict satisfaction with retention factors as a composite set of latent dependent variables. Tests for significant mean differences were utilised to investigate whether ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level differ significantly in terms of the constructs measured. Independent sample t-tests were performed for this purpose. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$.

1.5.4 Research variables

The context of this study was the retention of employees in the 21st century world of work. This research aimed to measure two independent variables (employability attributes and organisational commitment) in relation to one dependent variable (satisfaction with retention factors). The research focused on determining whether a statistical significant empirical relationship exists between these variables and whether biographical aspects (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level) differ in terms of these variables.

This research was interested in:

- Measuring the relationship between employability attributes (independent variable) and organisational commitment (independent variable)
- Measuring the relationship between employability attributes (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)

- Measuring the relationship between organisational commitment (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- Measuring the relationship between organisational commitment (independent variable), organisational commitment (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- Measuring the relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level), employability attributes (independent variable), organisational commitment (dependent variable) and satisfaction with retention factors (dependent variable).
- Measuring the differences between the biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level), employability attributes (independent variable), organisational commitment (dependent variable) and satisfaction with retention factors (dependent variable).

Figure 1.1 below represents the theoretical relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment, retention factors and biographical variables.

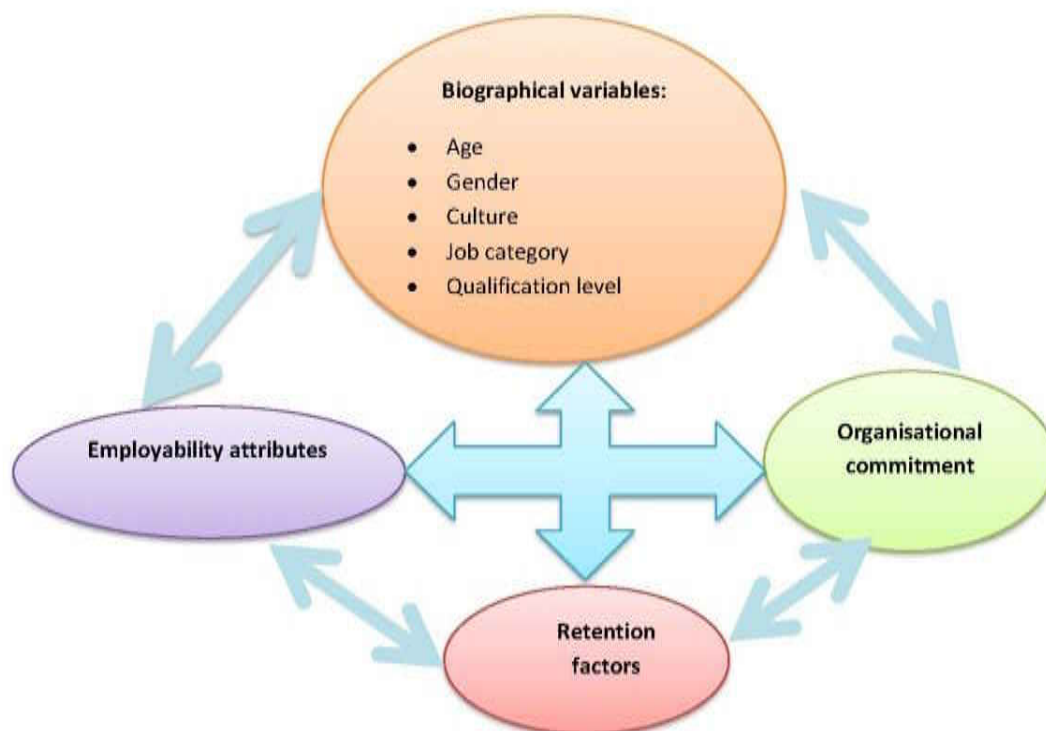


Figure 1.1: Theoretical relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

1.5.5 Methods used to ensure validity and reliability

(a) Validity

The validity of a measuring instrument indicates whether the methods, approaches and techniques the researcher has used really fit and measure the issues they are researching (Wisker, 2008). Internal validity applies to the context of the study itself, whereas external validity applies outside the context of the study and is used to make generalisations (Miller, 2013). Both internal and external validity are important and desirable for a research design.

In this research, the internal validity was ensured through:

- Using literature, models and theories that are relevant to the research topic, problem statement and aims.
- Selecting measuring instruments with proven validity and reliability that are applicable to the models and theories informing the study, and ensuring that they were presented in a standardised manner.

The external validity was ensured through the selection of the sample to be representative of the total population. Design validity was ensured by the identification of plausible rival hypotheses and eliminating their impact.

(b) Reliability

Reliability relates to how well the researcher has carried out the research. Research is considered reliable if it is consistent and likely to be replicated by another researcher interested in the same field of study (Wisker, 2008). In the empirical research, internal consistency reliability of the measures is important.

In this research, the reliability was ensured through:

- Using existing literature sources, theories and models.
- Using a representative sample.
- Data analysis: A statistical package (SPSS) was used to analyse the data to ensure the reliability of the analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to establish the internal consistency reliability of the instruments used to collect the data.

1.5.6 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the object, phenomenon, entity, process or event that is being researched (Mouton, 2008). In terms of biographical variables, the unit of analysis was the sub-groups, while the unit of analysis for the study was the individuals, focusing on employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

1.5.7 Delimitations

The study was confined to research dealing with the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. In an attempt to transverse factors that could influence individuals' employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, the variables used as control variables were limited to age, gender, culture, job category and qualification level.

The study was a groundwork research study that restricted its focus to the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a single study. The groundwork information will be useful to future researchers to address other issues relating to these constructs.

The selected research approach was not intended to establish the cause and effect of the relationship, but merely investigates whether such a relationship does exist.

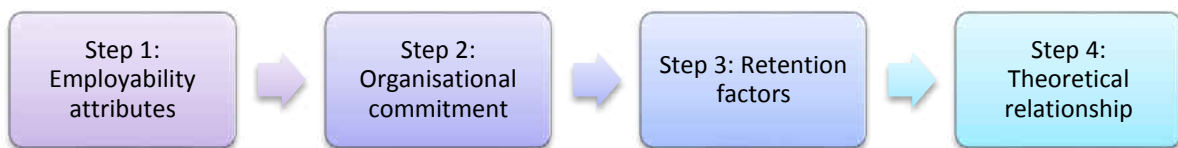
1.5.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines and standards as stipulated by the research ethics policy of the University of South Africa formed the basis of this study. The research conducted ensured that the ethics procedures of the institution were followed at all times. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, and all data and results were handled confidentially. Participation was completely voluntary and no participant was forced to participate. In order to ensure confidentiality, no participants were asked to complete any information that could compromise their identity. The research was conducted in a professional manner, ensuring that no harm was done to the participants (Mouton, 2008).

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study consisted of two phases. The first phase was the literature review and the second phase consisted of the empirical study. Figure 1.2 illustrates the steps that were followed in the research process in order to ensure the systematic execution of this study.

PHASE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW



PHASE 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY

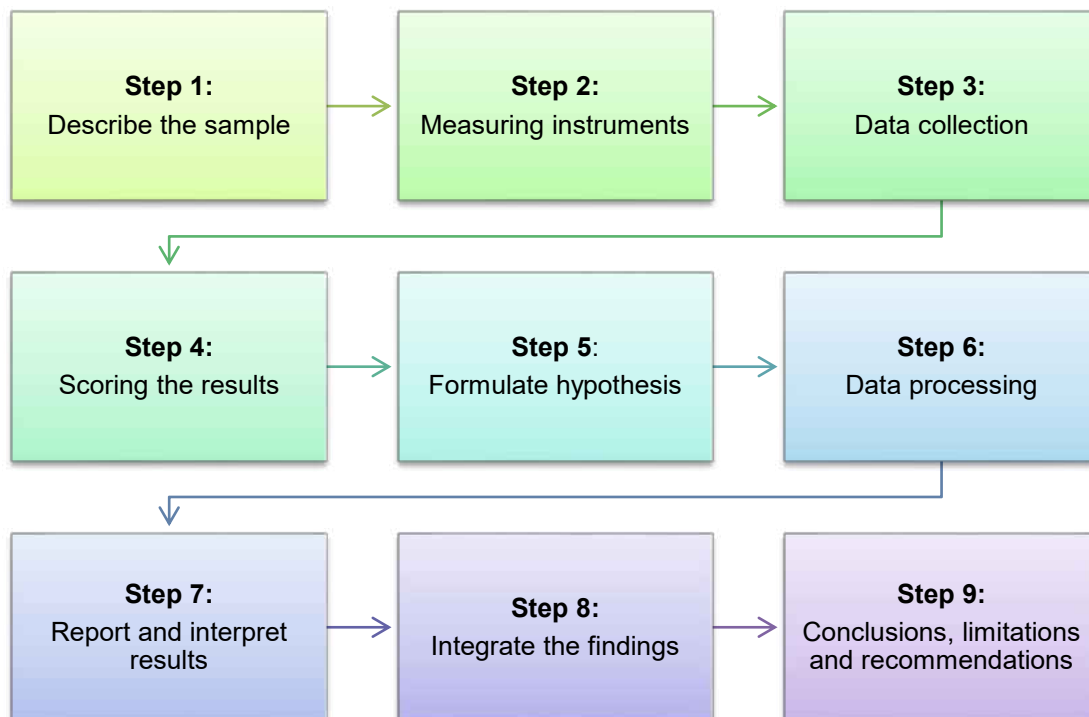


Figure 1.2: Overview of the research methodology

Phase One: Literature review

The reviewing of the literature provides the theoretical background, the findings of previous studies and how it relates to the research objectives, and incorporates the research into the existing body of knowledge (Kumar, 2011). In this instance, the literature review served to conceptualise the constructs employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

The steps that were followed in this stage are:

Step 1: Conceptualise employability attributes from a theoretical perspective

Step 2: Conceptualise organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective

Step 3: Conceptualise retention factors from a theoretical perspective

Step 4: Integrate the variables and conceptualise the theoretical relationship between the variables

Phase Two: Empirical study

The empirical study is presented in Chapter 4. This chapter outlines the core focus of the study, the background to the study, trends from the research literature, the potential value added by the study, the research design (research approach and research method), the results, a discussion of the results, the conclusions, the limitations of the study and recommendations for practice and future research.

In order to achieve the empirical aims, the following steps had to be completed:

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample

The unit of analysis was the human being, namely staff employed by the University of South Africa. The inclusion of biographical data was important to determine whether these factors influence the constructs in any way. Chapter 4 discusses the determination and description of the sample in more detail.

Step 2: Choice and motivation of the psychometric battery

A biographical questionnaire containing data regarding age, gender, culture, job category and qualification level was used in addition to the research questionnaires. The instruments that were used are the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS), developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010); the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by

Allen and Meyer (1996); and the Retention Factor Scale (RFS), developed by Döckel (2003). These measuring instruments have all been tested in South Africa for reliability and validity. The psychometric properties of these scales are discussed in the empirical chapter (Chapter 4).

Step 3: Administration of the psychometric battery

The following data collection procedure was followed:

- The EAS, OCQ and RFS were distributed to all the participants in the sample.
- A questionnaire to obtain biographical information was also included, containing questions on the variables ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level.
- The participants completed the questionnaires online using LimeSurvey.
- The privacy and confidentiality of all participants was ensured and no harm was done to any participant in the research process.
- Ethical permission was obtained from the University of South Africa to conduct the research.

Chapter 4 discusses the administration of the psychometric battery in more detail.

Step 4: Scoring of the psychometric battery

The responses of subjects to each of the items of the questionnaires were captured in an electronic spreadsheet format. All data were analysed by statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2008)

Step 5: Formulation of research hypotheses

The research hypotheses were formulated in order to determine the appropriate statistical analyses.

Step 6: Statistical processing of the data

The statistical procedure relevant to this research included descriptive statistical analysis (internal consistency reliability, means, standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness and frequency data); correlational analysis (Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients); and inferential statistics (canonical correlation analysis and tests for significant mean differences). This is discussed in Chapter 5.

Step 7: Reporting and interpreting the results

Results are presented in tables, diagrams and graphs and the discussion of the findings is presented in a systematic framework to ensure that the interpretation of the findings is conveyed in a clear and articulate manner.

Step 8: Integration of research findings

The results of the empirical research are integrated into the findings of the literature review.

Step 9: Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The final step relates to conclusions based on the results and their integration into the theory. The limitations of the research are discussed and recommendations are made in terms of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors regarding the new world of work, with a focus on the retention of employees.

1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters were presented in the following manner:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research

Chapter 2: Meta-theoretical context of the study: Careers and retention of staff in the 21st century world of work

Chapter 3: Employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 5: Research results

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background to and motivation for the research, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research design and research methodology were discussed in this chapter. The motivation for this study was based on the fact that exploring the relationships that exist amongst organisational commitment, employability attributes and retention factors may aid companies and HR practitioners to develop a more committed workforce. This study will help companies and HR practitioners to retain valuable employees.

Chapter 2 discusses the world of work and careers in the 21st century from a meta-theoretical perspective.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: CAREERS AND RETENTION OF STAFF IN THE 21ST CENTURY WORLD OF WORK

KEYWORDS:

21st century, boundaryless career, protean career, contemporary career, career management, retention

The aim of this chapter is to place this study in context by outlining the meta-theoretical context that formed the definitive boundary of the research. Individuals who enter into the world of work in the 21st century experience several challenges, as well as a change in their employment relationships (Alcover, Rico, Turnley & Bolino, 2016; Amundson, 2006; Baruch, 2006; Burke & Cooper, 2006; Lyons, Ng & Schweitzer, 2014; Shekhawat, 2016; Verbruggen, 2012). These challenges and changes require an understanding of the world of work in the 21st century, which potentially may have an influence on retention strategies.

2.1 CAREERS IN A CHANGING EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT

The 21st century world of work is dynamic and constantly changing and individuals need to be proactive in accommodating to these changes. This chapter discusses the changing work environment and boundaryless and protean careers.

2.1.1 The 21st century world of work

The 21st century has brought with it many changes that affect the way in which the world of work has evolved. Individuals entering the world of work in the 21st century are faced with several challenges, including decreased employment opportunities, reduced job security and increased technological advancements (Amundson, 2006). Within the 21st century world of work there has been an increase in job insecurity, flexibility, temporary work, technology introduction and organisational restructuring (Pahkin, 2015). Pahkin (2015) says that more female employees are entering the world of work, and the level of education has increased. Pahkin (2015) adds, that in some instances, the introduction of technology has been used to replace employees and this has led to an increase in production numbers. Yildiz, Beskese and Bozbura (2015) say the organisational system is changing, becoming dynamic and flexible, and careers are affected by these changes. As a result of these changes, individuals may experience feelings of anxiety and insecurity and, in order to overcome these uncertainties, they are expected to take personal responsibility to increase their employability and engage in life-long learning (Marock, 2008; Savickas, 2012). Savickas

(2002) supports this view by mentioning that those individuals entering the 21st century world of work must have certain skills and attributes that enable them to cope with the challenges effectively and reduce the hesitations they may have. In a later study it was found that individuals should also develop skills that enable them to cope with frequent job transitions and job insecurity (Savickas, 2012). Yildiz et al. (2015) add that the increased uncertainty and challenges have led to employees taking responsibility for their own career plans. The changes in the 21st century world of work have led to increased stress, which affects employee well-being, as well as the increased use of non-traditional working arrangements (part-time, temporary and contract work) and a change in the psychological contract between employers and employees (Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012).

Traditional careers usually unfolded within one single organisation and progressed along an upward career path that offered room for growth and promotion (Verbruggen, 2012). Technological advancements and competitive pressures have compelled organisations to downsize their workforce and adopt flatter organisational structures and, as a result, they can no longer offer long-term stability and career progression for their employees (Enache, Sallán, Simo & Fernandez, 2013). Employers in the 21st century world of work no longer provide long-term employment and promotional opportunities due to downsizing (Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015). Individuals within the 21st century world of work are less likely to experience frequent promotions and the fast-tracking of their upward mobility, as organisational hierarchies are flatter in comparison to the traditional organisational hierarchies (Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot & Baruch, 2012). Individuals are no longer guaranteed life-long employment, and an employee changing employers or even professions is no longer considered uncommon (Verbruggen, 2012). Individuals have adapted to the changing labour market by accepting more non-traditional work arrangements involving numerous changes in jobs, careers and occupations (Lyons et al., 2015). Lyons et al. (2015) add that high career mobility is normal for an individual in the 21st century world of work and is the only way an individual can remain employable.

The world of work in the 21st century is strongly influenced by changes in technology. Technology is continuously evolving and improving and this has an effect on the way work is done (Baran et al., 2012; Burke & Cooper, 2006; Burke & Ng, 2006; Supeli & Creed, 2016). Baran et al. (2012) have described the 21st century world of work as shifting and have identified rapid globalisation and technological advancements as strong contributors to organisational change. The development of the internet has had intense implications for organisations and work (Perrons, 2003). The increased competition that organisations in the 21st century world of work face due to technology and globalisation could have implications

for employee well-being and contribute towards stress (Baran et al., 2012). Burke and Ng (2006) note that technology keeps getting better, cheaper and faster and, as a result, employees need to be technologically literate to keep up with these changes. Baruch (2006) stresses that organisations need to provide training to employees to ensure that they can keep up with the latest technology. Burke and Ng (2006) identified the 'net generation' as those individuals who know how to integrate technology into their lives, easily adapt to new technology and become bored with one job very easily, therefore organisations should not expect them to stay long term. Ulrich, Younger and Brockbank (2008) believe that properly designed technology will enable employees to manage more of their HR administrative work by themselves. Perlow and Kelly (2014) add that the new technology changes the expectations of employees, as they are likely to be connected and able to work anywhere at any time. This is crucial and very beneficial, as many employees in the 21st century world of work are concerned with the effects of work demands and try to maintain a stable work and family life balance (Burke & Cooper, 2006; Perrons, 2003; Putnam, Myers, & Gailliard, 2014). The introduction of flexibility has become critical in the 21st century world of work (Putnam et al., 2014). Golden (2008) adds that employees strongly value the option of flexibility in the choice of workplace, as well as flexible working hours. Flexibility is important to increase employees' commitment to the organisation and increase their morale (Putnam et al., 2014). The introduction of new technology has made it easier for organisations to introduce flexible work arrangements and telecommuting in the workplace (Burke & Ng, 2006). Perlow and Kelly (2014) found that many organisations in the 21st century world of work implement strategies in the form of flexitime, telecommuting and reduced work schedules to enable individuals to balance their work demands and family structures. Lyons et al. (2014) go on to add that organisations in the 21st century world of work must be sensitive to the work/life balance and career development of women.

The world of work in the 21st century has become global. Various scholars stress the importance of recognising the diversity of individuals and encouraging employers to learn how to manage a diverse pool of workers (Baruch, 2006; Burke & Ng, 2006). Ulrich et al. (2008) declare that diversity must shift beyond an intellectual exercise to a core component of organisational values. The demographics of people entering the workforce have changed drastically in the 21st century (Lyons et al., 2014). More women are entering the workplace and demand workplace flexibility (Pahkin, 2015). Organisations need to recognise that employees in the 21st century come from varied backgrounds with different races, genders, cultures and religions, and they must learn to manage these diverse individuals in a way that will benefit the organisation. Baruch (2006) adds that organisations should embrace diversity, since it is here to stay, and diversity is favourable for superior organisational

effectiveness. An understanding of demographic shifts in the labour market is vital for organisations to attract and retain valuable staff (Lyons et al., 2014)

The 21st century world of work forms the background to and context of the present study. The information presented here will help to provide clarity on the perspective of this research further on in the chapter.

2.1.2 The changing nature of careers

Super (1980) was one of the first scholars to identify the recurring nature of careers. He developed a theoretical model – the life-span, life-space theory, which describes the multiple stages of career development an individual goes through. A career can be defined as an individual's sequence of occupations during his/her life (Savickas, 2002). Baruch (2006) defines a career as a process of development of an employee along a path of experiences and jobs with multiple organisations. He adds that employees should view their career as a journey made up of multiple phases. The on-going relationships that form between people and their work creates a link between individuals and organisations and are commonly known as careers (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2012). According to Okurame and Fabunmi (2014), a career provides an employee with an opportunity to engage in satisfying work activity for the purpose of attaining diverse goals of life. A career is an individual's work-related experiences that take place within and outside an organisation during his/her life (Lyons et al., 2014).

The economic and financial circumstances, together with the changes in the 21st century world of work, have created an unstable organisational context resulting in the shift of careers from the traditional career to the 'new' or contemporary career (Enache et al., 2013). Prior to these changes, the traditional career systems evolved around one or two firms, and an employee was likely to remain with the same organisation for a period of time (Verbruggen, 2012). Traditional careers were based on a hierarchy, whereby employees competed for limited promotional prospects and considered promotions as the critical indicator of success (Baruch, 2006). Savickas (2012) adds that workers exchanged employee loyalty for job security. Within this traditional career paradigm, both parties (the employer and employee) take joint responsibility for the management of employees' careers (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). The insecure economic environment has motivated individuals to fulfil personal aspirations themselves, rather than depending on their organisations to give them opportunities for advancement (Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014).

The new career or contemporary career is described as a career that accommodates individuals to meet changes in the 21st century. Chudzikowski (2012) describes the new career as one characterised by frequent individual career moves within and across organisations, where employees have shown decreased levels of job security and reduced levels of employee loyalty to the organisation. Contemporary careers have become less predictable, and this makes career management particularly challenging for organisations (De Vos & Cambré, 2016). Lyons et al. (2015) add that the new career is characterised by individual agency, flexibility of career paths and increased mobility across jobs and careers. Gubler, Arnold and Coombs (2014) are in agreement; they describe the contemporary career as being associated with high inter-organisational mobility and emphasise the role of individual agency. Clarke (2013) contends that the new career involves varied experiences across jobs, industries and organisations. Grimland et al. (2012) add that this type of new career will bring about several changes, including globalisation, competitive pressures and technological advances, which will have an effect on employment relationships and organisational structures. Within the new career orientations, an employee is responsible for his/her own career management (Yildiz et al., 2015). While the traditional career focused on progress in the hierarchy, the new career focuses on an individual's development and work experience over time (Baruch, 2006; Savickas, 2002). By adopting new or contemporary careers, employees have exchanged long working hours and autonomy for lateral moves and employability development within the organisation (Baruch, 2006; Joao & Coetzee, 2011). Individuals entering the world of work in the 21st century embrace the contemporary career arrangements and engage in continuous learning to develop their employability (Briscoe, Henagan, Burton, & Murphy, 2012). Although employees are required to take responsibility for their own career development, they are still dependent on the organisational resources to increase their employability and experience (Inglis & Cray, 2012). Savickas et al. (2009) add that individuals in the 21st century are likely to feel insecure and therefore must become life-long learners who can keep up to date with technology, embrace flexibility, develop and sustain employability and create their own opportunities. Employability is obtained through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities that are valued by organisations in the 21st century world of work, and thus employability can be regarded as an important factor in understanding career success in the contemporary career (Van der Klink et al., 2014). De Vos and Cambré (2016) add that contemporary career management needs to focus on supporting individuals in their career development.

According to Super's (1980) life-span, life-space theory, the early stages of an individual's career are known as exploration and establishment. An employee then goes through the mid-career stage, known as maintenance, and finally the late career stage, known as disengagement. Researchers believe that, within the new career paradigm, employees no longer go through these stages of career development (Amundson, 2006; Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996; Savickas, 2002; Sullivan, 1999). Grimland et al. (2012) are of the opinion that current careers in the 21st century world of work are boundaryless and less predictable than Super's (1980) traditional linear view of careers. Rodrigues, Guest and Budjanovcanin (2013) add that employees who adopt the new career determine the success of their career in terms of needs, values and goals, rather than salary, growth and promotion, which was used by employees to measure success within the traditional career.

Okurame and Fabunmi (2014) did a comparison between traditional and contemporary careers and found that, within the traditional context, individuals generally took a submissive approach to the management of their careers while, in the contemporary career context, individuals are less dependent on the organisation and follow an unpredictable career path to develop their employability attributes, which will enable them to move across jobs easily. According to Fallows and Steven (2000) it is vital for all employees in the 21st century world of work to develop employability skills that will enable them to effectively consider and find alternate employment. Changing organisational structures and reduced job security have resulted in an increasing emphasis on developing employability to ensure career success (Clarke, 2008b; Nauta, Van Vianen, Van der Heijden, Van Dam & Willemsen, 2009). Individuals who promote a contemporary career attitude and competencies are more equipped to deal with workplace challenges in the 21st century world of work (Uy, Chan, Sam, Ho & Chernyshenko, 2015).

Grimland et al. (2012) noted that the 21st century career should be viewed as an evolving sequence of work experiences over time, where individuals bear the most responsibility for the planning and management of their careers. According to Gubler et al. (2014), 21st century career-orientated individuals should be mobile and self-directed in their careers. Individuals do not depend on education and work experience to direct their individual career planning and no longer believe in a lifetime job (Amundson, 2006). According to Chudzikowski (2012), the new career, which encourages regular shifts, is the best way forward for the future and will lead to greater career success. A comparison of traditional and contemporary careers is shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Comparison between traditional and contemporary careers

	Traditional careers	Careers within the 21st century world of work	Scholars
Organisations worked for	A single employer – growth and promotion	Multiple employers – limited opportunities for promotion	Baruch (2013) Coetzee (2008) Culié, Khapova and Arthur (2014) Enache et al. (2013) Grimland et al. (2012) Savickas (2012) Verbruggen (2012)
Use of technology	Limited technology, more workers needed	Technology replaces workers	Amundson (2006) Baran et al. (2012) Baruch (2013) Burke and Cooper (2006) Burke and Ng (2006) Enache et al. (2013) Golden (2008) Pahkin (2015) Perlow and Kelly (2014) Perrons (2003) Ulrich et al. (2008)

	Traditional careers	Careers within the 21st century world of work	Scholars
Hierarchy	Rigid organisational hierarchies	Flatter organisational structures	Baruch (2013) Chudzikowski (2012) Enache et al. (2013)
Stages of career development	Employees go through all stages: exploration and establishment, maintenance, disengagement	Employees no longer go through these career development stages	Amundson (2006) Super (1980) Savickas (2012)
Diversity	Individuals entering into the world of work come from similar backgrounds	Employee demographics have changed and individuals come from varied backgrounds, with different races, genders, cultures and religions	Baruch (2013) Burke & Ng (2006) Ulrich et al. (2008)
Career management	Employer and employee take joint responsibility for the management of an individual's career	Individuals are required to self-manage their careers	Briscoe and Hall (2006) De Vos and Soens (2008) Grimland et al. (2012) Okurame and Fabunmi (2014) Savickas (2012) Yildiz et al. (2015)
Job security and employee loyalty	Employees display loyalty to an organisation in exchange for job security	Organisations no longer guarantee job security and, as a result, employees are less loyal to	Enache et al. (2013) Lyons et al. (2015) Marock (2008)

	Traditional careers	Careers within the 21st century world of work	Scholars
		their employers	Savickas (2012)
Training and development	Limited opportunities for training and development	Continuous individual development to increase employability to enable an individual to explore alternate career options	Briscoe et al. (2012)
Flexibility	Employees are offered limited opportunities for flexibility	Employees are offered workplace flexibility in order to balance work/family life	Baruch (2006) Burke and Cooper (2006) Burke and Ng (2006) Golden (2008) Perlow and Kelly (2014) Perrons (2003) Putnam et al., (2014) Yildiz et al. (2015)

From the above discussion it is evident that several changes have taken place in the 21st century world of work. These changes have led to increased job insecurity and, as a result, individuals are no longer loyal to an organisation. Individuals take it upon themselves to manage their careers proactively in order to achieve their career goals.

The new careers have also led to the introduction of boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) and the protean career (Hall, 1996), which will be discussed in the forthcoming sections. In both protean and boundaryless careers, subjective preferences are important for individuals' career management, and the career journey may differ for each individual (Yildiz et al., 2015).

2.1.3 The boundaryless career

From the above it can be concluded that traditional careers evolved within the context of one or two firms. However, employees in the 21st century world of work can no longer plan to work for a number of years within the boundaries of the same job or organisation (Savickas, 2012; Sullivan, 1999). The new or contemporary career proposes an alternative, inter-organisational lens for analysing careers, known as the boundaryless career era (Rodrigues et al., 2013). The concept of the boundaryless career was introduced by Defillippi and Arthur (1994), who emphasised the obscuring of career-related boundaries within organisations. The boundaryless career emerged as a result of unpredictability and ambiguity in the organisational environment of the 21st-century world of work (Yildiz et al., 2015). Arthur (1994) declared that, regardless of their size, all organisations trying to adapt to the new era should adopt boundaryless careers, as these careers are becoming the norm rather than the exception (Sullivan, 1999). Savickas (2012) adds that, within the new job market in an unstable economy, employers are looking for employees who view a career as a recurrent selling of skills and services to a number of employees, who need tasks to be completed, rather than a life-long commitment to one organisation. A boundaryless career can be defined as an arrangement of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of one employment setting (Arthur, 1994). A boundaryless career refers to an individual's own career-management process in order to remain employable and be open to the available opportunities (Yildiz et al., 2015). Table 2.2 summarises the key features of a boundaryless career as identified by Arthur (1994). Sullivan (1999) provides many definitions and interpretations of a boundaryless career; however, she contends that the main focus is independence, rather than dependence on traditional career arrangements. Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom (2005) define a boundaryless career as one that does not provide lifetime employment and describe the employment relationship as a short-term one that is unlikely to

last forever. Inkson (2006) points out that the concept of a boundaryless career is derived from the word boundary, and thus explains a boundaryless career as a career with no limits to the territory it can encompass. Yildiz et al. (2015) to add that individuals adopting a boundaryless career prefer not to limit themselves to one organisation or job during their careers, but rather to take advantage of new opportunities that are available. Thus, individuals with a boundaryless career are not bound to an organisation or job and feel comfortable to establish new opportunities beyond their organisation (Yildiz et al., 2015).

Table 2.2: *Characteristics of the boundaryless career*

The characteristics of a boundaryless career	
1	Moves across the boundaries of separate employees
2	Validation is obtained externally and not only from the present employer
3	The career is sustained through networks outside of the organisation
4	Traditional organisational boundaries and hierarchies are broken
5	An individual rejects career opportunities for personal/family reasons
6	Leads to a boundaryless future

Source: Arthur (1994)

One of the key characteristics of a boundaryless career is the reforming of organisations into flatter, less hierarchal structures to accommodate changes in the 21st century that encourage employees to consider other employment opportunities (Arthur et al., 2005). Chudzikowski (2012) supports this view by mentioning that many organisations have reduced horizontal boundaries to be able to position an employee in more than one role. Baruch (2006) adds that employees adopting the boundaryless career concept may experience several changes in their jobs and sometimes may even experience a change in their occupation.

The boundaryless career also results in a change in the psychological contract between the employee and employer (Culié et al., 2014). With this new psychological contract, employers can no longer commit to providing their employees with secure jobs, but rather focus on providing employees with multiple skills to increase their individual employability that will be useful in securing employment (Baruch, 2006). Chudzikowski (2012) notes that life-long employment is no longer guaranteed – as levels of job insecurity have increased and employee loyalty has decreased. Arthur et al. (2005) add that both the employer and employee know that this employment relationship is unlikely to last forever. Currie, Tempest and Starkey (2006) emphasise that this contractual relationship is a short-term one between an individual and many organisations, rather than a lengthy period in which an individual's

career path is centred on climbing an organisational hierarchy. Within the 21st century world of work an employee can no longer expect to work for 30 years developing a career within the boundaries of one organisation (Savickas, 2012).

The boundaryless organisation is developing and many organisations are becoming boundaryless by replacing traditional barriers with new and challenging concepts (Baruch, 2006). Culié et al. (2014) note that individuals adopting the boundaryless career mindset not only undergo physical mobility, but also psychological mobility. Briscoe and Hall (2006) define psychological mobility as the ability of an individual to visualise a large variety of career options. Individuals who adopt the boundaryless career approach are driven by the desire for physical and psychological mobility that a career can provide (Clarke, 2013). Joao and Coetzee (2011) add that careers in the 21st century are characterised by a preference for physical movement between organisational boundaries.

Currie et al. (2006) identified several benefits of the boundaryless career, including lower internal labour costs and increased flexibility. Inglis and Cray (2012) add that individuals who adopt a boundaryless career focus on outcomes, such as meaningful work, skill development, work/life balance and fulfilling relationships, and are more satisfied and productive workers. According to Uy et al. (2015), individuals with a boundaryless career attitude work on projects with people across many organisations and feel enthusiastic about new experiences outside their organisations. Verbruggen (2012) highlights that, although the boundaryless career option offers several advantages, employers should be mindful of the disadvantages that come about by adopting this approach. He adds that individuals may be compelled to adopt the boundaryless approach and this may create uncertainty and unnecessary stress. In addition, employees are less likely to be inclined to invest in their relationships at work, as they feel they are not there for a long period of time.

From the above discussion it appears that individuals no longer limit their careers to the boundaries of a single organisation. Individuals are risk takers and move between organisations to develop skills and remain employable.

2.1.4 The protean career

Hall (1996) introduced the concept of the protean career and defines this as a new career, in which the individual takes responsibility for the management of his/her own career and does not depend on the organisation to guide his/her career path. He describes the protean career as one that can change shape to respond to the external environment and the

changing nature of work in the 21st century. Baruch (2006) defines the protean career as an individual's contract within him/herself, rather than between the individual and the organisation. Yildiz et al. (2015) describe the protean career as a process managed by the individual rather than the organisation. Briscoe and Hall (2006) contend that the protean career orientation is a mindset about one's career that reflects the individual's freedom, self-direction and decision-making based on personal values. A summary of the key characteristics of an individual adopting the protean career as defined by Briscoe and Hall (2006) is provided in Table 2.3. Grimland et al. (2012) describes a protean career as one in which an individual takes responsibility for transforming his/her career path in line with his/her personal aspirations. He adds that the protean career will provide the individual with significant work, which will develop the freedom, growth and professional commitment of the individual. Furthermore, these individuals are adaptable, flexible, independent and can easily adjust to changing circumstances. They are motivated by psychological success, continuous self-directed learning, autonomy, flexibility and self-fulfilment (Inglis & Cray, 2012). Baruch (2013) adds that these individuals are able to utilise their knowledge and skills to fit the changing work environment and to maintain their employability. Individuals with a protean career attitude appreciate autonomy, value continuous learning, accept responsibility and set their own goals to succeed in their careers (Supeli & Creed, 2016).

Table 2.3: *Key characteristics of an individual adopting the protean career*

The protean career theory – individual characteristics	
1	The person is value driven – the individual's internal values provide the guidance and measurement of success for his/her career.
2	The person is self-directed – the individual has the ability to adapt in terms of performance and learning demands

Source: Grimland et al. (2012)

These changes in the 21st century recognise that a career belongs to the person and not to the organisation, and therefore an individual is responsible for managing his/her own career (Hall, 1996; Savickas et al., 2009). Transition to a protean career is driven by the desire to pursue careers that offer a good personal fit for an individual (Clarke, 2013). In a study conducted in 2012, Grimland et al. (2012) concluded that there was a positive relationship between protean career attitude and career success. According to their findings, employees are more likely to succeed in their careers by taking personal responsibility for the management of their careers.

