

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ETHICS CLIMATE, RETENTION FACTORS AND ORGANISATIONAL
COMMITMENT OF NURSES IN A SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC HOSPITAL

Dissertation

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mahlamakiti Derisa Kau, student number 43120571, declare that this dissertation entitled: **the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment of nurses in a South African public hospital** is my own work. All the sources that I have used or have quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. The work has not in part or whole been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of South Africa (Unisa). I also declare that the study was carried out in strict accordance with Unisa policy on research ethics and that I conducted the research with the highest integrity taking into account Unisa's policy for copyright infringement and plagiarism.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment of nurses in a South African public hospital.

Previous studies evidenced the association between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment separately. However, research combining all these variables have not yet been done. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment of nurses in a South African public hospital. A quantitative research design was followed and a probability stratified sample ($N=208$) of nurses participated in the study. The results indicate significant relationships between work ethics climate and retention factors. Furthermore, the results indicate significant relationships between work ethics climate and organisational commitment. Moreover, the results indicate that work ethics climate moderates the relationship between training and development components of retention factors and organisational commitment. These findings provide new knowledge for the design of retention strategies, which adds value to the body of knowledge in relation to work ethics climate. Recommendations for further research and for the implementation of the results of the study by human resource professionals were made in terms of improving the ethical climate, the retention factors and organisational commitment of their employees.

KEY TERMS

Work ethics climate, retention factors, organisational commitment, nurses.

SETSOPOLWA

Kamano magareng ga seemo sa maitshwaro ka mošomong, mabaka a go tšwela pele le boikgafo bja baoki ka sepetleleng sa setšhaba sa Afrika Borwa.

Dinyakišišo tše di fetilego di file bohlatse bja kamano magareng ga seemo sa maitshwaro ka mošomong, mabaka a go tšwela pele le boikgafo ka fao go aroganego. Le ge go le bjale, dinyakišišo tše di kopanyago mehuta ye ka moka ga se tša hlwa di dirwa. Maikemišetšo a dinyakišišo tše e bile go nyakišiša kamano magareng ga seemo sa maitshwaro ka mošomong, mabaka a go tšwela pele le boikgafo bja bja baoki ka sepetleleng sa setšhaba sa Afrika Borwa. Tlhamo ya dinyakišišo tša boleng e dirišitšwe gomme sampole ya baoki ye e arogantšwego ($N=208$) ba kgathile tema ka dinyakišišong. Dipoelo di laetša kamano ye kgolo magareng ga seemo sa maitshwaro ka mošomong le mabaka a go tšwela pele. Godimo ga fao, dipoelo di laetša dikamano tše kgolo magareng ga seemo sa maitshwaro ka mošomong le boikgafo bja ka mokgatlong. Godimo ga fao, dipoelo di aletša gore seemo sa maitshwaro se lekanyetša kamano magareng ga dikarolo tša tlhahlo le tša tlhabollo tša mabaka a go tšwela pele le boikgafo bja ka mokgatlong. Dikutollo tše di fana ka tsebo ye mpsha ya tlhamo ya mekgwa ya go tšwela pele, yeo e tlišago boleng go tsebo mabapi le seemo sa maitshwaro a ka mošomong. Ditšhišinyo tša dinyakišišo go tšwela pele le tša go phethagatša dipoelo tša dinyakišišo ka bašomi ba sephrofešenale ba merero ya bašomi di dirilwe mabapi le go kaonafatša seemo sa maitshwaro, mabaka a go tšwela pele le boikgafo bja ka mokgatlong bja bašomi ba yona.

MAREO A BOHLOKWA

Seemo sa maitshwaro a ka mošomong, mabaka a go tšwela pele, boikgafo bja ka mokgatlong, baoki.

NGOKUFITJHAZANA

Itjhebiswano eliphakathi kobujamo bemigomo yokusebenza, imithelela yokubamba abasebenzi kanye nokuzibophelela kwihlangano kwabahlengikazi besibhedlela sombuso eSewula Afrika

Amarhubhululo zesikhathi esidlulileko zifakazele itjhebiswano eliphakathi kobujamo bemigomo yokusebenza, imithelela yokubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi kanye nokuzibophelela kwihlangano ngendlela ehlukaniweko. Nanyana kunjalo, ngokwerhubhululo ukuhlanganiswa kwazo zoke lezi zinto akhange kweziwe. Ihloso yaleli rhubhululo bekukuphenya itjhebiswano eliphakathi kobujamo bemigomo yokuziphatha emsebenzini, ukubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi kanye nokuzibophelela kuhlangano kwabahlengikazi esibhedlela sombuso eSewula Afrika. Ihlelo lerhubhululo elidzimelele kuzinga lekulumo lilandelwe kanti nesampula yabahlengikazi I ($N=208$) labadlale indima kurhubhululo lisetjenzisiwe. Imiphumela iveza itjhebiswano eliqakathekileko phakathi kobujamo bemigomo yokusebenza kanye nemithelela yokubanjwa kwabasebenzi bangakhambi. Ukuragela phambili, imiphumela iveza itjhebiswano eliqakathekileko phakathi kobujamo bemigomo yokusebenza kanye nokuzibophelela kwehlangano. Ngaphezu kwalokho, lemiphumela iveza ukobana ubujamo bemigomo yokuziphatha ilinganisa itjhebiswano phakathi kweengaba ezibandulako nezithuthukisako, iingaba ezimalungana nemithelela yokubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi kanye nokuzibophelela kwehlangano. Leli lwazi elitholakeleko linikela ilwazi elitjha malungana nokudizayinwa kwamasu wokubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi, okuyinto engezelela ivelu kumthombo welwazi malungana nobujamo bemigomo yokuziphatha emsebenzini. Iincomo ezinye ezimalungana nokuragela phambili nerhubhululo kanye nokusetjenziswa kwemiphumela yerhubhululo elimalungana nabasebenzi bomnyango wezokuqatjiswa kwabasebenzi zenziwe ngokuthi kuthuthukiswe ubujamo bemigomo yokuziphatha, imithelela yokubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi kanye nokuzibophelela kwabasebenzi kuhlangano.

AMAGAMA AQAKATHEKILEKO

Ubjamo bemigomo yokuziphatha, imithelela yokubamba abasebenzi bangakhambi, ukuzibophelela kuhlango, abahlengikazi.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION

The research study examines the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment amongst nurses in a public hospital in South Africa. Besides sketching a background and motivation for the research, the chapter also outlines the study's problem statement, its aims, paradigm perspectives that guided the research, and the research design and methodology. The chapter concludes with a summary of each of the study's chapters.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Work ethics climate relates to various desirable work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, commitment, and a lower level of employees' intention to quit. Work ethics climate is the general perception of behaviour that is ethically proper, and how to approach ethical issues (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Work ethics climate in an organisation represents the proximity of ethics practiced, and the moral atmosphere in the work situation (Mulki & Lassk, 2019). Ethical climate is formed by the organisation's employees' experiences and behaviour, which develop whilst dealing with situations that relate to ethical context (Toleikiene et al., 2014).

Employee satisfaction regarding certain organisational resources such as work life policies, rewards and recognition, leadership and management style, training and development, culture and career opportunities, and job characteristics relate positively to employees' level of commitment (Coetzee et al., 2014). Filipova (2011) found a positive relationship between work ethics climate and organisation retention factors. For instance, Huang et al. (2012) assert that health organisations can enhance worker retention by creating a positive and ethical working environment. Hospitals with a negative or less positive ethical climate have a negative impact on employees, or the quality of their work (Constantina et al., 2019).

Dwivedi et al. (2014) indicate that retaining employees in this era of skills shortages has become a major concern for organisations. Top level executives and human resource departments within organisations spend more money, time and efforts trying to retain valuable staff (Mitchel et al., 2001; Tadesse, 2018). Retention concerns an organisation's capacity to maintain the relationship with their top performers. In addition, Laddha et al. (2012) opine that employee retention is a system, which keeps employees with an organisation for a long period, or until they complete an assignment or project. Employers develop integrated systems and strategies to improve, retain and use individuals that have the required aptitude and skills to meet current and future business needs, which is what retention involves (Lockwood, 2006). Hospitals that have poor retention strategies experience a decline in patient safety and quality of care, while staff morale and cohesion are negatively affected (Perreira et al., 2018). According to Okolie and Kawedo (2018), organisations that retain talented employees are positioned more successfully in an unpredictable environment that requires quality services. Furthermore, Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) found a significant relationship between employees' retention factors and their organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment is perceived to be an employee's belief in and willingness to work according to the organisation's values and objectives (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mitonga- Monga & Cilliers, 2016). Nafei (2013) posits that organisational commitment is an employee's attachment to an organisation and its goals. Dwivedi et al. (2014) aptly comment that the relationship between individuals and an organisation is reciprocal in terms of the individuals' commitment to the organisation, and the organisation's attitude towards the individuals as employees. Organisational commitment was found to increase workers' intention to stay and perform (Chang et al., 2015). Nurses with the longest tenure have the highest intention to remain with their current organisation (Salminen & Miettinen, 2019).

According to Brunetto et al. (2013) nurses' levels of commitment tend to increase when they are happy with their direct managers or supervisors. Individual nurses who work in a positive ethical atmosphere are usually emotionally connected to, and extend their membership with, the organisation (Brunetto et al., 2013). Previous studies by Borhani et al. (2014) report that ethical climate relates to organisational commitment. Ethical climate is said to increase employees' intention to stay at an organisation (Clements et al., 2016; Numminen et al., 2015; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). It remains to be examined, which aspects of work ethics climate and retention factors are associated with employees' levels of organisational commitment within the South African public hospitals context.

1.1.1 South African context

Statistics from the South African Nursing Council [SANC] (2016) indicate an increase of 34% of nurses who completed their studies in South Africa from 2006 to 2015. This increase is satisfactory when compared to previous statistics that were released for the period of 1996 to 2005, which indicated a 42% decline in the number of nurses who completed their qualifications in South Africa (SANC, 2006). The 2009 to 2018 statistics indicate a decrease of 15% in the number of nurses that completed their studies in 2018 (SANC, 2019). In addition, Almalki et al. (2012) point out that the loss of nurses, which leads to under-staffing, may, in turn, decrease nurses' confidence and enthusiasm, whilst increase the pressure on those that are left behind to take care of the increased workload. Therefore, the retention of nurses is of the utmost importance because staff shortages will affect patient care and recovery negatively (Ritter, 2011).

Nursing shortages and mal-distribution of nurses are priority issues for healthcare systems around the globe (El-Jardi et al. 2010). Bogonko and Kathure (2015) found that retaining nurses is an important issue; shortages can lead to burnout, work overload, and frustration amongst the remaining nurses, which, in turn, could lead to high turnover and compromised services that they provide to the patients. In the

same vein, Ehlers (2013) found that nurses in the public sector are emotionally strained, under-staffed, and dissatisfied with their jobs. Despite the limited increase in the number of nurses that completed their training, developed countries continue with their recruitment drive of South African nurses because of the global shortage of nurses.

Nurses from developing countries such as South Africa migrate to developed countries and prefer to work in private hospitals because of the career development opportunities that these offer, which are seldom provided in local government hospitals (Sonmez & Yildirim, 2009). As a result, developing countries' health care services compete in recruiting and retaining nurses in their organisations (Mokoka et al., 2010). Furthermore, Stanz and Greyling (2010) claim that the South African nursing profession is at a critical point, since experienced nurses are leaving South Africa in search of lucrative work opportunities in developed countries. The emigration of professional nurses from South Africa aggravates the crisis that the country faces in the public health service sector currently (Bagram, 2013). Koen et al. (2011) argue that many experienced nurses feel emotionally overwhelmed, and are demotivated; consequently, they experience job dissatisfaction, which often leads to them abandoning their profession.

The scarcity of experienced nurses in South Africa is perceived as an urgent issue that is hindering the Department of Health from achieving its objectives (Tshitangano, 2013). Efforts by the South African Department of Health to retain its nurses are failing because of certain unethical practices, and the high level of dissatisfaction amongst the nurses; situations, which negatively affect nurses' intentions to stay (Koen et al., 2011). It is believed that these factors affect an individual's commitment negatively, and influences their turnover intention. Against this background, the relationship between nurses' perceptions of their work ethics climate and retention factors, coupled with their level of commitment in this sector, should be investigated. Therefore, this study sought to investigate how nurses' perceptions of their work ethics climate and retention factors influence their levels of organisational commitment in a South African public hospital setting. Furthermore, this study contributes to the theoretical and empirical debate on

ethics climate, retention factors, and organisational commitment. Hence, this study may contribute to the creation of a meaningful workplace, characterised by positive regulations, policies, rules and practices, which lead to high levels of commitment amongst nurses.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

From the above-mentioned background it is evident that South Africa faces a challenge owing to the country's high nurse turnover, especially amongst those that have critical health skills and experiences. Stanz and Greyling (2010) report that of the 233 respondents in their study, 23.18% indicated that the leading reason why they would leave their organisation is because they are discontented with their salaries. About 15.45% expressed that they would leave when they retire, and 15.02% stated that they would leave because they wanted to work in a foreign country. By contrast, 9.44% indicated that they would leave because of a lack of contentment with their current jobs, 3% said that they would leave to follow other career paths outside the hospital group, and only 2.1% expressed that they would resign to further their studies outside of the nursing profession. This high turnover is exacerbated by the great demand for these nurses' skills in western countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. Therefore, an in-depth understanding is required of factors that can enhance the retention of nurses in South African public hospitals (Tshitangano, 2013).

The research literature shows that theoretical models do not explain the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors, and nurses' organisational commitment. There is proof from the literature that variables that relate to the said work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment may influence their intention to stay. This research study has added to research covering the retention of nurses in a South African public hospital by investigating the associations between these elements. Furthermore, this study has contributed to the discipline of human resource

management and its practitioners to take cognisance of the factors that enhance the retention of staff nurses.

A review of the literature on work ethics climate, retention factors and employees' organisational commitment identified the following research problems:

- Theoretical models do not interpret the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment;
- There is a lack of awareness concerning the theoretical and empirical relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment of nurses, especially in a South African public hospitals context; and
- Limited information is accessible on the holistic relationship of work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment, and the significance of using these in order to increase the retention of nurses in public hospitals; hence the need for further investigation.

It is clear that research on the association between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment may contribute to the discipline of human resource management. The positive contribution is with regard to retention factors (rewards and recognition, leadership and management style, development and training, culture and work life policies, career opportunities, and job characteristics). These retention factors are aimed at enhancing the above-mentioned elements in an uncertain and turbulent employment context. Based on the problem statement, the general research question is formulated as follows:

- To what extent do nurses' perceptions of their work ethics climate and retention factors influence their organisational commitment to a South African public hospital?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

Given the empirical questions outlined above, certain aims were formulated for the research study.

1.3.1 General aim of the research

The general aim of this research was to examine whether a relationship exists between work ethics climate, retention factors and nurses' organisational commitment in a South African hospital.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

In respect of the study's literature review, the following specific aims were framed:

- To conceptualise the work ethics climate and retention factors;
- To conceptualise organisational commitment; and
- To integrate the theoretical relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

The following are specific aims in terms of the empirical study:

- To determine the relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors;
- To determine the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment;
- To determine the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment;
- To determine whether the work ethics climate moderates the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment among nurses in a South African hospital; and

- To recommend further research in the field of human resource management regarding work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment in order to retain nurses employed in a South African public hospital.

1.4 RESEARCH MODEL

The study used the Mouton and Marais (1996) model as a framework. The model comprises five methodological dimensions, namely teleological, ontological, sociological, epistemological and ethical arranging these with the research process. The model indicates that research is a crucial social operation owing to the interaction between researchers and the research subjects (Lor, 2012). A model's concepts are usually based on values, regulations, opinions, cultures, rules, principles and traditions that cannot be destroyed (De Gialdino, 2011).

1.5 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Research paradigms represent an important factor for the research, as these influences how researchers construct and interpret meanings of the reality and the strategy (Poni, 2014). Researchers use paradigms as practices and beliefs that control inquiry within disciplines (Bunnis & Kelly, 2010). Chalmers (1982) identifies the five components of a paradigm as follows:

- Explicit laws and theoretical assumptions;
- Ways to apply the fundamental laws to different contexts;
- instrumentation and instrumental techniques that implement the paradigm's laws in the real world;
- general metaphysical principles that guide work within the paradigm; and
- general methodological prescriptions to use in a paradigm.

1.5.1 Intellectual climate

1.5.1.1 Literature review

Relevant literature was reviewed from the paradigmatic perspectives presented below.

1.5.1.1.1 Humanistic paradigm

The humanistic paradigm claims that people can only be understood from the point of their own feelings and perceptions (Rogers, 1951). The said author further states that anxiety may arise from partial perceptions that individuals may have of feelings and ideas that are consistent with their distorted self-concepts. The humanistic paradigm brings a voice to the under-represented populations, interests, issues and concerns associated with globalisation (Lupton & Pirson, 2014).

Michael (2017) defines the humanistic paradigm as a combination of the following three ways of thinking:

- The humanistic paradigm involves human rather than divine matters;
- The humanistic paradigm encompasses why, and how to solve human problems; and
- The humanistic paradigm focusses on peoples' wellbeing and ways to improve this by engaging in their higher potential.

