

**EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY AS PREDICTORS OF
STAFF SATISFACTION WITH RETENTION FACTORS**

by

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SCOPE OF THE DISSERTATION

For this master's dissertation of limited scope (50% of the total master's 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.

TECHNICAL AND REFERENCE STYLE

The publication guidelines of the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (SAJIP) were chosen to structure the article presented in chapter 3. The APA 6th edition guidelines for referencing, tables and figures were used.

DECLARATION

I, Elleen Stoltz, student number 53337328, declare that the dissertation entitled “Employability attributes and career adaptability as predictors of staff satisfaction with retention factors” is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I also declare that the study has been carried out in strict accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (Unisa). I took great care that the research was conducted with the highest integrity, taking into account Unisa’s Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism.

I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research has been obtained from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa. Permission has been obtained from the participating organisation to conduct the research.

SIGNATURE

DATE

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ABSTRACT / SUMMARY

EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY AS PREDICTORS OF STAFF SATISFACTION WITH RETENTION FACTORS

by

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The objectives of the study were firstly to determine the relationship between employability attributes (measured by the Employability Attributes Scale), career adaptability (measured by the Career-Adapt Abilities Scale) and retention factors (measured by the Retention Factor Scale), and, secondly, to determine whether employees from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in their levels of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. A cross-sectional quantitative, correlational research design was followed. The non-probability sample consisted of 321 permanently employed salaried employees in a South African automotive manufacturing company. Descriptive statistics, correlations, structural equation modelling and regressions were used for data analysis. The data analysis revealed significant associations between the career meta-competencies and retention factors. In addition, significant differences were found between age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups.

Key terms: employability, employability attributes, career adaptability, satisfaction, retention factors, retention practices

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

The study described here investigated whether employability attributes and career adaptability are predictors of staff satisfaction with retention factors. This chapter discusses the background and motivation for the study, as well as the problem statement, research aims, paradigm perspective, research design and method.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The context of the present study is employee retention in a changing marketplace. More specifically, the study focuses on the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with factors that influence their retention. Today's employers demand new and different types of skills from their workers than in the past (Cinar, Dongel, & Sogutlu, 2009) and university qualifications are no longer the only qualities employers look for when recruiting (Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwaldes, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, & Van Esbroeck, 2009). Entering the world of work today requires more effort, deeper self-knowledge and greater confidence than ever before (Savickas, 2012). Workers have to be employable lifelong learners who commit themselves to an organisation for a period of time and show professional character in performing emotional labour and adapting quickly to changes (Savickas, 2012). In this turbulent career environment, survival depends on workers constantly managing change. Thus, a person's ability and willingness to adapt is essential to career success (Hall, 2002). Current workplaces require workers with high technical skills coupled with well-developed employability skills (Singh & Singh, 2008). Employees are expected to assume greater ownership for their careers, hence a greater focus on psychological career-related meta-capacities, such as employability attributes, career adaptability and retention-related dispositions, for example satisfaction and commitment (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010).

Employability attributes refer to the general and nontechnical competencies that are required for performing all jobs, regardless of the type or level (Ju, Zhang, & Pacha, 2012), and are identified as being the most critical skills in the current global job market (Ministry of Higher Education in Malaysia, 2006; Potgieter, 2012). Since today's post-industrial society no longer guarantees ordered and sequential career pathways for adolescents or adults (Nota, Ginevra, & Soresi, 2012), individuals need to have the skills and attitudes (attributes) that allow them to adapt quickly to a variety of situations and to cope with more frequent work transitions (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012). Consequently, career meta-

competencies such as employability and career adaptability resources can enable people to proactively manage career transitions (Brown, Bimros, Barnes, & Hughes, 2012; De Guzman & Choi, 2013), construct their work lives and build their careers (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012). In the current economic crisis, with limited employability skills and adaptability resources employees might experience a person-job mismatch or experience underemployment, with negative consequences for career satisfaction, career-enhancing behaviours and career prospects (Gutman & Schoon, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Takase, Nakayoshi, & Teraoka, 2012). The shortage of employability and career adaptability skills, as well as the importance of retaining and developing these skills in the global job market, cannot be underestimated (Koen et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

There would seem to be consensus on the issue that skills shortages are major obstacles to economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Kraak, 2008; Rasool & Botha, 2011). In the search for solutions to overcome the problem of skills shortages in South African workplaces, it seems beneficial to gain insight into the contribution that employability and adaptability skills make to employees' satisfaction with organisational retention factors. An investigation into the psychological career-related attributes (meta-competencies), such as individual employability and career adaptability, that have been shown by research to influence individuals' retention-related dispositions (for example, satisfaction and commitment) has thus become crucial in the light of the changing nature of careers and the global skills scarcity (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). The concept of employability has recently been emphasised as a key contributor to career satisfaction and success in an increasingly unstable and chaotic global business environment (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010). Individuals are now more likely to change jobs frequently, either by choice or by necessity, in light of a struggling Western work economy (Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, & Dauwalder, 2012). In this context, as previously explained, individuals need to have skills and attributes that allow them to adapt quickly to a variety of situations (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas et al., 2009). On the other hand, employers need to be able to retain their valuable knowledge workers in the midst of a general shortage of experienced and skilled candidates and in response to the aggressive recruitment tactics used by others in the high technology arena (Mohlala, Goldman, & Goosen, 2012; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

The best way to understand the current employment era is by realising that the only constant is change (Arnold & Randall, 2010). Pressure to change stems from a variety of internal and

external sources and, as a result, the business environment has become more dynamic and complex (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Boojihawon & Segal-Horn, 2006; Du Toit & Coetzee, 2012; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012). The recent economic downturn and the need for a knowledge-based society and knowledge economy (Melnikas, 2011); the mounting pressure to mitigate the carbon footprint of nations and stimulate economic recovery (Scully-Russ, 2013); the rapidly changing society (Roberts, 2002) and the nature of careers (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Potgieter, 2012; Sinclair, 2009); the increasing skills shortage in times of global skills shortages (Brundage & Koziel, 2010; Chabault, Hulin, & Soparnot, 2012) and the existence of four generations of employees working side by side for the first time in history (Schoch, 2012) are all proof of the changing nature of the 21st century and the complexities of this era.

Whereas the secure employment and stable organisations of the 20th century offered a firm basis for building a life and envisioning a future, the digital revolution of the 21st century has brought a new social arrangement of work in which temporary assignments and time-limited projects have replaced permanent jobs (Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000). The new job market in an unsettled economy calls for viewing a career not as a lifetime commitment to one employer, but as a recurrent selling of services and skills to a series of employers who need projects completed (Savickas, 2012). On an individual level, current trends indicate that as organisations become boundary-less, career paths that span more than one organisation can be expected (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012). As career paths are less predictable, enhanced employability has become the new benchmark of career success (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Coetzee & Bergh, 2009; Du Toit & Coetzee, 2012; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Employability refers not only to people's ability to gain entrance to, adjust to and be dynamic in the place of work, but also to their constant ability to perform, obtain or create work through the best possible use of both occupation-related and career meta-competencies (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Employability attributes are psychosocial constructs that describe career-related characteristics, such as career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). Employability attributes promote adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect. They also increase a person's suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2011; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007).

The above-mentioned changes in the workplace highlight the need for individuals to self-regulate their career behaviour and needs in order to accommodate employment-related change, as well as change that is driven by an individual seeking new challenges (Brown et al., 2012). The self-regulatory, psychosocial competencies that shape adaptive strategies and actions aimed at achieving adaptation goals are described as career adaptability resources (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources, such as concern, control, curiosity and confidence, for coping with the current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles that, to some large or small degree, alter their social integration (Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). For human beings, adaptation to social life implicates all their core and peripheral roles. As they design their lives (Savickas et al., 2009; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), people have to adapt in order to meet the expectations that they will be able to work, have a fulfilling career and develop satisfactory relationships. Career adaptability is believed to exert a strong influence on career or work-related outcomes, including success in the workplace, work engagement, job satisfaction and job tenure (Brown et al., 2012; Havenga, 2011; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Zacher, 2014). Machin and Hoare (2008) support this conception and found that some of the specific skills or mechanisms included or encapsulated in adaptability, such as coping skills or emotional regulation mechanisms, are related to these outcomes.

Guaranteeing a skilled and loyal workforce in a tight market will demand both improved recruitment of workers and a greater emphasis on retaining them as experienced workers become a more valuable and increasingly scarce commodity (Dietrich, 2000). According to Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009), the skills crisis in the retention of top talent in South Africa, is a one that is unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. Neilson, Pasternack, and Viscio (2000) agree that the tight labour market is going to get tighter over the next decade or so. As new markets, competitors and technologies begin to emerge, there will be an increased need for skilled employees at every level and in every functional area of the organisation (Neilson et al., 2000). This situation is also being compounded by affirmative action, which has resulted in the high demand and short supply of black professionals and hence the creation of a skills gap (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Vallabh & Donald, 2001). Moreover, the current employment equity and affirmative action legislation has opened up career mobility opportunities for black professionals (João & Coetzee, 2012). The loss of valuable knowledge and experience because of staff turnover increases the importance of staff retention for organisational sustainability and competitiveness (Burke & Ng, 2006).

Cascio (2003) describes retention as the initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. Such initiatives include rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively; ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers; and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment. Retention factors such as compensation, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work–life balance and commitment to the organisation facilitate the retention or departure of employees and influence their decisions to leave or remain, depending on their priorities (Netswera, Rankhumise, & Mavundla, 2005; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In order to avoid the devastating effect to business if key employees were to leave, employers need to focus on the causes of employee turnover and the retention factors that influence employee satisfaction (Fheili, 2007; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012).

Employees need to be employable and adaptable, whilst organisations need to be able to retain such employees. This is regarded as a critical requirement for sustaining a competitive advantage at the company level and for promoting experiences of objective and psychological career success at the individual level (Van Dam, 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Against the foregoing background, this research focuses on individuals' employability attributes and career adaptability as important psychological career-related meta-capacities, and attempts to establish whether these capacities influence their satisfaction with retention factors such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work–life policies and organisational commitment.

Various researchers have found that career adaptability improves employability both within and outside an organisation (Arthur, 1994; De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Ellig, 1998; Hall, 1996; Ito & Brotheridge, 2005; Waterman, Waterman, & Collard, 1994). Consequently, an understanding of an individual's career adaptability profile can be applied to manage staff retention in an organisation effectively (Ferreira, 2012). Ferreira (2012) also found that an individual who plans his or her career makes certain decisions based on this planning, explores new opportunities and has the confidence to implement these decisions in order to perform the activities needed to accomplish his or her career objectives may be highly career adaptable. This means that the individual may be more committed and connected to the organisation at an emotional (affective) level. Moreover, such an individual may show stronger feelings of fit with the organisation and the community, and have better ties with the

people in the organisation and the community, which may ensure that he or she remains with the organisation. An individual who is career adaptable may also feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the organisation, which in turn may influence his or her decision to leave it (Ferreira, 2012). Mitchell, Holtom, and Lee (2001) have a similar view on the relationship between employability and retention; according to them, an emphasis on career agency and employability can potentially influence people's psychological attachment to their organisations.

Lastly, a study conducted by Bontis, Richards, and Serenko (2011) provided results that indicated that autonomy and challenging work, both of which are retention factors, contribute to employee satisfaction. Interestingly, to date, only one study has investigated the relationship between employability skills and career adaptability (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). However, no study has yet investigated the extent to which employability attributes and career adaptability contribute to employees' satisfaction with retention factors. The present research extends research on staff retention by addressing this gap in the research literature.

The following research hypotheses were accordingly formulated:

- **H1:** There is a positive and significant relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with the factors influencing their retention.
- **H2:** Individuals' employability attributes and career adaptability significantly and positively predict their satisfaction with retention factors.

The research also seeks to understand how individuals from various biographical groups (age, gender, race, tenure and job levels) differ in terms of their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. For this purpose, a literature review of significant differences between biographical groups was conducted. Van Rooy, Alonso, and Viswesvaran (2005) found a positive relationship between age and employability, while De Armond, Tye, Chen, Krauss, Rogers, and Sintek (2006) and Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) found that employability decreases with age, especially when a person moves into a new field or to a higher position. De Armond et al. (2006) also found that older workers are less likely to search for new challenges, are less flexible, have less desire for variation in their work and are less motivated to learn new skills. These common stereotypes

have a negative effect on their employability when they look for new employment. On the other hand, Lee (2001) argues that graduates face discrimination because of their age, a perception that is reinforced by their lack of practical experience when applying for new positions.

It would also seem that women are regarded as less employable than men; in other words, women tend to have lower employability compared to men (Potgieter, 2012). Various researchers have shown that many organisations discriminate against women because of gender stereotypes and family responsibilities, organisations tending to perceive women as being less committed to their careers and organisations (Clarke, 2008; Lee, 2001; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Alfrassa (2001) confirms that men are more likely to find work than women are after graduating, while Clarke (2008) reported that women still face the glass ceiling and are disadvantaged because of their gender. Other researchers also found particular differences between males and females on certain elements of employability (such as thinking skills, interpersonal style and resource/capability skills), although these findings could only be generalised to the mechanical and technical institutions that participated in the study (Kazilan, Ramlah, & Bakar, 2009). There are contradictory findings about the influence of race on employability. Rothwell, Jewell, and Hardie (2009) found no significant differences between self-perceived employability and ethnicity. Lee (2001) and Mancinelli, Massimiliano, Piva, and Ponti (2010) reported that high levels of education have positive effects on the advancement of previously disadvantaged groups (Africans, coloureds, Indians and women); as a result, they are more likely to find satisfying jobs, earn higher incomes and have better career prospects.

One of the implications of employability in the current work context is that lifelong employment in one organisation is no longer guaranteed. Years of service will therefore also be included as a variable in this study in order to determine whether length of service influences employability (Ottino, 2010; Van der Heijden, De Lange, Demerouti, & Van der Heijde, 2009). In a study conducted by Ottino (2010), however, no statistically observed relationships between employability and years of service were found and it can thus be assumed that longer years of service in a company does not equate to an inability to change, as this did not significantly separate the respondents in terms of their overall employability. Previous research has shown that biographic characteristics, such as gender and race, have an influence on the satisfaction that individual's experience with retention factors. According to Maume (1999), women who work in male-dominated occupations have more difficulty in

moving up the hierarchy, presumably because of gender bias. Moreover, women may have fewer opportunities for job development and mentoring in male-dominated occupations (Lai, Lin, & Leung, 1998; Ohlott, Ruderman, & McCauley, 1994) and could be less committed to their organisations (Martins & Coetzee, 2007). In terms of race, black professionals regard career advancement as important for their career mobility and commitment to the organisation. As a result of employment equity and affirmative action legislation, they are currently experiencing enhanced career mobility opportunities (João & Coetzee, 2012). White South African employees, on the other hand, experience greater levels of satisfaction on other job facets, such as promotional opportunities, which is a key aspect of perceived intra-organisational career mobility (Lumley, 2009).

Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, and Baert (2011) found a positive relationship between age, retention and intentions to stay and a negative relationship between age, retention and intentions to leave. Their findings show that younger employees are significantly more likely to leave their organisations than older employees. Reasons for this include older employees having more difficulty finding new jobs because they are more likely to be affected by negative stereotyping and age discrimination (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Ng and Feldman (2009) argue that the relationship between age and turnover might have changed over the last 20 years because of changes in work environments and the norms for job mobility.

Research conducted by Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) indicated that tenure groups differ significantly in their levels of satisfaction with retention factors. The same study also found that Asian and white participants scored significantly higher than their coloured and African participants in terms of their satisfaction with job characteristics, which is one of the factors of retention uncovered by Döckel (2003). Pauw (2011) found that African participants considered career opportunities and work–life balance to be important retention factors.

There seems to be paucity of research on biographical characteristics and career adaptability. According to Peeters and Emmerick (2008), adaptation to change in work settings may become more difficult with age. Limited research was also found on the influence of biographical details such job level on employability and career adaptability, which emphasises the need for further research in order to obtain a better understanding of the influence of biographical characteristics on employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction.

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

- **H3:** Age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict the individual's satisfaction with retention factors.
- **H4:** Individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in terms of their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

This research aims to benefit industrial psychologists, human resource (HR) professionals and researchers in further understanding employability attributes and career adaptability, as well as the factors that influence the retention of knowledge workers in an evolving world of work in the 21st century.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against this background, there seems to be consensus that skills shortages are major obstacles to economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Bhorat, Meyer, & Mlatsheni, 2002; Kraak, 2008; Rasool & Botha, 2011). Exploring employees' employability attributes and career adaptability, as well as the factors that influence their retention has thus become important in the contemporary world of work. An understanding of these constructs is important not only because of the significant changes that have taken place in industry and the changing nature of careers, but also as a result of the limited research-based data on these variables, especially in the South African organisational context.

According to Mitchell et al. (2001), there are numerous studies that point to the reasons why people leave their organisations; however, there seems to be a paucity of studies on the factors that influence the turnover and retention of employees in a South African organisational context. There also seems to be limited information available on how best to strategically and practically increase employability in South Africa (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Gore, 2005; Potgieter, 2012). Moreover, there seems to be a paucity of research explaining the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. It is therefore of value to conduct research on these constructs, especially in the automotive manufacturing industry. Skills shortages, particularly in the field of science, engineering and technology, have a major impact on the competitiveness of the automotive manufacturing industry (Mashilo, 2010), a situation which

is intensified by the mobility of highly skilled employees, especially engineers (João & Coetzee, 2012). It is therefore important to retain the talent that is required to sustain the productive capacity of the organisation (Cheney & Nienaber, 2009).

This research may bring new insights that could inform organisational retention strategies. This is of particular value in a multicultural work context such as that found in South Africa. It is also evident that research on employees' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors will make a significant contribution to the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, particularly regarding retention practices in the dynamic and ever-changing organisational environment. In a personal conversation on 7 January 2013, Venter, a manager responsible for strategic planning, highlighted the potential value of the research findings to the automotive manufacturing industry based on the following factors: the company requires a large number of engineers and artisans with scarce skills; it has a retiring workforce with a wealth of knowledge that will consequently be lost; it is experiencing increases in its resignation rate year on year and currently has a huge need for an employable and adaptable workforce to support the implementation of new technology; it has flexible labour structures, and needs to deliver new models in a cost-effective and environmentally friendly way. According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2011), these changes and challenges are global and came about with the emergence of the boundary-less career.

For companies to survive and experience business success, they need to retain and develop their most important assets (employees). By developing workers' employability attributes and career adaptability, a culture that supports individual development can be created (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996). The solution lies in embracing the urgency of managing human capital and acting on it, since talent and skills drive business success (Witthuhn, 2009).

The general research question that this research aims to answer is as follows:

What is the nature of the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors?

To establish the nature of the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors, this research was designed to answer specific literature and empirical questions.

In terms of the literature review, the research aims to answer the following questions:

Research question 1: How are employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors conceptualised in the literature?

Research question 2: What is the theoretical relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors?

Research question 3: What are the implications of this relationship for retention practices?

In terms of the empirical study, the research aims to answer the following questions:

Research question 1: What is the nature and direction of the statistical relationship between the constructs of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction, as manifested in a sample of permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa?

Research question 2: Do employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors?

Research question 3: Do age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors?

Research question 4: Do individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction?

Research question 5: What are the implications of the findings of the empirical study for retention practices and what recommendations can be made for the field of industrial and organisational psychology and future research?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The following general and specific aims were formulated.

The general aim of this research is to explore the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

1.3.1 Specific aims: literature review

The review of literature aims to achieve the following:

Research aim 1: Conceptualise employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 2: Explain the theoretical relationship between employability attributes and career adaptability in influencing employees' satisfaction with retention factors.

Research aim 3: Identify the implications for retention practices.

1.3.2 Specific aims: empirical study

The empirical study aims to achieve the following:

Research aim 1: Explore the nature and direction of the statistical relationship between the constructs, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction, as manifested in a sample of permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa.

Research aim 2: Explore whether employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.

Research aim 3: Assess whether age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.

Research aim 4: Ascertain whether individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

Research aim 5: Make recommendations for the organisation and the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology with regard to retention practices and future research.

1.4 THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

A paradigm is the lens through which the researcher views the obvious and not so obvious principles of reality (Maree, 2009). It is important to position the proposed study within the particular paradigmatic and disciplinary (meta-theoretical) context to which it belongs in order to establish its definitive boundaries. The paradigmatic perspective will guide the specific approach to be followed in the interpretation of the research process within the social sciences. A paradigm thus acts as a map that guides the research or investigation.

The meta-theoretical context (disciplinary boundary) of this study is career psychology, which is a sub-field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. According to Sdorow and Rickabaugh (2002), as well as Bergh and Theron (2009), Industrial and Organisational (IO) Psychology applies various psychological principles, concepts and methods to study and influence human behaviour in the workplace. The overall goal of IO psychologists is to maintain and improve organisational functioning by understanding the interaction between humans and their work environment from a psychological perspective.

In this study the constructs of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors are studied within the context of career psychology, as a subfield of IO Psychology. Career psychology involves career development and helping employees resolve career conflict (Bergh & Theron, 2009). It is concerned with the interplay between individuals and environments and attempts to describe the nature of the patterns of positions held and the resultant experiences during an individual's lifespan (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). The areas of interest include, among others, career/job and organisational choices, factors influencing individuals in their careers such as employee employability, career embeddedness and mobility, job and career satisfaction, and experiences of career well-being (Coetzee, Bergh, & Schreuder, 2010). The proposed study has relevance for the field of career psychology because it supports the need for an overall conceptual framework of career development support initiatives that relate to effective retention practices.

Thematically, within these meta-theoretical boundaries, the literature review of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors will be presented from a human-existential paradigm, while the empirical study will reside within a positivist research paradigm.

1.4.1 Humanistic-existential paradigm

Humanistic-existential psychology can be distinguished from the two other traditional theoretical paradigms of psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural forces in that it is about understanding an individual's life experiences and the ways in which they construct meaning of their world. It is about placing a high value on the unique ways in which an individual develops their own view of situations (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek, 2007).

The following assumptions about the humanistic-existential paradigm are made (Cilliers, 2000; Garrison, 2001):

- Individuals are seen as more than the sum of their parts and can be studied as a whole.
- Individuals are principally good and should be seen as dignified beings.
- People exist in a human context, which forms the basis of human identity.
- Individuals act in self-awareness, where they have ongoing growth whilst realising their true potential.
- People have the freedom and responsibility to make choices and live purposefully.

1.4.2 Positivist research paradigm

The empirical part of this study will be approached from the perspective of a positivist research paradigm. The object of study is independent of researchers and knowledge is discovered and verified through direct observation or the measurement of phenomena. The phenomenon is studied by taking it apart to examine the components of the parts in order to establish the facts (Krauss, 2005). According to a positivist epistemology, science is seen as the way to acquire truth so that it can be understood well enough to be predicted and controlled (Krauss, 2005). Positivism is thus based on a natural science model for dealing with facts and is therefore more closely associated with quantitative methods of analysis (Noor, 2008).

Positivism predominates in science and assumes that science quantitatively measures independent facts about a single apprehensible reality (Healy & Perry, 2000). Thematically this quantitative study focuses on the relationship dynamics between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.4.3 Conceptual descriptions

Employability is an attribute that includes self-directedness or personal agency for retaining or securing a job or form of employment. It constitutes a range of personal career-related attributes that are generally regarded as alternatives to job security in an unstable world of work (Rothwell et al., 2009; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Bezuidenhout (2010) and Coetzee (2010) developed an employability attributes framework. It consists of eight core career-related employability attributes, namely, career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy, that are important for increasing a person's chances of securing and sustaining employment (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2011). The employability attributes framework will apply to the present research.

Career adaptability is defined as the ability to adjust and fit into a new career-related situation (Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic, & Nauta, 2010). It is described as the willingness to manage the predictable tasks involved in planning for and contributing to the work context while taking into consideration the random changes endorsed by transformation in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997). The career adaptability model developed by Savickas (1997) will apply to the present research. This model includes four specific dimensions: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence.

Cascio (2003) describes retention as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. Retention factors are those factors that facilitate the retention or departure of employees and their decisions to leave or remain, depending on their priorities (Netswera et al., 2005). For the purpose of the current study, Döckel's (2003) framework of retention factors, which focuses on compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life policies and organisational commitment, will apply.

1.4.4 Central theoretical statement

The central hypothesis of the study is framed as follows:

Individuals' employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict their satisfaction with retention factors. Age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups will significantly predict individuals' level of satisfaction with retention factors. Individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding these three variables.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton and Marais (1996), the aim of the research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised. The design is presented in terms of the research approach used, the methods used to ensure validity and reliability, the unit of analyses, and the ethical considerations.

1.5.1 Research approach

A quantitative approach will be used to empirically examine the statistical relationships between the different variables. A positivist approach is objective and attempts to describe the laws that govern society. This approach focuses on testing and verifying hypotheses and theories empirically using instruments that have been validated and are reliable (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006).

For the purpose of this study a cross-sectional survey design, targeting permanently employed salaried employees from an automotive manufacturing company, will be used. The research will be based on the analysis of primary data obtained by means of questionnaires (Struwig & Stead, 2001). The questionnaires will be administered in group sessions and the data will be captured in an electronic file and subsequently converted into an SPSS file. The statistical data will be processed and analysed by means of descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics.

1.5.2 Methods used to ensure validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are two terms that are repeatedly encountered in research methodology and are often used in connection with measurement. The validity and reliability of the measurement instruments influence the extent to which something can be learnt about the phenomena that are studied, the probability of obtaining statistical significance in the data analysis, and the extent to which meaningful conclusions can be drawn from the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

1.5.2.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument accurately measures the concept it is intended to measure (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2001). Internal and external validity are important in research design (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002), with internal validity being the approximate truth about inferences relating to cause–effect relationships (Trochim, 2006). Because the literature review and the empirical study must be valid in terms of the variables in the study (Mouton & Marais, 1996), the selection of literature that is relevant to the topic, the problem statement and the aims ensures that the literature review is valid. In addition, to further ensure the validity of data obtained for the empirical study, standardised instruments of measurement will be used (Gregory, 2000). Internal validity will also be assured by minimising selection bias.

The validity of the data gathering instruments will be ensured as follows:

- The constructs of this research will be measured in a valid manner using questionnaires that have been tested in scientifically and consequently accepted as being most suitable in terms of face validity, content validity and construct validity.
- Efforts will be made to ensure that the data collected is accurate, and that it is subsequently accurately coded and appropriately analysed so as to ensure content validity. The statistics will be processed by an expert using the most recent and sophisticated computer packages.
- The researcher will ensure that the findings of this research are based on the data analysed to ensure content validity. The reporting and interpreting of results will be done according to standardised procedures

- The researcher will ensure that the final conclusions, implications and recommendations are based on the findings of the research.

When interpreting the results of a research study, it is important to consider the limitations of the findings. One concern, when attempting to ensure the internal validity of the research, is the extent to which the researcher is successful in eliminating and/or understanding the influence of extraneous or confounding variables in ascertaining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Riggio, 2009). A large as possible sample will be chosen to offset the effects of extraneous variables. The questionnaires will include standard instructions and information to all participants, whilst the statistical procedures will control for biographical variables, such as age, gender, race, tenure and job level by ascertaining whether these biographical variables predict the variables of concern to the study.

External validity, on the other hand, is the degree to which the results of this study are generalisable to other research settings and people. External validity is associated with the sampling procedures used, the time and place of the research, and the conditions under which the research will be conducted (Trochim, 2006). In this study, this type of validity will be assured by seeing to it that the results are relevant only to salaried employees, who are permanently employed in the automotive industry. Targeting the total population of permanently employed, salaried employees in the automotive industry will help to increase the generalisability of the results to the target population.

1.5.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with stability and consistency and refers to whether a particular measuring technique (instrument) applied repeatedly to the same object will yield the same result each time (Babbie, 1990). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be used to determine the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaires. Appropriate statistical techniques that are congruent with the aims of this research will be used to analyse the data.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient estimates reliability based on the number of items in the test and the average intercorrelation among test items (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0, which means there is no internal consistency, to 1, which is the maximum internal consistency score (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). Accordingly, the higher the alpha, the more reliable the item or test. A Cronbach's alpha

coefficient of .75 is thus considered a desirable reliability coefficient (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

1.5.3 Research variables

Neuman (2006) and Terre Blanche et al. (2006) posit that a variable is a concept that can be measured and it can be either independent or dependent. An independent variable is a cause variable as it produces an effect or an outcome on something else. The dependent variable, on the other hand, is the result or the outcome of another variable. In this study (empirical research aims 1 and 2), the independent variables are employability attributes and career adaptability and the dependent variable will be retention factor satisfaction. The study does not, however, focus on cause–effect relationships, but rather on exploring whether there is a statistically significant relationship between these variables (empirical research aim 1), and whether the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variables (empirical research aim 2).

The biographical variables will be treated as person-centred variables, influencing the individual's employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. In terms of the present study (empirical research aim 3), the biographical variables (age, gender, race, tenure and job levels) are seen as the independent (predictor) variables and satisfaction with retention factors as the dependent (criterion) variables.