Since organisations no longer guarantee long-term careers, employees who want to be successful in the 21st century world of work must develop their employability to secure their employment (Chudzikowski, 2012). These individuals are now given greater responsibility and control over their career decisions and future. They are able to choose and pursue a career based on their personal goals, rather than on organisational requirements (Grimland et al., 2012). Okurame and Fabunmi (2014) believe that these individuals view the organisation that they work for as merely a place that awards them an opportunity to align their career with their personal values. In a study conducted by De Vos and Soens (2008), it was concluded that those individuals who adopt a protean career attitude reported higher levels of employee satisfaction and perceived employability. Uy et al. (2015) describe individuals with a protean career attitude as being highly self-directed, flexible, adaptive and changeable. Individuals with a protean career attitude shape their careers according to their own internal beliefs and values (Uy et al., 2015).

According to Okurame and Fabunmi (2014), in order to adopt a protean career individuals should be value driven and adopt a self-directed attitude, which will enable them to use personal values as guidance in managing their careers to achieve their personal aspirations.

Briscoe et al. (2012) found that individuals who adopt protean and boundaryless career attitudes are able to develop skills to effectively cope with the unstable career and economic environment. Gubler et al. (2014) proclaim that the protean and boundaryless careers overlap significantly, but the focus of the protean career is on individual's motive to follow a particular career path, whereas the boundaryless career concept mainly concerns different forms of mobility.

From the above discussion it appears that individuals no longer rely on organisations to manage their careers, but rather adopt a proactive attitude in managing their own careers. Individuals develop skills and competencies to assist them in directing their careers and achieving their goals.

2.2 INDIVIDUAL CAREER MANAGEMENT

Against the aforementioned background it can be concluded that the responsibility for career management has changed in the 21 century world of work (Arthur, 1994; Baruch, 2006; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 1996; Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014; Savickas, 2012; Verbruggen, 2012). De Vos and Soens (2008) believe that employees took a more passive role in the management of their careers in the traditional work setting and they relied on the

organisation to provide direction. However, the changes in the 21st century world of work have resulted in employees taking greater responsibility for the management of their own careers. The transformation in the 21st century world of work has compelled organisations to depend more on their employees to ensure organisational success for the future (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). The traditional employment relationship has become less common, and the 21st century world of work has introduced new, non-traditional employment relationships, including part-time, temporary, flexible, virtual and contract work (Alcover et al., 2016).

Along with the previously mentioned changes, the 21st century world of work and the introduction of boundaryless and protean careers have led to a change in the psychological contract between an employer and employee (Baruch, 2006; Chudzikowski, 2012). Guest (1998) defines a psychological contract as a relationship in which one party believes that the promise of a future and a contribution have been made, and in which there is an obligation to provide future benefits. Hess, Jepsen and Dries (2012) also note that this traditional psychological contract is changing – the promise of a secure job in return for loyalty is no longer the norm. Employers can no longer commit to providing their employees with secure jobs and, as a result, employees no longer commit to the same organisation for a period of time (Baruch, 2006). The 21st century world of work has led to a shift in employee loyalty – instead of an employee being loyal to an organisation, he/she is more likely to foster loyalty to a career and take actions to advance within that career (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen & De Pater, 2011).

Orpen (1994) highlights the shift from organisational career management to contemporary career management. He defines organisational career management as policies and practices designed by the organisation to improve employee effectiveness. Individual career management, on the other hand, is the personal effort made by an individual to progress his/her career goals, which involves the management of individual career planning and individual career tactics. De Vos and Soens (2008) add that individual career management includes the improvement of learning about oneself and also taking concrete initiatives to manage one's career. Career self-management can be defined as the proactivity employees show with regard to managing their careers and includes an individual's efforts to identify and define his/her own, personal objectives, which may or may not be aligned with the objectives of the organisation (De Vos & Soens, 2008). Career management and development are viewed as a life-long process of learning and adapting to changing contexts in the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2015). The responsibility for career management lies with the individual and not the organisation (De Vos & Cambré, 2016). Coetzee et al. (2015)

believe the development of employability attributes facilitates proactive career-management behaviours. Many organisations In the 21st-century world of work require employees to engage in proactive career management in order to develop their careers and achieve personal goals (Direenzo et al., 2015).

Employees in the traditional world of work relied on the organisation to provide direction and career progression; however, within the new world of work, individuals are adopting the protean career attitude whereby they take greater responsibility for their own career choices (Baruch, 2006; De Vos & Soens, 2008; Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014; Park, 2009). Briscoe and Hall (2006) define protean career attitudes as involving self-directed career management, with a specific emphasis on employees taking responsibility for the management of their careers. De Vos and Soens (2008) support this view, mentioning that Individuals with a protean career attitude are more likely to engage in career self-management. These individuals realise that, within the current work context, they cannot depend on a career path based on seniority and should rather act self-sufficiently to create opportunities to progress their careers (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011).

Due to the changes in the 21st century world of work, the nature of organisational life has become chaotic and unpredictable. King (2004) points out that employees must adopt career self-management to overcome these challenges. De Vos, De Clippeleer and Dewilde (2009) feel that individuals adopting the new career approach should take primary responsibility for the management of their careers. A changing attitude toward employee career development is required to successfully adopt contemporary careers within the 21st century world of work (De Vos & Soens, 2008). King (2004) concludes that employees who adopt a career self-management attitude over a period of time will master developmental tasks and thus achieve their desired outcomes. De Vos and Segers (2013) add that individuals within the 21st century world of work must engage in career self-management activities to create career options that allow them to realise their goals and ensure employability.

De Vos et al. (2009) emphasise the important role of networking in career self-management. They urge individuals to engage in networking to ensure career success, as it will provide them with an opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with other individuals who have the potential to assist them in career progression.

2.3 RETENTION

The 21st century world of work has created a labour market with an increasing number of layoffs and a weakening of traditional employment relationships (Baruch, 2013). Several authors have highlighted the decrease in job security and decline in organisational commitment of individuals within this new world of work (De Vos & Segers, 2013; Grimland et al., 2012; Klehe et al., 2011; Verbruggen, 2012). The 21st century world of work is very competitive and therefore organisations often lose valuable staff to their competitors (Shekhawat, 2016). In order for organisations to remain competitive and perform at their best, they have to downsize and reduce their workforce (Klehe et al., 2011). In the traditional form of work, individuals had the tendency to follow the norm of strong commitment and stability and remain with the same organisation; however, individuals in the 21st century world of work are adopting boundaryless careers and are more likely to change jobs and employers more frequently, making the retention of key employees a greater challenge for organisations (Baruch, 2013). According to Klehe et al. (2011), individuals in the 21st century often report insecurity and limited opportunities for promotion as their reasons for seeking opportunities somewhere else. Hausknecht et al. (2009) highlight that one of the primary concerns that organisations face in the 21st century world of work is retaining top talent; failure to do so will result in the organisation losing competitiveness. Kreisman (2002) identifies employee commitment, productivity and retention issues as the most critical challenges faced by organisations in the 21st century world of work. The dynamic and volatile working environment has created an uncertain environment for employees, thereby increasing the challenge of employee retention (Kreisman, 2002). Baruch (2013) emphasises the importance of employee retention in the 21st century world of work. Employers invest a lot of time and money in recruiting, selecting and training employees and must therefore retain these employees for as long as they are productive (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011)

Cascio (2003) defines retention as an initiative taken by the organisation to keep employees from leaving the organisation. Maheswari and Krishnan (2014) define retention as the ability of an organisation to keep their valuable workforce for a long period of time, or until retirement. Employee retention refers to the policies used by organisations to prevent knowledgeable employees from leaving their jobs (Hong et al., 2012). According to Das and Baruah (2013), retention is defined as the process during which employees are urged to remain with an organisation for a maximum period of time or until the completion of a project.

Browell (2003) goes on to define employee retention as keeping those staff members whom an organisation does not want to lose to its competitors. Johnson (2000) holds a similar opinion and defines retention as the ability to hold on to those employees an organisation wants to keep. Browell (2003) mentions that organisations want to retain key employees who contribute directly towards the success of the organisation. McKeoen (2002) supports this view and is of the opinion that employee retention should only be aimed at high-performing individuals who add value, and not at those with lower performance.

2.3.1 The importance of retaining employees

Organisations in the 21st century world of work spend a huge amount of money on orientating and training employees to develop their employability, and therefore organisations should focus more on retention than recruitment (Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen & Moeyaert, 2009; Mathieu et al., 2015). Sahi and Mahajan (2014) support this view and stress that, while it is essential for organisations to hire knowledgeable people, retention is even more important. De Vos and Cambré (2016) add that investing in the retention of human capital will benefit the performance of the organisation. The retention of talented staff is a priority for HR professionals and organisations (Mathieu et al., 2015). Research has found that the cost of replacing an old employee with a new one is estimated to be twice as much as the employee's annual salary (Irshad & Afridi, 2012). Irshad and Afridi (2012) go on to mention that, apart from losing the employee, in some instances the organisation also loses customers who were loyal to the employee, as well as knowledge of production, current projects, competitors and the past history of the organisation. Ramlall (2003) believes that, for an organisation to avoid losing individual knowledge, it must create an intellectual capital environment that allows for the transmission of knowledge throughout the structure.

One of the biggest challenges faced by organisations in the 21st century world of work is employee turnover. Turnover results in a financial loss for the company, declining productivity, reduced morale, poor customer relations and a loss of expertise (Kgomo & Swarts, 2010; Kreisman, 2002). Maheswari and Krishnan (2014) support this view and describe turnover as a great loss to an organisation, along with unnecessary financial losses.

In 2003, a study was conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council regarding the recruitment of skilled employees. It found that companies in South Africa are experiencing various challenges in recruiting skilled employees and concluded that it is imperative for organisations to retain those skilled employees that cannot be replaced easily. According to

Hiltrop (1999), a large number of organisations in America are suffering from a shortage of talented people, and also therefore empathises the importance of retaining talented employees. According to Potgieter et al. (2016), South African organisations remain highly competitive in globalised markets, and thus retaining talented professionals who are committed to the organisation has become important in the South African context, particularly in view of the competition for the same skills in the job market.

The retention of employees is important to any organisation as it provides a number of benefits. The long-term success and productivity of an organisation depends on the retention of key employees (Das & Baruah, 2013). The benefits of retaining knowledgeable workers include saving recruitment costs, less training being required for new candidates, improved productivity, increased performance, increased profits and the fulfilment of organisational goals and objectives (Hong et al., 2012). Das and Baruah (2013) emphasise that it is not just about the retention of employees, but also the retention of valued skills.

In order for organisations to overcome the challenges relating to retaining key employees with employability attributes, they need stronger commitment from and engagement of staff (Burke & Cooper, 2006; Döckel et al., 2006). Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) emphasise that organisations should rely on employees who are talented and committed to the organisation to guard their competitiveness and increase their market value. Cardy and Lengnick-Hall (2011) are of the opinion that organisations will be adversely affected at both operational and strategic level if they fail to retain their key employees.

Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy and Baert (2011) highlight the existence of challenging and meaningful work, opportunities for advancement, empowerment, responsibility and new opportunities as some of the retention strategies that organisations can implement within the 21st century world of work. Sinha and Sinha (2012) identified seven factors that they believe contribute to the retention of talented staff – compensation and appreciation of the work performed, provision of challenging work, opportunities to learn, recognition of capabilities and performance contributions, a stable work/life balance and good communication within the organisation. Chang and Wang (2013) add that offering employees' incentive compensation may encourage them to remain with the organisation. Competitive remuneration packages also play a role in attracting and retaining employees (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) contend that a high salary is not necessarily required to lure an employee to remain with the organisation; however, the salary must be competitive.

By providing employees with autonomy to make decisions on actions surrounding their job, the organisation can secure talented staff. Employees are also more satisfied if they are provided with safe and pleasant working environments (Govaerts et al., 2011). Those employees who are given autonomy will view their work outcomes in terms of their personal initiatives and contributions rather than instructions from a supervisor, and they will thus be more satisfied (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007).

Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) mention that investing in career development will help to attract and retain employees, as employees in the 21st century world of work are life-long learners who are continuously looking for career growth opportunities. Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) emphasise that employees seek opportunities to develop their careers rapidly and improve their employability. Employees are more likely to remain with organisations that promote career opportunities through learning and the application of skills (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Govaerts et al. (2011) support this view by mentioning that as long as employees feel that they are learning and developing they are less inclined to leave that organisation; however, as soon as opportunities are no longer present they will begin to look externally for other job prospects. Döckel et al. (2006) add that, when employees feel that the organisation is doing a good job of providing them with training, they will feel that the organisation is concerned with improving their skills and become attached to that organisation, and thus be more committed to that organisation.

Döckel et al. (2006) mention that employees within the 21st century world of work strive to maintain a balanced work/life and organisations that provide flexible work arrangements to accommodate these employees have a greater likelihood of retaining employees. Work/life policies include flexible work scheduling and family leave policies allowing employees to take care of family and personal matters (Burke & Cooper, 2006). Van Dyk et al. (2013) emphasise that flexibility around work has become increasingly important to the 21st century dual-career couple and will positively affect their work performance.

Burke and Ng (2006) mention that organisations can retain older employees by delaying their retirement and providing appropriate human resource policies to encourage these employees to remain with the organisation. The employers must treat these older employees with dignity and respect whilst ensuring that they are not discriminated against on the basis of their age.

Various scholars have investigated the effect of the boundaryless and protean careers on organisational commitment (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012; Sullivan, 1999). According to Hall (1996), individuals who adopt a boundaryless or protean career attitude will be less committed to their organisation. In a later study conducted by Briscoe and Hall in 2006, they found that these individuals are constantly seeking opportunities to develop their competencies in new areas and, if organisations enhance opportunities for career development and employability, individuals will be more committed to the organisation and organisations can then retain these valuable employees (Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012).

2.3.2 Retention strategies that can be implemented in organisations

Organisations should ensure that proper measures are in place to prevent their employees from leaving their jobs in an effort to look for alternate opportunities (Ghosh et al., 2013). Ramlall (2003) believes that a sufficient compensation package is a key factor that must be in place in order to keep employees working for the organisation. Govaerts et al. (2011) conducted a study and found that giving employees the opportunity to learn what they are good at will increase the likelihood of high employee retention.

Schuler, Jackson and Tarique (2011) have identified characteristics of effective retention strategies that can be implemented by organisations. Top management should make a strong commitment to make talent management a priority, assess the efficacy of current recruitment sources, expand the list recruiting sources, source talent globally, monitor labour markets worldwide, and establish diversity programmes. Organisations should establish accountability amongst managers for retention goals and reward managers for improving retention.

Yang, Wan and Fu (2012) have identified several retention strategies that companies in the 21st century world of work can implement. A selective hiring procedure, promoting a mentoring system for newcomers, career development and empowerment, job satisfaction and developing a continuous sharing-learning system are some of the strategies that can help to improve the retention of key staff.

Hiltrop (1999) has identified a strong connection between an organisation's human resource practices and its ability to attract and retain talent. She identified employee security, opportunities for training and skill development, recruitment and internal promotion, career development and guidance, opportunities for skill development and specialisation, autonomy and decentralisation of decision making, opportunities for teamwork and participation, equal

benefits and access to prerequisites for all employees, extra rewards and recognition for high performance, openness of information about corporate goals, outcomes and intentions and proactive personnel planning as HR practices companies should have in place to increase retention.

Hinkin and Tracey conducted a study in 2010 to determine the best retention practices adopted by organisations. They have identified a culture of caring for employees and open communication; flexible scheduling to meet the needs of a changing workforce; innovative methods to attract, select and retain a loyal and competent workforce; training programmes that are viewed as investments in people, with an emphasis on career tracks and internal promotion; performance management systems that are aligned with organisational objectives; and compensation programmes that reflect the values of an organisation and link pay to performance as the best human resource practices offered by companies. They further elaborate that employees who work in organisations offering these practices are less likely to leave and look for alternate employment.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the theoretical (contextual) framework of this study. From the above we can conclude that many changes have affected the world of work in the 21st century. These changes have resulted in change in the management of one's career – traditional careers have been replaced with contemporary careers that include boundaryless and protean careers. Employees entering the world of work are required to be life-long learners who take responsibility for the management of their careers and are no longer guaranteed long-term employment.

Herewith research aim 1 (to conceptualise careers and the retention of staff in the 21st century workplace) has been achieved.

Chapter 3 will focus on part of research aim 1 and research aim 2 of the literature review:

Research aim 2: To conceptualise the three constructs, namely employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 3: To identify and explain the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of explanatory theoretical models.

CHAPTER 3: EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RETENTION FACTORS

KEYWORDS:

Employability attributes, skills, competencies, organisational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment retention factors,

This chapter focuses on a discussion of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The chapter aims to conceptualise and explain the constructs employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors and their related theoretical models. The variables influencing employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors will then be discussed. Finally, the theoretical implications of the retention of employees in the work context will be discussed.

3.1 CONCEPTUALISATION

This section deals with the conceptualisation of each of the three constructs (employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors) relevant to the present study.

3.1.1 Defining employability attributes

3.1.1.1 Employability

As outlined in Chapter 2, previous research has indicated that the 21st century world of work is characterised by frequent change (Amundson, 2006; De Vos & Cambré, 2016; Joao & Coetzee, 2011; Marock, 2008; Pahkin, 2015; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Ribeiro, 2015; Shekhawat, 2016). As a result of this, employees are no longer guaranteed life-long employment and suffer from job insecurity (Baruch, 2013; Coetzee, 2008; Drenzo et al., 2015; McArdle et al., 2007; Pahkin, 2015). Both employers and employees acknowledge the need to invest in the education, training and development of employees to succeed in a highly competitive and turbulent business environment (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). Development legislation in South Africa emphasises the need to promote workplace training and learning to enhance the employability of employees (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). Forrier and Sels (2003) believe that employability materialised as a key objective for those employees seeking long-term employment as a means to provide them with security. Employability aims to influence the factors affecting a person's probability of getting a new or

improved job (McQuaid, 2006). According to Thijssen, Van der Heijden and Rocco (2008), the increasing need for flexibility and high mobility rates have led to the recent focus on employability in the world of work. With the introduction of boundaryless careers, employability can be used as a means to solve the problem of the employment relationship (Ling, Qing & Shen, 2014). The 21st century world of work require individuals entering the world of work to be work-ready and employable and to sustain their employability (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Froehlich et al. (2016) define being employable as having a set of competencies that enables an individual to fulfil, acquire or create work.

McQuaid (2006) explored the different perspectives on employability within local markets. According to McQuaid (2006), the narrow perspective focuses on labour supply-side factors, such as an individual's skills or job readiness, while the broad approach seeks to integrate the supply- and demand-side factors that take into account personal factors determining the probability of successful job match. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) argue that most researchers adopt a broader approach to employability which assess whether an individual is capable of moving into new employment.

A broad definition of employability suggests that employability refers to an individual's ability to find a job, retain the job and easily go on to find a new job and move across industries as needed (Clarke, 2008b). Hillage and Pollard (1998) argue that, while there is no singular definition of employability, it can be explained in simple terms as the capability to move self-sufficiently across the labour market, which will enable one to realise one's potential through sustainable employment. Benson (2006) defines employability as a promise to employees that they will develop the skills and attributes that will enable them to change jobs more easily. Employability means that an individual acquires and secures a valued job through education and training, and as a result obtains transferable knowledge and skills he/she may utilise to move across organisations (Ling et al., 2014). Employability is an individual's work-centred adaptability that influences his/her ability to secure a job and take advantage of potential career opportunities in the labour market (Bozionelos et al., 2016). Mulaudzi (2015) defines employability as an individual's self-assessment of his/her own capacity to interact with the workplace and the effort an individual displays in exploring career opportunities. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) acknowledge the different perspectives on employability and contend that the focus of employability centres primarily on individual characteristics and job readiness or factors influencing the employment contract.

Clarke (2008a) argues that employability is an individual's potential to enter and remain in employment. Many scholars believe that employability is linked to employment, and if a person has the right mix of skills, attitudes and behaviours then he/she is considered to be employable. Employers no longer offer job security to employees; however, by providing them with employability skills, employees feel more secure as they have the necessary skills and abilities to find a new job without difficulty (Benson, 2006).

Cardoso et al. (2014) identified three forms of employability, namely individual employability, institutional employability and contextual employability. Individual employability refers to the potential of an employee to find and secure a job. Institutional employability refers to the potential of an institution to increase the probability of its graduates finding a job. Contextual employability refers to the better or worse adaptation due to external events in the market that affects individuals and institutions.

3.1.1.2 Employability skills, competencies and attributes

Cassidy (2006) defines employability skills as non-technical skills that are not job specific, but rather skills that apply to all industries across various levels. Personal competencies, referred to as employability competencies or employability skills, help in determining whether an employee is able to use marketable and career opportunities for progression and movement beyond his/her current employment radius (Thijssen et al., 2008). Saterfiel and Mclarty (1995) add that employability skills are valued, since they apply to many jobs and support common preparation applicable to different occupations. Employability capacities refer to the number of soft skills and attributes that are essential in determining an individual's success in the 21st century world of work (Potgieter et al., 2016). These skills and attributes are generic, transferable skills and personal attributes that enable individuals to proactively manage their careers and adapt to the changing market circumstances (Potgieter et al., 2016). In order to manage an individual's continued employability, a range of skills and attributes that promote proactive adaptability in changing environments is required (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014).

Psychosocial employability attributes refer to positive psychosocial capital that enhances the individual and work interface and makes individuals valued assets to prospective employers (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014). These attributes include proactive career self-management behaviours, career resilience, career adaptability, self-efficacy, self-esteem, productivity, locus of control, emotional literacy and sociability (Bezuidenhout, 2010). Coetzee et al. (2015) also explain employability attributes as a psychosocial construct that explains

proactive career management behaviour in changing environments and the career-related attributes and skills individuals use to enhance their appropriateness for sustainable employment.

The following discussion is an integration of various approaches to employability skills, competencies or attributes from various perspectives. The Australian Mayer Committee report (1992) was drawn up as a response to the changing working environment and the need for flexibility in the workplace. This report found the seven key competencies or generic employability skills that every employee should have to be collecting, analysing and organising information; communicating ideas and information; planning and organising activities; working with others in teams; using mathematical ideas and techniques; solving problems; and using technology. In 2002, another study was conducted in Australia by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) together with the Business Council of Australia (BCA). The purpose of this study was to identify a set of employability skills that the ACCI and BCA believed to be generic and relevant to all employees across various sectors and industries. This report incorporated the Mayer key competencies and added personal attributes to the scope (ACCI, 2002). The ACCI and BCA argue that employability skills are not only required to gain entry into employment, but that these skills are also required to progress in one's career and provide a valuable contribution to the organisation. According to the ACCI and BCA, the eight essential employability skills are communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-awareness, learning, and the ability to work with technology (ACCI, 2002).

The Employability Skills Profile was developed in 1992 by the Conference Board of Canada in conjunction with leading educators across the Canadian border. These researchers identified the critical skills of employees to be academic skills, including communication and thinking skills, personal management skills and teamwork (McLaughlin, 1992).

The State of Michigan in the USA published a set of curriculum standards and benchmarks for career and employability skills. According to the State of Michigan (Michigan Department of Education, 1998), employers require a mix of academic, personal management and teamwork skills. Zinser (2003) conducted a case study in the USA based on the employability skills identified by the State of Michigan. The 10 employability skills were identified as basic communication skills, career planning, developing and presenting information, problem solving, personal management, organisational skills, teamwork, negotiation skills, understanding systems and integration of employability skills (Michigan Department of Education, 1998).

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKES) aims to raise UK opportunities by improving employment and skills. The UKES identified employability skills as long-term skills to which an employee can readily go back. According to them employability skills include self-management, thinking and solving problems, working together and communicating, understanding the business, using numbers effectively, using language effectively and introduction of IT. CBI conducted another study in the UK in 2011 and defined employability as readiness to participate in new ideas and activities. This organisation identified employability skills as communication and literacy skills, problem-solving skills, self-management, teamwork, application of IT, application of numeracy, and business and customer skills. Table 3.1 below provides an integration of the commonalities of the employability competencies discussed above.

In the context of the present study, employability attributes are regarded as a psychosocial construct representing career behaviours that promote an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014; Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter, 2013). The employability attributes framework developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) is relevant to the present study as it provides clarity on the elements of employability. This framework has been designed specifically within the South African higher education context. The employability attributes framework describes a set of eight core employability attributes (career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy) that are important for increasing the chances of acquiring and sustaining employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout, 2010).

Research by Bezuidenhout (2010) indicates that career self-management, career resilience and cultural competence are key attributes that influence an individual's ability to sustain his/her level of employability. The attributes self-efficacy, sociability, proactivity, emotional literacy and entrepreneurial orientation promote proactive behaviours, increase opportunities for employment and increase the likelihood of career success.

Table 3.1: Summary of employability competencies

Australian Mayer-committee report (1992)	State of Michigan – USA (1998)	Employability Skills Profile – Canada (1992)	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Business Council of Australia (2002)	UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKES) (2009)	CBI employability skills (UK) (2007)
Communication	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication and language	Communication and literacy skills
	Career planning				
Collecting, analysing and organising information	Developing and presenting information				
Problem solving	Problem solving		Problem solving	Problem solving	Problem solving
	Personal management	Personal management skills	Self-awareness	Self-management	Self-management
Planning and organising activities	Organisational skills		Planning and organising		
Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork	Teamwork
	Negotiation skills				
Technology	System understanding		Technology	Technology	Application of IT
	Integration of employability skills		Learning		

Australian Mayer-committee report (1992)	State of Michigan – USA (1998)	Employability Skills Profile – Canada (1992)	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Business Council of Australia (2002)	UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKES) (2009)	CBI employability skills (UK) (2007)
			Initiative and enterprise		
Mathematical skills				Using numbers effectively	Application of numeracy
				Understanding the business	Business skills

3.1.2 Defining organisational commitment

3.1.2.1 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment has become a popular research topic in and even prior to the 21st century and various scholars have conceptualised organisational commitment in different ways. The 21st century world of work has brought about several challenges and changes in the nature of work, and thus it is important for organisations and employers to understand the dynamics of commitment in organisations (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), workplace commitment can potentially influence organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. Based on their research, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) have concluded that commitment may be viewed as a unidimensional or multidimensional construct, and that it takes on various forms, including commitment to organisations, occupations, professions, teams and leaders, goals and personal careers. This study aims to focus primarily on organisational commitment.

Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) define organisational commitment as an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. Researchers have failed to reach consensus on a single definition for organisational commitment. According to Brown (1996), organisational commitment is defined as an obliging force that requires an employee to honour his/her commitment to the organisation irrespective of changing circumstances and attitudes. Scholl (1981) and Brickman (1987) support this view and describe organisational commitment as a stabilising force that controls an employee's behaviour. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) share a different view and describe organisational commitment as an individual's psychological attachment to an organisation and the extent to which the individual internalises and adopts characteristics of the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1991) support O'Reilly and Chatman's view and define organisational commitment as a psychological state binding an individual to the organisation. Ling et al. (2014) go on to define organisational commitment as a psychological agreement between an employee and organisation and a willingness to remain with the organisation. Organisational commitment indicates an employee's wish to remain a productive role player within an organisation (Potgieter et al., 2016). Organisational commitment is further conceptualised as an affective attachment to an organisation, characterised by shared values, a desire to remain with the organisation and a willingness to put in effort towards remaining with the organisation (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Amdan et al. (2016) define organisational commitment as an attitude whereby employee and organisation goals are similar.

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment has a multidimensional nature and can be defined in various ways. They suggest that an employee's commitment is viewed from the perspective of affective commitment (a desire to remain a role player in an organisation due to work experiences that create feelings of comfort and personal competence), continuance commitment (a need to remain with the organisation that results from the recognition of the costs associated with leaving) and normative commitment (an individual's obligation binding him/her to remain with the organisation).

Affective commitment (AC) refers to identification with, involvement in and an emotional attachment to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). AC explains the feelings of employees in terms of their want or desire to remain with the organisation, and therefore these employees are more likely perform better, display work satisfaction and identify closely with the organisation (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Employees with strong AC remain with an organisation because they want to do so (Yousef, 2016).

Continuance commitment (CC) refers to commitment based on an employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees with strong CC remain with the organisation because they have to do so, either because of low perceived alternatives or high personal sacrifice associated with leaving the organisation (Yousef, 2016).

Normative commitment (NC) refers to commitment based on a sense of obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). NC is influenced by an individual's experiences before and after he/she enters the organisation (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014).

Becker's (1960) conceptualisation of commitment is known as the side-bet theory. According to his theory, committed employees are committed to an organisation because they have hidden investments or side-bets with that organisation. Cohen (2007) strongly supports this view of commitment, as he believes an employee accumulates investments over a period of time whilst working for an organisation, and the threat of losing these investments commits the employee to the organisation. Becker's (1960) approach to commitment indicates a direct relationship between organisational commitment and turnover. According to him, commitment should be measured by assessing the reasons that would result in an employee terminating his/her services with an organisation.

Mowday et al. (1979) conceptualised commitment as a psychological attachment to an organisation and introduced the exchange theory. Based on previous work done by Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974), Mowday et al. (1979) characterise commitment in terms of three related factors: a belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values; the willingness of an employee to apply effort on behalf of his/her organisation; and a strong desire to remain a member of the organisation. Although Mowday et al. (1979) conceptualise organisational commitment differently, they agreed with Becker's (1960) conclusion regarding the relationship between commitment and turnover.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), Meyer and Allen (1991) and Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) adopted a multi-dimensional approach to defining commitment. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) define organisational commitment as the psychological attachment an individual feels towards his/her organisation and the degree to which an employee will assume or accept the characteristics of the organisation. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) agree with the conclusions of Becker (1960) and Mowday et al. (1979), as they believe an individual's psychological attachment could result in other behaviours; they point to organisational citizenship behaviour as an outcome of commitment. Meyer and Allen began conducting research on organisational commitment in 1981. The purpose of their research was to argue the side-bet approach suggested by Becker (1960). Meyer and Allen (1991) believe the best way to measure side-bets is to use a measure that can directly assess an individual's perception in relation to the number of side-bets made. These authors then developed two scales to measure commitment, namely the affective and continuance components, and later added a third component – normative (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) define commitment as a psychological state that links an employee to an organisation.

According to Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982), when an individual develops a sense of identity with an organisation, he/she will develop a form of commitment to that organisation. Agba, Nkpoyen and Ushie (2010) describe highly committed individuals as being committed to the organisation, rather than to the work or the job.

An individual is primarily motivated to work in order to earn an income. An employee's pay satisfaction must be fulfilled to meet his/her daily needs and requirements in order to remain committed to the organisation (Peters, Lau & Ng, 2014). Agba et al. (2010) believe that employees in the 21st century world of work are looking for more than just a job. These individuals seek employment opportunities that extend their interests, personality and attributes and they want more than a pay check at the end of the month. The loyalty of these

employees and their level of commitment to the organisation will depend on the degree to which their needs are fulfilled by their employer (Agba et al., 2010).

According to Peters et al. (2014), employees develop high levels of commitment to an organisation when they experience job satisfaction. Agba et al. (2010) believe more highly committed individuals are more likely to take their work more seriously. Organisations that recognise and reward their employees for their contribution help to promote job satisfaction, which in turn increases the employees' commitment to the organisation (Peters et al., 2014).

Lee and Bruvold (2003) contend that an investment in developing an employee facilitates greater commitment by the employee to the organisation, and in turn will increase the willingness of the employee to put in more effort into his/her work in order to increase organisational effectiveness. The extent to which an organisation commits to developing an employee's personal and professional growth will influence the level of employee commitment to the organisation (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). Employees with strong co-worker support and relationships have stronger commitment and report less turnover (Peters et al., 2014).

Meyer and Allen (1991) are of the opinion that employees' willingness to contribute towards organisational goals will be determined by the nature of their commitment. Employees with affective commitment are more likely to exert an effort to perform than those with continuance commitment, who feel a need to belong, and those with normative commitment, who feel obliged to remain with the organisation.

In the context of the present study, organisational commitment is defined as a psychological attachment individuals have towards their organisation and their desire to contribute towards the attainment of its goals. This definition associates with Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition, which categorises organisational commitment into three components, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment. The three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1990) is relevant to the present study. The model of Meyer and Allen (1990) offers three approaches to commitment namely – affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

3.1.3 Defining retention factors

3.1.3.1 Retention factors

Organisations in the 21st century world of work recognise the shortage of skilled employees and therefore have prioritised the importance of keeping employees committed to the organisation and retaining their valuable skills (Coetzee et al., 2015; Stoltz, 2014). Organisations, managers and human resource practitioners need to understand the reasons why people leave their organisations, as well as identify the factors that influence the turnover and retention of employees (Coetzee et al., 2015). Netswera et al. (2005) suggest that retention factors influence the turnover intentions of employees and therefore must be considered in the design of retention strategies. Döckel (2003) adds that organisations recognise that staff satisfaction with retention factors is an important tool in retaining valuable and talented staff.

Döckel (2003) defines retention factors as those factors that encourage organisational commitment and thus increase the retention of employees. Netswera et al. (2005) define retention factors as those factors that influence an employee's decision to remain with an organisation or leave the organisation. Coetzee et al. (2015) define retention factors as those organisational factors that influence the retention or withdrawal of an individual and his/her decision to leave or remain with their organisation. Coetzee et al. (2015) go on to mention that these factors are positively related to employee turnover, job embeddedness, job and career satisfaction, engagement and commitment.

In the context of the present study, retention factors are defined as those factors that contribute towards organisational commitment and influence an individual's decision to remain with an organisation (Döckel, 2003; Netswera et al., 2005). The retention factor scale developed by Döckel (2003) is relevant to the present study. Döckel (2003) identified seven critical retention factors (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and organisational commitment) that organisations need to consider in order to retain valuable employees.

3.1.3.2 Factors influencing retention

Das and Baruah (2013) divide retention factors into three broad categories – social, mental and physical. The social dimension of retention consists of the contact an employee has with other people. The mental dimension consists of work characteristics – employees prefer

flexible work tasks in which they can use their knowledge and see the results of their efforts. The physical dimension consists of working conditions and compensation.

An employee will remain with an organisation when he/she fits with the organisation. According to Kgomo and Swarts (2010), an organisation's culture can be the determining factor in an employee's decision to remain with the organisation. Organisations should design their orientation programmes carefully to allow new employees to adapt to the organisational culture and understand what is expected of them (Ghosh et al., 2013). A rigid, bureaucratic culture can create hurdles and a communication gap between the employer and employee, and this will lead to low levels of commitment (Anis, Ijaz-Ur-Rehman, Nasir & Safwan, 2011).

Kreisman (2002) suggests that managers should deal with their employees on a one-on-one basis to identify their needs and concerns, and that this will enable them to retain these employees. Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) support this view and believe that managers should have open communication with employees and understand their day-to-day problems to increase engagement levels, which will influence an employee's decision to stay with an organisation. Managers and supervisors are expected to nurture their employees' development, and failure to do so may result in a loss of valuable employees (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011).

Employees value a 'healthy' organisation in which they are generally satisfied, empowered and feel good about going to work (Kreisman, 2002). The employees' working environment needs to be encouraging to allow employees to become involved in matters they are passionate about (Munsamy & Bosch Venter, 2009). Ramlall (2003) conducted a study in which he found the location of a company to be the most important reason for choosing to work for an organisation. Deckop, Konrad, Perlmutter and Freely (2006) emphasise the importance of recognising and appreciating employees in order to encourage them to work harder and remain with the organisation. Managers should strive to take care of their employees' feelings about the job and their job satisfaction from their working conditions, supervisors and peers to ensure retention.