Coon and Mitterer (2007) perceive humanistic paradigm as considering needs that are central to human functioning, and include the following assumptions:

- The humanistic approach can explain both the worst and best of the human behaviours;

- It is necessary to provide a more realistic and balanced view of the human condition by recognising ongoing conflicts;
- It is necessary to operationalise and clarify important humanistic and existential concepts;
- It is imperative to reframe the crucial issues of existential, humanistic psychology in terms of the human struggle for survival, and fulfilment in a chaotic and difficult world; and
- It is necessary to bridge the gaps between existential, humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

1.5.1.1.2 Behavioural paradigm

The behavioural paradigm focuses on the role of mental images and other sensory modalities rather than on the thought alone (Hickes & Mirea, 2012). Within a behavioural paradigm, an individual's motivation is held to be a product of two sets of beliefs, namely outcome expectations and self-efficacy (Scott & Drydon, 1996). Hickes and Mirea (2012) opine that behavioural paradigm incorporates not only behavioural and thinking processes, but also emotional, developmental, social, environmental or even religious factors that perpetuate a presenting problem. The behavioural paradigm suggests that individual existence and reality are developed through a creation of personal beliefs that might contribute to enhance emotionally distressing responses (Waller, 2001). In this regard, an influential mutual relationship may arise between emotions and cognitive meaning (Mankiewics, 2013).

1.5.1.2 Empirical study

The empirical study f, following the positivist and post-positivist paradigmatic perspectives, as below.

1.5.1.2.1 *Positivist paradigm*

A focus on causality and law-like generalisations reduces phenomena for the easiest elements (Wahyuni, 2012). Positivists conclude that diverse researchers that observe the same factual obstacles will generate a similar result by carefully utilising statistical tests, and by using similar research processes to explore a large sample (Creswell, 2014). Accuracy can be attained only if the right methodology is utilised. Therefore, the positivist approach depends on the following belief: extrinsic and objective truth (i.e. facts and laws) exists: the aim of science is to prove extrinsic and objective facts. The accumulation of data gathered via scientific methods assists to reach the objective reality. It is hardly possible to grasp the holistic reality. Therefore, the whole should be in different pieces, and should be placed within the whole accordingly. Once the cause-effect association is attained, it can be generalised to the whole, and scientists can be objective about their research by using positivist scientific methodology (Teknin & Kotaman, 2013).

1.5.1.2.2 *Post-positivist paradigm*

The post-positivist paradigm employs generalisation but states that knowledge results from social conditioning (Wahyuni, 2012). Understanding social reality needs to be framed in a certain context of dynamic social structures or relevant law, which have developed observable phenomena within the social world (Wahyuni, 2012). The post-positivist paradigm allows for the use of contextual data and natural settings, and indicates solutions to important problems (Henderson, 2011). The post-positivist paradigm sees the universe as multiple, ambiguous and variable in its own realities, for example, “what might be true for a certain group might not be true for the other” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). The post-positivism paradigm dictates mythological pluralism (Wildemuth, 1993). In addition, even though much effort and time have been utilised on post-positivist research, the generalisability of results is questionable because the studies focus on conditional, situational, and cultural contexts. Therefore,

conclusions could be made more on temporary and conditional objects (Teknin & Kotaman, 2013).

1.5.2 Field of study

This study was conducted by a researcher in the field of human resource management. The discipline deals with the art of producing, sustaining and expanding adequate personnel to attain the goals and objectives of an organisation in an operative and ethical manner (Jain, 2014). Human resource management emphasises that employees must be of great significance or value, and must be sustained by an organisation (Al-Bahussin & Elgaraihy, 2013). Successful human resource management is important for an organisation's competitiveness (Delic & Smajlovic, 2014).

Human resource management represents one of the important processes in an organisation, bearing in mind that a company cannot exist without employees (Virág & Albu, 2014). Most researchers focus on human resource outcomes such as employee commitment, employee satisfaction, and employee retention owing to the changing business environment. Organisations consider human capital as valuable assets, which bring a competitive advantage because of their unique skills, knowledge and abilities (Ijuku, 2015).

1.5.3 Theoretical models

With reference to work ethics climate, this research applied the model that Victor and Cullen (1987) developed. The Organisational Commitment model, developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), and the Retention Factors model, developed by Dockel (2003), was also utilised in this research.

Work ethics climate is defined as employees' shared perceptions of appropriate workplace conduct (Mitonga-Monga, 2018). The work ethics climate directs the

behaviour and understanding of employees, allowing them to assess and diagnose situations (Dinc & Huric, 2017). Work ethics climate should form part of the organisational culture, and should be adopted by all employees (Cemberci et al., 2016). Martin and Cullen (2006) identify four types of workplace ethics, as presented below.

- Rules – the rules dimension is associated with the ethical criterion, which concerns the firm's accepted rules of conduct (Dinc & Huric, 2017). Mitonga-Monga (2018) states that the rules dimension is a transparent and fair workplace code of conduct.
- Caring – employees perceive that their organisation is based on the wellbeing of others (Mitonga-Monga, 2018). The caring climate type is the interest that employees have for each other's interest and wellbeing outside and within the organisation (Dinc & Huric, 2017).
- Instrumental – this climate involves the egoistic criterion, which is primarily based on maximising self-interest. Employees regard the instrumental dimension as a tool for ethical decision making within the workplace (Dinc & Huric, 2017).
- Independence – is defined as the freedom that employees have to achieve the organisation's tasks (Dinc & Huric, 2017; Mitonga-Monga, 2018).

Individuals believe that decisions are made that serve the organisation's interest. Huang et al. (2012) and Schwepker (2001) reveal that work ethics climate relates positively to work-related outcomes such as commitment and satisfaction. This implies that employees who recognise their working environment to have concrete policies, procedures and regulations, are likely to be satisfied personally, and satisfied with their organisation (Dinc & Huric, 2017).

Retention factors are important factors that enhance and inject organisational commitment and key personnel retention (Dockel, 2003). In addition, retention factors emphasise the exit or stay of individuals, and the decision to stay or leave, based on the perceived direction of an individual's preferences. Dockel (2003) identifies the following six key factors that should be considered to retain employees:

- Compensation – includes non-monetary and monetary rewards for work done for employers (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012);
- Job characteristics – refers to the extent to which specialised knowledge workers use their skill variety and job autonomy when they experience a challenging assignment;
- Training and development – refers to the advancement and opportunities offered by employers to employees and, which are recognised by employees as a sign of being valued by their employers (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012);
- Supervisor support – refers to the degree to which employees participate in decision making, reasonable work tasks, information sharing, availability of discretion independence, and enough workspace (Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016);
- Career opportunities – includes the external and internal career options that individual employees have (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012); and
- Work life balance is the ability of an employee to balance their social and work life. Previous studies showed that employees who were able to maintain their work life balance indicated significantly higher organisational commitment, and expressed significantly lower intention to leave (Dockel et al., 2006).

Multiple regression analysis indicates that training and development did not have any evident influence on retention (Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016). Halfer (2012) reports that implementing a certificate programme can increase knowledge and skills, acquisition of advanced leadership skills, graduate school, promotion, certifications, matriculation, and nursing retention.

Organisational commitment is regarded as an employee's connection with a certain organisation, and is linked to the agreement to maintain the involvement with such an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organisational commitment is a circumstance in which an individual employee relates to a certain organisation and its objectives, and is intent on continuing as an employee of that organisation (Faloye, 2014; Ihionkhan & Aigbomian, 2014; Miller, 2003). In their paper, Meyer and Allen (1991) presented a three-component model of organisational commitment: affective commitment, continuous commitment, and normative commitment. These three components are described below.

- Affective commitment – the desire to remain a role player within an organisation owing to work experiences that create feelings of comfort and personal competence (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007) explain that affective commitment arises from a sense of emotional attachment.
- Continuous commitment – is the need to remain with the organisation, and results from a recognition of costs associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Van Dyk (2011) further explains that employees remain with an organisation because they fear losing certain benefits that the organisation might offer.
- Normative commitment – occurs when individual employees feel obliged to remain in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

In the same vein, Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007) support the view that normative commitment occurs from a sense of obligation to remain. Such employees consider the benefits and rewards that they have received throughout their employment and feel that

they should be loyal to the organisation (Ferreira, 2012). Limor (2014) reports that employees' organisational commitment relates to job satisfaction and reduced turnover. Limor (2014) also found that emotional variables such as organisational commitment mediates voluntary turnover, and that job satisfaction indirectly affects the voluntary turnover intentions of employees. Alsaraireh et al. (2014) state that there is a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention of employees. This implies that employees who are highly committed and satisfied with the organisation remain committed (Alsaraireh et al., 2014).

1.5.5 Central hypothesis

This study aimed to demonstrate the following:

- A relationship exists between work ethics climate and retention factors;
- Moreover, a relationship exists between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment; and
- In addition, this hypothesis further speculated that work ethics climate moderates the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment

1.6 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

1.6.1 Methodological dimension

This dimension deals with how the researcher goes about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known (Bansal et al., 2011). Research methodologies can be classified in terms of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research (Creswell, 2014). This study presents a literature review on work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment, as well as quantitative research in the empirical study.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design allows the researcher to plan and implement the study so that it achieves the intended goal/s (Burns & Grove, 2001). Bhattachrjee (2012) defines research design as a comprehensive plan to collect data for an empirical study. In the same vein, Saunders et al. (2019) state that the research design is a general plan that the researcher implements to answer the research questions.

The researcher used a quantitative research design in this study to investigate the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and nurses' organisational commitment in a South African hospital. According to Polit and Hungler (2013), quantitative research designs are usually highly structured and include tight controls to prevent contaminating influences. The design of the research is discussed by firstly explaining the research types, followed by a discussion of reliability and validity.

1.7.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is particularly important in understanding or understanding a problem when one is unsure of the exact nature of a problem (Saunders et al., 2019). According to Bhattachrjee (2012), exploratory research looks for explanations of observed phenomena, behaviours, or problems. Exploratory research is adaptable and flexible (Saunders et al., 2019). Exploratory research is used to handle preliminary inspections concerning most foreign topics (Shields & Rangarjain, 2013).

1.7.2 Research variables and measuring scales

The research variables of this study include the work ethics climate, which plays the role of the independent/moderating variable, retention factors as an independent variable, and organisational commitment as a dependent variable. The research sought to determine if there is a relationship between these variables, and aimed to address whether work ethics climate influences the relationship between retention factors and

organisational commitment. In an effort to determine the relationship between the independent/moderator variable (work ethics climate and independent variable) (retention factors) and the dependent variables (organisational commitment), data was gathered, using existing questionnaires.

1.7.3 Validity

Validity concerns the degree that a measure can adequately represent an underlying construct, which it should measure (Bhattachrjee, 2012). In this research study validity was determined by using relevant literature for the research study, together with the aims, models, problem-statement and theories, and by choosing measuring equipment that is validated and applicable to the theories and models on which the study is based, ensuring that they are discussed in an accepted manner. Current literature was used from experimental sources to ensure that the literature was valid.

In conducting empirical research, validity was ensured through the use of correct and normal measuring apparatus. These pieces of measuring apparatus measured what they were expected to measure, namely: criterion-related validity (determines if a measure behaves the way it should in terms of the construct theory); and content validity and construct validity (assessing how well a set of scale items matches the relevant content domain of the construct that it measures) (Bhattachrjee, 2012).

1.7.4 Reliability

Bhattachrjee (2012) refers to reliability as the depth to which the measure of a construct is dependable. Two important aspects that relate to reliability are repeatability and internal consistency. Reliability in the literature was addressed by using available literature theories, models and sources available to the researchers (Drost, 2011). To determine the reliability of the empirical study, Cronbach's alpha with p -value of .05 was calculated (Sohn et al., 2012), using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences for Windows, Version 24. According to Salkind (2017), the calculated Cronbach's alpha

values can be interpreted as follows: (1) reliability is good for a value higher than .90; (2) reliability is considered to be acceptable for a value between .6 and .8; and (3) reliability is believed to be unacceptable where a value is lower than .6.

1.7.5 Unit of analysis

There are four main groups of units of analysis: social artefacts; individuals; organisations; and groups (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Toshkov, 2012). The employee (nurse) is the unit of analysis in this study. As previously stated, the major aim of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between work ethics climate, retention factors and the organisational commitment amongst individual nurses in a South African public hospital. Since the employee (nurse) was the unit of analysis, the focus comprised perceptions, orientations, characteristics, and beliefs of the individual.

1.7.6 Delimitations

The study was restricted to researching the relationship between the three core constructs, namely work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

The research approach that was selected was not expected to establish the cause and effect of the relationship, but was merely an endeavour to investigate whether such a relationship does in fact exist between these three constructs. If so, it would be important for other academics and researchers to address important issues relevant to the three constructs: work ethics climate; retention factors; and organisational commitments. The study focused on nurses in a South African public hospital and, therefore, cannot be generalised to nurses in private hospitals. The purpose of this study was not to generalise about the entire population, but rather to validate the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment among nurses in a public hospital in South Africa.

1.7.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations imply that research procedures must adhere to social, legal and professional obligations in respect of respondents (Polit & Hungler, 2013). Above all, the respondents (who used to be referred to as subjects) must be given the assurance that they will not be exposed to any physical or psychological harm (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). If any significant risk is suspected, then the experiment should not be approved (Salkind, 2017). Many educational institutions require students to first obtain informed consent even when involved in simple classroom environments (Salkind, 2017). In this study the respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form to enable the researcher to use the information for research purposes, and this study was voluntary. Another ethical consideration regarding privacy is that individuals' privacy is not disregarded by the researcher when observing behaviour and collecting data (Salkind, 2017). Researchers should protect their research participants, engage their trust, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their institutions poorly, and promote the integrity of the research (Israel & Hay, 2006). The researcher followed certain procedures to adhere to ethical research standards:

- Research was conducted within recognised parameters;
- Participants were informed about the results of the research;
- Feedback and information obtained from participants was treated confidentially;
- All participants remained anonymous;
- The research process and findings were documented in the form of a thesis;
- All sources were quoted and explicitly referenced;
- Informed consent of the participants was obtained;

- Experts in the field of research were consulted in order to ensure a scientific research process;
- Both classical and recent sources were utilised when analysing and describing concepts; and
- Approval of ethics was obtained from the University of South Africa.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in three phases: the literature review, an empirical study, and integration of the two. Each phase consisted of different steps, which are outlined below.

Phase 1: Literature review

Step 1: Work ethics climate and retention factors

The work ethics climate and retention factors were conceptualised from a theoretical perspective. Detailed conceptual models were provided to illustrate the varying principles and concepts, which relate to work ethics and retention factors. Finally, the implications for human resource management, and specifically the retention of nurses in public hospitals, were discussed.

Step 2: Organisational commitment

A critical discussion was conducted of the various organisational commitment theories in the literature. Based on the conceptualisation of the construct, a conceptual model was provided to illustrate the various principles and concepts discussed in the literature. Finally, the implications for human resource management and, specifically, nurses' retention in public hospitals, were discussed.

Step 3: Theoretical integration on the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment

Theoretical integration of the construct work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment were discussed in order to conceptualise a theoretical relationship among these variables. Implications of the relationship between these three constructs were then considered.

Phase 2: Empirical study

The research was a quantitative survey design comprising the following six steps.

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample

The empirical study was conducted among nurses in a South African hospital. The population of the study consisted of 703 nurses at the hospital. Probability stratified sampling was used to select nurses of different ages, genders, job level, and race groups from the South African public hospital to participate in this study. Stratified sampling is one in which each person or other sampling unit in the population has the same known probability of being selected (Sanders, 2015). Salkind (2017) postulates that the selection of participants from the population is based on some form of random procedures such as simple random, systematic sampling, stratified, cluster, and panel sampling. The stratified sampling technique was considered to be the most appropriate technique for this study, considering the time, resources and its effectiveness. The targeted population total was 500. With a total population of 500, using Rao software at the margin error of 5% and confidential level of 95%, the recommended sample size was 218. The respondents were chosen purely according to their departments (Creswell, 2014).

Step 2: Choosing and motivating the psychometric battery

Questionnaires were distributed, comprising four sections, namely: biographical section; ethical climate; retention factors; and organisational commitment.

The following instruments were used:

- The Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ), developed by Victor and Cullen (1987);
- The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS), developed by Dockett (2003); and
- Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Meyer and Allen (1997).

Following the covering letter, a demographic questionnaire was included, which contained questions pertaining to the individual respondent's cultural group, gender, age, as well as job level. The psychometric battery subsequently followed the demographic questionnaire. The hospital's management granted permission to conduct the survey.

Step 3: Scoring of the psychometric battery

The participants' responses were captured, using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format. All the data was analysed by means of statistical analysis, utilising the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for Windows.

Step 4: Statistical processing of the data

According to Polit and Hungler (2013), quantitative research emphasises deductive reasoning, rules of logic, and the measurable attributes of the human experience. Quantitative research designs are usually structured and include controls that prevent contaminating influences (Polit & Hungler, 2013). Quantitative data collection comprises data collection techniques (such as a questionnaire) or data analysis procedures (such as graphs or statistics), which lead to numerical data (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The main

objectives and goals of quantitative research are to validate, confirm, and develop relationships from sample data, and generalise these to a broader population (Creswell, 2014).

