

**ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN A
CONSULTING FIRM**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

Master of Arts

In the subject

Industrial and Organisational Psychology

at the

University of South Africa

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November 2012

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE READER

SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

For this Masters' dissertation of limited scope (50% of the total Masters' degree) the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology prescribes an article format. This format involves four chapters - an introductory and literature chapter, followed by a research article (presented as chapter 3) and ending with a conclusion/limitations/recommendations chapter. For this dissertation, the Department recommends a boundary of approximately 60 to 80 pages.

TECHNICAL AND REFERENCE STYLE

In this dissertation, I have chosen the publication guidelines of the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* to structure my dissertation and article. Therefore, the APA style was followed in terms of the technical editing and referencing.

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DECLARATION

I, Nicole Avril Naik, (Student Number 4319-647-0) declare that **Organisational culture and organisational commitment in a consulting firm** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

(Mrs Nicole Avril Naik)

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my thanks and praise to God, who has blessed me in so many ways.

It is said that no feast comes to the table on its own feet, and the same holds true for a dissertation, therefore I would like to thank

- Prof Sanet van der Westhuizen, my supervisor, for her guidance, encouragement and all she taught me
- Dr Madia Levin, my co-supervisor, for her constant support, guidance and encouragement
- Clinton, my husband, for his unwavering support, encouragement, love and patience
- Mr Andries Masenge, the statistician, for his assistance with the statistical analysis
- The participants of the selected consulting firm, for their time and input
- My dearest family and friends, for their thoughts, prayers and support
- Mrs lauma Cooper, for professionally and critically editing the dissertation

SUMMARY

The general aim of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a consulting firm in South Africa.

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used on a non-probability sample (n=68) from an identified consulting firm in South Africa, utilising the Organisational Culture Questionnaire (Harrison & Stokes, 1992) and Organisational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The results were analysed using Pearson's correlation analysis and indicated that there is no relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in the consulting firm.

Key words: Organisational culture, organisational commitment, existing culture, preferred culture, consulting firm, affective commitment, power culture.

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CHAPTER 1

Orientation to the study

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment within a consulting firm. This chapter describes the background to and motivation for the study, the problem statement, aims, paradigm perspective, research design and methodology as well as the chapter layout.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Organisational culture can be understood as the identity of an organisation, similar to what a personality is to an individual (Singh, 2011; Sudan & Kumar, 2004). Organisational culture is unique to each organisation, and is a complex integration of values, behaviours and norms that are developed by the managers and employees within an organisation (Martins & Martins, 2003). Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2007) define culture as a system of shared meaning held by those who are employed in the organisation that ultimately distinguishes the organisation from other organisations. Schein (2010, p. 18) defines organisational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems”.

The common misconception is that organisational culture cannot be defined. However, in recent years the problem has become that there are so many definitions for organisational culture that it can be confusing (Brenton & Driskill, 2011). Since Deal and Kennedy's (1982) work, many researchers, such as Harrison and Stokes (1992) have explored the concept of organisational culture. Harrison and Stokes (1992) identified four dimensions of organisational culture, namely; power, role, achievement and support. Organisational culture research has also investigated how shared values and norms may affect employees' behaviours; which would also include their commitment to an organisation (Manetje & Martins, 2009). Meyer and Allen's (1997) research contributed to the development of the three-component model of organisational commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Rashid, Sambasivan and Johari (2003) state that culture is an important part of organisational behaviour and could affect the success of an organisation. While shared values and behaviours are important within the organisation, it is also important to make sure that employees are committed to the successful implementation of policies or plans to

ensure the survival and success of the organisation. A strong culture may influence the employees' commitment to the organisation's mission or goals in order to be successful (Dhladhla, 2011; Harrison, 1993). Luthans (2008, p. 147) defines organisational commitment as an attitude with "(1) a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation; (2) a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization".

1.1.1 Organisations in a global and South African context

Organisational culture and organisational commitment need to be understood within the global context, as well as the South African environment. The influence of national culture on organisational culture is sometimes ignored when analysing organisational culture (Brenton & Driskill, 2011). Organisations are faced with challenges such as competition and surviving the current difficult economic conditions. Globalisation has had a significant impact where South African organisations are required to compete not only nationally but within the international market as well in order to ensure success (Wood & Glaister, 2008). The changes within the business environment include technological advances and demanding economic trends that define the global market. With the declining effect of the global economic recession; competition and survival of the fittest has significantly increased (Grdinovac, 2010; Liu, 2010; Prabhu, 2010). As such, many organisations were required to downsize causing pressure, strain, guilt and stress on the remaining employees. These feelings of pressure, strain, guilt and stress due to downsizing are a result of survivor syndrome (Luthans, Vogelgesang & Lester, 2006). The current workplace has become a risky and unstable environment for employees (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2011) and as a result, employees' commitment levels are affected (Morrow, 2011), which in turn is likely to affect the success of the organisation. The global recession has been an effect of globalisation and with an increasing global economy, organisations are not just required to survive the recession, but also to remain competitive and successful throughout this time and create a stable environment (Prabhu, 2010).

According to Schein's (1990; 2010) definition, organisational culture will adapt to coping with the external and internal environments in order to survive the current economic recession. The recession has had a significant effect on organisational commitment due to the changing work practices and patterns (Morrow, 2011). As a result, commitment levels have been lower (Morrow, 2011). Luthans (2008) indicates that employee commitment to the organisation will result in the employee accepting the values and the goals of the organisation and therefore leading to the employee working hard towards the organisation's goals which, in turn, may lead to the success of the organisation (Dhladhla, 2011). According

to Clugston, Howell and Dorfman (2000, p. 22) and Wasti (2003) organisational culture has an effect on organisational commitment, influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. Therefore it would be important to assess the organisation's culture. Employees may be less committed to the organisation due to the recession and related changes, which may result in organisations not surviving the recession. As such it is also important to measure the commitment levels of the organisation, as committed employees will likely be effective and efficient in their work, making sacrifices to achieve the organisation's goals leading to the success of the organisation (Greenberg & Baron, 2003, p. 162).

Martins and Martins (2003, p. 380) state that "organisational culture helps to provide stability to an organisation, the community and South Africa as a nation". This indicates the importance of organisational culture in assisting organisations to deal with multi-cultural workforces. South Africa is dealing with discrepancies from the past and is managing diversity to enable all people in South Africa to have equal opportunities. In managing diversity, major changes are necessary such as changing organisational culture, restructuring organisations and developing managers and employees to work in an organisation that is different from what it used to be (Norris, 2000). South African organisations are also experiencing changes in their culture as a result of the new South Africa (Manetje & Martins, 2009) and changing legislation, which South African organisations are required to observe and implement (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2009). Considering that South African organisations are required to deal with issues that are unique to a South African environment, and the constant changes that they go through in order to deal with multi-cultural workforces, the relationship between culture and commitment may also be constantly changing in the same way that South African organisations deal with constant changes. Therefore, it would be important to understand organisational culture and organisational commitment in a South African organisation within the current context. This is the first rationale for the study.

Bearing in mind the changes within the South African economy, organisations have had to adapt in order to survive the recession and as a result, employees may view their culture within the organisation (Chipunza, 2009) and commitment to their organisation differently; such as the ability to be flexible and therefore less committed to the organisation in order to cope with the changing world of work and improve their employability (Cohen, 2003). This, in turn, would affect the way in which the employees within the organisation perceive their culture and the behaviours needed to cope with the turbulent changes that affect the organisation and the economy. However, depending on the culture of the organisation,

employees need to be considered in times of organisational change or it could prove to be detrimental (Elias, 2007) which also has the potential to negatively affect organisational commitment (Fedor, Caldwell & Herold, 2006). In times of layoffs and restructuring, the employees that are left to represent the organisation need to have trustworthy relationships with management, which is something that arguably commitment ensures (Cohen, 2003). Considering the way in which employees are required to interact with the organisation as well as with the global market and various uncertain changes that may arise, organisational culture will likely be required to adapt to the external environment and therefore commitment levels of the employee may then be affected by this interaction. Therefore it would be important to research the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment, in light of the constantly changing effects of functioning within a global economy. This is the second rationale for the study.

Research conducted globally indicates that organisational cultures create high levels of organisational commitment (Martins & Martins, 2003). In a study on cultural socialisation and whether individualized measures of power distance, collectivism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance were related to employees' level of commitment within a government department responsible for the administration of tax revenue, Clugston et al (2000) found that uncertainty avoidance was related to continuance commitment and power distance was related to normative commitment. Similarly Manetje and Martins (2009) conducted a research study to determine the relationship between organisational culture and employee's commitment, on 371 employees in a South African motor manufacturing organisation, and found a positive relationship between the power culture dimension and normative commitment. Their results indicated that all the dimensions of organisational culture reflected significant correlations with normative commitment except the existing achievement culture, and preferred power and support cultures. However, another South African study by Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) to determine the influence of organisational culture on organisational commitment within a South African municipality, did not find a significant relationship between the power culture dimension and normative commitment, but rather a relationship between the organisation's achievement culture and affective, continuance and normative commitment. Yet, Manetje and Martins (2009) did not find a relationship between existing achievement culture and all the dimensions of organisational commitment. Lok, Westwood and Crawford (2005) found a significant relationship between organisational subcultures and commitment when conducting research on 398 nurses from different categories of hospitals (general, private and psychiatric) in Sydney, Australia in order to investigate the relationship between organisational subcultures and organisational commitment. The correlations of the subcultures with commitment were higher than the

relationship between the main culture variables and commitment. Further research into the relationship between the dimensions of organisational culture and the dimensions of organisational commitment, would likely provide more information as to the significance of the various relationships and perhaps offer more clarity in terms of similarities and differences of these relationships, and the implication for South African and international organisations.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 General aims

The general aim of this study is to determine whether there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a consulting firm in South Africa.

1.2.2 Specific aims

The theoretical aims of the study are to

- Define and describe organisational culture and its dimensions.
- Define and describe organisational commitment and its dimensions.
- Discuss the theoretical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

The empirical aims of the study are to

- Determine the existing organisational culture dimension/s within the organisation.
- Determine the existing organisational commitment dimension/s within the organisation.
- Determine the empirical relationship between the dimensions of organisational culture and the dimensions of organisational commitment.
- Formulate recommendations regarding organisational culture and organisational commitment.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In order to achieve the aims, the study wishes to answer the following questions:

- What is organisational culture and what are its dimensions?
- What is organisational commitment and what are its dimensions?
- What is the theoretical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment?
- What is the empirical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment?
- What future recommendations can be made from the results of this research?

1.4 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

This study is positioned within Industrial and Organisational Psychology, which strives to enhance the effectiveness of the workplace by applying the principles of psychology (Aamodt, 2004) and the sub-discipline of organisational development which is a “process that applies a broad range of behavioural science knowledge and practices to help organisations build their capacity to change and to achieve greater effectiveness” (Cummings & Worley, 2008, p.1). In order to investigate the theoretical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment, the open-systems and functionalist paradigms will be used.

The open-systems paradigm studies the individual as part of an organisation that interacts with the external environment (Manetje, 2006). Considering the increasing effect of globalisation on the South African environment, organisations constantly interact with the external environment, which consequently affects the quality, efficiency, flexibility and effectiveness of their business (Yasin, Czurchry, Martin & Feagins, 2000). This will assist in understanding the interaction between the global economy that affects organisations and the internal parts of the organisation. Hodge, Anthony and Gales (1996) and Scott (2003) outline the following assumptions regarding the open-systems paradigm:

- An organisation is an open system that interacts with the external environment.

- An organisation is a set of co-dependent and interconnected parts arranged which are arranged in order to produce a whole.
- The open-systems model is determined by inputs, throughputs (transformational processes) and outputs.
- An open system is continuously growing and developing.
- There is a boundary between the open system and the external environment.
- Organisations take resources from the open system in order to survive.
- Organisations use the environment as a source of information.

The functionalist paradigm assists in explaining the empirical relationship (O'Conner & Netting, 2009) between organisational culture and organisational commitment, by trying to explain the function or purpose of the relationship. This paradigm postulates that culture influences the organisation's performance and therefore can be used to influence the organisation to be successful (Mueller, 2011). According to Morgan (1980) and Mueller (2011), the following are assumptions of the functionalist paradigm:

- Human or social behaviour is seen contextually bound to a real world and evident social relationships.
- It focuses on understanding society, which will generate empirical knowledge.
- Is primarily regulative and pragmatic in nature.
- Regards culture as a strategic asset that is essential for the organisation's performance.

The positivist paradigm assists in explaining the empirical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment by necessarily reducing people and their behaviours to variables. The purpose of research in this paradigm is to prove or disprove a hypothesis (Mack, 2010). Positivist research emphasises scientific methods, statistical analysis, and generalisable findings, with researchers applying scientific methodology as a way of understanding and researching social and psychological phenomena. According to Mack (2010), the following are assumptions of the positivist paradigm:

- Reality is external to the researcher and represented by objects in space; in other words, there is an objective reality.
- People know this reality and use symbols to accurately describe and explain this objective reality.
- There are general patterns of cause and effect that can be used as a basis for predicting and controlling natural phenomenon. The goal is to discover these patterns.
- We can rely on our perceptions of the world to provide us with accurate data.
- Research has been assumed to be value-free; if strict methodological protocol is followed, research will be free of subjective bias and objectivity will be achieved.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.5.1 Approach

A research design guides the order of the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with the relevant economy (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2007). A cross-sectional survey design collects data at one point in time from one sample in order to represent the larger population (Hall, 2008). As this study is conducted within one organisation, at one time from one convenience sample, a cross-sectional survey design is appropriate. A cross-sectional survey design often assumes that the population is heterogeneous in terms of age, behaviours and opinions and therefore the objective would be to represent adequately the diversity of the group. This design is better able to describe relationships between variables (Bourque, 2003), namely the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

1.5.2 Method

By defining the objects of the research study, there are typically two aspects of the objects that need to be defined: firstly, the units of analysis on which the study focuses and secondly, the variables (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). The unit of analysis for this study are individuals within the chosen organisation. Variables are factors, which change and can take on many different values by being multi-dimensional or can have only one dimension (Huysamen, 1994). There are two types of variables, namely independent and dependent

variables. An independent variable does not depend on anything else and causes an effect in a causal relationship (Terre Blanche et al, 2007) while the dependent variable depends on something else. For this study, the independent variable is organisational culture and the dependent variable is organisational commitment. This study is a descriptive study, in order to determine whether one variable (organisational culture) has a relationship with another variable (organisational commitment).