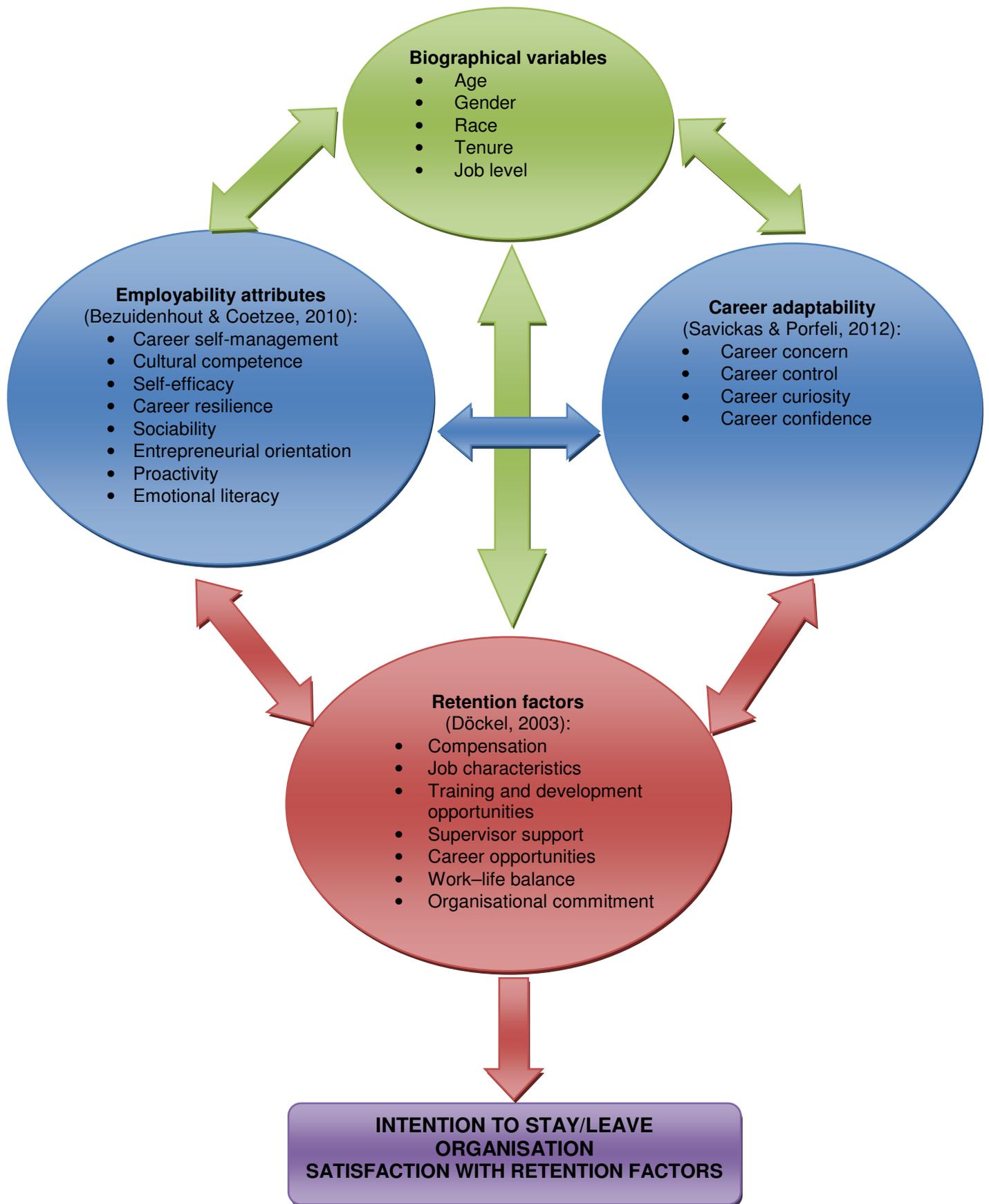


Figure 1.1: Theoretical relationship between biographical variables, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors

1.5.4 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the objects or things that are researched in order to formulate generalisations about these objects or things and to further explain the differences among them (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). In terms of individual measurement, the unit of analysis in this study is the individual. For the purpose of the proposed study, the unit of analysis will be the permanently employed salaried employees in the automotive manufacturing industry, with specific focus on their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. When investigating the differences between biographical groups (age, gender, race, tenure and job levels), the unit of analysis will be the sub-groups (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

1.5.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines and standards should form the basis of any research, as is stipulated by the Health Professions Councils of South Africa (HPCSA) and the Research Ethics Policy of the research institution (University of South Africa). Therefore, ethical considerations formed an important part of every step of this research process. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the participating company. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa. In addition, informed consent and voluntary participation was obtained from all the participants and all information, data and results were kept confidential. Participants were assured of anonymity and privacy and were informed of their right to withdraw at any time should they choose to do so, as well as their right to feedback on request. Instead of using the individuals' names, the results sheets were coded, thus integrating the data, and the final results were communicated only to the organisation from which the data was collected. In addition, the research was designed in such a way that individuals, organisations and the community derived benefit from it. No harm was done to any of the participants during the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Furthermore, the researcher strived to remain objective and to conduct the research with integrity.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consisted of a literature review (to conceptualise the relevant concepts) and an empirical study (to operationalise the variables included in the study). Figure 1.2 illustrates the steps in the research process that were followed in order to ensure the systematic and rigorous execution of the empirical study.

PHASE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

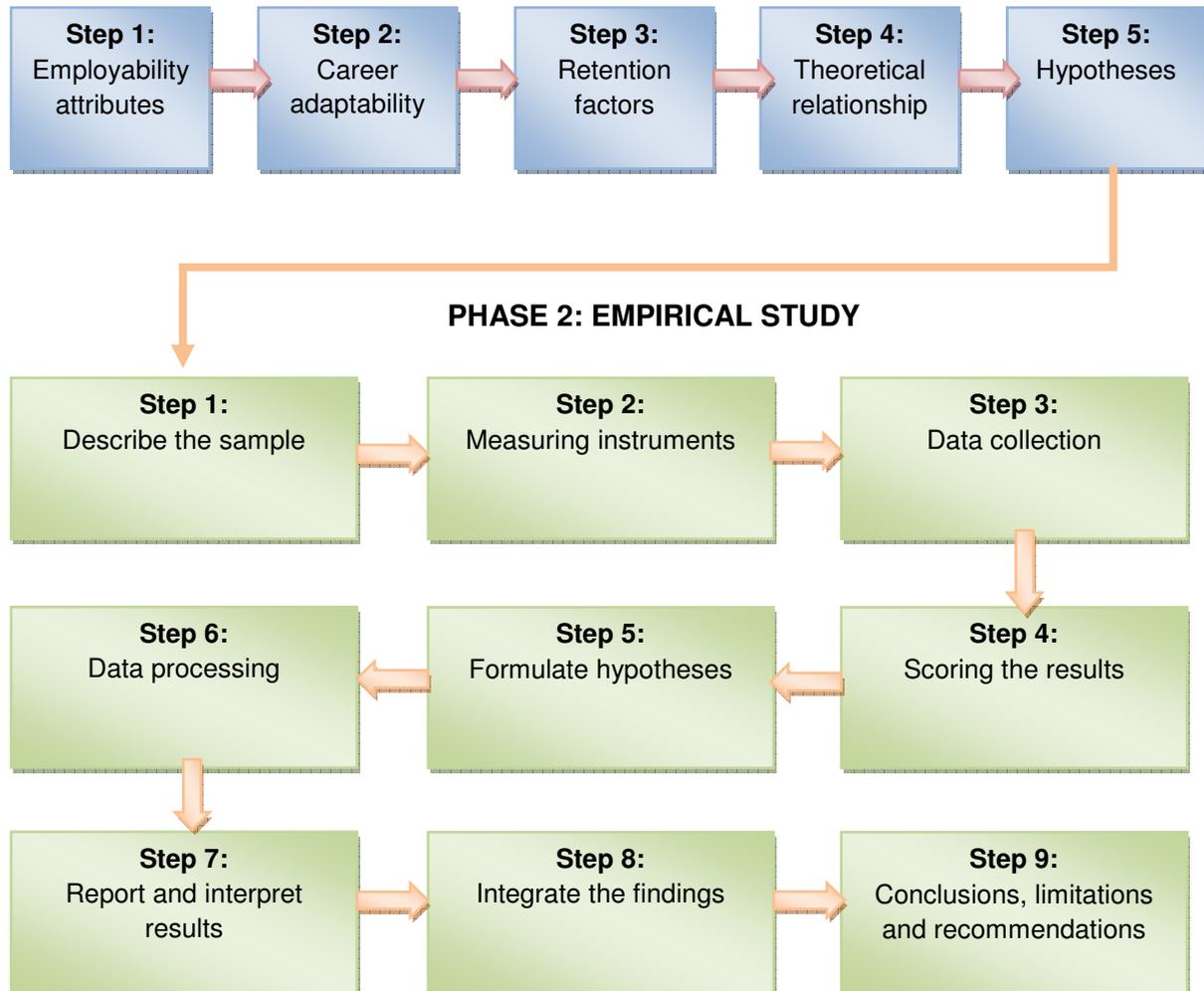


Figure 1.2: Flow diagram of the research method

Phase 1: Literature review

In order to achieve the research aims, the following steps were proposed for this phase:

Step 1: Conceptualise employability attributes from a theoretical perspective (research aim 1)

Step 2: Conceptualise career adaptability from a theoretical perspective (research aim 1)

Step 3: Conceptualise retention factors from a theoretical perspective (research aim 1)

Step 4: Integrate the variables and conceptualise the theoretical relationship between the variables (research aim 2)

Step 5: Formulate the research hypotheses of the study, in order to achieve the study objectives (research aim 3)

Phase 2: Empirical study

The empirical study will be presented in chapter 3 in the form of a research article. This article outlines the core focus of the study, the background to the study, trends from the research literature, the potential value added by the study, the research design (research approach and research method), the results, a discussion of the results, the conclusions, the limitations of the study and recommendations for practice and future research. Chapter 4 integrates the research study and discusses the conclusions, limitations and recommendations in more detail.

In order to achieve the empirical research aims, phase two consisted of nine steps:

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample (research participants)

The unit of analysis was the human being, namely, permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company. A non-probability purposive sample was used that did not involve random selection (Trochim, 2006). The sample was purposive in nature because the researcher approached the sampling problem with a specific plan in mind. Approximately 300 employees ($n = 300$) were included in the sample, out of a total population of approximately 790 permanent salaried employees. According to Struwig and Stead (2001), a sample size of 150 to 200 can provide an acceptable reflection of the population. By inflating the sample size to 300, the researcher reduced the impact of the non-response factor and ensured that the sample still represented the characteristics of the population. In addition to the three measuring instruments that were used in the study, a biographical questionnaire was also administered. The inclusion of biographical data was important, as previous research has shown that person-centred factors such as age, gender,

race, tenure and job level do have an impact on research results (Brown et al., 2012; Coetzee, 2010; João & Coetzee, 2012; Van der Heijden et al., 2009).

Step 2: Choosing and motivating the psychometric battery (measuring instruments)

The psychometric instruments that were used in this study were generally regarded as acceptable in terms of their reliability and validity. Employability attributes were measured by means of the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) that has been developed for the South African context and is used to measure individuals' self-perceived employability attributes (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). Career adaptability was measured by means of the Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012), while retention factors were measured using the Retention Factor Scale (RFS) that was developed in the South African organisational context by Döckel (2003). These three measuring instruments have all been tested in the South African context for both validity and reliability.

Step 3: Administration of the psychometric battery (research procedure)

The following data collection procedure was followed:

- The EAS, CAAS and RFS were distributed to all the participants in the sample.
- A questionnaire to obtain biographical information was also included, containing questions on the variables age, gender, race, tenure and job level.
- The participants completed the questionnaires during a group administration session and collected by the researcher directly afterwards.

This type of data collection method is referred to as personal questionnaires (De Vos, Delpont, Fouche, & Strydom, 2011). The use of personal questionnaires as a data collection technique ensures a high response rate, which is considered to be an advantage.

Employees in the organisation were asked to volunteer to complete the questionnaires and to give their permission for the results to be used for research purposes. In order to collect the data, a time slot was allocated during which the respondents were required to complete a paper-and-pencil version of the three measuring instruments and the biographical questionnaire. Prior to the questionnaire being administered, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and they were given directions for completing the

questionnaires.

The privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of all participants were ensured. No harm was done to any participant involved in the research process and permission to undertake the research was obtained from the HR director of the company concerned.

The data collection took approximately 60 minutes. Subsequently, the responses to each of the items of the three measuring instruments and the biographical questionnaire were captured in an electronic spreadsheet.

Step 4: Scoring of the psychometric battery

The questionnaires were scored in accordance with the scoring guidelines provided by the test developers.

Step 5: Formulation of research hypotheses

In Table 1.1 the research aim, research hypotheses and the applicable statistical procedures are described.

Table 1.1

The Research Aim, Research Hypotheses and Applicable Statistical Procedures

Empirical research aim	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure
Research aim 1		
Explore the nature and direction of the statistical relationship between the constructs employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction as manifested in a sample of permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa.	H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with the factors influencing their retention.	Correlational statistics: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.
Research aim 2		
Explore whether employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.	H2: Employability attributes and career adaptability positively and significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.	Structural equation modelling (overall model fit) Stepwise multiple regression analysis
Research aim 3		
Assess whether age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.	H3: Age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' retention factor satisfaction.	Stepwise multiple regression analyses

Empirical research aim	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure
<p>Research aim 4</p> <p>Explore whether individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.</p>	<p>H4: Individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.</p>	<p>Test for normality to assess whether parametric or non-parametric procedures was conducted to test for significant mean differences.</p> <p>A non-parametric test, namely, Wilcoxon two-sample test was used to test for significant mean differences between the biographical variables that acted as significant predictors of the retention factors.</p>

Step 6: Statistical processing of the data

A quantitative research approach was used for this study and the statistical data was processed and analysed by means of descriptive (Cronbach's alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations), correlational and inferential statistics. The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2013), SPSS Amos (2012) and the SAS (Statistical Analysis System, 2010) programs were used to analyse the data.

Cohen (1992) describes statistical tests as the probability that the test will yield statistical significant results. With each statistical test of a null hypothesis a p -value was generated, which subsequently generated the probability of a result under the null hypothesis. According to Leedy and Ormod (2005), statistical significance is the probability that the observed result could have occurred randomly if there were no true underlying effect. The significance level was the criterion used for rejecting the null hypothesis.

The statistical procedures were conducted in three stages:

Stage 1: Descriptive statistics, including Cronbach's alpha coefficients (internal consistency reliability), means and standard deviations, were used to describe the variables.

Stage 2: Correlational statistics were calculated to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the three variables. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to calculate the direction of and strength between variables (Steyn, 2001) as follows:

- A negative value reflected an inverse relationship.
- The strength of the linear relationship was determined by the absolute value of $p \leq .05$.
- A strong correlation did not imply a cause-effect relationship.

In order to counter the probability of a type I error, the significance value was set at the 95% confidence level ($p \leq .05$). In addition, the significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $r \geq .30$ were chosen as the cut-off point for rejecting the null hypotheses. For the purposes of this study, a *cut-off point of $r \geq .30$* (medium effect) (Cohen, 1992) at $p \leq .05$ was treated as being practically significant.

Stage 3: Inferential statistics were performed, including structural equation modelling (SEM) and multiple regressions, to explore the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (satisfaction with retention factors) that was explained by the independent variables (employability attributes, career adaptability and biographical variables). The levels of statistical significance of the multiple regression that were used in this study were as follows:

$F(p) < .001$

$F(p) < .01$

$F(p) < .05$ as the cut-off for rejecting the null hypotheses

In terms of SEM, maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation was used. The goodness-of-fit statistics were evaluated by using the following absolute goodness-of-fit indices: the chi-square test, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR). The following relative goodness-of-fit indices were also used to evaluate the model fit: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and

the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). In line with guidelines provided by Garson (2008), an adequate fit between the structural model and the measurement data was found to exist when CFI and TLI values of .90 or higher, a RMSEA of .08 or lower, and a SRMR of .06 or lower were obtained.

Multiple regressions were also used to explore the proportion of variance in the dependent variables (retention factors satisfaction) that was explained by the independent variables (employability attributes, career adaptability and age, gender, race, tenure and job level). For the regressions, ANOVA tables were used to determine the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables.

According to Terre Blanche et al. (2006), multiple regression analysis is one of the multivariate methods most commonly used to study the separate and collective contributions of several independent variables to the variance in the dependent variables. According to Neuman (2000), multiple regression results highlight two things. Firstly, the R^2 values indicate how well a set of variables explains a dependent variable, and secondly, the regression results measure the direction and size (magnitude) of the effect of each independent variable on a dependent variable. $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size), $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect size) and $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size) at $p \leq .05$ were used to determine the practical effect size of the multiple regression analyses (Cohen, 1992).

Prior to conducting the various regression analyses, collinearity diagnostics were examined to ensure that zero-order correlations were below the level of concern ($r \geq .80$), that the variance inflation factors did not exceed 10, that the condition index was well below 15, and that the tolerance values were close to 1.0 (Field, 2009).

Multicollinearity is a condition in which the independent variables are highly correlated (.80 or greater) (Field, 2009). Multicollinearity can be caused by high bivariate correlations (usually of .80 or greater) or by high multivariate correlations. Multicollinearity weakens analysis and implies that inverse relationships between the independent and the dependent variables are unstable and that independent variables are redundant in relation to one another, and that one independent variable does not add any more predictive value than another independent variable. In general, it is advisable to not include two independent variables that correlate with one another at .70 or more (Field, 2009).

Tests for normality (one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests) were conducted to assess whether the data was either normally or non-normally distributed. In the present study, the test for normality revealed a non-normal distribution of the data. The Wilcoxon two-sample test was therefore used to test for significant mean differences between the biographical variables that acted as significant predictors of the retention factors. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), a Wilcoxon two-sample test can be used to determine whether two samples with ordinal data differ from each other when a relationship exists between the samples. Two dependent groups with ranked scores can be compared using the Wilcoxon two-sample test, by either matching the two groups or testing the same group on two occasions (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Cohen's d was used to assess the practical effect size of significant mean differences as follows:

Small practical effect: $d = .20 - .49$

Moderate effect: $d = .50 - .79$

Large effect: $d \geq .80$

Step 7: Reporting and interpreting the results

Results will be presented in tables, diagrams and graphs. A discussion of the findings will be presented using a systematic framework in order to ensure that the interpretation of the findings is conveyed clearly and articulately.

Step 8: Integration of the research findings

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

Step 9: Formulation of research conclusions, limitations and recommendations (research aim 5 and 6)

In the final step, conclusions will be drawn that are based on the results and their integration with the theory. In addition, the limitations of the research will be discussed, and recommendations for future research will be made in terms of retention practices in the work context.

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The structure of the study, in terms of chapter layout, will be as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific orientation to the study

This chapter introduced the topic and discussed the variables to be investigated. It also provided an overview of the study design and the methodology for collecting and analysing data was discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides a conceptual analysis of the research variables, namely, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. The practical implications of the theoretical relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors will also be discussed. The employability attributes framework (Bezuidenhout, 2010), Savickas's career adaptability model (1997) and Döckel's (2003) framework of retention factors will be the theoretical models that will be applied. These models are relevant to the discussion of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors respectively.

Chapter 3: Research article

The chapter takes the form of a research article, in which the methodology, data collection and analysis will be presented. Furthermore, the measuring instruments will be disclosed and statistical information from the data analysis that is pertinent to the study objective and hypotheses will be discussed.

In this chapter the results of the study are reported in the form of a research article. The article starts with an introduction which will reflect the key focus and background of the study, trends identified in the research literature, the research objectives and the potential value-add of the study. Next, the research design will be discussed in terms of the research approach followed in the study and the research method. Subsequently, the sample, the measuring instruments and the procedure used to collect the data will be briefly described, and the research hypotheses will be formulated. Finally, the statistical procedures employed will be explained and the statistical results of the study will be reported in terms of descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics.

This will be followed with a summary and, finally, the research results will be integrated with the findings of the literature review. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for retention practices, the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology and further research. A number of limitations pertaining to the study will also be explained.

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

This chapter will form the final chapter of this dissertation and will contain an integrated discussion of the results. In addition, on the basis of the results a number of conclusions will be drawn. Further, on the basis of the findings some recommendations for the organisation will also be presented in this chapter. In conclusion, the limitations of the research design will be noted and recommendations made for future research and for the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

Some potential limitations in terms of the study have been identified. Since the present study is restricted to respondents employed in the automotive industry, the findings cannot be generalised to other occupational contexts. Moreover, the sample size is relatively small and could be reduced even further by the non-participation of some participants. This could potentially influence the external validity and generalisability of the research results. Four questionnaires must be completed in the form of paper and pencil, which might be time consuming. Some participants might therefore not complete all the questionnaires. A further limitation could be the fact that the gender distribution in the company is unequal, comprising predominantly males. Moreover, the research design was cross-sectional in nature and could therefore yield no statements about causation, since the association between the variables is interpreted rather than established. An all-encompassing view of the factors influencing retention could not be provided, as only three variables were considered (employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors satisfaction).

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the scientific orientation of the research was discussed in terms of the background to the research and the motivation for conducting it, the research problem and aims, the paradigm perspective and the research design. The chapter ended with the chapter layout.

Chapter two comprises of an in-depth literature review of the three constructs, namely, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 addresses the three research aims of the literature review by firstly conceptualising the constructs of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. Secondly, the theoretical relationship between employability attributes and career adaptability in influencing employees' satisfaction with retention factors is explained. The practical implications of the theoretical relationship between these constructs are explained using relevant models and tables. Lastly, the implications of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors for retention practices are identified,

2.1 EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES

This section conceptualises employability attributes and provides an overview of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework. The section concludes with a discussion on the variables that influence employability.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation

The concept of employability has been discussed in the literature since the early days of the 20th century (Botha, 2011). The concept has become increasingly more complex over time, evolving from a simple dichotomous notion to a concept that takes into account both internal individual and external market factors (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Berntson (2008) expands on this by explaining that the current era in which organisations are operating views the concept of employability as having expanded to include the entire labour market, focusing on the capacities, skills and abilities of the individual. It is for this reason that the complex nature of defining employability needs to be contextualised within what has been described as the knowledge economy (Coetzee, Botha, Eccles, Holtzhausen, & Nienaber, 2012). Within the context of a global knowledge economy, Gracia (2009) identifies employability as a central driver of the political and business thinking underpinning national competitive advantage, catalysing demand for flexible, creative, life-long learners. A variation of this definition is put forward by De Vos, Dewettinck, and Buyens (2009), who define employability as a form of work-specific active adaptability that enables workers to identify and realise their career opportunities. Ottino (2010) and Coetzee (2008) add that employability relates to the optimum use of one's occupation-related and career meta-competencies to continuously fulfil, acquire and create work opportunities.

The focus of this research is the retention of skills and knowledge to sustain the productive capacity and competitive edge of the organisation in the midst of global skills shortages, a retiring workforce, the implementation of flexible labour structures and the high need for the introduction of new technology. As such, employability skills can assist employees to adjust to various changes and to increase working abilities that suit the working environmental needs (Kazilan et al., 2009). In the context of this study, employability refers to a psycho-social construct representing a combination of career-related attributes (dispositions, values, attitudes and skills) that promotes proactive adaptability in changing environments and enhances an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment and the likelihood of obtaining career success (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Coetzee, 2011; Fugate et al., 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007). This definition is further enriched by Rothwell et al. (2009), as well as Schreuder and Coetzee (2011), who define employability as an attribute that includes self-directedness or personal agency in retaining or securing a job or form of employment. Employability uses a range of personal career-related attributes that are generally regarded as alternatives to job security in an unstable world of work and that integrate to assist workers in adapting successfully to work-related changes (Botha, 2011).

As a result, Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework is relevant to this study as it clarifies employability attributes, such as career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy.

2.1.2 Theory

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework is of specific relevance to this study as it has been developed and tested for adults in the South African context (Bezuidenhout, 2010). In addition, the focal context of the framework, namely, adaptability, lifelong learning, proactivity and motivation, is in line with the focus of this study and provides useful information on the attributes required for managing and sustaining employability in the contemporary world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010; Potgieter, 2012). Bezuidenhout (2010) also recognises some career meta-competencies that are of importance in the enhancement of individual employability. The employability attributes framework includes a range of eight core career-related employability attributes which are regarded as vital for increasing an individual's employability and likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). These attributes include career self-management, cultural competence, self-

efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. Table 2.1 outlines the eight dimensions identified by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010).

Table 2.1

Overview of Employability Attributes (Coetzee, 2011)

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011)
Career self-management	<p>An individual's ability to sustain employability through continuous learning, as well as career planning and management efforts (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). It involves those activities that allow individuals to make a realistic self-assessment of their own talents and capabilities in the light of organisational career opportunities and the concrete actions undertaken to realise these ambitions (De Vos et al., 2009; Ferreira, 2012).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to reflect on one's career aspirations and develop a clear sense of what one wants to achieve in one's career • Ability to recognise the skills needed to be successful in one's career, as well as the actions to take in order to achieve career goals • Having the confidence and determination to pursue and achieve set career goals • Continuously engage in development activities to achieve career goals
Cultural competence	<p>The meta-cognitive ability to understand, act and interface successfully within a diverse cultural environment (Bezuidenhout, 2010).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing the customs of other cultures as well as understanding their beliefs and values • Having the confidence to communicate interculturally, as well as finding it easy and enjoyable • Being able to initiate and maintain relationships with individuals from diverse cultures

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011)
Self-efficacy	<p>An individual's perception of the extent of difficulty of career-related or performance-related tasks which they believe they are going to attempt, as well as their perception of how well they will be able to execute the required actions in order to deal with those tasks. In addition, self-efficacy refers to the extent to which their perception will persist, despite obstacles (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).</p> <p>Self-efficacy also refers to the estimate that an individual makes of his or her ability to cope, perform and thrive (Bezuidenhout, 2010).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning independently of others • Making one's own decisions • Having the confidence to succeed at one's goals and efforts • Being persistent with challenges • Enjoying the discovery of creative new solutions • Keeping oneself up to date with the newest developments in one's job and career
Career resilience	<p>An individual's ability to adapt to changing situations by accepting job and organisational changes, looking forward to working with different and new people, being willing to take risks as well as having self-confidence (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).</p> <p>Bezuidenhout (2011) describes career resilience as a personal disposition that facilitates a high level of adaptability, self-confidence, competence as well as confidence irrespective of difficult career situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High self-regard for own personal qualities • Open to feedback from others with regard to strengths and weaknesses • Self-confidence in successfully identifying one's accomplishments • Open to, and able to proactively adapt to changes in one's environment
Sociability	<p>The ability to be open to, establish and maintain social contacts, as well as use formal and informal networks for the benefit of one's career (Bezuidenhout, 2010).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a network of friends who could advance one's career • Using networks in order to search for and find new job opportunities • Actively seeking feedback from other people in order to progress in one's career • Being willing to take risks • Having self-confidence

Employability attributes	Description	Skills and attributes (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011)
Entrepreneurial orientation	An individual's preference for innovation and creativity, a tendency to take risks, a need for achievement, a tolerance for uncertainty, as well as a preference for autonomy in the exploitation of opportunities within the career environment and the creation of something valuable (Bezuidenhout, 2010).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to various social situations by changing nonverbal behaviour within different sociocultural situations • Being interested in and continuously undertaking new business opportunities • Being open to new ideas • Having a positive attitude towards the implications of changes within one's workplace • Being comfortable in uncertain situations • Accepting responsibility for the success or failure of one's career
Proactivity	An individual's tendency to engage in active role orientations that lead to future-oriented and self-initiated action in order to change oneself and one's situation (Bezuidenhout, 2010).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking responsibility for one's decisions • Setting challenging targets for oneself • Identifying opportunities before others do • Improving on one's knowledge and skills in order to ensure career progress • Adapting to changing situations
Emotional literacy	An individual's ability to use emotions adaptively, as well as the quality of an individual's ability to read, understand and control own and other people's emotions (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting in spite of difficult career circumstances • Understanding one's own emotions and feelings • Managing one's own mood and emotions • Identifying others' emotions • Defusing an emotionally explosive situation • Cheering sad people up

2.1.3 Variables influencing employability attributes

Gracia (2009) takes a critical stance to the notion of employability. According to her, the notion of employability is limited to considering individual skills development and does not take cognisance of the influence of socio-cultural factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and social class on employability and its development (Gracia, 2009). This echoes the views of Moreau and Leathwood (2006) and Morley (2001) on the importance of socio-cultural factors. Potgieter (2012) explains that individuals' employability differs as a result of certain variables, especially in the South African context, as companies tend to discriminate against certain individuals in terms of race, gender and age. As a result, individuals who are discriminated against will not obtain employment even if those individuals have all the required skills and attributes (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). The key variables of importance in this research include age, gender, race, tenure and job level.

2.1.3.1 Age

Van Rooy et al. (2005) found a positive relationship between age and employability, while De Armond et al. (2006) and Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) found that employability decreases with age, especially when a person moves into a new field or to a higher position. De Armond et al. (2006) also found that older workers are less likely to search for new challenges, are less flexible, have less desire for variation in their work and are less motivated to learn new skills. Consequently, these common stereotypes have a negative effect on their employability when they look for new employment. This contradicts the findings of De Lange, Taris, Jansen, Kompier, and Houtman (2005), who reported that older employees are not less inclined to acquire new knowledge and skills compared with their younger colleagues.

At the other end of the spectrum, Lee (2001) argues that graduates face discrimination because of their age and their lack of practical experience. However, Potgieter (2012) reported that many older employees find themselves in the same position as new job applicants owing to the rapid changes that are taking place in the market environment. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Van der Heijden et al. (2009) found that self-reported employability is positively related to overall promotions for both younger workers and over-forties. In their study, these researchers concluded that age moderates the relationship between employability and objective career success. However, it is interesting to note that a

relatively recent study conducted by Ottino (2010) found no reportable differences with regard to age and employability.

2.1.3.2 Gender

It would seem that women have lower self-perceptions of their employability than their male counterparts (Clarke, 2008; Lee, 2001; Potgieter, 2012). According to Beukes (2010), men seem to be more adept in the utilisation of technology, which contributes to their self-perceived employability. It also seems as if men have more confidence in their ability to manage their careers and therefore show higher levels of confidence in their employability attributes (Clarke, 2008; Lee, 2001; Potgieter, 2012). It appears from the research literature that these differences in perceptions may be attributed to organisations discriminating against women because of gender stereotypes and perceptions of family responsibilities. In addition, organisations tend to perceive women as being less committed to their careers and organisations (Potgieter, 2012). Zikic and Hall (2009) support this view by adding that the prejudices are not only in terms of women reaching specific occupations, but also in their perceived value in the labour market as compared to their male counterparts. Alfrassa (2001) confirms that men are more likely to find work than women are after graduating and Clarke (2008) reported that women still face the glass ceiling and are disadvantaged because of their gender. This is supported by Van der Heijden et al. (2009), who found some significant gender effects to the disadvantage of women during their study on the employability–career success relationship.

Other researchers have also found particular differences between males and females on certain elements of employability (such as thinking skills, interpersonal style and resource/capability skills), although these findings could only be generalised to the mechanical and technical institutions that participated in the study (Kazilan et al., 2009). There is thus a need to consider the ethical implications and to increase efforts to understand how these effects are to be combated, especially as these outcomes are not attributable to differences in workers' capabilities or career potential; solely to discrimination based on gender (Blau & Kahn, 2006; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Interestingly though, a study conducted by Ottino (2010) found no statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of their employability. On the other hand, it would seem that exposure to the latest technical education and training, as well as the ability to deal with modern technologies, on-the-job training and workplaces, provide women with more confidence in themselves and their career prospects (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). It is, therefore, possible

that women now perceive greater opportunities to freely construct and design their career lives (Savickas, 2011).

2.1.3.3 Race

There are contradictory findings about the influence of race on employability. Rothwell et al. (2009) found no significant differences between self-perceived employability and ethnicity. Further, Lee (2001) and Mancinelli et al. (2010) reported that high levels of education have positive effects on the advancement of previously disadvantaged groups (Africans, coloureds, Indians and women). As a result, they are more likely to find satisfying jobs, earn higher incomes and have better career prospects (Potgieter, 2012). Beukes (2010) added that macroeconomic policy issues, specifically black economic empowerment (BEE), influence ethnic demand in industries and therefore result in ethnic differences in employability.

2.1.3.4 Tenure

In a study conducted by Ottino (2010), no statistically observed relationships were found between respondents' tenure and their perceived employability skills. It can therefore be assumed that longer years of service in a company does not equate to an inability to change. In addition, the research findings did not significantly separate the respondents in terms of their overall employability. However, length of service appears to be negatively related to both supervisor and self-rated employability, as found in a study by Van der Heijden et al. (2009).

2.1.3.5 Job level

Separate studies conducted by Potgieter (2012) and Puffer (2011) found that individuals on staff level are likely to be able to display greater confidence in their employability attributes, especially on career self-management, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity. These findings are in contrast with the findings of other researchers who found that individuals in the second half of their careers and on a higher job level display higher employability attributes (Van der Heijden et al., 2009).

2.2 CAREER ADAPTABILITY

The following section discusses Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) theory and four-dimensional structure, as well as the variables influencing career adaptability.

2.2.1 Conceptualisation

Adaptability is the predisposition or propensity to consciously and continually maintain an integration of person and environment, and it constitutes the attitudes, competencies and behaviours that individuals use to fit themselves into professions that suit them (Ferreira, 2012). Adapting proactively to changing career circumstances reflects the ability to handle the stress of a new or challenging career context constructively (Hirschi, 2012). Broadly speaking, adaptability reflects the ability to adjust to change, especially in unpredictable and stressful situations (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). In career construction theory, adaptability resources help to form the strategies that individuals use to direct their adaptive behaviours. That is, these resources serve as self-regulation strategies or strengths that enable individuals to broaden, refine and eventually implement their self-concepts in occupational roles, thereby creating their work lives and building their careers (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). Brown et al. (2012) highlight the need for individuals to self-regulate in order to accommodate employment-related change, yet acknowledge that change can also be driven by an individual either seeking new challenges or wishing to adopt new perspectives associated with engagement in substantive personal development.

Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) theory conceptualises a person's capacity to adapt with regard to their perception and interpretation of the environment and their reaction to it. Therefore adaptability cannot be seen as solely a performance or solely a trait, but happens according to multiple environmental and personal parameters (Hamtiaux, Houssemand, & Vrignaud, 2013). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career adaptability as a set of self-regulatory cognitive-affective behavioural capacities or psychosocial resources that individuals may draw upon to cope with current and anticipated career developmental tasks, occupational transitions, and complex and ill-defined career- and work-related problems. It is a multi-dimensional construct that involves a combination of the attitudes, competencies and behaviours that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them (Savickas, 2013). Thus, career adaptability resides at the person–environment intersection and reflects individuals' resources for managing career tasks and challenges (Zacher, 2014).

Career adaptability is further conceptualised as plan-fullness, exploration, decision making, information and realism, career planning and career exploration, a boundary-less mindset of career planning, career decidedness and career confidence (McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007; Skorikov, 2007; Zikic & Klehe, 2006). It is described as the ability to adjust and fit into a new career-related situation, the mastering of vocational development tasks, dealing with occupational traumas and negotiating job transitions, which then mediate the association between observed work goals and career outcomes such as occupational success, satisfaction and stability (Havenga, 2011; Koen et al., 2010). Career adaptability provides a framework for attending to the way individuals view their futures and supports interventions based on their needs (Rottinghaus et al., 2012). The section below will discuss the framework in more detail.

2.2.2 Theory

The Career Construction Theory (CCT) of Savickas (1997; 2013) presents a model for comprehending vocational behaviour across life cycles. CCT incorporates and updates previous theoretical contributions and frameworks, such as Super's (1957; 1990), or Holland's (1997) concepts and presents three major components: vocational personality, life themes and career adaptability. Career adaptability represents the 'how' of vocational behaviour ('how an individual constructs a career') (Savickas, 2013).

According to Havenga (2011), certain characteristics need to be displayed in order for career adaptability to be successfully demonstrated by an individual. These characteristics are determined through the distinct attitudes, belief and competencies (referred to as the career construction ABC) that shape the actual problem-solving strategies and coping behaviours of individuals in synthesising their vocational self-concepts with work roles (Savickas, 2008). The concepts in the ABC are grouped into four dimensions of adaptability, namely, career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. These four dimensions represent resources for self-cultivation (Savickas, 2008) and are involved in the translation of individual dispositions into positive career problem-solving and coping behaviours (Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch, & Rossier, 2013; Rossier et al., 2012).

The original Career Adapt-Abilities Scale is part of Savickas et al.'s (2009) life design project where career adaptability was initially described with five dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, cooperation and confidence. However, recent work has validated the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), showing that four dimensions, namely, career concern, career

control, career curiosity and career confidence, are sufficient to represent the construct. Results from international research conducted by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) provide support for a generally acceptable four-dimensional structure of career adaptability (Hamtaux et al., 2013). In addition, a study conducted by Maree (2012) proved that the CAAS-South Africa and CAAS-International function similarly. Maree (2012) reported that the total scale and four subscales of the CAAS-South Africa each demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency estimates and a coherent multidimensional, hierarchical structure that fits the theoretical model and linguistic explication of career adaptability resources.

The four global dimensions of career adaptability as a hierarchical construct, as defined by Ferreira (2012) and Savickas and Porfeli (2012), will now be explained. *Career concern* consists of the ability to be aware of and to plan for a vocational future. It involves a tendency to consider life within a time perspective anchored in hope and optimism. *Career control* reflects the perceived personal control over the vocational future and the belief about personal responsibility for constructing one's career. Career control rests on the conviction that it is an advantage for people to be able not only to use self-regulation strategies to adjust to the needs of the different settings, but also to exert some sort of influence and control over the context. *Career curiosity* reflects the tendency to explore one's environment, for example by exploring possible selves and future scenarios. Curiosity about possible selves and social opportunities increases people's active exploration behaviours. Finally, *career confidence* is the self-confidence in one's ability to face and to solve concrete vocational and career problems. It includes the capacity to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives, even in the face of obstacles and barriers (Ferreira, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In short, it is about looking ahead to one's future (concern), knowing what career to pursue (control), looking around at options (curiosity), and having the self-efficacy to undertake the activities needed to achieve career goals (confidence) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These psychosocial resources are considered by Savickas (2013) as self-regulation capacities or skills that a person may draw on in order to face and resolve everyday life challenges. They help to form the strategies that individuals use to direct their adaptive behaviours and to manage career transitions (De Guzman & Choi, 2013).

Table 2.2 summarises various aspects of each of the four dimensions of adaptability.

Table 2.2

Aspects of the Four Dimensions of Career Adaptability

Adaptability dimension	Description	Career question	Attitudes and beliefs	Competence	Career problem	Coping behaviours	Career intervention
Career concern	Helps people to look ahead and prepare for the future.	Do I have a future?	Planful	Planning	Indifference	Aware Involved Preparatory	Orientation exercises
Career control	Enables people to take control over their future by being responsible and conscientious in making career-related decisions.	Who owns my future?	Decisive	Decision making	Indecision	Assertive Disciplined Wilful	Decisional training
Career curiosity	Helps people form a realistic image of themselves and their career options through an exploration of their opportunities and thinking about the fit between the self and different environments, vocational roles and future scenarios.	What do I want to do with my future?	Inquisitive	Exploring	Unrealism	Experimenting Risk-taking Inquiring	Information seeking activities
Career confidence	Makes people less likely to shy away from difficult career-related situations and more likely to engage in active problem solving.	Can I do it?	Efficacious	Problem solving	Inhibition	Persistent Striving Industrious	Building of self-esteem

(Hartung, 2007; Havenga, 2011; Koen et al., 2012; Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)

2.2.3 Variables influencing career adaptability

Limited research was found on the influence of biographical details such as race on career adaptability, which emphasises the need for further research to obtain a better understanding of the influence of these biographical characteristics. According to Zacher (2014), hardly any research has so far examined the effects of individual differences on changes in overall career adaptability and career adaptability dimensions over time. Imel (2002) is of the opinion that a concept such as adaptability has a middle-class orientation, which does not address gender, class or race. The conflicting and supporting findings of various researchers will be discussed below.

2.2.3.1 Age

Conflicting statements were found during the literature review, with some researchers stating that career adaptability decreases with age whilst other researchers found that career adaptability can increase with age. Rostami, Abedi, Bagnhan, and Savickas (2012) are some of the researchers who found that motivation to change decreases with age and that middle-aged or younger individuals should be more adaptable than the elderly. Peeters and Emmerick (2008) reported similar findings in their research and stated that the adaptation to change in work settings may become more difficult with age. These researchers explain that older adults may have negative attitudes toward the developmental experiences that are required in order to become adaptable, because such experiences may be taking place at an unexpected time in their lives (Rostami et al., 2012). This view is further supported by Koen et al. (2012) who found that career exploration, a dimension of career adaptability, decreases as individuals grow older and that career adaptability therefore has a general tendency to decrease with age. It also seems as if younger individuals or newcomers to the labour market require career adaptability to a greater extent than older individuals or regular job seekers (BLS, 2011; Eurostat, 2012) due to the important school-to-work transition that they need to make (Koen et al., 2012).

Contrary to the above, other researchers state that career adaptability may change in response to different situations and found that the transition from work to retirement prompted the display of career adaptability (Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven, & Prosser, 2004; Johnston et al., 2013). Heckhausen, Wrosch, and Schulz (2010) support the view that career adaptability can increase with age and explain their finding by using theories and findings from the life span developmental literature. Specifically, the motivational theory of life span

development suggests that individuals' primary control capacity decreases with age, and that aging individuals compensate for this decline by enhancing their secondary control striving. This may manifest itself in increases in self-esteem, perceptions of personal control, and self-efficacy, which positively predicts changes in control, confidence and overall career adaptability over time. Consistent with this finding, an empirical study found that self-esteem gradually increases throughout adulthood (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling, & Potter, 2002). Thus, the motivational theory of life span development suggests that older individuals experience greater increases in control and confidence over time than younger individuals (Zacher, 2014). Other researchers have found that young adults do not know where to find the information needed to be able to make a career decision and that the poor self-exploratory processes lead to negative outcomes for the individual, such as not being able to settle on a career (Creed, Fallon, & Hood, 2009; Julien, 1999). It would seem that career adaptability skills, such as career decision-making and self-exploration, are important career developmental tasks that influence the level of career adaptability in individuals (Savickas, 1997; Whiston & Keller, 2004; Zikic & Klehe, 2006).

2.2.3.2 Gender

Once again various researchers differ in their findings on the impact of gender on career adaptability. O'Connell, McNeely, and Hall (2008) found a significant relationship between gender and adaptability, with women being more adaptable than men. A study conducted by Ferreira (2012) supports this finding and reported that women showed higher levels of career adaptability than their male counterparts. The females in the study experienced a higher level of career purpose and career venturing, which means that they have a tendency to move from one career to the next much more easily than the male participants. The results also suggest that the female participants were far more open to new career opportunities (Ferreira, 2012). In another study, Hartung, Porfeli, and Vondracek (2008) found that adolescent girls scored higher on the construct "career maturity/adaptability" than did their male counterparts.

On the other hand, Carless and Arnup (2011) argue that males are more likely to change careers, which should suggest that males are more flexible than females. Another researcher reported that their research pointed to the presence of career adaptability with both female and male participants (Havenga, 2011), whilst various other researchers revealed a modest or not significant contribution of gender to career adaptability (Kenny & Bledsoe, 2005). Lastly, Hirschi (2009) established that gender did not affect career

adaptability development at all. All of this proves that research findings or results are inconclusive regarding gender differences in career adaptability, as stated by the majority of the researchers (Carless & Arnup, 2011; Havenga, 2011; Patton, Bartrum, & Creed, 2004; Patton & Lokan, 2001).

2.2.3.3 Race

There seems to be a paucity of research on the influence of race on career adaptability. The only findings derived from the literature review refer to the impact of culture and the influence of relationships with other individuals and races. Del Corso and Rehfuss (2011) highlighted that individuals' career adaptabilities do not reside completely within themselves, but can also be affected, influenced, formulated and developed through relationships with others. In particular, individuals from deep-rooted cultural backgrounds, with distinctive cultural attributes and strong adherence to tribal tradition might think differently about their problem-solving skills, which could influence their career adaptability (Asian Development Bank, 2007; De Guzman & Choi, 2013).

2.2.3.4 Tenure

As an important set of individual resources, career adaptabilities influence several work or career-related variables and outcomes to various extents, including successful job transitions and job tenure (Brown et al., 2012; Rossier et al., 2012). Research conducted by Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, Kirpal, Gronning, and Daehlen (2010) not only considered tenure in an organisation, but also tenure in a specific job. Their research found that adults in employment who do not engage in substantive up-skilling or re-skilling for periods of five to ten years, through either formal learning or learning at work, increasingly run the risk of being locked into particular ways of working. Their ability to be adaptable with regard to their career progression can thus decay, which makes them vulnerable in the labour market. The researchers also considered how skills can be developed over time in different contexts, and consequently encouraged job change and the exploration of a wider range of opportunities and possibilities in facilitating career adaptability. Brown et al. (2012) also encourage job change as a means of stimulating career adaptability by mastering a new additional substantive knowledge base and learning through challenging work, rather than through extended tenure in a specific job.

The results of a study by Zacher (2014) suggest that improving career adaptability, especially clients' career concerns and confidence (as measured by the CAAS), should have positive effects on clients' career satisfaction, which in turn could potentially influence intention to stay or job tenure. Porfeli and Savickas (2012) agree with this statement and add that career adaptability positively predicts career commitment making. On the other hand, Rostami et al. (2012) report that early career workers tend to have less years of service and may retain their high levels of career adaptability. From the above it would seem that high levels of career adaptability contribute to tenure in an organisation (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Zacher, 2014), whilst reducing tenure in a specific job or encouraging job change can positively stimulate career adaptability (Brown et al., 2012). However, the research on career adaptability in relation to years of service still seems to be insufficient to make accurate conclusions and therefore further research is required (Coetzee & Harry, 2014).

2.2.3.5 Job level

Research on career adaptability has repeatedly shown that individuals higher in career adaptability are more successful in mastering vocational transitions between same level positions or to higher job levels (Creed, Muller, & Patton, 2003; Germeijs & Verschueren, 2007) and in enhancing career success (Hirschi, 2010). According to Ferreira (2012), career-adaptable individuals are more likely to engage in self-development activities that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities in their job or career (Ferreira, 2012). In addition, career adaptability positively predicts team-work skills (De Guzman & Choi, 2013), job search self-efficacy (Guan, Deng, Sun, Wang, Cai, & Ye, 2013), tenacious goal pursuit, flexible goal adjustment, and the outcomes of career satisfaction and promotability (Tolentino, Garcia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2013). A study undertaken by Koen et al. (2012) found that participants who were trained on each of the career adaptability dimensions reported higher employment quality than members who had not participated in the training. This finding supports previous research conducted by McKee-Ryan and Harvey (2011), who established that good employment or job quality increases career satisfaction, career prospects and career-enhancing behaviours, which can support individuals in reaching the desired job level. From the above it would seem that career adaptability contributes positively to individuals' promotability and their ability to reach a desired job level. However, some researchers reported on the reverse situation, in other words on the influence of job level or change in job level on the career adaptability of individuals.

Brown et al. (2012) found that challenging work, increased influence over career situations and experimenting with a wider set of new and different activities and projects, usually associated with a job change or change in job level, can positively contribute to career adaptable competencies, such as control, commitment, confidence and concern. Brown et al. (2012) also found that learning by updating a substantive knowledge base, or mastering a new additional substantive knowledge base, resulting from a change in job or job level, can help individuals to develop career adaptable competencies. However, the researchers also highlighted the fact that individuals at all stages of their career progression, or at any job level, can improve their career adaptability by learning through undertaking challenging work, by updating their substantive knowledge base and by learning through interactions at work. Brown et al. (2010) further highlighted the negative effect on career progression (in job level) that occurs if individuals remain in the same job for periods of five to ten years without engaging in substantive up-skilling or re-skilling, as their ability to be adaptable can decay.

2.3 RETENTION FACTORS

This section conceptualises the term ‘retention factors’ and discusses Döckel’s (2003) retention factor framework and the variables influencing retention factors.

2.3.1 Conceptualisation

The existing literature has proffered differing views on the definition of employee retention, the type of employees to be retained, and the approach to follow when defining a retention strategy (Mohlala et al., 2012). McKeown’s (2002) view is that there is no precise definition of employee retention because managers’ perceptions of retention vary. Some managers view employee retention as reducing the employee turnover figure to an acceptable level, whilst others think retention is about compensation and benefits; moreover, some think of it as a component of culture, that is, how people are treated within the organisation (McKeown, 2002). Recently, retention has received increased attention in the literature as an entity in its own right (Cheney & Nienaber, 2009; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009; Kontoghiorghes & Frangou, 2009; Linne, 2009; Pillay, 2009).

Cascio (2003) describes retention as the initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. These include rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively, ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers, and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment. Frank, Finnegan, and

Taylor (2004) support Cascio (2003) in this regard by emphasising the importance of a work environment that engages employees for the long term and that keeps desirable workers in order to meet business objectives. Various researchers also agree that retention should be aimed at top performing employees, who add value, contribute to the organisation overall and inspire others (Browell, 2003; McKeown, 2002). The focus here would be on employees of whom the organisation has a positive evaluation, and who would normally only leave the organisation through voluntary resignation (Mengel, 2001). Thus, employers need to retain their high performers who have the knowledge and skills that are critical in order for the organisation to maintain a competitive advantage. Kontoghiorghes and Frangrou (2009) add that retention is the outcome of mutual satisfaction between employees and employers.

On the other hand, retention factors can be seen as factors that encourage organisational commitment and thus increase the retention of employees (Döckel, 2003; Pauw, 2011). Netswera et al. (2005) refer to retention factors as factors that would facilitate the retention or departure of employees and the decision to leave or remain, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities. Research conducted by Ferreira (2012) identified the key retention challenges and priorities in South Africa as follows: organisational culture, business dynamics, diversity, a new demographic employee pool, ethnicity, language, education, opportunities, competitiveness, personal characteristics, self-centredness and exclusiveness.

2.3.2 Theory

There is currently no single framework that guides research and practice, although the importance of employee retention to organisational effectiveness and efficiency is clear (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Even if a framework or theoretical model did exist, there would still be situations in which voluntary employee turnover was unavoidable and beyond the control of management. The focus of this study is therefore on factors that management can control and that may influence workers to stay with the organisation. A South African study conducted by Döckel (2003) uncovered seven critical retention factors that organisations need to consider if they are to retain employees with high technology skills. The following seven factors are relevant to this study: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and organisational commitment. The seven factors will now be discussed in more detail.

2.3.2.1 Compensation

Compensation is a form of reward that an employee receives from an organisation in exchange for his or her services (Jiang, Xiao, Qi, & Xiao, 2009). Compensation can be divided into monetary and non-monetary rewards. According to Döckel (2003), monetary rewards are extrinsic financial rewards that organisations pay to their staff for the services they deliver. Such rewards may include the base salary, incentives and stock options. Non-monetary rewards, on the other hand, are indirect financial rewards employees receive for their labour (Döckel, 2003), which may include flexible working hours, medical aid and pension.

In South Africa, compensation is a driver of retention, job satisfaction and employee commitment (Sutherland, 2011). The literature indicates that unattractive pay and working conditions eventually result in employees becoming disengaged, demoralised, less committed to their work and ultimately to leaving their organisations (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Oehley & Theron, 2010; Richardson, 2007). Luna-Arocas and Camps (2008) support this finding by explaining that salary and financial incentives are direct and indirect precursors of intentions to leave. It is also stated that rewards can play a significant role in influencing employees' attitudes and perceptions of work (Milkovich, Newman, & Gerhart, 2011). The actual level of pay seems to be less important than feelings about pay raises and the process used to administer them (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). Congruent with this finding, research conducted by Döckel (2003) indicated that employees in the high technology industry were dissatisfied with the way their raises were determined. Accordingly, it would seem that employees prefer to know how their compensation is determined and how they can increase their salary (Döckel, 2003). Thus, employees want to feel that they are able to influence their compensation.

Various researchers support these findings by stating that competitive compensation has time and again been listed as a means of attracting and retaining employees (Armstrong, Brown, & Reilly, 2010; Phillips & Gully, 2012; Swanepoel, Erasmus, & Schenk, 2008) and that inadequate compensation or dissatisfaction with compensation is often the cause of turnover (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2011). This is confirmed in the South African context by Mohlala et al. (2012), who found that the lack of monetary rewards in the organisation they studied negatively affected retention. Compensation should motivate and help to retain employees by incentivising desired behaviour and rewarding good performance (Grobler et al., 2011; Meyer & Kirsten, 2012). The results of a study conducted

by Snelgar, Renard, and Venter (2013) indicate that compensation is considered to be the most important reward category. This finding is not surprising, as compensation has been cited as the main reason why individuals work (Prince, 2011).

2.3.2.2 Job characteristics

Job characteristics can include varied work, opportunities to solve challenging problems, opportunities to work with the best people, freedom, flexibility, and being able to pursue interesting assignments (Döckel, 2003). In the current study, job characteristics will include skill variety and job autonomy since highly specialised knowledge workers prefer jobs where they can use a variety of skills and experience challenging assignments and job autonomy (Spector, 2008). Task variety refers to the extent to which a job requires many different things using a variety of skills and talents (Thatcher, Liu, Stepina, Goodman, & Treadway, 2006). Accordingly, employees who experience high levels of skills variety in their jobs are more likely to remain with the employing organisation (De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). The reason for this could be that employees use this skill to develop their ability to connect positively with their organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). Job autonomy refers to employees who: (a) value the opportunity to be independent; (b) prefer working on their own; (c) create new ideas to make work easier or more efficient (creativity); (d) or prefer to make decisions on their own (Sharf, 2010).

In a study conducted by Bontis et al. (2011), the results indicated that autonomy and challenging work contribute to employee satisfaction and retention. Döckel (2003) states that job characteristics will increase the retention of employees by promoting feelings of increased competence and meaningfulness of work, which in turn may result in more organisational commitment.

2.3.2.3 Training and development opportunities

Training and development opportunities can be formal development activities provided by the organisation, as well as informal experiences of quality developmental relationships with senior managers, for example career mentoring (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011). Training and development opportunities support employee growth and development, provide opportunities for advancement and contribute to a sense of self-worth (Kraimer et al., 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1997). They can also make employees feel that they are valuable

to the organisation, as their organisations are investing in them, and thus increase affective commitment (Kraimer et al., 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research by Döckel, Basson, and Coetzee (2006) and João (2010) has shown that training and development, as well as career growth and advancement opportunities, are important factors that prevent professionally qualified employees from leaving their organisations. Govaerts et al. (2011) found that employees who experience appreciative learning climates in their organisations are more inclined to stay. According to Rodriguez (2008), employees begin to search for external job opportunities once they feel they are no longer growing. These findings are supported by Döckel (2003), who suggests that organisations can encourage, plan and invest in employees' development and that investments in education can make employees more committed to their careers. On the other hand, Maurer and Lippstreu (2008) found that employees with low levels of learning orientation do not respond to development support with greater commitment.

Döckel (2003) argues that development opportunities should be seen as essential and invaluable to the organisation. Moreover, organisations should view these investments as their social responsibility to build a better South Africa (Döckel, 2003).

2.3.2.4 Supervisor support

Supervisor support refers to the degree of support that employees feel they receive from their supervisors. Various research studies have indicated the importance of recognition and feedback in the retention of valuable employees (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003; Morrow, 2011). In the current study, supervisor support therefore includes recognition and feedback from supervisors to employees. Perceived supervisor support is a construct that describes the extent to which a supervisor values a follower's contributions and cares about the wellbeing of that follower (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Job feedback, on the other hand, is the degree to which a job provides the employee with information about his or her job performance (Thatcher et al., 2006). Morrow (2011) found that perceived supervisor and organisational support increased the affective commitment of employees in the long term.

2.3.2.5 Career opportunities

Career opportunities refer to the internal and external career options that an employee may have. Internal career opportunities may be in the employee's current organisation; for

example a promotion or to be moved to a different position inside the same organisation. External career opportunities, on the other hand, may be to obtain a position at another organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; João, 2010). Research has shown that career opportunities and growth are significant factors that increase employees' affective commitment to their organisations and that reduce their intentions to leave (João, 2010; Morrow, 2011; Neiningger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010; Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010). Kraimer et al. (2011) support this research and add that perceived career opportunities significantly predict job performance and turnover. When employees perceive that there are many career opportunities in their organisations, it can result in better job performance and reduce their intentions to leave. It is thus clear that the career orientations of employees in relation to career opportunities can have important implications for their organisational commitment, perceived job embeddedness and retention factors (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; João, 2010).

2.3.2.6 Work–life balance

Work–life balance can be described as an individual's ability to meet both their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities (Parkes & Langford, 2008). According to Munsamy and Bosch-Venter (2009), the focus of work–life balance is on the notion of a flexible and stress-free work environment. This can be done by making provision for childcare facilities and by allowing employees to see more of their families. The location of the work is important, as is the amount of travel away from home, recreational facilities in distant locations and hours of work, leave time, overtime and flexitime. Increasing flexibility around work has therefore become more important to dual-income families.

Phillips and Gully (2012) suggest that workplace flexibility could assist in retaining employees, because arrangements such as job sharing, flexitime and telecommuting could help employees to balance their work and home lives better. Döckel (2003) argues that organisations need to accommodate employees by providing remote access for telecommuting, childcare centres, referral programmes and employee assistance programmes. As a result of this, organisations may then be perceived as concerned employers; this positively influences employees' attachment to the organisation, which in turn will result in more positive attitudes towards their organisations (Döckel, 2003).

2.3.2.7 Organisational commitment

In the past, researchers reported differing views on the concept of organisational commitment. Becker (1960) argued that commitment came with the awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organisation, whilst Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) defined commitment as an emotional attachment to the organisation and Wiener (1982) conceptualised commitment as a moral obligation toward the organisational rules. These one-dimensional conceptualisations were not widely accepted (Llobet & Fito, 2013). Currently, the more acceptable definition places the construct as a mindset which can take different forms and becomes a force that binds an individual to a particular direction or approach in relation to one or more aims of the organisation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Organisational commitment is thus viewed as a multidimensional construct and focuses on both the entity to which commitment is directed and the course of action of relevance to the entity (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Meyer and Allen (1991) integrated attitudinal and behavioural approaches in their multidimensional approach to commitment in order to create three distinct dimensions of organisational commitment: affective commitment (AC) as the desire to belong to the organisation and which refers to how emotionally connected to, linked with and involved an employee is in the organisation; continuance commitment (CC), which is based on the belief that leaving the organisation would be costly and the observation of the damage when employees leave the organisation; and normative commitment (NC) as a feeling of obligation and sense of indebtedness towards the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Research by Martin and Roodt (2008) indicates that affective commitment positively influences normative commitment and, in turn, that continuance commitment is determined by normative commitment and affective commitment. However, affective commitment makes a stronger impact on the desire and intention to continue working in the organisation than normative commitment.

The concept of organisational commitment is close to Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of affective commitment, as it refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation (El-Nahas, Abd-El-Salam, & Shawky, 2013). In essence, organisational commitment is a psychological state that reflects the sense of shared values, identity, loyalty, support and pride that employees feel towards their organisation (Cho, Rutherford, & Park, 2013; Le Rouge, Nelson, & Blanton, 2006). Employees with higher levels of organisational commitment seem to have a sense of belonging, believe in, accept and have the desire to pursue the organisational goals, activities and values, and are willing to remain and to devote themselves to offering their

best efforts for the organisation's wellbeing (Alniacik, Cigerim, Akein, & Bayram, 2011; Yamaguchi, 2013; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). Suliman and Iles (2000) identified a number of important aspects of organisational commitment, namely, commitment fosters better superior-subordinate relationships; enhances organisational development, growth and survival; improves the work environment; negatively influences withdrawal behaviour such as turnover, lateness and absenteeism; and has a positive impact on employees' readiness to innovate and create. In addition, commitment is related to the way employees respond to dissatisfaction with events at work (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

2.3.3 Variables influencing retention factors

The following variables and their influence on employees' satisfaction with retention factors will now be considered: age, gender, race, tenure and job level.

2.3.3.1 Age

Research has found that age is significantly related to turnover intentions, which in turn has an impact on the retention of employees (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen, & Mäkikangas, 2011). This is congruent with Govaerts et al. (2011), who found a positive relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to stay; and a negative relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to leave. These findings are also in line with research conducted by Martin and Roodt (2008), which indicated a significant relationship between age of the respondent and turnover intention. They found that as age increased intentions to stay increased. In other words, research indicated that older employees have lower turnover intentions compared to their younger counterparts (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011).

Spector (2008) explains that as employees get older, they become more satisfied with their jobs, which may be as a result of them having less interest in task variety as opposed to younger employees who find jobs without task variety unsatisfying. It is also suggested that older workers may work in jobs high in complexity and control and they therefore perceive more remaining opportunities and experience more compensation opportunities than do their counterparts working in more restricted jobs (Zacher & Frese, 2009). In addition, Posthuma and Campion (2009) explain that older employees have more difficulty finding new jobs, because they suffer from more negative stereotyping and age discrimination than younger ones.

By contrast, it would seem that younger employees are more nomadic and more likely to leave their organisations when dissatisfied (Govaerts et al., 2011; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011). This is supported by Boxall, Mackey, and Rasmussen (2003), who found that younger employees are most likely to use job mobility to gain better pay and better access to good training opportunities. Young employees, especially in their early adulthood life phase, tend to be active learners who require ongoing training and further development opportunities through on-the-job experiences that enable them to refine their talents and skills (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008). Lawton and Chernyshenko (2009) confirmed this finding and concluded that young employees value training and development opportunities more than their older peers. According to Van Dyk (2011), younger employees tend to be significantly less satisfied with their job characteristics than older employees, as they need more challenging work and task variety. They tend to prefer work situations in which they can be free of organisational constraints and restrictions, and also free to develop their professional competence as far as possible (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008). Cennamo and Gardner (2008) reported similar findings and explained that younger employees value freedom in their jobs, such as work–life balance, and prefer rewards that allow them to have a more flexible lifestyle. Recent research by Snelgar et al. (2013) reported that younger employees currently place even more emphasis on work–home integration.

The preceding discussion confirms that needs change as employees get older, as established by Hedge, Borman, and Lammlein (2006). These researchers suggest that older employees value rewards such as flexible work arrangements and skill development, rather than cash compensation (Hedge et al., 2006). Contrasting findings were obtained by Cennamo and Gardner (2008), who found that extrinsic rewards, such as pay and benefits, are valued more highly by older employees than younger employees. This is in line with findings by Snelgar et al. (2013), whose study showed that younger employees, in the age group 18–29 years, place less importance on base pay and contingency or variable pay than older employees. Nienaber, Bussin, and Henn (2011) concluded that needs do change with age, as research discovered that reward categories, such as remuneration and benefits, as well as a working environment that is pleasant and supportive, are valued more by younger employees, reducing in need as employees age. Ng and Feldman (2009) argue that the relationship between age and turnover might have changed over the last 20 years owing to changes in work environments and norms for job mobility. It is therefore important for this study to also consider the impact of a variable such as age on employees' satisfaction with retention factors.

2.3.3.2 Gender

The literature states that gender generally has an effect on employees' subjective experiences of work (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012). The research pertaining to this finding has been mainly concerned with females and their preferences, with less information having been obtained for males. Research conducted by Van Dyk (2011) reported that male participants had higher satisfaction with perceived career opportunities, whilst the female participants displayed a lower preference for career opportunities. According to Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb, and Corrigan (2000), males place great importance on career advancement and promotions, as well as increased responsibility without interference from managers.

It is interesting to note that females assign a significantly higher rating to intrinsic values and may value the following intrinsic values higher than males: challenging job, development opportunities, quality of feedback and autonomy (Metcalf & Dick, 2002). In terms of development opportunities, Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) caution organisations to take care not to let traditional gender stereotyping influence employees' need for career development opportunities. Maume (1999) reported that females who work in male-dominated occupations have more difficulty in moving up the hierarchy, presumably because of gender bias. Furthermore, the gender distribution within an industry also influences mobility opportunities (Van Dyk, 2011) and limits females in terms of their opportunities for job development and mentoring in male-dominated occupations (Lai et al., 1998; Ohlott et al., 1994). This could result in females being less committed to their organisations and showing intentions to leave (Martins & Coetzee, 2007). Woodd (2000) also cautioned organisations against gender stereotyping and gender bias by explaining that females who are professionally trained and qualified reflected preferences for a spiral career pattern. This type of pattern occurs when an employee has a preference for moving on to another field of specialisation after developing in a given field for a length of time (Marshall, 1995; Woodd, 2000).

In addition, the literature review revealed the importance of remuneration and benefits, an emotionally supportive work environment and flexible work arrangements as factors that contribute to female employees' satisfaction at work. The most recent research conducted by Snelgar et al. (2013) found that females prefer base pay, quality work environments and work-home integration more than men. This is congruent with research results from Coetzee and Schreuder (2008), as well as Nienaber et al. (2011), which showed that females have a stronger preference for stability, remuneration and benefit packages, as well

as a pleasant and supportive working environment. Previous research supported these findings and indicated that females have a greater need for an emotionally supportive work environment as a source of career satisfaction (Martins & Coetzee, 2007; Nabi, 2001), whilst Kidd and Smewing (2001) found a positive linear relationship between supervisor support and commitment for females in particular.