Hence, statistical techniques should be established to regulate the certainty of such inferences. Two methods of statistical inferences are used frequently, namely estimation, using confidence intervals, and null hypothesis testing. The current study used the null hypothesis testing to justify its hypotheses. The study used the statistical programme SPSS to analyse its data. The statistical procedures were carried out in four stages, as outlined below.

Stage 1: Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), relating to the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) (Victor & Cullen, 1987); the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) (Dockel, 2003); and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Meyer & Allen, 1997) were determined for the total sample to apply the relevant statistical procedures. The study used descriptive statistics to determine the mean, standard deviations, and Cronbach alpha coefficients of the instruments: ECQ, OCQ and RFMS.

Stage 2: Correlations: Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to find the direction and strength of the relationship between ECQ, OCQ and RFMS.

Stage 3: Inferential statistics: Moderation regression was computed to determine the influence of work ethics climate on the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.

Stage 4: Reporting and interpreting results: The study presented its results in the form of tables and figures, and discussion of the findings in a systematic framework, ensuring that interpretation was conveyed clearly and articulately.

Phase 3: Integration and conclusion

Step 1: Integration of the research findings

The findings in the literature review were integrated with the findings of the empirical study to provide the overall findings of the research.

Step 2: Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The final step relates to the conclusion based on integration of the results with the theory. The limitations of the research were discussed, and recommendations for future research were made in terms of work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment regarding the modern world of work with a focus on talent retention.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research

Chapter 2: Work ethics climate and retention factors

Chapter 3: Organisational commitment

Chapter 4: Theoretical integration on the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

Chapter 6: Results

Chapter 7: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 SUMMARY

The background of and motivation for the research study, problem statement, aim of the study, and the research design and research methodology were discussed in this chapter. The study is crucial because government hospitals are losing nurses to private hospitals, while some are migrating to developed countries. The findings may enhance retention strategies for nursing staff at government hospitals.

CHAPTER 2: WORK ETHICS CLIMATE AND RETENTION FACTORS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the first aim of the literature review, namely to conceptualise work ethics climate and retention factors. The chapter begins by examining definitions of work ethics climate and retention factors before discussing the models of work ethics climate and retention factors. This chapter ends with a summary.

2.1.1 DEFINING WORK ETHICS CLIMATE

The concept of work ethics climate has evolved over the past two decades, with various researchers defining the term (Benjamin, 2012). The literature reveals several unresolved issues on the topic. A few of these originate from the conceptual stage of work ethics climate research such as confusion about the definition, lack of interrogation of the difference between molar and focused perspectives, as well as the lack of resolution of the study of work ethics climate (Bezuidenhout, 2014). Unethical behaviours have increased in the medical industry (McAndrew et al., 2019). It is important to create an awareness of an ethical work climate to enable nurses to engage in caring and helpful behaviour towards their patients (Zhang et al., 2019; Zolkefli, 2019).

The concept of ethics originated from the word “ethos”, which means character in Greek (Mumcu & Doven, 2016). Work ethics climate is a predominant perception of common organisational procedures and practices, with a high ethical content that complements an organisation’s working relationship (Victor and Cullen, 1988; Hung et al., 2015). Mulki and Lassk (2019) describe work ethics climate as an organisation’s ethics that it practices, and its moral atmosphere. Kuenzi et al. (2020) state that work ethics climate assists employees to make sense of their work environment. An organisation’s work ethics climate is a set of a measurable properties of the work environment, as perceived

by employees, both indirectly or directly, to influence their behaviour and motivation (Addai et al., 2019).

Work ethics climate is the summary of all employees' perceptions of a particular organisation (Choe et al., 2017). Mobarakeh and Ghorbani (2015) see work ethics climate as a representation of an employee's understanding of their own organisation, and the effects on their behaviour and attitudes.

Ethical climate is a shared opinion of behaviour that is ethically fair, and how an organisation addresses ethical issues (Numminen et al., 2015). In the same vein, Shafer (2015) and Hansen et al. (2016) support the view that top management will influence employee perceptions of work ethics climate in their organisational sub-unit or organisation. How employees perceive their organisation's ethical climate affects their trust in the organisation's management (Gamgai & Agrawal, 2015). Ethical climates reduce turnover when individuals have a high level of support from their organisation's managers (Rubel et al., 2017). Furthermore, Gorsira et al. (2018) argue that organisations should deploy measures that encourage ethical decision-making, whilst strengthening an organisation's ethical climate.

The ethical climate of an organisation, therefore, reflects the shared opinions that employees hold regarding its procedures, practices and policies (Guerci et al., 2015). Organisations' work ethics climate may affect how rules are applied, and an individual organisation's norm for ethical decision-making may call for changes in rule behaviour (Borry, 2017). An organisation's work ethics climate is considered to provide important advice for employees' behaviour by reflecting institutionalised values and norms, as well as examples for appropriate conduct (Arnaud & Schminke, 2012). Employees should be made aware of ethical issues to ensure enhanced levels of ethical behaviour in organisations (Goebel & Weibenberger, 2017). Borry (2017) asserts that employees' ethics can be influenced by the organisational environment.

Ethical culture, when combined with the concepts of organisational culture, can be conceptualised as the ethical dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour (Mumcu & Doven, 2016). Previous studies indicate that the way in which employees view the ethical climate of their organisation leads to higher organisational citizenship behaviour. Newman, Round, Bhattacharya and Roy (2017) argue that when an organisation's ethical climate strength is high, it strengthens employees' organisational citizenship behaviour. A common belief is that ethics in organisations is deteriorating owing to employees believing that their interests are secondary to that of the organisation, or even non-existent (Simha & Stachowics-Stanusch, 2015). To maximise employee performance in organisations, employees should perceive the organisation's ethical climate as being powerful (Kaya & Baskaya, 2016).

Work ethics climate expresses how the business should be conducted. If it does not meet employee self-concepts and values, it might lead to many psychological outcomes (Tuna & Yesiltas, 2014). An employee who faces an ethical problem will make his or her decision based on the organisation's ethical climate (Manroop et al., 2014). Ethical climates relate to decision-making and behaviours in response to ethical problems (Huang et al., 2012). In addition, work ethics climate serves as a perceptual lens through which workers diagnose and assess situations (Cullen et al., 2003). An organisation's work ethics climate exerts a powerful and pervasive influence on the employees' ethical behaviour (Humphries & Woods, 2016).

Employees' work ethics may be regarded as the overall framework from which work values originate, which, in turn, influence individuals' behaviour at work (Van der Walt et al., 2016). Organisations can enhance overall job satisfaction and organisational commitment by enhancing the organisation's ethics (Dinc & Huric, 2017). Perceptions of ethical work climate will affect individuals' stated intentions to engage in ethically questionable behaviour (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000). Moreover, employees perform their work activities based on a work ethics climate that reflects organisational values and standards (Toleikiene et al., 2014). Barnett and Schubert (2002) argue that an

employee's perception of the work ethics climate is likely to influence his or her perception of whether a binding, long-term relationship exists within the organisation. The authors further suggest that agreement relationships will be less likely in a climate that promotes self-interest.

The work ethics climate is regarded as the organisational business climate (Bekir, 2017). In addition, the work ethics concept has been affected by political, economic and managerial developments that led to social change and transformation (Tarima et al., 2014). The work ethic construct was developed to speed up progress amongst the South African population and its workplaces, which means that great attention should be given to work ethics (Van der Walt et al., 2016). Employees in a positive work ethics climate setting are free to express themselves about issues, and are free to disagree with one another in order to increase their understanding of issues (Olson, 1998). The next section summarily explores various models of the work ethics climate.

2.1.2 MODELS OF WORK ETHICS CLIMATE

The ethical climate model was first introduced by Victor and Cullen (1988). Ethical climate is part of ethical decision criteria, with the locus of analysis used by the organisation's employees (Mitonga-Monga, 2015). The focus of ethical climate theory is a typology based on ethical philosophy, as well as the sociology theory of the reference group (Victor & Cullen, 1988). The ethical climate theory helped to inspire and shape outstanding streams of research in business ethics, while it was one of the highly influential conceptual foundations in the business ethics domain (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Weber (1990) argues that Victor and Cullen's (1988) ethical climate theory did not contain a universal dimension and, therefore, offered limited value from a normative perspective. As mentioned previously, the models discussed in this chapter include the theoretical ethical climate model and the empirical ethical climate model.

2.1.2.1 Theoretical ethical climate model

Figure 2.1 below reveals the nine theoretical ethical climate types, according to a two-dimensions typology (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Victor and Cullen's (1988) theoretical ethical climate model comprises of two dimensions; the first dimension is the ethical criterion, characterised by three constructs: egoism, benevolence (utilitarianism) and principle (deontology). These dimensions are the inherent guidelines by which ethical decisions are framed (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Putranta & Kingshott, 2011). The second dimension, locus of analysis, comprises of individual, local and cosmopolitan constructs. This dimension taps the basis upon which an employee's ethical decisions are based (Putranta & Kingshott, 2011).

The first dimension of ethical theory serves as the ethical criteria used for decision-making within an organisation (Gamgai & Agrawal, 2015). Organisational members can decide whether it is ethical to accept or pay bribes, considering the different ethical criteria (Gorsira et al., 2018). The ethical criteria are developed from moral philosophy theories (Shafer, 2015), and have three levels: egoism, benevolence and principle (Ghosh, 2015).

The first construct of the ethical criterion dimension, egoism, covers behaviour focus with self-interest and self-interest enhancing behaviour (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Kim & Miller, 2008; Toleikiene et al., 2014; Mumcu & Doven, 2016). Egoism suggests that individuals should make decisions based on what is best for themselves, without considering what is best for others (Barnett & Schubert, 2002). Egoistic climates are described by the interest of employees in themselves in order to gain reward, and to avoid punishment (Coldwell et al., 2008). Furthermore, Cullen et al. (2003) identify that in an egoistic climate, many employees may perceive that the organisation operates outside morally acceptable ethical limits, and not in line with ethical societal expectations. They further mentioned that many employees feel less attached to an organisation that does not

consider the needs of all their stakeholders. Egoistic climates tend to allow self-interest behaviours such as stealing and lying. These behaviours minimise employees' commitment to their organisations (Cullen et al., 2003).

The second construct, benevolence, refers to behaviour concerned with the well-being of others (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Benevolence is characterised by decisions that want to maximise joint interest (Kim & Miller, 2008; Toleikiene et al., 2014). A climate that emphasises benevolence requires individuals to consider the effect of their actions on others when making decisions (Barnett & Schubert, 2002). An individual perceives that a benevolent climate is more likely to make decisions that provide the greatest number involved in the decision (Cullen et al., 2003). Often associated with concern and caring for other employees, there is a positive correlation between benevolent climates and employee commitment (Elci & Alpan, 2009).

The third construct, namely principle, also refers to behaviour concerned with the well-being of others (Martin & Cullen, 2006). The benevolent achieve this by actions that arrive at the greatest good outcome for a high number of people (Martin & Cullen, 2006). A principle is characterised by decisions about which rules, standards and laws are the normative expectations of a social unit (Kim & Miller, 2008). Climates that emphasise clear principles of behaviour such as company rules or professional codes, are more likely to develop mutual commitment and shared values (Barnett & Schubert, 2002). As moral advancement emerges, it progresses from the interests of an individual to the interests of others, and to the interests of humanity, in general, leading to enhanced ethical behaviours such as whistleblowing (Kohlberg, 1984).

The second dimension, namely locus of analysis, is used as a reference point to take ethical decisions (Kim & Miller, 2008). The locus of analysis completes coordination of the ethical climate types (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Locus of analysis taps the grounds upon which an employee's ethical decisions are based (Putranta & Kingshott, 2011).

There are three levels or types of constructs: the individual, the local and the cosmopolitan.

The individual level construct refers to the use of the self as reference for moral reasoning (Kim & Miller, 2008). Organisational ethical climates are backed by morals, which favour employees (Davies, 2015). An individual employee's moral reasoning emerges from the individual themselves.

The local level construct is the most common reference group, and refers to the organisation (Kim & Miller, 2008; Martin & Cullen, 2006). Organisational ethical climates are backed by norms, which support reference groups within the organisation (Davies, 2015), while moral reasoning evolves from the employee's social system.

The last level is the cosmopolitan construct, which refers to the source of professional association (Kim & Miller, 2008). This is the level where decision-making is determined, and behaviour is practical (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Organisational ethical climates are backed up by norms that favour the external origins of ethical reasoning (Davies, 2015).

Previous research identified nine perceived theoretical and ethical climate types in an organisation (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Davies (2015) asserts that, in research, there is a shortfall consensus in the number of ethical climates, which organisations can acquire. Figure 2.1 presents the theoretical ethical climate types.

		Locus of analysis		
		Individual	Local	Cosmopolitan
Ethical Criterion	Egoism	Self-interest	Company Profit	Efficiency
	Benevolence	Friendship	Team Interest	Social Responsibility
	Principle	Personal Morality	Company Rules and Procedures	Laws and Professional Codes

Figure 2.1: Theoretical ethical climate types (Victor & Cullen, 1988)

- Self-interest (egoistic moral judgement and individual locus of analysis): At this level egoism emphasises consideration of the preferences and need of one’s interest (e.g. personal gain, self-confidence) (Mitonga-Monga, 2015). Self-interest is defined according to physical pleasure, well-being, happiness, power, or other dimensions that promote the individual employee’s concerns (Elci & Alpkhan, 2009).
- Company profit (egoistic moral judgement and local locus of analysis): At the local locus of analysis ethical decisions are motivated by the work group’s beliefs and perceptions, while an organisation’s profit-type ethical climate refers to the setting, whereby employees' decisions reflect the company’s best interests (corporate profit, strategic advantage) (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Efficiency (egoistic moral judgement and cosmopolitan locus of analysis): In this type of ethical climate, ethical decisions are persuaded by economic interest or general social (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).

- Friendship (benevolent moral judgement and individual locus of analysis): This type depends on the criterion of consideration of other employees, which considers the interests of one's friends instead of the organisation's membership of the organisation (e.g., friendship, reciprocity) (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Team interest (benevolent moral judgement and cosmopolitan locus of analysis): This emphasises attention on the organisation as a whole (e.g., esprit de corps, team play) (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Social responsibility (benevolent moral judgement and cosmopolitan locus of analysis): In this type of climate ethical decisions are motivated by external forces that guide socially responsible behaviour (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Social responsibility (benevolent moral judgement and cosmopolitan locus of analysis): In this type of climate ethical decisions are made owing to external forces that guide socially responsible behaviour (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Company rules and procedure (principled moral judgement and local locus of analysis): This climate type is the basis of ethical principles, and originates from the organisation's procedures and rules (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).
- Laws and professional codes (principled moral judgement and cosmopolitan locus of analysis): In this climate the base of principles transcends the organisation. This foundation is planted in professional organisations, and in the legal system (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).

2.1.2.2 Empirical ethical climate model

Based on the theoretical framework, the ethical climate questionnaire (ECQ) was established to measure different perceptions of ethical climate, based on the theoretical

bases of egoistic, benevolent and principle reasoning (Martin & Cullen, 2006). The five climate types, which Martin and Cullen (2006) defined in their research are encountered more frequently and, consequently, provide the majority of data available for meta-analysis (Huang et al., 2012). The five ethical climate types: instrumental, care, independence, rules, laws and codes are the most dominant in organisations (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Figure 2.2 below indicates the five common empirical derivatives of ethical climate.

		Locus of analysis			
		Individual	Local	Cosmopolitan	
Ethical Theory	Egoism	Instrumental			
	Benevolence	Caring			
	Principle	Independence	Rules	Law and code	

Figure 2.2: Five common empirical derivatives of ethical climate (Martin & Cullen, 2006)

The nature of each of the common empirical derivatives of ethical climate is discussed below.

- Instrumental

The instrumental climate includes the egoistic criterion and is sourced on the maximisation of self-interest (Huang et al., 2012). Employees that see an instrumental ethical climate perceive their organisational unit as having expectations and norms that strengthen ethical decision-making from an egoistic perspective (Martin & Cullen, 2006). In an instrumental climate employees solve ethical issues according to self-interest, potentially to the harm of other employees (Huang et al., 2012). Mutebai et al. (2012)

postulate that when instrumental climate is dominant, employees develop an attitude for organisational benefits in respect of being treated fairly. Employees maintain collective relations, which encourage taking more responsibility within, and confidence in the organisation (Mutebai et al., 2012). Hence, employees maintain communal relationships that promote greater affective commitment and trust towards the organisation (Mutebai et al., 2012).

- Caring

The caring climate emphasises the ethical criterion, benevolence (Huang et al., 2012). In this atmosphere employees see that decisions should be and are sourced from an underlying concern for the well-being of other employees (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Huang et al., 2012). In such an environment employees mainly consider the well-being of others when dealing with ethical problems (Huang et al., 2012). In a caring climate employees usually have a real and sincere attitude towards others' welfare, which can influence their ethical decisions within the organisation, as well as outside of it (Mutebai et al., 2012). In this climate employees believe that the organisation's ethical policies and practices include concern for organisational members, as well as for society, in general (Mutebai et al., 2012).

- Independence

This characterises an atmosphere in which the de-ontological perspective is applied at an individual level (Atabay et al., 2015). It also indicates that employees believe that they should act with deeply-held, independent personal moral convictions to make ethical decisions (Martin & Cullen, 2006). The independence dimension encompasses the principle of the ethical criterion, and according to this dimension, individuals act according to their own personal moral beliefs (Huang et al., 2012). This allows employees to make their own choices in relation to ethical issues without employers forcing them to follow a certain course of action (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009).