This study tests the hypothesis that there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

1.5.3 Participants

The population for this study are employees from a consulting organisation in South Africa, the population and population size is approximately 190 employees across South Africa from lower level employees through to senior management. The whole population were invited to participate in the study. A convenient, non-probability sample is used whereby availability is the determinant of the study. In many situations, these “non-probability samples are more than adequate for the research purposes” (Terre Blanche et al, 2007, p. 139).

1.5.4 Measurement instruments

The measurement instruments used for this study are the Organisational Culture Questionnaire (OCQ) and the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS).

1.5.4.1 Organisational Culture Questionnaire

Harrison (1993, p. 9) indicates that the Organisational Culture Questionnaire (OCQ) is a questionnaire that is developed to “diagnose culture in an organisation, in order to identify the different cultural orientations and initiate culture change strategies”. The OCQ consists of 60 items and measures four dimensions of organisational culture, namely achievement, power, role, and support cultures (Harrison, 1993). A four-point Likert-type scale is used for rating the existing responses to the OCQ.

The reliability of the OCQ’s four dimensions as calculated by the Spearman-Brown formula are 0.86 for achievement, 0.90 for power, 0.64 for role and 0.87 for support (Harrison, 1993). The overall reliability of the OCQ is 0.85 (Harrison, 1993). There is also evidence of construct validity of the OCQ, which is the ability of the questionnaire to vary simultaneously

with other measures, which should reflect the same underlying attitudes and values (Harrison, 1993). Harrison (1993) cites Janz's (1987) comparative study, with a questionnaire known as the Culture Index, which revealed that they both measure similar attitudes and values of organisational culture.

1.5.4.2 Organisational Commitment Scale

Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) measures the three components of organisational commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative, which is measured through 24 structured items or statements. Eight statements or items measure each dimension. A seven-point Likert-type scale is used to measure the commitment dimensions. Meyer and Allen (1997, p. 120) found the internal consistencies "vary between 0.85 for affective, 0.79 for continuance and 0.73 for normative". The overall reliability exceeds 0.70 (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The construct validity of the OCS is based on the fact that they correlate as predicted with proposed antecedents' variables, such as personality, experience, and demographic factors, and situational variables, such as task interdependence, job involvement and work group attachment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

1.5.5 Research procedure

The questionnaires were printed and handed out personally to the employees within the organisation, where the participants could complete it, and the questionnaires were collected from each employee. The questionnaires were anonymous and the option of "prefer not to answer" was offered in the biographical section, should the candidate be concerned about being identified. Both the OCQ and OCS are self-administered questionnaires and were completed by the participants without any assistance. Clearance was obtained by the relevant organisation in order to conduct the research within the South African offices.

1.5.6 Statistical analysis

The demographic variables of the sample, namely age, gender, race, home language, qualification and tenure are described using frequencies. The mean is identified for each dimension of organisational culture and organisational commitment. The mean is the arithmetic average of all the numbers (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). The standard deviation is also measured and identifies the extent to which a group varies around the mean. Organisational culture and organisational commitment scores will be compared using Pearson correlation analysis to determine any possible relationships. Correlation analysis is

used to describe the linear relationship between two or more variables. The purpose of determining a correlation coefficient is to establish whether a relationship between two or more variables exists and if so, to establish the magnitude and direction thereof. The strength of the relationship is indicated by the correlation coefficient (r), which varies in magnitude between +1 and -1 (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). A positive relationship is indicated by a positive correlation coefficient while a negative relationship is indicated by a negative correlation coefficient (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). The independent variables are achievement, role, power and support cultures while the dependent variables are affective, normative and continuance commitment.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are essential in research and protect the welfare of the participants (Terre Blanche et al, 2007). All participants are to be treated respectfully and with dignity during the research process. This includes obtaining informed written consent from the participants to use their results in the research study. The written consent explains the confidentiality of their results as well as the purpose of the study and how the results are to be used. The researcher's contact details are provided on the written consent form and participants are requested to contact the researcher to answer any questions and clarify any confusion.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment within a consulting firm. This chapter describes the background to and motivation for the study, the problem statement, aims, paradigm perspective, research design and methodology as well as the chapter layout.

1.7 STUDY LAYOUT

Chapter 1 is an orientation to the study, outlining the aims, paradigm perspective, methodology and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review on organisational culture and organisational commitment conducted for the study. The literature review covered the aspects that define organisational culture and organisational commitment, its importance and significance within the organisation, and an overview of existing research on the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

Chapter 3 presents a research article based on the results of the study. The article is presented in the format prescribed by the *South African Journal of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*.

Chapter 4 discusses the conclusions and limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the background to and motivation for the study, the research problem, as well as the aims, paradigm perspective, methodology and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

The previous chapter dealt with the background to and motivation for this study. In accordance with the theoretical aims, this chapter defines organisational culture and organisational commitment and determines the theoretical relationship between these variables based on previous research in South Africa and internationally. The chapter focuses on background, definition, model, dimensions and organisational implications of organisational culture and organisational commitment.

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

2.1.1 Theoretical background to organisational culture

Organisational culture has become an important aspect in the study of organisational behaviour and, in turn, a popular topic in research (Manetje & Martins, 2009; Martins & Martins, 2003; Van der Post, De Coning & Smit, 1998; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). Organisational culture can exert “considerable influence in organisations, particularly in areas such as performance and commitment” (Lok & Crawford, 2003, p. 323). The notion that organisational culture influences important aspects such as performance and commitment emphasises why organisational culture has become an important part of organisations. Research in the 1970’s focused on the concept of organisational climate, while at the same time observing organisational culture not as a whole (in its current understanding) but in separate terms of roles, norms and values (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2011). Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) study on corporate culture brought the concept of organisational culture to life in its current understanding. They state that culture is an important aspect of all organisations, and is the most important contributor to an organisation’s success, even more so than the organisation’s business strategy, structure or politics. This is due to the assertion that a good fit between the employee’s personality and the organisation’s culture was important (Nazir, 2005) and would lead to an organisation’s success. A good fit between the organisation and the employee may cultivate a strong culture across the organisation, which would assist with the organisation’s success. It can also be understood that a strong culture would be steady, since the values and beliefs of the organisation are shared relatively consistently across the organisation. Schein (1992) identified the importance of values and beliefs in organisational culture.

Regarding culture, Schein (1992) identified three levels that explain organisational culture, namely artefacts, values and basic underlying assumptions. The biggest underlying

assumption is that employees bring their unconscious cultural assumptions, based on their cultural socialisation, into their relevant organisations (Brenton & Driskill, 2010). This is particularly important in a South African context as many different cultures are present in South Africa and all employees bring their culture as well as their own underlying cultural assumptions into the organisation. According to Schein (2010), culture is an abstraction, which operates outside of our awareness; therefore, we need to understand culture because it helps to explain various phenomena within the organisation. In order to understand organisational culture and its interaction within the workplace, it needs to be defined.

2.1.2 Definition of organisational culture

There is no consensus on the definition of organisational culture (Brenton & Driskill, 2010; Manetje & Martins, 2009; Schein, 1992; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

Deal and Kennedy (1982) define organisational culture as the way things are done in an organisation. This basic definition indicates the concept of a shared understanding of how an organisation functions. The concept of “sharing” is also identified by Schein (1992, p.12) who defines organisational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems”. In this definition, organisational culture leans towards patterns and integration of employees’ behaviour, and is therefore passed on to new employees in order to ensure their successful incorporation into the organisation. Schein’s (1992; 2010) definition recognises the importance of socialisation within an organisation. Schein’s (1992) definition complements O’Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell’s (1991) definition by stating that organisational culture can be seen as cognitions that are shared by individuals in an organisation and can be described as what a personality is to an individual. This includes factors such as assumptions, values, behavioural norms and expectations.

Arnold (2005, p. 625) refers to organisational culture as “the distinctive norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that combine to give each organisation its distinct character”. This concurs with O’Reilly et al’s (1991) and Schein’s (1992) definitions that identify that the norms, beliefs and assumptions are an essential part of socialisation within an organisation. This definition further highlights the individuality of each organisation that gives it an identifiable feel (Harrison, 1993) and can be described as what a personality is to an individual (Harrison & Stokes, 1992; Hellriegel et al, 2004; Martins & Martins, 2003).

There is general agreement that organisational culture refers to individuals' shared norms, values, meanings, beliefs and principles which are held within the organisation and forms part of the socialisation process of new employees (Lok & Crawford, 2003; Martins & Coetzee, 2007; Rashid, Sambasivan & Johari, 2003; Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2007; Schein, 2010; Taormina, 2009). In an effort to understand organisational culture further, shared assumptions, values, socialisation, norms, languages and practices will be discussed in more detail.

2.1.2.1 Shared assumptions

Shared assumptions can be described as broad-based intrinsic views that are believed to be true, which then guide employees' behavioural and emotional tendencies as well as determining how they function (Hellriegel et al, 2004). Schein (2010) notes that these shared assumptions are sometimes unquestioned and often accepted as the truth. Therefore only when an organisation has these shared assumptions between individuals can a culture begin to develop. The assumptions are developed or discovered by employees from experience and this causes future employees to adopt these assumptions because they seem to have worked in the past (Brenton & Driskill, 2010).

2.1.2.2 Shared values

Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Hellriegel et al (2004) describe values as stable basic views and ideas about specific aspects of life, which are significant to individuals. Values form the core of organisational culture (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). These values are also unquestioned and may be taken for granted as individuals are usually not aware of them.

2.1.2.3 Shared socialisation and norms

Norms are general rules and patterns of behaviours across the organisation and what are seen as appropriate behaviour within the organisation (Hellriegel et al, 2004). Individuals enter organisations and are exposed to these norms and are expected to follow them (Schein, 2010). This process is known as socialisation or acculturation, which keeps the organisation's culture alive (Schein, 2010) by teaching the new employees the culture.

2.1.2.4 Shared language and practices

Language is not just a way we communicate, but the way in which the world is understood

(Ashkanasy et al, 2011). Hellriegel et al (2004, p. 357) define language, from a cultural perspective, as a “shared system of vocal sounds, written signs, as well as gestures that are used to convey special meanings among employees”. Shared practices provide a framework in which to teach other employees the culture of the organisation (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

The underlying factor in organisational culture is the concept of a shared understanding, and this sharing allows individuals with different backgrounds to come together and accept culture in similar ways. Martins and Martins (2003) theorise that organisations have one dominant culture and many subcultures. The dominant culture will identify the core values of the organisation and should be shared by the majority of the organisation’s members. These characteristics, again, highlight the importance of the employee within an organisation, showing the complex interaction of employees with an organisation and how employees affect the way in which an organisation behaves.

Considering the importance of employees and their complex interaction with and in an organisation, Harrison (1993, p.11) defines organisational culture as “a distinctive constellation of beliefs, values, work styles, and relationships that distinguish one organization from another”. This definition indicates the uniqueness of each organisation and notes that beliefs, values, work style and relationships are shared among individuals in the organisation. The present study adopted Harrison’s definition of organisational culture. Harrison’s (1993) model of organisational culture will be discussed next.

2.1.3 Model of organisational culture

Harrison and Stokes (1992) identify four dimensions of organisational culture: power, role, achievement and support. According to Harrison and Stokes, every organisation has a combination of these four cultural dimensions, with each type of dimension reflecting some behaviour based on different values. Each dimension also has strengths and weaknesses, so there is no specific dimension of organisational culture that is necessarily better than any other. Figure 2.1 represents Harrison’s (1993) theoretical model for diagnosing organisational culture. The model is intended to be descriptive which creates an awareness of the culture gap between the existing and preferred cultures in an organisation (Harrison, 1993). It represents the four dimensions in each quadrant and indicates their measurement within two modes of operation, namely formalisation and centralisation. The modes of operation can be measured on a high-to-low scale. High formalisation in an organisation creates “predictability, orderliness and consistency” (Martins & Martins, 2003, p. 382), while

high centralisation in an organisation refers to the consolidation of power under a central control (Shukla, 2004).

