

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK PERFORMANCE AND SENSE OF
COHERENCE**

by

ELIAS MOCHABO MOERANE

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject of

INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR SE VOSLOO

NOVEMBER 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks and praise to the holy trinity, Almighty God our heavenly father, Lord Jesus Christ, through Him you have created everything from the beginning, and the Holy Spirit the giver of life.

I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people for their guidance and support in completing this dissertation:

Dr Salome Vosloo, for her supervision, guidance and encouragement.

Dr Cas Coetzee, for his supervision and assistance with the statistical analysis.

My wife, Penny and daughter Pelonolo for their emotional support.

To my father, Elliot Moerane, my brothers Jacob and Thomas for their support and confidence in me.

To all respondents, without whose cooperation this research would not have been possible.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation, "The relationship between work performance and sense of coherence" is my own work, and that all the sources I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

Signature

Mochabo Moerane

Student no.: 559-302-6

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
List of figures	vii
List of tables	viii
Summary	x
Key terms	x
CHAPTER 1 SCIENTIFIC REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH	4
1.3.1 General aim	4
1.3.2 Theoretical aims	4
1.3.3 Empirical aims	5
1.4 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH	5
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN	9
1.6 RESEARCH METHOD	10
1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION	13
1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY	13
CHAPTER 2 SENSE OF COHERENCE	14
2.1 CONCEPTUALISATION OF SENSE OF COHERENCE	14
2.2 DIMENSIONS OF SENSE OF COHERENCE	15
2.2.1 Comprehensibility	15
2.2.2 Manageability	15
2.2.3 Meaningfulness	16
2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF COHERENCE	17
2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY	21

CHAPTER 3 WORK PERFORMANCE	22
3.1 CONCEPTUALISATION OF WORK PERFORMANCE	22
3.2 THE PURPOSE OF WORK PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS	23
3.2.1 Problems with poor assessments of work performance	27
3.2.2 Critical success factors	28
3.2.3 Methods of work performance assessments	30
3.3 DYNAMICS OF WORK PERFORMANCE	37
3.4 WORK PERFORMANCE AND BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS	39
3.4.1 Age	39
3.4.2 Marital status	40
3.4.3 Gender	40
3.4.4 Tenure	41
3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY	41
INTEGRATION OF LITERATURE STUDY	42
CHAPTER 4 EMPIRICAL STUDY	46
4.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE	46
4.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS	47
4.2.1 Quality of Life Questionnaire (QOL)	47
4.2.2 Job evaluation manager (JE Manager)	53
4.2.3 Biographical characteristics	60
4.3 DATA GATHERING	60
4.4 DATA PROCESSING	61
4.4.1 Descriptive statistics	61
4.4.2 One-way analysis of variance	61
4.4.3 Factor analysis of variance	62
4.4.4 Reliability analysis of the QOL questionnaire	63
4.4.5 Pearson correlation coefficient	64
4.4.6 Level of statistical significance	64

4.5	CHAPTER SUMMARY	64
	CHAPTER 5 RESULTS	66
5.1	BIOGRAPHICAL DATA	66
5.2	THE OVERALL WORK PERFORMANCE RATING OF RESPONDENTS	70
5.3	COMPARISON OF GROUPS BY MEANS OF AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE ON BIOGRAPHICAL DATA	71
5.4	FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS	76
5.5	CORRELATION BETWEEN SOC AND WORK PERFORMANCE	81
5.6	CHAPTER SUMMARY	83
	CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	84
6.1	CONCLUSIONS	84
6.1.1	Age and work performance	86
6.1.2	Marital status and work performance	86
6.1.3	Gender and work performance	86
6.1.4	Level of education and work performance	87
6.1.5	Tenure and work performance	87
6.1.6	Functional departments and work performance	87
6.1.7	Job category and work performance	87
6.1.8	Work performance and SOC	87
6.2	LIMITATIONS	88
6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	88
6.3.1	Recommendations applicable to the organisation	89
6.3.2	Recommendations on future research	89
6.4	CHAPTER SUMMARY	90
	REFERENCES	91

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
FIGURE 1: PLOT OF EIGENVALUES OF THE CORRELATION MATRIX OF ITEMS OF THE SOC ($N=80$)	77

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
Table 5.1	Age distribution of respondents	66
Table 5.2	Marital status distribution of respondents	67
Table 5.3	Gender distribution of respondents	67
Table 5.4	Qualification distribution of respondents	68
Table 5.5	Tenure distribution of respondents	69
Table 5.6	Departmental distribution of respondents	69
Table 5.7	Job category distribution of respondents	70
Table 5.8	Performance rating of respondents	70
Table 5.9	Performance rating and age: analysis of variance	71
Table 5.10	Performance rating and marital status: analysis of variance	72
Table 5.11	Performance rating and gender: analysis of variance	73
Table 5.12	Performance rating and qualifications: analysis of variance	73
Table 5.13	Performance rating and tenure: analysis of variance	74
Table 5.14	Performance rating and departments: analysis of variance	75
Table 5.15	Performance rating and job category: analysis of variance	75

Table 5.16	Single factor solution for quality of life questionnaire	78
Table 5.17	Item-analysis statistics for the SOC scale (N=80)	79
Table 5.18	Descriptive statistics of the SOC scale	80
Table 5.19	Correlation between SOC and work performance	81

SUMMARY

This dissertation investigates the relationship between work performance and the sense of coherence, using the salutogenesis approach and the influence of employees' biographical variables on work performance.

The sense of coherence construct is discussed and conceptualised in terms of its comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Similarly, work performance is discussed and conceptualised in terms of its dimensions and dynamics. The integration of the literature study characteristics such as the cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal characteristics were discussed.

The research was conducted among 80 employees at a banking institution. The quality of life questionnaire and performance appraisal ratings were used. The relationship between biographical variables such as age, marital status, gender, qualifications, tenure, functional department and work performance were investigated. The results confirmed the empirical investigation that there was not a significant relationship between work performance and SOC. However, a significant relationship was found between job category and work performance, and between age and work performance.

Finally, recommendations made for future research included using a bigger sample size in order to improve the generalisation of the findings to other organisational environments, and to further determine the relationship between other aspects of work performance (not just the KPAs) such as the human attributes of work performance and SOC.

KEY TERMS:

Work performance, sense of coherence and employees' biographical variables.