- Rules

The distinct construct defined as company procedures and rules emerges empirically in the rules climate (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Huang et al., 2012). The multifaceted codes of conduct rules, progressively actioned by employers in the contemporary corporate landscape, appeal mainly to this ethical climate (Mitonga-Monga, 2015). Based on this climate, it is imperative to follow the organisation's rules and procedures strictly, and all employees are expected to do the same (Borhani et al., 2014). In this ethical typology, employees solve their ethical issues by abiding by organisational procedures and rules (Huang et al., 2012). In other words, employees match their words with actions (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009).

- Law and code

The law and code dimension is based on the idea that the organisation supports principled decision-making based on external factors such as the bible, the law or professional codes of conduct (Martin & Cullen, 2006). The law and code dimension is combined with the principle of the ethical criterion, based on the perception dimension and depends on employees adhering to the regulations and codes of their profession, or another authority (Huang et al., 2012). The major consideration for individual employees is that they are expected to obey professional standards or legal and the ethical codes of the profession or the law (Borhani et al., 2014). Decisions that people make should adhere to the mandates of such external systems to resolve ethical problems (Huang et al., 2012) A principled leader who has high moral standards and ethics applies the law whenever making a decision, and hence becomes a role model who is trusted and respected by his/her subordinates (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009).

2.2 RETENTION FACTORS

The following section defines retention factors and discusses retention factor models.

2.2.1 DEFINING RETENTION FACTORS

There is no exact definition of retention, since organisations' views on employee retention differ (Mohlala et al. 2012). Idris (2014) defines retention as a long-term strategy that organisations employ to ensure that competent employees choose to join their organisations and remain committed to them. Employee retention is a process of ensuring that employees remain within the organisation (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). Michael et al., (2016) define retention as an organisation's ability to hold onto employees that they want for longer than their competitors. Retention entails implementing strategies to enhance workplace productivity by implementing enhanced processes to develop, attract, retain and utilise individuals with the required skills and knowledge to meet organisational objectives (Lockwood, 2006). It is a highly challenging task for human resource practitioners to retain competent employees (Rahman et al., 2017).

Employee retention includes taking measures to encourage employees to remain at the organisation for an extended time, which will benefit the organisation, as well as the individual employees (Singh & Prakash, 2013). These measures will probably differ from organisation to organisation, and will be influenced by organisational culture, individual and group characteristics, and the nature of the organisation's core business. It is important for organisations to establish good retention strategies specifically in respect of dynamic employee rewards, and strong employee recognition in order to retain and attract highly competent and talented employees in a competitive business environment (Mohammed, 2015). Therefore, it is the employer's task to retain talented and valuable employees to minimise its turnover of competent employees (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2015).

Retention of employees is a voluntary process by an organisation to avail an environment, which emphasises and encourages individuals to stay with the organisations for the maximum period (James & Mathew, 2012). Singh and Prakash (2013) underscore that employee retention requires a lot of energy, effort and resources, but the outcomes are worth it. Rekha and Reddy (2014) explain that it is management

and the line managers' responsibility to ensure that the employees are happy with their responsibilities and roles, and that the job provides them with new challenges and learning every day. Employee retention depends on having the right organisational culture, and an understanding of what motivates staff (Abdel-Monem, 2012). An organisation that knows and understands what motivates its employees, is most likely to achieve greater business results, and attain high performance levels (Swapna & Raja, 2016).

The most important assets in an organisation are individual employees: these drives employers to not neglect the issue of employee retention within their organisation (Idris, 2014). Employee retention is imperative because the organisation experiences a significant loss when employees exit their job after they have been trained (Sarmad et al., 2016). Similarly, Iqbal and Hashmi (2015) support this view, stating that when employees feel dissatisfied, they will switch to a better opportunity. Mujajati (2016) states that these competent employees lead the organisation to be profitable, effective, competitive, and sustainable, and will ensure survival in the challenging and volatile world of work. Therefore, employers need to keep their competent employees who have skills and knowledge that are crucial for the organisation to sustain a competitive advantage (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

Previous research emphasises that an organisation's success is decided by the retention of exceptionally competent and dedicated individuals (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2015; Zhang et al., 2019). Highly talented, educated, and professional employees are the most important and innovative resources that deliver great products and services, making organisations effective, and increasing product sales, giving colleagues and customers immense satisfaction (Graen & Grace, 2015). Organisations need to retain their competent employees who have skills and knowledge that are vital for the organisation to sustain a competitive advantage (Van Dyk, 2011).

Retaining the talented and competent employees would also enhance investors' confidence because they have an interest in the organisation's capacity to excel in such a way that would positively enhance the rate of their investment in the organisation (Mandhanya, 2015). In an environment where everything is in the open, employees attain a sense of belonging and achievement from a positive work environment, while the company benefits from a reliable and stronger workforce, with innovative ideas for its growth and profits (Laddha et al., 2012).

The best strategy for organisations to minimise employee poaching is to ensure that they have the most effective retention strategy in place to be able to deploy, retain and attract highly competent employees who are required to exceed and meet the strategic objectives (Kheswa, 2015). Organisations should facilitate measures that maintain valuable employees, and hence increase their employee retention. Further, they should understand and implement organisational aspects that increase employees' commitment, especially considering the high costs associated with employees exiting organisations (Mandhanya, 2015). It is also equally important for organisations to secure the loyalty and trust of their employees so that they will have less of a desire to quit the organisation in future (Kempegowda & Purushotham, 2016).

Mujajati (2016) suggests that for organisations to continue to retain competent employees who are adaptive, resilient, versatile, innovative, intellectual and agile, it is imperative that organisations maintain healthy working environments, and have work life policies that will retain and attract productive and bright individuals. Employee retention is a long-term initiative by employers to ensure that the best individuals continue to remain with their organisations (Idris, 2014). Retention factors emphasise the departure or retention of employees and the decision to remain or leave, based on the perceived direction of the employee's priorities (Netswera et al., 2005). Employees will only remain with their employer when they perceive that their needs are met.

It is essential for employers to know and understand what influences their employees to leave or stay with the organisation as means to effectively retain competent and knowledgeable employees who will ensure a competitive advantage for the organisation (Bhattachrjee, 2012). Organisations cannot bear the costs associated with the loss of employees (Al Badawy et al., 2017).

Employers must relate the effectiveness of retention factors to employees' views, as they will indicate the retention factors that will impact whether they leave or stay (Van Dyk, 2011). Employees want a working environment where they can satisfy their basic needs and utilise their abilities (Mandhanya, 2015). Ou et al. (2017) point out that for employers to understand the effectiveness of retention factors, it is imperative to connect them to employees' ideas on their importance, since such views may provide direction regarding, which retention factors determine their intention to leave or stay.

2.2.2 MODELS OF RETENTION FACTORS

Dockel (2003) mentions six factors that could be used to retain competent, knowledgeable employees in the South African organisational context, as summarised in Table 1 below. These factors (Table 3.1) are, therefore, applicable to this study, and include compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, and work life balance.

Table 2.1: Top retention factors identified by Dockel (2003)

Retention factors	Frequency of factors in high-technology literature	Rank order of frequency
Training and development opportunities	32	1
Supervisor support (behaviour/support or feedback)	25	2
Career opportunities (internal to the organisation)	23	3
Job characteristics (skills variety, autonomy, challenge)	52	4
Work-life balance	19	5
Compensation (base salary)	14	6

- **Training and development opportunities**

Presbitero et al. (2016) define training and development opportunities as the upgrading of employees' skills by continuously focusing on diffusion, creation, and the use of knowledge and information. Training and development are the best strategies to use to retain and attract competent employees (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2015). Therefore, training is important to retain human resources, and it is the only option for them to stay employable over the span of their careers (Dockel et al., 2006). Training and development should be an ongoing programme that will continuously enhance employee knowledge and skills (Aruna & Anitha, 2015), leading to the belief by employees that their organisations value them (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Employee training contributes significantly to human growth and development (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2015). In the same vein, Kraimer et al. (2011)

arrived at a similar conclusion, noting that training and development opportunities are the pillar of employee development opportunities for growth, which enhance employees' sense of self-worth. When employees perceive that their employers provide them with adequate training, their experience is that the organisation really wants to improve their skills and ability, making them feel connected to their organisations (Dockel et al., 2006).

- **Supervisor support (behaviour/support or feedback)**

Bibi et al. (2018) point out that the supervisor-employee relationship is a major concern in the workplace. Supervisors will respond to employees' needs, especially their work life balance needs and their career if they know and understand their employees, treat them equally, are easily accessible, and can be trusted (Bibi et al., 2018). An example of this would be when supervisory support sustains highly technological innovation for employees through recognition and rewards (Dockel et al., 2006). Providing acceptable performance feedback to employees enhances positive attitudes towards the organisation and helps to prevent early intentions to leave the organisation (Dockel et al., 2006).

Kang and Kang (2016) postulate that perceived supervisor support significantly reduces job stress and reinforces the effect of highly committed employees. Similarly, Tucker et al. (2018) support this phenomenon by arguing that when supervisors do not support employees, regardless of the level of role overload that employees encounter, employees become distressed. Morrow (2011) reports that perceived supervisor support and organisational support increase employee organisational commitment in the long-term. In an environment that is transparent, and where employees receive supervisor support and a sense of achievement from a positive work environment, organisations benefit from a stronger and innovative workforce that harbours new ideas for its progress (Laddha et al., 2012). In an environment where employees perceive that their supervisors support them, they are likely to exert more of an effort, since their hard work will be recognised and rewarded (Iqbal & Hashmi, 2015). A culture of supervisor support

can be implemented by facilitation through good communication and encouraging inclusionary, and not exclusionary policies (Laddha et al., 2012).

- **Career opportunities (internal to the organisation)**

Career opportunities are processes of development, provided by an organisation to enhance their individual employees opportunities to acquire new knowledge, growth and skills in their career path (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). Employees who believe that they are not commodities that can be bought and sold, but who perceive that they are treated as resources to be developed, are highly committed (Dockel et al., 2006). Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) mention that when employees realise that their organisation holds many career opportunities, it could lead to better employee job performance and increased retention of employees. Buhera (2016) argues that career development is an advancing process, whereby an employee progresses through a series of stages, characterised by themes and sets of issues or tasks.

- **Job characteristics (skills variety, autonomy, challenge)**

Job characteristics refer to the features of a job, which include different work, working with talented people, and opportunities to settle complex issues, flexibility, freedom and the ability to engage with challenging tasks (Idris, 2014). Employees do not want to do repetitive and unchallenging jobs that do not allow them to use their talents and skills (Dockel et al., 2006). Organisations that offer a variety of work options are said to have an advantage because their labour pool will grow, while they can successfully attract qualified competent employees who are innovative and do not want to repeat outdated routines (Idris, 2014).

According to Jepngetich and Njue (2013), competent employees are inspired and excited to engage in challenging work that matches their skills and abilities. Characteristics increase employee retention by encouraging feelings of meaningfulness of work and

increased competence, which may result in high levels of organisational commitment (Dockel, 2003). In an organisation where individual employees perceive that they are obsolete, and their input is not taken into consideration, they are likely to resign owing to frustrations and stresses (Laddha et al., 2012).

- **Work-life balance**

Work-life balance refers to an employee's ability to meet their family and work commitments, together with other responsibilities (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Having flexible working conditions has become increasingly important to dual income families (Van Dyk et al., 2013). Du Plessis and Sukumaran (2015) conducted a study that found that many skilled women in top positions resign when they realise that their jobs do not do justice to their maternal responsibilities. Coetzee and Pauw (2013) claim that employees are more committed to an organisation that offers work life balance benefits.

Miryala and Chiluka (2012) emphasise that work life balance strategies, where employers offer tele-commuting and flexitime, undoubtedly grant their employees an opportunity for better motivation, leading to higher performance, work life balance, increased retention, and improved satisfaction. Organisations that work through policies and processes must be agile enough to permit some freedom to employees so that they may carry out their work duties to the best of their ability so that they may enjoy a balance between their private lives and their lives at work (Deery & Jago, 2015).

- **Compensation (base salary)**

Compensation is still the primary incentive used to retain talented and competent employees (Michael et al., 2016). A competitive, consistent and fair compensation strategy is a competent retention strategy that organisations must introduce to minimise employee poaching by competitors (Jepngetich & Njue, 2013). Miryala and Chiluka (2012) argue that money is not a long-term strategy for retaining and hiring highly

competent and remarkable talented employees. Idris (2014) supports this view, declaring that employees are conscious of money for a while, but if they become bored with the job, money alone will not retain them in an organisation. Mujajati (2016) concurs that fair compensation does not guarantee employee loyalty and commitment, and Idris (2014) concurs, saying that increasing financial benefits is considered an unsustainable strategy in employee retention.

Sarmad et al., (2016) buttress the argument that employees need to be financially comfortable to commit to their organisation, though compensation is not the only reason for better retention of employees. Coetzee and Pauw (2013) mention that an all-inclusive compensation package is one of the primary catalysts for individuals to commit to an organisation. Compensation satisfaction is a crucial factor in retention policies because it assists to retain top employees for a long time (Bhattachrjee, 2012). Compensation is treated as the most imperative reward category (Snelgar et al., 2013). Most employees believe that they are worth more than what they are paid (Laddha et al., 2012). Similarly, Presbitero et al. (2016) postulate that when employees perceive that they are underpaid by their employers, they believe that they are not acknowledged as assets, and are hence undervalued.

2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the first research aim, namely to conceptualise work ethics climate and retention factors. The chapter discussed the definition, and the models of work ethics climate, as well as retention factors. Therefore, the study's second literature aim was achieved.

CHAPTER 3: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the second aim of the literature review, namely to conceptualise organisational commitment. The chapter begins with definitions of organisational commitment, followed by presenting models of organisational commitment, and ending with a summary of the chapter.

3.2 DEFINING ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Although organisational commitment has been defined in a variety of ways over the years, no general agreement has been reached on its exact definition (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Furthermore, organisational commitment is emotionally bonded to the values and goals of an organisation, and not its instrumental values (Gamgai & Agrawal, 2015; Im et al., 2016). Pillay (2008) mentions that in the 1980s and 1990s, defining organisational commitment was no different, and was hence the subject of further research. Meyer and Allen (1991) define organisational commitment as an internal situation or strategy that connects employees to their organisation. Kou (2012) states that organisational commitment is an effective persuasive strategy for associating employees and their organisations: it provides cohesion, enhances employees' efforts to address external factors and meet customer needs. Osei et al. (2017) view this connection as a positive work attitude or psychological connection expressed by an individual employee towards their organisation.

Ledimo and Martins (2014) emphasise that organisational commitment is the extent to which an individual is prepared to sustain membership owing his/her interest in, and connection to the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1997) posit that an individual who is committed stays with the organisation through difficult times, puts in a full day, shares the company's goals, attends work regularly, and protects the company's assets. An employee who shows signs of commitment at work is usually happier and, in turn, is less

likely to exit the organisation (Moshoeu, 2011). Van Dyk et al. (2013) asserts that it is imperative for employers to understand employees' commitment to their organisation because of its impact on employees' intentions to commit to the organisation. Coetzee and Botha (2012) consider organisational commitment as an employee's loyalty and intention to stay with an organisation, based on responsibility and sense of duty, extending beyond a purely personal interest in employment. Organisational commitment is generally assumed to reduce employee tardiness and turnover (Lumley et al., 2011).

Commitment can be used to identify motivated employees in an organisation (Osei et al., 2019). Moshoeu and Geldenhuys (2015) point out that organisational commitment indicates that individual employees value their investment in the organisation, which makes leaving organisation difficult. Cruz et al. (2014) argue that employee commitment is usually stronger among employees who have been with the organisation for longer, because they have experienced personal success within the business. Employee commitment is a different standard of identification and involvement, which employees have with their organisations (Beeri et al., 2013). In addition, Moshoeu (2011) posits that individuals come to organisations with skills, needs and expectations in the hope of finding an environment in which they will use their abilities and satisfy their needs, while achieving organisational objectives. Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that organisations that can provide opportunities for employees to develop and enhance their skills and knowledge, will gain highly committed employees.

Dhlahla (2011) maintains that some researchers refer to organisational commitment as an individual's intellectual connection to the organisation, including a sense of job involvement, belief and loyalty in terms of the organisation's values. Furthermore, Latchigadu (2016) postulates that organisational commitment is a psychological connection between organisations and their employees, and the employees' desire to want to add to the attainment of organisational goals. Organisational commitment is the binding force that inspires employees to take part in a course of action that relates to both the organisations and the employee (Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). Moshoeu

(2011) supports the view that organisational commitment is a mind-set amongst employees who align their own goals and values with those of their organisation. Moshoeu (2011) further says that this suggests that commitment based on the attitudinal perspective is developed during the stage when a new employee realises that his/her values and goals relate to those of the organisation. Van Dyk et al. (2013) opine that if an organisation and an employee have common characteristics and goals, it enhances the chances of the employee committing to the organisation.