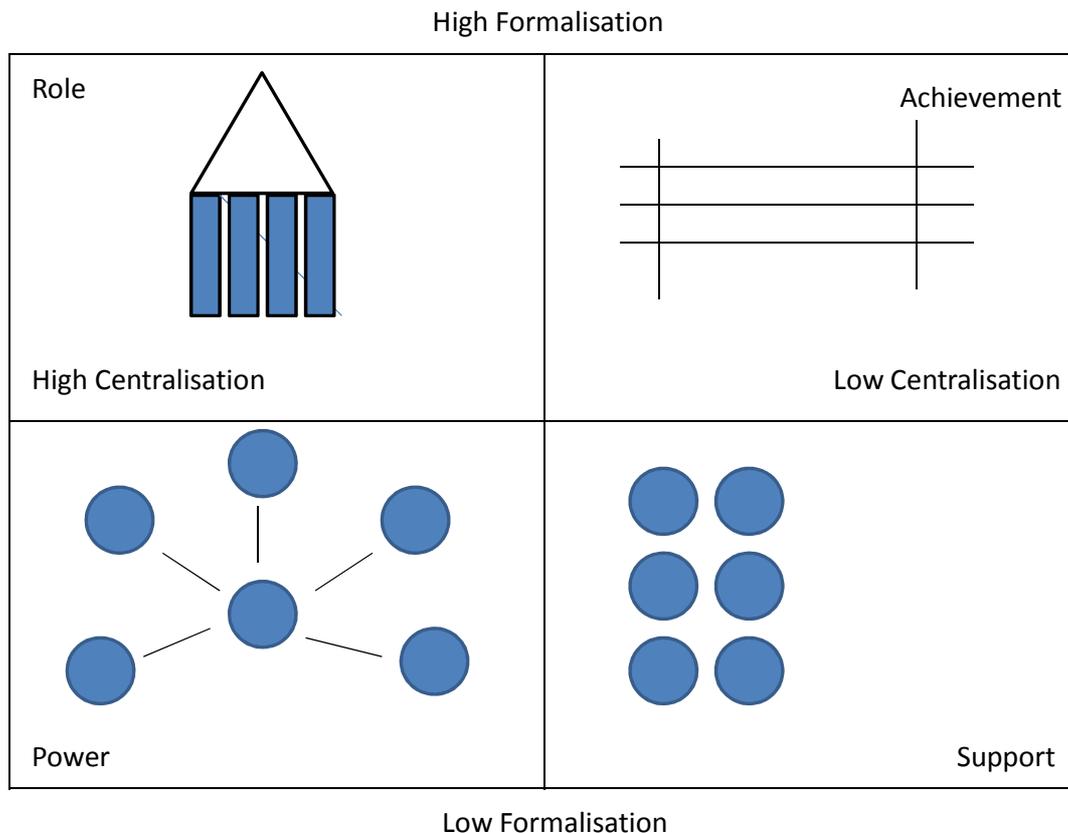


Figure 2.1 Organisational Culture Model

Source: (Harrison, 1972, p. 121)

The four dimensions and their relevant strengths and weaknesses are discussed in detail next.

2.1.3.1 Power

This dimension is generally found in smaller organisations where the organisation is run by one individual or where one individual is responsible for all the employees within the organisation (Martin, 2005), but can be found in large organisations as well. This dimension is based on the fact that one individual generally has control of the resources within the organisation and therefore all employees have minimal access to those resources (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). Power is used to exercise control thereby influencing the behaviours of the employees in the organisation. This dimension is characterised by high formalisation and low centralisation, as indicated in Figure 2.1. Power is based on strength and its main traits are the leader's single-minded approach; the leader's full control and character, and a lack of

official rules and regulations within the organisation (Martin, 2001).

2.1.3.1.1 Strengths of power

The organisation is able to react quickly in the market, although the success of the reaction is based on the capabilities of the leader (Martin, 2001). They are able to take advantage of opportunities and react quickly to threats or danger. There is a unified individual effort behind the vision of the leader, the talent, knowledge and wisdom of the leader are leveraged and can provide direction and certainty in times of confusion (Harrison, 1993).

2.1.3.1.2 Limitations of power

Power-oriented organisations can be ruled by fear, with power being used for personal advantage, which could lead to nepotism and/or favouritism (Manetje, 2006). Constructive changes are dependent on the leader's vision and flexibility, while in large organisations direct management can lead to inefficiency. In some organisations, employees may be distracted by trying to gain favour with the leader and employees' work pauses while they wait for approval or their next task should the leader be busy. Leaders can also become isolated from issues that arise and bad news within the organisation. Closed-minded thinking and leaders' impulse decisions can affect the organisation's schedules and systems (Harrison, 1993).

2.1.3.2 Role

Role is based on the formal establishment of rules, policies, procedures and specified job descriptions, which guide the organisation and its employees (Martin, 2001). In this dimension the leader's power is replaced by structures, systems and job descriptions, which are more important than the actual employees in those positions (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). The effort to gain power is restrained by rules, which leads to the perception that the role dimension is organised by rules and regulations and by rationality, order and dependence (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). This dimension is characterised by both high formalisation and centralisation (see Figure 2.1). According to Brown (1995), role is a series of pillars that represent specialist functions within the organisation and the pediment is the small group of leaders who coordinate and control the employees' efforts. Therefore, roles and responsibilities are cascaded downwards without direct supervision of top management.

2.1.3.2.1 Strengths of role

Employees are able to focus their energy on their work due to the effective structures and systems, while any time wasted is also reduced as clearly-defined systems and procedures will prevent having to “reinvent the wheel”. Clear lines of authority and responsibility will reduce conflict, confusion and indecision, while clear rules and regulations will prevent the misuse of power (Harrison, 1993). The structure, routine, and predictability of the organisation provide a sense of security and stability among the employees.

2.1.3.2.2 Limitations of role

A weakness of the role dimension is that lower level employees are not given responsibilities within the organisation and, as such, are assumed not to be trusted. Employees are controlled by the rules, so much so that they might make the wrong decisions, would not be innovative and would not use their creativity if it fell outside the rules (Harmse, 2001; Harrison & Stokes, 1992) and deviating from the norm and making decisions outside of one’s authority is considered an offence. Employees end up being treated as parts of a machine rather than as individuals. It is also difficult to obtain approvals for necessary changes, which eventually leads to employees just forgetting about change. Change also becomes difficult for role-oriented organisations and, as such, they may react too slowly against chaos (Harrison, 1993) which can prove detrimental in a time of globalisation.

2.1.3.3 Achievement

The distinguishing attribute of achievement is that the organisation’s employees are united with the organisation’s common vision or purpose (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). The achievement dimension is characterised by high centralisation and low formalisation (see Figure 2.1). Employees work towards a set goal or the purpose of the organisation and, in doing so, tries to use their personal energy in achieving these goals. The systems and structures of the organisation are also put in place to serve the organisation’s purpose. The main purpose is to bring suitable employees together to achieve the organisation’s goals (Manetje & Martins, 2009).

2.1.3.3.1 Strengths of achievement

Employees in an achievement-oriented organisation will feel a sense of urgency while working towards the organisation’s goals which they feel are worthwhile and attainable (Harmse, 2001). Employees have high energy, enthusiasm, and a high level of employee involvement. Employees also have a high sense of belonging and being part of the group,

and will manage themselves according to what they see needs to be done. The organisation adapts rapidly to change and is able to learn quickly and solve problems efficiently (Harrison, 1993).

2.1.3.3.2 Limitations of achievement

Employees in an achievement-oriented organisation may often be under-organised because they do not have time to plan or organise and tend to rely on the common mission to organise work (Harmse, 2001). Employees may burn out from long hours or very high energy levels put into their work in an effort to meet the organisation's goals and mission. There is also a tendency to waste resources and be generally inefficient, and employees may become arrogant and highly competitive when faced with other groups. Employees can be ruthless when interacting with other groups and the individuality of employees may make it difficult to coordinate (Harrison, 1993).

2.1.3.4 Support

A supportive culture's main characteristic is the shared trust between the individual and the organisation (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). There is a warm and caring atmosphere in the workplace, and individuals feel that they are treated as human beings and not just individuals to do a job. Communication is normally verbal and more informal, with decisions being made through informal channels with more of a consensus decision making (Harrison, 1993). There is also minimal hierarchy in this structure and it is characterised with both low formalisation and centralisation (see Figure 2.1). The belief is that the feeling of belonging will produce a committed feeling among employees and therefore they will contribute more energy to the organisation (Harmse, 2001). Support-oriented organisations tend to be small and have built personal relationships over time. In this dimension, there is minimal formal power (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

2.1.3.4.1 Strengths of support

There is good internal communication and integration within a support-oriented organisation. There are also high levels of trust within the organisation, which results in a high level of commitment to decisions that are made and cooperation to the goals of the organisation. There is effective group work and management have good people management skills in dealing with issues and have a caring work environment which is good for the health of employees (Harrison, 1993).

2.1.3.4.2 Limitations of support

The downside of the support dimension is that they have a habit of avoiding conflict and when actually faced with conflict, will not deal with it well, or not deal with it at all (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). Employees tend to make decisions based on compassion, which can lower employee effectiveness and efficiency. The organisation is often slow to make decisions, as efforts may be scattered and unfocused on the goal (Harrison, 1993).

Harrison and Stokes's (1992) model of organisational behaviour was used as the basis for this study as Harrison and Stokes's (1992) research instrument has been tested in the South African environment with positive and significant results (Manetje, 2006; Manetje & Martins, 2009; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

In order to understand organisational culture and its role in the organisation, it is necessary to establish the key factors that determine an organisation's type of culture.

2.1.4 Determinants of organisational culture

The main determinants of organisational culture are the individuals who initially started the organisation, as their personalities would influence the way in which the organisation functions (Martin, 2001). Martin (2001) states further that employees go through a phase of enculturation, which is a process of socialisation whereby new employees are introduced to the organisation and its culture, and begin to adapt to the organisational culture. In addition to the importance of socialisation, Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) indicates a number of other influences that determine the organisational culture, namely history and ownership, size, technology, goals and objectives, and environment. These influences will be discussed next.

2.1.4.1 History and ownership

The history of the organisation is determined by integrated aspects of functioning and behaviour derived from the individuals who started the organisation, and as the organisation becomes more established, significant stakeholders as well as dominant groups that function within the organisation form part of the culture (Campbell & Craig, 2005; Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Ownership influences the organisation, depending on different leadership styles. A new generation of organisational leaders can lead to changes or alterations to the culture when they arrive in the organisation (Campbell & Craig, 2005; Martin, 2001). Organisational culture is enduring, as it exists before the employee joins the organisation and will continue to exist after the employee has left (Martin, 2001). Although culture is fairly stable within an organisation, it is also dependent on the interaction of the employees in the organisation.

2.1.4.2 Size

Size is an important aspect of the organisation and its culture. Larger organisations tend to be more formalised than smaller organisations (Martin, 2001).

2.1.4.3 Technology

Technology is an important aspect of organisation culture, particularly if the organisation's core business is in advanced technology. Therefore, the organisation's design and values will seek to highlight the employees' technical skills as a significant factor in the organisation (Martin, 2001; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

2.1.4.4 Goals and objectives

Culture and organisational goals mutually influence each other, as the culture of an organisation can be moulded around the organisational goals, while at the same time, the culture can cause the organisation to accept particular goals in line with its objectives (Martin, 2001). The organisational goals can develop or completely change over time as the organisation's culture develops and adapts to various factors. A strong organisational culture will influence employees, and employees will accept the organisation's goals as their own and begin to exert extra effort in order to achieve those goals.

2.1.4.5 Environment

The external environment, with which the organisation interacts, influences and is influenced by the organisational culture and can therefore change the organisation's culture (Martin, 2001). The environment is an important consideration in understanding the organisation's culture as a changing environment (for example, globalisation) requires organisations to be flexible and adaptive (Campbell & Craig, 2005) and culturally diverse environments require that the organisational structure reflect the external cultures of the South African environment.

While these determinants affect the type and development of organisational culture, there are specific factors that cause organisational culture to develop in certain areas and not in others as well as how the culture is maintained within the organisation to ensure that it is passed on to new employees.

2.1.5 Creating and maintaining organisational culture

Organisational culture develops from the founders of the organisation and rarely fades away (Manetje, 2006). The organisation's current culture is dependent on what has been done before, and the degree of success the employees had with those actions. However, the founders have the biggest impact on the culture of the organisation (Schein, 2010) as they often provide the vision for the organisation as well as establishing the values they deem to be important (Martins & Martins, 2003).

Once the culture is established, it becomes the shared norm between the employees and is maintained by employees sharing similar experiences. The selection process, performance evaluation criteria, training, career development, and promotion procedures ensure that employees who fit within the culture are rewarded, while those who challenge the culture are penalised. These aspects will be discussed next.

2.1.5.1 Selection

Selection is important to maintaining culture so that the right skills, knowledge and abilities are present in order for the candidate to perform the job. Typically, then, more than one candidate will fit the position and the final decision is often made by senior managers based on their judgement of how well the person will fit into the organisation (Martins & Martins, 2003).

2.1.5.2 Socialisation

Socialisation is an important part of maintaining culture in the organisation, as new employees are required to learn about the organisational culture and accepted behaviours, values and beliefs that form part of the culture so they can become effective members of the group (Nelson & Quick, 2011). New employees make a concerted effort to learn about the history and culture of the organisation and can then adapt to the new culture (Manetje, 2006). Martins and Martins (2003) conceptualise three stages of the socialisation process: pre-arrival, encounter, and metamorphosis. In the pre-arrival stage employees learn about the organisation but before they join the organisation. The encounter stage is when the employees see the organisation for what it is and face the possibility that reality and their expectations could be different. Metamorphosis, the final stage, encompasses the long-term change that the employees will make as well as overcoming any problems that were found during the encounter stage.

2.1.5.3 Incorporation/rejection

This is the final stage of sustaining culture, and through the socialisation process, the new employees are either accepted or rejected. In order to be fully accepted into the organisation, the employees must have a good understanding of the culture and be willing to accept the organisational culture. Rejection from the organisation may allow employees to lose sight of goals, values and assumptions, which could ultimately lead to or create an identity crisis for the organisation's members (Schein, 2010).