The Corporate Leadership Council identified four attractors and retainers (compensation and benefits, work/life balance, work environment and organisational environment) it believes to contribute to employee retention (Munsamy & Bosch Venter, 2009). Table 3.2 provides an overview of these factors.

The 21st century world of work is characterised by constant change, and employers and employees need to embrace the change in order to remain competitive. Organisations in the 21st century need to be mindful of the changing priorities of their employees and consider the factors that attract and engage employees in their careers, work, occupations and the organisation itself (Tladinyane et al., 2013). According to Anis et al. (2011), the training and development of employees have become a prerequisite for all organisations. They believe advancement opportunities help in reducing absenteeism while increasing the commitment and satisfaction of employees. The probability of an employee remaining with an organisation is significantly increased in instances where training and development opportunities are offered (Deckop et al., 2006). Hong et al. (2012) are of the opinion that training can define roles and eliminate stress and, as a result, will lead to higher retention rates. Baruch (2006) is of a similar opinion, as he believes training and development are positively related to commitment and may lead to higher chances of retention.

Employees expect greater responsibility and autonomy after they receive training, and organisations that support this view can increase the retention of their employees (Anis et al., 2011). The empowerment of employees can create a feeling of obligation towards the organisation, thus empowered employees are more likely to remain with an organisation due to a sense of belonging (Hong et al., 2012).

Another factor influencing the retention of employees has been identified as compensation. Many scholars believe this is an important tool and, in some cases, the most important tool organisations can use to retain employees (Anis et al., 2011; Deckop et al., 2006; Döckel et al., 2006; Hong et al., 2012; Munsamy & Bosch Venter, 2009; Ramlall, 2003). Compensation plays a significant role in attracting and retaining good employees (Irshad & Afridi, 2012; Ramlall, 2003). According to Anis et al. (2011), compensation can be used as a motivator for an employee to remain committed to an organisation, which will result in increased retention. Compensation works well as a communicator when it is given to an employee to indicate his/her value and worth to the organisation (Anis et al., 2011). Compensation also serves as an attractor to potential candidates applying for a vacancy (Anis et al., 2011). If employees are satisfied with the manner in which the company operates and communicates compensation policies, they will remain with the organisation (Hong et al., 2012). However, further research has proven that organisations may struggle to retain employees merely by compensation, and they often use employee recognition to boost employee morale and encourage positive work behaviour (Anis et al., 2011). Employees with high levels of morale are generally more satisfied and will remain longer with an organisation.

Irshad and Afridi (2012) identified co-worker relationships and group membership as other factors influencing retention. According to them, employee loyalty and willingness to remain with an organisation can increase when an employee is able to identify within a group and contribute towards the performance of a group.

Employees in the 21st century world of work look for jobs that offer flexibility. Employees are becoming more accustomed to having autonomy and flexibility in their work and organisations (Phillips & Connell, 2003). Organisations that provide employees with flexible work arrangements to help them maintain a work/life balance and fulfil their family responsibilities can increase their retention of employees (Irshad & Afridi, 2012).

Table 3.2: *Four attractors and retainers contributing to employee retention*

Attractor/Retainer	Description
Compensation and benefits	Compensation and benefits should be market-related. Organisations should employ mechanisms to reward and retain top performers
Work/life balance	Organisations must make provision to accommodate a flexible working environment.
Work environment	The work environment should be challenging and provide opportunities for learning and growth. Job profiles should be flexible to make positions more attractive.
Organisational environment	The organisation should create an attractive image by implementing a proactive marketing and communication strategy with emphasis on learning and innovation.

Source: Corporate and Leadership Council (2002, as cited in Munsamy and Bosch Venter, 2009)

Table 3.3 below provides a summary of the factors influencing the retention of staff.

Table 3.3: *Factors influencing retention*

Factors	Scholars
Organisational culture	Anis et al. (2011) Kgomo and Swarts (2010)
Work environment	Deckop et al. (2006) Kreisman (2002) Munsamy and Bosch Venter (2009) Ramlall (2003)
Training and development	Anis et al. (2011) Baruch (2006) Deckop et al. (2006) Munsamy and Bosch Venter (2009)
Empowerment/Autonomy	Anis et al. (2011) Hong et al. (2012)
Compensation and benefits	Anis et al. (2011) Deckop et al. (2006) Döckel et al. (2006) Irshad and Afridi (2012) Hong et al. (2012) Munsamy and Bosch Venter (2009)
Workplace flexibility	Irshad and Afridi (2012) Munsamy and Bosch Venter (2009) Phillips and Connell (2003)
Group membership	Irshad and Afridi (2012)
Reward and recognition	Anis et al. (2011)
Communication between managers and employees	Kreisman (2002) Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011)

3.2 THEORETICAL MODELS

3.2.1 Theoretical models of employability

The following theoretical models are relevant to the study:

- Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth's (2006) dispositional approach to employability
- Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competency-based approach to employability

- Beukes's (2009) self-regulatory model of employability
- Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework

3.2.1.1 Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth's (2006) dispositional approach to employability

Fugate et al. (2004) conceptualise employability on the basis of previous work done by Ashford and Taylor (1990). They describe employability as a psychosocial construct symbolising individual characteristics that nurture adaptive cognition, behaviour and enhance an individual's work interface. According to Fugate et al. (2004), employees are responsible for acquiring and utilising the knowledge, skills and attributes valued by organisations. Employees should be proactive and changeable to meet the demands of their working environments (Fugate et al., 2004).

Fugate et al. (2004) identify three dimensions of employability – career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital. They believe that each of the three dimensions assists an individual to identify and realise possible internal and external career opportunities. They acknowledge that each dimension adds value in its own right and that they collectively generate a concept commonly known as employability. Fugate (2006) conducted further studies on employability and developed an employability model known as the dispositional approach to employability. Within this model, employability is viewed as a disposition capturing individual characteristics that support employees to be proactive rather than reactive agents. The construct of dispositional employability incorporates the commonalities of the different dimensions of employability, as well as highlights the conceptual and empirical overlap between these dimensions that contribute towards proactive adaptability (Fugate, 2006). The dispositional model was developed to include: openness to changes at work, work and career resilience, work and career proactivity, career motivation, social and human capital, and career identity. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of Fugate's (2006) dispositional model of employability.

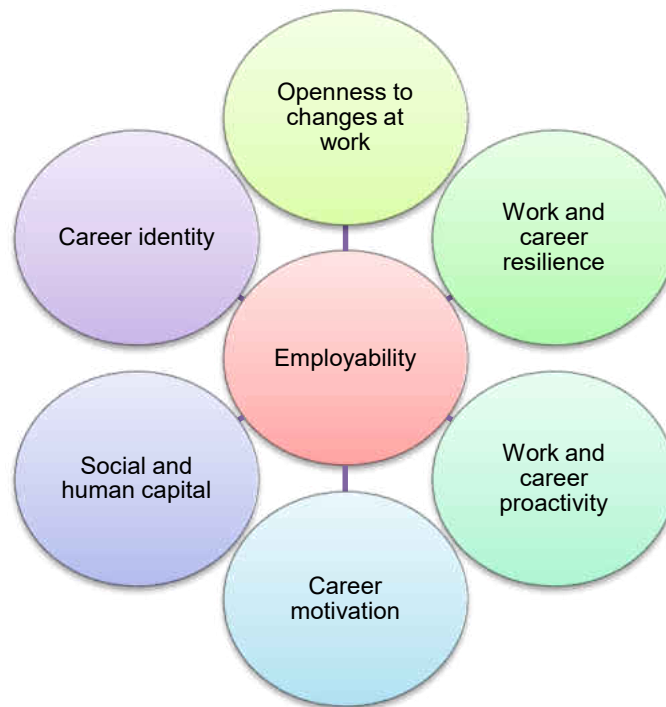


Figure 3.1: Fugate's dispositional model of employability

Source: Adapted from Beukes (2010)

(a) Openness to changes at work

Openness to change enhances an individual's personal adaptability by supporting continuous learning and enabling individuals to proactively identify possible career opportunities (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Open individuals are flexible and recognise change as a positive challenge when faced with a new or unfamiliar situation (Fugate, 2006). Fugate et al. (2008) believe that individuals who are open to change and new experiences are more employable, as they can easily acclimate in a dynamic work environment.

(b) Work and career resilience

According to cognitive adaption theory, work- and career-resilient individuals reflect high self-evaluation and display an optimistic attitude towards their work and careers (Fugate, 2006). These positive self-evaluations inspire employee productivity, which results in positive expectations for the future (Fugate, 2006). Resilient individuals show confidence in their ability to deal with objective and affective challenges in the workplace (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Work- and career-resilient individuals possess career optimism, enabling them to foster the identification and realisation of career opportunities and develop fundamental employability attributes within changing work environments (Fugate, 2006; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

(c) Work and career proactivity

Work and career proactivity is often compared to proactive coping due to their similarities in nature. Proactive coping is defined as an individual's effort to identify potential stressors and develop the resources and skills required to deal with these stressors effectively (Fugate, 2006). Work- and career-proactive individuals acquire information related to potential opportunities and challenges associated with their career (Fugate, 2006). Proactive individuals with high levels of employability assess their value in the market place by comparing their skills with the available job opportunities (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Fugate and Kinicki (2008) contend that work and career proactivity enables the identification and realisation of career opportunities.

(d) Career motivation

Career motivation extends to the concepts of motivation control and learning goal orientation (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Career motivation is advantageous for employees in many ways, as it provides motivation for workers, persistence during periods of boredom and frustration, and provides sustained effort in handling challenges (Fugate, 2006). Career-motivated individuals learn new skills and recognise new situations as potential opportunities (Fugate, 2006). Career motivation is a critical determinant of continuous learning and dispositional employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

(e) Social and human capital

Social and human capital are described as investments that contribute to employability (Fugate, 2006). Social capital consists of the resources available in social networks that can advance a person's interests. The size and diversity of an individual's network are directly related to the amount of influence available (Fugate, 2006). Human capital consists of more traditional factors (age and education, work experience and training, job performance and organisational tenure) influencing an individual's career advancement.

(f) Career identity

Career identity describes an individual's self-definition in the career context (Fugate, 2006). Career identity organises past experiences and aims to provide direction for future opportunities (Fugate, 2006). Fugate and Kinicki (2008) contend that people who define themselves as employable endorse behaviours consistent with this self-view. Career identities direct, regulate and sustain behaviour, and require individuals to take self-management of their boundaryless careers within the 21st century world of work (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Career identity supports and integrates the other dimensions of employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

3.2.1.2 Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence-based approach to employability

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) conceptualise employability as a prerequisite for enabling competitive advantage and career success. According to these authors, employability enables employees to cope with dynamic work environments in the 21st century world of work.

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) propose a competence-based approach to employability derived from an extension of the resource-based view. This perspective aligns two different theories on employability, namely Fugate's (2006) dispositional approach to employability and Van Dam's (2004) process model of employability. The changes in the 21st century world of work are taking place at a rapid pace, and thus organisations are compelled to become more flexible and reorganise their structure of work (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). In an attempt to keep up with these changes, the transition from a job-based human resource management (HRM) system to a competence-based person-related system has taken place and these changes also have significant implications for the skills employees need and the ideal employee profile (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

According to the resource-based approach, employability, together with occupational expertise, provides for work continuity and opportunities for career development (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Within the resource-based approach, competencies are one category of potential resources that allow firms to achieve performance and gain a competitive advantage (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Within a competence-based approach, competence models are used to combine individual capabilities with organisational competencies. The competence-based approach is based on a five-dimensional conceptualisation of employability: occupational expertise, anticipation and optimisation, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance. Figure 3.2 provides an overview of Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence-based approach to employability. The proposed employability dimensions include aspects of job-related issues and aspects of broader career development. The competence approach aims to adopt a dual orientation toward the development of human potential and work process development, taking cognisance of the employer and the employees (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

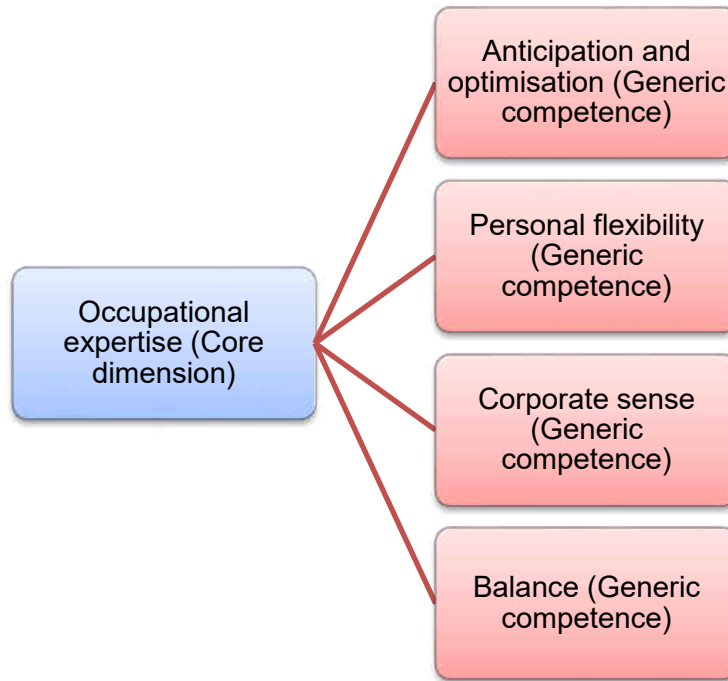


Figure 3.2: Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence-based approach to employability

Source: Adapted from Beukes (2010)

(a) Occupational expertise

Occupational expertise is the first dimension of employability. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) believe that occupational expertise is fundamental for employees to gain and retain employment. Individuals with occupational expertise are less likely to be made redundant during periods of recession and downsizing (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). In order to enhance their employability, individuals should have a high degree of knowledge and skills related to their profession, together with the perception that they are high performers and outstanding professionals (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

The second and third dimensions of employability relate to adapting to changes and developments that are relevant in the light of performance outcomes. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) distinguish two types of adaption, namely anticipation and optimisation – a self-initiating proactive variant, and personal flexibility – a more passive, reactive variant. Both adaption types coexist and function with the objective of increasing an individual's employability.

(b) Anticipation and optimisation

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) propose that anticipation and optimisation involve preparing for future work changes in order to achieve the best career outcomes. The complexity of the work environment in the 21st century world of work makes it difficult for employers to predict the future work environment, therefore employees are compelled to proclaim their jobs and personal lives themselves (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Employees have the opportunity to take responsibility for managing the future of their careers, rather than merely performing fixed tasks that will not allow for career progression (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) suggest that career management will be elevated when a balance is achieved between personal preferences and market development.

(c) Personal flexibility

Within the 21st century world of work, employees are compelled to adapt passively to changes in their work environment (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) define personal flexibility as the ability of an employee to make a smooth transition between jobs whilst easily adapting to changes in both the internal and external labour market. The 21st century world of work is dynamic in nature and requires flexible employees at multiple levels (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). These organisations look for employees with coping skills and those who can easily recover from disappointments. Fugate et al. (2004) identify personal flexibility as a prerequisite of adaptability, an important component of employability. Employees with high personal flexibility embrace change and are more likely succeed in career development (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). One way in which organisations can introduce flexibility is by hiring temporary or part-time workers. These organisations can benefit significantly by recruiting flexible employees, which will help to reduce personnel costs during periods of decline (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Fellow employees can also benefit from the recruitment of temporary, flexible workers as there will be reduced competition for promotion and increased opportunities for career development.

(d) Corporate sense

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) identify corporate sense as the fourth dimension of employability. The change in the traditional employment relationship indicates that employees are required to participate in teams, identify corporate goals and engage in joint decision making (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Corporate sense builds on organisational citizenship behaviour, in terms of which employees must participate in work

groups, work teams, occupational, community and other networks (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) believe that employees within the 21st century world of work belong to more groups than in previous work eras. Corporate sense also builds on social capital, where employees participate in various networks, including project networks, occupational networks, industry networks and virtual networks (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). To summarise, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) define corporate sense as sharing responsibilities, knowledge, experience, feelings, credits, failures and goals, as well as related tasks.

(e) Balance

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) identify balance as the last dimension of employability and define it as a compromise between employer and employee interests. A relationship that accommodates a balance between employer and employee investments and profits will allow for employability (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Employees may experience that their working life is characterised by assertive, competing demands that are difficult to balance successfully (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) believe that organisations demand certain conflicting characteristics from their employees, including the deployment of employees who are self-reliant and self-managing, highly committed employees who are flexible, and specialised employees who can de-specialise as required. Employees need to balance these conflicting demands to be successful within the 21st century world of work.

3.2.1.3 Beukes's (2010) self-regulatory model of employability

Beukes (2010) conceptualises employability based on previous work done by Pool and Sewell (2007). Beukes (2010) proposes a self-regulatory approach to employability, focusing on developing and sustaining an individual through a series of development stages. He defines employability as a range of supportive competencies and attributes that develop continuously through a series of stages that enhance an individual's employment opportunities. Beukes (2010) describes the self-regulatory model of employability as a career-orientated model designed to guide individuals in managing their careers through continuous learning and reintegration into their ever-changing career context.

Beukes (2010) proposes a series of reiterative stages that enable individuals to direct their employability skills and competencies in gaining and securing employment in the 21st century world of work. The stages involve five sets of development tasks, namely audit and alignment, career goal clarity, formal and informal learning, self-presentation, and

competence trade-off. Each stage of development is supported by a set of competencies: audit and alignment are supported by basic skills, career goal clarity is supported by goal-driven behaviour, informal and formal learning are supported by creative learning skills, self-presentation is supported by communication skills, and competence trade-off is supported by business acumen. Figure 3.3 provides an overview of Beukes's (2010) self-regulatory model of employability.

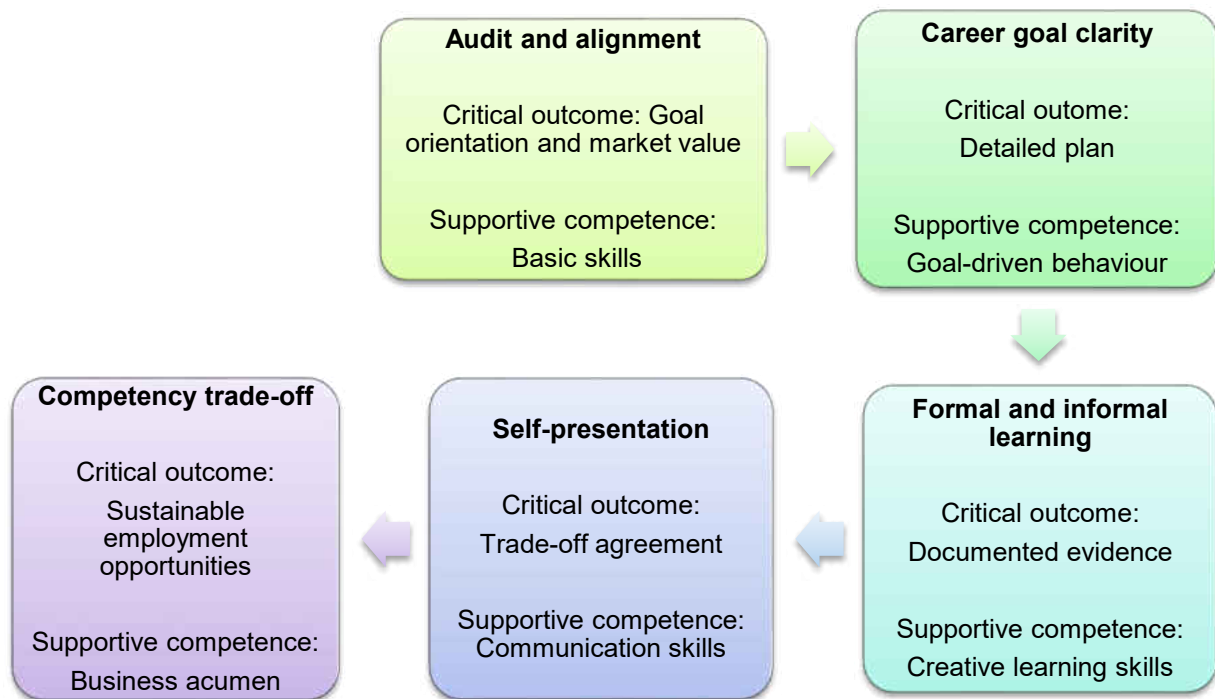


Figure 3.3: Beukes's (2010) self-regulatory model of employability

Source: Beukes (2010)

(a) Stage 1: Audit and alignment

During this stage, individuals conduct an audit on their competencies in relation to labour demands and potential employment opportunities. The critical outcomes for this stage are employee insight into market value and goal orientation. Beukes (2010) adds that the audit and alignment stage is supported by a set of basic skills enhancing the alignment process. These basic skills include generally accepted employability skills – literacy and numeracy skills, computer skills, planning, organising and problem-solving skills. Beukes (2010) believes that those individuals who have successfully developed these skills are able to apply them effectively and have a greater capacity to assess their competence values in relation to current competence demand.

(b) Stage 2: Career goal clarity

During this stage, individuals set career-specific goals in order to achieve the main alignment purpose. The critical outcome of this stage is the development of a detailed plan for effective action. Beukes (2010) contends that the goal-setting process should enable an individual to effectively assess his/her career progress in a more scientific and quantifiable manner. Beukes (2010) adds that the career goal clarity stage is supported by goal-driven behaviour. Individuals who adopt goal-driven behaviour make a habit of recoding, attempting and adjusting goals in a way that facilitates their achievement. Beukes (2010) believes that, if individuals develop the ability and knowledge to achieve their goals, they can progress to further goals. This cycle of goal achievement is very useful to employees within the 21st century world of work.

(c) Stage 3: Formal and informal learning

During this stage, an employee will engage in life-long learning, which is necessary to achieve his/her goals and purposes. This learning can take place formally or informally, both of which will be beneficial to the individual. The critical outcome of this stage is documented evidence – an individual has proof of his/her development in relation to employment opportunities. Beukes (2010) believes that the changes within the 21st century world of work have made it necessary for employees to engage in life-long learning in order to cope with the changes effectively. Beukes (2010) adds that the formal and informal learning stages are supported by creative learning. Creative learning is based on an understanding of learning and commitment in order to enhance employee development. Creative learning also facilitates ways of overcoming learning challenges.

(d) Stage 4: Self-presentation

During this stage an individual needs to negotiate a trade-off agreement between his/her skills and competencies and the compensation package offered by the organisation. The critical outcome of this stage is mutual trade-off, which can be achieved by the individual articulating his/her personal brand. Beukes (2010) contends that clear communication must take place on the trade-off between the employee and the organisation. Individuals must thus share information about themselves by highlighting the characteristics that make them more unique and better suited than their fellow candidates. Beukes (2010) adds that the self-presentation stage is supported by communication. An individual must have the ability to express him/herself and set clear expectations regarding career goals.

(e) Stage 5: Competency trade-off

During this stage, the actual trade-off negotiated in stage 4 between the individual competencies and the remuneration package offered by the organisation takes place. This trade-off allows for the employee to receive the remuneration package whilst also accommodating for employability development to allow for career progression. The critical outcome of this stage is sustainable employment opportunities. Beukes (2010) adds that this stage is supported by business acumen. Business acumen is described as the ability to make good judgements and take effective decisions on trade/occupation. Business acumen is also described as understanding the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in business.

3.2.1.4 Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) conceptualise employability as psychosocial career-related attributes that promote and enhance an individual's ability to secure and sustain employment. The Employability Attributes Framework (EAF) was developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) and was designed specifically for adult learners in the South African higher education context. The framework describes eight core attributes that are regarded as important employability skills required for an individual to secure and sustain employment. These attributes include career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. Figure 3.4 provides an overview of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework, as illustrated by Coetzee (2012).

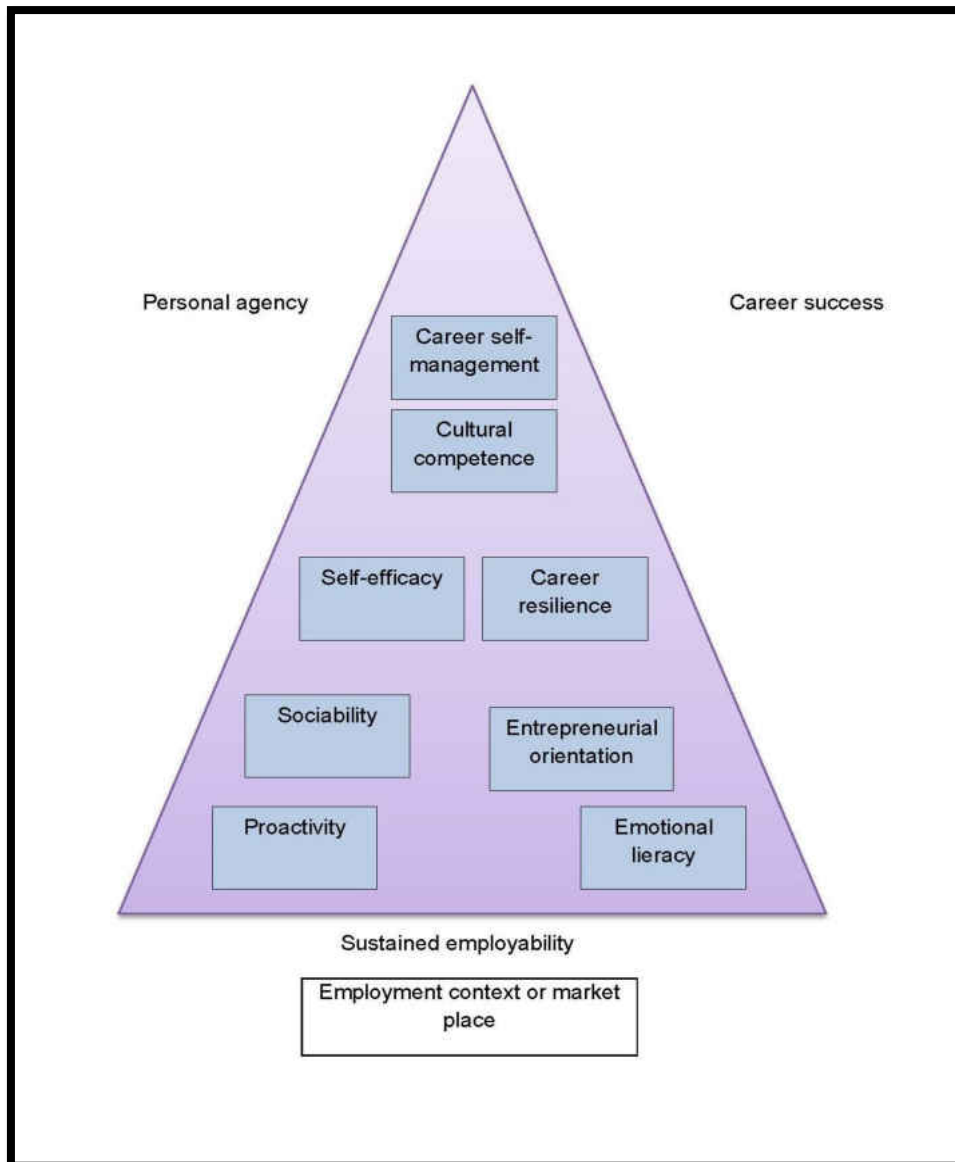


Figure 3.4: Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) Employability attributes framework
 Source: Coetzee (2011)

(a) Career self-management

Coetzee (2011) defines career self-management as an individual's ability to sustain his/her employability through continuous learning, career planning and management efforts. According to Coetzee (2011) and Bezuidenhout (2010), individuals with career self-management encompass the following attributes: the ability to reflect on career goals and develop clarity on what they want to achieve in their career, to identify the skills required for career success and the actions necessary to accomplish career goals, and to have the confidence to achieve these goals. Individuals who adopt career self-management have the ability to continuously engage in career development activities to reach their career goals (Bezuidenhout, 2010).

(b) Cultural competence

Coetzee (2010) defines cultural competence as the metacognitive ability of an individual to effectively understand, act and interface with others in diverse cultural environments. Individuals with cultural competence have the following attributes: knowledge of different customs of cultures, understanding of diverse values and beliefs, confidence in effortlessly communicating interculturally and maintaining relationships with people from diverse cultures (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010).

(c) Self-efficacy

Coetzee (2010) defines self-efficacy as an individual's awareness of the difficulty of career- or performance-related tasks that they believe they will attempt, how well they believe they can execute these tasks and the degree to which their beliefs will persevere, irrespective of the challenges they face. Individuals with self-efficacy have the following attributes: the ability to function independently and make their own decisions, and the confidence to accomplish their own goals (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010). Coetzee (2011) adds that self-efficient individuals are persistent when overcoming challenges and strive to keep themselves up to date with the most recent career developments.

(d) Career resilience

Coetzee (2010) defines career resilience as an individual's ability to adapt to changing circumstances by welcoming career changes, working with new people and having the self-confidence to take risks. Individuals with career resilience have the following attributes: hold high self-regard for personal qualities and are open to getting feedback from others on their strengths and weaknesses (Coetzee, 2011). Resilient individuals can adapt proactively to changes that occur in their environment (Bezuidenhout, 2010).

(e) Sociability

Bezuidenhout (2010) defines sociability as an individual's ability to establish and maintain social contracts and make use of informal and formal networks to advance in his/her career. Individuals with sociability skills have the following attributes: the ability to build a network of friends for career advancement and the ability to use these friendship networks to find new job opportunities. Bezuidenhout (2010) adds that sociable individuals are risk takers and actively seek feedback from others to assist their career progression. These individuals are self-confident and can easily adapt to different social situations.

(f) Entrepreneurial orientation

Bezuidenhout (2010) defines entrepreneurial orientation as an individual's inclination to creativity and risk taking, the individual's need for achievement, tolerance for ambiguity, preference for autonomy and desire to create something of value. Individuals with an entrepreneurial orientation have the following attributes: being curious and continuously venturing into new opportunities, being open to new ideas, and feeling positive about the implications of change in their workplace (Bezuidenhout, 2010). These individuals feel comfortable in uncertain situations and accept responsibility for their career success or failure.

(g) Proactivity

Bezuidenhout (2010) defines proactivity as an individual's active role in engaging in self-initiated action to change and improve him/herself or the situation he/she is in. Individuals with proactivity have the following attributes: accepting responsibility for decisions, setting challenging targets for themselves, identifying opportunities before others, improving knowledge and skills to ensure career progression, and the ability to adapt to and persevere in changing situations (Bezuidenhout, 2010).

(h) Emotional literacy

Coetzee (2010) defines emotional literacy as an individual's ability to use emotions, as well as the ability to read, understand and manage their own and others' emotions. Individuals with emotional literacy have the following attributes: understanding and managing their own emotions and moods, and being able to identify and influence others' emotions and moods (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010).

3.2.1.5 Integration of employability theoretical models

The employability models discussed in the previous section – Fugate et al.'s (2006) dispositional approach to employability, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence-based approach to employability, Beukes's (2009) self-regulatory model of employability and Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework appear to be complementary in nature. Each of these models shares a number of commonalities, mainly that they view employability from the individual perspective and emphasise the active role that individuals play in developing their employability.

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework is of specific relevance to this study, as it has been developed specifically for use with young adults in the South African context. Table 3.4 provides a summary of the employability models discussed in the previous section.

Table 3.4: Comparison of employability models

	Fugate's (2006) dispositional approach to employability	Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence approach to employability	Beukes' (2006) self-regulatory model of employability	Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework
Description of model	A dispositional model of employability that predisposes employees to be proactive rather than reactive in managing their careers.	A competence-based approach to employability that describes an individual's ability to gain and secure employment within the working environment.	A career-oriented model aimed at guiding an individual to manage his/her career through the process of continuous learning and reintegration into his/her ever-changing career contexts.	Career-related attributes promoting and enhancing an individual's ability to secure and sustain employment.
Previous work	Based on previous work done by Ashford and Taylor (1990). An extension of employability work done by Fugate (2004).	Derived as an extension of the resource-based view.	An extension of previous work done by Pool and Sewell (2007).	Conceptual foundations based on the graduate employability model (GEM) developed by Bezuidenhout (2010).
Categories/submissions	Openness to changes at work Work and career	Occupational expertise Anticipation and optimisation	Stage 1: Audit and alignment	Career self-management Cultural competence Self-efficacy

	Fugate's (2006) dispositional approach to employability	Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence approach to employability	Beukes' (2006) self-regulatory model of employability	Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework
	resilience Work and career proactivity Career motivation Social and human capital Career identity	Personal flexibility Corporate sense Balance	Stage 2: Career goal clarity Stage 3: Formal and informal learning Stage 4: Self-presentation Stage 5: Competence trading	Career resilience Sociability Entrepreneurial orientation Proactivity Emotional literacy
Characteristics	Proactivity Flexibility/adaptability Life-long learning Optimistic/motivated Self-confident	Proactivity Flexibility/adaptability Life-long learning Motivated	Proactivity Adaptability Continuous learning Motivated	Proactivity Adaptability Continuous learning Optimistic Self-confident
How is employability achieved?	Employability is achieved through the adoption of a proactive and adaptable career attitude.	Employability is achieved through proactivity and adaptability.	Employability is achieved through reiterative stages of life-long learning.	Employability is achieved through continuous learning.

3.2.2 Theoretical models of organisational commitment

The following theoretical models are of relevance to the study:

- Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment
- O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment
- Morrow's (1983) model of major commitment
- Randall and Cote's (1991) commitment model

3.2.2.1 Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1990) adopted a multidimensional approach to conceptualising organisational commitment. They define organisational commitment as a connection between an individual and the organisation that will reduce employee turnover. The three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1990), commonly referred to as the TCM model, has had the greatest impact on organisational commitment studies. The model offers three approaches to commitment, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) are of the opinion that, by taking all three forms of commitment into consideration, one can gain an improved understanding of an employee's psychological attachment to the organisation. Figure 3.5 provides an overview of Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment.