In terms of flexible work arrangements, it appears that females prefer work schedules that do not conflict with, or have a negative effect on, their personal lives (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008; Pauw, 2011). Females play various different roles, which may contribute to their reasoning that work–life balance is important in retaining them (Pauw, 2011). Mooney (2010) states that women feel challenged to balance work life and home life, which emphasises the importance of work-based social support in contributing to job satisfaction and retention (Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, & Gordon, 2007). However, the finding that women place more importance on integrating their work and home lives is in contrast to findings by Paddey and Rousseau (2011), who found no gender differences in South Africa with regard to restructuring work to accommodate one’s home life.

2.3.3.3 Race

In terms of race, black professionals regard career advancement as important for their career mobility and commitment to the organisation and, as a result of employment equity and affirmative action legislation, they experience enhanced career mobility opportunities (João & Coetzee, 2012). These findings are in line with research conducted by Pauw (2011), who found that African participants seemed to consider career opportunities, more specifically promotions and internal opportunities, to be more important than any other racial group. In addition, Pauw’s (2011) research highlighted work–life balance as an important factor for African employees. It is stated that African employees might remain in the employment of an organisation if the needs discussed above are fulfilled (Pauw, 2011). According to Van Dyk (2011), African and coloured employees are least satisfied with their compensation and the nature of their job and work tasks. These findings are supported by Martins and Coetzee (2007) who found black employees to be more dissatisfied with their compensation.

White South African employees, on the other hand, experience greater levels of satisfaction on other job facets, such as promotional opportunities, which is a key aspect of perceived intra-organisational career mobility (Lumley, 2009). Pauw’s (2011) research elaborated on

this finding by reporting that white and Asian participants scored significantly higher than the African and coloured participants in terms of their satisfaction with job characteristics, which is one of the factors of retention uncovered by Döckel (2003). Conversely, white employees seem to be least satisfied with their work–life balance (Van Dyk, 2011; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Coetzee, Schreuder, and Tladinyane (2007) are in agreement with this finding and found white employees to value work–life balance significantly more than their black counterparts.

2.3.3.4 Tenure

Research conducted by Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) indicates that tenure groups differ significantly in their levels of satisfaction with retention factors. More specifically, Van Dyk (2011) and Ng and Feldman (2010) found that participants who had worked for an organisation for longer than 15 years were more satisfied with their compensation and were more concerned with job security and career stability. Van Dyk (2011) explains that the reason for this may be that individuals' compensation may increase over time when staying at the same organisation as a result of annual increases. The participants who had worked for an organisation for between 11 and 15 years indicated higher levels of satisfaction with their job characteristics. This finding suggests that the longer individuals work for an organisation, the more challenging the work and the more a variety of tasks may become part of their job description. This may be the result of the job promotions that can be achieved through years of service at the same organisation (Van Dyk, 2011).

2.2.3.5 Job level

Research indicates that the needs, expectations and motivational drivers may differ for different levels of employee (Van Dyk, 2011). The differing drivers, as well as various job and workplace characteristics, influence turnover and it is therefore important to include different job levels when determining employees' satisfaction with retention factors on all levels in an organisation (McKnight, Phillips, & Hardgrave, 2009; Van Dyk, 2011). Research conducted by Nienaber et al. (2011), Snelgar et al. (2013) and Van Dyk (2011) provided various findings regarding job level and its influence on employees' satisfaction with retention factors. Nienaber et al. (2011) found that employees in lower level jobs, such as administrative and junior management levels, hold significantly higher preferences for remuneration and benefits compared to senior and executive management. It is also reported that lower level employees feel that additional education and training will increase

their chances for career advancement (Nienaber et al., 2011). A study conducted by Snelgar et al. (2013) correlates with Nienaber et al.'s (2011) findings in that job level was found to influence employees' preference for benefits, with lower-level employees exhibiting the highest preference for benefits. Van Dyk (2011) adds that employees on the operational level reported higher satisfaction levels regarding their work–life balance. It is possible that operational level employees experience less overtime and fewer work demands and, thus, less work stress (Van Dyk, 2011). On the other hand, the operational level participants seemed less satisfied than the management and senior management level employees with regard to their job characteristics, mainly as a result of less variety and fewer challenging work demands on the operational job level compared to work demands on the senior job level (Van Dyk, 2011).

In terms of the senior management job level, Van Dyk (2011) found that employees in this category experienced higher satisfaction levels with compensation, job characteristics, supervisor support and organisation fit. Employees on senior management level also believed that they would have to give up a lot if they were to leave their job or the organisation (Van Dyk, 2011). It is clear that all job levels, whether leadership, functional or technical, need to be appraised in terms of their value in achieving the corporate objectives and their strategic impact on organisational performance (Cappelli, 2009; McDonnell, 2011). Mercer (2008) recommends that job level be used to categorise a workforce so that employee groups can be more effectively rewarded and retained. It is therefore expected that the current study and investigation into the impact of job level on employees' satisfaction with retention factors will make a valuable contribution to retention practices in South Africa for employees on all job levels.

2.4 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES, CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RETENTION FACTORS

In the preceding sections of this chapter, a critical overview of prominent research related to the concepts of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors was provided. The literature review accordingly conceptualised the three constructs and provided evidence regarding the theoretical link between them, as shown in Figure 1.1 in chapter 1. The theoretical integration of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, shown in Table 2.4, involves a theoretical comparison of these constructs by differentiating the three constructs, their subdimensions and the biographical variables

influencing the constructs. The theoretical relationship between the three constructs was also examined, as well as the frameworks applicable to the study.

In terms of the hypotheses of the study, the literature review provided supportive evidence for all four hypotheses listed in Table 2.3, as explained in sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5 of Table 2.4.

Table 2.3

Confirmation of Evidence Found in the Literature Review for the Four Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses	Supported evidence found in the research literature	Reference to evidence found
H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and their satisfaction with the factors influencing their retention.	Yes	Section 2.4.4 of Table 2.4.
H2: Individuals' employability attributes and career adaptability significantly and positively predict their satisfaction with retention factors.	Yes	Section 2.4.4 of Table 2.4.
H3: Age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.	Yes	Section 2.4.5 of Table 2.4.
H4: Individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job levels differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.	Yes	Section 2.4.5 of Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Integration and Theoretical Comparison of Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

CONSTRUCT	Employability attributes	Career adaptability	Retention factors
2.4.1 Conceptualisation (definitions)	Employability attributes refer to the general and non-technical competencies required for performing all jobs, regardless of types or levels (Ju et al., 2012). It is a psychosocial construct that promotes proactive adaptability in changing environments and enhances individual suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Coetzee, 2011).	Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Adaptability reflects the ability to adjust to changes and to manage career tasks and challenges, especially in unanticipated and stressful situations (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Zacher, 2014).	Retention factors are the factors that facilitate the retention or departure of employees and their decisions to leave or remain, depending on their priorities (Netswera et al., 2005). It can also refer to initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation (Cascio, 2003).
2.4.2 Applicable framework or theoretical model and measures	Employability attributes framework by Bezuidenhout (2010) and Coetzee (2010) and the Employability Attributes Scale (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010)	The Career Adapt-Ability Scale by Savickas and Porfeli (2012), based on the career construction theory of Savickas et al. (2009)	The Retention Factor Scale based on research conducted by Döckel (2003)
2.4.3 Core subdimensions of the construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career self-management • Cultural competence • Self-efficacy • Career resilience • Sociability • Entrepreneurial orientation • Proactivity • Emotional literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career concern • Career control • Career curiosity • Career confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation • Job characteristics • Training and development opportunities • Supervisor support • Career opportunities • Work–life balance • Organisational commitment.

CONSTRUCT	Employability attributes	Career adaptability	Retention factors
2.4.4 Theoretical relationships between the constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of employability allow individuals to reap the benefits of active career adaptability. • Enhanced employability skills assist with adapting effectively to any situation in a changing workplace and adjusting to suit the working environmental needs. • Key contributor to individuals' retention-related dispositions, such as career satisfaction and commitment, as well as career-enhancing behaviours and success. • Contributes to psychological attachment, which in turn reduces retention risks. • The development of employability attributes supports individual development, which addresses certain retention factors, such as training and development needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career adaptability improves employability both within and outside an organisation. • Promotes the effective management of retention by enabling individuals to be committed and connected, and to have a stronger fit with the organisation. • Ability and willingness to adapt is essential to career satisfaction and success, which in turn contributes to job tenure or retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention factors, such as autonomy and challenging work, contribute to employee satisfaction and retention of employees. • Encourages organisational commitment, which in turn increases retention. • Eradicates the devastating effect of key employees leaving the organisation, thus reducing turnover.
2.4.5 Biographical variables influencing the constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability tends to decrease with age. • Women seem to be less employable than men owing to gender stereotypes and family responsibilities. However, recent research findings indicate slight changes resulting from women's increased exposure to the latest technical education and training. • African participants reported higher levels of employability, mainly due to BEE and the advancement of education for previously disadvantaged groups. • Contrasting evidence was found regarding tenure and employability. • It seems as if lower level employees (staff level) display more employability skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career adaptability tends to decrease with age. • Contradictory results were found regarding gender and career adaptability. • Contradictory findings regarding length of service and career adaptability were found; however it seems as if high levels of career adaptability contribute to tenure. • Higher job level seems to positively relate to career adaptability owing to the challenging work and higher influence associated with a higher job level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older employees have lower turnover intentions. • Females and males differ in terms of the retention factors that they value most. • Different race groups differ in terms of the retention factors that they prefer and value. • Years of service (tenure) might contribute to more challenging work and higher compensation, which positively affects employees' satisfaction with certain retention factors. • Lower job levels prefer remuneration and benefits and seem to be more satisfied with work-life balance, whilst senior management shows higher satisfaction with compensation, job characteristics, supervisor support and organisational fit.

CONSTRUCT	Employability attributes	Career adaptability	Retention factors
2.4.6 Implications for practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved performance and productivity • Sustained capabilities • Enables technical advancement • Reduced unemployment • Enhanced and relevant training and development programmes • Individual development • Career satisfaction, career-enhancing behaviours, enhanced career prospects or opportunities and career success • Enhanced person-job match • Enhanced psychological attachment and commitment • Retention of effective, skilled and knowledgeable employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger sense of responsibility • Stronger connection and fit • Enhanced ability to overcome career challenges • Enhanced work engagement, job satisfaction and career success • Ability to work with diverse groups • Retention of effective, skilled and knowledgeable employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management of retention • Minimise voluntary turnover • Higher intention to stay; lower intention to leave • Retention of diverse groups • Inform the right combination of work practices for retention • Improved and additional retention initiatives • More committed and satisfied employees • Enhanced productivity • Sustainability and competitiveness • Minimise obstacles on economic growth and job creation.

2.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Workforce trends point to a future scarcity of extremely skilled employees who have the essential knowledge and capability to perform at high levels (Hausknecht, Rodda, & Howard, 2009). Keeping employees committed to the organisation and retaining their valuable skills is therefore a top priority for many contemporary organisations (Neininger et al., 2010). Moreover, the retention of valuable knowledge and experience contributes positively to organisations' sustainability and competitiveness (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Burke & Ng, 2006; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012), which results in skilled employees being characterised as the principal differentiating factor for most organisations in the 21st century (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Some of the main contributing factors to the retention challenges in South Africa are increased career mobility, emigration for improved employment conditions, aggressive recruitment tactics and a retiring workforce (Dietrich, 2000; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

The above discussion highlights the importance of retention and emphasises that retention practices have become an intimidating and highly challenging task for managers and human resource (HR) practitioners in an aggressive economic environment (Chiboiwa, Samuel, & Chipunza, 2010). The global skills scarcity requires industrial and organisational psychologists and HR practitioners to not only understand the reasons why people leave their organisations, but also the factors that influence turnover and the retention of employees. By understanding the reasons why people leave and the factors that influence turnover and retention, practitioners can positively contribute to reducing the impact of skills shortages on economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Rasool & Botha, 2011). This, in turn, will have a major impact on the competitiveness of the automotive industry (Mashilo, 2010) and assist organisations in South Africa to sustain their productive capacity (Cheney & Nienaber, 2009). As this study aims to inform retention practices in an attempt to overcome the problem of skills shortages in South African workplaces, it also provides insight into the contribution of attributes such as employability and adaptability skills on employees' satisfaction with organisational retention factors.

Research has shown that employability attributes provide employees with a constant ability to perform (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012). More specifically, employability attributes, such as career resilience and entrepreneurial orientation or openness to change, influence the retention of employees and ultimately their wellbeing. According to Fugate et al. (2004), career resilience fosters optimism, and openness to change facilitates continuous learning.

Continuous learning and the development of employees is important in order for them to be able to sustain their capabilities as effective employees and to resist being without a job, whilst they also enable the organisation to look forward to technological advancement and to retaining its skilled employees (Ferreira, 2012; Kyndt, Docky, Michielson, & Moeyaert, 2009). Rodriguez (2008) explains that employees begin to search for external job opportunities once they feel they are no longer growing. Thus, the development of employability attributes further supports retention practices, as it contributes to individual development which addresses training and development needs (a retention factor) (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

High levels of employability allow individuals to reap the benefits of active career adaptability (Fugate et al., 2004), whilst they also positively contribute to person-job match, career satisfaction, career-enhancing behaviours, career prospects and improved career opportunities and career success (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Mohd Yusof, Mustapha, Syed Mohamad, & Bunian, 2012; Takase et al., 2012). The positive contribution of employability to career satisfaction, commitment and psychological attachment consequently reduces retention risks (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Mitchel et al., 2001). Knowledge of the employability skills required by manufacturing employers, such as in the automotive industry, will therefore guide HR and training and development practitioners and technical instructors in terms of the employability skills that should be emphasised in their programmes (Rasul, Rauf, & Mansor, 2013).

Whilst employability stimulates career adaptability, it is said that career adaptability also improves employability both within and outside an organisation (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). Career adaptability contributes to various factors that positively influence the retention of employees, such as work engagement, job satisfaction, career success, a stronger connection and fit with the organisation and a stronger sense of responsibility towards the organisation (Ferreira, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Zacher, 2014). A study conducted by Rasul et al. (2013) revealed that although adaptability is only moderately important to employers in the manufacturing industry, such skills are of great advantage to employees, as they enable them to face any challenge in the workplace, to motivate themselves to get through the challenges and to work with various race, culture and language groups.

By understanding individuals' employability and career adaptability profiles, industrial and organisational psychologists and HR practitioners will be able to manage retention within the

organisation effectively (Ferreira, 2012). The retention factors measured in this study are all associated with the HR management practices that influence employees' intentions to leave (Döckel, 2003). The results of the study will therefore provide managers and HR practitioners who are interested in the retention of talented and scarce-skilled employees with valuable information. The findings of the study can also serve as a basis for the development of a retention strategy by the organisation. In addition, the study will report on the differences found between age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups in terms of some of the retention factors. These findings will also serve as useful pointers for retaining diverse groups of employees in the South African multicultural work environment (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In this regard, the research will also give an indication of the changing priorities of biographical groups, which will in turn inform attraction and retention practices.

On the other hand, it is also important to note that the enhancement of work practices and employees' employability and career adaptability may increase voluntary turnover (Ferreira, 2012). This presents HR practitioners with situations where advocating involvement, career resilience and career development may not only build commitment and workforce flexibility, but may also inadvertently contribute to the departure of valued employees (Ferreira, 2012; Ito & Brotheridge, 2005). The study can also be of value in this regard by highlighting the combination of learning and development and selective promotion and salary decisions that are required and that are most valued by employees in the contemporary workplace. According to Echols (2007), the right combination of work practices can be a strong retention factor.

Some of the recommendations made in the literature regarding retention include the promotion of belonging to social groups; developing self-efficacy and self-esteem to improve career resilience, which fosters optimism; providing supportive relationships to assist with emotions and distress; providing sufficient growth opportunities and challenging work; providing work-life balance opportunities; promoting intra-organisational career mobility; drawing up individualised career development plans that take biographical factors into account; and encouraging engagement in learning and self-development (Ferreira, 2012; Hermann, Stewart, Diaz-Granados, Berger, Jackson, & Yuen, 2011; Robertson, 2013). The study will also provide additional initiatives to enable managers, industrial and organisational psychologists and HR practitioners to develop employees' attributes and manage the retention of skilled and knowledgeable employees effectively.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is clear that there is a growing global awareness of the importance of a range of attributes, capabilities and dispositions which enable individuals to work successfully in the knowledge economy. More importantly, these individuals are expected to respond to a dynamic and complex workplace which expects them to be employable, in terms of being able to build their own careers (Koen et al., 2012; Savickas, 2012), and to be adaptable (Coetzee et al., 2012; Ferreira, 2012). Organisations, on the other hand, are expected to be able to retain the skilled, employable and adaptable individuals (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

Chapter 2 presented a comparative examination of the existing literature and research on the concepts of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. These were conceptualised by providing differing and supportive views and definitions obtained from various researchers. Furthermore, an overview of the applicable framework and main subdimensions relevant to the three constructs were provided. Following this the variables influencing employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors were discussed by highlighting the congruent and conflicting statements and findings in the literature. The chapter then provided a theoretical link between the constructs in the form of an integrated model.

The literature review highlighted the limitations and shortcomings of previous studies, which this study might address. As the constructs under investigation, namely, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, were established relatively recently in the 20th century, the researcher found that the majority of the research focuses on the conceptualisation and measurement of the constructs rather than the relationship between the three constructs. The researcher could not find any previous studies that focused on the relationship between these important constructs. The current study is therefore not only relevant to the 21st century world of work and contemporary matters in a knowledge economy, but will also contribute new and valuable findings as it investigates the contribution of psychological career-related dispositions (meta-competencies), namely, employability attributes and career adaptability, to retention-related dispositions. By conducting the study in the automotive industry in South Africa, the researcher will be able to positively contribute to concerns highlighted by the literature review, such as skills shortages and the increased mobility of the skilled, especially in science, engineering and technology (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mashilo, 2010). The current study will contribute in particular to the effective management of retention, as it will focus on the

factors that influence turnover and retention, rather than the reasons why people leave, as is the case in the majority of the retention-related studies (Mitchell et al., 2001). In addition, there is limited information available in the literature on how best to strategically and practically increase employability and career adaptability in South Africa (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Gore, 2005; Potgieter, 2012). In this regard, the study will also provide findings relating to the specific and core constructs of employability attributes and career adaptability that can be developed to contribute to the retention of employees.

There would seem to be a paucity of research on the role of biographical characteristics in employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. The study will therefore examine the influence of biographical characteristics further. This will contribute additional information to the existing findings and potentially resolve the conflicting statements, especially as they relate to the influence of tenure on employability, and the influence of gender and length of service on career adaptability. The findings of the study relating to individuals' differences based on their different biographical characteristics, such as age, gender, race, tenure and job level, will contribute to retention practices, especially in a multicultural South Africa where currently four generations coexist in one workplace (Schoch, 2012).

The following literature research aims were achieved in this chapter:

Research aim 1: To conceptualise employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 2: To explain the theoretical relationship between employability attributes and career adaptability in influencing employees' satisfaction with retention factors.

Research aim 3: To identify the implications of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors for retention practices.

Chapter 3 presents the empirical findings of the study in the form of a research article.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH ARTICLE

Employability attributes and career adaptability as predictors of staff satisfaction with retention factors

ABSTRACT

Orientation: The 21st century world of work and knowledge economy requires employees to be employable and adaptable, whilst growing skills shortages and the increased mobility of the highly skilled require organisations to retain their valuable knowledge workers. The lack of skilled professionals, a retiring workforce, rapid technological changes, the need for flexible labour structures and the striving for a competitive advantage and sustainability in the automotive industry have resulted in a renewed interest in effective retention practices.

Research purpose: The objectives of the study were: (1) to determine the relationship between employability attributes (as measured by the Employability Attributes Scale), career adaptability (as measured by the Career-Adapt Abilities Scale) and satisfaction with retention factors (as measured by the Retention Factor Scale), and (2) to determine whether employees from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in their levels of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction.

Motivation for the study: Organisations operating in the 21st century face significant challenges in the retention of their employees. By understanding the constructs, factors and biographical groups that influence employees' satisfaction with retention factors, organisations may potentially be more effective in managing the retention of valuable staff.

Research design, approach or method: A cross-sectional quantitative, correlational research design was followed. Accordingly, the three measuring instruments were administered to a non-probability sample of 321 permanently employed salaried employees in a South African automotive manufacturing company. Descriptive statistics, correlations, structural equation modelling and regressions were used for data analysis.

Main findings: The data analysis revealed significant associations between the participants' career meta-competencies (employability attributes and career adaptability) and their satisfaction with certain retention factors. Significant differences between age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups were also found.

Practical implications for retention practices in Industrial and Organisational Psychology:

Both organisations and practitioners need to acknowledge individuals' needs and preferences, as well as recognise the way in which employees' employability attributes and career adaptability influence their satisfaction with retention factors. When developing retention strategies and practices, attention must also be given to the development of employability attributes and career adaptability in order to manage retention effectively. Furthermore, developing employees' employability attributes and career adaptability may help to enhance their satisfaction with key retention factors. In conclusion, suggestions are made for career development interventions in the context of talent management.

Contributions/value-add: The findings add new and additional information to the existing research literature on the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. The study also contributes valuable insight and knowledge to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology regarding the retention of employees in the automotive industry and especially in the contemporary world of work.

Key words: employability, employability attributes, career adaptability, satisfaction, retention factors, retention practices

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section explains the background and focus of the study. General trends identified in the research literature will also be highlighted. Thereafter the research objectives and potential value added by the study will be discussed.

3.1.1 Key focus of the study

The context of the study is employee retention in a changing marketplace. More specifically, the study focuses on the relationship between individuals' career meta-competencies (employability attributes and career adaptability) and their satisfaction with factors influencing their retention. Skills shortages, particularly in the field of science, engineering and technology, have a major impact on the competitiveness of the automotive manufacturing industry (Mashilo, 2010), a situation which is intensified by the mobility of highly skilled employees, especially engineers (João & Coetzee, 2012). It is therefore important to retain the talent required to sustain the productive capacity of the organisation, especially in the 21st century workplace with its rapidly changing technologies and need for survival in a highly competitive business environment (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Cheney &

Nienaber, 2008; Mohlala et al., 2012; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

3.1.2 Background to the study

Workforce trends point to a current and future scarcity of highly skilled employees with the essential knowledge and capability to perform at high levels (Hausknecht et al., 2009). The May 2014 draft of the South African National Scarce Skills List indicates engineering skills as one of the top five scarce or critical skills for economic growth (DHET, 2014). Keeping employees committed to the organisation and retaining their valuable skills is therefore a top priority for many contemporary organisations, as discussed in chapter 2 of this study (Neininger et al., 2010). The retention of valuable knowledge and experience is an important contributor to an organisation's sustainability and competitiveness (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Burke & Ng, 2006; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012), a fact which has resulted in skilled employees being characterised as the principal differentiating factor for most 21st century organisations (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Some of the main contributing factors to the retention challenges in South Africa are increased career mobility, emigration for improved employment conditions, aggressive recruitment tactics and a retiring workforce (Dietrich, 2000; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009).

The above discussion highlights the importance of retention and emphasises that retention practices have become an intimidating and highly challenging task for both managers and human resource (HR) practitioners in an aggressive economic environment (Chiboiwa et al., 2010). The global skills shortage requires industrial and organisational psychologists and HR practitioners to not only understand the reasons why people leave their organisations, but also the factors that influence the turnover and retention of employees. By understanding the reasons why people leave and the factors that influence turnover and retention, practitioners can contribute positively by reducing the impact of skills shortages on economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Rasool & Botha, 2011). This will in turn have a major impact on the competitiveness of the automotive industry (Mashilo, 2010) and assist organisations in South Africa to sustain their productive capacity (Cheney & Nienaber, 2009). As this study aims to inform retention practices in an attempt to overcome the problem of skills shortages in South African workplaces, it also provides insight into the contribution of career meta-competencies, such as employability and adaptability skills, to employees' satisfaction with organisational retention factors.

The 21st century world of work also presents employees with many challenges, such as unemployment, decreased employment opportunities, diminished job security and rapidly changing technology (Potgieter, 2012). In addition, as a result of an increasingly competitive environment, individuals can no longer rely on their qualifications and technical skills alone to obtain employment. Moreover, even if they are already employed they cannot expect security and employment for life from their employers (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Savickas et al., 2009). This implies that the workplace no longer guarantees ordered and sequential career pathways for adolescents or adults (Nota et al., 2012) and that individuals therefore need to have skills and attitudes (career meta-competencies), such as employability attributes and career adaptability, that allow them to adapt quickly to a variety of situations and to cope with more frequent work transitions (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Rottinghaus et al., 2012; Savickas et al., 2009).

The increased concerns about the employability and adaptability of employees, especially in South Africa, require more emphasis on these constructs and on helping employees to increase and develop their employability attributes and career adaptability. In addition, more research and insight is required on how best to strategically and practically increase and develop employability and career adaptability (De Guzman, 2013; Potgieter, 2012). The necessity for employability attributes and career adaptability skills and the importance of retaining and developing these skills in the global market cannot be underestimated (Koen et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Another trend that may be identified in the contemporary work environment is the increasing diversity in workplaces. This requires employers to understand how people's biographical characteristics influence their employability attributes and career adaptability skills (Potgieter, 2012). This study will accordingly investigate the differences between age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups in terms of these career meta-competencies and satisfaction with retention factors, which will give useful pointers for retaining diverse groups of employees in the South African multicultural work environment (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In this regard, the research will also give an indication of the changing priorities of biographical groups, which will inform attraction and retention practices. The 21st century world of work requires employees to be employable and adaptable, whilst organisations in turn need to be able to retain their diverse, skilled and knowledgeable workers in the knowledge economy.

3.1.3 Review of the literature

3.1.3.1 Employability attributes

In the context of this study, employability attributes refer to the general and non-technical competencies required for performing all jobs, regardless of types or levels of jobs (Ju et al., 2012). It is a psychosocial construct that explains proactive adaptability in changing environments and the career-related attributes and skills individuals employ to enhance their suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Coetzee, 2011).

Research has shown that employability attributes provide employees with a constant ability to perform (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012). More specifically, employability attributes, such as career resilience and entrepreneurial orientation or openness to change, influence the retention of employees and ultimately their wellbeing. According to Fugate et al. (2004), career resilience fosters optimism, and openness to change facilitates continuous learning. Continuous learning and the development of employees is important in order for employees to be able to sustain their capabilities as effective employees and to manage being without a job, whilst it also enables the organisation to look forward to technological advancement and to retain skilled employees (Ferreira, 2012; Kyndt et al., 2009). Rodriguez (2008) explains that employees begin to search for external job opportunities once they feel they are no longer growing. Furthermore, the development of employability attributes supports retention practices, as it contributes to individual development, which addresses training and development needs (a retention factor) (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

High levels of employability allow individuals to reap the benefits of active career adaptability (Fugate et al., 2004), whilst also positively contributing to person-job match, career satisfaction, career-enhancing behaviours, career prospects or improved career opportunities and career success (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Mohd Yusof et al., 2012; Takase et al., 2012). Moreover, the positive contribution that employability makes to career satisfaction, commitment and psychological attachment reduces retention risks (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2001). Knowledge of the employability skills required by manufacturing employers, such as in the automotive industry, will guide HR and training and development practitioners and

technical instructors in terms of the employability skills that should be emphasised in their programmes (Rasul et al., 2013).

The employability attributes framework developed by Bezuidenhout (2010) is of specific relevance to this study as it has been developed and tested for adults in the South African context (Bezuidenhout, 2010). The framework consists of the following eight core career-related employability attributes which are regarded as vital for increasing an individual's employability (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2011):

- Career self-management refers to an individual's ability to sustain employability through continuous learning, career planning and management efforts (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011).
- Cultural competence is the mega-cognitive ability to understand, act and interface successfully within a diverse cultural environment (Bezuidenhout, 2010).
- Self-efficacy is the estimate an individual makes of his or her ability to cope, perform and thrive (Bezuidenhout, 2010).
- Career resilience refers to a personal disposition that facilitates a high level of adaptation, self-confidence, competence and confidence, irrespective of different career situations (Bezuidenhout, 2011).
- Sociability is the ability to be open to, establish and maintain social contacts, as well as to use formal and informal networks for the benefit of one's career (Bezuidenhout, 2010).
- Entrepreneurial orientation is an individual's preference for innovation and creativity, a tendency to take risks, a need for achievement, a tolerance for uncertainty, as well as a preference for autonomy in the exploitation of opportunities within the career environment and the creation of something valuable (Bezuidenhout, 2010).
- Proactivity refers to an individual's tendency to engage in active role orientations that lead to future-oriented and self-initiated action in order to change oneself and one's situation (Bezuidenhout, 2010).
- Emotional literacy refers to an individual's ability to use emotions adaptively, as well as the quality of an individual's ability to read, understand and control own and other people's emotions (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010).

The aims of this study also cover differences in biographical characteristics. De Armond et al. (2006) and Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) found that employability tends to

decrease with age. Moreover, De Armond et al. (2006) found that older workers are less likely to search for new challenges, are less flexible, have less desire for variation in their work and are less motivated to learn new skills. In terms of gender, women seem to be less employable than men owing to gender stereotypes and family responsibilities (Beukes, 2010; Blau & Kahn, 2006; Clarke, 2008; Kazilan et al., 2009; Potgieter, 2012; Van der Heijden et al., 2009; Zikic & Hall, 2009). However, more recent research findings indicate slight changes resulting from women's increased confidence and their improved career prospects (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Ottino, 2010; Savickas, 2011). Many researchers have found that African participants report higher levels of employability, mainly as a result of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and the advancement of education for previously disadvantaged groups (Beukes, 2010; Mancinelli et al., 2010; Potgieter, 2012). However, contrasting evidence was found regarding tenure and employability (Van der Heijden et al., 2009) and it is hoped that the results of the current study may provide more clarity in this regard. In terms of job level groups, it would seem that lower level employees (staff level) display more employability skills (Potgieter, 2012; Puffer, 2011).

3.1.3.2 Career adaptability

Donald Super introduced the term 'career adaptability' to conceptualise the way adults adjust to the challenges of a changing world of work (Rottinghaus et al., 2012; Super & Kidd, 1979). Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with the current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Adaptability reflects the ability to adjust to changes and to manage career tasks and challenges, especially in unanticipated and stressful situations (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Zacher, 2014). Rossier et al. (2012) posit that career adaptability exerts a strong impact on career- and work-related outcomes, such as success in the workplace, work engagement, job satisfaction, or job tenure, and thus on retention-related dispositions (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). Career adaptability is therefore an important construct to consider in this study, as it relates to employee retention.

Career adaptability consists of a multidimensional, hierarchical structure with four subscales. The four global dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by Ferreira (2012) and Savickas and Porfeli (2012), can be explained as follows:

- Career concern consists of the ability to be aware of and to plan for a vocational future. It involves a tendency to consider life within a time perspective that is anchored in hope and optimism.
- Career control reflects perceived personal control over the vocational future and the belief about personal responsibility for constructing one's career. Career control rests on the conviction that it is an advantage for people to be able not only to use self-regulation strategies to adjust to the needs of the different settings, but also to exert some sort of influence and control over the context.
- Career curiosity reflects the tendency to explore one's environment, for example by exploring possible selves and future scenarios. Curiosity about possible selves and social opportunities increases people's active exploration behaviours.
- Career confidence is the self-confidence in one's ability to face and to solve concrete vocational and career problems. It includes the capacity to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives even in the face of obstacles and barriers.