2.1.6 Changing organisational culture

Changing organisational culture is complex, as it requires changing the very identity of the organisation (Singh, 2011). In addition, the effects of globalisation on organisations require them to constantly adapt and make necessary changes in their culture in order to remain effective and competitive within the global economy. Although changing organisational culture is difficult, Martins and Martins (2003) maintain that it can be done. Ornstein and Lunenberg (2008) emphasise certain components essential for organisational change to be successful. The first is an enabling external environment which should be supportive of any change that may occur. This will also determine the degree of threat the organisation will feel should the change occur. In addition to the external environment, the internal environment must have permitting conditions such as a surplus of resources (manager's time and energy and financial resources); system readiness (willingness for employees to experience change and any possible accompanying uncertainty); minimal coupling (effective coordination and integration of the system components), and power from the change agent and the leadership ability.

Certain factors may hasten the process of organisational change such as poor performance, pressure from stakeholders, organisational growth or a decreased number of employees as well as any perceived threat from the external environment (Ornstein & Lunenberg, 2008). In order to achieve successful organisational change, cultural visioning must be in place. There should be a clear vision of a new and more preferred organisational culture, which is important for change success (Martin & Fellenz, 2010). Leaders need to establish the current beliefs, values, assumptions and behaviours in the existing culture, and will need to anticipate any future conditions and create an image of the successful organisation. Once the new organisational vision is in place, a strategy needs to be developed for the vision to be achieved. The strategy comprises action plans for the inducement, management and stabilization of the change strategy (Martin & Fellenz, 2010). The inducement phase requires stimulating the employees to change and dealing with any employees who are resistant to

change. The management phase involves outlining the interventions and mobilizing the change agents while the stabilisation phase focuses on formalising the culture change and ensuring the new culture becomes known as fact (Ornstein & Lunenberg, 2008). The importance of changing, maintaining and sustaining organisational culture will be discussed further below.

2.1.7 Importance of organisational culture

As awareness of its relationship with various constructs within organisations grew, organisational culture became an integral part of all organisations. Organisational culture determines not only organisational behaviour, but also goals, work methods, how employees should interact, and how to handle personal relationships (Harrison, 1993). Organisational theory recognises the importance of organisational culture and its role in the organisation and effects on employees (Martins & Martins, 2003). Moreover, organisational culture performs a central function by mainly defining the way of doing things in order to give meaning to organisational life (Arnold, 2005).

2.1.8 Functions of organisational culture

Martins and Martins (2003) identify four functions of organisational culture. Organisational culture

- Defines the boundaries of the organisation and separates one organisation from another.
- Communicates the sense of identity to the other employees.
- Offers a sense of belonging to a group rather than an individual's self-interest.
- Offers stability to the social system.

Culture offers the glue that binds the organisation by providing the rules, regulations and boundaries in which to behave while guiding and shaping the behaviours and attitudes of employees within the organisation.

Although organisational culture's functions are valuable for both organisation and employees, it can nevertheless prove to be dysfunctional as well (Martins & Martins, 2003). Culture can become a problem when the shared values are not conducive to furthering the organisation's effectiveness. This usually occurs when the environment changes too rapidly or when an organisation is required to be dynamic, which many organisations are required to be within a global economy. Therefore when there are rapid changes in the organisation, the

previous organisational culture may not be as appropriate as it was before and stability of behaviour in the organisation can actually hinder the ability of the organisation to move forward (Martins & Martins, 2003).

2.1.9 Implications of strong and weak organisational cultures

Organisational culture is deemed to be either strong or weak (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). At the same time, having a strong culture does not necessarily mean that it is a positive culture (Brenton & Driskill, 2010). As they try to cope with changes, stronger cultures may put more pressure on the employees and may persuade them to adopt those changes. Organisations, particularly in South Africa, employ diverse individuals who bring their own strengths in behaviour and skills, yet in strong cultures these diverse skills and behaviours are weakened as new employees try to conform to the strong culture (Martins & Martins, 2003). Table 2.1 presents Brenton and Driskill's (2010, p. 43) comparison of strong and weak cultures.

Table 2.1 Comparison of strong and weak cultures

Strong Culture	Weak Culture
Values permeate the organisation	Values are limited to top management
Elements of culture send consistent message	Elements send contradictory messages
Most employees can tell stories about history and heroes	Little knowledge about history or heroes exists among average employees
Identification with all employees is strong	Employees identify more with subcultures than with the overall organisational culture
Surface cultural elements are tied to employee beliefs and assumptions	Little connection exists between cultural elements and employees' beliefs and assumptions
Culture has historical penetration and therefore has existed over a long period	Culture is recent and not well established

Source: (Brenton & Driskill, 2010, p. 43)

In a strong culture, the organisation's core values are widely shared, therefore the more the values are accepted by the employees, the more likely the employees are to be committed to the values and the culture will be stronger (Martins & Martins, 2003). Accordingly, a

stronger culture will have a greater influence on employee behaviours because the employees share the same values and this will create a greater intensity that controls the behaviour. A strong culture should ultimately result in a lower employee turnover and create a sense of loyalty, integration between employees and organisational commitment, which may in turn reduce the employees' need to leave the organisation (Martins & Martins, 2003). Organisational commitment will be discussed next.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

2.2.1 Theoretical background to organisational commitment

Organisational commitment was initially viewed as a concept with a single dimension, based on attitude, identification, involvement and loyalty (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). Current research on organisational commitment focuses on the relationship between employees and the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lok & Crawford, 2003; Manetje & Martins, 2009; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). Organisational commitment is now seen as a construct that can be described as attitudinal, behavioural and motivational (Dhladhla, 2011; Ferreira, Basson & Coetzee, 2010; Luthans, 2008; Manetje & Martins, 2009). Clayton and Hutchinson (2002) suggest that employees' attitude towards the organisation is due to their loyalty to the organisation as well as identification with its values, while the behavioural aspect of commitment reflects the employees' willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation and intention to remain at the organisation. An employee's commitment to the organisation is an important area of research due to the behavioural and attitudinal consequences (Dhladhla, 2011). Although there is widespread agreement that organisational commitment is an attitude, definitions vary (Dhladhla, 2011).

2.2.2 Definition of organisational commitment

Various definitions of organisational commitment exist, but there is a common thread that organisational commitment is a psychological bond between the organisation and the employee (Ferreira, Basson & Coetzee, 2010).

O'Reilly (1989, p. 17) defines organisational commitment as "an individual's psychological bond to the organisation, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organisation". Some researchers refer to commitment as a psychological state or as a bond that forms a link between the individual and the organisation, although the majority identify organisational commitment as an attitude (Dhladhla, 2011). By viewing

organisational commitment as an attitude, employees' positive attitudes show that they accept organisational goals and have a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation (Clayton & Hutchinson, 2002; Manetje, 2006). Meyer and Allen's (1991, p. 67) attitudinal definition views organisational commitment as "a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation". Porter et al (1974) and Rashid et al (2003) emphasise that organisational commitment is not just about a positive attitude which will result in exerting effort on behalf of the organisation but that it will also result in employees wanting to remain at and be involved in a certain organisation. Miller (2003, p.73) describes organisational commitment as "a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership at the organisation". Greenberg and Baron (2003) view organisational commitment as employees' attitudes towards their organisations.

Luthans (2008, p. 147) concurs with Greenberg and Baron (2003), stating that employees are committed to the organisation if they have "(1) a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; (2) a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; (3) a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization". The common factors in the definition of organisational commitment are that it is an attitude which employees hold which affects their behaviour in the organisation, and can result in the acceptance of the organisation's goals, missions and values, which in turn make the employees want to exert effort in order to achieve those goals. Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organisational commitment was used as the basis for this study and identifies feelings of identification, attachment and loyalty to the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1991) further developed a model of organisational commitment based on their definition.

2.2.3 Model of organisational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a three-component model of organisational commitment, consisting of affective, continuance and normative commitment. These three dimensions describe different ways in which organisational commitment develops as well as the implications for employee behaviour. The model has received substantial empirical support in research (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). Figure 2.2 represents the three-component organisational commitment model. Meyer and Allen (1991) also noted antecedents to organisational commitment for each of the three components, which can be seen in Figure 2.3. The antecedents are important to consider as they provide deeper insight

into where organisational commitment originates and how it develops.

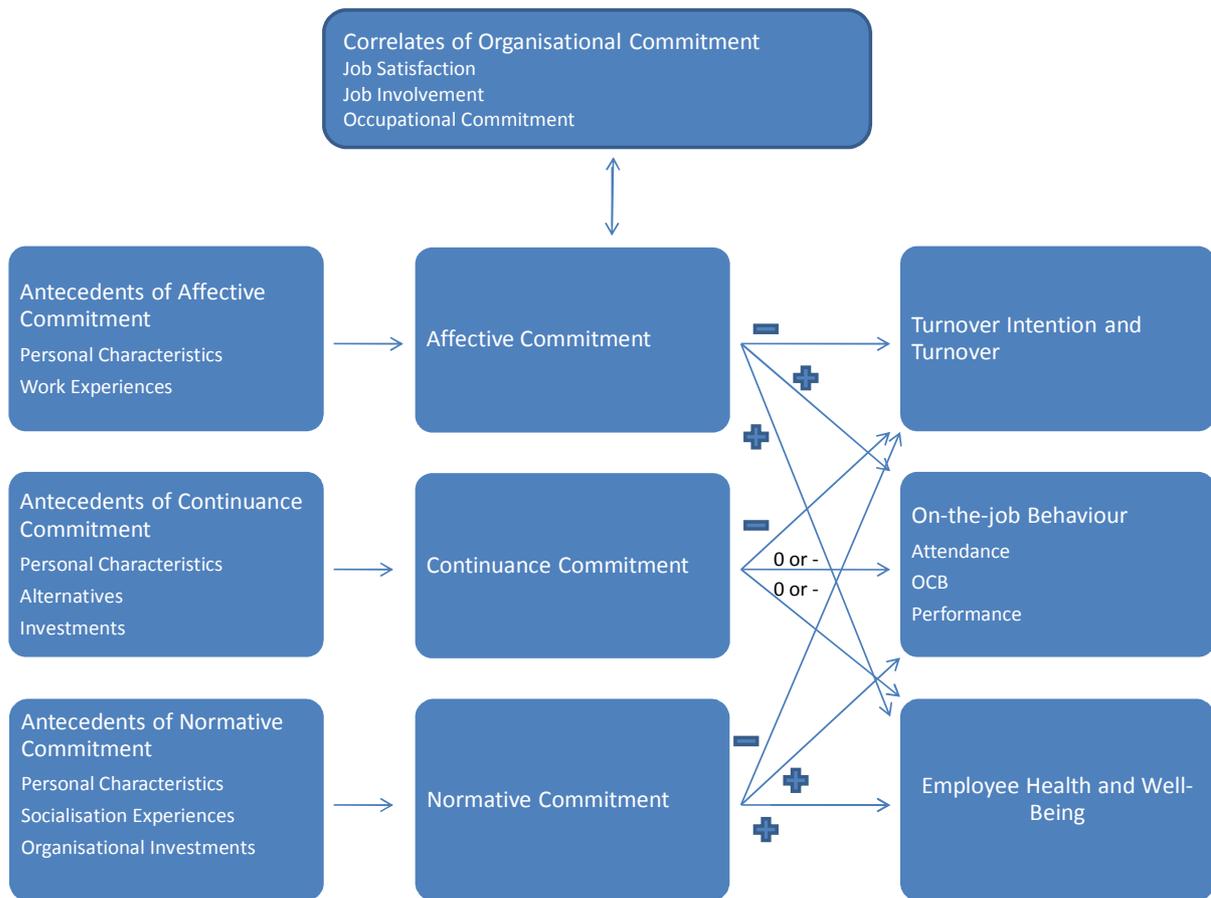


Figure 2.2 Organisational Commitment Model

Source: (Meyer and Allen, 1991, p. 67)