Iden and Eikebrokk (2015) state that organisational commitment presents itself in an individual employee who has strongly beliefs in, and accepts the organisation's goals and values, whilst demonstrating a willingness to work hard to reach them. Cruz et al. (2014) contend that organisational commitment goes further than loyalty, leading to an active contribution towards the achievement of organisational goals. Mowday et al. (1979) claim that organisational commitment involves an effective relationship with the organisation, allowing employees to contribute to the organisation's achievement of its objectives and targets, while they are willing to compromise something of themselves in the process. In the same vein, Chen and Lai (2014) note that organisational commitment is a process of individuals interacting with their organisation to an extent that they are willing to work interdependently towards retaining their membership of the organisation, and advance and protect the organisation's interests and goals.

Naik (2012) mentions that a common factor in the definition of organisational commitment is that an employee's behaviour in an organisation is affected by their attitude, and increases their approval of the organisation's values, objectives and missions. Meyer and Allen's (1991) definition of organisational commitment was used as the basis for this study: organisational commitment is the emotional relationship that employees have with their organisation, which indicates the connection that they have with their organisation, and their intention to stay with the organisation. In addition, the behavioural and attitudinal perspectives of organisational commitment, as well as their harmonising relationship, are integrated (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

3.3 ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIOURAL MODEL

Lawrence's (1958) study drew attention to the importance and requirements for research in this field, as the author raised the point that, admirably, we would want one sentiment to be that of power to all employees from management to the lower levels. Four main approaches have materialised to conceptualise and explore organisational commitment: the attitudinal approach, the behavioural approach, the motivational approach and the multidimensional approach, which Roodt (2004) classified. When analysing the different explanations of the concepts of organisational commitment, an important factor that should be considered is whether commitment can be distinctly differentiated from different approaches and constructs that relate to organisational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Figure 3.1 illustrates the attitudinal and behavioural perspectives in respect of organisational commitment.

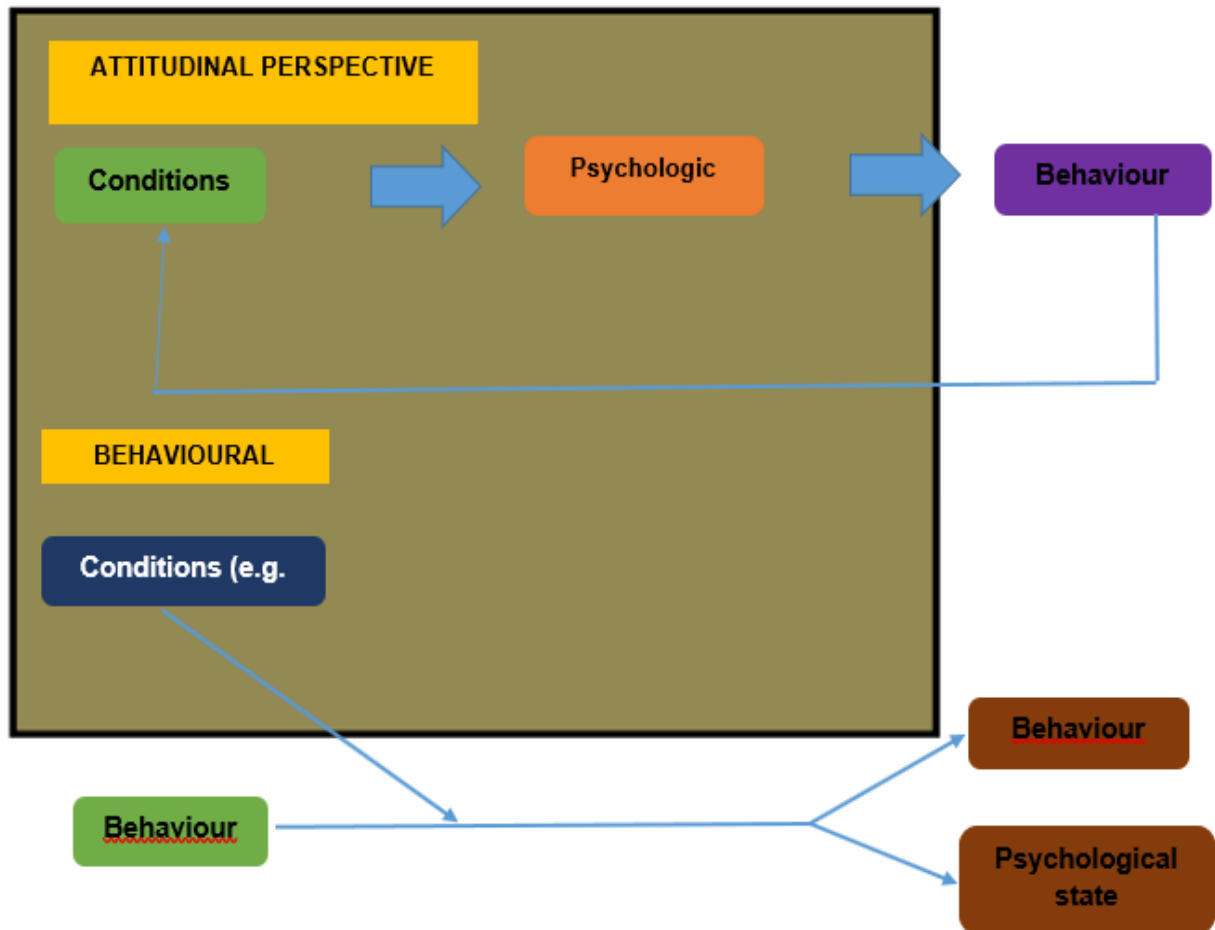


Figure 3.1: Attitudinal and behavioural perspectives on organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)

Tladinyana (2012) contends that behavioural commitment presents the process by which an employee comes close to an organisation, whereas attitudinal commitment focuses on the procedure by which individuals come to think about their employment relationship with their current organisation. Scholl (1981) concurs that the behavioural school of thought uses the notion of investment as a force that keeps employees in an organisation, while the attitudinal approach uses the notion of commitment to explain membership and performance. Buchanan (1974) posits that with the attitudinal approach, research is aimed at pinpointing the antecedents that add to the development of behavioural consequences and commitment.

- **Attitudinal approach**

The attitudinal approach is the most powerful one when conceptualising organisational commitment (Porter et al., 1974). According to Porter et al. (1974), organisational commitment is the relative strength of an employee's connection and identification with a certain organisation. Mowday et al. (1979) report that the attitudinal approach focuses on how an employee decides, based on the organisational goals, whether he or she chooses to be part of achieving its goals and remaining committed to the organisation. Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) dispute that organisational commitment unfolds as a key indicator of an individual's attitude.

Roodt (2004) remarks that an attitudinal approach refers to three dimensions of organisational commitment. The dimensions of organisational commitment include affective commitment (attitude), which refers to the emotional involvement towards and identification with the organisation; continuance commitment (calculative), which refers to the costs involved with exiting an organisation; and normative commitment (morals), which refers to a sense of obligation towards an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Attitudinal approach is a multi-dimensional construct that develops obstacles in predictive models, which make it difficult to achieve complete certainty, and include both affective and cognitive aspects, which allow the different spheres of employment attitude to overlap (Roodt, 2004). In addition, Porter et al. (1974) mention the following as characteristics of organisational commitment:

- a strong desire and intent to remain with the organisation;
- willingness to apply considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; and
- an acceptance and strong belief in the organisation's values and goals

In the attitudinal approach, the factors associated with commitment include job characteristics, as well as work and personal experience, while the outcomes include reduced absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, and increased performance (Porter

et al., 1974). Mowday *et al.* (1979) contend that the attitudinal approach relates to the concept of the psychological contract, where the organisational commitment level can be expected to increase if there is a mutual relationship between the employee and employer.

- **Behavioural approach**

Becker (1960) defines the behavioural approach as comprising of certain investments that individuals have with their organisation. The behavioural approach concerns behaviour where employees relate to a certain programme rather than the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Latchigadu (2016) regards the behavioural approach as emphasising the view that individual investments (e.g. friendships, share schemes, time and pension/provident funds) lead to employee loyalty towards their current organisation.

Scholl (1981) argues that the behavioural approach uses the concepts of investments as a force that retains an employee in an organisation. Mutheveloo and Rose (2005) stress that employees who find decisions difficult to change, freely choose to operate in a certain way to create attitudes in line with their choice and become committed to the chosen behaviour. Consequences of the behavioural approach in organisational commitment have included increased organisational citizenship behaviour, lower turnover, improved performance, and reduced absenteeism (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Moreover, Roodt (2004) argues that behaviour is multi-dimensional in scope. However, it is not easy to focus on it alone, as certain behaviours can easily predict other behaviours and can further influence behaviours.

- **Multidimensional approach**

Organisational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct that plays a crucial role in fine-tuning and in recognising human resource management practices (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Suliman and Iles (2000) postulate that the multidimensional approach speculates

that organisational commitment advances through an interplay of moral obligation, emotional attachment, and perceived costs.

- **Motivational approach**

Roodt (2004) posits that the motivational approach targets employee commitment in a distinct fashion, disconnecting it from its consequences and antecedents. Conger and (1988) argue that the motivational approach tries to incorporate different views of approaches to commitment, thereby defeating limitations in the other two approaches. Furthermore, Roodt (2004) supports the above statements, and contends that employee commitment derives from various approaches, but the motivational approach is identified as a remarkable alliance, which produces strong theoretical basics for conceptualising employee commitment as a cognitive approach to work. The motivational approach involves the achievement of salient goals, and of the realisation of salient values (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

Commitment should be linked to an intrinsic motivational force, because employees who are committed are thought to be motivated to apply immense energy on behalf of the organisation (Mowday et al., 1979). Meyer et al. (2004) argue that commitment lacks goal regulation, which targets the purpose of, and focuses on the reasons for, a course of action because it is an element of a motivated mind-set. Meyer et al. (2004) concur and state that the motivated mentality may be accompanied by different mind-sets or psychological states found in various forms of commitment. The next section briefly explores Meyer and Allen's (1991) model of organisational commitment.

3.4 A MODEL OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The above-mentioned tri-dimensional model to conceptualise organisational commitment is divided into three dimensions, namely affective, continuance, and normative. All three commitment dimensions have clear implications in terms of staying

or leaving an organisation, but more so, are theoretically quite different (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Furthermore, Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) concur that employees' intention to exit from or commit to their organisation is a highly significant predictor of their affective, continuance, and normative commitment. These three dimensions describe the diverse ways of organisational commitment, and the implications for individual employees' behaviour. Ledimo and Martins (2014) point out that it is imperative that managers, human resource practitioners, and leaders consider the differences between the dimensions of organisational commitment to enhance employee commitment.

Coetzee and Botha (2012) posit that the three dimensions view organisational commitment as a psychological state that characterises employees' relationship with their organisation and impact their decision to stay or leave. McLaggan et al. (2013) refer to the dimensions of commitment as psychologically different orientations towards an organisation. Employees should have a commitment to delineation, indicating the strength of all the dimensions of organisational commitment (Moshoeu & Geldenhuys, 2015). In addition, Meyer and Allen (1991) state that affective, normative, and continuance commitment will develop because of different experiences or causes and have different effects for on-the-job behaviour and employee turnover. Figure 3.2 illustrates a three-component conceptualisation of organisational commitment.

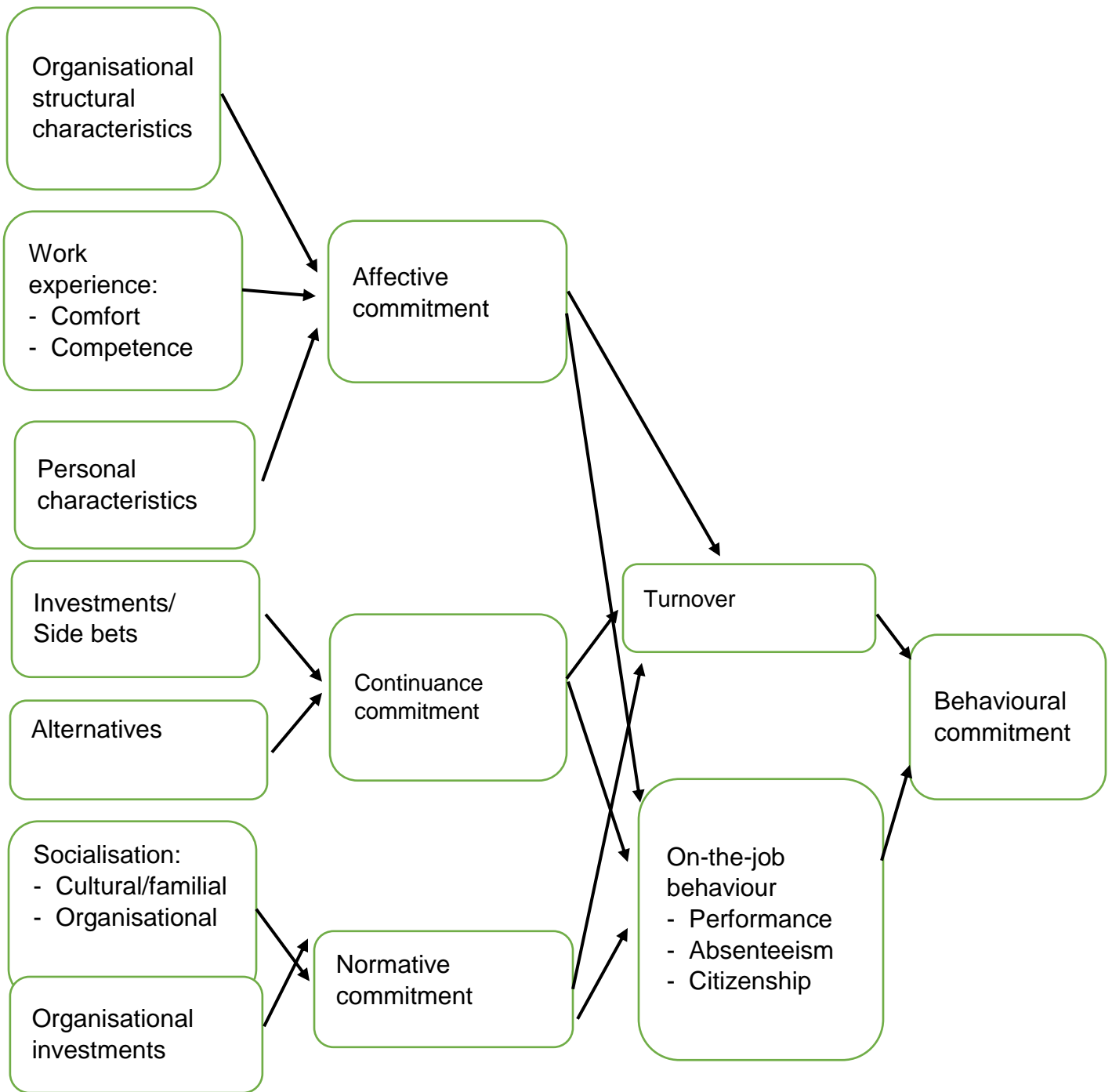


Figure 3.2: A three-component conceptualisation of organisational commitment (adapted from Meyer & Allen, 1991)

- **Affective commitment**

Allen and Meyer (1996) define affective commitment as involvement, identification, and emotional connection to the organisation. They further maintain that employees with solid affective commitment continue with their organisation because they enjoy being a part of it. Ledimo and Martins (2014) mention that affective commitment refers to an employee's positive feelings of identification and connection to their organisation, and involvement in their organisation's work. Vagharseyyedin et al. (2018) support this view, and state that affective organisational commitment is an employee attachment and identification with their organisation.

Ezirim et al. (2012) explain that in affective commitment, an individual solidly identifies with the objectives and goals of the organisation, and wants to continue being part of that organisation. Highly affective committed individuals continue to work in their organisation on a voluntary basis and with much devotion and dedication (Moshoeu & Geldenhuys, 2015). Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) point out that affective commitment develops emotional attachments that can lead employees to have a sense of duty and responsibility to their organisation. Affectively committed employees stay with their organisation because they choose to, and because they are acclimated to the organisation and its rules (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013). Furthermore, Coetzee and Botha (2012) maintain that highly affective committed employees are those that are prepared to voluntarily put in more effort and go the extra mile.

- **Continuance commitment**

Allen and Meyer (1996) posit that continuance commitment is based on the employee's recognition of the costs associated with exiting from the organisation. Moshoeu and Geldenhuys (2015) assert that continuance commitment is associated with and responsible for ensuring that employees retain their organisational participation. Individual employees with a high continuance commitment remain with an organisation

because they must do so (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Continuance commitment is the degree to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of costs associated with leaving their organisation (Ledimo & Martins, 2014). Lumley et al., (2011) argue that individuals with a high continuance commitment remain within their organisation because of the financial benefit. Therefore, they earn as employees because of the time that they spent working in the organisation, and not their personal choice.

Coetzee et al. (2014) argue that because of the escalating cost of living, employees develop high continuance commitment because of the financial loss that the individual employee will adhere to when exiting their organisation. Ezirim et al. (2012) state that individuals stay with their organisation because of hidden costs that relate to leaving. In addition, Rae et al. (2015) mention that an employee who has high continuance commitment remains with an organisation when he/she needs to stay within it, because of the perceived costs that they will lose when leaving the organisation. Coetzee and Botha (2012) argue that in continuance commitment, individuals do not put in more effort, or go the extra mile to keep their job.

Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) assert that continuance commitment is the degree to which employees consciously decide and desire to remain within their organisation, which originates from their cognitive, emotional and physical investment developed in the organisation, which in turn makes leaving the organisation not the best decision. McLaggan et al. (2013) claim that it is an employee's investment in their organisations: for example, their time, effort, contributions, and organisation-specific skills that may not be transferable. Coetzee and Botha (2012) argue that a lack of alternative employment opportunities fosters continuance commitment apart from the cost related with exiting the organisation. Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) declare that employees with high continuance commitment remain with their organisation owing to adding value to the organisation as experienced employees, and not because they are willing to. Continuance commitment differs from affective commitment, where employees stay in

their organisation because they are familiar with it and its principles, and because they want to (Ferreira, 2012).

- **Normative commitment**

Normative commitment is the final dimension of organisational commitment and indicates feelings of being forced to stay within an organisation because of pressures from others (McLaggan et al., 2013). Allen and Meyer (1996) define normative commitment as commitment, which is based on a sense of obligation towards the organisation. In addition, Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) define normative commitment as the degree of an individual employee's commitment; they commit to an organisation because they feel that they should. In the same vein, Ledimo and Martins (2014) concur that employees with a high normative commitment remain with their organisation because they feel that they are obliged to do so. Similarly, Coetzee et al. (2014) state that employees feel that they are forced to stay with their organisation, because they believe that it is the right thing to continue to serve one organisation.

Ezirim et al. (2012) argue that employees feel that they are forced to remain in an organisation to repay the debt that their organisation has invested in them during training and development. This is when an individual employee has a sense of moral obligation to remain in an organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Hansen et al. (2016) contend that employees who believe that they are treated fairly are more likely to feel inspired and devoted to their organisation or develop emotions of long-term commitment to their employers or the organisation.

Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) postulate that employees who are normatively committed stay with an organisation because of a normative idea, which is that they have an ethical responsibility to remain, allowing employees to regard their extended membership at the organisation highly. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) argue that employees could not behave freely because they feel that they are obliged to remain with their organisation

while they are unhappy. They further postulate that employees have a sense of indebtedness to their organisations. Employees' normative commitment enhances an organisation's confidence (Lotfi et al., 2018).

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the second research aim, namely to conceptualise organisational commitment. The chapter discussed the definition, attitudinal and behavioural model, as well as an organisational commitment model. Therefore, the purpose of the above chapter has been achieved.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL INTEGRATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ETHICS CLIMATE, RETENTION FACTORS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical integration of the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors, and organisational commitment, which are first discussed before hypotheses are proposed.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ETHICS CLIMATE AND RETENTION FACTORS

Previous studies indicate that work ethics climate relates positively to employee retention (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander, 2008; Numminen et al., 2015; Mumcu & Doven, 2016; Olson, 1998). However, the findings of these studies were divergent. For example, Schulte et al. (2001) reported a positive and significant correlation between ethical climate and employee retention. Hart (2005) conducted a similar study and found that there are correlations between the work ethics climate and nurses' turnover intentions. Hospital nurses experience the ethical climate through how they perceive organisational practices (Sabiou et al., 2019). To enhance retention of employees, managers should focus on improving their organisational commitment (Van Den Bulcke et al., 2019).

Managers can use work ethics climate to improve employee retention and employees' behaviours within the organisation (Stewart et al., 2011). Lee et al. (2015), in their study, concluded that employees perceive that they are valued and recognised when their organisation emphasises a positive work ethics climate. A positive work ethics climate results in lower stress, employees' positive job attitudes, and lower turnover intentions (Mulki et al., 2008; Numminen et al., 2015).

Johnston and Spinks (2013) reported that there was no significant relationship between work ethics climate and the retention of employees. Shim (2014) also found that work

ethical climate does not really affect the retention of employees. He further states that employees will only be retained only when they have clear and effective incentives and rewards for job performance, and high levels of emotional energy. Kyndt et al. (2009) also came to the same conclusion, namely that employees can only be retained if they perceive that the organisation values them. Although, previous studies on the association between work ethics climate and employee retention are inconsistent (Eustace & Martins, 2014; Mumcu & Doven, 2016), little has been learned in a South African hospital context. Thus, since work ethics climate can influence employee retention (Numminen et al., 2015), the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Work ethics climate significantly and positively affects retention factors.

4.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK ETHICS CLIMATE AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Previous studies established that work ethics climate affects employee's attitudes and behaviours such as organisational commitment (Mitonga-Monga, 2018). However, these findings are divergent. For example, Wombacher and Felfe (2017) report that ethical climate relates to organisational commitment, and that employees who perceive a positive ethical climate in an organisation report a strong desire to remain committed to the organisation. Furthermore, Rubel et al. (2017) declare that when the ethical climate of an organisation increases, employees will more likely develop a sense of commitment to their organisation. Work ethics climate is a tool that organisations use to help employees make sense of their work environment (Tetteh & Brenyah, 2016). Employees who perceive a positive work ethics climate within their organisations are likely to stay committed, whilst organisational productivity increases (Mumcu & Doven, 2016). Facilitation of positive work ethics climate leads to increased employee commitment, decreased turnover, and job satisfaction (Lemmenes et al., 2018). Mitonga-Monga (2018) says that employees with high organisational commitment are vital to an organisation's longevity and survival.

Thus, Putranta and Kingshott (2011) reported a negative relationship between ethical climates and organisational commitment, and established a negative relationship between egoistic climates and affective commitment; while a benevolent climate indicated that it was likely to increase the affective and egoistic commitment. The authors further revealed that continuance commitment with principle-based climates was found to have a positive impact on the staff's affective commitment through positive impacts on their idealistic ethical ideology. In addition, Kim and Miller (2008) found that organisational commitment increased when both "caring" and "law and code" were recognised, but minimised when "self-interest" was recognised. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Work ethics climate significantly and positively affects organisational commitment.

4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RETENTION FACTORS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

In their study, João and Coetzee (2012) found that when employees feel positive about the availability of retention factors in their organisations, they tend to feel more emotionally attached and committed to the organisation. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) also concluded that when employees were satisfied with their retention factors, it enhanced their organisational commitment significantly. Meyer and Allen (1997) state that retention factors positively affects employees' commitment in an organisation. Van Dyk et al. (2013) found that retention factors in an organisation predicts employee organisational commitment.

Brown et al. (2013) opine that employee commitment and retention of employees are multifactorial. Employee retention factors will only enhance the commitment of employees when factors such as chronic diseases, pressures at work, and the economic climate are well controlled (Moloney et al., 2017). The retention factor supervisor support was found to be a significant predictor of organisational commitment (Ahsan et al., 2013). Retention factor training and development does not have any visible influence on the organisational commitment of employees (Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2016).

Hom et al. (2012) claim that when employees are dissatisfied with their organisational retention factors and rational decision processes, employee turnover intentions arise. Organisations should focus on retention strategies that are sensitive and more common in all cultures to minimise employee turnover (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). Bergman, Payne and Boswell (2012) posit that when talented employees find a replacement job, or accept a promotion in another organisation, then this would relate to bad results of their organisational retention factors. However, Cao and Hamori (2019) argue that lower turnover intention on employees is not because of satisfaction with retention factors, but merely because they are comfortable with their jobs.

Furthermore, prior studies on employee commitment and turnover intention are well documented (Osei et al., 2016; Salminen & Miettinen, 2019). Nurses that are highly committed to their organisations are less likely to leave their employer (Salminen & Miettinen, 2019). Osei et al. (2016) state that committed employees tend to have a good working relationship with their employers. A committed workforce is likely to be loyal, attached and take an interest in the organisation, and be less likely to leave because they are known to be better performers (Mobarakeh & Ghorbani, 2015). Choe et al., (2017) found that employees who are committed to their organisation tend to invest their efforts towards achieving the organisation's goals.

Highly committed employees tend to have low turnover intention (Nasurdin et al., 2018). A previous study by Asegid et al. (2014) found that a low level of turnover rates enhances

employee performance of healthcare organisations, while a study by Faloye (2014) revealed that there is a low positive correlation between turnover intentions and organisational commitment dimensions (affective, continuance and normative). Faloye (2014) further maintains that the relationships are statistically powerful, except the one between normative commitment and turnover intentions, which was statistically insignificant. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Retention factors significantly and positively affects organisational commitment.

4.5 WORK ETHICS CLIMATE AS A MODERATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RETENTION FACTORS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Previous studies have examined the influence of work ethics climate in the association between retention factors and organisational commitment (Bindu, 2017; Brown et al., 2013; Mitonga-Monga, 2018; Moloney, et al., 2017; Van Dyk and Coetzee, 2012). Most of these studies were consistent. For example, Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) report that retention factors relate to organisational commitment. In addition, Ahsan et al. (2013) found that retention factors such as supervisor support influences employees' commitment positively. Furthermore, Hassan et al. (2019) found a positive and significant correlation between ethical climate and employee retention. A study by Lee and Ha-Brookshire (2017) found work ethics climate to be a positive predictor of organisational commitment.

Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) found that work ethics climate positively affects employee retention and organisational commitment. Johnston and Spinks (2013) studied a relationship between work ethics climate and employee retention and concluded that there is no significant relationship between work ethics climate and retention of employees. Although a greater deal has been learned about the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment in developed countries (Mitonga-monga, 2018; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012), little has been learned

about this relationship within a South African context. Thus, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Work ethics climate significantly and positively influences the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.

Figure 4.1 illustrates a theoretical framework, showing relationship between the variables.

Theoretical relationship between variables

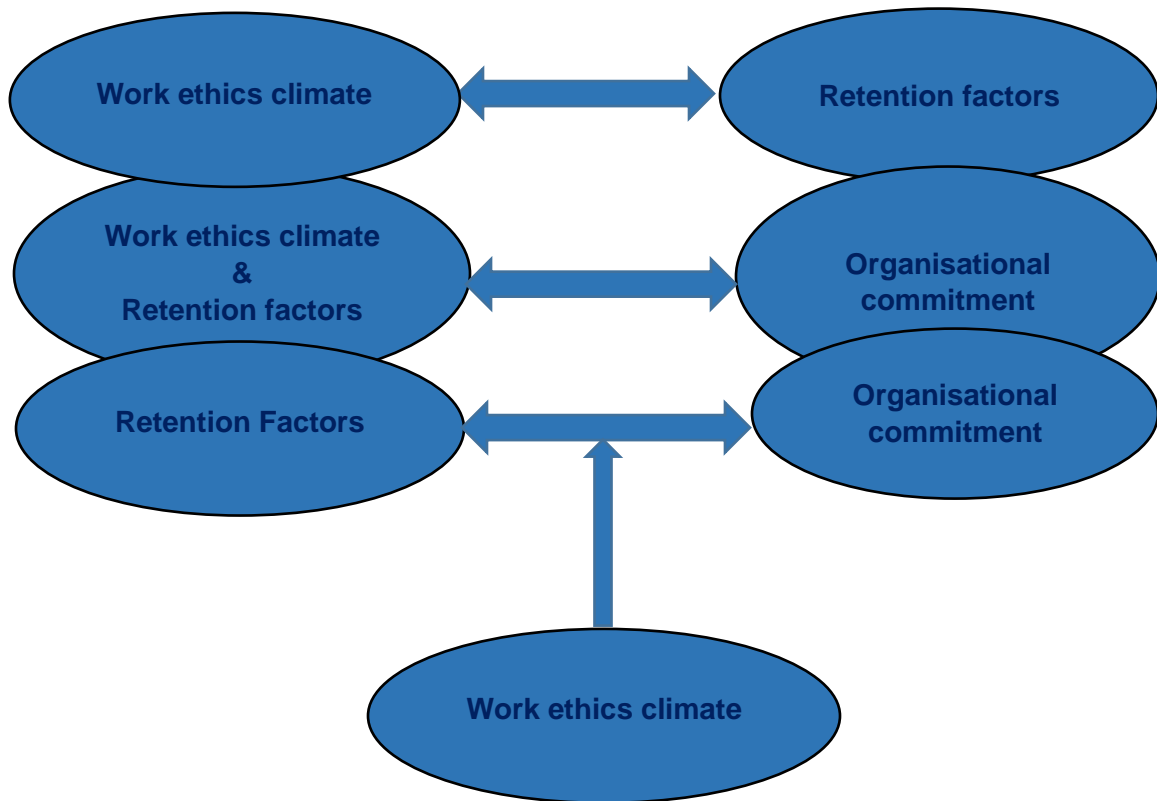


Figure 4.1.: Theoretical framework

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 addressed the four research aims, namely to integrate the theoretical relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors, and organisational commitment. Therefore, research aim number four of the literature review, was achieved. The next chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the study's research design.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 addresses Steps 1 to 6 of the empirical study listed below. Firstly, the chapter provides an overview of the study's population and, secondly, presents the measuring instruments, followed by justification for the choice and a discussion of each; the process that was followed to score data collection, and to administer the instruments. Formulation of the research hypotheses is also presented, and the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

While the empirical research phase consists of eight steps, steps 1-6 are addressed in this chapter, and Steps 7 and 8 are addressed in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively.

The eight steps are:

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample;

Step 2: Selection of appropriate data collection instruments;

Step 3: Distribution of the questionnaire;

Step 4: Data capturing;

Step 5: Formulation of the research hypothesis;

Step 6: Statistical processing of data;

Step 7: Reporting and interpretation of the results and integration of the literature; and

Step 8: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations.

5.2 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

5.2.1 The population

A population is the cluster of people or set of objects about which the researcher wishes to make a distinct conclusion (Welman et al., 2013). Field (2013) defines population as a collection of units (e.g. plankton, suicidal authors, people, plants, cities, etcetera) about

which the researcher wants to generalise a set of findings. The research population is the total number of research members, objects, and subjects that comply to the specifications of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A population is a whole set of group members or cases (Saunders et al., 2019). The population of this study comprised 703 nurses in a South African hospital.

5.2.2 The sample

The sample size should be a smaller number but represents the collection of units from a population used to determine truths about the population (Field, 2013). The sample for this study was selected from the population in such a way, increasing the probability that it represented the population as much as possible (Salkind, 2017). The reliability of research findings is mainly based on how the sample is selected (Kumar, 2011), while the sampling techniques are probability and non-probability. Non-probability sampling does not give all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected, while probability sampling is when all members of a population have a known and equal chance of being selected (Salkind, 2017).

Probability stratified sampling was used to select nurses to participate in this study: the sampling included different ages, gender, job level, and race groups from the South African hospital. Stratified sampling is one in which each person or other sampling unit in the population has the same probability chance of being selected (Sanders, 2015). Salkind (2017) asserts that the selection of participants from the population is based on some form of random procedures such as simple random, systematic sampling, stratified, cluster, and panel sampling. The stratified sampling technique was deemed to be the most appropriate technique for this study, considering the time and resources available, and the technique's effectiveness. The targeted population number was 500. Moreover, the respondents were chosen purely according to their departments, which were considered as strata (Creswell, 2014). According to Rao Software calculation a recommended sample size was 218 (50%). However, the final sample size was 208

(42%) of the total population. G*Power software was used to determine if a sample size of 208 was sufficient for making statistical inferences. According to G*Power software, at a margin error of 5% and 95% confidence level, a sample size of 208 was sufficient to make statistical inferences with 3 predictors.

5.2.2.1 *Composition of the sample according to tenure*

Table 5.1 indicate the tenure distribution of the sample. The tenure distribution of the respondents was measured according to the categories, ranging from 0 year and 10 years to over 31 years, and the frequency seemed to be concentrated around 0 to 10 years (51,9%). Participants between 11 and 20 years comprised 24.5%, those between 21 and 31 years constituted 13%, and those with 31 years and more, comprised 10,6%.

Table 5.1: Composition of the sample according to tenure

		Tenure			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 - 10 years	108	51.9	51.9	51.9
	11 - 20 years	51	24.5	24.5	76.4
	21 - 30 years	27	13.0	13.0	89.4
	31 and more	22	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2.2 *Composition of the sample according to education*

Table 5.2 indicate the educational distribution of participants in the sample. A highest number of the participants had a secondary school (47,1%), or standard G10/G12 or equivalent (27,4), followed by those with primary school (13,5%). Those with a post school certificate 7,7%, 3,8% had a bachelor's degree. and 0,5% had an honours degree.

Table 5.2: Composition of the sample according to education

		Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary school	28	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Secondary school	98	47.1	47.1	60.6
	Standard G10/G12 or equivalent	57	27.4	27.4	88.0
	Post school certificate	16	7.7	7.7	95.7
	Bachelor's	8	3.8	3.8	99.5
	Honours	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2.3 *Composition of the sample according to marital status*

Table 5.3 below illustrate the sample's marital status distribution. A highest number of the participants were single (36,1%), while married participants totalled 35,6%, followed by those who lived together (12%). Those who were widowed comprised 8,7%, and those who were divorced 7,7%.

Table 5.3: Composition of the sample according to marital status

		Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	75	36.1	36.1	36.1
	Married	74	35.6	35.6	71.6
	Widower/Widow	18	8.7	8.7	80.3
	Divorced	16	7.7	7.7	88.0
	Living together	25	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2.4 *Composition of gender groups in the sample*

Table 5.4 illustrate the sample's gender distribution. The sample involved 65.9% female participants and 34.1% male participants (n=208).

Table 5.4: Composition of the sample according to gender

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	71	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Female	137	65.9	65.9	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2.5 *Composition of age in the sample*

Table 5.5 below indicate the sample's age distribution. Participants aged 18 to 30 years comprised 29.3% of the sample. Those in the age group of 31 – 40 years comprised 28.8%; those who were 41 -50 years, 28.4%; those who were 51 -60 years comprised 7.2%; and those who were 61 and older, comprised 6.3% of the total sample (n=208).