In short, career adaptability is about looking ahead to one's future (concern), knowing what career to pursue (control), looking around at options (curiosity), and having the self-efficacy to undertake the activities needed to achieve career goals (confidence) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, in relation to the findings of the study by Rossier et al. (2012), career adaptability relates to employee retention. This finding has been confirmed by various other researchers in the literature. According to Ferreira (2012), Savickas and Porfeli (2012) and Zacher (2014), career adaptability contributes to various factors that positively influence the retention of employees, such as work engagement, job satisfaction, career success, a stronger connection and fit with the organisation and a stronger sense of responsibility towards the organisation. It is said that career adaptability resources can also prevent person-job mismatch and underemployment, thus limiting their negative consequences for career satisfaction and positively influencing retention (Gutman & Schoon, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Takase et al., 2012). Organisations that develop career adaptability will most likely promote the effective management of retention within the organisation (Ferreira, 2012). A study conducted by Rasul et al. (2013) revealed that although adaptability is only moderately important to employers in the manufacturing industry, it is of great advantage to the employees who have these skills, as it enables them to face any

challenge in the workplace, motivates them to get through the challenges and helps them to work with various race, cultural and language groups.

In terms of the biographical variables that influence career adaptability, it would seem that career adaptability decreases with age, mainly as a result of a decline in career exploration and these employees' potential negative attitudes toward the developmental experiences that are required in order to become adaptable (BLS, 2011; Eurostat, 2012; Koen et al., 2012; Peeters & Emmerick, 2008; Rostami et al., 2012). Contradictory results were found regarding gender and career adaptability, as some researchers report that women display higher levels of career adaptability (Ferreira, 2012; Hartung et al., 2008; O'Connell et al., 2008), although Carless and Arnup (2011) report that males have higher levels of career adaptability. There would seem to be a paucity of research relating to the influence of race on career adaptability. Del Corso and Rehfuss (2011) highlight the fact that culture and relationships with other individuals and races may influence career adaptability, especially for individuals from deep-rooted cultural background (Asian Development Bank, 2007; De Guzman & Choi, 2013). Contradictory findings were, however, also found regarding length of service (Brown et al., 2010; Rostami et al., 2012), although it is interesting to note that high levels of career adaptability contribute to tenure (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Zacher, 2014). In terms of job level, it would seem that higher job levels relate positively to career adaptability owing to the challenging work and increased influence associated with a higher job level (Brown et al., 2012). It is clear that there are limited and contradictory findings in the literature regarding the influence of biographical variables on career adaptability. Consequently, the findings of the study have the potential to make a great contribution in this regard.

3.1.3.3 Retention factors

Retention is a deliberate action by an organisation to produce a setting that engages employees for the long term (Chiboiwa et al., 2010). It can also refer to initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation (Cascio, 2003). For the purpose of this study, retention factors are those factors that facilitate the retention or departure of employees and their decision to leave or remain, depending on the perceived direction of their priorities (Netswera et al., 2005). The focus of the study is therefore on factors that management can control and that may influence workers to stay with the organisation. A South African study conducted by Döckel (2003) uncovered seven critical

retention factors that organisations need to consider if they are to retain employees with high technology skills. The following seven factors are relevant to this study (Döckel, 2003):

- Compensation refers to monetary and non-monetary rewards.
- Job characteristics include skill variety and job autonomy.
- Training and development opportunities refer to formal development activities provided by the organisation.
- Supervisor support includes recognition by and feedback from supervisors to employees.
- Career opportunities include the internal and external career options that an employee may have.
- Work–life balance refers to an employee’s ability to meet both work and family commitments.
- Organisational commitment refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation (El-Nahas et al., 2013).

According to Kyndt et al. (2009), the implementation of retention practices will facilitate employee engagement. A study conducted by Bontis et al. (2011) indicated that autonomy and challenging work, both being retention factors, contribute to employee satisfaction. João (2010) also found that the need for career growth and opportunities for advancement, as well as challenging work, are significant factors that stop professionally qualified employees from leaving their organisations. Organisations that fulfil employees’ needs regarding the retention factors also encourage organisational commitment (Döckel, 2003; Pauw, 2011). According to Pauw (2011), commitment and connection to the organisation have a direct influence on employee retention. Research thus indicates that the retention factors contribute to reduced voluntary turnover, lower intentions to leave, enhanced productivity, more committed and satisfied employees and the effective management of retention practices (Döckel, 2003; Ferreira, 2012; João, 2010; Kraimer et al., 2011; Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2008; Morrow, 2011).

The literature review revealed various differences in terms of the influence of biographical variables on retention factors. It would seem that older employees have lower turnover intentions mainly as a result of them having less interest in task variety and because they might have more difficulty finding new jobs owing to negative stereotyping and age discrimination (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011; De Cuyper et al., 2011; Govaerts et al., 2011;

Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Zacher & Frese, 2009). The gender groups differ in terms of the retention factors that they value most. Females tend to value stability, remuneration, benefits, emotionally supportive work environments and flexible work arrangements, whilst males experience higher satisfaction with perceived career opportunities (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008; Nienaber et al., 2011; Pauw, 2011; Snelgar et al., 2013; Van Dyk, 2011). In terms of race, it would seem that black professionals value career advancement and opportunities, whilst white professionals have a preference for work–life balance (Coetzee et al., 2007; João & Coetzee, 2012; Pauw, 2011). Years of service or tenure might contribute to more challenging work and higher compensation, which positively affects employees' satisfaction with certain retention factors (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Van Dyk, 2011). Lastly, employees on lower job levels seem to prefer remuneration and benefits and seem to be more satisfied with work–life balance (Nienaber et al., 2011; Snelgar et al., 2013; Van Dyk, 2011), whilst senior management shows higher satisfaction with compensation, job characteristics, supervisor support and organisational fit (Van Dyk, 2011).

3.1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of the study were firstly to explore the relationship between employees' career meta-capacities, such as their employability attributes and career adaptability, and their satisfaction with retention factors. Secondly, the study aimed to explore whether employees from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in terms of their levels of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction. Accordingly the identification of those career meta-capacities (employability attributes and career adaptability) that significantly predict satisfaction with retention factors and an understanding of the influence of biographical variables on these constructs could potentially assist industrial psychologists, HR practitioners and managers in the design of appropriate talent management strategies.

3.1.5 The potential value-add of the study

The general purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and employees' satisfaction with retention factors, with a view to informing retention practices and strategies for employers within the automotive industry. The main contributions of the study will be in terms of 1) extending retention research by investigating the relationship between the three constructs; 2) contributing valuable new insights on retention-related challenges and potential solutions in the 21st century

workplace; 3) highlighting the retention factors that are most valued by employees in the automotive work environment; 4) identifying the differing needs of the diverse workforce based on biographical variables, such as age, gender, race, tenure and job level; 5) building on existing recommendations and initiatives for effective retention practices and strategies; and 6) guiding and stimulating future research to further explore and analyse the relationship between the three variables.

Retention practices have become an intimidating and highly challenging task for managers and HR practitioners in an aggressive economic environment (Chiboiwa et al., 2010). Therefore, these parties should not only understand the reasons why employees leave organisations but should also understand the factors that influence employee turnover and retention. The retention factors measured in this study are all associated with HR management practices that influence employees' intentions to leave (Döckel, 2003). The results of the study will therefore provide valuable information to managers and HR practitioners who are interested in the retention of talented and scarce skilled employees. It will also make a significant contribution to the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, particularly regarding retention practices in a dynamic and ever-changing organisational environment. The findings of the study can also serve as a basis for the organisation to develop a retention strategy. In addition, the study will report on the differences found between age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups on some of the retention factors, which will give useful pointers for retaining diverse groups of employees in the South African multicultural work environment (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In this regard, the research will also give an indication of the changing priorities of biographical groups, which it is hoped will, in turn, inform attraction and retention practices. This is of particular value in a multicultural work context, such as that found in South Africa.

The study will, furthermore, provide HR practitioners and training practitioners with ideas on how best to train, develop and increase employability attributes and career adaptability skills, both strategically and practically, in an attempt to reduce retention risks – an issue that has been identified as a limitation in previous studies (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Potgieter, 2012; Rasul et al., 2013). By assisting managers and HR practitioners to develop a retention strategy, to increase employability attributes and career adaptability skills through training and development and to better understand the employability and career adaptability profile of employees, organisations may potentially be able to retain their skilled and knowledgeable workforce (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Ferreira, 2012; Potgieter, 2012). This

in turn may potentially reduce the impact of skills shortages on economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Rasool & Botha, 2011), whilst also contributing to the competitiveness and sustainability of the organisation (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Mashilo, 2010; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012).

3.1.6 Explanation of the sections to follow

In the discussion that follows the research design used in this study. Thereafter, the research approach and method used will be clarified. The results will then be provided, followed by a discussion of the significant findings and interpretation of the findings in the light of previous research. The conclusion will then be presented and the limitations will be briefly identified. Finally, recommendations for future research will be made.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section the research design is presented according to the research approach used. The research method will be discussed, including the research participants, the measuring instruments, the research procedure, the ethical considerations and the statistical analyses.

3.2.1 Research approach

A quantitative approach was used to empirically examine the statistical relationships between the different variables. For the purpose of this study a cross-sectional survey design, targeting permanently employed salaried employees from an automotive manufacturing company, was used. The research was based on the analysis of primary data in the form of questionnaires (Struwig & Stead, 2001), which were administered in individual and group sessions. The data was captured in an electronic file and converted into an SPSS file. The statistical data was processed and analysed by means of descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics.

3.2.2 Research method

This section will clarify the research method followed in terms of the research participants, measuring instruments, research procedure and statistical analyses conducted in this study.

3.2.2.1 Research participants

A non-probability, purposive sample of 321 of a population comprising 790 permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa was targeted. The relatively large sample size ensured that the characteristics of the population were represented and also reduced the impact of the non-response factor. Biographical variables, such as age, gender, race, tenure and job level were included in the study, as the literature review showed that person-centred factors influence research results (Brown et al., 2012; Coetzee, 2010; João & Coetzee, 2012; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). In the section that follows, the profile of the sample is described according to the biographical variables.

The sample was well distributed and representative of the various age groups in the study. As shown in Figure 3.1, the participants were mostly in the early career stage (20–39 years: 48%), with the remainder of the participants being between 40 and 49 years (26%) and 50 and 59 years (24%), and only 2% being older than 60 years.

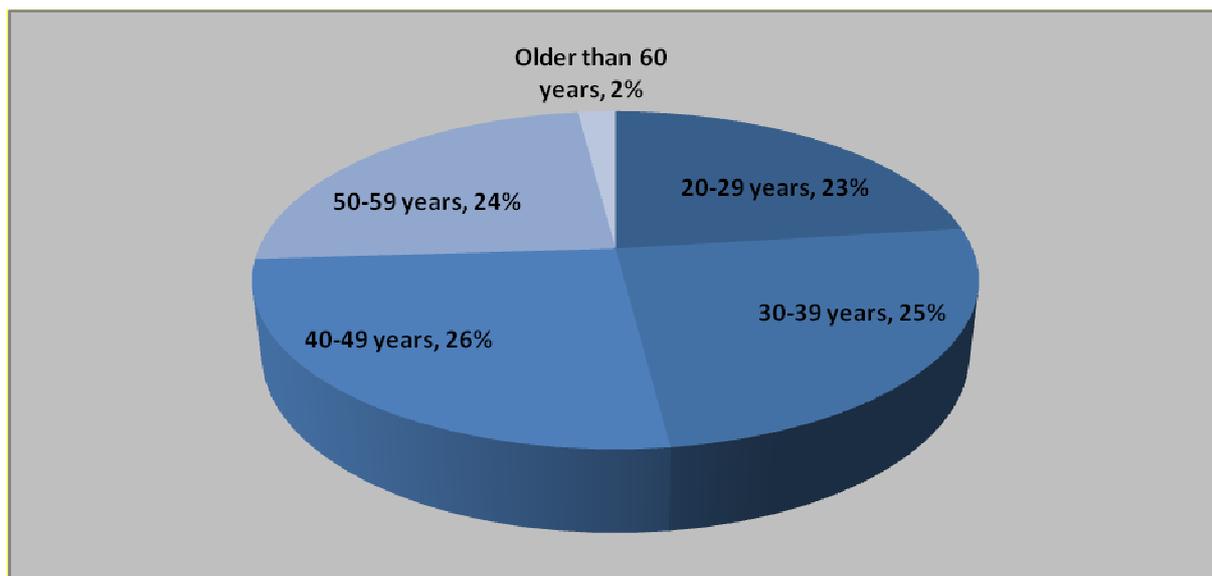


Figure 3.1: Sample distribution by age (N = 321)

In terms of gender groups, the final sample (n = 321), as shown in Figure 3.2, was skewed towards males (72%), with 28% only being female.

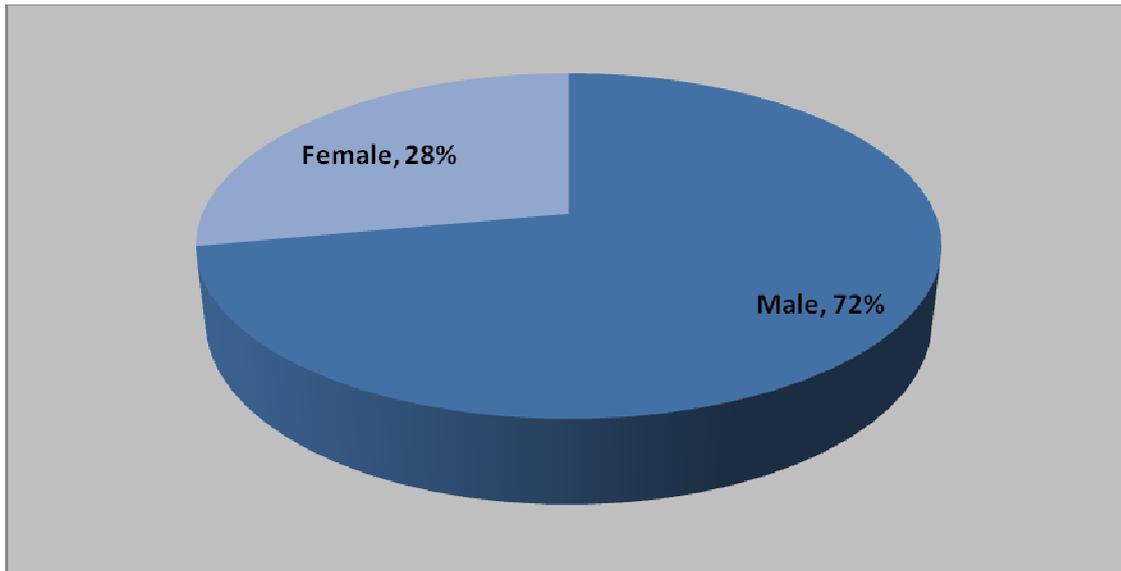


Figure 3.2: Sample distribution by gender (N = 321)

The racial composition of the sample (n = 321) was 50% white, 35% African, 1% Asian, 4% coloured and 10% Indian. Overall, black participants represented 50% of the sample.

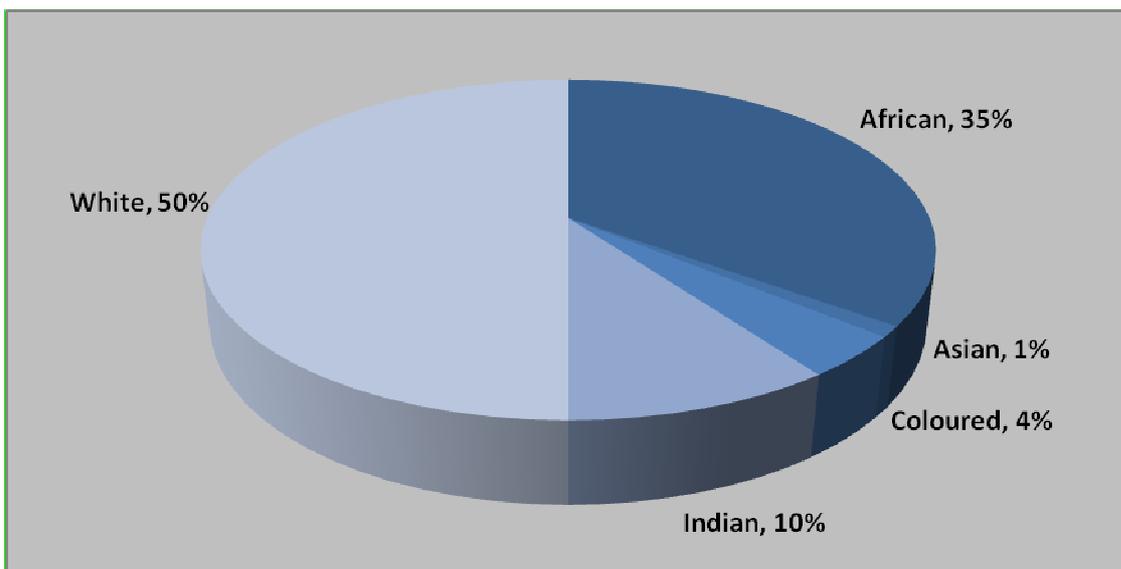


Figure 3.3: Sample distribution by race (N = 321)

As shown in Figure 3.4, in terms of tenure, most of the participants have been in the company's employment for less than five years (36%). Only 6% of the participants have been with the company for between 26 and 30 years, with an additional 6% having been employed by the company for more than 31 years.

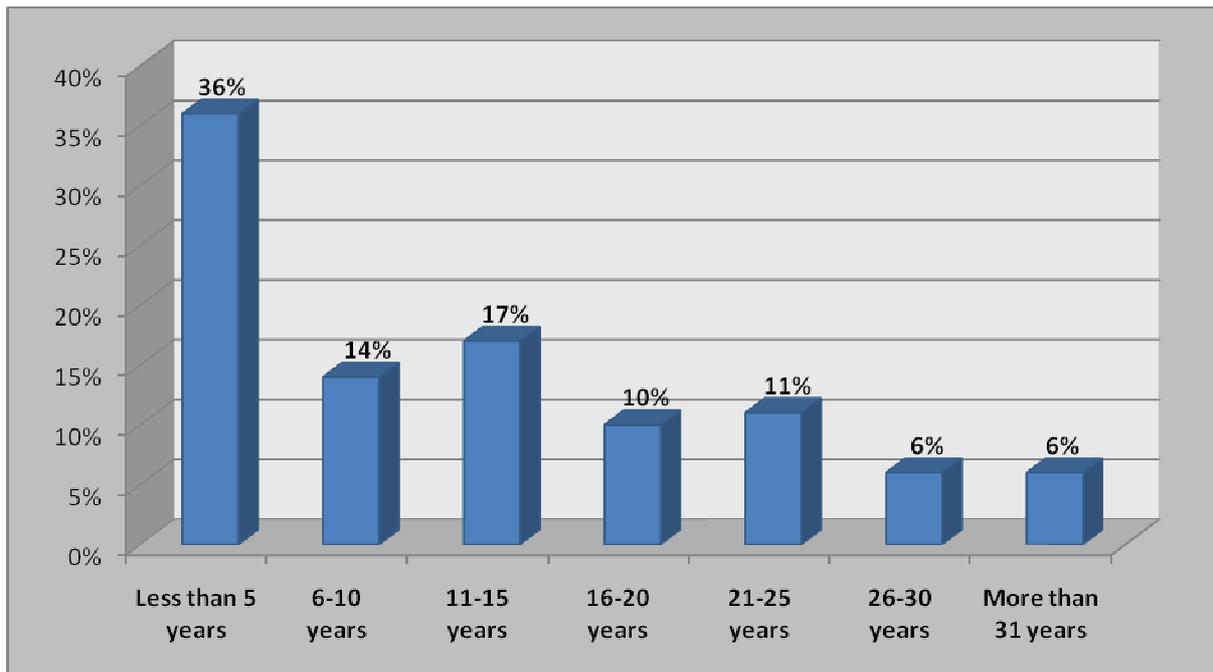


Figure 3.4: Sample distribution by tenure (N = 321)

Figure 3.5 shows that the majority of the participants were on the management or supervisory level (62%), with 21% on the operational level and the remaining 17% of participants on the senior management level. Overall, participants on the managerial/supervisory job level represented 79% of the sample.

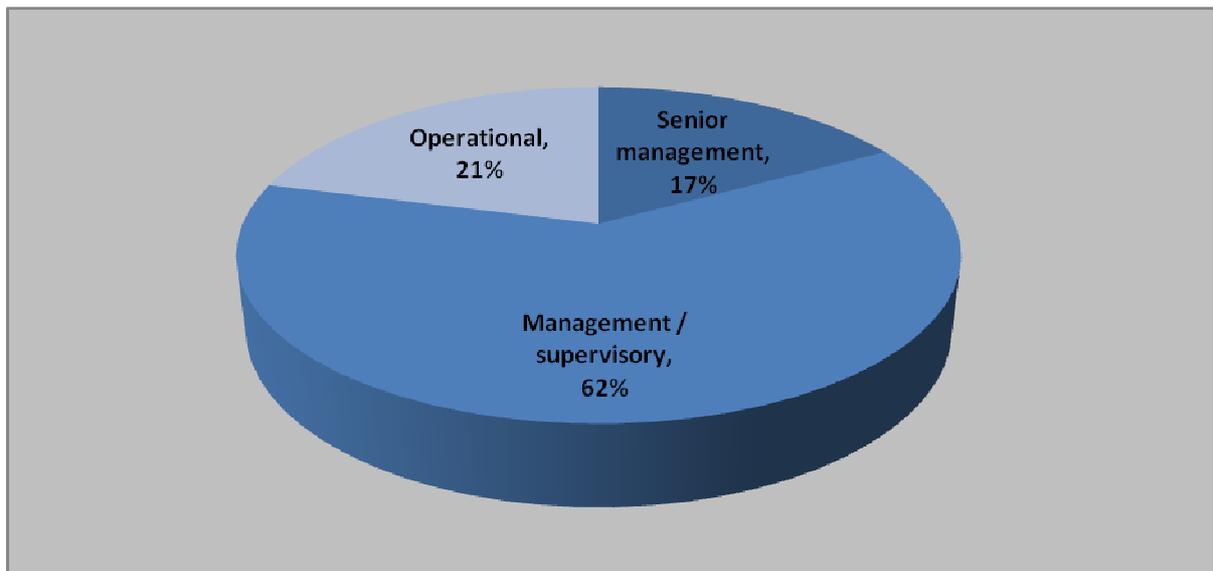


Figure 3.5: Sample distribution by job level (N = 321)

In addition, the participants were mainly Afrikaans speaking and married. The majority of the participants possessed a diploma or a degree, worked on average between 41 and 50 hours per week and had worked for up to two previous employers before joining the organisation. Overall, the sample constituted a balance between white and black participants and comprised predominantly males and participants in the early career stage (20–39 years), of which the majority had worked for the organisation for less than five years and were on a management or supervisory level.

3.2.2.2 Measuring instruments

Employability attributes were measured by means of the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS). The EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) has been developed for the South African context and is used as an instrument to measure individuals' self-perceived employability attributes. The EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) is a self-rated, multifactorial measure which contains 56 items and eight sub-scales: career self-management (11 items, for example "I regularly reflect on what my career aspirations are"), cultural competence (5 items, for example "I know the customs of other cultures"), self-efficacy (6 items, for example "When I achieve something, it is because of my own effort"), career resilience (6 items, for example "I regularly ask others' opinions regarding my strengths and weaknesses"), sociability (7 items, for example "I actively seek feedback from others to make progress in my career"), entrepreneurial orientation (7 items, for example "I am responsible for my own successes and failures in my career"), proactivity (7 items, for example "I can easily establish and maintain interpersonal relationships"), and emotional literacy (7 items, for example "It is easy for me to identify the emotions of others"). Respondents are required to rate each item on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = never true for me; 6 = always true for me). An exploratory factor analysis (Coetzee, 2010) provided evidence that the EAS items meet the psychometric criteria of construct validity. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) reliability coefficients for each subscale range between .78 and .90 (Coetzee, 2010).

Career adaptability was measured by means of the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS). The CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) is a multifactorial self-rating measure, consisting of 24 items and four subscales: concern (6 items, for example "Thinking about what my future will be like"), control (6 items, for example "Keeping upbeat"), curiosity (6 items, for example "Exploring my surroundings"), and confidence (6 items, for example "Performing tasks efficiently"). A five-point Likert-type scale is used for subjects' responses to each of the 24

items (1 = not strong; 5 = strongest). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) report the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients (internal consistency) for the four subscales: concern (.83), control (.74), curiosity (.79) and confidence (.85). Maree (2012) has confirmed the construct validity and internal consistency reliability of the CAAS in the South African context.

Retention factors were measured using the Retention Factor Scale (RFS) which was developed in the South African organisational context by Döckel (2003). The Retention Factor Scale (RFS) measures the participants' satisfaction with the following retention factors on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly dissatisfied; 6 = strongly satisfied): compensation (13 items, for example "On my present job this is how I feel about my benefits package"), job characteristics (4 items, for example "The job requires me to use a number of complex or high-level skills"), training and development opportunities (6 items, for example "The company is providing me with job-specific training"), supervisor support (6 items, for example "My supervisor looks for opportunities to praise positive employee performance, both privately and in front of others"), career opportunities (6 items, for example "My chances for being promoted are good"), work-life balance (4 items, for example "I often feel like there is too much work to do") and commitment to the organisation (3 items, for example "How would you rate your chances of still working at this company a year from now"). A factor analysis on the RFS conducted by Döckel (2003) confirmed the construct validity of the questionnaire in the South African context. In terms of internal consistency reliability, Döckel et al. (2006) report the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: compensation (.90), job characteristics (.41), training and development opportunities (.83), supervisor support (.90), career opportunities (.76), work-life balance (.87) and commitment to the organisation (.89).

A biographical questionnaire was also used to obtain data on age, gender, race, tenure and job level.

3.2.2.3 Research procedure and ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the research institution. Permission for the research was obtained from the HR Director of the participating company.

The following data collection procedures were followed:

- The EAS, CAAS and RFS questionnaires were distributed to all the participants in the sample.
- A questionnaire for gathering biographical information was included, containing questions on the variables age, gender, race, tenure and job level.
- The participants completed the questionnaires during individual and group administration sessions and the researcher collected the questionnaires as soon as they had been completed.

Five-hundred and twenty-eight questionnaires were distributed, of which 321 completed and usable questionnaires were returned. This yielded a response rate of 61%. Prior to the administering of the instruments, the purpose of the study was explained and directions for completing the questionnaires were provided. Participants were invited to respond to the questionnaires voluntarily and the respondents gave their permission for the results to be used for research purposes only. The privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of all the participants were assured. Moreover, no harm was done to any participant involved in the research process.

3.2.2.4 Statistical analyses

A quantitative research approach was used for this study. The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2013), SPSS Amos (2012) and the SAS (Statistical Analysis System, 2010) programmes were used to analyse the data.

The statistical procedures were conducted in three stages:

Stage 1: Descriptive statistics were used to describe the variables. These included Cronbach's alpha coefficients (internal consistency reliability), means and standard deviations.

Stage 2: Correlational statistics were calculated to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the three variables. Accordingly, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to calculate the direction of and strength between variables (Steyn, 2001) as follows:

- A negative value reflected an inverse relationship.

- The strength of the linear relationship was determined by the absolute
- value of $p \leq .05$.
- A strong correlation did not imply a cause–effect relationship.

In order to counter the probability of a type I error, the significance value was set at the 95% confidence level ($p \leq .05$). In addition, the significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $r \geq .30$ were chosen as the cut-off point for rejecting the null hypotheses.

For the purposes of this study, a cut-off point of $r \geq .30$ (medium effect) and larger (Cohen, 1992) at $p \leq .05$ was treated as practically significant.

Stage 3: Inferential statistics were performed, which included structural equation modelling (SEM) and multiple regressions, to explore the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (retention factors satisfaction) that was explained by the independent variables (employability attributes, career adaptability and biographical variables). The levels of statistical significance of the multiple regression that were used in this study were as follows:

$F(p) < .001$

$F(p) < .01$

$F(p) < .05$ as the cut-off for rejecting the null hypotheses

In terms of SEM, maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation was used. The goodness-of-fit statistics was evaluated by using the following absolute goodness-of-fit indices: the chi-square test, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR). The following relative goodness-of-fit indices were also used to evaluate the model fit: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). In line with guidelines provided by Garson (2008), an adequate fit of the structural model to the measurement data existed when CFI and TLI values of .90 or higher, an RMSEA of .08 or lower, and an SRMR of .06 or lower were obtained.

Multiple regressions were also used to further explore the proportion of variance in the dependent variables (retention factor satisfaction) that was explained by the independent variables (employability attributes, career adaptability and age, gender, race, tenure and job level). ANOVA tables were used for the regressions in order to determine the proportion of variance that was explained by the independent variables on the dependent variables.

$R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size), $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect size) and $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size) at $p \leq .05$ were used to determine the practical effect size of the multiple regression analyses (Cohen, 1992).

Prior to conducting the various regression analyses, collinearity diagnostics were examined to ensure that zero-order correlations were below the level of concern ($r \geq .80$), that the variance inflation factors did not exceed 10, that the condition index was well below 15, and that the tolerance values were close to 1.0 (Field, 2009).

Multicollinearity is a condition under which the independent variables are very highly correlated (.80 or greater) (Field, 2009). Multicollinearity can be caused by high bivariate correlations (usually of .80 or greater) or by high multivariate correlations. Multicollinearity weakens analysis and implies that inverse relationships between independent and dependent variables are unstable and independent variables are redundant with one another, and that the independent variable does not add any predictive value to another independent variable. In general, it is advisable to not include two independent variables that correlate with one another at .70 or greater (Field, 2009).

Tests for normality (one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests) were conducted to assess whether the data was either normally or non-normally distributed. In the present study, the test for normality revealed a non-normal distribution of the data. The Wilcoxon two-sample test was therefore used to test for significant mean differences between the biographical variables that acted as significant predictors of the retention factors. Cohen's d was used to assess the practical effect size of significant mean differences as follows:

Small practical effect: $d = .20 - .49$

Moderate effect: $d = .50 - .79$

Large effect: $d \geq .80$

3.3 RESULTS

This section reviews the descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics of significant value for each scale applied. The descriptive statistics, such as the mean and standard deviations, as well as the bivariate correlational analysis between the three constructs, namely, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, are presented in tables 3.1 to 3.3.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales of the three measuring instruments were used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the measuring instruments and are also reported in the tables below. Each of the subscales on the EAS reflected sufficiently high Cronbach's alpha values and had high internal consistency reliability (.71–.91). The Cronbach's alpha values on the CAAS were also high (.82–.89), while on the RFS all these alpha values were satisfactory. Most were high (.72–.96) with the exception of job characteristics, which had a lower, but for research purposes an acceptable, value of .60. A desirable reliability coefficient would usually fall into the range of .80 to .90 (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002). The internal consistency coefficients for the three instruments (EAS, CAAS and RFS) were therefore generally regarded as acceptable.

3.3.1 Descriptive statistics

3.3.1.1 Descriptive statistics: employability attributes scale (EAS)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Tables 3.1 and 3.2 show that the total EAS mean average score was ($M = 4.53$; $SD = .61$). The highest mean scores obtained were on self-efficacy ($M = 4.69$; $SD = .64$), and the entrepreneurial orientation subscales ($M = 4.66$; $SD = .66$). The lowest mean scores were obtained on the sociability ($M = 4.21$; $SD = .74$), and cultural competence subscales ($M = 4.40$; $SD = .90$). The standard deviations of the subscales ranged from .64 to .90.