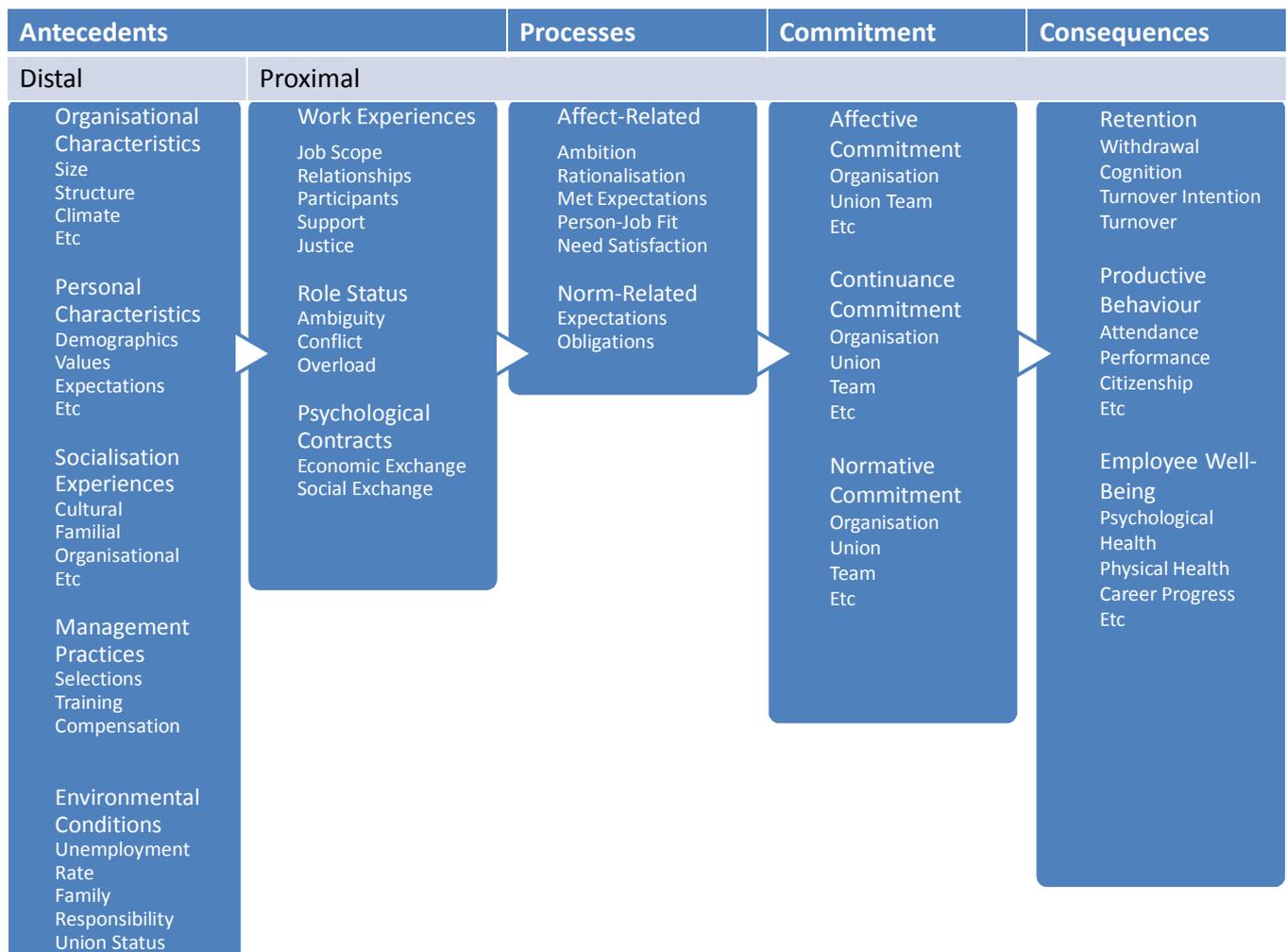


Figure 2.3 A multidimensional model of organisational commitment, its antecedents and consequences

Source: (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 106)

2.2.3.1 Affective commitment

Affective commitment represents an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affectively committed employees will stay at an organisation because they want to. This is an emotional response to commitment and links the identity of the individual with the identity of the organisation (Dawley, Stephens & Stephens, 2005; Rashid et al, 2003). Rashid et al (2003) note that affectively committed employees are not only emotionally attached to the organisation but have an emotional attachment to the goals and values of the organisation as well as their role in relation to these goals. According to Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007), most research on organisational commitment has focused on affective commitment, due to its strong and consistent relationship with advantageous outcomes such as turnover and performance.

Leaders believe affective commitment is important in terms of attracting, motivating and retaining key talents (Morrow, 2011).

Affective commitment is influenced by aspects such as job challenges, role clarity, goal clarity, goal difficulty, receptiveness from management, peer cohesion, equity, personal importance, feedback, participation and dependability (Meyer & Allen, 1997). An individual's affective commitment is based on identification with the desire to establish a satisfying relationship with the organisation, and through internalisation of the goals and values of the organisation (Manetje, 2006). This relates to the antecedents of affective commitment, which will be discussed next.

2.2.3.1.1 Antecedents of affective commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) identify three categories of antecedents to affective commitment, namely personal characteristics, organisational structures and work experiences.

a) Personal characteristics.

Personal characteristics are factors that define an individual (Steers, 1977; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). These are factors such as achievement, association, independence and having an interest in work. They have been found to correlate with organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) note that individuals who choose career paths closely related to their personalities are likely to have a more positive attitude towards their roles and responsibilities. Hult (2005) examined the concept of "person-environment fit", which enables employees to use their abilities as well as fulfil their needs within the organisation. Hult (2005) found that if there is a high level of fit between the organisation and the employee, the employee is likely to have high levels of commitment.

b) Organisational structures

Meyer and Allen (1991) found little research on the relationship between organisational commitment and organisational structures. Moreover, these studies focused on an individual level of analysis as opposed to an organisational level. In a study on the relationship between culture, commitment and performance in a South African electricity utility, Pittorino (2009) found affective commitment related to the delegation of the decision-making authority. Pittorino (2009) asserts that a more decentralised decision-making structure would impact on organisational commitment.

c) Work experiences

Work experiences can be divided into two groups of individuals, namely those who feel the need to be physically and psychologically at ease in their organisations, and those who feel it is important to contribute their skills, abilities and knowledge to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees with experiences that are similar to their expectations in the organisation and that satisfy their essential needs are more likely to develop a stronger affective commitment to the organisation than their colleagues with a less satisfying work experience (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

2.2.3.2 Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment refers to the employees' awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees whose commitment is continuance based will stay with an organisation because they need to. Dawley, Stephens and Stephens (2005) note that in this dimension employees see commitment as a calculative process where they weigh benefits such as pension, seniority, social status, or social networks that bind them to the organisation. These interests would be at risk should they leave the organisation. In addition, the fewer potential job opportunities there are available at other organisations, the stronger the employees' continuance commitment will be (Rashid et al, 2003).

Continuance commitment is based on the employees' assessment of the economic gain from the organisation (Manetje, 2006). There are incentives to this commitment and employees will not have to identify with the organisation's goals and values in order to stay at the organisation. Therefore, if there are potential better opportunities or rewards at another organisation, they will not feel obliged to stay with the organisation, as the effort-bargain ratio will be better at a different organisation. In order to retain employees who are continuance committed, the organisation needs to give more attention to and recognise the factors that will increase the employees' confidence to become affectively committed (Manetje, 2006).

2.2.3.2.1 Antecedents to continuance commitment

Continuance commitment is the employees' realisation of the costs associated with leaving the organisation and therefore anything that increases the perceived costs could be an antecedent (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Antecedents in continuance commitment are investments and alternatives.

a) Investments

Meyer and Allen (1997) state that commitment results from the increasing amount of side-bets individuals make. Side-bets are actions that connect individuals to particular activities based on whether or not they will benefit from the action. Therefore, the side-bet involves the investment of something like time, effort or money that employees would lose should they leave the organisation. Examples of such investments would be pension plans, job skills, status as well as investments that are not work related, such as moving into a new area or the interruption of a personal relationship (Pittorino, 2009).

b) Alternatives

Employees who believe they have feasible alternatives will have a weaker continuance commitment than ones who believe their opportunities are limited (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Perceptions of alternatives can also be influenced by things such as results of previous job searches or if other organisations have tried to recruit the individuals.

2.2.3.3 Normative commitment

Normative commitment portrays the feeling of obligation to stay with an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees who are normatively committed feel that they should stay at the organisation. Employees internalise normative beliefs of obligation and duty and feel obligated to stay with the organisation (Manetje, 2006). Employees' past experience within organisations will influence this type of commitment, whether or not they were members of the organisation (Rashid et al, 2003). This may occur due to societal socialisation or organisational socialisation, as societal values can place individuals under pressure before they can even be socialised into the organisation (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

Highly normatively committed employees are concerned with maintaining a good impression with their organisation and their colleagues. Therefore, they would be worried about what their colleagues would think if they wanted to leave the organisation (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). The employees believe it is morally right to stay at the organisation regardless of the status enhancement or satisfaction that they get over the years. This moral obligation may stem from socialisation within the society or the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The strength of normative commitment is influenced by the accepted rules regarding mutual obligation between the organisation and its members (Manetje, 2006). Organisational commitment varies within the organisation and may develop and change through different stages in an employee's term at the organisation. Antecedents to normative commitment may assist in further understanding commitment.

2.2.3.3.1 Antecedents to normative commitment

Employees with a high level of normative commitment would feel obligated by their feelings of what is right and moral. Antecedents of normative commitment are socialisation and organisational investment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

a) Socialisation

Normative commitment develops in an organisation from the group pressures and stresses that individuals encountered in their early socialisation (from family or culture) as well as the socialisation process when they first joined the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Clugston, Howell and Dorfman (2000) support the idea of cultural socialisation. According to Clugston et al (2000), these socialisation processes are extremely important as they provide individuals with appropriate attitudes and behaviours in particular situations. Individuals then internalise these and the belief of appropriateness of being loyal to the organisation develops.

b) Organisational investment

Organisational investment refers to investment like training or loans that the organisation may have given employees that seem hard for them to reciprocate (Meyer & Allen, 1997), such as job-related training or assisting with the payment of school fees. This may give employees a feeling of being unbalanced and in order to rectify the imbalance, employees feel obligated to stay with the organisation. After the debt has been repaid, individuals may choose to leave or reduce effort to the organisation (Pittorino, 2009).

2.2.4 Development of organisational commitment

To understand organisational commitment further necessitates considering how commitment develops within an organisation. According to Johnson, Chang and Yang (2010), commitment develops through various stages, namely compliance, identification and internalisation.

2.2.4.1 Compliance

During this first stage, employees accept the influence of others in order to benefit from them. Employees begin to accept the behaviours and attitudes in order to gain some sort of reward, which is similar to the dimension of continuance commitment in which employees calculate the relevant benefits and rewards. At this stage, employees want to stay in the organisation because of the benefits they receive (Beck & Wilson, 2000).

2.2.4.2 Identification

The second stage involves the employees' acceptance of the social values of the organisation in order to maintain a satisfying relationship with the organisation (Manetje, 2006). Employees begin to develop an identity with the organisation by realising their roles and responsibilities within the organisation. At this stage, organisational commitment can be equated to normative commitment.

2.2.4.3 Internalisation

In this last stage, employees begin to find the social values of the organisation intrinsically rewarding and aligned with their personal values. At this stage, employees experience affective commitment, as they start to develop a sense of belonging and willingness to go beyond what is required in their job (Manetje, 2006).

The stages of organisational commitment and organisational commitment's antecedents provide an understanding of the employee's role in developing a level of commitment to the organisation. By examining the relationship between the employee and the organisation and how commitment develops within the organisation, the importance of organisational commitment becomes increasingly evident.

2.2.4.4 Importance of organisational commitment

Greenberg and Baron (2003) note that there are many positive outcomes when an organisation has committed employees. At the same time, there are also negative consequences to having committed employees, such as a loss of flexibility within the organisation or the lack of innovation due to acceptance of the status quo (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Pittorino, 2009). Effort-reward imbalance, over-commitment to the organisation, and work-life conflict may also result in job and occupational burnout, possible obsessive-compulsive work patterns or even a neurotic compulsion to succeed (Kinman & Jones, 2008; Manetje, 2006). While these potential effects are low, they could prove to be detrimental to the organisation. At the same time, however, high levels of affective, continuance and normative commitment are most likely to have positive implications for the organisation such as higher employee retention. Each dimension of organisational commitment should correlate negatively with an employee's intention to leave the organisation or voluntary turnover behaviour. Therefore, committed employees would create a solid work environment, which is important for organisational stability. According to Culpepper (2011), high turnover in an organisation can be reduced by enhancing affective commitment, but is

only sustainable as long as the organisation maintains the relevant action.

While most commitment research focuses on retention, turnover and performance, commitment's relation to employee well-being has also recently been examined. Employee well-being refers to a wide range of variables such as job satisfaction, physical and mental health, absence in the workplace, and physical or psychological strain (Meyer, Stanley, & Parfyonova, 2011). Wasti (2003) and Somers (2009) found that employees who are affectively committed experience much less job stress than those who have a high level of continuance commitment. Evidence that organisational commitment is an important aspect of an organisation is increasingly apparent, not just in terms of having a stable workforce, but also having healthy employees who are psychologically and physically able to contribute to the organisation.

The psychological bond to the organisation forms the common denominator in all three dimensions of commitment (Ferreira et al, 2010; Humphreys, Weyant & Sprague, 2003). Moreover, it is an important prerequisite for employees to go beyond their expected roles and responsibilities as well as their willingness to contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees who are highly committed demonstrate the willingness to share and make sacrifices that are expected of them in order to conduct effective services.

Each of the three components of commitment has various consequences on work behaviour, such as high levels of attendance or going beyond what is required. For example, an affectively committed employee who is emotionally attached to the organisation is most likely to have a greater motivation or desire to contribute to the organisation than one who has a weak affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The expectation would then be that employees who are highly affectively committed would not be absent from work, would be motivated to perform better at their responsibilities and have a positive work experience (Bergman, 2006). However the consequences for employees who have high continuance commitment would be different, as they stay at an organisation specifically because the costs of leaving the organisation are too high. It could be assumed that the employee would not particularly want to contribute to the organisation in any way, which could lead to feelings of resentment or frustration and produce unsuitable work behaviours (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Murray, Poole & Jones, 2006). Normatively committed employees stay with the organisation out of a feeling of obligation. Such feelings may motivate employees to behave more appropriately and to do the right thing for the organisation. Therefore it is possible that employees who are normatively committed will usually contribute positively to the

organisation in areas such as job performance or attendance due to that feeling of obligation (Rego & Cunha, 2008). Other employees, however, may feel a sense of resentment due to feeling indebted or an obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Organisational commitment forms a significant part of the employee's relationship with the organisation. Organisational commitment and organisational culture have been discussed theoretically to provide a basis for the present study. The theoretical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment will be discussed further below.