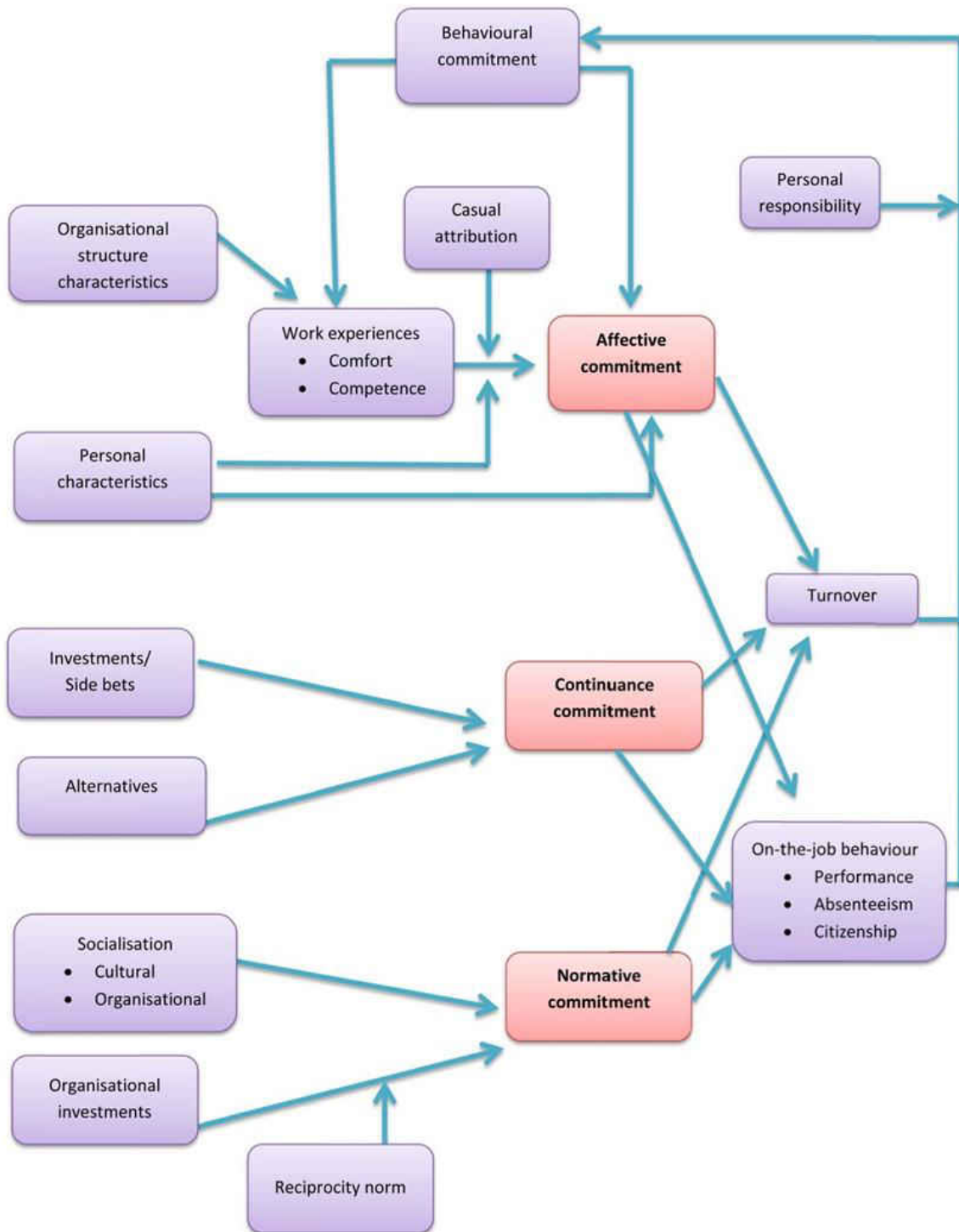


Figure 3.5: Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment
 Source: Meyer and Allen (1991)

The commonality between the three approaches is the link between the employee and the organisation, although the nature of this link differs (Meyer & Allen, 1990). According to Meyer and Allen (1990), employees with strong affective commitment remain with an organisation because they want to do so; those with strong continuance commitment remain with an organisation because they need to do so; and those with normative commitment remain with an organisation because they want feel obligated to do so. Table 3.5 provides a comparison of the three components of employability. Meyer and Allen (1990) highlight that an employee may experience more than one of these psychological states to varying degrees. According to Meyer et al. (1993), a better understanding of an employment relationship between the employee and the organisation can be achieved when all three forms of commitment are considered together.

Table 3.5: *Comparison of three components of organisational commitment*

	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
Definition	An employee's emotional attachment to the organisation	An employee evaluates costs associated with leaving the organisation	An employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation
Characteristics	Emotional bond Engagement with the organisation	Benefits and rewards	Indebtedness to the organisation Obligation
Nature of link between employee and organisation	Wants to remain with organisation	Needs to remain with the organisation	Feels obligated to remain with the organisation
Contribution to the study	Can assist in determining employees' feelings of attachment to the organisation	Can assist in determining employees' intentions to remain working with the organisation	Can assist in determining employees' sense of duty towards the organisation

(a) Affective commitment

The affective component proposed by the model refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Mowday et al. (1982) identified four characteristics of affective commitment, namely personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics and work experiences.

Meyer and Allen (1991) believe that affective commitment develops when an employee is able to satisfy his/her needs through a range of experiences that are compatible with his/her values. Employees who describe their experiences as constant with their expectations and as fulfilling their basic needs develop stronger affective attachment to the organisation than those employees who describe their experiences as less satisfying (Meyer et al., 1993). According to Meyer and Allen (1990), employees with a strong affective commitment remain with the organisation because they want to do so.

(b) Continuance commitment

The continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that an employee associates with leaving the organisation. Becker (1960) introduced the side-bet theory and says that commitment develops as one makes side bets that would be lost if the action were discontinued. These side bets can take on many work- or non-work-related aspects and are usually calculated as the potential costs of leaving a company. Meyer and Allen (1990) believe that side bets are difficult to measure and therefore proclaim that continuance commitment develops as a function of lack of alternate employment opportunities, together with an accumulation of side bets. Employees are afraid of losing certain benefits or advantages and as a result, they remain with an organisation (Meyer et al., 1993). According to Meyer and Allen (1990), employees with a strong continuance commitment remain with an organisation because they feel they need to do so. Iles, Forster and Tinline (1996) add that individuals with continuance commitment are likely to remain committed to the organisation out of compulsion or coercion.

(c) Normative commitment

The normative component refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1991) identified two forms of normative commitment – one being prior to entry into the organisation and the other following entry into the organisation. Employees may feel an exertion of normative pressures binding them to an organisation, but in instances where an organisation invests in the employee, the employee may feel obligated to remain with the organisation until the debt has been paid off (Scholl, 1981).

According to Meyer and Allen (1990), employees with a strong normative commitment remain with an organisation because they feel they should do so.

3.2.2.2 O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) adopted a multidimensional structure to conceptualise organisational commitment. They define commitment as the psychological attachment an individual has to an organisation and the degree to which the individual assumes or adopts characteristics of the organisation. Commitment serves as the basis of an individual's attachment to an organisation and may take on three distinct forms, namely compliance, identification and internalisation.

(a) Compliance

According to Caldwell, Chatman and O'Reilly (1990), compliance (instrumental commitment) occurs when attitudes and corresponding behaviours are adopted in order to gain specific rewards.

(b) Identification

Caldwell et al. (1990) say that identification occurs when an individual come to an agreement to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship. At this stage, organisational commitment is supported by the normative element of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

(c) Internalisation

According to Caldwell et al. (1990), internalisation occurs when an individual comes to an agreement to encourage the adoption of attitudes and behaviours that are congruent with existing values..

3.2.2.3 Morrow's (1983) model of major commitments

According to Morrow (1983), work commitment consists of a set of different, but interrelated, commitment constructs and thus adopted a multiple commitment approach (Carmeli & Gefen, 2005). Morrow (1993) identified five universal forms of work commitment that she believes have a mutual influence on each other: the Protestant work ethic, career commitment, job involvement, affective organisational commitment and continuance organisational commitment. These forms of work commitment are an adaptation of the five forms of commitment initially suggested by Morrow in 1983. Morrow (1993) aimed to study the interrelationship between commitment constructs and believes a shared connectedness

may exist between the different levels of commitment. Figure 3.6 provides an overview of Morrow's (1993) model of major commitments.

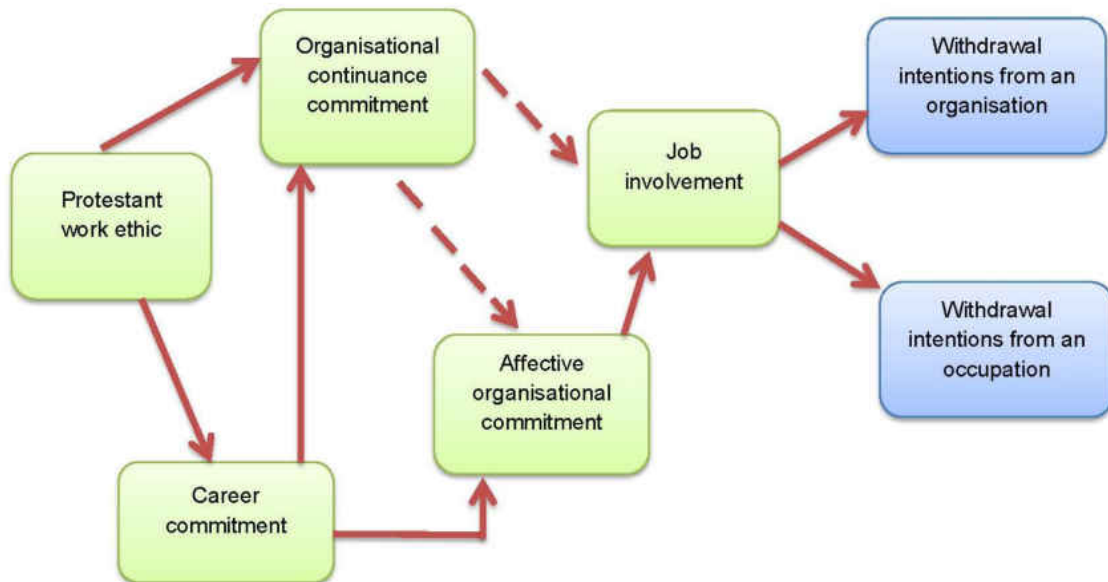


Figure 3.6: Morrow's (1993) model of major commitments

Source: Carmeli and Gefen (2005)

(a) Protestant work ethic (PWE)

According to Morrow (1993), the Protestant work ethic is defined as the extent to which an employee considers hard work as important, but holds a stronger desire for leisure time and excess money.

(b) Career commitment

Morrow (1993) defines career commitment as an employee's attitude towards his/her profession. Career commitment does not appear to be a changeable attitude.

(c) Continuance commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1990), continuance commitment is defined as the extent to which an employee feels committed to the organisation by virtue of costs they associate with leaving.

(d) Affective commitment

Meyer and Allen (1993) define affective commitment as the positive feelings of attachment an employee feels to the organisation. Morrow (1983) believes organisational commitment may vary over an employee's lifetime.

(e) Job involvement

According to Morrow (1993), job involvement is the extent to which an organisation/job can satisfy an employee's needs.

3.2.2.4 Randall and Cote's (1991) model of commitment

Randall and Cote (1991) propose a multivariate model of commitment. According to their commitment model, an employee experiences varying degrees of commitment toward many aspects of the work setting at the same time. The five forms of work commitment identified by Randall and Cote (1991) are organisational commitment, career salience, work group attachment, job involvement and the protestant work ethic. It should be noted that subsequent work commitment models, by Carmeli and Gefen (2005) and Cohen (1999), have not included work-group attachment as no empirical support has been found for that construct in the original work proposed by Randall and Cote (1991). Job involvement is presented as the key moderator influencing the relationship between the protestant work ethic, continuance organisational commitment, continuance affective commitment and career commitment (Carmeli & Gefen, 2005).

(a) Work-group attachment

Randall and Cote (1991) define work-group attachment as an individual's identification and sense of cohesiveness with other members of the organisation.

(b) Protestant work ethic

Morrow (1983) describes the protestant work ethic as a relatively fixed attribute over an individual's life. According to Randall and Cote (1991), the protestant work ethic is an essential, important form of work commitment, as it plays a key role in influencing an employee's affective responses in the workplace.

(c) Job involvement

Morrow (1983) defines job involvement as the degree of daily involvement an individual experiences in a work activity. Randall and Cote (1991) propose a strong, direct link between work-group attachment and job involvement – social relationships and a strong

sense of cohesiveness are believed to shape an individual's attitude towards a job. Randall and Cote (1991) also propose a strong relationship between job involvement and the protestant work ethic – an individual internalising this work ethic is more likely to be involved in his/her job.

(d) Career salience

Randall and Cote (1991) define career salience as the importance of a career in an individual's life. They propose a strong, direct link between job involvement and career salience. Morrow (1983) refers to career salience as career commitment.

(e) Organisational commitment

Mowday et al. (1979) define organisational commitment as the extent to which an individual has a strong desire to remain with an organisation whilst staying true to accepting the goals and values of the organisation. Randall and Cote (1991) propose a direct link between job involvement and organisational commitment, as well as a direct link between work-group attachment and job involvement.

Randall and Cote (1991) also suggest that job involvement should influence three other forms of work commitment – affective organisational commitment, continuance organisational commitment and career commitment (Carmeli & Gefen, 2005). Figure 3.7 provides an overview of Randall and Cote's (1991) model of commitments.

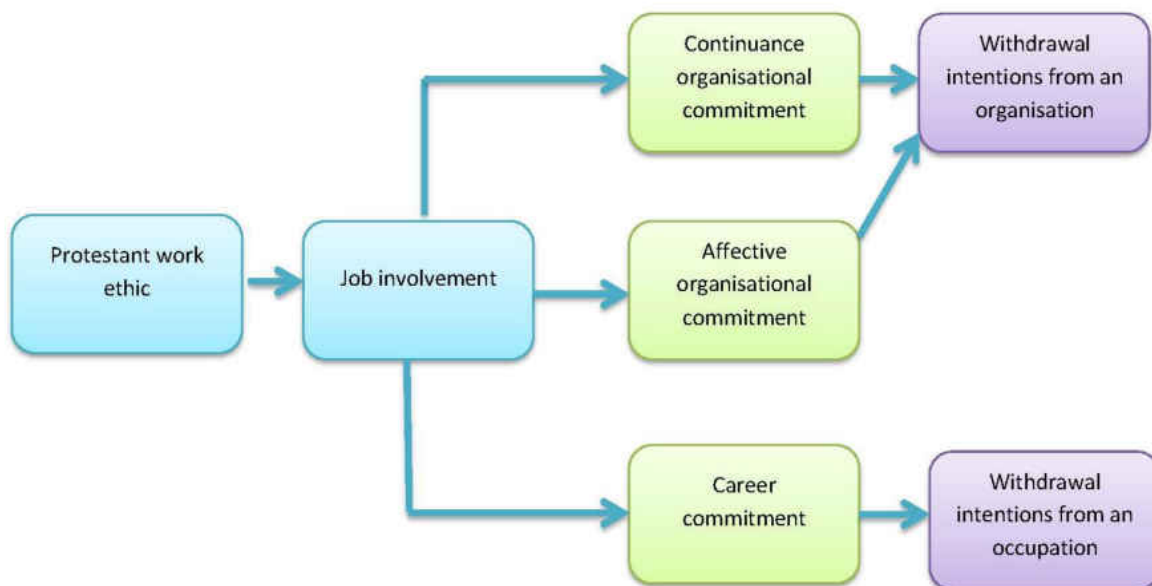


Figure 3.7: Randall and Cote's (1991) model of commitments

Source: Carmeli and Gefen (2005)

3.2.2.5 Integration of theoretical models of organisational commitment

Randall and Cote's (1991) model should be compared with the model proposed by Morrow (1983), who tested slightly different forms of commitment (Cohen, 1999). The main difference identified between Morrow's (1983) model and Randall and Cote's (1991) model is the role of job involvement (Cohen, 1999). However, Carmeli and Gefen (2005) believe that these two models can be integrated. Morrow (1983) indicates that job involvement is largely a role of situational conditions, although Randall and Cote (1999) suggest that job involvement is largely an invention of individual features (Carmeli & Gefen, 2005).

The organisational commitment models discussed in the previous section – Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment, O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment, Morrow's (1983) model of major commitment and Randall and Cote's (1991) commitment model – appear to be complementary in nature. Each of these models shares a number of commonalities, mainly in that they view organisational commitment from the individual perspective. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment is of specific relevance to this study. Table 3.6 provides a summary of the employability models discussed in the previous section.

Table 3.6: Comparison of organisational commitment models

	Meyer and Allen's (1990) three component model of organisational commitment	O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment	Morrow's (1983) model of major commitments	Randal and Cote's (1991) commitment model
Description of model	A multidimensional approach to organisational commitment that describes three forms of commitment, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.	The psychological attachment an individual has to an organisation and the degree to which the individual assumes or adopts characteristics of the organisation.	A unidimensional approach to commitment describing five universal forms of commitment.	A multivariate model of commitment that proposes that the relationship between the Protestant work ethic and continuance organisational commitment, affective organisational commitment and career commitment is influenced by job involvement.
Previous work	An extension of previous work done by Meyer and Allen (1987)	Based on Kelman's (1985) work on attitude and behaviour.	Based on research conducted, Morrow concluded that no attempt had been made to incorporate literature embracing work commitment.	Based on previous research conducted by Morrow (1983), with an attempt to explore the relationship between the major forms of work commitment.

	Meyer and Allen's (1990) three component model of organisational commitment	O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment	Morrow's (1983) model of major commitments	Randal and Cote's (1991) commitment model
Categories/submissions	Affective commitment Continuance commitment Normative commitment	Compliance Identification Internalisation	Protestant work ethic Career commitment Continuance commitment Affective commitment Job involvement	Protestant work ethic Job involvement Work group attachment Career salience Organisational commitment
Characteristics	Remain with an organisation because they want to do. Remain with an organisation because they need to do so. Remain with an organisation because they feel obligated to do so.	Adopting attitudes. Accepts influence to establish and maintain a relationship. Accepts influence to adopt attitudes and behaviours supporting values.	Encourages hard work. Adopts work attitude. Remains with an organisation because they need to do so. Remains with an organisation because they want to do so. Employees needs are satisfied	Proposes a strong direct link between work-group attachment and job involvement. Proposes a strong relationship between job involvement and the Protestant work ethic Proposes a strong, direct link between job involvement and career salience. Proposes a direct link

	Meyer and Allen's (1990) three component model of organisational commitment	O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment	Morrow's (1983) model of major commitments	Randal and Cote's (1991) commitment model
				<p>between job involvement and organisational commitment.</p> <p>Proposes a direct link between work-group attachment and job involvement.</p>
How is organisational commitment achieved?	Organisational commitment is achieved through the development of a psychological attachment to the organisation.	Organisational commitment is achieved through an individual's basis for attachment to the organisation.	Organisational commitment is achieved through an examination of the interrelationships amongst different forms of work commitment.	Organisational commitment is achieved through an examination of the relationships amongst different forms of work commitment and examining the role of job involvement.

3.2.3 Theoretical models of retention

The following theoretical models are of relevance to the study:

- The Retention Factor Measurement Framework of Döckel (2003)
- The model of rewards constructed by Britton et al. (1999)

3.2.3.1 The retention factor measurement framework (RFS) of Döckel (2003)

Döckel (2003) defines retention factors as those factors that encourage organisational commitment and thus increase the retention of employees. Döckel (2003) identified seven critical retention factors (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and organisational commitment) that need to be considered in the retention of staff. Figure 3.8 provides an overview of the Retention Factor Measurement Framework of Döckel (2003).

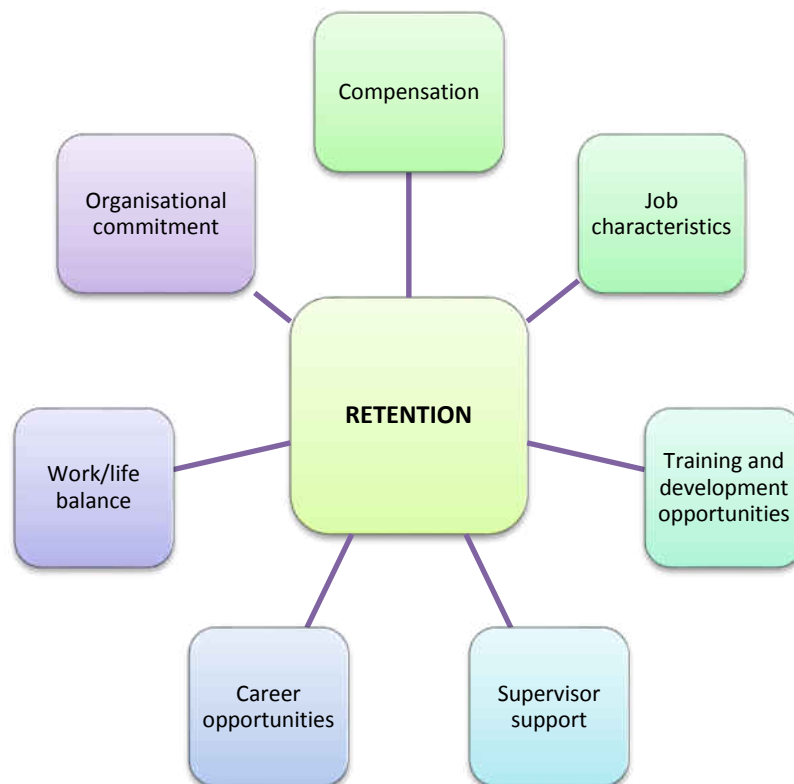


Figure 3.8: The Retention Factor Measurement Framework of Döckel (2003)

Source: Döckel (2003)

(a) Compensation

Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) define retention as monetary and non-monetary rewards employees receive in return for the work they do. Monetary rewards include basic salaries, incentives and stock options, whereas non-monetary rewards are indirect financial rewards employees receive for their labour (Döckel, 2003). Döckel et al. (2006) identify money as the primary incentive used to attract high-technology professionals. Money therefore is an important contributing factor in the retention of employees. Netswera et al. (2005) argue that pay alone is not the sole reason for employee satisfaction and therefore organisations that offer attractive benefits have not necessarily been associated with the high retention of employees.

(b) Job characteristics

Döckel et al. (2006) suggest that all employees want to do interesting work that challenges them and allows them to utilise their skills and abilities. As a result, high-technology professionals approach tasks as challenging and as providing opportunities for learning and information exchange and therefore are less likely to leave an organisation (Döckel, 2003). Döckel (2003) suggests that job characteristics may include varied work, including opportunities to solve challenging problems and work with the best people, freedom and flexibility, and the ability to engage in interesting assignments at work. According to Van Dyk (2012), job characteristics will include skill variety and job autonomy, since highly specialised knowledge workers have a preference for challenging job opportunities in which they can use a variety of skills and exercise autonomy.

(c) Training and development opportunities

According to Döckel et al. (2006), training is essential for the survival of any information worker and is the only way these employees can stay employable for the duration of their careers. Employees stay at companies that promote career opportunities through learning and development (Döckel et al., 2006). Van Dyk (2012) mentions that employees who are presented with development opportunities feel valued and develop a sense of obligation to remain with the organisation (Döckel, 2003). Döckel (2003) adds that organisations should view employee investments as their social responsibility to building a better South Africa.

(d) Supervisor support

Döckel et al. (2006) define supervisor support as the support employees feel they receive from their supervisors. Supervisor support includes recognition and feedback from supervisors to employees. Döckel et al. (2006) suggests most employees are people with critical innovation skills and knowledge. In instances where organisations provide employees

with sufficient feedback on their performance, they are able to prevent employees' intentions to leave the organisation (Döckel et al., 2006).

(e) Career opportunities

Joao and Coetzee (2011) have identified internal and external career opportunities that employees have. Internal career opportunities refer to career opportunities within the organisation, such as promotions or transfers. External career opportunities refer to career opportunities outside the organisation, such as employment at a new organisation. According to Döckel et al. (2006), perceived career opportunities significantly predict job performance and turnover. Joao and Coetzee (2011) also found that the fulfilment of career growth, advancement opportunities and challenging work are factors that prevent qualified employees from leaving an organisation.

(f) Work/life policies

The final factor affecting the retention of employees has been identified by Döckel (2003) as work/life policies. A work/life balance is described as an individual's ability to meet his/her work commitments as well as family commitments and maintain a healthy balance between them (Döckel, 2003). Golden (2008) believes employees have a need to set their work schedules and location according to their family demands, and employees who feel their needs are fulfilled will remain with their organisation (Munsamy & Bosch Venter, 2009). Döckel (2003) adds that organisations need to accommodate employees by providing remote access for telecommuting, childcare centres, referral programmes and employee assistance programmes in order to develop a positive employee attitude towards his/her job.

(g) Organisational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe organisational commitment as a multidimensional concept made up of attitudinal and behavioural components. Organisational commitment is divided into three dimensions, namely affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. Affective commitment (AC) is defined as an individual's desire to belong to an organisation due to an emotional connection with the organisation; normative commitment (NC) is defined as a feeling of obligation towards the organisation; and continuance commitment (CC) is defined as the belief that leaving the organisation will be costly and damaging to the individual (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Stoltz (2014) concludes that employees with higher levels of organisational commitment appear to have a greater sense of belonging and are therefore willing to remain with an organisation and offer their best efforts to ensure organisational well-being.

3.2.3.2 The model of rewards constructed by Britton et al. (1999)

Britton et al. (1999) constructed a model of rewards based on the value proposition of employment that lead to attraction and retention. The model contains five groups of factors. Figure 3.9 provides an overview of Britton et al.'s model of rewards.



Figure 3.9: Britton et al.'s model of rewards

Source: Britton et al. (1999)

Britton et al. (1999) propose that the employee value proposition is optimised when the following elements are balanced:

(a) Direct financial

With regard to direct pay, Britton et al. (1999) have proposed the following retention drivers: a pay system that is well understood and a pay system that justifies the pay policy and practice.

(b) Affiliation

The strongest retention drivers for affiliation have been identified by Britton et al. (1999) as those creating conditions for employees to make a commitment to the organisation by ensuring a congruence of values, de-emphasising politics, cutting the red tape that frustrate high-performing employees and offering support to employees through the total value proposition of work.

(c) Career opportunity

Britton et al. (1999) propose that retention is increased by providing clear and achievable options for career advancement, such as opportunities for personal growth, job security and employability

(d) Indirect financial

In terms of indirect financial rewards, Britton et al. (1999) propose the following drivers of retention: an investment in employees with status and respect for their contribution, promoting a healthy balance of business and personal life and offering benefits that are perceived to be valuable in meeting employees' needs for security and savings

(e) Work content

According to Britton et al. (1999), work content contributes to retaining talent by ensuring that there are a variety of assignments and interesting work, and by providing a reasonable degree of autonomy

3.2.3.3 Integration of theoretical models

The retention models discussed in the previous section – the framework as measured by the retention factor scale (RFS) of Döckel (2003) and the model of rewards of Britton et al. (1999) appear to have common characteristics. Table 3.7 provides a summary of the employability models discussed in the previous section.

Table 3.7: Comparison of retention models

	The retention framework of Döckel (2003)	The rewards model of Britton et al. (1999)
Description of model	A model of retention that identifies six (6) critical factors that influence the retention of high-technology employees.	Britton et al. (1999) propose that the employee value proposition is optimised when five elements are balanced.
Previous work	Based on previous work and literature surveys conducted by McNee et al.	Britton et al. (1999) constructed a model of rewards based on a study conducted by the University of Carolina that studied the Canadian workforce in relation to the value proposition of employment that leads to attraction and retention.
Categories/submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation Job characteristics Training and development opportunities Supervisor support Career opportunities Work/life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct financial Affiliation Career opportunity Indirect financial Work content
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monetary and non-monetary rewards Autonomy Career development Recognition and feedback Career opportunities Flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fair and reasonable pay system Employee support and opportunities for development Job security and employability Work/life balance Interesting work

	The retention framework of Döckel (2003)	The rewards model of Britton et al. (1999)
		Autonomy
How is retention achieved	Retention is improved by fulfilling employees' needs and ensuring they are satisfied.	Retention of staff is increased by providing employees with these five elements.

3.3 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL LINK BETWEEN EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RETENTION FACTORS

The aim of the literature review was to provide an overview of the three constructs that are of importance to this study. The literature review conceptualised the constructs of employability, organisational commitment and satisfaction with retention factors, and then discussed the theories underlying these constructs. The theoretical integration attempts to explore whether a theoretical relationship exists between the three constructs (employability, organisational commitment and retention factors). Table 3.8 summarises the integration and theoretical comparison of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

Benson (2006) conducted a study on the relationship between employee development and organisational commitment. His findings indicate that employees who participate in on-the-job training and gain specific skills, thereby enhancing their employability, are more committed to the organisation. De Cuyper et al. (2011) found a positive relationship between employability and organisational commitment. According to De Cuyper et al. (2011), employability may provide opportunities to enhance commitment among workers, and concern only rises when workers perceive better alternative employment opportunities outside their current organisation. De Cuyper et al. (2011) went on to mention that workers who are committed to their organisations produce higher performance ratings in comparison to less committed workers. Kalyal, Berntson, Naswall and Sverke (2010) conducted a study to determine the moderating role of employability on the relationship between job insecurity and commitment to change. They identified a positive relationship between employability and affective commitment to change, supporting the argument by Fugate et al. (2004) – employability creates a proactive disposition towards the acceptance and support of change. Employability was found to have a negative relationship with continuance commitment to change – indicating that people with high levels of employability remain with a job willingly, rather than fear of a lack of alternatives (Kalyal et al., 2010). Finally, they identified that employability was positively related to normative commitment to change – being employable will enforce the psychological relationship between the employer and the employee. Potgieter et al. (2016) found that employability attributes provide security to employees, therefore employees with high employability attributes can find a new job easily if required, and this allows them to develop a sense of commitment to their careers and occupations rather than to the organisation.

Ling et al. (2014) suggest that training is the main way for an employee to develop employability and believe that employees view the opportunity to learn and develop as a primary standard for choosing the organisation. Their findings indicate a positive relationship between training and organisational commitment. This relationship is supported by Birdi, Allan and Warr (1997) and Bartlett and Kang (2004), who also support a positive relationship between training and organisational commitment. Training has been proven to have a significant positive relationship with employability (Ling et al., 2014).

De Cuyper et al. (2011) propose an indirect relationship between employability and retention. According to them, employees with low levels of employability are less likely to leave an organisation, as they fear they may experience difficulty in finding a new job, whereas employable employees are likely to quit when they believe they have nothing to lose. With the changing nature of work in the 21st century, employees feel they can no longer rely on their organisation to provide them with job security and, as a result, these employees no longer feel a sense of obligation to their organisation and are likely to leave when presented with other opportunities (De Cuyper et al., 2011; Sullivan, 1999). De Cuyper et al. (2011) go on to mention that organisations may want to increase the perception of employability among workers as a retention strategy for the organisation. Ling et al. (2014) disagree with these findings and suggests a positive relationship between employability attributes and retention factors. According to them, training is viewed as human capital investment, which has a significant effect on employee retention. Employees who are offered training to enhance their employability skills feel committed to the organisation, develop a sense of belonging and are likely to remain working for that organisation (Ling et al., 2014). Coetzee et al. (2015) identified career-self management, proactivity and emotional literacy as psychosocial employability attributes that influence an individual's satisfaction with certain retention factors.

Tladinyane et al. (2013) have come to the conclusion that organisational commitment can be regarded as a powerful predictor of employee turnover – an employee's level of commitment to an organisation will influence his/her psychological attachment to that organisation.

Döckel et al. (2006) conducted a research study in the South African context to determine the possible relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment. Their findings indicate that staff satisfaction with retention factors has a significant relationship with their organisational commitment. Döckel et al. (2006) found that an employee's desire to remain with an organisation is most likely due to his/her psychological contract, which addresses the various retention factors positively. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) examined

the relationship between the retention factors identified by Döckel (2003) and the three-component commitment model of Meyer and Allen (1991) to determine how biographical groups differed in terms of these groups. In terms of career opportunities, Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) found that employees who felt positive about the potential career opportunities were more emotionally attached to the organisation. Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) support this view and believe that the retention factors identified by Döckel (2003) contribute to reduced voluntary turnover, lower intentions to leave, increased productivity and more committed employees. Pauw (2011) also supports this view and goes on to mention that commitment to the organisation has a direct influence on employee retention. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) also believe that affective commitment develops when employees' expectations are met, while continuance commitment develops because of the benefits employees are presented with. Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) also identified a positive relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors. They believe employees with high levels of organisational commitment are unlikely to pursue alternative job opportunities.

Ghosh et al. (2013) have found that it is important for employees to spend the remainder of their career with their current organisation, display belongingness to the organisation and also feel a need to reciprocate to the organisation. As a result, employees with a higher affective and normative commitment to their organisation would have lower intentions to leave the organisation.

After reviewing several studies conducted on the relationship between affective commitment and turnover, Ghosh et al. (2013) decided to conduct their own study to determine whether such a relationship does indeed exist. Affective commitment has been defined as an employee's personal attachment to an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Ghosh et al. (2013) found that many employees would be happy to spend the remainder of their career and working life with their current organisation. These employees consider the organisational problems to be their own and they have developed a sense of belongingness. According to Ghosh et al. (2013), this is known as affective commitment and such employees are less likely to leave the organisation.

Meyer and Allen (1990) contend that employees with a high level of normative commitment remain with an organisation because they feel it is the right thing to do. Ghosh et al. (2013) confirm a relationship between normative commitment and turnover. They found that employees with high levels of normative commitment are likely to remain with an organisation. This finding is in agreement with a previous finding by Iles et al. (1996), who

also found that employees with high levels of normative commitment are likely to remain with their current organisation, as these employees feel trapped and have very few alternatives available to them.

Based on the theoretical evidence provided above, this study focused on confirming the existence of a relationship between employability, organisational commitment and satisfaction with retention factors in the 21st century world of work. Figure 3.10 depicts the overall hypothesised relationship between employability, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work.

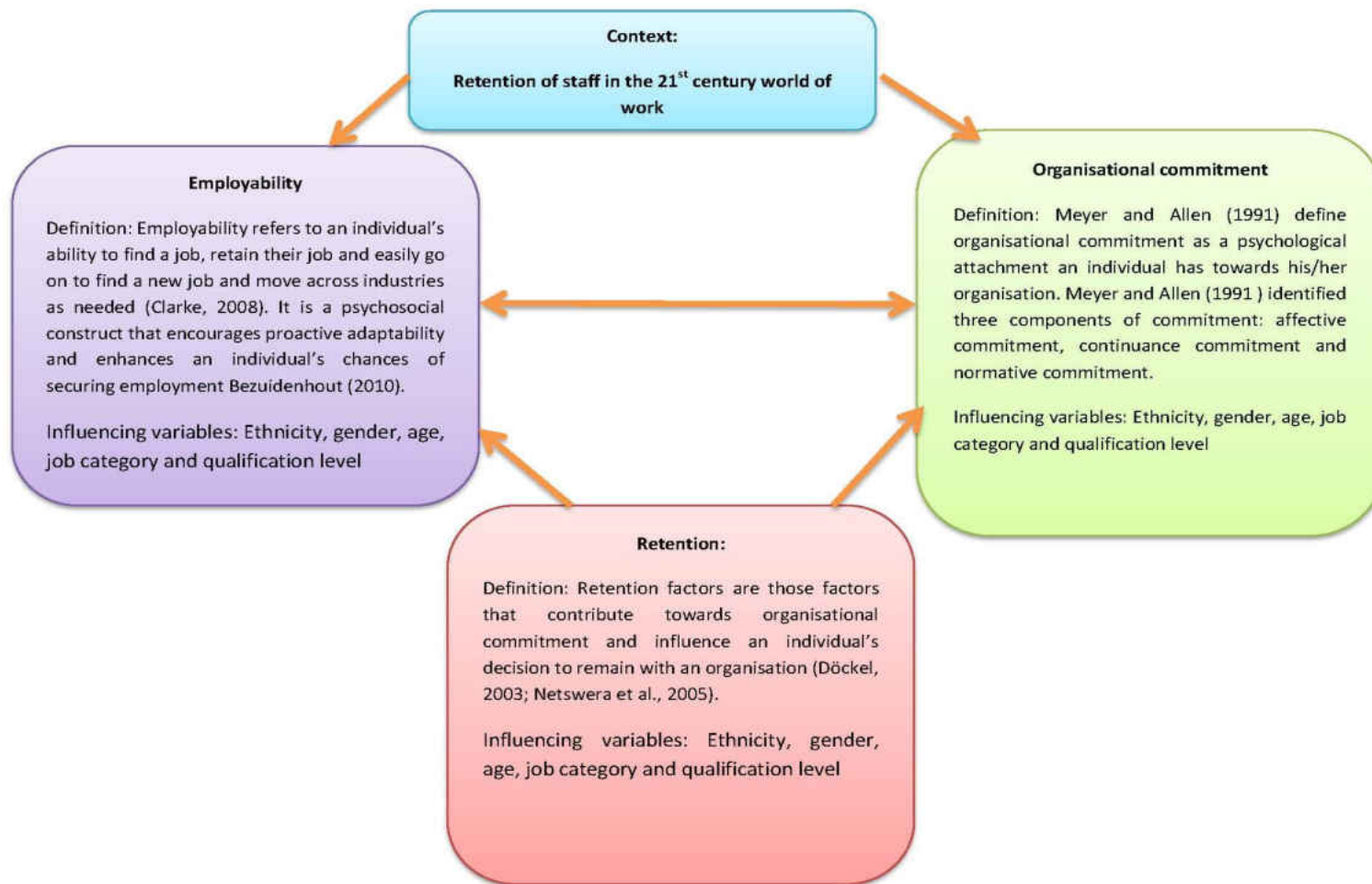


Figure 3.10: Overall hypothesised relationships between employability, organisational commitment and retention in the 21st century world of work.