Table 5.5: Composition of age in the sample

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 30 years	61	29.3	29.3	29.3
	31 - 40 years	60	28.8	28.8	58.2
	41 - 50 years	59	28.4	28.4	86.5
	51 - 60 years	15	7.2	7.2	93.8
	61 and older	13	6.3	6.3	100.0
Total		208	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2.6 *Composition of race groups in the sample*

Table 5.6 indicate the sample's race group distribution. A majority of the participants were Black (78.8%); followed by Coloureds (9,6%), Whites (6.7%) and Indians (4.8%).

Table 5.6: Composition of race group in the sample

Race group				Valid	Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
Valid	Black	164	78.8	78.8	78.8
	White	14	6.7	6.7	85.6
	Coloured	20	9.6	9.6	95.2
	Indian	10	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

5.3 SELECTION OF APPROPRIATE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Data collection tools for the study were selected by considering the literature and psychometric properties of the three variables: work ethics climate, organisational commitment, and retention factors. The chosen measuring instruments were relevant and applicable to the study's theories and models and were found to be reliable and valid by most researchers. The selected measuring instruments are discussed below.

5.3.1 Biographical information

Section B (the first part) of the questionnaire requested participants to provide the following biographical information: race, age, gender, marital status, language, highest qualification, and duration of employment. The decision to include these factors was to determine whether any or all of these influences the relationship between work ethics climate, organisational commitment, and retention factors.

5.3.2 Psychometric properties of the measures of ethical climate, retention and organisational commitment of nurses

Various factors (rationale for the purpose, dimensions, administration, interpretation, reliability and validity) were considered and discussed as means to select the research study's measuring instruments, and these are presented below.

5.3.2.1 Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ)

- Rationale for and purpose of the ECQ

The ECQ (Victor and Cullen, 1987) is a self-rating measure, consisting of law and code, caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency and independence. This measuring instrument determines individuals' perceptions of behaviour, which is ethically correct.

- Dimensions of ECQ

The questionnaire consists of 30 items and measures six dimensions (law and code, caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency, and independence). Each of these dimensions had a number of structural questions or items that are used to measure it. The following is a detailed description of these six dimensions.

i) Law and code (six items)

The above dimension captures two of the basic characteristics of professionalism, an extra-organisational level of concern, and an external source of principle.

ii) Caring (four items)

This dimension considers how employees look out for each other's welfare; the most important interest is the wellbeing of all employees in the organisation.

iii) Rules (four items)

All employees are expected to comply with organisational rules and procedures; this dimension also emphasises that employees should obey organisational policies and understand that rules need to be followed.

iv) Instrumental (four items)

The above dimension relates to the extent to which employees first and foremost look out for their own self-interests, ignoring the interests of other employees who are affected by their decision/s.

v) Efficiency (four items)

The biggest responsibility of employees in the organisation is to control costs, and, therefore, they should operate efficiently in respect of their work.

vi) Independence (9 items)

Employees in the organisation make decisions for themselves regarding what is right or wrong.

- Administration of the ECQ

An ECQ is a self-administered questionnaire and takes about 20 minutes to complete and includes instructions to complete it. The items are structured in a statement format, with a five-point Likert-type rating scale for each statement, and respondents rate the statements based on their self-perceived ethical climate. The score for law and code, caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency, and independence are then added together to compute a total overall score for the construct of the ECQ (Victor & Cullen, 1987).

- Interpretation of ECQ

Each subscale (law and caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency and independence) is measured separately, and reflects the participants' perceptions of these dimensions and work ethics climate. Therefore, it is possible to determine, which dimensions are perceived to be true, and, which are not for the respondent. The higher the score, the truer the respondent's statement. A response of 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

- Reliability and validity of the ECQ

Research findings on the reliability of the questionnaire point out that it is a reliable instrument to measure ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1987). Exploratory factor analysis indicated that the ECQ items did not merely satisfy the psychometric criteria for both the discriminant and convergent validity, but that the content was also appropriate for the theoretical construct that was considered (Trevino, Butterfield & McCabe, 1995). A study conducted by Victor and Cullen (1987) reported an acceptable alpha for the six dimensions of low and code (.81), caring (.82), rules (.75), instrumental (.78), efficiency (.73), and independence (.65).

- Motivation for using the ECQ

The ECQ (Victor & Cullen, 1987) was selected for this study, because of the conceptual congruence with the explication of the construct of ethical climate, and its highest degree of validity and reliability.

5.3.2.2 Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

- Rationale for and purpose of the RFMS

The RFMS is designed to evaluate the construct retention factors in adults in a reliable and valid manner. A factor analysis on RFMS, conducted by Dockel (2003), supports the construct validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

- Dimensions of the RFMS

The RFMS is a questionnaire, consisting of 38 items, which measures compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, managerial support, career opportunities and work policies. The RFMS uses a five-point Likert-type scale to measure the respondents' answers for the items.

The six dimensions are described below.

i) Compensation

This dimension has 13 questions, which measures the way employees feel about their compensation.

ii) Job characteristics

This dimension consists of four questions that assess the way employees feel about the characteristics of their jobs.

iii) Training and development

This dimension has six questions that assess how employees feel about training and development opportunities that their employer provides.

iv) Supervisory support

This dimension contains six questions that measure the way employees feel about support that their supervisor offers.

v) Career development

This dimension comprises six questions, and measures how employees feel about their career development.

vi) *Work–life balance*

This dimension consists of four questions that assess the way employees feel about their work–life balance.

- Administration of the RFMS

The questionnaire can be administered to groups or individuals; it normally takes about 15 to 20 minutes to answer the questions. The instructions are shown on the response sheet and the questionnaire. The respondents complete 38 items by ticking each according to a scale from 1- 5. A response of 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire was scored by utilising both a software programme and manually. The scores for the RMFS are derived by totalling the number of items checked that indicate high retention factors.

- Interpretation of RFMS

Each subscale of the five items is measured independently and indicates the feelings and perceptions of the respondents in these dimensions. Subsequently, an analysis can be undertaken as to which dimensions are perceived to be valid for the respondent and, which are not valid. This is an important diagnostic technique to determine the depth of the respondent's retention factors. The higher the score, the more positive the depth of these factors.

- Reliability and validity of the RFMS

Dockel (2003) found evidence of the validity and reliability of the RFMS. Content validity was developed in the instrument by building a construct definition of retention factors, and by writing items that covered all angles of the construct. In addition, Dockel (2003) found acceptable internal consistency for the factor analysis conducted on the RFMS.

- Motivation for the RFMS

The RFMS was selected because it was appropriate for this research. It is a quick and simple instrument to use and its validity and reliability has been proven, and it is free of any cultural biases. The instrument can also be used to create interventions in an organisation, and as a measuring instrument for individuals' development.

5.3.2.3 Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

- Rationale for using the OCQ

The OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997) serves as a basic research instrument to measure commitment. The OCQ measured employee commitment by assessing the three components of organisational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

- Dimensions of the OCQ

The OCQ is a questionnaire that employs three constructs, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment. The OCQ is a questionnaire that consists of 24 items, which are divided equally into the three above-mentioned components with 8 items each. The OCQ uses a five-point Likert-type scale to measure the responses of the respondents to each of the items. The three dimensions are described below.

i) Affective commitment

Individuals' positive feelings of identification, involvement and attachment in respect of their work organisation.

ii) Continuance commitment

Individuals' commitment levels towards their organisation owing to their own personal valuation of cost associated with them leaving the organisation.

iii) Normative commitment

Employees' feelings of obligation to remain with their organisation.

- Administration of the OCQ

The questionnaire can be conducted amongst groups and with individuals, and usually takes 15-20 minutes to complete, although there is no maximum time limit. The instructions and questions are indicated on the questionnaire. Supervision was not important, as the questionnaire was self-explanatory. The respondents were asked to rate each item on a seven-point Likert scale. The higher the number, the truer that item is to the respondent. Respondents were expected to rate their responses as: 1- strongly disagree; 2 –disagree; 3 – neutral; 4 – agree; and 5 – strongly agree.

- Interpretation of the OCQ

The OCQ measures 24 items separately and reflects the emotions and perceptions of the respondents in these items. An analysis, based on the results, can be carried out regarding those items that are perceived to be accurate for the respondents, and, which are not. This is an imperative diagnostic technique to regulate levels of the respondents' organisational commitment.

- Reliability and validity of the OCQ

Meyer and Allen (1997) found evidence of the validity and reliability of the OCQ. Content validity was developed in the instrument by developing a construct definition of organisational commitment, and by writing items aimed to cover all the angles of the construct. In addition, Meyer and Allen (1997) reported an acceptable internal consistency for the factor analysis conducted on the OCQ.

- Motivation for using the OCQ

The OCQ was selected for this research because of its appropriateness for the study. It is straightforward and quick to administer, is both valid and reliable, and free of cultural biases.

5.4 DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Permission to conduct this study was provided by the following structures:

- The Research, Ethics and Innovation Committee at the University of South Africa (Department of Human Resource Management);
- The Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria (Faculty of Health Science Research Ethics Committee); and
- Mamelodi Hospital.

This study's population consisted of 700 individuals (nurses) who work at a South African Public Hospital. The hospital has 15 wards with a designated number of nurses: the labour ward has 49 nurses; the internal medicine ward has 87 nurses; the surgery ward has 35 nurses; the orthopaedic ward has 43 nurses; the gynaecology ward has 45 nurses; the post-natal ward has 41 nurses; the paediatrics ward has 40 nurses; the casualty ward has 84 nurses; the ICU ward has 33 nurses; the theatre ward has 49 nurses; the central sterilising service department ward has 13 nurses; the neonatal ward has 47 nurses; the psychiatric ward has 40 nurses; and the HIV and AIDS ward has 23 nurses. There are 30 operational nursing managers and 41 professional nurses at the hospital.

Upon receiving permission to conduct the research study, the researcher requested the Nursing Manager and the Research Committee Chairperson to introduce her to the nurses in all the wards. Thereafter, the researcher verbally asked who would be willing

to take part in the study. These individual nurses comprised the sample of N =500 that agreed to participate in the study, and the questionnaires were distributed to them. A covering letter stating the researcher's contact details, the purpose of the study and its ethical standards, as well as an envelope, accompanied each questionnaire. The participants were requested to place their anonymous questionnaires inside the provided envelopes, and to seal these once completed. The researcher collected the first 130 questionnaires after a period of two weeks. Following this, the researcher returned to collect questionnaires every Friday for a period of 2 months, until she collected a total of 208 sealed and usable questionnaires. A response rate of 41,6% was thus achieved.

5.5 DATA CAPTURING

Quantitative data in raw form, before data is processed and analysed, convey little meaning to individuals (Saunders et al., 2019). Therefore, data needed to be captured and processed to make them useful, and to turn them into findings (Saunders et al., 2019). The questionnaire items relating to the work-related characteristics/issues and biographical variables were captured in an electronic spreadsheet, where each column was an item of the questionnaire, and each row comprised participants (Coetzee et al., 2016). When the coding plan was complete, the results were entered onto a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (Adams et al., 2007). Descriptive statistics were conducted to clean mistakes that may have been made during data capturing (Fowler, 2009). The MS Excel data was then imported into the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0 for analysis.

5.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Following data collection, this was entered into a format that could be analysed and interpreted to determine emerging theory (Saunders et al., 2019). Statistical measures assisted in this process by creating simple graphs and tables that indicate the frequency of occurrence, and by using statistics such as indices to allow for comparisons through

establishing statistical relationships between variables for complex statistical modelling (Saunders et al., 2019; Salkind, 2017). The following statistical analyses were executed: descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, hierarchical moderated regression, using the SPSS Version 26.0 (2017) for Microsoft Windows 7 to analyse the data.

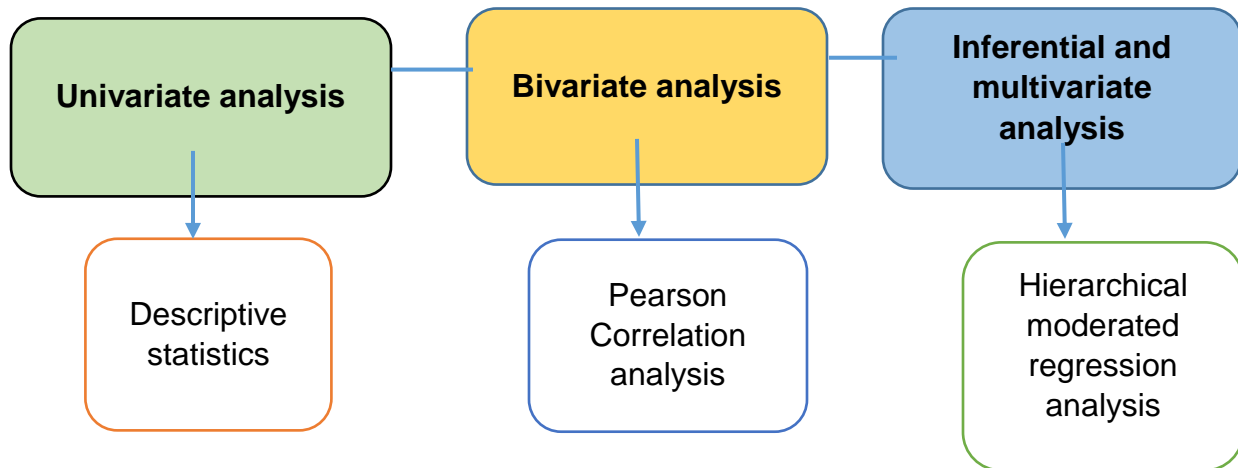


Figure 5.7: Data analysis process

5.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics enable researchers to compare and describe variables numerically (Saunders et al., 2019). Data description occurs by computing a set of descriptive statistics because they describe the general characteristics of distribution scores (Salkind, 2017). Kumar (2011) argues that it is extremely difficult to understand the patterns in a data. Therefore, it is important that the data set should be summarised. The summary statistics can either be illustrated graphically, or in a tabular form (Adams et al., 2007). This allows the reader of the research report to gain an accurate understanding of what the data looks like (Salkind, 2017).

The following three processes were conducted during this phase.

5.6.1.1 *Calculating frequency distribution, central tendency and standard deviations*

Descriptive statistics were handled by calculating the frequency distribution, and the central tendency and measure of dispersion (mean and standard deviation). Frequency distribution is proportionate to the probability that it will take each value (Kumar, 2011). The mean is the value, usually known as the average, which includes all data values in its calculation (Salkind, 2017; Bhattachrjee; 2012). Standard deviation describes the length of spread of data values around the mean for a variable with a numerical data (Saunders et al., 2019). The larger the standard deviation, the more variable the set of scores (Salkind, 2017).

5.6.1.2 *Determining reliability of the measuring instrument*

Reliability is the extent to which the researcher's analysis procedures or data collection techniques will produce consistent findings (Saunders et al., 2016). In addition, reliability encompasses both a true score and an observed score component (Salkind, 2017). A Cronbach's alpha test with a significance level (α) of 0.05 was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the measuring instruments (Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). For the purpose of this study, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value, ranging from 0.50 to 0.70, was considered to be adequate (Brunetto et al., 2013).

5.6.2 Pearson correlation analysis

Correlation statistics were conducted to test the strength and direction of the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors, and organisational commitment. Pearson product moment correlation is the most frequently used to measure relationships, represented by the letter r , and followed by symbols that represent the variables that are correlated (Salkind, 2017). A correlation coefficient score of near 1 indicates a strong positive relationship between variables. A negative or positive result score of the correlations coefficient of two variables indicates that the two variables are perfectly

correlated, which means that all the points are on a straight line (Adams et al., 2007). Hence, it was decided to set the value at 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0.05$), and the practical effect size at $r \leq 0.29 \leq r \geq 0.30 \geq 0.50$ (small, medium to large effect (Salkind, 2017)).

5.6.3 Hierarchical moderated regression analysis

Hierarchical moderator regression analysis was used to determine if retention factors moderate the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment. Disatnik and Sivan (2016) define moderator regression analysis as the appropriate inferential procedure when the underlying theory indicates differences in the form of the relationship between two variables as a function of some moderator variable. Hartmann and Moers (2003) indicate that moderated regression analysis is a specific application of multiple linear regression analysis in which the regression equation contains an interaction term. Moderator regression is used to assess the magnitude of the interaction effects of the moderator variable (Disatnik and Sivan, 2016). Moderated regression analysis is a preferred statistical procedure to detect interaction effects (Russell & Bobko, 1992).

Moderating regression analysis (Cohen et al. 2013) was computed to gauge the influence of ethical climate on retention factors and organisational commitment. A rescaled mean-centred value was used for the ethical climate variable for the moderated regression analysis. The zero values for the ethical climate construct were set at one standard deviation above and below the mean for respondents that had high and low perceptions of ethical climate mean scores, respectively. The regression model was calculated on the scores of the ethical climate in terms of the moderating effect on the relationship between retention factors (independent) and organisational commitment (dependent) variables. For this study, the practical significance of the ΔR^2 values was determined by calculating effect sizes (f^2) (McGrath, 2014), namely a small effect size of 0.02 to 0.14, a medium effect size of between 0.15 and 0.34, and a large effect size of

between 0.35 and 0.50. All tests were held to a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0.05$) for the statistical significance.