3.3.1.2 Descriptive statistics: career adapt-abilities scale (CAAS)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Tables 3.1 and 3.3 show that the total CAAS mean average score was ($M = 3.99$; $SD = .55$). The highest mean score obtained was on career confidence ($M = 4.13$; $SD = .61$), whilst the lowest mean score was obtained on the career concern subscale ($M = 3.87$; $SD = .69$). The standard deviations of the subscales were fairly similar, all ranging from .57 to .69.

3.3.1.3 Descriptive statistics: retention factor scale (RFS)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show that the total RFS mean average score was ($M = 3.88$; $SD = .76$). The highest mean scores obtained were on organisational commitment ($M = 4.71$; $SD = 1.27$), and the job characteristic subscales ($M = 4.49$; $SD = .88$), while the lowest mean score was obtained on the career opportunities subscale ($M = 3.46$; $SD = .96$). The results show that the participants felt moderately

committed to the organisation ($M = 4.71$; $SD = 1.27$) and felt slightly satisfied with job characteristics ($M = 4.49$; $SD = .88$) and supervisor support ($M = 4.29$; $SD = 1.06$). However, the results also indicate a slight dissatisfaction with work–life balance ($M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.24$); compensation ($M = 3.64$; $SD = 1.16$); training and development opportunities ($M = 3.62$; $SD = 1.21$); and career opportunities ($M = 3.46$; $SD = .96$). The standard deviations of the subscales ranged from .88 to 1.27.

3.3.2 Correlational statistics

Pearson product-moment correlations (r) allowed the researcher to identify the direction and strength of the relationship between each of the variables. A cut-off of $p \leq .05$ ($r \geq .30$, medium practical effect size) was used for interpreting the significance of the findings (Cohen, 1992).

3.3.2.1 Correlation (zero-order) analysis between biographicals, employability attributes (EAS) and career adapt-ability (CAAS)

As shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, the following correlations were found between the biographical variables and the EAS subscales:

- Age had a negative correlation with career resilience ($r = -.11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Strong, significant and negative correlations were found between race and each of the EAS subscales ($r \geq -.24 \leq -.46$; small to moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Tenure had negative and significant correlations with some of the EAS subscales, namely, career self-management ($r = -.12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); self-efficacy ($r = -.15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); career resilience ($r = -.15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); entrepreneurial orientation ($r = -.13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$) and overall EAS ($r = -.11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Positive and significant relationships were found between job level and each of the EAS subscales, with a small practical effect ($r \geq .14 \leq .29$).

As shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.3, the following correlations were found between the biographical variables and the CAAS subscales:

- Age had negative and significant relationships with career concern ($r = -.19$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$) and overall CAAS ($r = -.11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Race had significant and negative correlations with all the CAAS subscales, namely, career concern ($r = -.41$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$); career control ($r = -.19$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); career curiosity ($r = -.26$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); career confidence ($r = -.17$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); and overall CAAS ($r = -.31$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Tenure had a negative correlation with career concern ($r = -.15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Job level had significant and positive correlations with all the CAAS subscales, namely, career concern ($r = .19$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); career control ($r = .19$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); career curiosity ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); career confidence ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); and overall CAAS ($r = .20$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).

In terms of the correlations between the EAS and CAAS variables, the following were found as shown in Table 3.1:

- Significant and positive correlations were found between all the EAS and CAAS variables, with a statistical significance of $p \leq .001$.
- Career self-management, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity, and overall EAS correlated significantly and positively with each of the CAAS subscales ($r \geq .55 \leq .74$; large practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence correlated significantly and positively with each of the CAAS subscales ($r \geq .38 \leq .48$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$).

Table 3.1

Descriptive Analysis: Biographical, Employability Attributes Scale and Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Variables

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Age	n/a	.41	.49	1.00																		
2. Gender	n/a	.27	.45	-.05	1.00																	
3. Race	n/a	.59	.49	.22* **	-.08	1.00																
4. Tenure	n/a	.14	.34	.48* **	-.10*	.15* *	1.00															
5. Job level	n/a	.22	.42	- **	.27* **	.10* **	.34* **	.19* **	1.00													
6. Career self-management	.89	4.56	.72	-.09	-.03	.46* **	-.12*	.29* **	1.00													
7. Cultural competence	.91	4.40	.90	.00	.01	.32* **	-.03	.15* *	.55* **	1.00												
8. Self-efficacy	.71	4.69	.64	-.08	.00	.27* **	.15* *	.19* **	.66* **	.42* **	1.00											
9. Career resilience	.79	4.49	.69	-.11*	-.04	.37* **	-.15*	.21* **	.72* **	.63* **	.64* **	1.00										
10. Sociability	.77	4.21	.74	-.06	.02	.42* **	-.11	.25* **	.69* **	.69* **	.54* **	.69* **	1.00									

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
11 Entrepreneurial orientation	.80	4.66	.66	-.05	-.08	.31*	-.13*	.26**	.78**	.55**	.71**	.75**	.66**	1.00								
12 Proactivity	.85	4.67	.68	-.02	-.07	.29**	-.08	.17*	.79**	.62**	.68**	.80**	.69**	.83**	1.00							
13 Emotional literacy	.86	4.50	.76	.08	.00	.24**	-.03	.14*	.58**	.55**	.57**	.62**	.52**	.58**	.66**	1.00						
14 EAS	.97	4.53	.61	-.05	-.03	.40**	-.11*	.26**	.89**	.74**	.77**	.87**	.83**	.88**	.91**	.76**	1.00					
15 Career concern	.85	3.87	.69	.19**	.05	.41**	.15*	.19**	.62**	.038	.47**	.49**	.51**	.55**	.58**	.37**	.60**	1.00				
16 Career control	.82	4.07	.57	-.02	.05	.19*	-.04	.19**	.58**	.39**	.60**	.52**	.42**	.61**	.62**	.52**	.64**	.60**	1.00			
17 Career curiosity	.88	3.90	.69	-.11	.01	.26**	-.11	.15*	.60**	.46**	.56**	.55**	.50**	.64**	.63**	.45**	.66**	.57**	.68**	1.00		
18 Career confidence	.89	4.13	.61	-.05	.02	.17*	-.06	.14**	.55**	.41**	.55**	.54**	.46**	.59**	.64**	.46**	.63**	.55**	.75**	.77**	1.00	
19 CAAS	.94	3.99	.55	-.11*	.03	.31**	-.11	.20**	.69**	.48**	.63**	.61**	.56**	.70**	.72**	.52**	.74**	.80**	.87**	.88**	.88**	1.00

Notes: N = 321; *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant. EAS: Employability Attributes Scale; CAAS: Career Adapt-Ability Scale.

3.3.2.2 Correlation analysis between biographical variables, employability attributes (EAS) and retention factors (RFS)

Section 3.3.2.1 reported on the correlations found between the biographical variables and the EAS variables.

As shown in Tables 3.2 and 3.3, the following correlations were found between the biographical variables and the RFS subscales:

- Age correlated significantly with career opportunities ($r = -.16$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and organisational commitment ($r = .20$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Gender correlated negatively and significantly with career opportunities ($r = -.13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Race correlated significantly and positively with compensation ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and organisational commitment ($r = .16$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$), whilst it correlated significantly and negatively with training and development opportunities ($r = -.13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); career opportunities ($r = -.13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); and work–life balance ($r = -.25$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Tenure correlated significantly and negatively with career opportunities ($r = -.12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$) and significantly and positively with organisational commitment ($r = .11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Job level correlated significantly and positively with training and development opportunities ($r = .22$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); career opportunities ($r = .21$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); and work–life balance ($r = .19$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$), and significantly and negatively with job characteristics ($r = -.15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- It is important to note that career opportunities correlated significantly with each of the biographical variables, as reported above.

In terms of the correlations between the EAS and RFS variables, the following were found as shown in Table 3.2:

- Career self-management had significant and positive correlations with some of the RFS subscales, namely, training and development opportunities ($r = .24$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); supervisor support ($r = .16$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); career opportunities ($r = .31$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$); work–life balance ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$) and overall RFS ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence had significant and positive correlations with training and development opportunities ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and work–life balance ($r = .12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Self-efficacy had a significant and negative correlation with compensation ($r = -.12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Career resilience had significant and positive correlations with training and development opportunities ($r = .12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); supervisor support ($r = .13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); career opportunities ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); and work–life balance ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Sociability had significant and positive correlations with training and development opportunities ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and career opportunities ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation had significant and positive correlations with training and development opportunities ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and career opportunities ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity had significant and positive correlations with job characteristics ($r = .16$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); training and development opportunities ($r = .13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); supervisor support ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); and career opportunities ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy had significant and positive correlations with training and development opportunities ($r = .12$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$) and work–life balance ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Overall EAS correlated significantly and positively with the following RFS variables: training and development opportunities ($r = .18$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); supervisor support ($r = .13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); career opportunities ($r = .20$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$); and work–life balance ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).

- It is important to note that training and development opportunities correlated significantly and positively with all of the EAS subscales, with the exception of self-efficacy.
- Career opportunities also strongly, significantly and positively correlated with a number of the EAS subscales, namely, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and overall EAS, as reported above.

Table 3.2

Descriptive Analysis: Biographical, Employability Attributes Scale and Retention Factor Scale Variables

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Age	n/a	.41	.49	1.00																					
2. Gender	n/a	.27	.45	-.05	1.00																				
3. Race	n/a	.59	.49	.22*	**	1.00																			
4. Tenure	n/a	.14	.34	.48*	**	-.10*	1.00																		
5. Job level	n/a	.22	.42	-.27*	**	.10	.34*	.19*	1.00																
6. Career self-management	.89	4.56	.72	-.09	-.03	.46*	**	.29*	**	1.00															
7. Cultural competence	.91	4.40	.90	.00	.01	.32*	**	-.15*	*	.55*	1.00														
8. Self-efficacy	.71	4.69	.64	-.08	.00	.27*	**	.15*	*	.19*	**	.66*	.42*	1.00											
9. Career resilience	.79	4.49	.69	-.11*	-.04	.37*	**	.15*	**	.21*	**	.72*	.63*	.64*	1.00										
10. Sociability	.77	4.21	.74	-.06	.02	.42*	**	-.11	**	.25*	**	.69*	.69*	.54*	.69*	1.00									

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
11 Entrepreneurial orientation	.80	4.66	.66	-.05	-.08	.31* **	-.13*	.26* **	.78* **	.55* **	.71* **	.75* **	.66* **	1.00											
12 Proactivity	.85	4.67	.68	-.02	-.07	.29* **	-.08	.17* *	.79* **	.62* **	.68* **	.80* **	.69* **	.83* **	1.00										
13 Emotional literacy	.86	4.50	.76	.08	.00	.24* **	-.03	.14* **	.58* **	.55* **	.57* **	.62* **	.52* **	.58* **	.66* **	1.00									
14 EAS	.97	4.53	.61	-.05	-.03	.40* **	-.11*	.26* **	.89* **	.74* **	.77* **	.87* **	.83* **	.88* **	.91* **	.76* **	1.00								
15 Compensation	.96	3.64	1.16	-.02	.01	.15* *	.08	-.06	.00	-.06	-.12* -	-.07	-.09	-.08	-.06	-.09	-.08	1.00							
16 Job characteristic	.60	4.49	.88	.06	-.11	.10	-.05	.15* *	.08	.02	.01	.08	.05	.05	.16* *	-.00	.07	.28* **	1.00						
17 Training & development opportunities	.91	3.62	1.21	.03	-.08	.13* -	.04	.22* **	.24* **	.15* *	.06	.12* -	.14* *	.15* *	.13* -	.12* -	.18* *	.49* **	.27* **	1.00					
18 Supervisor support	.79	4.29	1.06	-.07	-.06	.02	-.06	-.03	.16* *	.06	.02	.13* -	.10	.10	.15* *	.08	.13* -	.36* **	.38* **	.32* **	1.00				
19 Career opportunities	.72	3.46	.96	.16* *	-.13* -	-.13* -	-.12* -	.21* **	.31* **	.09	.08	.18* **	.18* **	.18* **	.18* **	.01	.20* **	.46* **	.31* **	.53* **	.39* **	1.00			

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
20 Work-life balance	.86	3.87	1.24	.02	-.05	.25* **	.06	.19* **	.18* **	.12* **	.03	.14* *	.09	.10	.09	.15* *	.14* *	.18* **	.06	.20* **	.24* **	.26* **	1.00		
21 Organisational commitment	.77	4.71	1.27	.20* **	-.09	.16* *	.11* **	-.07	-.00	-.03	-.05	-.06	.02	-.03	-.01	.01	-.02	.40* **	.36* **	.35* **	.32* **	.35* **	.12* **	1.00	
22 RFS	.93	3.88	.76	-.01	-.08	.02	.03	.06	.18* **	.05	-.02	.08	.06	.07	.10	.03	.09	.84* **	.49* **	.72* **	.63* **	.71* **	.40* **	.57* **	1.00

Notes: N = 321; *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant. EAS: Employability Attributes Scale; RFS: Retention Factor Scale.

3.3.2.3 Correlation analysis between biographical variables, career adapt-ability (CAAS) and retention factors (RFS)

Sections 3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.2 reported on the correlations found between the biographical variables and the CAAS variables, and the biographical variables and the RFS variables, respectively.

Table 3.3 shows the correlations found between the CAAS and RFS subscales, as follows:

- Career concern had significant and positive correlations with job characteristics ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); training and development opportunities ($r = .17$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); career opportunities ($r = .30$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .001$); work–life balance ($r = .16$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$); and overall RFS ($r = .17$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Career control had significant and positive correlations with supervisor support ($r = .11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$) and career opportunities ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).
- Career curiosity had a significant and positive correlation with career opportunities ($r = .11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$) but a significant and negative correlation with compensation ($r = -.11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Career confidence had significant and positive correlations with job characteristics ($r = .14$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and career opportunities ($r = .13$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$).
- Overall CAAS had significant and positive correlations with job characteristics ($r = .11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); supervisor support ($r = .11$; small practical effect; $p \leq .05$); and career opportunities ($r = .20$; small practical effect; $p \leq .001$).
- It is important to note that career opportunities had a significant and positive correlation with each of the CAAS subscales as reported above.

Table 3.3

Descriptive Analysis: Biographical, Career Adapt-Abilities Scale and Retention Factor Scale Variables

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Age	n/a	.41	.49	1.00																	
2. Gender	n/a	.27	.45	-.05	1.00																
3. Race	n/a	.59	.49	.22** *	-.08	1.00															
4. Tenure	n/a	.14	.34	.48** *	-.10*	.15**	1.00														
5. Job level	n/a	.22	.42	-. *	.10*	.34** *	.19** *	1.00													
6. Career concern	.85	3.87	.69	.19** *	.05	.41** *	-.15**	.19** *	1.00												
7. Career control	.82	4.07	.57	-.02	.05	-.19**	-.04	.19** *	.60** *	1.00											
8. Career curiosity	.88	3.90	.69	-.11	.01	.26** *	-.11	.15**	.57** *	.68** *	1.00										
9. Career confidence	.89	4.13	.61	-.05	.02	-.17**	-.06	.14*	.55** *	.75** *	.77** *	1.00									
10. CAAS	.94	3.99	.55	-.11*	.03	.31** *	-.11	.20** *	.80** *	.87** *	.88** *	.88** *	1.00								
11. Compensation	.96	3.64	1.16	-.02	.01	.15**	.08	-.06	.04	-.04	-.11*	-.03	-.04	1.00							

Variable	α	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
12 Job characteristic	.60	4.49	.88	.06	-.11	.10	-.05	-.15**	.14*	.06	.06	.14**	.11*	.28**	1.00						
13 Training & development opportunities	.91	3.62	1.21	.03	-.08	-.13*	.04	.22**	.17**	.04	.02	.05	.08	.49**	.27**	1.00					
14 Supervisor support	.79	4.29	1.06	-.07	-.06	.02	-.06	-.03	.10	.11*	.07	.10	.11*	.36**	.38**	.32**	1.00				
15 Career opportunities	.72	3.46	.96	-.16**	-.13*	-.13*	-.12*	.21**	.30**	.14**	.11*	.13*	.20**	.46**	.31**	.53**	.39**	1.00			
16 Work-life balance	.86	3.87	1.24	.02	-.05	.25**	.06	.19**	.16**	.07	-.00	.04	.08	.18**	.06	.20**	.24**	.26**	1.00		
17 Organisational commitment	.77	4.71	1.27	.20**	-.09	.16**	.11*	-.07	.00	-.00	-.02	.04	.00	.40**	.36**	.35**	.32**	.35**	.12*	1.00	
18 RFS	.93	3.88	.76	-.01	-.08	.02	.03	.06	.17**	.06	-.01	.07	.08	.84**	.49**	.72**	.63**	.71**	.40**	.57**	1.00

Notes: N = 321; *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant. CAAS: Career Adaptability Scale; RFS: Retention Factor Scale.

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and their satisfaction with the factors influencing their retention.

3.3.3 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics were used to explore the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (retention factor satisfaction) that is explained by the independent variables (employability attributes and career adaptability).

3.3.3.1 Structural equation modelling

In addition to exploring the proportion of variance in the dependent variable, as explained by the independent variables, inferential statistics, such as structural equation modelling (SEM), are also used to evaluate the model fit. According to Garson (2008), an adequate fit of the structural model to the measurement data exists when CFI and TLI values of .90 or higher, a RMSEA of .08 or lower, and a SRMR of .06 or lower are obtained. The SEM results of this study, as reported in Table 3.4, depict an adequate fit with the data, with the CFI and TLI values being higher than .90 and a RMSEA value of .08 (SRMR = .068). The standardised structural pathways were also significant with $p = .000$. The squared multiple correlations showed that the model explained 2.3% ($R^2 = .023$; small practical effect) of the variance in the retention factors construct.

Table 3.4

Structural Equation Modelling Fit Statistics

Model	CMIN	Df	CMIN/df	<i>P</i>	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
1	448.49	149	3.01	.000***	.88	.89	.92	.91	.92	.079	.068

Note: CMIN(χ^2) = chi-square; df = degrees of freedom; p = significance level; NFI = Bentler-Bonett normed fit index; RFI = relative fit index; TLI = non-normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR = standardised root-mean-square residual.

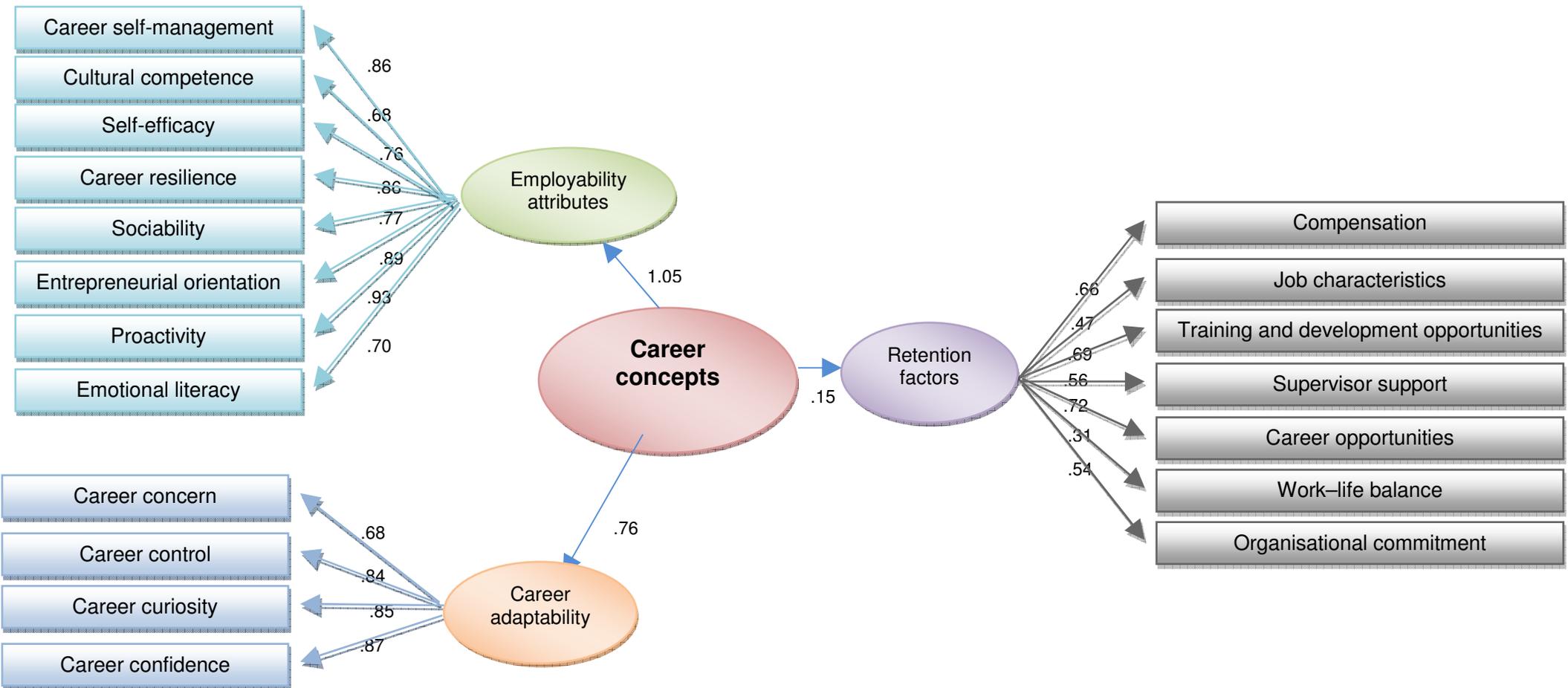


Figure 3.1: Structural equation model with standardised path coefficient estimates

Note: Entries represent standardised regression weights. Structural pathways are significant at the *** $p = .001$ and ** $p = .01$ levels.

Figure 3.1 further shows that in terms of the EAS construct, proactivity ($\beta = .93$), entrepreneurial orientation ($\beta = .89$), career self-management ($\beta = .86$), and career resilience ($\beta = .86$) contributed the most in explaining the variance in employability attributes. In terms of the CAAS construct, career confidence ($\beta = .87$), career curiosity ($\beta = .85$), and career control ($\beta = .84$) contributed the most in explaining the variance in career adaptability. In terms of the two career meta-competencies constructs, the employability attributes contributed most in explaining the variance in the retention factors construct ($\beta = 1.05$). Career opportunities ($\beta = .72$), followed to a lesser extent by training and development opportunities ($\beta = .69$), and compensation ($\beta = .66$) contributed most in explaining the variance in the retention factors construct.

3.3.3.2 Multiple regression analysis

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted using the biographical, employability attributes and career adaptability variables as the independent variables and retention factors as the dependent variable.

Biographical variables and employability attributes as predictors of retention factor satisfaction

Table 3.5 provides the summary of results from the stepwise multiple regression analyses, with the biographical variables and employability attributes as the independent variables and retention factors as the dependent variable. Seven models were extracted of which five were significant, namely, job characteristics ($R^2 = .15$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect); training and development opportunities ($R^2 = .11$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); career opportunities ($R^2 = .16$; $p \leq .001$; medium practical effect); work–life balance ($R^2 = .12$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); and organisational commitment ($R^2 = .08$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Proactivity contributed the most in explaining the variance in job characteristics ($\beta = .52$; $p \leq .001$; $sr^2 = .27$; large practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained), followed by career self-management which contributed the most in explaining the variance in training and development ($\beta = .35$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .12$; moderate practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained), career opportunities ($\beta = .44$; $p \leq .001$; $sr^2 = .19$; moderate practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained) and work–life balance ($\beta = .24$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .06$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). Sociability contributed the most towards explaining the variance in organisational commitment ($\beta = .21$;

$p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). In terms of the biographical variables, job level contributed towards explaining the variance in training and development opportunities ($\beta = .17$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .03$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained), whilst race negatively and significantly contributed towards explaining work–life balance ($\beta = -.18$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .03$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). Both race and age also significantly and positively contributed towards explaining the variance in organisational commitment ($\beta = .17$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .03$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained).

Table 3.5

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis: Employability Attributes as Predictors of Retention Factor Satisfaction

Predictor variables	Compensation		Job characteristic		Training & Development opportunities		Supervisor support		Career opportunities		Work–life balance		Organisational commitment	
	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2	β	Semi-partial r^2
Age	-.07	.01	.12	.01	.05	.00	-.07	.01	-.08	.01	.10	.01	.17*	.03
Gender	.06	.00	-.08	.01	-.06	.00	-.01	.00	-.07	.01	-.01	.00	-.04	.00
Race	.19*	.04	.08	.01	.02	.00	.11	.01	.05	.00	-.18*	.03	.17*	.03
Tenure	.09	.01	-.12	.01	.04	.00	-.04	.00	-.08	.01	.05	.00	.01	.00
Job Level	-.02	.00	.14*	.02	.17*	.03	-.08	.01	.07	.01	.10	.01	-.04	.00
Career self-management	.35*	.12	.09	.01	.35*	.12	.28*	.08	.44**	.19	.24*	.06	.09	.01
Cultural competence	.05	.00	-.05	.00	.14	.02	-.13	.02	-.07	.01	.02	.00	-.02	.00
Self-efficacy	-.15	.02	-.12	.01	-.10	.01	-.08	.01	-.14	.02	-.10	.01	.06	.00
Career resilience	.02	.00	.07	.01	-.03	.00	.04	.00	.11	.01	.13	.02	-.11	.01
Sociability	-.10	.01	.04	.00	-.05	.00	.10	.01	.05	.00	-.04	.00	.21*	.04
Entrepreneurial orientation	-.06	.00	.24*	.06	.02	.00	-.17	.03	-.09	.01	-.02	.00	-.04	.00

Predictor variables	Compensation		Job characteristic		Training & Development opportunities		Supervisor support		Career opportunities		Work-life balance		Organisational commitment	
	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2
Proactivity	-.04	.00	.52***	.27	-.13	.02	.18	.03	.03	.00	-.25	.06	-.08	.01
Emotional literacy	-.10	.01	-.12	.01	.001	.00	-.03	.00	-.22*	.05	.12	.01	-.02	.00
Model	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
R^2	.08	n/a	.15	n/a	.11	n/a	.08	n/a	.16	n/a	.12	n/a	.08	n/a
ΔR^2	.04	n/a	.10	n/a	.05	n/a	.07	n/a	.10	n/a	.03	n/a	.02	n/a
F(df; Mean square)	1.70* (13; 2.30)	n/a	3.43** *(13; 2.33)	n/a	2.39** (13; 3.21)	n/a	1.66 (13; 1.83)	n/a	3.73** *(13; 2.92)	n/a	2.79** *(13; 3.82)	n/a	1.81* (13; 2.79)	n/a
ΔF	1.53	n/a	3.54** *	n/a	1.88	n/a	2.39 *	n/a	3.75** *	n/a	1.25	n/a	.84	n/a

Notes: N = 321; *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant. All statistics are from the final (second) step. Standardised beta values reported. $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size). $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect size), $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size).

Biographical variables and career adaptability as predictors of retention factor satisfaction

Table 3.6 provides a summary of the results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses with career adaptability as the independent variable and retention factors as the dependent variable. Seven models were extracted of which six were significant, namely compensation ($R^2 = .07$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); job characteristics ($R^2 = .13$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); training and development opportunities ($R^2 = .08$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); career opportunities ($R^2 = .12$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); work-life balance ($R^2 = .12$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); and organisational commitment ($R^2 = .08$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

Career concern contributed the most with regard to explaining the variance in compensation ($\beta = .23$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .05$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained); job characteristics ($\beta = .28$; $p \leq .001$; $sr^2 = .08$; small practical effect in terms of incremental

variance explained); training and development opportunities ($\beta = .22$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .05$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained); career opportunities ($\beta = .30$; $p \leq .001$; $sr^2 = .09$; moderate practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained); and work–life balance ($\beta = .19$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). The beta-weight of career confidence also shows a significant contribution to explaining the variance in job characteristics ($\beta = .27$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .07$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained), followed by career curiosity that indicates a negative and significant contribution to work–life balance ($\beta = -.20$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). In terms of the biographical variables, race contributed mainly to the variance in compensation ($\beta = .20$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained) and organisational commitment ($\beta = .16$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .03$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained), with a negative and significant contribution to work–life balance ($\beta = -.21$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). Job level contributed significantly to explaining the variance in training and development opportunities ($\beta = .21$; $p \leq .001$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained) and negatively and significantly to job characteristics ($\beta = -.15$; $p \leq .05$; $sr^2 = .02$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained). Age significantly contributed to explaining the variance only in organisational commitment ($\beta = .19$; $p \leq .01$; $sr^2 = .04$; small practical effect in terms of incremental variance explained).

Table 3.6

Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis: Career Adaptability as Predictors of Retention Factor Satisfaction

Predictor variable	Compensation		Job characteristic		Training & Development opportunities		Supervisor support		Career opportunities		Work–life balance		Organisational commitment	
	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2	β	Semi-partia r^2
Age	.07	.01	.13	.02	.08	.01	.07	.01	-.09	.01	.12	.01	.19*	.04
Gender	.05	.00	.11	.01	.07	.01	.02	.00	-.10	.01	.01	.00	-.05	.00

Predictor variable	Compensation		Job characteristic		Training & Development opportunities		Supervisor support		Career opportunities		Work-life balance		Organisational commitment	
	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2	β	Se mi-partial r^2
Age	-.07	.01	.13	.02	.08	.01	-.07	.01	-.09	.01	.12	.01	.19**	.04
Gender	.05	.00	-.11	.01	-.07	.01	-.02	.00	-.10	.01	-.01	.00	-.05	.00
Race	.20**	.04	.12	.01	-.02	.00	.04	.00	.03	.00	-.21**	.04	.16*	.03
Tenure	.11	.01	-.10	.01	.05	.00	-.04	.00	-.07	.01	.05	.00	.01	.00
Job Level	-.01	.00	-.15*	.02	.21***	.04	-.07	.01	.10	.01	.12	.01	-.01	.00
Career concern	.23**	.05	.28***	.08	.22**	.05	.03	.00	.30***	.09	.19*	.04	.14	.02
Career control	-.06	.00	-.12	.01	-.11	.01	.06	.00	.00	.00	-.00	.00	-.08	.01
Career curiosity	-.20	.04	-.17	.03	-.08	.01	-.04	.00	-.11	.01	-.20*	.04	-.07	.01
Career confidence	.08	.01	.27**	.07	.07	.01	.11	.01	.03	.00	.07	.01	.11	.01
Model	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
R ²	.07	n/a	.13	n/a	.08	n/a	.03	n/a	.12	n/a	.12	n/a	.08	n/a
ΔR^2	.03	n/a	.08	n/a	.03	n/a	.02	n/a	.06	n/a	.03	n/a	.02	n/a
F(df; Mean square)	2.10 *(9; 2.84)	n/a	4.52** *(9; 3.06)	n/a	2.60* *(9; 3.54)	n/a	.85 (9; .97)	n/a	4.00** *(9; 3.20)	n/a	3.78** *(9; 5.15)	n/a	2.37 *(9; 3.64)	n/a
ΔF	2.26	n/a	6.09**	n/a	1.90	n/a	1.31	n/a	4.44**	n/a	1.91	n/a	1.11	n/a

Notes: N = 321; *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant. All statistics are from the final (second) step. Standardised beta values reported. $R^2 \leq .12$ (small practical effect size). $R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ (medium practical effect size), $R^2 \geq .26$ (large practical effect size).

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H2: Employability attributes and career adaptability positively and significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors; and H3: Age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' retention factor satisfaction.

3.3.3.3 Tests for significant mean differences

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between the various biographical groups were tested by means of the Wilcoxon two-Sample test. Tables 3.7 to 3.11 provide the results of this test for the following biographical variables: age, gender, race, tenure and job level.