Table 3.8: *Integration and theoretical comparison of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors*

Construct	Employability attributes	Organisational commitment	Retention factors
Conceptualisation	Employability refers to an individual's ability to find a job, retain the job and easily go on to find a new job and move across industries as needed (Clarke, 2008). It is a psychosocial construct that encourages proactive adaptability and enhances an individual's chances of securing employment (Bezuidenhout, 2010).	Mowday et al. (1979) define organisational commitment as an individual's identification with a particular organisation. According to Brown (1996), organisational commitment is defined as an obliging force that requires an employee to honour his/her commitment to the organisation, irrespective of changing circumstances and attitudes. Meyer and Allen (1993) define organisational commitment as a psychological attachment individuals have to their organisation and their desire to want to contribute towards the attainment of its goals.	Retention factors are defined as those factors that contribute to organisational commitment and influence an individual's decision to remain with an organisation (Döckel, 2003; Netswera et al., 2005).
Theoretical models applicable to this study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Retention Factor Measurement Scale of Döckel (2003)

Construct	Employability attributes	Organisational commitment	Retention factors
Core sub-dimensions of the construct (derived from theoretical models)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career self-management • Cultural competence • Self-efficacy • Sociability • Entrepreneurial orientation • Emotional literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective commitment • Continuance commitment • Normative commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation • Job characteristics • Training and development opportunities • Supervisor support • Career opportunities • Work/life balance • Organisational commitment

Based on the hypothesised theoretical models, the following theoretical hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothetical relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment

In the 21st century world of work, individuals are expected to be adaptive to changing work situations. Stoltz (2014) has identified employability as a key contributor to enhancing organisational commitment. Employability contributes to stimulating psychological attachment between an employee and his/her organisation. This means that employees with high levels of employability are more committed to their organisations.

Hypothetical relationship between employability attributes and retention factors

The development of employability attributes supports individual development, which will enhance retention as all employees want to develop themselves (Stoltz, 2014). Employees in the 21st century world of work are expected to engage in career self-development. The researcher can thus conclude that employability will enhance employee retention.

Hypothetical relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors

Employees who are committed to their organisations will be unlikely to leave the organisation, thus the researcher can conclude that organisational commitment is a contributing factor to higher retention in an organisation.

3.4 VARIABLES INFLUENCING EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES, ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RETENTION FACTORS

Potgieter (2013) noted that South African companies tend to discriminate against certain individuals in terms of age, gender and race and, as result of this discrimination, individuals may not obtain employment even if they are equipped with the right skills and qualifications (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). This section will focus on the demographic variables of ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level and the way in which these variables influence employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

3.4.1 Ethnicity

Several authors contend that employability is influenced by culture (Beukes, 2010; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Potgieter, 2012). Beukes (2010) mentions that macro-economic policy issues in South Africa, including black economic empowerment (BEE), affect ethnic demand in industries and therefore result in ethnic differences in employability. In a study conducted in 2005, Kraak found that the majority of adult learners graduating from Further Education and Training Colleges were white rather than black graduates, and they therefore were able to secure employment more easily.

Coetzee et al. (2011) found no significant differences between the organisational commitment levels of different race groups. Ferreira et al. (2010) came to a similar finding and believe culture does not influence an employee's level of commitment to an organisation. According to Coetzee et al. (2011), black participants feel more committed to an organisation that allows them the opportunity to express their sense of service to the people component of the business.

Joao and Coetzee (2011) have identified a relationship between race and retention. Their findings indicate that black professionals regard career advancement as an important determinant for their career mobility and commitment to the organisation. Joao and Coetzee (2011) go on to mention that employment legislation in South Africa allows black professionals an opportunity to experience enhanced career opportunities. In a research study conducted by Van Dyk (2012) it was found that African and coloured employees were the least satisfied with their compensation and the nature of their job. They also noted that white employees were least satisfied with their work/life balance and that these dissatisfactions may result in employee turnover. Coetzee et al. (2011) are in agreement with this finding and say that white employees value work/life balance considerably more in comparison to black employees.

3.4.2 Gender

Women are often stereotyped and perceived as being less committed to the organisation and their careers (Clarke, 2008b). Organisations believe that women have greater family responsibilities and they therefore are discriminated against. Afrassa (2001) confirms that gender affects employability and that men are more likely to be employed after they graduate than females. Potgieter (2012) supports this view, as her study concluded that men are better at managing their careers than women and, as a result, display higher

employability attributes. However, Afrassa (2001) says that gender influence has been decreasing over the years and organisations in South Africa in the 21st century world of work must take labour laws into consideration when employing new staff.

Brand (2009) found gender to have a significant impact on workforce commitment. According to Scadura and Lankau (1997), women develop different psychological relationships with organisations compared to the relationships men develop with organisations. Women have reported higher levels of commitment to organisations that support work/life balance and introduce flexible work hours (Scadura & Lankau, 1997). Aven, Parker and McEvoy (1993) found gender to have no impact on organisational commitment. Coetzee, Schreuder and Tladinyane (2011) came to a similar finding and concluded that women are as just as committed to the organisation as men.

Research conducted by Van Dyk (2012) indicated that male participants reported higher levels of satisfaction when presented with possible career opportunities, whilst female participants displayed a lower preference for possible career opportunities. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) mention that it is important for organisations to make sure that traditional gender stereotyping does not influence an employee's need for career development. Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) believe work/life balance is important for men and women, but more specifically for younger women, who often have family and child responsibilities. Coetzee and Schreuder (2008) support this view; they found that women have a stronger preference for job stability, remuneration, benefits packages and a supportive working environment. They assert that women prefer work schedules that do not conflict with their personal lives. Govaerts et al. (2011), on the other hand, report no relationship between turnover and gender, implying that gender does not affect an employee's intention to remain with an organisation.

3.4.3 Age

Research indicates that age may influence employability (Clarke, 2008a; Potgieter, 2013; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Van der Heijden (2002) found that the degree of employability diminishes sharply with age – as an individual gets older, his/her level of employability decreases. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) contend that younger individuals perceive themselves as being more employable in comparison to older individuals. Clarke (2008a) accepts a negative correlation between age and employability and believes that organisations discriminate against older workers with regard to employability opportunities for older workers. Van der Heijden (2002) emphasises that, in order to have a positive

influence on the degree of employability, age must be taken into account. DeArmond et al. (2006) have found that older workers are generally seen as less likely to seek new challenges, are less flexible, are unlikely to seek job variation and have a low desire to learn new skills. Beukes (2010) concludes that these common stereotypes negatively influence the employability of older workers when they are looking for a new job.

Ferreira et al. (2010) found older employees to be more affectively and normatively committed to their organisations than younger employees. Joao and Coetzee (2011) came to a similar finding and conclude that older workers are more committed to an organisation. Joao and Coetzee (2011) believe that older employees are aware of the perceived costs of leaving an organisation and have fewer job opportunities available to them, thereby increasing their levels of commitment to an organisation. D'Amato and Herzfeldt (2008) confirm this belief, as they have found that younger employees feel less obligated and committed to remain with an organisation. Lok and Crawford conducted a study in 2003 and found that employees with higher positions who had been in the same job longer and were older had higher levels of commitment to the organisation compared to younger and newer employees. Knights and Kennedy (2005) came to a similar finding and believe that higher organisational commitment is found amongst long-term employees, thus older employees are more committed.

Research has found that age is significantly related to turnover intentions, which in turn has an influence on the retention of employees (De Cuyper et al., 2011). Similarly, Ramlall (2003) found that older employees have a significantly longer tenure than younger employees. Ramlall (2003) also identified a relationship between age and the number of positions employees had with the organisation. Govaerts et al. (2011) confirm the positive relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to stay. Govaerts et al. (2011) found a negative relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to leave. Van Dyk (2012) found that younger employees are considerably less satisfied with their job characteristics than older employees, as they need more challenging work as well as task variety. Younger employees also prefer work situations free from organisational constraints that enable them to develop their professional competence (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008). Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) found that, as employees get older, the chances of losing knowledge and skills increase. Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) propose introducing succession-planning initiatives to groom younger employees who do not have turnover intentions. Employee turnover does not only occur when employees leave work due to dissatisfaction. Older employees resign as they have reached retirement age. In such

instances, the organisations can foresee the turnover and plan for the replacement of their valuable employees (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011).

3.4.4 Job category

Sanders and De Grip (2004) conducted a study to determine the effect training has on developing the employability of low-skilled workers. They found that lower skilled employees are more likely to remain with the same organisation, as these employees usually have more internal career opportunities. Van der Heijden, Boon, Van der Klink and Meijs (2009a) came to the conclusion that individuals on a higher job level display higher employability attributes. Rothwell and Arnold (2007) are in agreement with this finding, and mention that people at high levels are more employable than people at lower levels, as they have more skills and therefore higher employability. Potgieter (2012) found that individuals on staff level are likely to display higher confidence in their employability attributes, specifically on the career self-management, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity subscales. Stoltz (2014) found various differences between managerial and staff level employees in terms of their employability attributes. Their findings indicates that staff-level employees perceive themselves to be stronger in terms of their employability attributes than their managerial and supervisory counterparts. According to Nienaber, Bussin and Henn (2011), lower level employees feel that education and training will increase their chances for career advancement.

A study conducted by Ferreira et al. (2010) found that supervisors achieve a significantly higher score for affective commitment than other staff. They also found that employees in managerial positions have higher levels of normative commitment than other employees. Clinton-Baker (2013) found a significant difference in the affective normative and continuance commitment of employees. These findings indicate that managers are more emotionally attached to their organisations, have a higher sense of obligation towards their organisations and generally are more committed to their organisations than the general staff. Van Dyk (2012) found that senior management staff are more committed to their organisations.

Stoltz (2014) also found various differences between the managerial and staff-level employees in terms of their retention factors. The staff-level employees displayed a greater preference for training and development opportunities and work/life balance in comparison to their managerial and supervisory counterparts. Van Dyk (2012) found that the needs, expectations and motivational drivers differed for different levels of employees. Therefore, it

is important to include different job levels in determining employees' satisfaction with retention factors. Nienaber et al. (2011) found that employees at administrative and junior management levels have higher preferences for remuneration and benefits in comparison to senior and executive management. Van Dyk (2012) adds that operational-level employees report higher satisfaction levels regarding their work/life balance and poorer satisfaction regarding their job characteristics. In terms of senior management staff, Van Dyk (2012) found that these employees reported high satisfaction with compensation, job characteristics and supervisor support.

3.4.5 Qualification level

Rothwell and Arnold (2007) found that non-graduates felt more employable than graduates, as graduates have a fear of competing for limited job opportunities. This is in contrast with several other findings. Van der Heijden et al. (2009a) found employees with higher levels of prior education are expected to participate in training programmes and are given exposure to higher levels of learning opportunities. As a result, employees with higher qualifications have a higher level of employability.

Employers and personnel managers regard higher qualification levels as positive and desirable work attitudes (Rose, 2005). Rose (2005) found that employees with lower qualifications were more committed to their current organisations, as they fear a lack of available job opportunities. According to Rose (2005), the higher a qualification an individual has, the more likely he/she is to leave an organisation to explore available opportunities.

Archer and Chetty (2013) conducted a study on graduate employability and found that the majority of employed graduates felt satisfied with their salary and reported high on-job satisfaction.

3.5 EVALUATION: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR RETENTION PRACTICES

Many organisations and managers are concerned about retaining their top talent and fear that failure to do so will affect their organisational competitiveness and performance. Baruch (2004) indicates that the economic events in the 21st century world of work have resulted in managers and human resource practitioners placing more emphasis and concern on the employees' psychological attachment to the organisation.

Amundson (2006) describes the changing nature of work in 21st century world of work and emphasises that lifetime employment and job security are no longer guaranteed. According to Benson (2006), many companies offer employees employability development in order for them to enhance their skills and replace job security, so that in the event of them losing their jobs they are still marketable to find alternative employment. Baruch (2006) contends that developing the employability of employees makes the employees more employable and opens up new opportunities in the job market, which is ironic, as organisations fear losing valuable employees. However, Benson (2006) believes that by offering individuals employability the firm can reduce an individual's uncertainty about finding a new job, and as a result employee commitment increases, which will make it easier to retain these employees.

Benson (2006) adds that people should be viewed as an investment by a company and investing in employability development will assist organisations in retaining these employees. Sutherland and Jordaan (2004) support this view and mention that an organisation is only as good as its people. They highlight the importance of retaining skilled and marketable individuals.

Kyndt et al. (2009) believe that it is important for organisations to give employees the opportunity to learn and develop, as the retention of these employees will increase the economic competitiveness of the organisation. Development opportunities allow employees to adjust more easily to the workplace challenges and enhance their chances to remain in their current jobs (Maheswari & Krishnan, 2014). By investing in employee development through training programmes, organisations can retain their valuable employees (De Vos & Cambré, 2016). According to Ndzube (2013), organisations should serve as a learning environment by inspiring continuous development and supporting individuals in their career paths. In doing so, the organisation and the individual will benefit and organisations will successfully retain more employees without having to develop retention strategies. Kyndt et al. (2009) stress the importance of retaining skilled employees; if the organisation loses the employee it would mean a loss of investment and the skilled individual can take confidential information with him/her.

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) model of employability attributes appears to be of value for this study, as it provides a framework that can be used to develop retention strategies to help individuals to understand the attributes that are necessary to enhance their employability.

In the 21st century world of work, building and maintaining a committed workforce aids in increasing revenues, reducing costs, building market share and improving bottom lines (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Organisations can gain a strong competitive edge by utilising people as creators of assets (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Sahi and Mahajan (2014) come to the conclusion that committed employees are an asset to any organisation and, as a result, the organisation must develop strong human resource management practices that bind the employees to the organisation in order to retain them.

Culpepper (2011) suggests that the three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) defines organisational commitment in terms of employee retention. According to him, an individual will remain with an organisation because he/she wants to, needs to or feels obligated to do so. Allen and Meyer (1990) believe that commitment is strongly linked to turnover, and strongly committed employees are less likely to leave an organisation.

Organisations that are successful have come to realise and understand the importance of retaining employees with high levels of organisational commitment (Peters et al., 2014). Organisational commitment serves as a source of competitive advantage in sustaining growth and leadership in the market place. Peters et al. (2014) identify improving job satisfaction and organisational commitment as a foremost challenge in retaining talented employees. Sahi and Mahajan (2014) describe commitment as an anticipated characteristic that should be nurtured in employees, as committed employees are less likely to leave an organisation than uncommitted employees (Mowday et al., 1979).

Brand (2009) believes employee commitment levels are influenced by uncontrollable social, economic and psychological variables. According to him, organisations can attract and retain committed employees by fulfilling the basic and special needs of an employee.

It thus is evident that organisations need to develop and implement retention strategies that enhance an employee's employability attributes, increases organisational commitment and at the same time takes retention factors into account.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter conceptualised employability, organisational commitment and retention factors and their related theoretical models. The various factors that influence employability, organisational commitment and retention factors and their implications for the retention of staff in the workplace were discussed.

With this, the following (literature) research aims were achieved:

- **Research aim 2:** To conceptualise the three constructs, namely employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research aim 3:** To identify and explain the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of explanatory theoretical models.
 - Sub-aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.
 - Sub-aim 3.2: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.
 - Sub-aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.
- **Research aim 4:** To conceptualise the effect of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level) on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

Chapter 4 discusses the empirical investigation, with the specific aim of determining the statistical strategies that can be employed to investigate the relationship dynamics between the variables employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors at higher education institutions in South Africa.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the empirical investigation undertaken in the study with the specific aim of describing the statistical strategies that were employed to investigate the relationship dynamics between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Firstly, an overview of the study population and sample is presented. The measuring instruments will be then discussed and the choice of each justified, followed by a description of the data gathering and processing. The research hypotheses will be stated, and the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

The empirical research phase consisted of nine steps, as outlined below:

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample

Step 2: Choosing and motivating the choice of the psychometric battery

Step 3: Administration of the psychometric battery

Step 4: Scoring of the psychometric battery

Step 5: Formulation of the research hypotheses

Step 6: Statistical processing of the data

Step 7: Reporting of the interpreting of the results

Step 8: Integration of research findings

Step 9: Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

Steps 1 to 6 are addressed in this chapter, and steps 7, 8 and 9 are addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.1 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

A sample is a group of individuals chosen to participate in a research study (Clow & James, 2014). A population refers to the group or entity from which the sample is chosen (Salkind, 2012). Clow and James (2014) mention that sampling is often used if the population size is too large, as it is not practical to survey the entire population. The purpose of sampling is for the researcher to analyse the data collected from the sample to draw conclusions and make generalisations to the entire population (Punch, 2014)

There are two main categories of sampling, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling allows for a sample in which each case that could be chosen has a known probability of being included in the sample (Vogt, 2011). Generally, survey

samples are designed in a way that considers the population structure (Lynn, 2011). Stratified sampling is a process that divides the overall population into subgroups and thereafter creates a sample by drawing subsamples from each of those subgroups (Morgan, 2012).

This research study utilised probability sampling, in terms of which the total population of staff at the academic institution had an equal chance of being selected through random selection. When the goal of the research is to use statistics to make deductions about the population parameters and draw conclusions based on the sample, then probability sampling is used. For the purpose of this study, the type of probability sampling to be used will be disproportionate, stratified sampling. A stratified, proportional, random sample of N = 311 of individuals from different ethnic, gender, age, job category and qualification level groups was drawn from the total population.

The population of this research project comprised academic, administrative and managerial staff employed by the University of South Africa (UNISA). The questionnaire was sent out to N = 4 794 staff members. A total of N = 602 participants completed the online questionnaire. Of these, 311 questionnaires were completed in full and were identified as usable for the purpose of this study (N = 311). Thus, a response rate of 6.5% was achieved.

4.1.1 Composition of ethnicity in the sample

In this section, the ethnicity frequency statistics of the sample are provided.

Table 4.1: *Ethnicity distribution of sample*

Ethnicity					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	African	141	45.5	45.5	45.5
	Coloured	8	2.6	2.6	48.1
	Indian	28	9.0	9.0	57.1
	White	127	41.0	41.0	98.1
	Other	6	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 shows that the sample comprised predominantly black participants (57.10%), represented by people from African (45.5%), Indian (2.6%) and coloured (9.0%) origin. White participants comprised 41% of the sample. This is also illustrated in Figure 4.1.

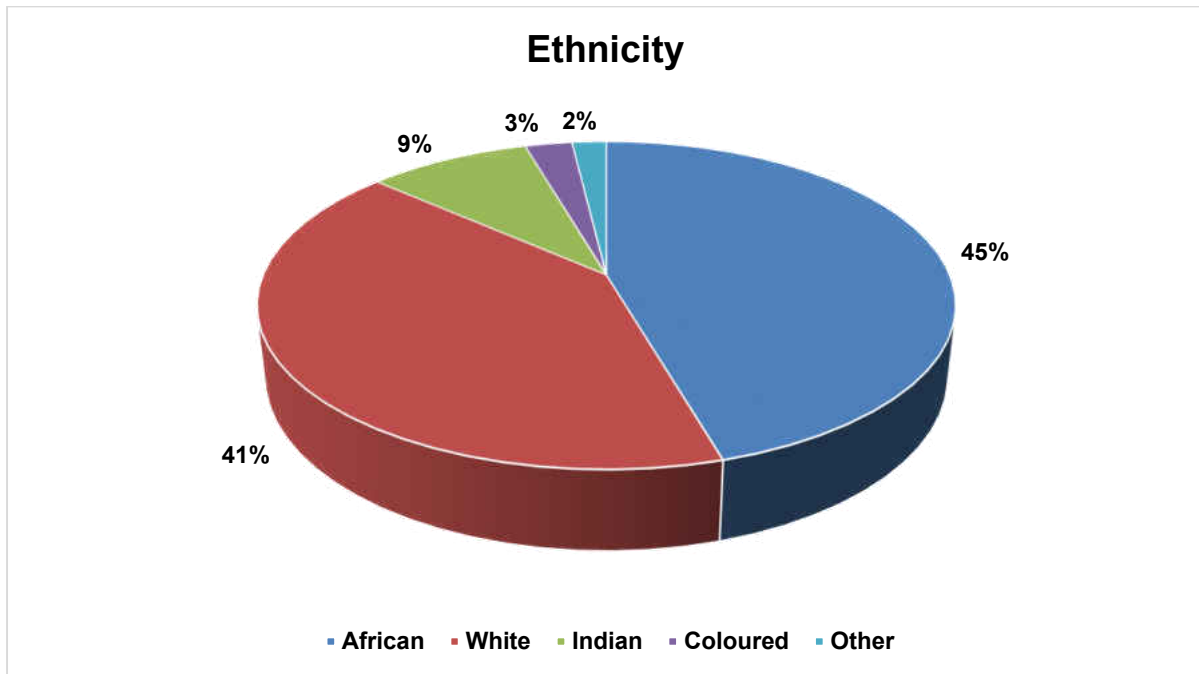


Figure 4.1: Sample distribution by ethnicity (N = 311)

4.1.2 Composition of gender groups in the sample

The gender distribution of the participants is indicated in this section.

Table 4.2: Gender distribution of sample

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	122	39.4	39.4	39.4
	Female	188	60.6	60.6	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2 shows that the gender groups comprised 39.4% males and 60.6% females. This is further illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

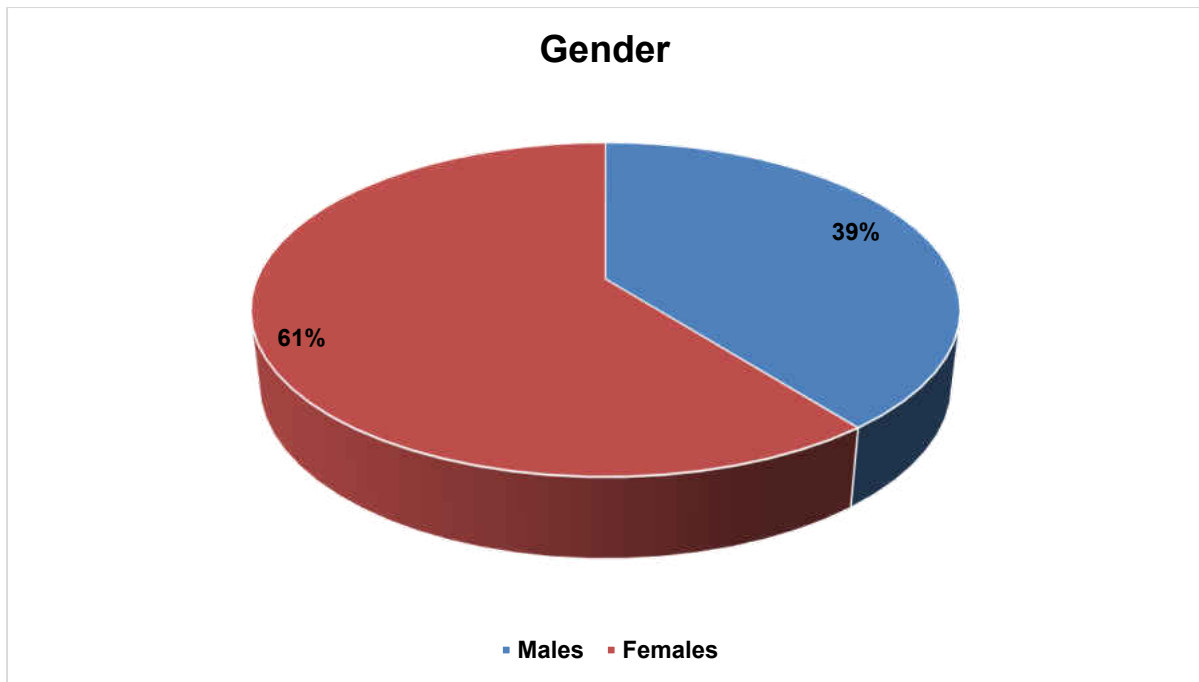


Figure 4.2: Sample distribution by gender (N = 311)

4.1.3 Composition of age groups in the sample

This section provides information on the age distribution of the sample.

Table 4.3: Age distribution of sample

Age groups					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	< 30 years	31	10.0	10.0	10.0
	31-45 years	132	42.6	42.6	52.6
	46-60	124	40.0	40.0	92.6
	61+ years	23	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 shows that the sample comprised participants from the early adulthood life stage (exploration and establishment career stages: < 45 years = 52.6%) and participants in the middle adulthood life stage (maintenance career stage: > 45 years = 47.4%). This is also illustrated in Figure 4.3.

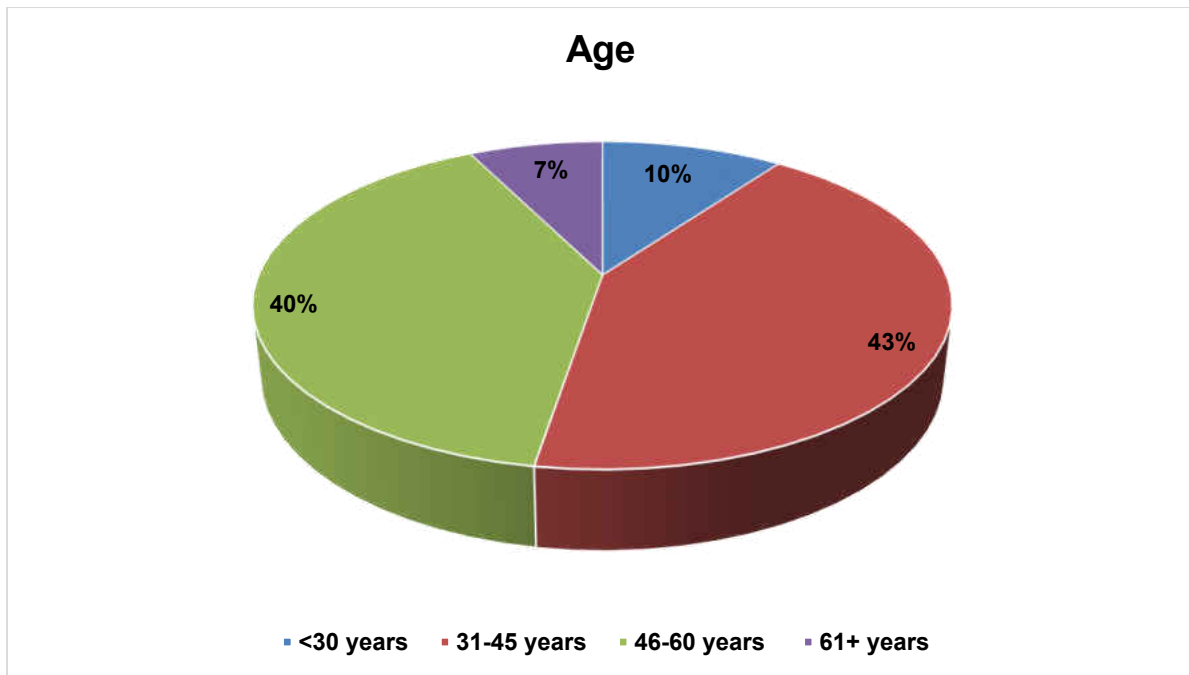


Figure 4.3: Sample distribution by age (N = 33)

4.1.4 Composition of job category of the sample

The composition of job category of the sample is discussed in this section.

Table 4.4: Job category distribution of the sample

Job category					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Academic staff	128	41.3	41.3	41.3
	Administrative staff	149	48.1	48.1	89.4
	Managerial staff	33	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4 shows that the sample was predominantly comprised of administrative (48.1%) and academic staff members (41.3%), and managerial staff members (10.6%). This is illustrated in Figure 4.4.

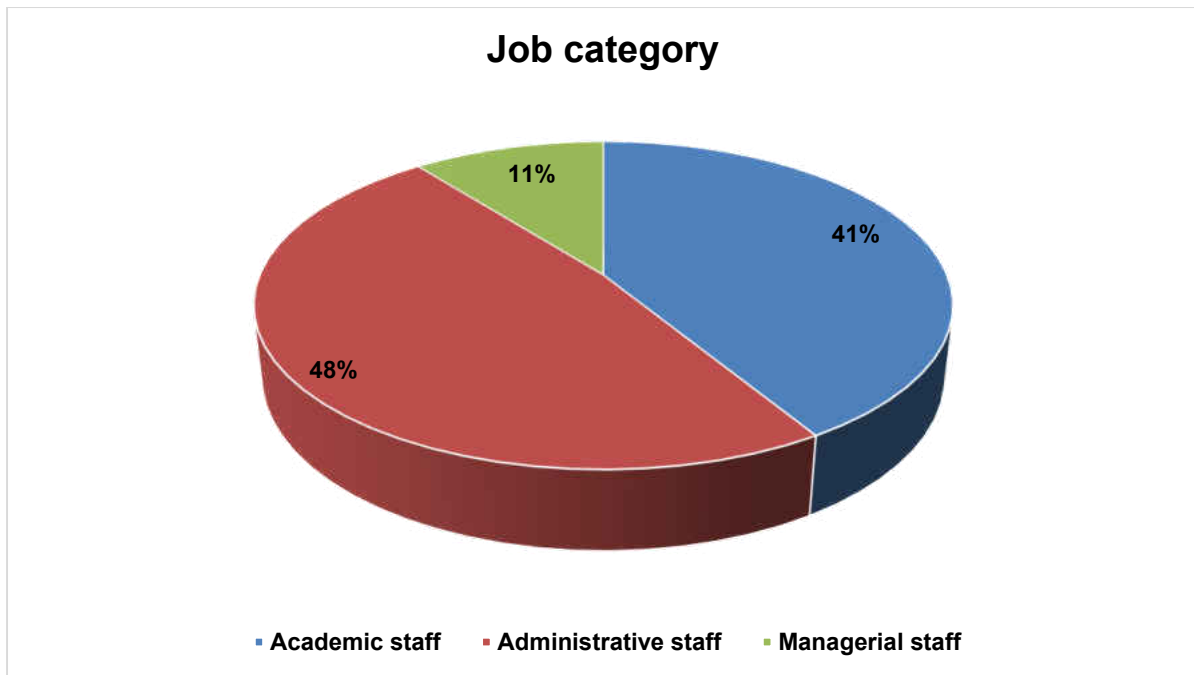


Figure 4.4: Sample distribution by job category (N = 33)

4.1.5 Composition of qualification level of the sample

The composition of the qualification level of the sample is discussed in this section.

Table 4.5: Qualification level distribution of the sample

Qualification level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Diploma	48	15.5	15.5	15.5
	Undergraduate	45	14.5	14.5	30.0
	Postgraduate	217	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5 shows that the sample was predominantly comprised participants with a postgraduate degree (70.0%). Participants with an undergraduate-level type qualification comprised only 30% of the sample. This is also illustrated in Figure 4.5.

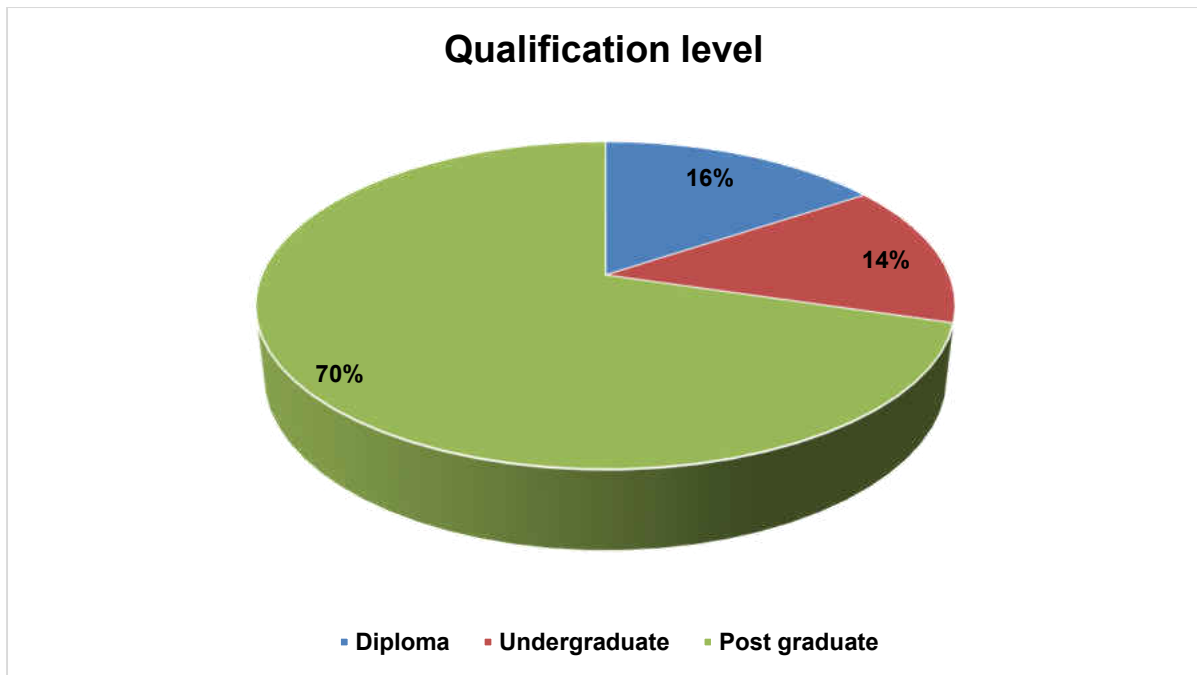


Figure 4.5: Sample distribution by qualification level (N = 311)

4.1.6 Summary: biographical profile of the sample

In summary, the biographical profile of the sample shows that the main sample characteristics that need to be considered in the interpretation of the empirical results are the following: the majority of the sample were black females between the ages of 31 and 45, employed in administrative positions and who held postgraduate qualifications.

4.2 CHOICE OF AND MOTIVATION FOR USING THE PSYCHOMETRIC BATTERY

The selection of the measuring instruments for the purposes of this study was informed by the literature study. The following instruments were used:

- A biographical questionnaire to gather data on ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level needed for the statistical analysis of the data.
- The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS), developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010), to measure the construct employability attributes.
- The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Meyer and Allen (1996).
- The Retention Factor Scale (RFS), developed by Döckel (2003).

4.2.1 The biographical questionnaire

A biographical questionnaire was used to obtain the personal information of the sample, namely the ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level.

4.2.2 The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS)

This section focuses on the development of and rationale for the instrument, the description of the scales used within the instrument, and the administration and interpretation, as well as the validity and reliability, of the EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). Finally, the researcher will provide reasons for using the EAS.

4.2.2.1 Development of the EAS

The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) was developed for the South African context and was used to measure each respondent's employability. The EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) focuses on a broad definition of employability that includes the relevant individual employability attributes that enable people to sustain and manage their employability.