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Links between organisational culture and organisational commitment have been explored. Clugston, Howell and Dorfman (2000) found that Hofstede's (1993) cultural dimensions, particularly cultural values, correlated positively with the escalation of Meyer and Allen's (1984) organisational commitment dimensions. Lahiry (1994) found a significant positive relationship between a passive/defensive culture and continuance commitment, but no evidence of a relationship between the organisation's culture and normative commitment. Lahiry (1994) focused on eight business units in a manufacturing organisation, using the organisational culture inventory and Meyer and Allen's (1990) organisational commitment scale. In their study on 202 public managers in Malaysia, using Deshpande and Webster's (1989) cultural types and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale, Rashid et al (2003) found a positive relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. Rashid et al (2003) believe that there is an appropriate match between the type of organisational culture and type of organisational commitment that when it is correctly matched, will be of benefit to the performance of the organisation. Therefore it is evident that organisational culture and organisational commitment have an impact on the success of the organisation (Rashid et al, 2003, p.709).

Findings by O'Reilly et al (1991) suggest that employees who fit the organisational culture are likely to be normatively committed to the organisation. Therefore the employees' were able to identify with the values of the organisation. According to O'Reilly et al (1991) and Nazir (2005) normative commitment or the values-based commitment is often associated with organisations that have a strong culture. Martin (2001, p. 621) also noted that an organisation with a strong culture, which is supported by managers, would result in employees who are more committed to the organisation's aims and objectives. In a study to establish the effect of organisational culture on organisational commitment, Chen (2004) found that a negative relationship exists between an organisational culture that is mainly

bureaucratic in nature and organisational commitment. Odom, Boxx and Dunn (1990) believe that if an organisation removed barriers that were developed as a result of a bureaucratic culture, a stronger organisational commitment would likely be achieved. Chen (2004) also found a positive relationship between a supportive culture and higher levels of organisational commitment. Lok et al (2005) used Wallach's (1983) organisational culture index and Mowday, Porter and Steer's (1979) job commitment survey in their study in three general public hospitals, two private hospitals and two psychiatric hospitals in Sydney, Australia with a sample of 251 nurses. Lok et al (2005, p. 508), Chen (2004) and Odom et al (1990) note that supportive cultures had stronger positive relationships with commitment than a bureaucratic type of culture, which had a negative relationship with commitment.

Using Harrison and Stokes's (1992) organisational culture questionnaire and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale, Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) studied the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a South African municipality (n=148). The results indicated a significant positive relationship between achievement culture and organisational commitment. In addition, the results suggested that organisational culture has a positive correlation with employees' attitudes towards their commitment in an organisation (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). A research study within a South African motor manufacturing organisation, Manetje and Martins (2009) found a significant positive relationship between organisational culture and normative commitment. Manetje and Martins (2009) used Harrison and Stokes's (1992) organisational culture questionnaire and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale on a sample of 371 participants. Pittorino (2009) focused on the relationship between culture, commitment and performance in a South African electricity utility. The study found a significant positive relationship between the existing achievement culture and affective commitment, and a negative linear relationship between the existing power culture and affective commitment. This correlates with Lok et al's (2005) and Odom et al's (1990) findings of a negative relationship between a power or bureaucratic type of culture and commitment levels. Specifically within a South African organisation, there appears to be a positive relationship between achievement culture and organisational commitment.

The literature review indicated that both positive and negative relationships may exist between organisational culture and organisational commitment. The theoretical link between organisational culture and organisational commitment is that the organisation's existing culture does appear to result in organisational commitment, which may lead to the organisation's success within a global economy (Manetje, 2006). Research conducted by Rashid et al, (2003, p. 709), Chen (2004, p. 433), Martins and Martins, (2003, p.380)

indicate that organisational culture has an influence on organisational commitment. Martins and Martins (2003) and Pittorino (2009) further state that the organisation's existing culture will affect the organisation's success and performance. Various measurement instruments were used across organisational culture and commitment studies, and the results appear to be relatively consistent. Organisational culture can have a positive relationship with continuance commitment and normative commitment. An achievement or supportive culture has also been found to have a positive relationship with organisational commitment. Negative relationships have been established between organisational cultures, which are primarily bureaucratic in nature, or organisations that have a centralised power. There appears to be a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in particular circumstances, therefore, and this study wished to establish if there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a South African consulting firm.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter described various definitions of organisational culture and organisational commitment found in the literature reviewed. The definitions of organisational culture agree that there is a shared understanding of the general behaviours and values that are acceptable within the organisation. Harrison's (1993) model of organisational culture was discussed and considered appropriate for use in this study. Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model of organisational commitment was also discussed, and will be used to measure commitment in this study. The three components of organisational commitment are affective, continuance and normative commitment, and can be regarded as a combination of the three components that can be found in varying degrees in an organisation. Of the various studies on the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment discussed, some found significant relationships between particular dimensions of culture and commitment while others indicated no significant relationships between particular culture and commitment dimensions.

Chapter 3 presents a research article based on the empirical results of the study. The article is presented in the format prescribed by the *South African Journal of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*.

CHAPTER 3
Research article

**ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN A
CONSULTING FIRM**

ABSTRACT

Orientation: Global trends affect organisations and the way they function, resulting in organisations adjusting to these changes. Organisational culture and the commitment levels of employees may vary as the organisation attempts to adapt to the changes.

Research purpose: The objective of the study was to explore the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment within a South African consulting firm.

Motivation for the study: Culture is an important part of organisational behaviour and could significantly affect the success of an organisation. Constant changes in the business environment, such as increased global competition, reengineering and downsizing, affect organisational culture. Research has shown that organisational culture may also be related to employees' commitment. This study aimed to determine if these findings would hold true in a South African consulting firm.

Research design, approach and method: The Organisational Culture Questionnaire and the Organisational Commitment Scale were administered to a non-probability sample of 68 employees from a population of 160 employees working within the consulting firm. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

Main findings: Four of the eight culture scales were unreliable and were excluded from further analysis. The results indicate that the consulting firm has a dominant power-orientated culture, and a preferred achievement culture. The results further indicate that the employees are predominantly affectively committed to the firm. Pearson's correlation analysis indicated that there is no relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment within the consulting firm.

Practical implications: This study provided insight into the culture of the firm, with a dominant existing power culture in the consulting firm and the preferred achievement culture, as well as predominantly affectively committed employees.

Contribution: The findings of this study indicate that there is no relationship between

organisational culture and commitment. This is contrary to previous findings and may suggest that organisational culture will not always necessarily be related to organisational commitment in any organisation. In this context, it would seem that culture and commitment should be addressed as separate constructs in the organisation.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations are faced with increasing challenges such as competition and surviving the current difficult economic conditions (Syrett & Devine, 2012). Globalisation has had a significant impact where South African organisations are required to compete not only nationally but within the international market as well (Wood & Glaister, 2008). The changes within the business environment include technological advances and demanding economic trends that define the global market. With the declining effect of the global economic recession, competition and survival of the fittest has significantly increased (Grdinovac, 2010; Liu, 2010; Prabhu, 2010).

Many organisations were required to downsize causing pressure, strain, guilt and stress on the remaining employees. These negative feelings are a result of survivor syndrome (Luthans, Vogelgesang & Lester, 2006) which causes the current workplace to become a risky and unstable environment for employees (Ashkanasy, Wilderom & Peterson, 2011).

Organisational culture and organisational commitment have been proven to influence the organisation's performance and thus affect the way in which an organisation will cope with the constantly changing effects of functioning within a global economy (Manetje & Martins, 2009). Accordingly, an organisation's culture will have to adapt to coping with external and internal environments in order to survive the current economic recession (Schein, 1990; 2010). The recession has also had a significant effect on organisational commitment due to the changing work practices (Morrow, 2011). As a result, commitment levels in general have been lower (Morrow, 2011).

Bearing in mind the changes within the South African economy, employees may view their culture within the organisation (Chipunza, 2009) and commitment to their organisation differently (Cohen, 2003). For instance, the ability to be flexible and therefore less committed to the organisation in order to cope with the changing world of work and improve their employability (Cohen, 2003). This, in turn, would affect the way in which the employees in

the organisation perceive their culture and the behaviours needed to cope with these turbulent changes that affect the organisation and the economy.

Therefore it would be important to understand organisational culture and organisational commitment in a South African organisation within the current context.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Martins and Martins (2003, p. 380) state that organisational culture “helps to provide stability to an organisation, the community and South Africa as a nation”. This indicates the importance of organisational culture in assisting organisations to deal with diverse cultural workforces. In managing diversity, major adjustments are necessary, such as changing organisational culture, restructuring organisations, and developing managers and employees to work in an organisation that is different from what it used to be (Norris, 2000). South African organisations are also experiencing changes in their culture as a result of the new South Africa (Manetje & Martins, 2009) and changing legislation, to which they are required to respond (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2009).

Deal and Kennedy (1982) define organisational culture as the way things are done in an organisation. This basic definition indicates the concept of a shared understanding of how an organisation functions. Schein (1992, p. 12) also identifies the concept of “sharing” and defines organisational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems”. In this definition organisational culture leans towards patterns and the integration of employees’ behaviour, and is therefore passed on to new employees in order to ensure their integration into the organisation. Schein’s (1992; 2010) definition recognises the importance of socialisation within an organisation. Schein’s (1992) definition complements O’Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell’s (1991) definition by stating that organisational culture can be seen as cognitions that are shared by individuals in an organisation and can be described as what a personality is to an individual. Harrison and Stokes (1992), Hellriegel et al (2004), and Martins and Martins, (2003) also support this definition. Therefore, organisational culture provides a shared understanding between employees of how to behave within an organisation. This is then passed on to new employees and becomes the norm of acceptable behaviour.

Harrison and Stokes (1992) identify four dimensions of organisational culture, and maintain that every organisation has a combination of these cultural dimensions. This study adopted Harrison and Stokes's (1992) four dimensions of organisational culture, namely role, power, achievement, and support cultures. Each dimension reflects on a particular behaviour with each one based on different values. The power dimension is generally found in smaller organisations where the organisation is run by one individual or where one individual is responsible for all the employees in the organisation (Martin, 2005), but this can be found in large organisations as well. The role dimension is based on the formal establishment of rules, policies, procedures and specified job descriptions, which guide the organisation and its employees (Martin, 2001). The distinguishing attribute of achievement is that the organisation's employees are united with the organisation's common vision or purpose (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). A supportive culture's main characteristic is the shared trust between the individual and the organisation (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Meyer and Allen's (1991, p. 67) attitudinal definition views organisational commitment as "a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation". Definitions by Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974) and Rashid, Sambasivan and Johari (2003) strengthen the perspective that organisational commitment is not just about a positive attitude which will result in exerting effort on behalf of the organisation, but will also result in the employee wanting to remain at and be involved in a certain organisation. Miller (2003, p. 73) states that organisational commitment describes employees who associate themselves with a certain organisation and its goals and as a result will look to sustain their affiliation with the organisation. Greenberg and Baron (2003) also view organisational commitment as the employees' attitudes towards their organisations.

Luthans (2008, p. 147) concurs, stating that employees are committed to the organisation if they have "(1) a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; (2) a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; (3) a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization". The common factors in the definition of organisational commitment are that it is an attitude which employees hold which affects their behaviour in the organisation, and can result in the acceptance of the organisation's goals, missions and values, which in turn make the employees want to exert

effort in order to achieve those goals. Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organisational commitment was used as the basis for this study and identifies feelings of identification, attachment and loyalty to the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1991) further developed a model of organisational commitment based on their definition, consisting of affective, normative and continuance commitment.

These three dimensions describe different ways in which organisational commitment develops as well as the implications for employee behaviour. The model has received substantial empirical support (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). Affective commitment represents an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Continuance commitment refers to the employee's awareness of the costs that are associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative commitment portrays the feeling of obligation to stay with an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Links between organisational culture and organisational commitment have been explored. Clugston, Howell and Dorfman (2000) found that Hofstede's (1993) cultural dimensions, particularly cultural values, correlated positively with the escalation of Meyer and Allen's (1984) organisational commitment dimensions. Lahiry (1994) found a significant positive relationship between a passive/defensive culture and continuance commitment, but no evidence of a relationship between the organisation's culture and normative commitment. Lahiry (1994) focused on eight business units in a manufacturing organisation, using the organisational culture inventory and Meyer and Allen's (1990) organisational commitment scale. In their study on 202 public managers in Malaysia, using Deshpande and Webster's (1989) cultural types and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale, Rashid et al (2003) found a positive relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. Rashid et al (2003) believe that there is an appropriate match between the type of organisational culture and type of organisational commitment that when it is correctly matched, will be of benefit to the performance of the organisation. Therefore it is evident that organisational culture and organisational commitment have an impact on the success of the organisation (Rashid et al, 2003, p.709).

Findings by O'Reilly et al (1991) suggest that employees who fit the organisational culture are likely to be normatively committed to the organisation. Therefore the employees' were able to identify with the values of the organisation. According to O'Reilly et al (1991) and Nazir (2005) normative commitment or the values-based commitment is often associated with organisations that have a strong culture. Martin (2001, p. 621) also noted that an organisation with a strong culture, which is supported by managers, would result in employees who are more committed to the organisation's aims and objectives. In a study to establish the effect of organisational culture on organisational commitment, Chen (2004) found that a negative relationship exists between an organisational culture that is mainly bureaucratic in nature and organisational commitment. Odom, Boxx and Dunn (1990) believe that if an organisation removed barriers that were developed as a result of a bureaucratic culture, a stronger organisational commitment would likely be achieved. Chen (2004) also found a positive relationship between a supportive culture and higher levels of organisational commitment. Lok et al (2005) used Wallach's (1983) organisational culture index and Mowday, Porter and Steer's (1979) job commitment survey in their study in three general public hospitals, two private hospitals and two psychiatric hospitals in Sydney, Australia with a sample of 251 nurses. Lok et al (2005, p. 508), Chen (2004) and Odom et al (1990) note that supportive cultures had stronger positive relationships with commitment than a bureaucratic type of culture, which had a negative relationship with commitment.