(a) Significant mean differences: Age

As depicted in Table 3.7, the younger participants (≤ 45 years) scored significantly higher than the older participants (≥ 46 years) on some of the EAS, CAAS and RFS variables. In terms of the EAS subscales, the younger participants scored significantly higher on career resilience ($M = 4.55$ versus $M = 4.39$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) than their older counterparts. On the CAAS subscales, the participants below the age of 46 scored higher than the other age groups on the career concern variable ($M = 3.97$ versus $M = 3.70$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect). Significant differences in the age groups were found on two of the RFS subscales, namely, career opportunities and organisational commitment. The participants in the age group of 45 and below scored significantly higher than their older (≥ 46 years) counterparts on career opportunities ($M = 3.58$ versus $M = 3.27$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); however, the older age group (≥ 46 years) scored significantly higher on organisational commitment ($M = 5.04$ versus $M = 4.51$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect) than the younger (≤ 45 years) participants.

In terms of organisational commitment, the employees above the age of 46 years indicated greater levels of commitment towards the organisation than their younger counterparts.

Table 3.7

Results of Tests for Mean Differences for Age: Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) \leq 45 years	Mean (SD) \geq 46 years
Career self-management	17978.50	-1.67	.10	.18	4.61(.71)	4.48(.72)
Cultural competence	19390.00	.09	.93	.03	4.39(.89)	4.42(.92)

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) ≤ 45 years	Mean (SD) ≥ 46 years
Career self- management	17978.50	-1.67	.10	.18	4.61(.71)	4.48(.72)
Cultural competence	19390.00	.09	.93	.03	4.39(.89)	4.42(.92)
Self-efficacy	18119.50	-1.50	.14	.17	4.73(.65)	4.62(.62)
Career resilience	17697.00	-2.02	.04*	.23	4.55(.66)	4.39(.74)
Sociability	18427.50	-1.11	.27	.11	4.24(.70)	4.16(.80)
Entrepreneurial orientation	18555.00	-.95	.34	.12	4.69(.66)	4.61(.67)
Proactivity	18965.50	-.44	.66	.06	4.68(.67)	4.64(.70)
Emotional literacy	20455.00	1.41	.16	.17	4.45(.77)	4.58(.75)
Career concern	16640.50	-3.34	.001***	.40	3.97(.65)	3.70(.71)
Career control	19332.00	.01	.99	.04	4.07(.56)	4.05(.58)
Career curiosity	17798.00	-1.90	.06	.22	3.95(.68)	3.80(.71)
Career confidence	18758.00	-.70	.48	.10	4.15(.58)	4.09(.66)
Compensation	19156.50	-.20	.84	.03	3.65(1.17)	3.61(1.14)
Job characteristics	20119.50	1.00	.32	.14	4.44(.90)	4.56(.84)
Training & development opportunities	19956.50	.79	.43	.07	3.59(1.17)	3.67(1.28)
Supervisor support	17860.50	-1.82	.07	.14	4.35(1.09)	4.20(1.01)
Career opportunities	16705.00	-3.26	.001***	.33	3.58(.95)	3.27(.94)
Work-life balance	19646.00	.41	.69	.04	3.85(1.24)	3.90(1.23)
Organisational commitment	22512.50	4.00	<.0001***	.43	4.51(1.32)	5.04(1.11)

Notes: N (Age < 45 years) =201; N (Age > 46 years) = 120. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant.

(b) Significant mean differences: Gender

The results of the Wilcoxon two-samples test did not present significant differences between males and females on the EAS, CAAS or RFS. The only exception was found on the career opportunities subscale of the RFS, which indicated a significant difference in the mean scores with males scoring significantly higher than females ($M = 3.54$ versus $M = 3.26$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect). The results of the mean differences in gender groups are reported in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8

Results of Tests for Mean Differences for Gender: Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) Males	Mean (SD) Females
Career self-management	14089.00	-.54	.59	.07	4.58(.71)	4.53(.74)
Cultural competence	14595.50	.14	.89	.01	4.40(.90)	4.41(.92)
Self-efficacy	14548.00	.08	.94	.03	4.68(.64)	4.70(.65)
Career resilience	14005.00	-.65	.52	.04	4.50(.71)	4.47(.67)
Sociability	14809.00	.43	.67	.04	4.20(.73)	4.23(.76)
Entrepreneurial orientation	13394.50	-1.47	.14	.19	4.70(.63)	4.57(.72)
Proactivity	13591.00	-1.21	.23	.16	4.70(.66)	4.59(.72)
Emotional literacy	14512.00	.03	.98	.01	4.50(.76)	4.51(.76)
Career concern	15463.00	1.31	.19	.10	3.85(.67)	3.92(.74)
Career control	15166.00	.91	.36	.10	4.05(.56)	4.11(.59)
Career curiosity	14723.50	.31	.75	.00	3.90(.67)	3.90(.74)
Career confidence	14926.50	.59	.56	.05	4.12(.61)	4.15(.61)
Compensation	14975.50	.65	.52	.03	3.63(1.11)	3.66(1.26)
Job characteristics	13134.00	-1.82	.07	.22	4.54(.84)	4.34(.95)

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD)	
					Males	Females
Training & development opportunities	13605.00	-1.19	.24	.18	3.68(1.17)	3.46(1.29)
Supervisor support	13974.00	-.69	.49	.13	4.33(.98)	4.19(1.24)
Career opportunities	12862.50	-2.18	.03*	.29	3.54(.94)	3.26(1.00)
Work-life balance	13907.50	-.78	.44	.10	3.90(1.22)	3.78(1.28)
Organisational commitment	13554.50	-1.26	.21	.20	4.78(1.20)	4.52(1.41)

Notes: N (males) = 231; N (females) = 90. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant

(c) *Significant mean differences: Race*

In this study, the Indian, coloured and Asian respondents had small base sizes that were not deemed sufficient for including in the comparison statistics. The Wilcoxon two-sample test results in Table 3.9 show that the African and white participants differed significantly on all the EAS and CAAS subscales, as well as on many of the RFS subscales. The African participants scored significantly higher than the other race groups on each of the eight EAS subscales at the $p \leq .001$ significance level, as follows: career self-management ($M = 4.97$ versus $M = 4.29$; large practical effect); cultural competence ($M = 4.75$ versus $M = 4.18$; moderate practical effect); self-efficacy ($M = 4.93$ versus $M = 4.55$; moderate practical effect); career resilience ($M = 4.76$ versus $M = 4.28$; moderate practical effect); sociability ($M = 4.60$ versus $M = 3.96$; large practical effect); entrepreneurial orientation ($M = 4.93$ versus $M = 4.49$; moderate practical effect); proactivity ($M = 4.90$ versus $M = 4.52$; moderate practical effect); and emotional literacy ($M = 4.76$ versus $M = 4.39$; moderate practical effect).

On the four CAAS subscales, the African participants also obtained significantly higher mean scores than the white participants with a $p \leq .001$ significance level on each of the following subscales: career concern ($M = 4.22$ versus $M = 3.63$; large practical effect); career control ($M = 4.18$ versus $M = 3.97$; small practical effect); career curiosity ($M = 4.10$ versus $M =$

3.73; moderate practical effect); and career confidence ($M = 4.25$ versus $M = 4.04$; small practical effect). In terms of the RFS subscales, the African race group scored significantly higher on training and development opportunities ($M = 3.85$ versus $M = 3.54$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); career opportunities ($M = 3.62$ versus $M = 3.37$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); and work–life balance ($M = 4.22$ versus $M = 3.59$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect). However, the white participants seemed to value compensation and organisational commitment more than the African participants with reported significant mean differences on compensation ($M = 3.78$ versus $M = 3.42$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect) and organisational commitment ($M = 4.90$ versus $M = 4.49$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Table 3.9

Results of Tests for Mean Differences for Race: Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) African	Mean (SD) White
Career self-management	20016.50	7.51	<.0001***	1.02	4.97(.69)	4.29(.63)
Cultural competence	18558.50	5.24	<.0001***	.67	4.75(.88)	4.18(.83)
Self-efficacy	18044.50	4.44	<.0001***	.61	4.93(.66)	4.55(.59)
Career resilience	19056.50	6.03	<.0001***	.72	4.76(.72)	4.28(.60)
Sociability	19609.00	6.88	<.0001***	.94	4.60(.69)	3.96(.67)
Entrepreneurial orientation	18513.00	5.17	<.0001***	.68	4.93(.68)	4.49(.61)
Proactivity	18216.50	4.71	<.0001***	.56	4.90(.71)	4.52(.64)
Emotional literacy	17787.00	4.03	<.0001***	.50	4.76(.75)	4.39(.72)
Career concern	19477.00	6.69	<.0001***	.91	4.22(.66)	3.63(.63)
Career control	17114.00	2.99	<.0001***	.37	4.18(.61)	3.97(.52)
Career curiosity	17899.00	4.21	<.0001***	.54	4.10(.71)	3.73(.66)
Career confidence	17038.50	2.87	<.0001***	.34	4.25(.66)	4.04(.58)
Compensation	13785.00	-2.22	.03*	.30	3.42(1.30)	3.78(1.08)

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) African	Mean (SD) White
Job characteristics	14024.50	-1.85	.06	.19	4.36(.92)	4.53(.83)
Training & development opportunities	16724.00	2.37	.02*	.26	3.85(1.32)	3.54(1.09)
Supervisor support	15022.50	-.29	.77	.04	4.24(1.03)	4.28(1.09)
Career opportunities	16549.50	2.10	.04*	.27	3.62(.97)	3.37(.91)
Work-life balance	17879.00	4.18	<.0001***	.54	4.22(1.11)	3.59(1.23)
Organisational commitment	13307.50	-2.99	.003**	.33	4.49(1.29)	4.90(1.23)

Notes: N (black) = 111; N (white) = 162. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant.

(d) *Significant mean differences: Tenure*

Table 3.10 provides the Wilcoxon two-sample test results for the two tenure groups, namely, participants who had worked for the organisation for five years and less, and participants who had worked for six years and more. The results provide some support that tenure groups differ significantly in their levels of employability attributes, career adaptability and their satisfaction with retention factors. According to the results, the employees who had worked for the organisation for five years and less scored significantly higher on many of the EAS subscales, such as career self-management ($M = 4.59$ versus $M = 4.33$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); self-efficacy ($M = 4.72$ versus $M = 4.44$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); career resilience ($M = 4.52$ versus $M = 4.24$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); sociability ($M = 4.24$ versus $M = 4.00$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect); and entrepreneurial orientation ($M = 4.69$ versus $M = 4.44$; $p \leq .05$; small practical effect).

In terms of the CAAS construct, the only significant difference in mean scores was obtained on the career concern subscale, where the employees who had worked five years and less for the organisation scored significantly higher than the other groups ($M = 4.91$ versus $M = 3.60$; small practical effect) at the $p \leq .05$ confidence limit. The RFS construct also yielded

one significant mean difference on the career opportunities subscale, with the lower tenure group scoring significantly higher than the employees who had worked six years or more for the organisation ($M = 3.51$ versus $M = 3.15$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Table 3.10

Results of Tests for Mean Differences for Tenure: Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) ≤ 5 years	Mean (SD) ≥ 6 years
Career self-management	5084.50	-2.20	.03*	.35	4.59(.71)	4.33(.77)
Cultural competence	5971.00	-.57	.57	.09	4.41(.90)	4.33(.93)
Self-efficacy	4814.00	-2.70	.01**	.46	4.72(.64)	4.44(.57)
Career resilience	4824.00	-2.69	.01**	.39	4.52(.68)	4.24(.76)
Sociability	5229.00	-1.94	.05*	.32	4.24(.72)	4.00(.79)
Entrepreneurial orientation	4989.50	-2.38	.02*	.38	4.69(.66)	4.44(.65)
Proactivity	5524.50	-1.39	.17	.24	4.69(.67)	4.52(.75)
Emotional literacy	6020.00	-.48	.63	.03	4.50(.77)	4.48(.71)
Career concern	5071.50	-2.23	.03*	.43	3.91(.67)	3.60(.76)
Career control	5998.00	-.52	.60	.13	4.07(.57)	4.00(.54)
Career curiosity	5297.00	-1.81	.07	.33	3.93(.68)	3.70(.73)
Career confidence	5645.50	-1.17	.24	.19	4.14(.61)	4.02(.64)
Compensation	6880.00	1.11	.27	.25	3.60(1.17)	3.87(.99)
Job characteristics	5573.50	-1.30	.19	.17	4.50(.89)	4.36(.75)
Training & development opportunities	6678.50	.74	.46	.13	3.60(1.21)	3.76(1.19)
Supervisor support	5538.50	-1.36	.17	.17	4.31(1.06)	4.13(1.05)

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) ≤ 5 years	Mean (SD) ≥ 6 years
Career opportunities	4894.50	-2.55	.01**	.40	3.51(.97)	3.15(.81)
Work-life balance	6803.00	.97	.34	.20	3.84(1.27)	4.07(.98)
Organisational commitment	7305.50	1.91	.06	.41	4.65(1.30)	5.11(.89)

Notes: N (Tenure < 5 years) = 117; N (Tenure > |6 years) = 204. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant.

(e) *Significant mean differences: Job level*

Job level is the biographical variable that reflects the most differences between the groups. For Wilcoxon two-sample test purposes, the group was split between managerial/supervisory and staff level participants. The results in Table 3.11 indicate significant differences between the job level groups with regard to all three measuring instruments, namely, the EAS, CAAS and RFS. On the EAS construct, the staff level participants scored higher than the managerial/supervisory participants on each of the EAS subscales as follows: career self-management ($M = 4.96$ versus $M = 4.45$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); cultural competence ($M = 4.65$ versus $M = 4.33$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); self-efficacy ($M = 4.93$ versus $M = 4.62$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); career resilience ($M = 4.74$ versus $M = 4.42$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); sociability ($M = 4.53$ versus $M = 4.12$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); entrepreneurial orientation ($M = 4.97$ versus $M = 4.58$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); proactivity ($M = 4.87$ versus $M = 4.61$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); and emotional literacy ($M = 4.71$ versus $M = 4.44$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

In addition, the staff level participants also scored higher than the managerial/supervisory participants on the four CAAS subscales, namely, career concern ($M = 4.21$ versus $M = 3.80$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); career control ($M = 4.27$ versus $M = 4.01$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect); career curiosity ($M = 4.10$ versus $M = 3.84$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect); and career confidence ($M = 4.29$ versus $M = 4.08$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect). The RFS construct showed differing results between the job level groups, with the staff level participants showing higher satisfaction with the training and development opportunities ($M = 4.14$ versus $M = 3.48$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); career opportunities ($M = 3.85$

versus $M = 3.36$; $p \leq .001$; moderate practical effect); and work–life balance retention factors ($M = 4.32$ versus $M = 3.75$; $p \leq .001$; small practical effect). On the other hand, the managerial/supervisory level participants scored higher than the staff level participants on the job characteristics retention factor ($M = 4.56$ versus $M = 4.23$; $p \leq .01$; small practical effect).

Table 3.11

Results of Tests for Mean Differences for Job Level: Employability Attributes, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) Managerial / supervisory	Mean (SD) Staff level
Career self-management	14679.00	5.23	<.0001***	.74	4.45(.69)	4.96(.68)
Cultural competence	12901.50	2.63	.01**	.36	4.33(.89)	4.65(.90)
Self-efficacy	13453.50	3.44	.001***	.50	4.62(.63)	4.93(.62)
Career resilience	13686.00	3.78	.0002***	.46	4.42(.67)	4.74(.72)
Sociability	14107.00	4.40	<.0001***	.57	4.12(.71)	4.53(.74)
Entrepreneurial orientation	14301.00	4.68	<.0001***	.60	4.58(.64)	4.97(.65)
Proactivity	13187.50	3.05	.003**	.39	4.61(.67)	4.87(.67)
Emotional literacy	12841.00	2.54	.01**	.37	4.44(.76)	4.71(.71)
Career concern	13685.00	3.79	.0002***	.59	3.80(.66)	4.21(.72)
Career control	13461.00	3.46	.001***	.47	4.01(.56)	4.27(.55)
Career curiosity	13081.00	2.90	.004**	.38	3.84(.69)	4.10(.68)
Career confidence	12953.00	2.72	.007**	.35	4.08(.61)	4.29(.60)
Compensation	10385.00	-1.06	.29	.14	3.67(1.13)	3.50(1.25)
Job characteristics	9073.00	-2.99	.003**	.38	4.56(.87)	4.23(.85)

Variables	Wilcoxon statistic	Z	P	d (Cohen)	Mean (SD) Managerial / supervisory	Mean (SD) Staff level
Training & development opportunities	13951.00	4.16	<.0001***	.55	3.48(1.16)	4.14(1.25)
Supervisor support	10873.50	-.34	.73	.07	4.31(1.07)	4.24(1.04)
Career opportunities	13526.50	3.54	.001***	.53	3.36(.96)	3.85(.88)
Work-life balance	13440.00	3.42	.001***	.48	3.75(1.24)	4.32(1.15)
Organisational commitment	10100.00	-1.49	.14	.18	4.76(1.26)	4.53(1.30)

Notes: N (managerial/supervisory) = 252; N (staff level) = 69. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H4: Individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

Table 3.12 summarises the key significant differences.

Table 3.12

Summary of Significant Mean Differences between the Biographical Groups

Variable	Age	Gender	Race	Tenure	Job levels
Career self-management			H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
			L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Cultural competence			H: African		H: Staff level
			L: White		L: Managerial / supervisory
Self-efficacy			H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
			L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Career resilience	H: ≤ 45 years		H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
	L: ≥ 46 years		L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Sociability			H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
			L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Entrepreneurial orientation			H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
			L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Proactivity			H: African		H: Staff level
			L: White		L: Managerial / supervisory
Emotional literacy			H: African		H: Staff level
			L: White		L: Managerial / supervisory
Career concern	H: ≤ 45 years		H: African	H: ≤ 5 years	H: Staff level
	L: ≥ 46 years		L: White	L: ≥ 6 years	L: Managerial / supervisory
Career control			H: African		H: Staff level

Variable	Age	Gender	Race	Tenure	Job levels
Career curiosity			L: White H: African		L: Managerial / supervisory H: Staff level
Career confidence			L: White H: African		L: Managerial / supervisory H: Staff level
Compensation			L: White H: African		
Job characteristics					H: Managerial / supervisory L: Staff level
Training and development opportunities			H: African L: White		H: Staff level L: Managerial / supervisory
Supervisor support					
Career opportunities	H: ≤ 45 years L: ≥ 46 years	H: Males L: Females	H: African L: White	H: ≤ 5 years L: ≥ 6 years	H: Staff level L: Managerial / supervisory
Work–life balance			H: African L: White		H: Staff level L: Managerial / supervisory
Organisational commitment	H: ≥ 46 years L: ≤ 45 years		H: White L: African		

Note: H: Highest; L: Lowest

3.4 DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the study was to explore the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. The secondary objective was to determine whether individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ with regard to their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

3.4.1 Biographical profile of the sample

The non-probability, purposive sampling method used was dependent on the willingness and availability of the participants for this study. The sample consisted of 321 permanently employed salaried employees at an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa. The sample was well distributed and representative of the various age groups in the study. The sample characteristics constituted predominantly white males, in the early career stage (20–39 years). The majority of the participants were married and well qualified, possessing a diploma or degree. The higher qualification level of the sample makes sense when interpreted in the light of the fact that the sample consisted of engineers and skilled manufacturing professionals. The participants worked on average 41 to 50 hours per week and were mainly on a management or supervisory level. The majority of the participants had worked for one to two employers prior to joining the company and had been in their current position for less than five years, but with length of service (tenure) of more than six years.

The participants scored very high on self-efficacy in terms of their employability attributes and low on sociability. The high scores on self-efficacy suggest that the individuals in the study displayed high levels of confidence in their own efforts and in reaching their goals and that they can work independently and make their own decisions. On the other hand, the participants seemed to be less confident in their ability to adapt to social situations, to build networks that can support them in career advancement and to adapt their non-verbal behaviour in different cultural circumstances. In terms of career adaptability, the participants expressed self-confidence in their ability to face and solve concrete vocational and career problems. The individuals seemed to have the capacity to stand by their own aspirations and objectives, even in the face of obstacles or barriers. However, they might not be able to plan effectively for their vocational future and might lack the required hope and optimism. Lastly, in terms of the retention factors, the participants scored high on their commitment to the organisation, resulting in intentions to stay with the organisation. Although the participants

might be highly committed to the organisation, they reported slight dissatisfaction with their career development and chances for promotion within the organisation. It would seem that the participants were not confident in their ability to easily find an opportunity within another department or on a higher level within the organisation.

3.4.2 Research aim 1: Relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors

Positive relationships existed between the employability attribute variables and the retention factor variables. The results suggested that the participants who were confident about their employability attributes seemed to be more satisfied with their training, development and career opportunities and less likely to leave the organisation. This finding supports previous research that indicated that the development of employability attributes support individual development, which in turn addresses retention factors such as training and development needs (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). According to the results, career self-management and proactivity in particular contributed to the participants' satisfaction with their retention factors. This emphasises the importance of the organisation's role in improving the career-related knowledge and skills of the workforce and in engaging them in development activities. On the other hand, the findings suggest an awareness by the participants of the expectation to assume greater ownership of their careers and their commitment to become lifelong learners (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Savickas, 2012). The participants who showed greater confidence in their ability to take concrete actions to acquire new skills and to realise their ambitions (career self-management), whilst having the persistence to follow through on challenging targets (proactivity), seemed to be more content to remain in the organisation.

Positive relationships existed between the career adaptability variables and the retention factor variables. The participants who portrayed greater confidence in their future in terms of looking ahead and preparing for the future (career concern) seemed to be more satisfied with the organisation's retention initiatives. The participants who viewed themselves as career adaptable were especially satisfied with their career opportunities, which in turn reduced their intentions to leave, as corroborated by the findings of various researchers (João, 2010; Morrow, 2011; Neiningen et al., 2010; Weng et al., 2010). The organisation seemed to provide various internal career opportunities to its employees, based on the limited number of years in a specific position in comparison with the total length of service (tenure) of the employees in the same organisation. The positive career orientations of the

employees regarding career opportunities might have important implications for their organisational commitment and retention factors, as found in research conducted by Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2012) and João (2010). The results thus show that employees who have confidence in their ability to manage career transitions and to adapt to changing situations at work (career adaptable) experience greater satisfaction at work and have reduced intentions to leave the organisation. This is supported by Ferreira (2012) who found that highly career adaptable employees are more committed and connected to the organisation, show stronger feelings of fit with the organisation and feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the organisation, which ensures that the employee remains with the organisation.

The biographical variables also influenced the results, with race and job level in particular having strong and significant relationships with each of the employability attributes and career adaptability variables. However, the results show the differences between the biographical groups to be practically small in magnitude. It is clear that biographical variables affect employees' employability attributes and career adaptability, which in turn contributes to employees' satisfaction with retention factors as explained above.

3.4.3 Research aim 2: Employability attributes and career adaptability as predictors of retention factor satisfaction

The SEM and the stepwise multiple regression analyses indicated dimensions of employability attributes and career adaptability as significant predictors of employees' satisfaction with retention factors. The value of the findings obtained in the present study lies in the predictive utility of the identified employability attributes and career adaptability variables, which seem to drive the retention of employees.

The results of the study suggested that specific employability attributes, namely proactivity and career self-management, were the greatest contributors to employees' satisfaction with retention factors, especially in terms of the job characteristics, career opportunities and work-life balance retention factors. The significant relationship between proactivity and job characteristics shows that employees who take proactive steps towards setting challenging targets, taking accountability for their decisions and improving their knowledge and skills for career progression are more likely to experience their work assignments as interesting, varied and challenging. The research also indicated that the proactive steps taken by the employees not only enhance their opportunities for career progression but also increase

their satisfaction with retention factors, which in turn reduces their intentions to leave the organisation. The findings contribute supportive evidence to the findings of previous researchers regarding the employability attributes that drive the retention of highly specialised knowledge workers. Spector (2008) found that highly specialised knowledge workers, such as the participants from the automotive manufacturing company, preferred jobs where they can use a variety of skills and experience challenging assignments and job autonomy. Other researchers then found that employees who experienced high levels of skills variety, job autonomy and challenging work were more satisfied with their work, which contributed to their retention (Bontis, 2011; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). The participating organisation placed a great deal of emphasis on value-added production systems, which drive the use of various methods of working more creatively and efficiently and which might have contributed to the relationship between proactivity and job characteristics.

Another employability attribute, career self-management, was strongly associated with retention factors such as career opportunities and work–life balance. Bezuidenhout (2011) associated career self-management with an employee's ability to have clear career aspirations and to recognise the skills needed to achieve career goals, as well as continuous engagement in developmental activities. The results showed that the participants who knew what they had to do to be successful in their careers and who had clearly formulated career goals and action plans were more satisfied with the internal and external career opportunities that they perceived. Research has shown that perceived career opportunities significantly predict job performance and reduce intentions to leave (Kraimer et al., 2011). Various other researchers have also found that career opportunities and growth are significant factors that increase employees' affective commitment to their organisation and that reduce their intentions to leave (João, 2010; Morrow, 2011; Neiningen et al., 2010; Weng et al., 2010). The study therefore confirmed Bezuidenhout's (2010) view that employees who have high levels of career self-management should find it easier to secure and sustain employment opportunities. The study also confirmed that employees who take responsibility for their own career goals and manage their own action plans experience greater career opportunities, which has important implications for retention.

In terms of the significant relationship between career self-management and work–life balance, it might be that the employees who showed higher levels of career self-management and who therefore continuously engaged in developmental activities, also

made use of the supportive facilities offered by the organisation that would have assisted them in meeting both their work and family commitments. Döckel (2003) reported that organisations that are perceived as concerned employers tend to have a positive influence on employees' attachment to the organisation. Therefore, one can conclude that employees with high proactivity and career self-management will show high levels of satisfaction with retention factors. The findings of the study thus confirmed that employability attributes do influence and predict employees' satisfaction with retention factors.

The study revealed similar results on the significant relationship between career adaptability and employees' satisfaction with retention factors. The best predictor of retention factor satisfaction seemed to be the career concern dimension of career adaptability. Career concern is strongly associated with retention factors such as job characteristics, career opportunities and work–life balance. The results implied that employees who are able to look ahead and plan for the future and who can use coping behaviours by being aware, involved and prepared, may experience greater satisfaction with job autonomy, solving challenging problems and applying a variety of skills (job characteristics). Such employees also tend to enjoy greater internal and external career options (career opportunities) and show enhanced ability to meet work and family commitments (work–life balance).

Career curiosity was also reported as a significant predictor of employees' satisfaction with the work–life balance retention factor, but to a lesser extent. According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), strong career curiosity assisted employees to explore their opportunities and to think about the fit between them and their different environments. It might be that the ability to explore a fit between the self and different environments or vocational roles could assist employees to also find fit and balance between work and other non-work responsibilities and activities. Ferreira (2012) reported that adaptable employees show stronger feelings of fit with the organisation which may ensure that they remain with the organisation. The results confirmed that career adaptability, especially career concern, contributed to employees' satisfaction with retention factors. These results are in line with those of Savickas and Porfeli (2012), who found that career adaptability exerts a strong impact on career or work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and job tenure (retention). The study thus confirmed that individual dimensions of career adaptability influence employees' satisfaction with retention factors in varying degrees.

3.4.4 Research aim 3: Biographical characteristics as predictors of retention factor satisfaction

The study found biographical characteristics such as age, race and job level to be significant predictors of employees' satisfaction with retention factors. Age significantly predicted organisational commitment, whilst race significantly predicted compensation, work–life balance and organisational commitment. In addition, job level significantly predicted job characteristics and training and development opportunities. The positive relationship between age and organisational commitment is not surprising, taking into consideration the preferences and needs of older employees. Older employees tend to prefer job security, have invested more in the organisation over the years and might experience difficulty finding new jobs, which makes them more committed to the organisation and less inclined to leave (Martin & Roodt, 2008; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). This is supported by research by Ferreira, Basson, and Coetzee (2010), who found that older employees tend to be affectively and normatively more committed to their organisations than their younger counterparts. Döckel et al. (2006) adds to this by explaining that older employees generally become more attitudinally committed to an organisation for a variety of reasons, including greater satisfaction with their jobs, possible promotions, and having 'cognitively justified' their continuance in an organisation.

The results of the study indicated that race strongly predicts employees' satisfaction with compensation. Various researchers reported on varying degrees of satisfaction with compensation between the various races, such as African, coloured, Indian, Asian and white employees; therefore race does play a significant role. The white employees' higher satisfaction levels with compensation compared to their African counterparts might be due to the fact that the majority of the sample was on a management or supervisory job level and therefore enjoyed higher income and enhanced benefits. Research by Van Dyk (2011) on senior management employees reported similar findings in terms of white employees' higher satisfaction levels with compensation. On the other hand, Martins and Coetzee (2007) found black employees to be more dissatisfied with their compensation. The results of the study therefore confirm that race influences and predicts employees' satisfaction with compensation. Race also seemed to negatively predict employees' satisfaction with work–life balance. Pauw (2011) highlights the fact that work–life balance is an important factor for African employees, whilst Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) found that white employees were least satisfied with work–life balance. Lastly, race seemed to be a predictor of organisational commitment, but to a lesser extent. This finding is supported by a South African study

conducted by Martin and Roodt (2008) that found organisational commitment to have a significant relationship with the race of the respondent. African employees seemed to be less committed to the participating organisation, which might be due to the enhanced career mobility opportunities that they experience in the market (João & Coetzee, 2012).

Job level seemed to be the best predictor of employees' satisfaction with training and development opportunities, as a dimension of retention factors. In this study, the staff level employees showed a significantly higher score for training and development opportunities than the managerial or supervisory level employees. This might be due to the positive contribution of enhanced training and development to employees' chances of experiencing career advancement (Nienaber et al., 2011).

3.4.5 Research aim 4: Significant differences between biographical groups

The present study explored broad trends regarding differences between various age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups in terms of their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

3.4.5.1 Age

The majority of the research participants were between the ages of 40 and 49 years. The employees below the age of 45 years were significantly more confident about their career resilience and their ability to prepare for the future (career concern) and more satisfied with their career opportunities. However, they were significantly less committed to the organisation than the employees of 46 years and above. The findings are consistent with other researchers who found that younger employees want job mobility, task variety and good career opportunities that enable them to refine their talents and skills and are nomadic and more likely to leave their organisations when dissatisfied (Boxall et al., 2003; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2008; Govaerts et al., 2011; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011). Older employees, on the other hand, have less interest in task variety, with lower intentions to leave and greater commitment to stay with the organisation (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011; Martin & Roodt, 2008). Older employees also experience finding new jobs more difficult with age and tend to become more satisfied with their jobs as they get older (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Spector, 2008).

3.4.5.2 Gender

The males in the study reported significantly greater satisfaction with career opportunities than the females. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies, which reported that females experienced fewer career opportunities as a result of traditional gender stereotyping, especially in male-dominated industries such as the automotive manufacturing industry (Maume, 1999; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

3.4.5.3 Race

In terms of race, various differences were identified for employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. The African employees showed greater confidence than the other race groups on all eight EAS subscales, namely, career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. The greater confidence displayed by the African employees regarding their employability might be as a result of the positive influence of black economic empowerment (BEE) which has influenced ethnic demand in organisations, as well as their higher levels of education resulting from the advancement of previously disadvantaged groups (Beukes, 2010; Lee, 2001; Mancinelli et al., 2010). The African employees also reported higher levels of career adaptability than the other race groups on all the CAAS subscales, namely, career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. The enhanced career adaptability of the African employees might be as a result of the positive influence of many intra-organisational career opportunities within the organisation. These increased intra-organisational career opportunities might require the African employees to adapt more often to job changes that include substantial change in work responsibilities, hierarchical level or titles (Feldman & Ng, 2007), which might positively influence their ability to adjust and fit into a new career-related situation.