4.2.2.2 Rationale for the EAS

The main aim of the EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) is to assess the generic skills or attributes that an individual needs in order to be employable in the 21st century world of work. Individuals are measured on eight employability attributes, namely (1) career self-management; (2) cultural competence; (3) career resilience; (4) proactivity; (5) entrepreneurial orientation; (6) sociability; (7) self-efficacy; and (8) emotional intelligence.

4.2.2.3 Description of the scales of the EAS

The EAS is a questionnaire that consists of 56 items measuring the following eight sub-scales:

- career self-management (10 items, for example: *"I regularly reflect on what my career aspirations are"*)
- cultural competence (five items, for example: *"I know the customs of other cultures"*)

- self-efficacy (six items, for example: *“When I achieve something, it is because of my own effort”*)
- career resilience (six items, for example: *“I regularly ask others’ opinions regarding my strengths and weaknesses”*)
- sociability (seven items, for example: *“I actively seek feedback from others to make progress in my career”*)
- entrepreneurial orientation (seven items, for example: *“I am responsible for my own successes and failures in my career”*)
- proactivity (seven items, for example: *“I am able to easily establish and maintain interpersonal relationships”*)
- emotional literacy (seven items, for example: *“It is easy for me to identify the emotions of others”*)

4.2.2.4 Administration of the EAS

The EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) can be administered to individuals and groups. The questionnaire takes an average of 10 minutes to complete. All instructions are provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Supervision is not necessary, as the questionnaire is self-explanatory. The responses are recorded on a six-point Likert scale. Respondents may circle option “1” if the statement is never true for them, option “2” if the statement is occasionally true for them, option “3” if the statement is more than occasionally true for them, option “4” if the statement is often true for them, option “5” if the statement is more often true for them, or option “6” if the statement is always true for them.

4.2.2.5 Interpretation of the EAS

Each subscale (career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy) is measured separately. The scores can range from 30 to 60. The higher the score, the higher the self-perceived ability of individuals to demonstrate the employability attributes.

4.2.2.6 Validity and reliability of the EAS

An exploratory factor analysis and inter-item correlational analyses provided evidence that the EAS items meet the psychometric criteria for construct validity (Coetzee, 2010). In terms of reliability (internal consistency), the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were as follows: 0.88

for career self-management, 0.89 for cultural competence, 0.83 for self-efficacy, 0.75 for career resilience, 0.79 for sociability, 0.80 for entrepreneurial orientation, 0.87 for proactivity and 0.83 for emotional literacy (Coetzee, 2010).

4.2.2.7 Motivation for using the EAS

The EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) was chosen for the purposes of this research study because it is the only known instrument for adults developed and tested in the South African context. The EAS is therefore relevant to this research.

4.2.3 The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

This section focuses on the development of and rationale for the instrument, the description of the scales used within the instrument, and the administration and interpretation, as well as the validity and reliability, of the OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Finally the researcher will provide reasons for using the OCQ.

4.2.3.1 Development of the OCQ

Meyer and Allen (1997) developed a three-component model of organisational commitment comprising affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The development of the affective, continuance and normative commitment scales was based on the definitions of the three constructs used to develop an initial pool of items that were administered to a sample of men and women working in various occupations and organisations (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.2.3.2 Rationale for the OCQ

The OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997) was developed with the aim of measuring three components of commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment).

4.2.3.3 Description of the scales of the OCQ

The OCQ is a questionnaire that consists of 24 items measuring the following three sub-scales:

- affective commitment (eight items, for example: *“I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it”*): this dimension measures the individual’s emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation.
- continuance commitment (eight items, for example: *“It wouldn’t be too costly for me to leave my organisation in the near future”*): this dimension measures the individual’s commitment to the organisation based on the costs associated with leaving it.
- normative commitment (eight items, for example: *“I owe a great deal to my organisation”*): this dimension measures the individual’s feelings of responsibility to remain with the organisation.

Examples of items included in the scale are: “I feel as if this organisation’s problems are my own”, “I believe I have too few options to consider leaving the organisation”, and “This organisation deserves my loyalty”.

4.2.3.4 Administration of the OCQ

The OCQ is a self-administered questionnaire and takes about ten minutes to complete. Clear instructions for its completion are provided. The items are structured in a statement format with a rating scale for each statement. Respondents rate the statements on the basis of their self-perceived organisational commitment. The responses are recorded on a seven-point Likert scale. Respondents are asked to describe how they feel about their overall organisational commitment. Respondents may circle option “1” if they strongly disagree, option “2” if they disagree, option “3” if sometimes disagree, option “4” if they feel neutral, option “5” if they sometimes agree, option “6” if they agree, and option “7” if they strongly agree.

4.2.3.5 Interpretation of the OCQ

Each subscale (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) is measured separately. The higher the score, the more committed an employee feels towards his/her organisation.

4.2.3.6 Validity and reliability of the OCQ

Research studies support the reliability and validity of the affective, continuance and normative commitment scales. The internal consistencies of the OCS dimensions vary

between 0.85 for affective commitment, 0.79 for continuance commitment and 0.73 for normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.2.3.7 Motivation for using the OCQ

The OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997) was chosen for the purposes of this research study because it allows for the specific nature of organisational commitment to be measured, instead of only the affective scale, which is often used (Meyer et al., 1993). The psychometric assets of the OCS also make it a valid and reliable measure of the three-component structure of organisational commitment in the South African context (Ferreira, 2010; Ferreira et al., 2010).

4.2.4 The Retention Factor Scale (RFS)

This section focuses on the development of and rationale for the instrument, the description of the scales used within the instrument, and the administration and interpretation as well as the validity and reliability of the RFS (Döckel, 2003) Finally the researcher will provide reasons for using the RFS.

4.2.4.1 Development of the RFS

The Retention Factor Scale was developed by Döckel (2003) and is used to measure an individual's satisfaction with regard to retention factors and commitment to an organisation.

4.2.4.2 Rationale for the RFS

The main purpose of the RFS (Döckel, 2003) is to measure the participants' satisfaction with regard to the following retention factors: (1) compensation; (2) job characteristics; (3) training and development opportunities; (4) supervisor support; (5) career opportunities; (6) work/life balance; and (7) commitment to the organisation.

4.2.4.3 Description of the scales of the RFS

The RFS is a questionnaire that consists of 42 items measuring the following seven sub-scales:

- compensation (13 items, for example: *"The information about pay issues provided by the company"*)

- job characteristics (four items, for example: *“The job is quite simple and repetitive”*)
- training and development opportunities (six items, for example: *“This company is providing me with job-specific training”*)
- supervisory support (six items, for example: *“I feel undervalued by my supervisor”*)
- career opportunities (six items, for example: *“My chances for being promoted are good”*)
- work/life balance (four items, for example: *“I often feel like there is too much work to do”*)
- generalised commitment to the organisation (three items, for example: *“What are your plans for staying with this organisation?”*)

4.2.4.4 Administration of the RFS

The RFS (Döckel, 2003) can be administered to individuals and groups. The questionnaire takes an average of 15 minutes to complete. All instructions are provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. Supervision is not necessary as the questionnaire is self-explanatory. The responses are recorded on a six-point Likert scale. Respondents are asked to describe how they feel about their organisation and current workplace. Respondents may circle option “1” if they feel strongly dissatisfied, option “2” if they feel moderately dissatisfied, option “3” if they feel slightly dissatisfied, option “4” if they feel slightly satisfied, option “5” if they feel moderately satisfied, and option “6” if they feel strongly satisfied.

4.2.4.5 Interpretation of the RFS

Each subscale (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and generalised commitment to the organisation) is measured separately. The higher the score, the more satisfied an employee feels with his organisation and current workplace, thereby higher retention.

4.2.4.6 Validity and reliability of the RFS

A factor analysis of the RFS conducted by Döckel (2003) confirmed the construct validity of the questionnaire. In terms of internal consistency reliability, Döckel et al. (2006) report the following Cronbach’s alpha coefficients: compensation (0.90), job characteristics (0.41), training and development opportunities (0.83), supervisor support (0.90), career opportunities (0.76), work/life balance (0.87) and commitment to the organisation (0.89).

4.2.4.7 Motivation for using the RFS

The RFS (Döckel, 2003) was chosen for the purposes of this research study because it is the only known instrument for adults developed and tested in the South African context. The RFS is therefore relevant to this research.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

This study adopted a cross-sectional, quantitative, online survey design approach. Cross-sectional correlational research designs are used to measure each individual unit of analysis identified at approximately the same time and then to analyse the association between the variables identified (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2006). Lin and Van Ryzin (2013) say the advantages of using online surveys are that they have lowered logistical and personnel costs and can be administered faster. However, they did find that online surveys have a lower response rate in comparison to paper-based surveys. Other advantages of using questionnaires include confidentiality of respondents, easier to analyse and interpret into quantitative results, and they can be distributed to a larger number of participants. Questionnaires also have several disadvantages, such as that they do not offer interaction with the respondents and they offer only limited depth to which the researcher is able to probe the respondents (Hofstee, 2006). The cross-sectional design approach cannot measure age changes directly, as it tests different people at different ages (Miller, 2013). This approach also cannot answer questions about individual stability over time (Miller, 2013). The following data collection procedure was followed:

- Ethical clearance and permission to conduct research at the academic institution was obtained from the research ethics committee of the institution.
- A list of all permanent staff members employed at Unisa was obtained from the HR department.
- The survey was designed and set up using LimeSurvey. The survey was tested to ensure that it was free from errors.
- All staff members were sent an email inviting them to participate in the research study. They were informed of the aim of the study and the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and were provided with instructions on how to access the survey, the estimated time the survey would take to complete and a link directing them to the survey. The participants had an option to save and resume the survey later.
- The survey consisted of four sections – a biographical questionnaire (section 1), as well as the EAS, OCQ and RFS questionnaires (section 2 to 4).

- After completing the questionnaire, all responses were recorded electronically and the participant received a notification that the questionnaire was complete and was thanked for his/her participation.

4.4 SCORING OF MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The responses of the participants were captured in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The completed questionnaires were scored by an independent statistician. All the data were imported and analysed using statistical methods, specifically the statistical programs SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 20.0 for the Microsoft Windows platform (SPSS Inc., 2011), and SAS version 9.2 (SAS, 2008) .

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of ethics, the following procedures were followed:

- Permission was obtained from the academic institution.
- All research was conducted within recognised parameters.
- All sources used were reliable and verified.
- Referencing was correct.
- Participation in the study was voluntary and no participant was harmed in any way during the process.
- Informed consent was obtained from each participant.
- All responses were kept confidential.
- Participants remained anonymous.
- All original data would be kept by the researcher for five years.

4.6 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In the literature review chapters, the central hypothesis was formulated as being to determine whether a relationship exists between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Table 4.6 below displays the research hypotheses that were formulated with a view to achieving the empirical objectives of the study and to meet the criteria for the formulation of hypotheses.

Table 4.6: *Research hypotheses*

AIM	RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS	STATISTICAL PROCEDURE
Research aim 1		
<p>To conduct an empirical investigation of the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of staff employed at the University of South Africa.</p>	<p>Ha1 – There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.</p>	<p>Correlation analysis</p>
Research aim 2		
<p>To empirically investigate whether employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.</p>	<p>Ha2 – The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.</p>	<p>Canonical correlation analysis</p>
Research aim 3		
<p>To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level).</p>	<p>Ha3 – Individuals from various ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factor satisfaction levels</p>	<p>Test for significant mean differences</p>

4.7 STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF THE DATA

For the purpose of this study, a quantitative research method was used to investigate the relationship dynamics between the variables employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The cross-sectional research design provides quantitative measures of an individual's commitment to the organisation, employability attributes and retention factors at a specific point in time, and how individuals from different biographical backgrounds (age, gender, culture, job category and qualification level) differ regarding these variables. The quantitative approach to research design is also known as the positivist design (Welman et al., 2006). In a quantitative study, researchers use theory to explain or predict relationships (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research is also classified as a more structured approach to research and involves exploring relationships, confirming theories or quantifying problems (Kumar, 2011).

The process of determining whether a relationship exists between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors and whether biographical groups differ significantly regarding the variables of gender, culture, age, job category and qualification level is described as follows:

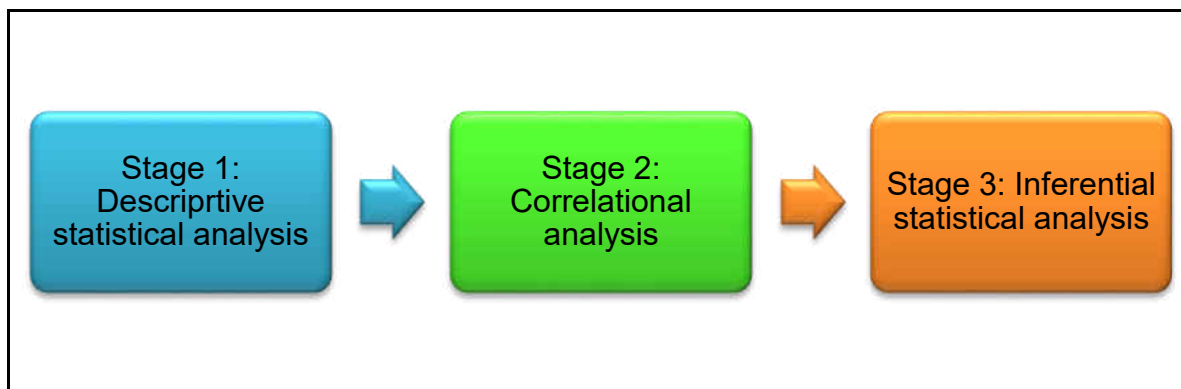


Figure 4.6: Statistical analysis process

Stage 1: Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics, which include Cronbach's alpha coefficients, were determined for the EAS, OCQ and RFS to test the internal consistency reliability of the instruments for the purpose of this study. The categorical or frequency data (means and standard deviations) as measured by the EAS, OCQ and RFS were determined for the total sample in order to apply the relevant statistical procedures.

Stage 2: Correlational analysis

The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to calculate the direction and magnitude of variables (Steyn, 2001). The correlation coefficient (r) indicates the strength of an association between two variables. The value of r can range from +1 to -1, with +1 indicating a perfect positive relationship, 0 indicating no relationship and -1 indicating a perfect negative or inverse relationship (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), and the variables of EAS, OCQ and RFS. In instances where the distribution of scores was skewed, Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. The level of statistical significance was set as $p \leq .05$. A practical effect size of $r = .30$ (medium effect) was also considered for the correlation analyses to be able to interpret the practical significance of the findings.

Stage 3: Inferential statistical analysis

Canonical correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between two sets of multiple variables; employability attributes and organisational commitment (set of independent variables), and retention factors (set of dependent variables). The purpose of canonical correlations is to simultaneously correlate multiple dependent variables with multiple independent correlations (Hair et al., 2010). The procedure involves obtaining a set of weights for the dependent and independent variables that provides the maximum simple correlation between the set of dependent variables and the set of independent variables (Hair et al., 2010).

Inferential statistical analysis was performed for significant relationships as determined by the correlation tests to determine whether age, gender, culture, job category and qualification level differ significantly in terms of the constructs measured. ANOVA and independent sample t-tests were performed for this purpose.

Level of significance

The level of significance expresses the statistical significance in terms of specific probability. Two types of errors can exist in testing the level of significance. A type 1 error occurs when a researcher has falsely rejected the null hypothesis (Miller, 2013). This implies that the

researcher has stated that a relationship exists when in fact no relationship exists. A type 2 error occurs when a researcher falsely accepts a null hypothesis (Miller, 2013). This implies that the researcher has stated that a relationship exists when in fact no relationship exists. A general level of significant of $p \leq 0.05$ is chosen to test the hypothesis. This provides a confidence level of 95% that the results will be accepted as the standard when applied in other research contexts (Hair et al., 2010).

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter focused on the empirical investigation undertaken for the study. This chapter discussed and described the sample, the psychometric batteries used, the data collection process and the ethical considerations. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the formulation of the research hypotheses and the statistical processing of the data.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

In this chapter, the statistical results pertaining to the following research aims are reported:

- **Research aim 1:** To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of staff employed at the University of South Africa.
- **Research aim 2:** To empirically investigate whether the employability attributes and retention factors as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables.
- **Research aim 3:** To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level).

The descriptive statistics, correlational statistics and inferential statistics are discussed, followed by a discussion and synthesis of the results. The chapter concludes with a brief summary and a review of Chapter 5.

5.1 PRELIMINARY STATISTICS

Due to the three self-rating measures used and the cross-sectional research design of this study, the preliminary data analysis involved testing for common method variance and the construct validity of each measuring scale. A Harman's one-factor solution and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted by using the CALIS procedure in SAS (Cary, 2013) and the guidelines set by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003). In terms of the CFA analysis, a marginal value of RMSEA and SRMR for model acceptance is .10, and a value of .08 and lower is considered a good fit (S. Y. Park, Nam, & Cha, 2012).

The one-factor solution showed that the single factor that emerged for the EAS accounted for only 34% of the covariance among the EAS variables. The CFA single-factor model did not fit the data adequately: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 4.03; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .10; SRMR = .09; CFI = .58; NNI: .56. These results indicate that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the findings. The eight-factor solution best-fit model data showed a good model fit for the eight EAS constructs: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 1.82; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .05; CFI = .91; NNI: .90, indicating the construct validity of the eight-factor EAS.

The one-factor solution showed that the single factor that emerged for the OCQ accounted for only 27% of the covariance among the OCQ variables. The CFA single-factor model did not fit the data adequately: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 7.98; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .15; SRMR = .15; CFI = .51; NNI: .46. These results indicate that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the findings. The three-factor solution best-fit model data showed a good model fit for the OCQ constructs: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 1.78; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .07; CFI = .96; NNI: .96, indicating the construct validity of the three-factor OCQ.

The one-factor solution showed that the single factor that emerged for the RFS accounted for only 26% of the covariance among the RFS variables. The CFA single-factor model did not fit the data adequately: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 6.11; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .13; SRMR = .13; CFI = .44; NNI: .42. These results indicate that common method bias did not pose a serious threat to the findings. The seven-factor solution best-fit model data showed a good model fit for the RFS constructs: Chi-square/*df* ratio = 1.74; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .06; CFI = .92; NNI: .92, indicating the construct validity of the seven-factor RFS.

5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

This section reports the internal consistency reliability coefficients of the three measurement scales used (Employability Attributes Scale, Organisational Commitment Questionnaire and the Retention Factor Scale), and the means and standard deviations achieved on the overall scale and subscales of the three measurement instruments.

In research studies in which numerical data is collected, the description of these data is termed as descriptive statistics (Schreiber, 2012). Descriptive statistics are used with the purpose of describing a situation by summarising information in a way that highlights the important numerical features of the data (Antonius, 2011). The numerical data is summarised and organised into tables, charts and graphs to give a visual representation of the distributions. In this section, the internal consistency reliability of the three measurement instruments is assessed, followed by a discussion of the means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), skewness and kurtosis that were computed for each scale.

Internal consistency reliability provides an estimate of the consistency of the responses to the measuring items in each instrument (Chen & Krauss, 2011). The internal consistency reliability relates to the extent to which the items making up each scale relate to each other (Cramer & Howitt, 2011). The reliability analysis focused on assessing the internal consistency reliability of the three measuring instruments, namely the Employability

Attributes Scales (EAS), the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and the Retention Factor Scale (RFS). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients are reported for each instrument in the following sections:

The most widely used test for reliability is Cronbach's alpha reliability (α) (Cramer & Howitt, 2011). Cramer and Howitt (2011) mention that the score should vary between 0 and 1, indicating perfect consistency. This means that a higher alpha coefficient will indicate a higher level of reliability. Measures with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 or higher are considered to be internally consistent (Cramer & Howitt, 2011). Hair et al. (2010) agree that a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 is set as the limit to determine reliability.

Table 5.1 summarises the Cronbach's alpha coefficients and means and standard deviations of the EAS, OCQ and RFS.

Table 5.1: *Descriptive statistics*

Measurement scale	Cronbach's alpha coefficient α	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
Assessing Employability Attributes Scale (EAS)			
Career self-management	.87	4.67	.74
Cultural competence	.89	4.37	.90
Self-efficacy	.68	4.77	.85
Career resilience	.73	4.64	.74
Sociability	.74	4.19	.78
Entrepreneurial orientation	.79	4.68	.77
Proactivity	.85	4.68	.74
Emotional literacy	.87	4.59	.75
Overall EAS	.96	4.57	.64
Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)			
Affective commitment	.81	4.74	1.20
Continuance commitment	.82	4.99	1.28
Normative commitment	.89	4.56	1.48
Overall scale	.87	4.76	.98
Retention Factor Scale (RFS)			
Compensation	.95	4.37	1.03
Job characteristics	.52	4.45	.93
Training and development opportunities	.90	4.24	1.23
Supervisor support	.79	4.05	1.19
Career opportunities	.75	3.49	1.26
Work/life balance	.90	3.46	1.52
Organisational commitment	.77	4.66	1.08
Overall scale	.91	4.14	.70

5.2.1 Assessing the internal consistency reliability of the EAS

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the eight subscales of the EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) was summarised in Table 5.1. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient score varied from .89 (high) to .73 (high) for the total sample (N = 311). The total EAS obtained a

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96 (high), which suggests a very good internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The EAS can thus be considered to have adequate reliability for the purpose of the current study.

The means of the four subscales ranged between 4.19 and 4.68. As shown in Table 5.1, the highest mean score was $M = 4.68$ ($SD = .77$) for the subscale *entrepreneurial orientation*, and $M = 4.68$ ($SD = .74$) for the subscale *proactivity*, while the lowest score obtained was $M = 4.19$ ($SD = .78$) for the subscale *sociability*. The overall mean for the EAS indicated a high score of $M = 4.57$ ($SD = .64$)

5.2.2 Assessing the internal consistency reliability of the OCQ

Table 5.1 also provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the three subscales of the OCQ (Allen & Meyer, 1996). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient score varied from .89 (high) to .81 (high) for the total sample ($N = 311$). The total OCQ obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87 (high), which suggests a very good internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The OCQ can thus be considered to have adequate reliability for the purpose of the current study.

The means of the three subscales ranged between 4.56 and 4.99. The highest mean score was $M = 4.99$ ($SD = 1.28$) for the subscale *continuance commitment*, while the lowest mean score obtained was $M = 4.56$ ($SD = 1.48$) for the subscale *normative commitment*. The overall mean for the OCQ indicated a high score of $M = 4.76$ ($SD = .98$).

5.2.3 Assessing the internal reliability consistency of the RFS

Table 5.1 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the seven subscales of the RFS (Döckel, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient score varied from .95 (high) to .52 (low) for the total sample ($N = 311$). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for job characteristics was .52 (low), indicating the low reliability of this subscale. The low reliability coefficient of the job characteristics scale was considered as a limitation to the interpretation of the results. The total RFS obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91 (high), which suggests a very good internal consistency reliability of the scale for this sample. The RFS can thus be considered to have adequate reliability for the purpose of the current study.

The means of the three subscales ranged between 3.46 and 4.66. The highest mean score was $M = 4.66$ ($SD = 1.08$) for the subscale *organisational commitment*, while the lowest mean score obtained was $M = 3.46$ ($SD = 1.52$) for the subscale *work/life balance*. The overall mean for the RFS scale indicated a high score of $M = 4.14$ ($SD = .70$).

In summary, the three scales (EAS, OCQ and RFS) were considered to have construct validity and acceptable internal consistency reliability.

5.3 CORRELATIONS

In order to investigate the relationship between the variables in this study, the descriptive statistics had to be transformed into explanatory (correlational) statistics to determine whether the results provided adequate evidence in support of research hypothesis Ha1: There is a significant relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

For the purpose of this study, a cut-off point of $r \geq .30$ (moderate effect) at $p \leq .05$ was used to determine the practical significance of the correlation coefficients. Spearman correlations were used to reflect the correlations between demographic variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level) and the variables of the three scales.

In this section, the zero-order correlations among and between the scale variables will be reported.

5.5.1 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between EAS and OCQ

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the EAS and the OCQ. As shown in Table 5.2, a number of significant positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.2: Bivariate correlations between the EAS and OCQ

Variables	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES					EAS								OCQ				
	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Job category	Qualification level	Career self-management	Cultural competence	Self-efficacy	Career resilience	Sociability	Entrepreneurial orientation	Proactivity	Emotional literacy	Overall EAS	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Overall OCQ
Ethnicity	-																	
Gender	.12*	-																
Age	.33***	-.06	-															
Job category	-.24***	-.06	.07	-														
Qualification level	.17**	.02	.09	-.39***	-													
Career self-management	-.33***	-.12*	-.04	-.05	.13*	-												
Cultural competence	-.25***	-.02	-.08	.11*	-.12*	.43***	-											
Self-efficacy	-.15**	-.11	.07	.00	.07	.74***	.45***	-										
Career resilience	-.27***	-.08	.000	.10	-.06	.66***	.59***	.64***	-									
Sociability	-.29***	-.03	-.08	-.02	.02	.70***	.61***	.58***	.68***	-								
Entrepreneurial orientation	-.35***	-.11	-.07	.11*	-.03	.74***	.56***	.76**	.75***	.67***	-							
Proactivity	-.23***	-.11	.08	.08	.03	.77***	.56***	.76***	.80***	.70***	.75***	-						
Emotional literacy	-.18***	.01	-.02	.07	-.12*	.52***	.46***	.57***	.65***	.56***	.59***	.69***	-					
Overall EAS	-.32***	-.09	-.03	.04	.02	.87***	.69***	.82***	.85***	.84***	.88***	.91***	.75***	-				
Affective commitment	-.22***	-.08	.02	.05	-.01	.16**	.16**	.09	.15**	.19***	.17**	.14*	.03	.17**	-			
Continuance commitment	.28***	.01	.15*	.09	-.11*	-.14**	-.09	-.12*	-.12*	-.13*	-.16**	-.15**	-.06	-.15**	.03	-		
Normative commitment	-.13*	-.03	.03	.04	-.09	.11*	.16**	.07	.14**	.21***	.16**	.09	.07	.15**	.66***	.25***	-	
Overall OCQ	-.06	-.04	.09	.09	-.09	.07	.11	.03	.09	.13**	.08	.04	.02	.09	.78***	.55***	.88***	-

Notes: N = 311; *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$. $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (medium practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical size)

Several significant relationships were found between the EAS and OCQ. Affective commitment displayed several significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Cultural competence ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Career resilience ($r = .15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Sociability ($r = .19$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Proactivity ($r = .14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Overall EAS ($r = .17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

No significant relationships were found between affective commitment and self-efficacy, and between affective commitment and emotional literacy.

Continuance commitment displayed several negative relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = -.14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Self-efficacy ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Career resilience ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Sociability ($r = -.13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = -.16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Proactivity ($r = -.15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Overall EAS ($r = -.15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

No significant relationships were found between continuance commitment and cultural competence, and between continuance commitment and emotional literacy.

Normative commitment displayed several significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Cultural competence ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Career resilience ($r = .14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Sociability ($r = .21$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

- Overall EAS ($r = .15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

No significant relationships were found between normative commitment and self-efficacy, normative commitment and proactivity, and normative commitment and emotional literacy.

Regarding the relationship between the EAS and OCQ variables, Table 5.2 shows that the associations were all significant, ranging between $r \geq .11 \leq .21$ (small practical effect). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.2) showed a small practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

Significant positive correlations were found between affective commitment and the EAS variables, with sociability ($r = .21$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation. Significant negative correlations were found between continuance commitment and the EAS variables, with entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$) showing the strongest correlation. Significant positive correlations were found between normative commitment and the EAS variables, with sociability ($r = .21$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation.

5.5.2 Reporting on the bivariate correlations between EAS and RFS

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the EAS and the RFS. As shown in Table 5.3, a number of significant positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.3: Bivariate correlations between the EAS and RFS

Variables	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES				EAS										RFS								
	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Job category	Qualification level	Career self-management	Cultural competence	Self-efficacy	Career resilience	Sociability	Entrepreneurial orientation	Proactivity	Emotional literacy	Overall EAS	Compensation	Job characteristics	Training and development opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work-life balance	Organisational commitment	Overall RFS	
Ethnicity	-																						
Gender	.12*	-																					
Age	.33***	-.06	-																				
Job category	-.24***	-.06	.07	-																			
Qualification level	.17**	.02	.09	-.39***	-																		
Career self-management	-.33***	-.12*	-.04	-.05	.13*	-																	
Cultural competence	-.25***	-.02	-.08	.11*	-.12*	.43***	-																
Self-efficacy	-.15**	-.11	.07	.00	.07	.74***	.45***	-															
Career resilience	-.27***	-.08	.000	.10	-.06	.66***	.59***	.64***	-														
Sociability	-.29***	-.03	-.08	-.02	.02	.70***	.61***	.58***	.68***	-													
Entrepreneurial orientation	-.35***	-.11	-.07	.11*	-.03	.74***	.56***	.76**	.75***	.67***	-												
Proactivity	-.23***	-.11	.08	.08	.03	.77***	.56***	.76***	.80***	.70***	.75***	-											
Emotional literacy	-.18***	.01	-.02	.07	-.12*	.52***	.46***	.57***	.65***	.56***	.59***	.69***	-										
Overall EAS	-.32***	-.09	-.03	.04	.02	.87***	.69***	.82***	.85***	.84***	.88***	.91***	.75***	-									
Compensation	.08	.09	.07	.11	.05	.05	-.01	.01	-.07	.03	-.00	-.02	-.09*	-.01	-								
Job characteristics	.17**	-.02	.21***	-.02	.25***	.13*	.03	.18**	.10	.04	.07	.13*	-.12*	.19***	.19***	-							
Training and development opportunities	-.08	-.05	.06	-.07	.14**	.10	-.02	-.01	.01	.12*	-.01	.01	-.05	.03	.43***	.29***	-						
Supervisor support	-.05	.02	.08	.08	-.05	.06	.08	.07	.04	.07	.11	.03	-.03	.61	.23***	.30***	.31***	-					
Career opportunities	-.31***	-.01	-.17*	-.12*	.13*	.33***	.09	.13*	.14**	.33***	.22***	.17**	.07	.25***	.35***	.17**	.42***	.32***	-				
Work/life balance	-.27***	.03	-.10	.15***	-.20**	.05	.11*	.02	.15*	.08	.08	.09	.02	.09	.08	.13*	.03	.15**	.03	-			
Organisational commitment	.23***	.056	.15***	-.14***	.029	-.00	-.06	-.00	-.05	-.03	-.08	-.03	-.09	-.049	.30***	.21***	.27***	.16**	.28**	-.01	-		
Overall RFS	-.08	.05	.04	.02	.09	.17**	.05	.08	.05	.16**	.09	.07	-.07	.09	.80***	.42***	.70***	.59***	.63***	.29***	.45***	-	

Notes: N = 311; $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$. $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (medium practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical size)

Several significant relationships were found between the EAS and RFS. Compensation displayed one significant negative relationship with the EAS scale.

- Emotional literacy ($r = -.09$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between compensation and career self-management, compensation and cultural competence, compensation and self-efficacy, compensation and career resilience, compensation and sociability, compensation and entrepreneurial orientation, and compensation and proactivity. There also was no relationship between compensation and the overall EAS.

Job characteristics displayed several positive relationships with the EAS variables.

- Career self-management ($r = .13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Self-efficacy ($r = .18$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Proactivity ($r = .13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Overall EAS ($r = .19$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

One negative relationship was found between job characteristics and the EAS scale.

- Emotional literacy ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between job characteristics and cultural competence, job characteristics and career resilience, job characteristics and sociability, and job characteristics and entrepreneurial orientation.

Training and development displayed one significant negative relationship with the EAS.

- Sociability ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between training and development and career self-management, training and development and cultural competence, training and development and self-efficacy, training and development and career resilience, training and development and entrepreneurial orientation, training and development and proactivity, and training and development and emotional literacy. There also was no relationship between training and development and the overall EAS.

Supervisor support displayed no significant relationships with the EAS scale.

Career opportunities displayed several significant positive relationships with the EAS.

- Career self-management ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Self-efficacy ($r = .13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Career resilience ($r = .14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Sociability ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .22$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Proactivity ($r = .17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Overall EAS ($r = .25$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

No significant relationships were found between career opportunities and cultural competence, and between career opportunities and emotional literacy.

Work/life balance displayed one significant positive relationship with the EAS scale.

- Cultural competence ($r = -.11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between work/life balance and career self-management, work/life balance and self-efficacy, work/life balance and career resilience, work/life balance and sociability, work/life balance and entrepreneurial orientation, work/life balance and proactivity, and work/life balance and emotional literacy. There also was no relationship between work/life balance and the overall EAS.

Organisational commitment displayed no significant relationships with the EAS.

The overall RFS displayed two positive relationships with the EAS scales.

- Career self-management ($r = .17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Sociability ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

Regarding the relationship between the EAS and RFS variables, Table 5.2 shows that the associations were all significant, ranging between $r \geq .09 \leq .33$ (small to medium practical effect). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson

product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.3) showed a small to medium practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

One significant negative correlation was found between compensation and the EAS, namely emotional literacy ($r = -.09$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$). Significant positive correlations were found between job characteristics and the EAS variables, with self-efficacy ($r = .18$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$) showing the strongest correlation and emotional literacy ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$) indicating a negative relationship. One significant negative relationship was found with the EAS, namely sociability ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$). No significant relationships were found between supervisor support and the EAS. Several significant positive correlations were found between career opportunities and the EAS, with career self-management ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$) and sociability ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlations. One significant positive correlation was found between work/life balance and the EAS scale, namely cultural competence ($r = -.11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$). No significant relationships were found between organisational commitment and the EAS.

5.5.3 Reporting on the bivariate correlations between RFS and OCQ

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the RFS and the OCQ. As shown in Table 5.4, a number of significant positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.4: *Bivariate correlations between the RFS and OCQ*

Variables	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES						RFS						OCQ				
	Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Job category	Qualification level	Compensation	Job characteristics	Training and development opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work/life balance	Organisational commitment	Overall RFS	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Overall OCQ
Ethnicity	-																
Gender	.12*	-															
Age	.33***	-.06	-														
Job category	-.24***	-.06	.07	-													
Qualification level	.17**	.02	.09	-.39***	-												
Compensation	.81	.09	.07	.11*	.05	-											
Job characteristics	.17**	-.02	.21***	-.02	.25***	.19***	-										
Training and development opportunities	-.08	-.05	.06	-.07	.14**	.43***	.29***	-									
Supervisor support	-.05	.02	.08	.08	-.05	.30***	.30***	.31***	-								
Career opportunities	-.31***	-.01	-.17**	-.12*	.13*	.35***	.17**	.42***	.32***	-							
Work/life balance	-.27***	.03	-.10	.15***	-.20**	.08	-.01	.03	.15**	.03	-						
Organisational commitment	.23***	.06	.15***	-.14**	.03	.29***	.21***	.27***	.16**	.28***	-.01	-					
Overall RFS	-.08	.05	.04	.02	.09	.80***	.42***	.69***	.59***	.632***	.29***	.45***	-				
Affective commitment	-.22***	-.08	.02	.05	-.01	.31***	.29***	.32***	.29***	.37***	.24***	.44***	.52***	-			
Continuance commitment	.28***	.01	.15**	.09	-.11*	.13*	-.05	.11*	.03	-.02	-.14*	.33***	.09	.03	-		
Normative commitment	-.13*	-.03	.03	.04	-.09	.22***	.16**	.27***	.18**	.34***	.05	.38***	.36***	.66***	.25***	-	
Overall OCQ	-.06	-.04	.09	.09	-.09	.30***	.19***	.32***	.23***	.32***	.08	.52***	.45***	.78***	.55***	.88***	-

Notes: N = 311; $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$. $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (medium practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical size)

Several significant relationships were found between the RFS and OCQ. Affective commitment displayed several significant positive relationships with all the RFS variables.