Using Harrison and Stokes's (1992) organisational culture questionnaire and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale, Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) studied the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a South African municipality (n=148). The results indicated a significant positive relationship between the existing organisational culture and organisational commitment (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). In addition, the results suggested that organisational culture has a positive correlation with employees' attitudes towards their commitment in an organisation (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007).

In research in a South African motor manufacturing organisation, Manetje and Martins (2009) found a significant positive relationship between organisational culture and normative commitment. Manetje and Martins (2009) used Harrison and Stokes's (1992) organisational culture questionnaire and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale on a sample of 371 participants. Pittorino (2009) focused on the relationship between culture,

commitment and performance in a South African electricity utility. The study found a significant positive relationship between the existing achievement culture and affective commitment, and a negative linear relationship between the existing power culture and affective commitment. This correlates with Lok et al's (2005) and Odom et al (1990) findings of a negative relationship between a power or bureaucratic type of culture and commitment levels. Specifically within a South African organisation, there appears to be a positive relationship between achievement culture and organisational commitment.

The literature review indicated that both positive and negative relationships may exist between organisational culture and organisational commitment. The theoretical link between organisational culture and organisational commitment is that the organisation's existing culture does appear to result in organisational commitment and success (Manetje, 2006). Research conducted by Rashid et al, (2003, p. 709), (Chen, 2004, p. 433), Martins and Martins, (2003, p.380) indicate that organisational culture has an influence on organisational commitment. Martins and Martins (2003) further state that the organisations existing culture will affect the organisation's success and performance. Organisational culture can have a positive relationship with continuance commitment and normative commitment. An achievement or supportive culture has also been found to have a positive relationship with organisational commitment. Negative relationships have been established between organisational cultures, which are primarily bureaucratic in nature, or organisations that have a centralised power on the one hand and organisational commitment on the other.

Research objectives

There appears to be a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in particular circumstances. Consequently, the aim of this study was to determine whether these findings could be replicated within a South African consulting firm, using Harrison and Stokes' (1992) organisational culture questionnaire and Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment scale.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Approach

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used. A cross-sectional survey design collects data at one point in time from one sample in order to represent the larger population (Hall, 2008).

Research Method

Research Participants

The target population consisted of professional, management, technical, support and administrative employees (N=160) at a consulting firm's head office in South Africa, including both permanent and contract staff. A non-probability sample of 68 employees responded to the survey, yielding a response rate of 42.5%. Table 1 reflects the respondents' biographical details.

The sample consisted of 58.8% (n = 40) men and 39.7% (n = 27) women and one employee preferred not to disclose gender. Of the respondents, 66.2% (n = 45) consisted of white respondents with 16.2% (n = 11) African, 1.5% (n = 1) Coloured and 14.7% (n = 10) Indian respondents. Table 1 also indicates that most of the respondents, 41.2% (n = 28) were between the ages of 35 and 44, and 36.8% (n = 25) were between 25 and 34. Of the respondents, 29.4% (n = 20) were employed in Mining & Metals, 16.2% (n = 11) in Support Services, and 51.3% (n = 37) were employed in the other 6 service sectors.

Table 1 indicates that of the respondents, 67.7% (n = 46) had a Bachelors, Honours or Master's degree, and 32.4% (n = 22) had a Higher Diploma, Diploma, Certificate or Matriculation (Grade 12). Finally, table 1 shows that of the respondents, 54.4% (n = 37) had worked for the organisation for one to five years; 11.8% (n = 8) had worked there for between five and ten years, and 14.7% (n = 10) had been with the organisation for one year or less. Only 2.9% (n = 2) had been with the organisation for over 20 years.

Table 1

Respondents' biographical details (n=68)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	40	58.8
Female	27	39.7
Prefer not to answer	1	1.5
Ethnicity		

White	45	66.2
African	11	16.2
Indian	10	14.7
Coloured	1	1.5

Age

Under 25 years	5	7.4
25-34 years	25	36.8
35-44 years	28	41.2
45-54 years	4	5.9
55-64 years	5	7.4
65 years plus	1	1.5

Department

Mining & Metals	20	29.4
Cost Management	9	13.2
Industrial & Infrastructure	9	13.2
Support Services	11	16.2
Project Management	6	8.8
FM/PPP	3	4.4
Contract Services	2	2.9
Energy	4	5.9
Prefer not to answer	2	2.9

Education

Matriculation (Grade 12)	5	7.4
Certificate	8	11.8
Diploma	6	8.8
Higher Diploma	3	4.4
Bachelor's degree	17	25
Honour's degree	21	30.9
Master's degree	8	11.8

Tenure			
0-1 year		10	14.7
1-5 years		37	54.4
5-10 years		8	11.8
10-20 years		11	16.2
Over 20 years		2	2.9

Measuring Instruments

Organisational Culture

Harrison and Stokes's (1992) Organisational Culture Questionnaire (OCQ) with 60 items that measure four dimensions of organisational culture, namely achievement, power, role, and support cultures (Harrison, 1993). A four-point Likert-type scale is used for rating the existing responses of the OCQ. The reliability of the OCQ's four dimensions as calculated by the Spearman-Brown formula is 0.86 for achievement, 0.90 for power, 0.64 for role and 0.87 for support (Harrison, 1993). The overall reliability of the OCQ is 0.85 (Harrison, 1993). There is also evidence of construct validity of the OCQ, which is the ability of the questionnaire to vary simultaneously with other measures, which should reflect the same underlying attitudes and values (Harrison, 1993). Janz (1987) (cited in Harrison 1993) conducted a comparative study, with a questionnaire known as the Culture Index, which revealed that they both measure similar attitudes and values of organisational culture.

Organisational Commitment

Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) measures the three components of organisational commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative, through 24 structured items or statements. Eight statements or items measure each dimension. A seven-point Likert-type scale is used to measure the commitment dimensions. Meyer and Allen (1997) found the internal consistencies vary between 0.85 for affective, 0.79 for continuance and 0.73 for normative. The overall reliability exceeds 0.70 (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The construct validity of the OCS is based on the fact that the dimensions correlate as predicted with proposed antecedent variables, such as personality, experience and demographic factors, and situational variables, such as task interdependence, job involvement and work group attachment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research Procedure

Discussions were held with the Human Resources Manager and the Finance Director of the consulting firm in order to obtain clearance for the research to be conducted in the South African offices. The questionnaires were printed and handed out personally to the participants at the organisation to complete and the questionnaires were collected from each participant. Both the OCQ and OCS are self-administered questionnaires and could therefore be completed by the participants without any assistance. Written consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring the confidentiality of their results, explaining the research procedure and how the results would be used. The questionnaires were anonymous and the option of “prefer not to answer” was offered in the biographical section, should the candidate be concerned about being identified. The researcher’s contact details were also provided to answer any questions and clarify any confusion.

Statistical Analysis

The reliability of the questionnaires used was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient measures internal consistency, which refers to the degree to which the measuring instrument items are consistent in the construct it is attempting to measure. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 164) state that Cronbach’s Alpha once computed, will produce a value that varies between 1 (representing perfect internal reliability) and 0 (representing no internal consistency), with the values 0.80 and 0.70 typically used as a cut-off point for a good level of internal reliability. In this study, a score of 0.70 was used as a cut-off score. Descriptive statistics (e.g. means and standard deviations) were used to analyse the data. The mean was identified for each dimension of organisational culture and organisational commitment. The mean is the arithmetic average of all the numbers (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2007). A correlation analysis was done to determine any possible relationships between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

Since the sample was relatively small for a quantitative study, a power analysis was conducted and results revealed that the study had a power of 0.82. Most guidelines are in agreement that a power of 80% is reasonable (Field, 2005) to detect an effect if one genuinely exists. According to Cohen’s (1992) guidelines, a large ($n=28$) to medium ($n=85$) effect could be detected with a sample of 68, if such an effect exists.

RESULTS

Reliability of the measuring instruments

The reliability of the culture and commitment subscales was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability of scales of the culture and commitment questionnaires

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	N of Items
Existing Power Culture	0.80	15
Existing Role Culture	0.53	15
Existing Achievement Culture	0.60	15
Existing Support Culture	0.88	15
Preferred Power Culture	0.93	15
Preferred Role Culture	0.45	15
Preferred Achievement Culture	0.93	15
Preferred Support Culture	0.63	15
Affective Commitment	0.79	6
Continuance Commitment	0.76	6
Normative Commitment	0.79	6

From table 2 it can be seen that the alpha coefficients of seven of the subscales ranged from 0.76 to 0.91, indicating internal consistencies within the recommended range. However, the existing role and achievement subscales and preferred role and support subscales appear to have an unacceptably low reliability (0.53, 0.60, 0.45 and 0.63, respectively). These low values suggest that the items in these scales did not correlate strongly with other items and therefore have low internal consistency. Therefore, these subscales were excluded from further analysis due to their lack of reliability.

Organisational culture and commitment

This section discusses the descriptive statistics of the organisational culture and organisational commitment. The statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3***Descriptive statistics of Organisational Culture and Organisational Commitment***

Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Existing Power Culture	68	38.47	9.33	-0.04	-0.23
Existing Support Culture	68	31.49	9.84	0.94	0.35
Affective Commitment	68	23.94	10.30	-0.28	-0.81
Continuance Commitment	68	19.4	9.55	0.08	-0.85
Normative Commitment	68	23	10.14	-0.05	-0.80

From table 3, taking into account the organisational culture and organisational commitment subscales that had an acceptable level of reliability, it can be seen that the respondents perceive the most dominant existing culture to be the power culture with a mean score of 38.47. The second strongest existing organisational culture is the support culture with a mean of 31.49.

Table 3 further illustrates that the dominant preferred culture in the consulting firm is achievement culture, with a mean score of 41.16. This score indicates that the respondents at the consulting firm would prefer to have an achievement rather than a power culture.

The mean scores of the organisational commitment scale indicate the respondents are committed to the organisation to a moderate degree. According to their mean scores, the respondents seem to be more committed in terms of the affective (23.94) and normative dimensions (23) than the continuance dimension (19.4).

The relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment

This section discusses the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. Table 4 depicts the findings.

Table 4***Correlations between Organisational Culture and Organisational Commitment***

Variable		EP	ES	AC	CC	NC
Existing Power (EP)	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	68				
Existing Support (ES)	Pearson Correlation	-0.658**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
	N	68	68			
Affective Commitment (AC)	Pearson Correlation	0.065	-0.101	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.600	0.412			
	N	68	68	68		
Continuance Commitment (CC)	Pearson Correlation	0.277	0.841	0.867	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.277	0.841	0.867		
	N	68	68	68	68	
Normative Commitment (NC)	Pearson Correlation	0.129	0.093	0.626**	0.297*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.295	0.450	0.000	0.015	
	N	68	68	68	68	68

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 4, there is no significant relationship between any of the culture dimensions and the three organisational commitment types at the consulting firm.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment dimensions in a South African consulting firm.

The results revealed that the measuring instruments used in this study were reliable, except for the existing role and achievement subscales and preferred role and support subscales which appeared to have an unacceptably low reliability. Similar low reliability coefficients were found in Van Stuyvesant Meijen's (2007) study, with coefficients for existing and preferred role culture at 0.45, and existing achievement culture at 0.39.

Harrison's (1993) study yielded reliability scores of achievement (0.86), power (0.90), role (0.64) and support (0.87). Manetje and Martins (2009) yielded acceptable reliability values: existing achievement culture (0.70), existing power culture (0.75), existing role culture (0.81) and existing support culture (0.78), preferred power culture (0.73), preferred power culture (0.72), preferred role culture (0.70) and preferred support culture (0.75) which indicates a high internal consistency. The reliability scores found in this study do not correlate with Harrison's (1993) values. These scores may be due to the self-administration of the questionnaire, as there was no further instruction prior to completing the questionnaire apart from the written instructions provided.

Van Stuyvesant Meijen's (2007) organisational commitment scales also proved to be similar to the current study, with the affective commitment subscale yielding an alpha coefficient of 0.75 and continuance commitment, 0.70. However, Van Stuyvesant Meijen's (2007) coefficient for normative commitment was only 0.30. Meyer and Allen's (1997) study indicated the subscale with the highest reliability to be affective commitment at 0.85, followed by continuance commitment with a coefficient of 0.79, and lastly normative commitment with an alpha coefficient of 0.73. Research conducted by Manetje and Martins (2009) produced reliability values of 0.77, 0.80 and 0.71 for affective, continuance and normative commitment, respectively. Meyer and Allen's (1997) and Manetje and Martins's (2009) scores correlate with the current study's reliability values, with affective commitment at 0.79, continuance commitment at 0.76 and normative commitment at 0.79.

The respondents indicated that they perceive the firm to currently have a power culture. A power-oriented firm is based on inequality of access to resources, which is generally controlled by a single source of authority where all the important decisions are made (Harrison, 1993). At its best, a power-oriented firm's leadership is based on strength and justice, with leaders who are firm, fair and generous to their loyal subordinates. They would feel a sense of obligation to their employees and would only exercise their power in accordance with their understanding of what is good for the firm and all its employees (Harrison, 1993). A major benefit for the consulting firm is that they would be able to react quickly to changes in the environment and, as an international company, would be able to adapt to global trends as there is a single source of power who deals with change and would therefore be able to make quick decisions. However, the disadvantage for the consulting firm is that employees may tend not to question their leaders even when they appear to be wrong or when they need to provide bad news, due to the consequences that may follow (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

The second dominant culture indicated by the respondents is the support culture. The support culture has its basis on mutual trust between the employee and the organisation (Harrison, 1993). With a support culture, the respondents feel that they are not just cogs in a machine, but valued human beings, who are integral to the firm's success. The support culture fosters warmth, with employees coming to work not only because they like their work but also because they care about the people they work with. However, the consulting firm may be at a disadvantage as the respondents (and other employees) may focus too much on their relationships with colleagues, neglect work being done, and avoid making difficult decisions that may upset others.