The white employees were significantly less satisfied with work–life balance than their African counterparts. This is congruent with findings from previous studies, which found that white employees value work–life balance significantly more than their African counterparts (Coetzee et al., 2007; Van Dyk, 2011; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In addition, the white employees were significantly more satisfied with compensation and showed higher commitment to the organisation. The higher satisfaction levels of the predominantly white male sample with compensation compared to their African counterparts may be due to the

fact that the majority of the sample was on a management or supervisory job level and therefore enjoy higher income and enhanced benefits. Research by Van Dyk (2011) with senior management employees reported similar findings in terms of their higher satisfaction levels with compensation.

On the other hand, the African participants were significantly more satisfied with training and development opportunities and career opportunities than their white counterparts. This is congruent with findings by João & Coetzee (2012), who found that African participants consider career opportunities to be more important than any other racial group. The African participants in the study might also be more satisfied with the career, training and development opportunities that the company offer owing to the employment equity and affirmative action legislation that provide them with enhanced career opportunities, as well as the company's Skills Development initiatives focused on training employees from previously disadvantaged groups.

3.4.5.4 Tenure

In terms of tenure, the employees who had worked for the organisation for less than six years were more confident in their employability in terms of their career self-management, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability and entrepreneurial orientation attributes. The same tenure group also reported greater confidence in their ability to plan and prepare for the future (career concern). In terms of retention factor satisfaction, the employees who had worked for the organisation for less than six years seemed to be more satisfied with the career opportunities available within the organisation. No previous research could be found to support these findings.

3.4.5.5 Job level

Various differences were found between the managerial or supervisory and staff level employees in terms of their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. The staff level employees perceived themselves to be stronger in terms of their employability attributes (career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, pro-activity and emotional literacy) and career adaptability (career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence) than their managerial or supervisory level counterparts. The greater confidence displayed by the staff level employees in their employability attributes is congruent with

studies conducted by Potgieter (2012) and Puffer (2011). The enhanced career adaptability of the staff level employees may be as a result of, firstly, their preference for additional education and training to enhance their chances of career advancement (Nienaber et al., 2011), which in turn improves their career adaptability by learning through interactions at work, and secondly, the update in their substantive knowledge base (Brown et al., 2010).

The staff level employees seemed to prefer career, training and development opportunities, as well as work–life balance, more than their counterparts on a managerial or supervisory level. This could be due to the enhanced chances of career advancement that additional education and training might offer to them (Nienaber et al., 2011). The greater preference for work–life balance by staff level employees might be due to the fewer work demands, less overtime and less work stress experienced on this level (Van Dyk, 2011). On the other hand, the lower levels of satisfaction with work–life balance reported by the management or supervisory level participants might be due to the regular overtime worked by the management or supervisory level employees. The higher satisfaction on job characteristics experienced by the managerial or supervisory level employees may be the result of the greater job autonomy, challenging assignments and variety of work that higher level positions usually entail. Spector (2008) supports this view and states that highly specialised knowledge workers prefer jobs where they can use a variety of skills and experience challenging assignments and job autonomy.

3.4.6 Limitations of the study

A comprehensive overview of all the limitations identified will be provided in Chapter 4. This section will therefore only highlight the core limitations.

Since the current study was restricted to respondents employed in the automotive manufacturing industry, the findings cannot be generalised to other occupational contexts. Moreover, the distribution of gender is not equal in the company, with predominantly males. In addition, the sample did not represent the South African population in terms of gender, race, tenure or job level, thereby reducing the power of this study and the potential to generalise the results to the diverse South African population.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of the study contribute valuable information on the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, as well as the differences between biographical groups' experiences of

these constructs. This study may form the basis for understanding these relationships and differences in order to inform the formulation of effective retention strategies.

3.4.7 Recommendations for future research

Only the core recommendations will be focused on in this section, as the recommendations will be elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 4. The findings of the study confirm the existence of a relationship between some of the elements in the three constructs, employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. The findings also confirm the existence of significant differences between the various biographical groups regarding the retention factors.

It is recommended that future researchers replicate this study to include a more balanced representation of the different biographical groups across various occupational groups and sectors.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

Overall it can be concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. Evidence was found that the biographical variables included in this study, employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors. In addition, the findings indicated that individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to their employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors.

The results of this study suggest that there was a significant, positive relationship between individuals' employability attributes and career adaptability. Moreover, each of the employability attribute variables had a similar relationship with each of the career adaptability variables. Employability attributes were also found to be significantly related to individuals' satisfaction with retention factors, with proactivity and career self-management being the best predictors of retention factor satisfaction. The relationship between career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction was significant and mainly positive, with the strongest relationship being between career concern and the retention factor variables. In addition, the findings indicated that the biographical variables, namely, age, gender, race, tenure and job level, predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors, with age, race and

job level being the best predictors. African participants indicated greater satisfaction with training and development opportunities, career opportunities and work–life balance, whilst white participants indicated greater satisfaction with compensation and organisational commitment. In terms of job level, individuals' on staff level indicated greater satisfaction with training and development opportunities, career opportunities and work–life balance, whilst the managerial/supervisory level individuals showed greater satisfaction with the job characteristics retention factor. The younger participants (≤ 45 years) indicated that they value career opportunities more than their older counterparts (≥ 46 years), who in their turn indicated that they value organisational commitment the most.

The overall findings of the study contribute valuable knowledge on the relationships found between the core variables and may contribute to the development of effective retention practices in the South African context. The conclusions and practical recommendations for talent retention are discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 consisted of a discussion of the core aspects of the literature and empirical study, an interpretation and analysis of the results and the conclusions drawn from the study. The core limitations of the study were highlighted and recommendations were made for future research. Chapter 4 presents a more comprehensive discussion of the conclusions drawn and elaborates on the limitations of the study, while also making a number of recommendations for the practical application of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4 contains the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following section focuses on the conclusions that were formulated based on the literature review and the empirical study.

4.1.1 Conclusions regarding the literature review

The general aim of this research was to explore the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. To establish the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction, this research was designed to address specific literature aims. In the subsections below, conclusions are drawn about each of the specific literature aims.

4.1.1.1 The first aim: Conceptualise employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors from the literature

This aim was achieved through the literature review in Chapter 2. In the context of this study, employability refers to a psychosocial construct representing a combination of career-related attributes (dispositions, values, attitudes and skills) that promotes proactive adaptability in changing environments and enhances an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment and the likelihood of obtaining career success (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Coetzee, 2011; Fugate et al., 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007). The employability attributes framework of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) was of specific relevance to this study as it has been developed and tested for adults in the South African context (Bezuidenhout, 2010). The employability attributes framework includes a range of eight core career-related employability attributes, namely, career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2011).

In conceptualising career adaptability for this study, the theory of Savickas and Porfeli (2012) was used. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career adaptability as a set of self-regulatory cognitive-affective behavioural capacities or psychosocial resources that individuals can draw upon to cope with current and anticipated career developmental tasks,

occupational transitions, and complex and ill-defined career- and work-related problems. It is a multidimensional construct that involves a combination of attitudes, competencies and behaviours that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them (Savickas, 2013). The four-dimensional structure of career adaptability was based on Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) theory and therefore also used in this study. The four dimensions are career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence.

Cascio (2003) describes retention as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. Retention factors are defined as factors that would facilitate the retention or departure of employees and the decision to leave or remain, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities (Netswera et al., 2005). As not all voluntary employee turnover situations are easily controlled by management, the focus of this study was on the retention factors that management can control and that may influence workers to stay with the organisation. In this regard, Döckel's (2003) seven critical retention factors were relevant to this study, namely, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and organisational commitment. It is concluded that there is currently no single framework that guides research and practice, although the importance of employee retention for organisational effectiveness and efficiency is clear (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

4.1.1.2 The second aim: Determine the theoretical relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors

From the literature review it can be concluded that there appears to be a relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. High levels of employability allow individuals to reap the benefits of active career adaptability and assist employees in adapting effectively to changes in the workplace (Fugate et al., 2004; Kazilan et al., 2009). Moreover, the development of employability attributes supports individual development, which addresses the training and development retention factor (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Employability attributes are also key contributors to retention-related dispositions, such as career satisfaction, commitment and psychological attachment, which in turn reduce retention risks (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Gutman & Schoon, 2012; Mitchel et al., 2001).

Career adaptability improves employability both within and outside an organisation (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). In terms of the relationship between career adaptability and

employee retention, it would seem that career adaptability enables individuals to be committed and connected and to have a stronger fit with the organisation, which promotes the effective management of retention (Ferreira, 2012). In addition, the literature review revealed that the ability and willingness to adapt is essential to career satisfaction and success, which in turn contribute to job tenure and retention (Hall, 2002). Career adaptability exerts a strong influence on career- and work-related outcomes, such as work engagement, job satisfaction and job tenure (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It also contributes to a strong sense of responsibility towards an organisation, which in turn may influence an employee's decision to stay with the organisation (Ferreira, 2012).

By paying attention to the factors that are important to employees, organisational commitment can be encouraged, which in return increases retention (Döckel, 2003; Pauw, 2011). Retention factors also contribute to employee satisfaction, which positively influences the retention of employees (Bontis et al., 2011). The conclusion can be made that employees need to be employable and adaptable, whilst organisations need to be able to retain such employees. In view of the fact that the literature review confirmed the theoretical relationship between the three constructs, it is important for organisations to pay attention to these relationships if they are to retain their employees and avoid the devastating effects of key employees leaving the organisation (João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012).

4.1.1.3 The third aim: Determine the implications for retention practices

The literature review elaborated on the way in which retention practices might be influenced by the relationship that exists between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. It focused not only on understanding the reasons why people leave their organisations, but also the factors that influence the turnover and retention of employees. By understanding the reasons why people leave and the factors that influence employee retention, practitioners can contribute to reducing the impact of skills shortages on economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Rasool & Botha, 2011). This, in turn, will have a major impact on the competitiveness of the automotive industry (Mashilo, 2010) and assist organisations in South Africa to sustain their productive capacity (Cheney & Nienaber, 2009).

The literature review provided valuable information pertaining to the various theoretical models and frameworks pertaining to employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, including the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the empirical

study. This enabled the researcher to choose and use instruments that have generally acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability. The literature review pointed out important factors to consider when developing talent retention strategies and provided valuable insight into the recommendations made by other researchers, which can be considered as possible solutions for some of the retention-related concerns highlighted by the empirical study. The differences in biographical groups were also highlighted by the literature review; however, some of the findings were inconsistent and should be compared with the findings of the empirical study.

4.1.2 Conclusions regarding the empirical study

To establish the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction, this research was designed to carry out the following six major tasks:

1. To explore the nature and direction of the statistical relationship between the constructs employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors satisfaction as manifested in a sample of permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypothesis Ha1.
2. To explore whether employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypothesis Ha2.
3. To assess whether age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individual's satisfaction with retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypothesis Ha3.
4. To explore whether individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regards to employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypothesis Ha4.
5. To propose recommendations to the organisation and the field of industrial and organisational psychology with regards to retention practices. This task is addressed in this chapter.
6. Highlight areas for further research for the field of industrial and organisational psychology with regards to retention practices. This task is addressed in this chapter.

4.1.2.1 *The first aim: Determine the nature and direction of the statistical relationship between the constructs employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction as manifested in a sample of permanently employed salaried employees in an automotive manufacturing company in South Africa*

The following two conclusions were drawn:

a) *Employees' employability attributes relate significantly and positively to their satisfaction with retention factors*

- Based on the findings it can be concluded that employees who were confident about their employability attributes were able to identify and effectively use their training, development and career opportunities, which made them less likely to leave the organisation.
- The findings indicated that career self-management and proactivity contributed the most to the employees' satisfaction with their retention factors. The organisation thus plays an important role in improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce and in engaging them in development activities. It was concluded that employees who show greater confidence in their ability to take concrete action to acquire new skills and to realise their ambitions (career self-management), whilst having the perseverance to follow through on challenging targets (proactivity), were more satisfied and more likely to remain in the organisation.

b) *Employees' career adaptability relates significantly and positively to their satisfaction with retention factors*

- It was concluded that employees who portray greater confidence in their future in terms of looking ahead and preparing for the future (career concern) were more satisfied with the organisation's retention initiatives.
- Based on the findings it was concluded that the employees who perceived themselves to be career adaptable were more confident about their ability to use effectively the career opportunities available to them in the organisation, which in turn reduced their intentions to leave the organisation.
- It was also concluded that employees who had confidence in their ability to manage career transitions and to adapt to changing situations at work (career adaptable)

experienced greater satisfaction at work and reduced intentions to leave the organisation.

4.1.2.2 The second aim: Determine whether employability attributes and career adaptability significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors

Based on the SEM and the stepwise multiple regression analysis, the following two conclusions were drawn:

a) Employability attributes significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.

- It was concluded that proactivity was the best predictor of employees' satisfaction with the job characteristics retention factor. The conclusion was that employees who take proactive steps towards setting challenging targets, taking accountability for their decisions and for improving their knowledge and skills for career progression, were more likely to experience their work assignments as interesting, varied and challenging. The participating organisation's focus on a value-added production system, which drives creativity and efficiency, might have contributed to the relationship between proactivity and job characteristics.
- Based on the findings, it was concluded that career self-management was the strongest predictor of career opportunities and work–life balance. The conclusion made is that employees who know what they need to do to be successful in their careers and who have clearly formulated career goals and action plans are more satisfied with the internal career opportunities, which has important implications for retention. The findings of the study further confirmed that organisations that offer childcare facilities, recreational facilities and employee assistance programmes contribute greatly to employees' satisfaction with their work–life balance. It was concluded that employees with high proactivity and career self-management will experience greater satisfaction with retention factors and thus have an intention to stay with the organisation.

b) Career adaptability significantly predicts individuals' satisfaction with retention factors.

- It was concluded that career concern is strongly associated with the retention factor variables, namely, job characteristics, career opportunities and work–life balance. The conclusion made was that employees who were able to look ahead and plan for the

future and who used coping behaviours by being aware, involved and prepared, experienced greater satisfaction with job autonomy, solving challenging problems and applying a variety of skills (job characteristics). It is further concluded that such employees enjoy greater career options and have enhanced abilities to meet work and family commitments.

- Based on the findings, career curiosity was also a strong predictor of employees' satisfaction with the work–life balance retention factor. The conclusion made is that the ability to explore a fit between the self and different environments or vocational roles might assist employees to also find fit and balance between work and other non-work responsibilities and activities.
- It is concluded that individual dimensions of career adaptability influence employees' satisfaction with retention factors in varying degrees.

4.1.2.3 The third aim: Determine whether age, gender, race, tenure and job level significantly predict individuals' retention factor satisfaction

On the basis of the multiple regression analysis, the following conclusion was drawn:

Age, race and job level significantly predict employees' satisfaction with retention factors

- Age was the strongest predictor of organisational commitment. Employees seem to develop a greater preference for job security as they age and have invested more in the organisation over the years, which make them more committed to the organisation.
- Race was the strongest predictor of compensation, work–life balance and organisational commitment. Significant differences were, however, found between the various races on the retention factor variables, but these will be explained in more detail in the section below.
- Job level was the strongest predictor of job characteristics and training and development opportunities. The conclusion made was that enhancement through training and development contributes to a great extent to career advancement for staff level employees, whilst the characteristics of a job depend greatly on the level of the job. The higher the job level, the more complex and challenging the job becomes.

4.1.2.4 *The fourth aim: Determine whether individuals from different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factor satisfaction*

The following five conclusions were drawn:

a) *Employees from different age groups tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors.*

- Based on the findings, it was concluded that the younger employees (≤ 45 years) came across as more career resilient in terms of their employability attributes than their older (≥ 46 years) counterparts.
- The younger employees (≤ 45 years) seemed to be more planful in terms of looking ahead and preparing for their future (career concern).
- It was concluded that the younger employees (≤ 45 years) were more satisfied with the career opportunities offered by the organisation, whilst the older employees (≥ 46 years) showed greater commitment to the organisation and thus a greater intention to stay with the organisation than their younger (≤ 45 years) counterparts.

b) *Males and females tend to differ significantly regarding their retention factor satisfaction*

- It was concluded that the male participants were more satisfied with the availability of career opportunities than their female counterparts.

c) *Employees from different race groups tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors*

- Based on the findings, the African employees showed greater confidence in their employability attributes and career adaptability skills compared to their white counterparts.
- From the results it was also concluded that the African employees tended to place more importance on work–life balance than their white counterparts. Moreover, the African employees were more satisfied with the opportunities offered by the organisation, such as career, training and development opportunities.

- It was concluded that the white employees valued compensation and seemed to be more satisfied with their compensation than their African counterparts, whilst the white employees also portrayed higher levels of commitment towards the organisation.
- d) *Employees from different tenure groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors*
- Based on the findings it was concluded that the employees who had worked for the organisation for less than six years (≤ 5 years) were more confident about their employability attributes, especially in terms of their career self-management, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability and entrepreneurial orientation. They therefore showed a greater ability to reflect on their career aspirations and to develop clear actions to achieve their career goals; to persevere in the face of challenges and make their own decisions; to proactively adapt to changes in their environment; to have the self-confidence to take risks and build networks, as well as to undertake new business opportunities.
 - It was concluded that the employees who had tenure of less than six years were more aware, involved and prepared for their future (career concern) than their counterparts who had worked for the organisation for more than six years (≥ 6 years).
 - From the results it was concluded that the employees who had worked for the organisation for less than six years (≤ 5 years) were more satisfied with the career opportunities that they enjoyed in the organisation.
- e) *Employees from different job level groups tend to differ significantly regarding their employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors*
- It was concluded that the staff level employees felt more strongly about their employability attributes and career adaptability skills than their managerial or supervisory level counterparts. The staff level employees thus have more confidence in their ability to secure and retain a form of employment and to adjust and fit into new career-related situations.
 - In terms of retention factors, the conclusion was that staff level employees have greater preference for and satisfaction with the career, training and development opportunities available to them in the organisation. The staff level employees also

enjoyed greater satisfaction with work–life balance than their managerial or supervisory level counterparts.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the managerial or supervisory level employees were more satisfied with the characteristics of their jobs and thus enjoyed more challenging assignments and a greater variety of work.

4.1.2.5 The fifth aim: Determine the implications for retention practices and the recommendations that can be made for the field of industrial and organisational psychology and future research

Knowledge of the employability attributes and career adaptability skills required by manufacturing employers, such as in the automotive industry, will guide HR and training and development practitioners and technical instructors in terms of the employability and career adaptability skills that should be emphasised in their programmes (Rasul et al., 2013). By understanding employees' employability and career adaptability profiles, industrial and organisational psychologists and HR practitioners will be able to manage retention within the organisation effectively (Ferreira, 2012). The retention factors measured in this study are all associated with HR management practices that influence employees' intentions to leave (Döckel, 2003). The results of the study could potentially provide managers and HR practitioners who are interested in the retention of talented and scarce skilled employees with valuable information. The findings of the study could also serve as a basis on which the organisation could develop a talent retention strategy for enhancing career meta-competencies, as well as career development and total reward practices.

In addition, the study reported on the differences found between age, gender, race, tenure and job level on some of the retention factors, which gave useful pointers for retaining diverse groups of employees in the South African multicultural work environment (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Previous research has yielded inconsistent results on some of the differences between biographical groups in terms of the variables of relevance to this study. The findings of this study provided some evidence to add to the existing findings and to provide clarity on the inconsistent results that were identified by the literature review. Importantly, the research gave an indication of the changing priorities of biographical groups, which could potentially inform attraction and retention practices. Knowledge of the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, as well as the relationship between the various variables of the constructs may also be of value in terms of highlighting the combination of learning and development and selective

promotion and salary decisions that are required and that are most valued by employees in the contemporary workplace. According to Echols (2007), the right combination of work practices can be a strong retention factor.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

The limitations in terms of the literature review and the empirical study are discussed in the section below.

4.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

- As the notions of employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors were established comparatively recently, in the 20th century, the researcher found that much of the research focused on the conceptualisation and measurement of the constructs, rather than the relationship between the various constructs. Previous research and findings from previous studies on the relationship between these constructs were thus limited, especially in the South African context.
- Only three variables were considered and therefore an all-encompassing view of the factors influencing retention cannot be provided. For this reason, several additional factors should be considered in developing retention strategies.
- A paucity of research exists on the role biographical characteristics play in employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors.
- Several models of employability attributes were found in the literature. The use of Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) model limited the study to the following attributes: career self-management, cultural competence, career resilience, self-efficacy, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy.
- Career adaptability was limited to the four-dimensional structure of career adaptability, as identified by Savickas and Porfeli (2012).
- Previous studies have reported various factors influencing employees' decision to stay or leave an organisation. As this study focused on the factors identified by Döckel (2003), it was limited to the following seven factors: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work–life balance and organisational commitment.

4.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

- A relatively small non-probability sample was used, which minimised the generalisation of the findings.
- The sample was not balanced across the various biographical groups, especially not in terms of gender, race, tenure and job level groups. Certain biographical groups were thus underrepresented. This therefore limited the generalisation of the results to the broader, multicultural South African population.
- The results of the study were obtained from participants who were permanently employed in an automotive manufacturing company, which further limits the generalisability of the findings because a random sample could not be taken from the general population group.
- Given the exploratory nature of the research design, this study can yield no statement about causation, since the associations between the variables were interpreted rather than established.
- The self-report nature of the study could have contributed to spuriously strong relationships between the variables as a result of method variance limitation. Future studies should test for common method variance.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of the study contributed valuable information on the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors, as well as the differences between biographical groups on each of the constructs. This study can thus form a basis for understanding these relationships and differences in order to inform the formulation of effective retention strategies.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

An overview of the predictors of retention factors and the recommendations for employee retention practices is given in Figure 4.1 and explained in detail in the sections below.

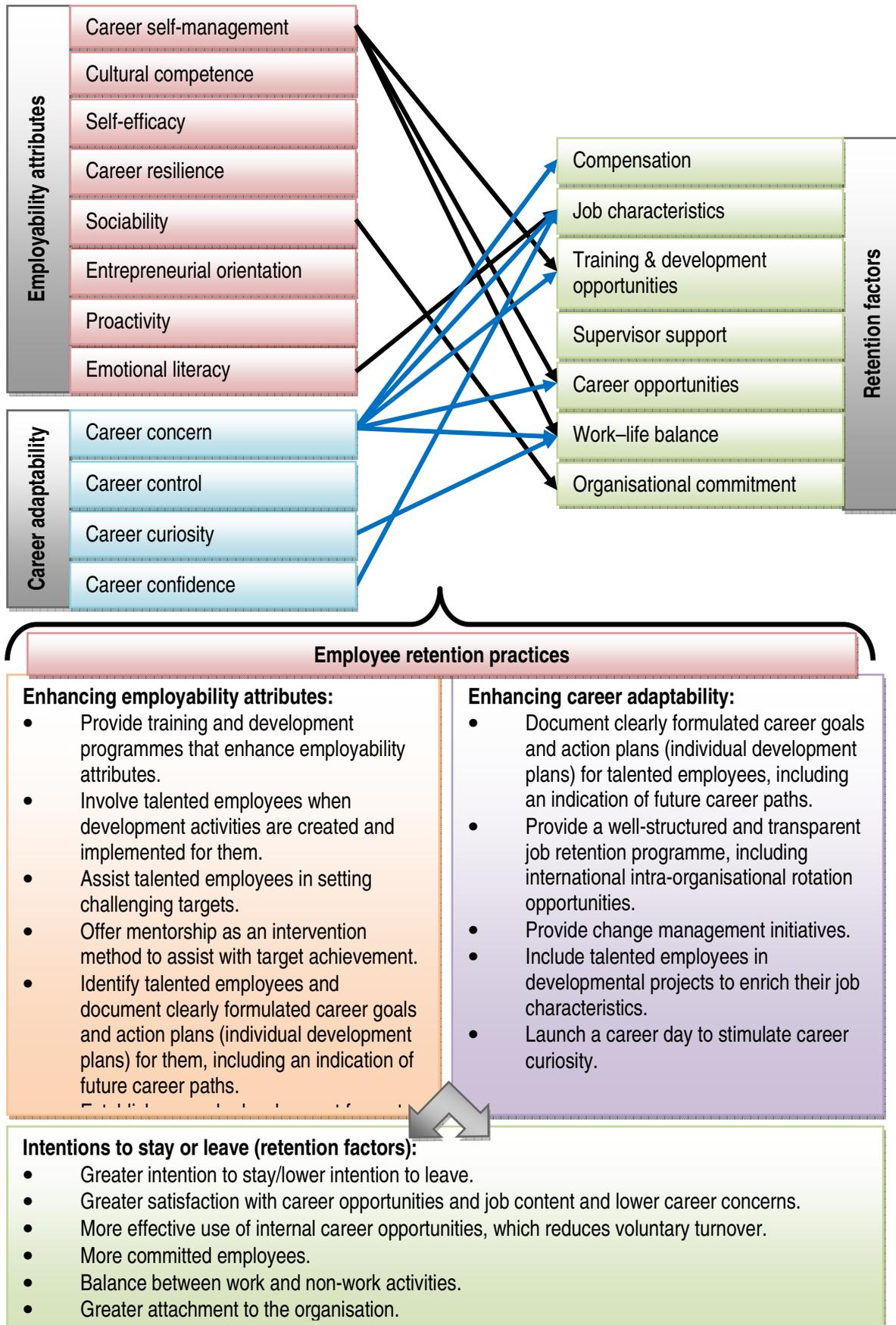


Figure 4.1: Overview of predictors of retention factors and recommendations for employee retention practices

4.3.1 Recommendations for retention practices

- Training and development programmes should address employability attributes, as this will contribute to employees' ability to identify and effectively use other training and development or career opportunities.
- As the development of employability attributes and career adaptability positively influences retention, human resource (HR) practitioners and training and development specialists should engage in interventions that will increase and develop these attributes and skills.
- Talented employees should be involved when development activities are created and implemented for them.
- Talented employees should be assisted in setting challenging targets for themselves and should be provided with sufficient support, such as a mentor, for them to follow through and achieve the set targets. This will build their confidence in career self-management and proactivity, which in turn will increase their intention to remain in the organisation.
- Talented employees should be identified and clearly formulated career goals and action plans (individual development plans) should be documented for them, including an indication of future career paths. This will contribute to their satisfaction with career opportunities and address their career concerns. By doing so, managerial or supervisory level employees will enjoy greater satisfaction with the career opportunities offered by the organisation, whilst the staff level employees will benefit from the developmental projects assigned to them in terms of enriched job characteristics.
- A targeted focus, specific to the various age groups or generations, is required when creating career paths and challenging job opportunities for talented employees.
- A well-structured and transparent job rotation programme should be considered to offer opportunities for career transitions that benefit both the employee and the organisation. This will enhance career adaptability skills and enable employees to more make effective use of internal career opportunities. Support through change management initiatives should be provided throughout such a rotation programme. This will provide talented employees with the confidence to manage career transitions and to adapt to changing work situations, which will in turn contribute to their satisfaction at work and ultimately influence their intention to stay with the organisation.

- The organisation can also use its international footprint to offer international intra-organisational rotation opportunities to further develop their talented employees and to contribute to their retention through the enhanced internal career opportunities and training and development opportunities offered.
- Talented employees should be encouraged to explore internal career opportunities, to inquire or obtain input from mentors and to participate in information-seeking activities, such as a career day. These interventions will stimulate their career curiosity, which will not only assist them to adapt to changes in the workplace, but also to find a fit and a balance between their work and non-work activities.
- A people development forum, consisting of a senior management representative from each section of the plant, should be established to ensure that the potential career paths and development plans of talented employees are discussed regularly on a senior management level. This will not only ensure that plans are followed and career paths realised, but also that the talented employees experience the organisation as a concerned employer, which positively influences employees' attachment to the organisation.
- Talented employees, especially on a staff level, should be offered opportunities to become involved in challenging and interesting assignments or projects, such as the value-added production systems (VPS) programme in the organisation. This will enrich their job characteristics, give them broader exposure and contribute to their satisfaction with their job content (job characteristics).
- A communication strategy that includes communication relating to the rewards, benefits and facilities that the organisation offers can help to re-emphasise the offerings that are available to employees. Greater awareness might lead to greater use of these facilities, such as the childcare facility, the biokinetic centre and the employee assistance programme. This study confirmed that such offerings contribute positively to employees' satisfaction with work-life balance, which reduces their retention risk.
- The total reward strategy of the organisation should be revised, based on the research findings, to ensure that the right combination of rewards, remuneration and benefits is offered.
- Job level can be used to categorise a workforce so that employee groups can be more effectively rewarded and retained. This recommendation is supported by this study, as well as a study conducted by Mercer (2008).
- Career development interventions should be individualised to take biographical factors and differences between the biographical groups into consideration.

- A retention strategy should be developed to retain talented employees. Such a strategy should also meet the unique expectations and motivations of the different biographical groups. The retention strategy should focus particularly on the retention of talented African employees as they seem to be less committed to the organisation.
- The organisation should consider a female development programme to attract more talented females to the organisation (currently male dominated) and to provide the current female employees with internal career opportunities that meet their unique needs and expectations.
- The organisation should identify talented staff level employees for future managerial or supervisory level positions, whilst offering them interesting tasks that show off their talent and enrich their job characteristics.
- The organisation should investigate the differences in satisfaction levels between the various races in terms of compensation to ensure that there is no unfair imbalance.
- The organisation should investigate the workload distribution between the various races to ensure that there is no unfair imbalance that negatively affects the employees' satisfaction with work–life balance.
- When recruiting the organisations should consider career meta-competencies, such as employability attributes and career adaptability, and not only qualifications and technical skills or experience.

4.3.2 Recommendations for future research

- Future research efforts should focus on obtaining a larger representative sample across various occupational groups and sectors. The broader sample should be more balanced in terms of the representation of individuals from, in particular, different age, gender, race, tenure and job level groups.
- Different models should be used to investigate the relationship between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors.
- Valuable insight might be obtained through the inclusion of additional variables, such as organisational culture and diversity, which were not measured in this study. This is of particular importance in a multinational organisation.
- Future longitudinal studies should be carried out to test the consistency of the relationship that exists between employability attributes, career adaptability and retention factors. Considering that employees' satisfaction with retention factors evolve

as career situations and circumstances change, longitudinal studies may be fruitful for future research.

4.4 CONCLUSION REGARDING THE STUDY

In conclusion, it is trusted that the findings of the study provided insights into the relationship between individuals' employability attributes, career adaptability and satisfaction with retention factors. The study will enable HR, training and development practitioners, technical instructors and industrial and organisational psychologists to apply the insights relating to the enhancement of career meta-competencies and career development and total reward practices effectively. The study also provided useful pointers for developing and retaining diverse groups of employees. The multicultural South African context necessitates the consideration of differences between biographical groups and the study will therefore also add value in this regard. Recommendations have been made for enhancing employees' employability attributes and career adaptability, which will contribute positively to their intentions to stay with the organisation. In addition, recommendations for future research have been made to ensure that the contributions of this study can be further enriched and built on in future. Overall, it can be concluded that the findings of the present study extended research on retention and contributed new insights that may potentially inform retention strategies in the automotative organisation that participated in the study. It is hoped that the research will stimulate further research on staff retention and talent management.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 covered the conclusions drawn from the study comprehensively and elaborated on the possible limitations of the study by focusing on both the literature review and the empirical study. In addition, recommendations and practical suggestions for talent retention in the South African context were made. Recommendations for future research were also offered. Finally, this chapter concluded the study.

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