- Compensation ($r = .31$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Job characteristics ($r = .29$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Training and development opportunities ($r = .32$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Supervisor support ($r = .29$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Career opportunities ($r = .37$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Work/life balance ($r = .24$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .44$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFS ($r = .52$; large practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

Continuance commitment displayed several significant positive relationships between all the RFS variables.

- Compensation ($r = .13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Training and development opportunities ($r = .11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

A negative relationship was found between continuance commitment and one RFS variable.

- Work/life balance ($r = -.14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between continuance commitment and supervisor support, or between continuance commitment and career opportunities. There also was no significant relationship between continuance commitment and the overall RFS.

Normative commitment displayed several significant positive relationships with all the RFS variables.

- Compensation ($r = .22$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Job characteristics ($r = .16$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Training and development opportunities ($r = .27$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Supervisor support ($r = .18$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Career opportunities ($r = .34$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .38$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

- Overall RFS ($r = .36$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

No significant relationship was found between affective commitment and work/life balance.

The overall OCQ scale displayed several significant positive relationships with all the RFS variables.

- Compensation ($r = .30$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Job characteristics ($r = .19$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Training and development opportunities ($r = .32$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Supervisor support ($r = .23$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Career opportunities ($r = .32$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .52$; large practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFS ($r = .45$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

No significant relationship was found between the overall OCQ and work/life balance.

Regarding the relationship between the RFS and OCQ variables, Table 5.4 shows that the associations were all significant, ranging between $r \geq .11 \leq .52$ (small to large practical effect). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.3) showed a small to large practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

Several significant positive correlations were found between affective commitment and the RFS, with organisational commitment ($r = .44$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation. Several significant positive correlations were found between continuance commitment and the RFS, with organisational commitment ($r = .33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation and work/life balance ($r = -.14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$) indicating a negative relationship. Several significant positive correlations were found between normative commitment and the RFS, with organisational commitment ($r = .38$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation. Several significant positive correlations were found between the overall OCQ and the RFS, with organisational commitment ($r = .52$; large practical effect, $p \leq .001$) showing the strongest correlation.

5.5.4 Reporting on the bivariate correlations among the EAS, OCQ and RFS

5.3.4.1 EAS

Regarding the relationship among the EAS subscales, Table 5.2 shows that the associations were all significantly positive, ranging between $r \geq .43 \leq .80$ (medium to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.2) showed a large practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

Significant positive correlations were found between all the subscales of the EAS and the overall EAS, ranging between $r \geq .69 \leq .91$ (large practical effect, $p \leq .001$), thereby indicating construct validity.

5.3.4.2 OCQ

Regarding the relationship among the OCQ subscales, Table 5.2 shows that several associations were significantly positive, ranging between $r \geq .25 \leq .66$ (small to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.2) showed a small to large practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

Significant positive correlations were found between all the subscales of the OCQ and the overall OCQ, ranging between $r \geq .55 \leq .88$ (large practical effect, $p \leq .001$), thus indicating construct validity.

5.3.4.3 RFS

Regarding the relationship among the RFS subscales, Table 5.4 shows that several associations were significantly positive, ranging between $r \geq .15 \leq .43$ (small to medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.4) showed a small to large practical effect and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .80$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

Significant positive correlations were found between all the subscales of the RFS and the overall RFS, ranging between $r \geq .29 \leq .80$ (small to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$), thereby indicating construct validity.

5.5.5 Reporting on the correlations between biographical variables and the EAS, OCQ and RFS

Table 5.2, Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 provide the bivariate correlation between the EAS and OCQ, EAS and RFS, and RFS and OCQ respectively. The tables also include the correlations between the biographical variables and the three scales.

5.3.5.1 Bivariate correlations between biographical variables and the EAS

Ethnicity displayed several negative relationships with all the EAS variables.

- Career self-management ($r = -.33$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Cultural competence ($r = -.25$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Self-efficacy ($r = -.15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Career resilience ($r = -.27$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Sociability ($r = -.29$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = -.35$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Proactivity ($r = -.23$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Emotional literacy ($r = -.18$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall EAS ($r = -.32$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

Gender displayed one negative relationship with the EAS variables.

- Career self-management ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

Age displayed no relationships with the EAS variables.

Job category displayed two positive significant relationships with the EAS variables.

- Cultural competence ($r = .11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

Qualification level displayed two negative relationships between the EAS variables.

- Cultural competence ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Emotional literacy ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

The negative correlations suggest significant differences among the respective biographical variables with regard to the relevant scale variables. No significant differences were present between age and the EAS variables and qualification level and the EAS variables.

5.3.5.2 Bivariate correlations between biographical variables and the OCQ

Ethnicity displayed several negative relationships with the OCQ variables.

- Affective commitment ($r = -.22$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Normative commitment ($r = -.13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

One positive significant relationship was found between ethnicity and the OCQ variables.

- Continuance commitment ($r = .28$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

Qualification level displayed one negative relationship between the OCQ variables.

- Continuance commitment ($r = -.11$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

No significant relationships were found between age, gender and job category and the OCQ variables.

The negative correlations suggest significant differences among the respective biographical variables with regard to the relevant scale variables. No significant differences were present between age, gender and job category and the OCQ variables and between qualification level and the EAS variables.

5.3.5.3 Bivariate correlations between biographical variables and the RFS

Ethnicity displayed two positive, significant relationships with the RFS.

- Job characteristics ($r = .17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .23$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

Two negative relationships were found between ethnicity and the RFS.

- Career opportunities ($r = -.31$; medium practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Work/life balance ($r = -.27$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

No significant relationships were found between gender and the RFS variables.

Age displayed two positive significant relationships with the RFS.

- Job characteristics ($r = .21$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = .15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

A negative relationship was found between age and the RFS.

- Career opportunities ($r = -.17$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

Job category displayed two positive significant relationships with the RFS.

- Compensation ($r = .21$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Work/life balance ($r = .15$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)

Two negative relationships were found between job category and the RFS.

- Career opportunities ($r = -.12$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)
- Organisational commitment ($r = -.14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

Several positive relationships were found between qualification level and the RFS variables.

- Job characteristics ($r = .25$; small practical effect, $p \leq .001$)
- Training and development opportunities ($r = .14$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)
- Career opportunities ($r = .13$; small practical effect, $p \leq .05$)

A negative relationship was found between qualification level and the RFS.

- Work/life balance ($r = -.20$; small practical effect, $p \leq .01$)

The negative correlations suggest significant differences among the respective biographical variables with regard to the relevant scale variables. No significant differences were present between ethnicity, gender and job category and the RFS variables and between qualification level and the RFS variables.

In summary, the correlation findings provide evidence in support of research hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

5.4 CANONICAL CORRELATION

This section aims to investigate whether employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables were significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables.

The purpose of canonical correlations is to simultaneously correlate multiple dependent variables with multiple independent correlations (Hair et al., 2010). The procedure involves obtaining a set of weights for the dependent and independent variables that provides the maximum simple correlation between the set of dependent variables and the set of independent variables (Hair et al., 2010).

Canonical correlation analysis was used to study the multivariate relationships between the employability attributes and organisational commitment variables and the retention factor variables. The employability attributes and organisational commitment variables were treated as the set of independent variables and the retention factor variables as the set of

dependent variables. Table 5.5 shows that the multivariate criterion and the F approximations for the model are statistically significant.

Table 5.5: *Canonical correlation analysis: Overall model fit statistics relating to the employability attributes and organisational commitment variables (independent variables) in relation to the retention factor variables (dependent variables)*

Measures of overall model fit for canonical correlation analysis					
Canonical function	Overall canonical correlation (R_c)	Overall squared canonical correlation (R_c^2)	Eigenvalue	F statistics	Probability (p)
1	.63	.43	.75	4.89	<.0001
2	.45	.25	.32	3.15	<.0001
3	.40	.18	.22	2.25	<.0001
Multivariate tests of significance					
Statistics		Value	Approximate F statistic	Probability (p)	
Wilks's lambda		.31245213	4.89	<.0001	
Pillai's trace		.97718379	4.40	<.0001	
Hotelling-Lawley trace		1.41753639	5.35	<.0001	
Roy's greatest root		.74514316	20.19	<.0001	

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

Canonical correlation analysis was useful in testing research hypothesis Ha2: The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.

Canonical correlation analysis is a multivariate statistical model exploring the relationship between two sets of variables, namely the set of independent variables and the set of dependent variables (Hair et al., 2010). By making use of canonical correlations, a researcher has the opportunity to generalise the results obtained from the sample to the population at large (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Canonical correlation analyses were considered relevant and valuable for the purpose of this study because the canonical

analysis limits the chances of committing type I errors. According to Hair et al. (2010), the canonical correlations or cross-loadings assess the magnitude of the canonical relationship. Bordens and Abbott (2014) mention that, while canonical correlations can be used to describe the relationship between two sets of variables, they cannot be used to infer causal relationships. The present research was regarded as exploratory research and therefore it was decided to use a cut-off criterion ($Rc \geq .20$) for the first canonical function. A more stringent cut-off criterion was used for the second canonical function ($Rc \geq .30$). The analysis of the canonical loadings assisted in establishing the employability attributes and organisational commitment variables that contributed the most to explaining the variance in the retention factor canonical construct variate.

Wilks's lambda chi-square test was used to test for the significance of the overall canonical correlation between the independent latent variables (employability attributes and organisational commitment) and the dependent latent variables (retention factors) of a canonical function. In an effort to counteract the probability of a type I error, the significance value to interpret the results was set at the 95% confidence interval level ($Fp \leq .05$). Moreover, the Wilks's lambda r^2 type effect size (yielded by $1-\lambda$) was utilised to determine the practical significance of the findings (Cohen, 1992) The redundancy index was also considered in determining the magnitude of the overall relationships (correlational) between the two variates of a canonical function. Hair et al. (2010) suggest that the redundancy index is also useful to determine the practical significance of the predictive ability of the canonical relationship. The squared canonical correlation (Rc^2) values of $\leq .12$ (small practical effect), $\geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect) and $\geq .26$ (large practical effect) ($Fp \leq .05$) were also considered in the interpretation of the magnitude or practical significance of the results (Cohen, 1992).

Table 5.5 indicates that the overall model r^2 type's effect size (yielded by $1-\lambda$: $1-.31$) was $r^2 = .69$ (large practical effect; $Fp = .001$), indicating that the full model explained a substantial proportion (approximately 69%) of the variance shared between the two canonical variate sets.

Table 5.6 provides the canonical coefficients (weights), canonical structure coefficients (Rc), canonical cross-loadings (Rc) and squared canonical loadings (Rc^2) for the first canonical function.

Table 5.6: Results of the standardised canonical correlation analysis for the first canonical function

Variate/variables	Canonical coefficient (Weight)	Structure coefficient (Canonical loading) (Rc)	Canonical cross-loadings (Rc)	Squared multiple correlation (Rc ²)
Employability attributes and organisational commitment canonical variate (composite set of latent independent variables)				
Career self-management	.22	.23	.15	.02
Cultural competence	-.11	.04	.02	.00
Self-efficacy	.22	.14	.09	.01
Career resilience	.08	.10	.07	.00
Sociability	.09	.18	.12	.01
Entrepreneurial orientation	-.29	.07	.05	.00
Proactivity	.08	.13	.09	.01
Emotional literacy	-.31	-.14	-.09	.01
Affective commitment	.84	.91	.59	.35
Continuance commitment	.24	.27	.17	.03
Normative commitment	.06	.67	.44	.19
Percentage of overall variance of variables explained by their own canonical variables:				
Retention factor canonical variate (composite set of dependent variables)				
Compensation	.13	.54	.35	.12
Job characteristics	.30	.54	.35	.12
Training and development opportunities	.14	.57	.37	.14
Supervisor support	.03	.41	.27	.07
Career opportunities	.24	.58	.38	.14
Work/life balance	.24	.25	.17	.03
Organisational commitment	.59	.80	.52	.27
Overall model fit measure (function1)				
$F(p) = (p < .0001)$; $df = 77$				
Wilks's lambda (λ) = .31				
r^2 type effect size: $1 - \lambda = .69$ (large practical effect size)				
Overall proportion: $Rc^2 = .43$ (43%) (large practical effect size)				
Redundancy index: $Rc^2 = .13$ (percentage of overall variance in retention factors (dependent) canonical construct variables accounted for by the employability and organisational commitment (independent) canonical construct variables: 13%)				

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; + $Rc^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size); ++ $Rc^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (moderate practical effect size); +++ $Rc^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size)

Table 5.6 shows that the variables of the two canonical variates of the first function accounted for 43% (overall $Rc^2 = .43$; large practical effect) of the data variability. The cut-off criterion for factorial loadings ($Rc \geq .20$) was utilised for the first function to assess the

relative importance of the canonical structure correlations (Hair et al., 2010). It should be noted that only the singular canonical structure correlations (loadings) and the squared canonical structure correlations (loadings) were considered in the interpretation of the practical significance and importance of the derivation of the two canonical variate constructs. This was attributed to the variability of the canonical weights and multicollinearity apprehensions (Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding the independent canonical variate, the employability attributes/organisational commitment canonical construct variate was most strongly influenced by the OCQ variables. Using the cut-off criterion of $R_c \geq .20$, only career self-management ($R_c = .23$) and the three organisational commitment variables (affective commitment: $R_c = .91$; continuance commitment: $R_c = .27$; normative commitment: $R_c = .67$) contributed to explaining the variance in the overall employability/organisational commitment canonical construct variate.

In terms of the dependent canonical variate (retention factor variables), Table 5.6 shows that organisational commitment ($R_c = .80$, very large practical effect) was most strongly influenced by the following RFS (Retention Factor Scale) variables. Compensation ($R_c = .54$), job characteristics ($R_c = .54$), training and development opportunities ($R_c = .57$), supervisor support ($R_c = .41$) and career opportunities ($R_c = .58$) displayed a large degree of association with the retention factor canonical variate.

In terms of the canonical cross-loadings and squared loadings between the independent and dependent canonical variate variables and constructs, affective commitment ($R_c = .59$, $R_c^2 = .35$) contributed most to explaining the retention factor canonical variate construct, followed by normative commitment ($R_c = .44$, $R_c^2 = .19$). The employability attribute variables did not contribute strongly to explaining the variance in the retention factor canonical variate construct.

Figure 5.1 is a graphical illustration of the canonical relationships between the independent variables (employability attributes and organisational commitment) and the dependent variables (retention factors) for the first canonical function.

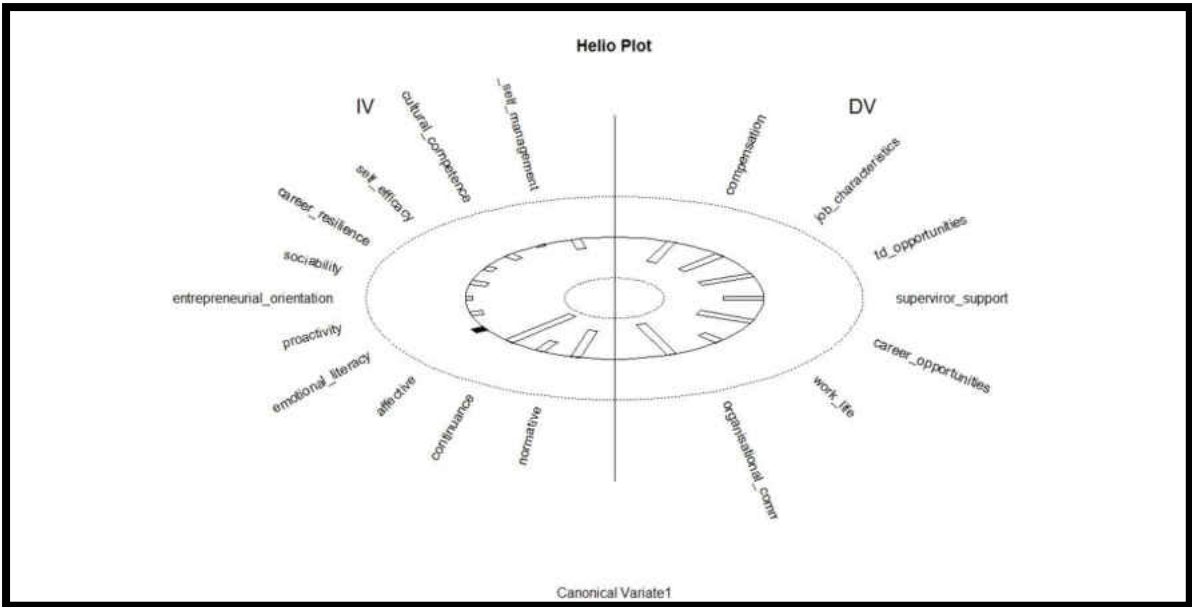


Figure 5.1: Canonical helio plot illustrating the overall relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variables) for the first canonical function

Table 5.7 provides the canonical coefficients (weights), canonical structure coefficients (R_c), canonical cross-loadings (R_c) and squared canonical loadings (R_c^2) for the second canonical function.

Table 5.7: Results of the standardised canonical correlation analysis for the second canonical function

Variate/variables	Canonical coefficient (Weight)	Structure coefficient (Canonical loading) (<i>R_c</i>)	Canonical cross-loadings (<i>R_c</i>)	Squared multiple correlation (<i>R_c²</i>)
Employability attributes and organisational commitment canonical variate (composite set of latent independent variables)				
Career self-management	.65	.65	.32	.12
Cultural competence	-.17	.27	.13	.02
Self-efficacy	-.65	.23	.11	.02
Career resilience	-.16	.39	.19	.04
Sociability	.63	.71	.35	.13
Entrepreneurial orientation	.43	.54	.26	.07
Proactivity	-.25	.39	.19	.04
Emotional literacy	.04	.31	.15	.03
Affective commitment	-.19	.10	.05	.35
Continuance commitment	-.46	-.51	-.25	.09
Normative commitment	.22	.14	.07	.19
Percentage of overall variance of variables explained by their own canonical variables:				
Retention factor canonical variate (composite set of dependent variables)				
Compensation	-.19	-.02	-.01	.12
Job characteristics	-.06	-.07	-.03	.12
Training and development opportunities	.06	.19	.09	.14
Supervisor support	-.13	.06	.03	.07
Career opportunities	1.00	.75	.37	.28
Work/life balance	.14	.15	.07	.03
Organisational commitment	-.58	-.37	-.18	.31
Overall model fit measure (function2)				
$F(p) = (p < .0001)$; $df = 77$				
Wilks's lambda (λ) = .31				
r^2 type effect size: $1-\lambda = .69$ (medium practical effect size)				
Overall proportion: $Rc^2 = .24$ (24%) (medium practical effect size)				
Redundancy index: $Rc^2 = .04$ (percentage of overall variance in retention factors (dependent) canonical construct variables accounted for by the employability and organisational commitment (independent) canonical construct variables: 4%)				

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; + $Rc^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size); ++ $Rc^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (moderate practical effect size); +++ $Rc^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size)

Table 5.7 shows that the variables of the two canonical variates of the second function accounted for 24% (overall $Rc^2 = .24$; medium practical effect) of the data variability. The cut-off criterion for factorial loadings ($Rc \geq .30$) was utilised for the second function to assess the relative importance of the canonical structure correlations (Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding the independent canonical variate, the employability attributes/organisational commitment canonical construct variate was most strongly influenced by the EAS variables. More specifically, career self-management ($Rc = .65$), career resilience ($Rc = .39$), sociability ($Rc = .71$), entrepreneurial orientation ($Rc = .54$), proactivity ($Rc = .39$), emotional literacy ($Rc = .31$) and continuance commitment ($Rc = -.51$) showed a large degree of association with the employability attributes and organisational commitment canonical construct variate.

In terms of the dependent canonical variate (retention factor variables), Table 5.7 shows that career opportunities ($Rc = .75$ very large practical effect) was most strongly influenced by the RFS variables. Organisational commitment ($Rc = -.37$, $Rc^2 = .31$) displayed a medium degree of association with the retention factor canonical variate.

In terms of the canonical cross-loadings and squared loadings between the independent and dependent canonical variate variables and constructs, sociability ($Rc = .35$, $Rc^2 = .13$) contributed most to explaining the retention factor canonical variate construct, followed by career self-management ($Rc = .32$, $Rc^2 = .12$). The organisational commitment variables did not contribute strongly to explaining the variance in the retention factor canonical variate construct.

Figure 5.2 is a graphical illustration of the canonical relationships between the independent variables (employability attributes and organisational commitment) and the dependent variables (retention factors) for the second canonical function.

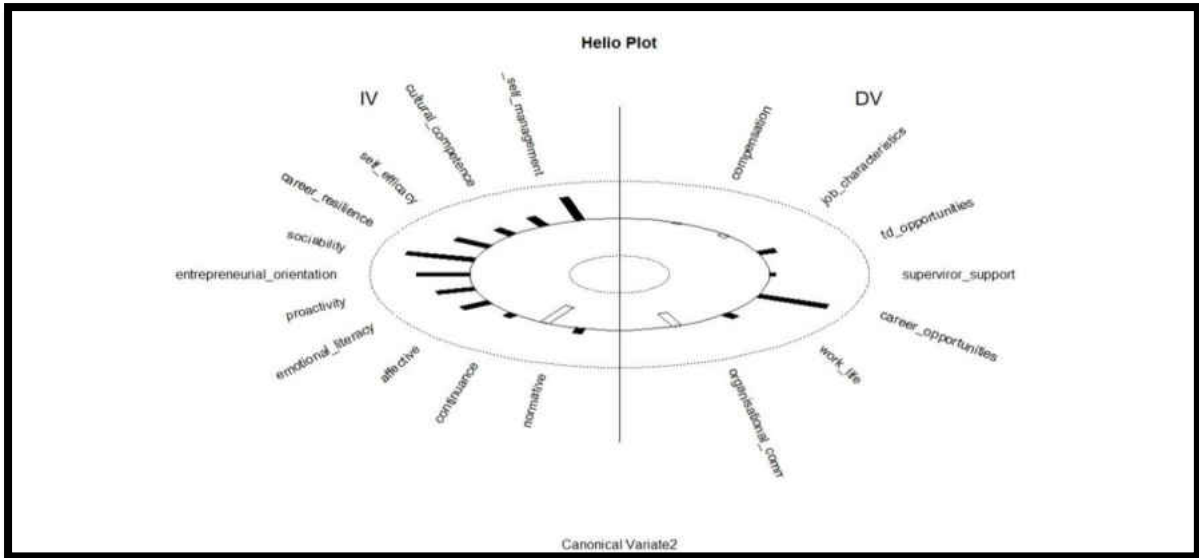


Figure 5.2: Canonical helio plot illustrating the overall relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variables) for the second canonical function.

In summary, the results of the canonical correlation analysis show that career self-management and the three organisational commitment variables (with the exception of supervisor support and work/life balance) significantly predicted the retention factors (function 1), and that career self-management and sociability significantly predicted satisfaction with career opportunities (function 2). These findings provide evidence in support of the research hypothesis H2: The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.

5.5 TESTS FOR MEAN DIFFERENCES

This section discusses the empirical investigation of whether there were differences between the employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of demographic variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level).

Independent t-tests were conducted to test for significant mean differences regarding the variables employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

5.5.1 Ethnicity

Table 5.8 displays the results of the independent t-test scores relating to ethnicity.

Table 5.8: Tests for significant mean differences – Ethnicity

Variable	African, Indian and coloured Mean (SD)	White Mean (SD)	Levene's test for equality of variances Fp	t-test for equality of means		Cohen's d
				t	df	
Career self-management	4.86 (.71)	4.43 (.72)	.03	5.21***	302	.60
Cultural competence	4.60 (.85)	4.04 (.88)	.01	5.61***	302	.66
Self-efficacy	4.85 (.84)	4.67 (.86)	.07	1.79	302	-
Career resilience	4.81 (.69)	4.41 (.75)	.64	4.90***	302	.56
Sociability	4.39 (.74)	3.92 (.81)	1.77	5.23***	302	.61
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.89 (.71)	4.40 (.76)	.81	5.79***	302	.67
Proactivity	4.82 (.72)	4.50 (.72)	.02	3.77***	302	.43
Emotional literacy	4.71 (.78)	4.45 (.69)	3.7*	2.98**	302	.37
Overall EAS	4.75 (.60)	4.35 (.63)	.57	5.56***	302	.63
Affective commitment	4.95 (1.12)	4.44 (1.25)	.35	3.74***	302	.43
Continuance commitment	4.67 (1.33)	5.43 (1.01)	7.18**	-5.31***	302	.63
Normative commitment	4.73 (1.39)	4.36 (1.56)	4.17*	2.19**	302	.25
Overall OCQ	4.79 (.98)	4.73 (.97)	.01	.56	302	-
Compensation	4.29 (1.05)	4.49 (1.00)	.68	-1.76	302	-
Job characteristics	4.32 (.96)	4.60 (.88)	1.35	-2.59	302	-
Training and development opportunities	4.33 (1.24)	4.14 (1.19)	.01	1.29	302	-
Supervisor support	4.06 (1.16)	4.04 (1.24)	.90	.20	302	-
Career opportunities	3.79 (1.28)	3.08 (1.09)	3.38*	5.06***	302	.59
Work/life balance	4.17 (.74)	4.09 (.66)	2.20	.98	302	-
Organisational commitment	4.48 (1.11)	4.89 (1.02)	1.10	-3.28***	302	.38
Overall RFS	4.20 (.66)	4.09 (.74)	2.20	.98	302	-

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq .001$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

The different ethnicity categories were classified as follows:

- Black (African, Indian and coloured) = 0
- White = 1

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.8) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the black (African, Indian and coloured) and white participants in all three scales used. Table 5.8 shows that the black participants scored significantly higher than their white counterparts on the employability attributes and affective commitment ($M = 4.95$ versus $M = 4.44$; $p \leq .001$; $d = .43$; small practical effect), normative commitment ($M = 4.73$ versus $M = 4.36$; $p \leq .01$; $d = .25$; small practical effect) and career opportunities ($M = 3.79$ versus $M = 3.08$; $p \leq .001$; $d = .59$; large practical effect). The white participants scored significantly higher than the black participants on continuance commitment ($M = 5.43$ versus $M = 4.67$, $p \leq .001$, $d = .63$, medium practical effect) and generalised organisational commitment ($M = 4.89$ versus $M = 4.48$, $p \leq .001$, $d = .38$, small practical effect)

No significant differences were observed in terms of black and white participants regarding self-efficacy, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support and work/life balance.

5.5.2 Gender

Table 5.9 displays the results of the independent t-test scores relating to gender.

Table 5.9: Tests for significant mean differences – Gender

Variable	Males Mean (SD)	Females Mean (SD)	Levene's test for equality of variances <i>F_p</i>	t-test for equality of means		Cohen's d
				t	df	
Career self-management	4.77 (.72)	4.59 (.75)	1.21*	2.06	308	.24
Cultural competence	4.39 (.88)	4.35 (.91)	.62	.44	308	-
Self-efficacy	4.88 (.81)	4.69 (.87)	.33	1.83	308	-
Career resilience	4.71 (.75)	4.59 (.74)	.02	1.40	308	-
Sociability	4.21 (.78)	4.17 (.81)	1.22	.45	308	-
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.78 (.75)	4.61 (.79)	.56*	1.93	308	-
Proactivity	4.78 (.68)	4.62 (.77)	3.15	1.84*	308	.22
Emotional literacy	4.59 (.74)	4.59 (.76)	.14	-.021	308	-
Overall EAS	4.64 (.62)	4.53 (.66)	1.11	1.52	308	-
Affective commitment	4.83 (1.21)	4.68 (1.19)	.05	1.06	308	-
Continuance commitment	4.96 (1.31)	5.01 (1.26)	.48	-.35	308	-
Normative commitment	4.61 (1.47)	4.53 (1.49)	.58	.45	308	-
Overall OCQ	4.80 (.91)	4.74 (1.02)	2.36	.55	308	-
Compensation	4.24 (1.06)	4.46 (.99)	1.18	-1.86	308	-
Job characteristics	4.48 (.93)	4.43 (.93)	.12	.43	308	-
Training and development opportunities	4.35 (1.15)	4.18 (1.23)	2.33	1.21	308	-
Supervisor support	4.02 (1.16)	4.06 (1.20)	.11	-.29	308	-
Career opportunities	3.50 (1.25)	3.48 (1.26)	.00	.15	308	-
Work/life balance	4.10 (.69)	4.16 (.71)	.22	-.73	308	-
Organisational commitment	4.61 (1.06)	4.69 (1.10)	.06	-.71	308	-
Overall RFS	4.10 (.69)	4.16 (.71)	.22	-.73	308	-

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq .001$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

The different gender categories were classified as follows:

- Male = 0
- Female = 1

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.9) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in proactivity. The male participants scored significantly higher than their female counterparts on proactivity ($M = 4.78$ versus $M = 4.62$, $p \leq .05$, $d = .22$, small practical effect). Overall there were no significant differences in the different dimensions on the OCQ and RFS with regard to males and females

No significant differences were observed in terms of males and females regarding the remaining EAS variables, OCQ variables and RFS variables.

5.5.3 Age

Table 5.10 displays the results of the independent t-test scores relating to age.

Table 5.10: Tests for significant mean differences – Age

Variable	Age ≤ 35 Mean (SD)	Age ≥ 36 Mean (SD)	Levene's test for equality of variances <i>F_p</i>	t-test for equality of means		Cohen's d
				t	df	
Career self-management	4.63 (.75)	4.67 (.75)	.01	-.39	285	-
Cultural competence	4.34 (.84)	4.37 (.92)	1.12	-.26	285	-
Self-efficacy	4.62 (.86)	4.80 (.86)	.09	-1.52	285	-
Career resilience	4.57 (.63)	4.63 (.77)	3.51	-.83*	285	.09
Sociability	4.17 (.75)	4.18 (.81)	2.38	-.10	285	-
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.68 (.73)	4.66 (.79)	1.91	.17	285	-
Proactivity	4.47 (.75)	4.73 (.73)	.32	-2.56**	285	.35
Emotional literacy	4.45 (.86)	4.64 (.73)	3.80*	-1.76	285	.24
Overall EAS	4.49 (.59)	4.59 (.66)	1.57	-1.04	285	-
Affective commitment	4.67 (1.25)	4.77 (1.18)	.09	-.62	285	-
Continuance commitment	4.95 (1.51)	5.00 (1.22)	5.28**	-.25	285	.04
Normative commitment	4.66 (1.54)	4.56 (1.49)	.11	.49	285	-
Overall OCQ	4.76 (1.11)	4.78 (.95)	4.19	-.14	285	-
Compensation	4.34 (1.00)	4.40 (1.02)	.01	-.45	285	-
Job characteristics	4.15 (.86)	4.55 (.93)	2.19	-3.16	285	-
Training and development opportunities	4.19 (1.36)	4.27 (1.22)	1.19	-.49	285	-
Supervisor support	4.01 (1.19)	4.07 (1.18)	.01	-.31	285	-
Career opportunities	3.74 (1.22)	3.40 (1.26)	.51	1.96*	285	.27
Work/life balance	4.12 (.77)	5.15 (.69)	.22	-.29	285	-
Organisational commitment	4.49 (1.15)	4.73 (1.05)	1.83	-1.57	285	-
Overall RFS	4.12 (.77)	4.15 (.69)	.22	-29.05	285	-

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq .001$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

The different age categories were classified as follows:

- < 35 years = 0
- > 36 years = 1

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.10) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between participants younger than 35 and participants older than 36. Table 5.10 shows that participants older than 36 scored significantly higher than participants younger than 35 on proactivity ($M = 4.73$ versus $M = 4.47$; $p \leq .01$; $d = .24$; small practical effect). Participants younger than 35 scored significantly higher than participants older than 35 on career opportunities ($M = 3.74$ versus $M = 3.40$; $p \leq .05$; $d = .27$; small practical effect).

No significant differences were observed in terms of participants younger than 35 and older than 36 regarding the remaining EAS variables, OCQ variables and remaining RFS variables.

5.5.4 Job category

Table 5.11 displays the results for the independent t-test scores relating to job category.

Table 5.11: Tests for significant mean differences – Job category

Variable	Academic staff	Administrative and managerial staff	Levene's test for equality of variances	t-test for equality of means		Cohen's d
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Fp	t	df	
Career self-management	4.74 (.69)	4.61 (.77)	2.55	1.52	308	-
Cultural competence	2.54 (.86)	4.45 (.92)	.85*	-1.91	308	2.14
Self-efficacy	4.80 (.79)	4.74 (.89)	1.49	.64	308	-
Career resilience	4.58 (.63)	4.68 (.81)	10.98***	-1.15	308	.14
Sociability	4.22 (.75)	4.16 (.83)	2.25	.59	308	-
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.59 (.73)	4.73 (.81)	1.92	-1.51	308	-
Proactivity	4.65 (.69)	4.71 (.77)	2.54	-.70	308	-
Emotional literacy	4.54 (.74)	4.63 (.77)	1.08	-1.03	308	-
Overall EAS	4.56 (.58)	4.59 (.68)	3.39	-.35	308	-
Affective commitment	4.68 (1.33)	4.78 (10.09)	6.28**	-.71	308	.08
Continuance commitment	4.85 (1.32)	5.09 (1.24)	.50	-1.64	308	-
Normative commitment	4.53 (1.52)	4.58 (1.45)	.53	-.27	308	-
Overall OCQ	4.69 (1.03)	4.81 (.94)	.73	-1.13	308	-
Compensation	4.30 (1.04)	4.42 (1.01)	.37	-1.02	308	-
Job characteristics	4.56 (.85)	4.37 (.97)	4.20	1.83	308	-
Training and development opportunities	4.49 (1.02)	4.07 (1.33)	13.08***	3.11**	308	.35
Supervisor support	4.01 (1.15)	4.08 (1.21)	.09	-.47	308	-
Career opportunities	3.75 (1.11)	3.30 (1.33)	10.22**	3.08**	308	.37
Work/life balance	4.17 (.69)	4.12 (.71)	.14	.59	308	-
Organisational commitment	4.83 (1.04)	4.55 (1.09)	2.21	2.26*	308	.26
Overall RFS	4.17 (.69)	4.12 (.71)	.14	.59	308	-

Notes: N = 311 *** $p \leq .001$. ** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

The different job categories were classified as follows:

- Academic staff = 0
- Administrative and managerial staff = 1

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.11) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between academic staff in comparison to administrative and managerial staff. Table 5.11 shows that academic staff scored significantly higher than administrative and managerial staff on training and development opportunities ($M = 4.49$ versus $M = 4.07$; $p \leq .01$; $d = .35$; medium practical effect), career opportunities ($M = 3.75$ versus $M = 3.30$; $p \leq .01$; $d = .37$; medium practical effect) and organisational commitment ($M = 4.83$ versus $M = 4.55$; $p \leq .05$; $d = .26$; small practical effect).

No significant differences were observed in terms of academic staff and administrative and managerial staff regarding the EAS variables, OCQ variables and remaining RFS variables.

In summary, the tests for significant mean differences provided evidence in support of research hypothesis 3: Individuals from various ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factor satisfaction levels.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 5.12 presents an overview of the research hypotheses that were formulated for the purposes of this research study.