The dominant preferred culture of achievement indicates that the respondents prefer the use of external rewards and punishments as motivation (Harrison, 1993). If the consulting firm had an achievement culture, the advantage would be that employees would share a sense of urgency when attaining worthwhile goals and values as they feel that they are working towards something bigger than themselves as well as high morale, teamwork and a sense of camaraderie among colleagues. Employees would also manage themselves and voluntarily do whatever needs to be done to meet the organisation's goals. It would also facilitate communication laterally and vertically (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). However, the disadvantage of the achievement culture is that employees may believe so much in what they

do, that the end comes to justify the means. Employees may become intolerant of their colleagues' personal needs, especially if they sacrifice work for the sake of their family, social life or health. This may result in employees beginning to burn out due to the pressure they place on themselves (Harrison & Stokes, 1992).

The findings of this study concur with those of Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) and Manetje and Martins (2009), which indicated that the dominant culture in their respective sampled organisations is the power culture. Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) and Manetje and Martins (2009) both identified the support culture as the dominant preferred culture within the respective organisations. However, this study indicates that the dominant preferred culture is the achievement culture. This may be due to the nature of the consulting industry as opposed to a municipality or motor company, which places significant emphasis on individual performance as well as the achievement of specified project goals.

The results illustrate that the respondents are moderately affectively committed to the consulting firm. Affectively committed employees have an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Therefore, the respondents stay with the firm because they want to and generally have the desire to contribute meaningfully to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The respondents also indicated being normatively committed to the consulting firm. Employees who are normatively committed will feel obligated to stay with the firm, mainly due to the belief that it is the moral or right thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1997). There appears to be a fine line between the respondents feeling that they want to remain with the firm or feeling that they should stay with the firm. Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) found that the participants within the municipality were normatively committed. Manetje and Martins (2009) found that the participants in the motor company had continuance commitment.

The results further indicate that there is no linear relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in this context. This may be due to several factors in the consulting firm, such as that the participants spend most of their working hours with the client due to being based on the client site for specific projects. These respondents may find themselves adapting to the client's culture (which may be different to the consulting firm) and have a commitment to their client. This is common in the firm, as the nature of consulting results in employees being seconded to various joint venture projects. Employees

may find themselves working with various employees from different organisations, and reporting to managers from other organisations for the duration of the project. As a result, employees may not be exposed enough to the consulting firm's culture, in order to adopt it as their own, and their commitment level would be related to the project they are assigned. This may affect the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. In contrast, Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) found statistically significant relationships between the existing role culture and affective and normative commitment, as well as a relationship between the existing support culture and affective and normative commitment. Manetje and Martins (2009) also found significant relationships between all existing and preferred organisational cultures and normative commitment.

LIMITATIONS

This study had several limitations. The first limitation was related to the population, sampling strategy and sample group as convenience sampling was used and all the respondents were from a single firm. Consequently, the results could not be generalised to the wider population or other consulting firms. In addition to this, some of the scales in the culture questionnaire did not yield reliable results and could not be used in identifying whether or not a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment exists. Therefore the present results are limited to the specific consulting firm, and further research would be required in order to generalise to other populations. The survey used was a cross-sectional design, conducted at a single point in time, and therefore causal or longitudinal inferences cannot be made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the limitations, this study made specific recommendations for the firm to address and for further research. The firm should communicate the findings of the study to all the employees, in order to create awareness of the organisational culture and organisational commitment. The strengths of the power-oriented culture and normative and affective commitment levels should be highlighted. The firm should address that the preferred culture is an achievement culture, and highlight what this means.

Based on the results showing the respondents prefer an achievement-oriented culture, reward systems should be based on performance and competency to create a sense of achievement within the firm. Demanding goals should be set with the employees, and rewards given for

individual achievement of the identified goals. With further visible management commitment to rewarding employees, this may create a positive influence on the success of the reward system. Further performance management processes should be put in place to assist employees in developing their careers. This would be important as employees would not just be achieving organisation-based goals, but it would allow them to achieve personal work and career goals that may not necessarily be identified as organisational goals.

Training should be provided internally on the decision making process, so that all employees are aware of it. Then, decision-making authority should also be given to performing employees in order to provide ownership of their roles. Further to this, an achievement culture would give employees effective authority in relation to their ability to contribute to the mission of the organisation, whereas with the power culture, the decision-making authority lies with a single source.

Further research should be conducted on the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment within other South African consulting organisations to improve the generalisability of the results.

Further research should be conducted with a larger sample to assist in improving the reliability of the results. Moreover, the administration of the questionnaires should be conducted in person in order to ensure respondents understand the questions and the administrator can deal with any questions that may arise.

A longitudinal study should be conducted over time to determine the effect of changing organisational culture on organisational commitment.

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CHAPTER 4

Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

This chapter discusses the conclusions and limitations of the study and makes recommendations.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of the study was to determine whether there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in a consulting firm in South Africa.

Research conclusions from the literature review and the empirical study for the research aims are formulated below.

The theoretical objectives were to define and describe (conceptualise) organisational culture and organisational commitment as well as to discuss the theoretical relationship between the concepts. This objective was achieved by means of the literature review on organisational culture and organisational commitment.

It is generally agreed that organisational culture refers to shared norms, values, meanings, beliefs and principles of individuals which are held in an organisation and forms part of the socialisation process of new employees (Lok & Crawford, 2003; Martins & Coetzee, 2007; Rashid et al, 2003; Robbins et al. 2007; Schein, 2010; Taormina, 2009). Harrison (1993) identifies four dimensions, namely, power, role, achievement and support. All organisations have a combination of these four dimensions, which reflects particular behaviours and values that are present in the organisation. Organisational culture is developed and further maintained by leadership and employees in the organisation, and creates a standard of acceptable behaviours which is then adhered to by current employees and learnt by new employees (Schein, 2010). In order to cope with the effects of globalisation, organisational culture further adapts to external and internal environments. This constant adaptation has had a significant effect on work practices and patterns, which as a result, may affect organisational commitment levels (Morrow, 2011).

Organisational commitment is widely considered an attitude (Dhladhla, 2011). By viewing organisational commitment as an attitude, employees' positive attitudes show that they accept organisational goals and have a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation (Clayton & Hutchinson, 2002; Manetje, 2006). Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organisational commitment represents the employees' desire to remain part of an organisation, to work hard in order to achieve the organisation's goals, and an

acceptance of these goals as their own goals. Meyer and Allen (1997) further identify three dimensions of commitment, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment.

The constructs of organisational culture and organisational commitment appear to be both positively and negatively related. Various measurement instruments have been used across organisational culture and commitment studies, and the results appear to be relatively consistent. Positive relationships have been found between organisational culture and continuance commitment and normative commitment (Lahiry, 1994). An achievement or supportive culture also has a positive relationship with organisational commitment (Chen, 2004; Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007). Negative relationships have been established between organisational cultures, which are primarily bureaucratic in nature, or organisations that have a centralised power (Chen, 2004). According to Harrison (1993), the power-oriented organisational culture is suited to entrepreneurial and start-up situations, in which a leader has the vision, intelligence and will to manage the business and direct its employees' activities. Therefore, a positive relationship between the power culture and commitment may not necessarily be identified, as research tends to be conducted on larger organisations. Positive relationships between existing organisational culture and organisational commitment have been found in a South African municipality (Van Stuyvesant Meijen, 2007) and a motor manufacturing organisation (Manetje, 2006). However, no positive relationship between the preferred organisational culture and organisational commitment was found in a South African electricity company (Pittorino, 2009). Therefore, the results vary between different South African organisations.

The empirical aims of the study were to identify the existing and preferred organisational culture dimension(s); to determine the existing organisational commitment dimension(s); to determine the empirical relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in the consulting organisation under study, and lastly, to formulate recommendations for organisational culture and organisational commitment (which will be addressed under the last heading of this chapter). The following conclusions were drawn from the results.

From the results, the participants identified the existing organisational culture in the consulting firm as power-oriented. Power-oriented consulting firms are based on the inequality of access to resources, which are generally controlled by a single source of authority where all the important decisions are made (Harrison, 1993). At its best, a power-oriented firm's leadership is based on strength and justice, with leaders who are firm, fair and generous to their loyal subordinates. The firm's leadership feel a sense of obligation to

their employees and would only exercise their power in accordance with their understanding of what is good for the firm and all its employees (Harrison, 1993).

The organisational commitment results indicated that there is a fine line between the participants' feeling that they want to remain with the firm or that they should stay with the firm. The participants are moderately normatively committed. Therefore, employees feel obligated to stay with the firm, mainly due to the belief that it is the moral or right thing to do (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The participants' feelings of obligation to the organisation and the leadership to its employees are represented in the power-oriented culture and the normative commitment.

The study results indicate further that the dominant preferred culture in the consulting firm is an achievement culture. If the consulting firm had an achievement culture, the participants would share a sense of urgency when attaining worthwhile goals and values as they feel that they are working towards something bigger than themselves as well as high morale, teamwork and a sense of camaraderie among colleagues. Management emphasize and reinforce the mission of the organisation and the participants clearly understood this. The participants would also manage themselves and voluntarily do whatever needs to be done to meet the organisation's goals. An achievement culture would also facilitate communication laterally and vertically (Harrison & Stokes, 1992). A significant disadvantage of the existing power culture is that, according to the participants, communication is often restrained between management and employees. Therefore the participants (and other employees) may fear being open and honest with their thoughts and tend to be careful with what they say and who they say it to.

The organisational commitment results indicated further that the participants are moderately affectively committed to the consulting firm. Therefore, the participants have an emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the consulting firm. The participants stay with the firm because they want to and generally have the desire to contribute meaningfully to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Since the participants already feel a sense of emotional attachment to, and identification with the consulting firm, an achievement culture would likely strengthen this commitment to the firm. As with an achievement culture, the participants would take on the organisation's goals as their own and put more effort into meeting the organisation's goals and further working towards the organisation's mission. Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) found a positive relationship between existing achievement culture and organisational commitment.

The results of this study showed that no relationship exists between organisational culture and organisational commitment, which may be a result of various possible factors within the consulting firm. One such possible factor is that the participants spend most of their working hours with the client due to being based at the client site for specific projects. The participants might find themselves adapting to the client's culture (which may be different to the consulting firm) and have a commitment to their client. This is a common situation within the firm, as the nature of consulting results in the participants and other employees being seconded to various joint venture projects. The participants may find themselves working with various employees from different organisations, and reporting to managers from other organisations for the duration of the project. As a result, the participants may not be exposed enough to the consulting firm's culture, in order to adopt it as their own, and their commitment level would be related to the project they are assigned. This may affect the relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment and may further contribute to the study's results that there is no relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

While this study shows that no relationship exists between organisational culture and organisational commitment in this context, Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) found a positive relationship between the existing role culture and affective and normative commitment, as well as a positive relationship between the existing support culture and affective and normative commitment. Manetje and Martins (2009) also indicate positive relationships between all existing organisational cultures and normative commitment. The results of the current study show that there is no significant relationship between the preferred cultures and organisational commitment. This concurs with Van Stuyvesant Meijen's (2007) and Pittorino's (2009) findings that there is no significant relationship between the preferred cultures and organisational commitment.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

The researcher identified the following limitations in the study:

Convenience sampling was used and all the respondents were from a single firm. The sample size was too small and therefore findings cannot be generalised to the wider population or other South African consulting organisations.

Specific scales in the culture questionnaires proved problematic, the existing role and achievement subscales and preferred role and support subscales appear to be unacceptably low (0.53, 0.60, 0.45 and 0.63 respectively) in the culture questionnaire and consequently

could not be used in identifying whether or not a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment exists.

In terms of design limitations, the survey used was a cross-sectional design, conducted at a single point in time. A longitudinal study would provide a more valid result, as the consistency of the results could be viewed over time and irregularities in the results could be addressed.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations for the firm and for further research.

4.3.1 The consulting firm

The firm should communicate the findings of the study to the employees, in order to create awareness of the organisational culture and organisational commitment. The strengths of the power-oriented culture and normative and affective commitment levels should be highlighted. The firm should address that the preferred culture is an achievement culture, and highlight what this means.

Since the participants prefer an achievement-oriented culture, reward systems should be based on performance and competency, to create a sense of achievement within the firm. Demanding goals could be set with the employees, and rewards given for individual achievement of the identified goals. With further visible management commitment to rewarding employees, this may create a positive influence on the success of the reward system. Further performance management processes should be put in place to assist employees in developing their careers. This would be important as employees would not just be achieving organisation-based goals, but it would allow employees to achieve personal work and career goals that may not necessarily be identified as organisational goals.

Management should provide training internally on the decision-making process, so that all employees are aware of it. Then, decision-making authority could also be given to performing employees, in order to provide ownership of their roles. Further to this, an achievement culture would give employees effective authority in relation to their ability to contribute to the mission of the organisation, whereas with the power culture, the decision-making authority lies with a single source.

4.3.2 Further research

The researcher recommends that further research be conducted on

- The relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment in other South African consulting organisations to improve the generalisability of the results and with larger populations
- The same topic, but with the administration of the questionnaires conducted in person, in order to ensure respondents understand the questionnaire and the administrator can deal with any questions that may arise
- A longitudinal study, conducted over time to determine the effect of changing organisational culture on organisational commitment

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conclusions and limitations of the study and made recommendations for practice and further research.

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