Table 5.12: *Conclusions regarding research hypotheses*

Research hypothesis	Supportive evidence
Ha1 – There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.	Yes
Ha2 – The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.	Yes
Ha3 – Individuals from various ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factor satisfaction levels.	Yes

5.7 DISCUSSION

In this section, the biographical profile of the sample is discussed, including the terms of the tested hypotheses.

5.7.1 Biographical profile of the sample

Participants in the sample were predominantly postgraduate African female staff aged between 31 and 45 years, within the establishment career stage (Super, 1980), who held administrative positions and were employed by the University of South Africa.

Table 5.13 shows the highest and lowest mean scores for the three measuring instruments.

Table 5.13: *Summary of mean scores for the three measuring instruments*

	EAS	OCQ	RFS
Highest mean score	Self-efficacy (4.77)	Continuance commitment (4.99)	Organisational commitment (4.66)
Lowest mean score	Sociability (4.19)	Normative commitment (4.56)	Work/life balance (3.46)

The participants scored very high on self-efficacy, suggesting that these individuals recognise their own contribution towards their career success. These findings are supported by Botha (2014), Potgieter (2013) and Stoltz (2014), who also found self-efficacy to hold the highest mean. According to Bezuidenhout (2010), self-efficacy is an individual's awareness of the difficulty of the career tasks or challenges that they may be faced with in the workplace. Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are able to function independently, make their own decisions and achieve their career goals with confidence (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010). Many scholars are of the opinion that organisations in the 21st century world of work recruit and source employees who can actively manage their own careers (Benson, 2006; Kyndt et al., 2009; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011; Van der Heijden, 2002).

The participants scored very low on sociability, indicating that sociability is their weakest attribute. Bezuidenhout (2010) has defined sociability as openness to establishing and maintaining social contracts and using formal and informal networks to advance in a career. Botha (2014) adds that a low level of confidence in sociability capabilities may be a concern for organisations in the 21st century world of work, where employees are expected to be team players and have networking skills.

With regard to organisational commitment, the participants scored very high on continuance commitment, suggesting that the participants were focused more on the costs, consequences and risks associated with leaving the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1993) describe employees with strong continuance commitment as those employees who are afraid of losing the benefits and advantages their current organisation offers. Ferreira (2012) suggests that high levels of continuance commitment imply that the participants remain with the current organisation because they feel the economic cost would be too high for them to leave and look for alternative jobs. The high score on affective commitment suggests that some of the participants remain with the organisation because they feel emotionally attached to the organisation.

The lowest mean score on the OCQ scale was for normative commitment, suggesting that very few participants felt obligated towards their organisation. The lower scores on normative commitment in this study compares well with the findings reported by Ferreira (2010; 2012) and Ferreira et al. (2010). The findings of the present study suggest that the participants also show a less strong sense of obligation towards their employer.

The participants scored high on organisational commitment, suggesting that they were willing to remain with the organisation. Stoltz's (2014) findings also indicated organisational commitment to be high among participants. Organisational commitment has been defined as psychological attachment to an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday et al., 1979; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). The high score on organisational commitment suggests that the participants have a high intention to remain with the organisation (Stoltz, 2014).

The lowest mean score on the RFS was work/life balance, implying that the individuals were slightly dissatisfied with the work/life balance offered by their organisation.

5.7.2 Relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

The results provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

Correlational analysis was used to describe the relationship between the various constructs and subscales.

5.7.2.1 Interpretation of correlations between employability attributes and organisational commitment

According to the results (Table 5.2), significant associations were found between employability attributes and organisational commitment. DeCuyper (2011), Kalyal et al. (2010), Ling et al. (2014) and Potgieter et al. (2016) similarly found a positive relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment. The findings also suggest that participants with high affective and normative commitment are likely to have a higher level of confidence in their career self-management, cultural competence, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity. This is in line with the findings of Kalyal et al. (2010), who also identified a positive relationship between affective commitment and employability attributes and normative commitment and employability attributes. It is interesting, however, that the current study found no significant relationships between affective commitment and self-efficacy, affective commitment and emotional literacy, normative commitment and self-efficacy, normative commitment and proactivity and normative commitment and emotional literacy.

The positive association between affective commitment and employability sociability implies that participants are also likely to be highly sociable, that is build friendships in their organisation and utilise these friendships to progress in their careers. The relationship might exist due to the fact that the participants have a sense of belonging with the organisation and therefore feel more confident to socialise with others.

The positive association between normative commitment and sociability implies that participants who felt obliged to remain with an organisation were also likely to form and build friendships with their colleagues. These employees may view their obligation to the organisation as an opportunity to progress in their careers and therefore use a network of friends to support this opportunity.

Continuance commitment revealed an inverse relationship with several employability attribute variables. These findings suggest that participants with high continuance commitment are also likely to have a lower level of confidence in their career self-management, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity. This implies that participants with high levels of employability attributes remain in a job willingly rather than out of fear of lacking alternative job opportunities. However, it is interesting that no significant relationships were found between continuance commitment and cultural competence and continuance commitment and emotional literacy. These findings are in line with those of Kalyal et al. (2010), who also found a negative relationship between continuance commitment and employability attributes.

The above findings are in line with Benson (2006), De Cuyper et al. (2011), Fugate et al. (2004), Kalyal et al. (2010), Ling et al. (2014) and Potgieter et al. (2016), who all found that individuals with higher levels of organisational commitment (affective commitment and normative commitment) are more able to demonstrate higher levels of employability attributes.

5.7.2.2 Interpretation of correlations between employability attributes and retention factors

According to the results (Table 5.3), significant associations were found between employability attributes and satisfaction with retention factors. Similarly, Coetzee et al. (2015) and Ling et al. (2014) found a positive relationship between employability attributes and satisfaction with retention factors. The findings also suggest that participants with high career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability,

entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity are more satisfied with their job characteristics, career opportunities and work/life balance.

The positive association between employability attributes and satisfaction with retention factors implies that participants who have high levels of employability attributes are more satisfied with their retention factors. Participants who were offered training to enhance their employability skills felt committed to the organisation, developed a sense of belonging and were likely to remain working for that organisation (Ling et al., 2014). Coetzee et al. (2015) identified career-self management, proactivity and emotional literacy as psychosocial employability attributes that influence an individual's satisfaction with certain retention factors.

These findings are in line with Benson (2006), Fugate et al. (2004), Kalyal et al. (2010), Ling et al. (2014) and Potgieter et al. (2016), who also found that individuals with higher levels of employability attributes are more satisfied with their retention factors. These findings differ from those of De Cuyper et al. (2011), who found that, as employability attributes decrease, satisfaction with retention factors increases. De Cuyper et al. (2011) support their findings by mentioning that employees with low levels of employability are less likely to leave an organisation, as they fear they may experience difficulty in finding a new job.

5.7.2.3 Interpretation of correlations between organisational commitment and retention factors

According to the results (Table 5.4), significant associations were found between organisational commitment and satisfaction with retention factors. Döckel et al. (2006), Pauw (2011) and Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) similarly found a positive relationship between organisational commitment and satisfaction with retention factors. These findings suggest that participants with high affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment are likely to feel more satisfied about their compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and organisational commitment.

The positive association between organisational commitment and satisfaction with retention factors implies that participants who feel committed to their organisations are also likely to be highly satisfied with the various retention factors. This suggests that participants with high levels of commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitment) are more satisfied with their organisation's retention factors (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

These findings are in line with the findings of Coetzee and Stoltz (2015), Döckel et al. (2006), Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) Pauw (2011) and Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016), who also identified a positive relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors. Participants with high levels of levels of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) felt more committed to their organisation due to the retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and organisational commitment) in place.

5.7.2.4 Interpretation of correlations between biographical variables, employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

According to the results (Table 5.2), significant negative associations were found between ethnicity and all the employability attributes. These findings suggest an inverse relationship between ethnicity and all the employability attributes. A significant negative association was found between gender and career self-management, indicating that possible significant differences exist between gender and employability attributes. A significant positive relationship was found between job category and cultural competence and gender and entrepreneurial orientation, indicating a positive relationship between job category and employability attributes. A significant negative association was found between qualification level and cultural competence and qualification level and emotional literacy, indicating that possible significant differences exist between qualification level and employability attributes.

According to the results (Table 5.3), significant negative and positive associations were found between ethnicity and organisational commitment. These findings suggest that possible significant differences exist between ethnicity and affective commitment and ethnicity and normative commitment, and that a positive relationship exists between ethnicity and continuance commitment. A significant negative association was found between qualification level and continuance commitment, indicating that possible significant differences exist between qualification level and continuance commitment.

According to the results (Table 5.4), significant negative associations were found between ethnicity and job characteristics and ethnicity and organisational commitment. These findings suggest that possible significant differences exist between ethnicity and retention factors. Significant negative and positive associations were found between age and retention factors. These findings suggest that there are no significant differences between age and job

characteristics and age and organisational commitment, and that possible significant differences exist between age and career opportunities. Significant negative and positive associations were found between job category and retention factors. These findings suggest that there are no significant differences between job category and compensation and job category and work/life balance, and that there are possible significant differences between job category and career opportunities and job category and organisational commitment. Significant negative and positive associations were found between qualification level and retention factors. These findings suggest no significant differences exist between qualification level and job characteristics, qualification level and training and development opportunities, and qualification level and career opportunities, and that there are possible significant differences between qualification level and work/life balance.

5.7.3 Employability attributes and organisational commitment as predictors of satisfaction with retention factors

The results provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha2: The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.

The results reported in Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 show that career self-management and organisational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) significantly predict satisfaction with compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, career opportunities, and organisational commitment. In addition, career self-management and sociability significantly predict satisfaction with career opportunities. The findings support the findings of previous researchers on the employability attributes that drive the retention of valuable staff. Stoltz (2014) also identified career self-management as a strong factor that contributed towards employee's satisfaction with retention factors. Stoltz (2014) further identified proactivity as another factor that contributed towards employee's satisfaction with retention factors. Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) found that employees who experience high levels of skill variety, autonomy and challenging work are more satisfied with their jobs, which contributes towards their retention.

Bezuidenhout (2010) describes career self-management as an individual's ability to have clear career objectives and to recognise the skills needed to attain career goals. The results indicate that participants who are aware of their career goals are more satisfied with the internal and external career opportunities they perceive. Joao and Coetzee (2011), Masibigiri

and Nienaber (2011) and Stoltz (2014) found that career opportunities and growth were significant factors that increased an individual's level of affective commitment to an organisation, thus reducing his/her intention to leave the organisation.

The study therefore confirms that employees who take responsibility for achieving their own career goals and manage their own action plans experience greater career opportunities, which has important implications for retention. The study furthermore confirms that employees who are committed to their organisations are unlikely to leave their organisations.

5.7.4 Differences between biographical groups

The results provide partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha3: Individuals from various ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factor satisfaction levels

5.7.4.1 Ethnicity

The majority of the research participants were black (African, Indian and coloured). In terms of ethnicity, various differences were identified for employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The black (African, Indian and coloured) participants showed greater confidence than other ethnic groups on several EAS variables, namely career self-management, cultural competence, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. The greater confidence displayed by the black (African, Indian and coloured) employees regarding their employability might be as a result of the influence of legislation governing employment in South Africa, such as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Act, which aims to advance those from previously disadvantaged groups (Beukes, 2010; Harvey, 2001; Stoltz, 2014).

The black (African, Indian and coloured) participants showed greater confidence in comparison with the other ethnic groups regarding affective commitment and normative commitment. White participants showed higher levels of continuance commitment than black participants. These findings suggest that white participants consider the benefits and costs associated with leaving their organisation. Coetzee et al. (2011) found no significant differences between the organisational commitment levels of different ethnic groups.

The black participants (African, Indian and coloured) were more satisfied with their career opportunities than their white counterparts. This is in congruence with findings by Joao and Coetzee (2012) and Stoltz (2014), who found that African participants more than any other racial group consider career opportunities to be important. Joao and Coetzee (2012) add that employment legislation within South Africa allows black professionals increased career opportunities. The white participants were more satisfied with their organisational commitment.

5.7.4.2 Gender

The majority of the research participants were female. In terms of ethnicity, various differences were identified regarding employability attributes. The male participants showed greater confidence than the females in their level of proactivity. This is in agreement with the findings of Potgieter (2012), who found males to be better at managing their careers than females.

5.7.4.3 Age

The majority of the research participants were aged between 31 and 45 years. In terms of age, differences were identified for employability attributes and retention factors. Participants younger than 35 years old showed greater confidence in their level of career opportunities. The findings are consistent with other researchers, who found that younger employees want job mobility, task variety and career opportunities that enable them to improve their skills (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008; Govaerts et al., 2011; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Stoltz, 2014).

Participants older than 35 years showed greater confidence in their level of proactivity, implying that older employees are more proactive, manage their careers and rely less on their organisation to do so.

5.7.4.4 Job category

The majority of the research participants were administrative and managerial staff. In terms of job category, several differences were identified in relation to retention factors. Academic staff showed greater confidence in training and development opportunities, career opportunities and organisational commitment.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics relevant to the study in order to integrate the findings of Chapter 3 (literature review) with the findings of the empirical study that was conducted. Chapter 5 thus addressed the following research aims:

Research aim 1: To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of staff employed at the University of South Africa.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the employability attributes and retention factors as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables.

Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level).

Thus the empirical aims of the study were achieved. Chapter 6 will conclude the empirical study by addressing the following research aim:

Research aim 4: To draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention and possible future research based on the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research study. The chapter addresses research aim 4, namely to draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention and possible future research based on the findings of the research.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This section focuses on the conclusions drawn from the literature and empirical studies in accordance with the aims of the research as set out in Chapter 1.

6.1.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

The general aim was to explore the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors and to identify the implications of the relationship dynamics for human resource management practices regarding retention practices in the 21st century world of work. The general aims were achieved by addressing and achieving the specific aims of the research.

Conclusions were drawn in terms of each of the specific aims regarding the relationship dynamics between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work.

6.1.1.1 Research aim 1: To conceptualise careers and the retention of staff in the 21st century workplace.

The first aim, namely to conceptualise careers and the retention of staff in the 21st century workplace, was achieved in Chapter 2.

(a) Conclusions relating to the evolution of careers in the 21st century workplace

The literature indicates that the 21st century workplace is dynamic and constantly changing, and thus individuals must act as career agents to proactively manage these changes. This suggests that individuals must develop skills and attributes that allow them to embrace the changes and not let these changes negatively affect their careers (Briscoe et al., 2012; Enache et al., 2013). Potgieter (2013) adds that employers no longer require only technical

skills from individuals, but also expect individuals to develop career meta-competencies that will enhance their ability to find and sustain employment.

The 21st century workplace is characterised by decreased employment opportunities, reduced job security, continuous introduction of technology, globalisation, opportunities and demands for flexible working arrangements and diversity (Amundson, 2006; Baruch, 2006, 2013; Burke & Ng, 2006; Coetzee, 2008; Savickas, 2012), and thus individuals are expected to learn and develop coping skills to make sure they are adaptable to the changes with which they will be faced. These individuals must also develop a set of skills that enable them to keep up to date with the latest developments in their field of work so that they become more employable.

Individuals in the 21st century workplace adapt new careers, boundaryless careers and protean careers (Baruch, 2006; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Chudzikowski, 2012; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994). This suggests that these individuals may face several career transitions, are more adaptable and flexible, are self-directed and choose to manage their own career rather than relying on the organisations to manage it for them. Individuals accept the challenges offered by the 21st century workplace and develop employability skills that enable them to take an active role in managing their careers (Agba et al., 2010; Benson, 2006; De Vos & Segers, 2013).

(b) Conclusions relating to the retention of staff

The literature indicates that the changing nature of work in the 21st century world of work has led to retention becoming a key challenge for organisations (Baruch, 2013; Hausknecht et al., 2009; Klehe et al., 2011). Individuals in the 21st century workplace are taking over management of their own careers, and these individuals are not afraid to change jobs frequently when opportunities arise. These individuals want to progress in their careers and are not loyal to their organisations, therefore making it very difficult for employers to retain key employees.

Organisations must work on developing retention practices to ensure that employees will not leave the organisation for a competitor. Compensation, autonomy, flexibility, safe working environments and learning and development are some of the factors employees look at when deciding to leave an organisation.

6.1.1.2 Research aim 2: To conceptualise the three constructs, namely employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, from a theoretical perspective.

The second aim, namely to conceptualise the three constructs – employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors – from a theoretical perspective, was achieved in Chapter 3.

(a) Conclusions relating to employability attributes

The literature provides many definitions of employability attributes, all emphasising an individual's ability to gain skills that enable him/her to secure employment. Clarke (2008b) defines employability as an individual's ability to find a job, retain the job and easily move on to find a new job if the need arises. Employability is therefore the capability of an individual to obtain different kinds of employment and explore the job market.

For the purposes of this study, employability was defined as a psychosocial construct that refers to the potential of an individual to gain skills and attributes that he/she may use to open up career opportunities for development and movement. Employability provides an individual with security, flexibility, mobility, skills and competencies that can be used for career progression.

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) model of employability attributes (EAS) was applicable to this study as it is the only known instrument for adults developed and tested in the South African context. Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) EAS model consists of eight career-related attributes that enhance an individual's suitability for sustained employment opportunities (Potgieter, 2013). These eight attributes are career self-management, career resilience, sociability, self-efficacy, cultural competence, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy.

An individual's employability attributes differ as a result of certain variables. The key variables of importance in this research are:

- Ethnicity (Beukes, 2010; Kraak, 2005; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Potgieter, 2013)
- Gender (Afrassa, 2001; Clarke, 2008a; Harvey, 2001; Potgieter, 2013)
- Age (Beukes, 2010; Clarke, 2008a; DeArmond et al., 2006; Potgieter, 2013; Van der Heijden et al., 2009)

- Job category (Nienaber et al., 2011; Potgieter, 2012; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Sanders & De Grip, 2004; Stoltz, 2014; Van der Heijden et al., 2009)
- Qualification level (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van Der Heijden et al., 2009)

(b) Conclusions relating to organisational commitment

The literature shows many definitions of organisational commitment, all emphasising an individual's attachment to an organisation. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) define organisational commitment as an individual's psychological attachment to an organisation and the extent to which the individual internalises and adopts characteristics of the organisation. Organisational commitment is thus an individual's willingness to remain with an organisation as long as it fulfils his/her needs.

For the purposes of this study, organisational commitment was defined as the psychological attachment or binding an individual has to an organisation. Employees remain with an organisation for three reasons: they want to do so as they have an emotional attachment to the organisation (affective commitment), they need to do so due to the benefits and rewards offered to them (continuance commitment), or they feel obliged to do so (normative commitment).

Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) was applicable to this study as it is a valid and reliable measure of the three-component structure of organisational commitment in the South African context. Meyer and Allen's OCQ consists of three commitment components, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

An individual's level of organisational commitment differs as a result of certain variables. The key variables of importance in this research are:

- Ethnicity (Coetzee, 2011; Ferreira, 2012)
- Gender (Coetzee et al., 2011; Scadura & Lankau, 1997)
- Age (Ferreira, 2012; Joao & Coetzee, 2011; Knights & Kennedy, 2005; Lok & Crawford, 2003)
- Job category (Clinton-Baker, 2013; Ferreira, 2012; Van Dyk, 2012)
- Qualification level (Rose, 2005)

(c) Conclusions relating to retention factors

The literature provides definitions of retention factors, all emphasising factors that influence an individual's decision to stay with or leave his/her organisation. For the purposes of this study, retention factors were defined as the factors offered by an organisation that are valued by individuals and encourage them to remain with the organisation for a period of time. Organisations that fail to accommodate these retention factors for their employees are likely to lose valuable employees to competing firms.

Döckel's (2003) Retention Factor Scale (RFS) was applicable to this study as it is the only known instrument for adults developed and tested in the South African context. Döckel's (2003) RFS identifies six critical factors. These factors are relevant to this study and are compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies.

Retention factors differ as a result of certain variables. The key variables of importance in this research are:

- Ethnicity (Coetzee et al., 2011; Joao & Coetzee, 2011; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012)
- Gender (Coetzee et al., 2011)
- Age (Govaerts et al., 2011; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011; Ramlall, 2003)
- Job category (Nienaber et al., 2011; Stoltz, 2014; Van Dyk, 2012)
- Qualification level (Archer & Chetty, 2013)

6.1.1.3 Research aim 3: To identify and explain the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of explanatory theoretical models

The third aim, namely to identify and explain the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of explanatory theoretical model, was achieved in Chapter 3.

It was evident from the literature that there is a theoretical relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Benson (2006), De Cuyper et al. (2011) and Ling et al. (2014) found a positive relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment. De Cuyper et al.'s (2011) findings indicate that organisations that offer training to develop employability may enhance the commitment of

their staff. Kalyal et al. (2010) found a positive relationship between employability attributes and affective commitment, as well as between employability attributes and normative commitment. This implies that individuals with high levels of employability feel emotionally attached to their organisations and have a strong psychological relationship with their organisation and/or employer. Kalyal et al.'s (2010) findings, however, indicate a negative relationship between employability attributes and continuance commitment, which implies that individuals with high levels of employability remain in a job willingly.

De Cuyper et al. (2011) and Sullivan (1999) propose an indirect relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment. They believe that employees only remain with an organisation when they feel they lack access to alternate opportunities because they do not have the skills needed for those jobs. Ling et al. (2014) contest these findings and suggest a positive relationship between employability attributes and retention factors. According to Ling et al. (2014), employees who are offered training to enhance their employability skills are likely to remain working for that organisation.

Ghosh et al. (2013), Meyer and Allen (1990), Iles et al. (1996), Döckel et al. (2006), Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) and Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) have identified a positive relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors. This thus confirms that employees who feel affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment are likely to remain with their organisation. High retention factors will lead to higher affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Döckel et al., 2006).

6.1.1.4 Research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level) on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

The fourth aim, namely to conceptualise the effect of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level) on the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, was achieved in Chapter 3.

The literature indicates that ethnicity has an effect on employability, as white graduates report higher employability than black graduates (Kraak, 2005). Regarding the effect of ethnicity and organisational commitment, Coetzee et al. (2011) and Ferreira et al. (2010) report that culture has no effect on an employee's level of commitment to the organisation. The literature further indicates that ethnicity has an effect on retention factors, as African and

coloured respondents reported high levels of turnover as they were unsatisfied with the retention factors offered by the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2011; Van Dyk, 2012)

The literature indicates that gender has an effect on employability, since males have been found to be more employable than females (Afrassa, 2001; Potgieter, 2012). Men were found to be better at career management than females (Potgieter, 2012). Regarding the effect of gender on organisational commitment, it was found that females are less committed to their organisations than males (Clarke, 2008a). Scadura and Lankau (1997) add that females who are offered more flexibility in their jobs report higher commitment levels. Aven et al. (1993) and Coetzee et al. (2011) found that gender does not have any effect on organisational commitment. Regarding the effect of gender on retention factors, the research clearly indicates that females value retention factors more than males (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008; Govaerts et al., 2011).

The literature shows that age has an effect on employability in that younger employees have higher levels of employability than older employees (Beukes, 2010; Clarke, 2008a; DeArmond et al., 2006; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden, 2002). It appears that older employees have a lower desire to learn new skills and, at the same time, organisations discriminate against older workers with regard to opportunities for employability. Regarding the effect of age on organisational commitment, many researchers believe that older employees are more committed to their organisation than younger employees (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Ferreira et al., 2010; Joao & Coetzee, 2011; Knights & Kennedy, 2005; Lok & Crawford, 2003). Older employees have fewer job opportunities and are thus more committed to their current organisations (Joao & Coetzee, 2011). The literature also indicates that age has an effect on retention factors. Coetzee and Schreuder (2008), De Cuyper et al. (2011), Govaerts et al. (2011), Ramlall (2003) and Van Dyk (2012) found that older employees are likely to remain working for an organisation until they are due to retire.

6.1.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical study

The general aim of the study was to carry out four principle tasks:

- (1) To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of

staff employed at the University of South Africa. This was achieved by empirically testing Ha1.

- (2) To empirically investigate whether the employability attributes and retention factors as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables. This was achieved by empirically testing Ha2.
- (3) To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level). This was achieved by empirically testing Ha3.
- (4) To draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention and possible future research based on the findings of this study

The statistical results provide supportive evidence for the research hypothesis and were reported in Chapter 5. The findings in term of the research aims that merit discussion will be presented as conclusions in the following sections.

6.1.2.1 Research aim 1: To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in a sample of staff employed at the University of South Africa.

The results provide supportive evidence for Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

- a) To empirically investigate the relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment

The results show a significant positive relationship between employability attributes and organisational commitment. Individuals with a high level of employability attributes are more attached to their organisations. Individuals with a low level of employability were found to be less attached to their organisations. Employers in the 21st century world of work require their employees to have skills and attributes to deal with workplace challenges, as well as employees who are committed to the organisation.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Individuals who have an emotional attachment (affective commitment) or obligated attachment (normative commitment) to their organisations reported high levels of sociability. These individuals are confident to form and maintain friendships in their workplace, network with their colleagues to open up career opportunities and take risks in their careers because they feel attached to their organisation. The emotional attachment allows for them to build trust and form meaningful relationships with their colleagues as they feel secure in their jobs. The obligated attachment that the individuals have also encourages them to build these friendships as a means of support for them.

Individuals who have continuance commitment to their organisations remain with an organisation because they need to. These individuals reported low levels of career self-management, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity. This may imply that these individuals only work for the organisation to fulfil their needs and that they are not satisfied. These individuals do not have the skills to leave their organisation and look for alternatives, which is the primary reason for their commitment to the organisation.

b) To empirically investigate the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors

The results found a significant, positive relationship between employability attributes and retention factors. Individuals who work for organisations with adequate retention factors display higher levels of employability attributes. Individuals who work for organisations with inadequate retention factors have low levels of employability attributes. Organisations must provide adequate retention factors to attract and retain skilled employees.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Individuals pursuing career opportunities report high career self-management, sociability and entrepreneurial orientation. These individuals take management of their own careers, build networks to support career progression, open up more opportunities and are willing to take risks to pursue these opportunities.

- c) To empirically investigate the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors

The results found a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors. Individuals who work for organisations with adequate retention factors feel more attached to their organisations. Individuals who work for organisations with inadequate retention factors are found to be less attached to their organisations. Organisations must provide adequate retention factors to retain a committed workforce.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Individuals develop an emotional attachment to the organisation when they are satisfied with the retention factors provided by the organisation. The salary, learning opportunities, recognition and feedback, promotion opportunities and flexibility provided by the organisation will influence an employee's emotional attachment to the organisation. Organisations must provide their employees with adequate retention factors to help build an emotional connection with their employees.

Individuals develop an obligation to the organisation when they are satisfied with the retention factors provided by the organisation. Individuals feel obligated to the organisation when their needs are well looked after.

- d) To empirically investigate the relationship between the biographical variables (ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level), employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors

Regarding ethnicity, the results found several negative associations between ethnicity and employability attributes, ethnicity and affective commitment, ethnicity and normative commitment and ethnicity and retention factors. A positive association was found between ethnicity and continuance commitment.

Regarding gender, the results show several negative associations between gender and employability attributes. No associations were found between gender and organisational commitment and gender and retention factors.

In terms of age, a negative association was found between age and career opportunities. Two positive associations were found – between age and job characteristics and age and organisational commitment.

Regarding job category, several positive associations were found between job category and employability attributes, job category and compensation and job category and work/life balance. Negative associations were found between job category and career opportunities and job category and organisational commitment.

Regarding qualification level, several negative associations were found between qualification level and employability attributes, qualification level and continuance commitment and qualification level and work/life balance. Positive associations were found between qualification level and job characteristics, qualification level and training and development opportunities, and qualification level and career opportunities.

6.1.2.2 Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the employability attributes and retention factors as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors as a composite set of dependent variables.

The results provide supportive evidence for Ha2: The employability attributes and organisational commitment as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variables as a composite set of dependent variables.

The empirical study revealed that career self-management and organisational commitment contribute significantly to explaining satisfaction with retention factors.

6.1.2.3 Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level).

The results provide partial supportive evidence for Ha3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in terms of biographical variables (ethnicity, age, gender, job category and qualification level).

The following conclusions were drawn:

- a) Employees from different ethnic groups tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.
- Based on the findings, it was concluded that black participants showed greater confidence in their employability attributes than their white counterparts.

- From the results it is also evident that the blacks participants have higher levels of affective and normative commitment than their white counterparts.
 - It was concluded that the black participants seemed to be more satisfied with their career opportunities than their white counterparts, while the white participants also portrayed higher levels of commitment towards the organisation.
- b) Males and females tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes.
- It was concluded that the male participants reported higher levels of proactivity than the females, indicating that males are more proactive in the management of their careers.
- c) Employees from different age groups tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes and retention factors.
- Based on the findings, it was concluded that the younger participants (< 35 years) came across as being more proactive in the management of their careers than their older counterparts (> 36 years).
 - It was concluded that the younger participants (< 35 years) seemed to be more satisfied with career opportunities than their older counterparts (> 36 years).
- d) Employees from different job categories tend to differ significantly regarding their retention factors.
- Based on the findings, it was concluded that the academic staff reported higher satisfaction with training and development opportunities, career opportunities and organisational commitment than the administrative and managerial staff.

6.1.3 Conclusions relating to the central hypothesis

The empirical results provided evidence in support of the central hypothesis, namely that a relationship exists between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Furthermore, people from different ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level differ significantly in terms of their employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The empirical study provided statistically significant evidence to support the central hypothesis regarding the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

6.1.4 Conclusions relating to the contributions to the field of human resource management

The findings of the literature review and empirical results contribute to the field of human resource management. The literature provided insights into the various concepts and theoretical models that promote employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. The results show the importance of developing career-self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, an entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional intelligence, together with affective, continuance and normative commitment, to increase an employee's satisfaction with compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies. The literature review further explained the way in which an individual's employability attributes and organisational commitment relate to his/her satisfaction with organisational retention factors. The findings of the empirical study contribute new knowledge to the relationship dynamics between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Furthermore, these findings can be used by practitioners to enhance the employability attributes and organisational commitment of individuals, which will in turn improve employees' satisfaction with organisational retention factors and may result in the possible future retention of valuable staff.

6.2 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the literature review and empirical study are discussed in this section.

6.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

The following limitations were encountered in the literature review:

The exploratory research with respect to employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors within the South African context was limited by the following:

- The research literature was limited to only three constructs (employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors) that are available currently.
- Limitations were experienced with regard to the influence of biographical variables, such as ethnicity, gender, age, job category and qualification level, on all three constructs.

- By using Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) Employability Attributes Scale, the study was limited to the following attributes: career self-management, cultural competence, career resilience, self-efficacy, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation proactivity and emotional literacy.
- Similarly, by using Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire, the study was limited to the following forms of commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.
- The Retention Factor Scale of Döckel (2003) limited the study to the following factors: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies.
- Although there is broad research on employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors, few studies have focused specifically on the relationship of these constructs in the context of the 21st century world of work in a single study.

6.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

In terms of the empirical study, the following limitations were encountered:

- The findings of the study cannot be generalised to the overall population due to the relatively small sample (N = 311) utilised for this study. The sample therefore might have affected the power of the outcome of the study.
- In view of the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the associations between the variables have been interpreted in an exploratory manner rather than being established. In addition, the potential risk of common method bias should be considered because of the self-report methodology that was used. Nevertheless, acceptable internal consistency reliabilities were reported for the two measuring instruments.
- The sample consisted predominantly of African participants and women (therefore men and white people are underrepresented) and thus the findings cannot be generalised to other gender and race groups.
- Data was collected only from participants employed by one higher education institution, therefore underrepresenting staff employed at other higher education institutions.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions and limitations of this study, recommendations for human resource management and further research in the field are highlighted below.

6.3.1 Recommendations for the field of human resource management

The main aim was to explore the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors and, based on the findings, to make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention in the 21st century world of work.

The empirical study confirmed the significant relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should engage in interventions to increase an individual's employability attributes, especially career self-management skills. By doing so, they will allow employees to develop skills and coping mechanisms to deal with the challenges and changes they may encounter in the 21st century workplace. By developing employability, these individuals will also feel more committed to their organisations. Individuals should be able to sustain their employability attributes through continuous learning and development, adapt to changing circumstances, be open to establish and maintain social contracts, take risks and be proactive in managing their careers. It therefore is recommended that organisations should increase the employability attributes of valuable employees and provide employees with career development plans to increase their levels of personal attributes. Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should also use the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) to assist individuals to identify their career meta-competencies that can affect their employability attributes and their potential to obtain suitable employment opportunities.

Employees may experience an emotional attachment to the organisation when their abilities and values match those of the work environment. A supportive organisational environment that the employee finds encouraging, as well as the support that the employee receives within the organisation regarding career development, might lead to proactive and affective career development and the management thereof. This might increase the employee's level of organisational commitment. Furthermore, if organisations invest in positive psychological contracts with their employees, this may result in employees who are much more committed and motivated. However, if these psychological contracts are neglected, the employees might experience reduced levels of commitment and their intention to leave the organisation might become a lot stronger. It can be recommended that organisations must have a good commitment strategy in place, which will enable the employees to remain committed to the organisation. Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should also use the

Organisational Commitment Questionnaire to assist individuals to identify the factors influencing their commitment to an organisation, as this will provide the organisation with valuable information and strategies for improvement.

In addition, retention factors should be increased. Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should make employees feel secure in their jobs by providing them with adequate retention factors. Organisations should endeavour to retain valuable staff by offering career development to their employees. In doing so, human resource practitioners and career counsellors can make sure they retain a committed workforce. Organisations should have a process for encouraging, planning and investing in their employees to make sure they remain with the organisation. By doing so, the organisation will indicate that they are committed to establishing a long-term relationship with their employees and care about fulfilling their needs. Employees value compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies, and therefore it is recommended that human resource practitioners and career counsellors should aim at providing these factors to their employees to make sure they remain with the organisation. In order to create a working environment that encourages individuals to remain with their respective organisations, managers need to pay fair wages, provide challenging and meaningful work tasks and foster positive co-worker relationships through social interactions and group dynamics. Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should also use the Retention Factor Scale to assist individuals to identify the factors influencing their retention and commitment to an organisation, as this will provide the organisation with valuable information and strategies for improvement.

6.3.2 Recommendations for further research

To enhance the probability of generalising the findings of the study to other sample group, further research should focus on acquiring a larger and more representative sample. This study was limited in the choice of the sample. The sample could be extended in terms of the representation of biographical variables, which will provide better representation of different levels of employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

There is also a need for more research on employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the South African context. Further studies will be valuable to human resource practitioners and career counsellors in order for them to identify implications for retention of staff in the 21st century world of work.

6.4 INTEGRATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research study investigated the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors in the 21st century world of work. The research results have established that employability attributes and retention factors significantly predict satisfaction with retention factors.

The literature review implied, but did not confirm, a relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. However, the empirical results of the study proved existence in support of the significant relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors.

In conclusion, the findings of this research study provide some insights into the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. This may be useful to human resource probationers and career counsellors who wish to improve the retention of their staff.

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the conclusions of the research study in terms of the theoretical and empirical objectives. The limitations of the study were discussed, followed by recommendations for further research investigating the relationship between employability attributes, organisational commitment and retention factors. Finally, the chapter integrated the results of this study.

Herewith research aim 4 (to draw conclusions and make recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management regarding retention and possible future research based on the findings of the research) has been achieved.

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