5.7 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

A hypothesis is a testable proposition, which states that there is a relationship or significant difference between two or more variables (Saunders et al., 2019). A good hypothesis provides transition from a question or problem statement to a form that is easily persuasive to test the research methods being discussed (Salkind, 2017). The reviewed literature in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 addressed a number of research hypotheses that are outlined below. A null hypothesis acts as a starting point because it is the state of affairs, which, in the absence of other information, is accepted as true (Salkind, 2017). A null hypothesis is a statement of equality (Salkind, 2017). The hypotheses presented in table 5.7 were tested in this empirical study:

Table 5.7: Link between the empirical research aims, hypotheses and statistical procedures

Empirical research aims	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure
Research aim 1: To determine the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.	<p>H01 – There is no relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.</p> <p>Ha1 – There is a relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.</p>	Correlation analysis
Research aim 1: To determine the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.	<p>H01 – There is no relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment.</p> <p>Ha1 – There is a relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment.</p>	
Research aim 1: To determine the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.	<p>H01 – There is no relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.</p> <p>Ha1 – There is a relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.</p>	
Research aim 2: To determine whether work ethics climate moderates the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.	<p>H02 –Work ethics climate does not act as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment amongst a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.</p> <p>Ha2 - Work ethics climate did act as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment amongst a sample of nurses in a South African public hospital.</p>	Hierarchical moderated regression analysis

Note: H0 (null hypothesis); Ha (Alternative hypotheses)

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the study's research design, which included the sampling technique and population that was used, measuring tools, data collection, analysis and capturing; lastly, the research hypotheses were formulated. The empirical research phase's first six steps have, therefore, been addressed. The following chapter provides an interpretation of the findings, integrating the findings with the literature.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the statistical results pertaining to the research aims. The descriptive statistics, correlational statistics and the hierarchical moderation regression are discussed. The chapter concludes with an interpretation and discussions of the research and a chapter summary.

6.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The results for the mean, and the standard deviations for the RFQ, ECQ, and OCB are summarised in Table 6.1.

6.2.1 The Retention Factors Questionnaire (RFQ)

Table 6.1 indicates that the mean scores ranged from 2.43 to 3.21. The participants obtained the highest mean score for work life balance ($M= 3.21$; $SD= .411$), followed by total retention factor ($M= 3.01$; $SD = .473$). Participants obtained a moderate mean score for career development ($M=2.74$; $SD =.953$), and supervisor support ($M =2.71$; $SD= .739$). The participants obtained the lowest mean scores for job characteristics ($M=2.46$; $SD= .987$), compensation ($M=2.44$; $SD =.962$), and training and development ($M =2.43$; $SD= .920$).

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	α
Total retention factors	3.01	.473	.85
Job characteristics	2.46	.987	.79
Compensation	2.44	.962	.77
Training & development	2.43	.920	.83
Supervisor support	2.71	.739	.62
Career development	2.74	.953	.82
Work-life balance	3.21	.411	.73
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	α
Total work ethics climate	4.10	.483	.80
Caring	3.17	.509	.77
Law & code	3.66	.906	.70
Rule	3.08	.933	.70
Independence	3.33	.903	.58
Instrumental	2.80	.823	.51
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	α
Total organisational commitment	2.87	.667	.79
Affective commitment	2.92	.552	.82
Continuance commitment	2.62	.855	.75
Normative commitment	3.23	.910	.63

6.2.2 Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ)

Table 6.1 indicates that the mean scores ranged from 2.80 to 4.10. The participants obtained the highest mean score for total work ethics climate (M= 4.10; SD= .483), followed by law and code (M= 3.66; SD = .906), independence (M =3.33; SD =.903), caring (M =3.17; SD = .509), and rule (M =3.08; SD =.933). The participants obtained the lowest mean score for instrumental (M =2.80; SD = .823).

6.2.3 Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

Table 6.1 indicates that the mean scores ranged from 2.62 to 3.23. The participants obtained the highest mean score for normative commitment (M= 3.23; SD= .910). The participants obtained a moderate mean score for affective commitment (M =2.92; SD = .552), followed by total organisational commitment (M= 2.87; SD = .823), and continuance commitment (M =2.62; SD =.855).

6.3 CORRELATIONS

The correlation between work ethics climate and retention factors was calculated, using Pearson's correlations. According to Tabachnich and Fidell (2014), correlation is used in social research to primarily determine a correlational relationship between variables, or to establish the direction and strength of the relationship.

6.3.1 Correlation analysis between work ethics climate and retention factors

The study used Pearson's product-moment correlations to compute association between the variables. These correlations allowed the study to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the constructs under investigation.

Table 6.2: Correlation between work ethics climate and retention factors (N=208)

Variables	Total work ethics climate	Caring	Law & code	Rule	Independence	Instrumental	Total retention factors	Job characteristics	Compensation	Training & Development	Supervisor support	Career development	Work life balance
Total work ethics climate	1	.65***	.65***	.65**	.52**	.56***	.18*	.15*	.02	-.00	.22*	.16*	.00
Caring		1	.23 [†]	.46**	-.01	.07	-.19*	-.24*	-.36**	-.38**	-.04	-.04	.16*
Law & code			1	.35**	.29*	.24*	.22*	.26*	.23*	.20**	.17*	.10	-.06
Rule				1	.18*	.17*	.21*	.06	.03	.01	.26*	.33*	-.03
Independence					1	.34**	.34**	.29*	.25*	.26*	.33**	.22*	-.11
Instrumental						1	.34**	.35**	.23*	.23*	.25*	.25*	.34*
Total retention factors							1	.81***	.76***	.80***	.80***	.71**	-.14 [†]
Job characteristics								1	.75***	.79***	.54***	.42**	-.20*
Compensation									1	.79***	.54***	.42**	-.20*
Training & Development										1	.52***	.39**	-.21*
Supervisor support											1	.56***	-.11
Career development												1	-.31**
Work-life balance													1

N = 208; ***= level of significance, Correlation values $r \leq 0.29$ are practically significant (small effect). Correlation values $r = \leq 0.49$ are practically significant (medium effect). Correlation values $r \geq 0.50$ are practically significant (large effect).

Table 6.2 shows that the variables correlated significantly ($r \geq .15$; $r \geq .81$; had a small to large practical effect; $p \leq .05$), and there was a negative correlation ($r \leq -.14$; $r \leq -.38$; small to medium practical effect) for the retention factors.

The results indicate that total work ethics climate correlated significantly with caring ($r = 0.65$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), law and code ($r = 0.65$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), rule ($r = 0.65$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), independence ($r = 0.52$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and instrumental ($r = 0.56$; large effect $p \leq 0.05$). The results indicate that total work ethics climate correlated significantly with total retention factors ($r = 0.18$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), job characteristics ($r = 0.15$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), supervisor support ($r = 0.22$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.16$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between caring and law and code ($r = 0.23$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and rule ($r = 0.46$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant negative correlation was also found between caring and total retention factors ($r = -0.19$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), job characteristics ($r = -0.24$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), compensation ($r = -0.36$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = -0.38$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and work-life balance ($r = -0.16$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between law and code and rule ($r = 0.35$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), independence ($r = 0.29$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and instrumental ($r = 0.24$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was also found between law and code and total retention factors ($r = 0.22$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), job characteristics ($r = 0.26$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), compensation ($r = 0.20$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = 0.20$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and supervisor support ($r = 0.17$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between rule and independence ($r = 0.18$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and instrumental ($r = 0.17$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was also found between rule and total retention factors ($r = 0.21$;

small effect; $p \leq .05$), supervisor support ($r = 0.26$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.33$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between independence and instrumental ($r = 0.34$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). In addition, a significant positive correlation was also found between independence and total retention factors ($r = 0.34$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), job characteristics ($r = 0.29$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), compensation ($r = 0.25$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = 0.26$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), supervisor support ($r = 0.33$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.22$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

The results indicate that instrumental correlated significantly with total retention factors ($r = 0.34$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), job characteristics ($r = 0.35$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), compensation ($r = 0.23$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = 0.25$; small effect; $p \leq 0.05$), career development ($r = 0.25$; small effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and work-life balance ($r = 0.34$, medium effect $p \leq 0.05$). A significant positive correlation was established between total retention factors and job characteristics ($r = 0.81$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), compensation ($r = 0.76$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = 0.80$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), supervisor support ($r = 0.80$, large effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.71$; large effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between job characteristics and compensation ($r = 0.75$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), training and development ($r = 0.79$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and supervisor support ($r = 0.54$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.42$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant negative correlation was observed between job characteristics and work-life balance ($r = -0.20$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between training and development and supervisor support ($r = 0.52$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and career development ($r = 0.39$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was observed between training and development and work-life balance ($r = -0.21$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between supervisor support and career development ($r = 0.56$; large effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant negative correlation was observed between career development and work-life balance ($r = -0.31$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$).

6.3.2 Correlation analysis between work ethics climate and organisational commitment

Table 6.3: Correlation between work ethics climate and organisational commitment (N=208)

Variables	Total work ethics climate	Caring	Law & code	Rule	Independence	Instrumental	Total organisational commitment	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
Total work ethics climate	1	.65***	.65***	.65***	.52***	.56****	.41**	.12	.41**	.33**
Caring		1	.23*	.46**	-.01	.07	.09	-.18*	.40*	.02
Law & code			1	.35**	.29*	.24*	.27*	.14*	.15*	.26*
Rule				1	.18*	.17*	.29*	.13	.36**	.11
Independence					1	.38**	.41**	.33**	.09	.41**
Instrumental						1	.35**	.25*	.16*	.31
Total organisational commitment							1	.74***	.51***	.76***
Affective commitment								1	-.06	.44**
Continuance commitment									1	.15*
Normative commitment										1

N = 208; ***= level of significance, Correlation values $r \leq 0.29$ are practically significant (small effect). Correlation values $r = \leq 0.49$ are practically significant (medium effect). Correlation values $r \geq 0.50$ are practically significant (large effect).

Table 6.3 shows that the variables correlated significantly ($r \geq .14$; $\leq r \geq .74$; small to large practical effect; $p \leq .05$) for organisational commitment.

The results indicate that the total work ethics climate correlated significantly with total organisational commitment ($r = 0.41$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), continuance commitment

($r = 0.41$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.33$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between caring and continuance commitment ($r = 0.40$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), while a negative correlation was found between caring and affective commitment rule ($r = -0.18$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between law and code and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.27$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.14$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), continuance commitment ($r = -0.15$; small effect; $p \leq .05$) and normative commitment ($r = 0.26$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). Furthermore, a significant positive correlation was established between rule and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.29$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and continuance commitment ($r = 0.36$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). In addition, a significant positive correlation was established between independence and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.41$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.33$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.41$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between instrumental and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.35$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.25$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), continuance commitment ($r = 0.16$; small effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.31$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$).

The results indicate that total organisational commitment correlated significantly with affective commitment ($r = 0.74$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), continuance commitment ($r = 0.51$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.76$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$). A significant positive correlation was established between affective commitment and normative commitment ($r = 0.44$; medium effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between continuance commitment and normative commitment ($r = 0.15$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

6.3.3 Correlation analysis between retention factors and organisational commitment

Table 6.4: Correlation between retention factors and organisational commitment (N=208)

Variables	Total retention factors	Job characteristics	Compensation	Training & development	Supervisor support	Career development	Work life balance	Total organisational commitment	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
Total retention factors	1	.81***	.76***	.80***	.80***	.71***	-.06	.47***	.67***	-.14	.71***
Job characteristics		1	.75***	.79***	.54***	.42**	-.20*	.33**	.53***	-.21*	.42**
Compensation			1	.96***	.49**	.37**	-.21*	.30**	.53***	-.25*	.25*
Training & development				1	.52***	.39**	-.21*	.30**	.56***	-.27*	.39**
Supervisor support					1	.56***	-.11	.42**	.53***	.01	.56***
Career development						1	-	.48**	.62***	-.00	-.31**
Work-life balance							1	.31**	-.30**	-.04	-.21*
Total organisational commitment								1	.74***	.51***	.76***
Affective commitment									1	-.06	.44**
Continuance commitment										1	.15*
Normative commitment											1

N = 208; ***= level of significance, Correlation values $r \leq 0.29$ are practically significant (small effect). Correlation values $r \leq 0.49$ are practically significant (medium effect). Correlation values $r \geq 0.50$ are practically significant (large effect).

Table 6.4 shows that the variables correlated significantly ($r \geq .15$; $\leq r \geq .81$; small to large practical effect, $p \leq .05$) between retention factors and organisational commitment.

The results indicate that total retention factors correlated significantly with total organisational commitment ($r = 0.47$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.67$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.71$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$). A negative correlation was observed between the total retention factors and normative commitment ($r = -0.14$; small effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between job characteristics and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.33$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.53$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.42$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$). On the contrary, a negative correlation was found between job characteristics and the continuance commitment rule ($r = -0.21$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between compensation and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.30$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.53$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.25$; small effect; $p \leq 0.05$). A negative correlation was found between compensation and continuance commitment rule ($r = -0.25$; small effect; $p \leq .05$).

A significant positive correlation was established between training and development and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.30$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.56$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.39$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$). However, a negative correlation was found between training and development and the continuance commitment rule ($r = -0.27$; small effect; $p \leq .05$). A significant positive correlation was established between supervisor support and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.42$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), affective commitment ($r = 0.53$; large effect; $p \leq .05$), and normative commitment ($r = 0.56$; large effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

Moreover, a significant positive correlation was established between career development and total organisational commitment ($r = 0.48$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$), and affective commitment ($r = 0.62$; large effect; $p \leq .05$). However, a negative correlation was found

between career development and normative commitment ($r = -0.31$; medium effect; $p \leq 0.05$).

6.4 HIERARCHICAL MODERATOR REGRESSION

Table 6.5 reports the final step of the results of the moderated regression analysis, with work ethics climate as a moderator of the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.

6.4.1 Work ethics climate as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment (N=208)

Table 6.5 (Model 1) indicated, in terms of the main effects, that job characteristics acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = .26$; $p \leq .001$), while work ethics climate ($\beta = .35$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment. In terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate did not significantly moderate the relationship between the job characteristics variable and organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .25$; $\Delta F = 21.91$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

Table 6.5 (Model 2) below indicated, in terms of the main effects, that compensation acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = .26$; $p \leq .001$), whereas work ethics climate ($\beta = .37$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a predictor of organisational commitment. In terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate acted as a significant moderator in the relationship between compensation and organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .26$; $\Delta F = 24.34$; $f^2 = .03$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

The interactions were analysed using the easy slope test, and by graphing the interaction using the value of the moderator at the mean, as well as standard deviations above and below the mean (Cohen et al., 2013). As portrayed in Figure 6.1, the relationship

between compensation and organisational commitment was higher for those participants with a high level of work ethics climate than for those with a low level. The participants who scored higher for compensation also achieved significantly higher scores than their counterparts for organisational commitment.

Table 6.5: Work ethics climate as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment (N=208)

Model1	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Job characteristics	.26**	.04	.01			
	Work ethics climate	.35**	.02	.00	.25***	.23***	
	Job characteristics X Work ethics climate	.08	.00	.00	ΔF:00	F:21.91	0.3
Model 2	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Compensation	.26***	.90	.21			
	Work ethics climate	.37***	9.65	1.61	.26***	.27***	
	Compensation X Work ethics climate	.15*	.04	.02	ΔF:00	F:24.34	.03
Model 3	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Training & development	.28***	.03	.01			
	Work ethics climate	.39***	.02	.00	.27***	.26***	
	Training & development X Work ethics climate	.13*	.00	.00	ΔF:00	F:25.01	0.4
Model 3	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Supervisor support	.31***	.04	.01			
	Work ethics climate	.32***	.01	.00	.29***	.29***	
	Supervisor X Work ethics climate	.11	.00	.00	ΔF:00	F:27.29	0.4
Model 4	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Career development	.41***	.04	.01			
	Work ethics climate	.34***	.01	.00	.034***	.34***	
	Career development X Work ethics climate	.05	.00	.00	ΔF:00	F:34.99	0.5
Model 5	Predictor variables	β	b	SE	ΔR²	Total R²	f²
Organisational commitment	Work life balance	-.21**	-.04	.01			
	Work ethics climate	.40***	.02	.00	.21***	.20***	
	Work life balance X Work ethics climate	.06	.00	.00	ΔF:00	F:18.20	0.3

N = 208; **, $p \leq 0.01$; *, $p \leq 0.05$. Δ, delta; β, standardised regression coefficient; b unstandardised regression coefficient; SE, standard error; f², effect size estimate for the interaction term; Beta values are mean centred: All statistics are from the final (second) step.

Table 6.5 (Model 3) indicated, in terms of the main effects, that training and development acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = .28$; $p \leq .001$), whereas work ethics climate ($\beta = .39$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a predictor of organisational commitment. In terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate significantly moderated the relationship between the job characteristics variable and organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .26$; $\Delta F = 25.01$; $f^2 = .03$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

The interactions were analysed by using the easy slope test and by graphing the interaction, using the value of the moderator at the mean, as well as standard deviations above and below the mean (Cohen et al., 2013). As portrayed in Figure 6.2, the relationship between training and development and organisational commitment was higher for those participants with a high level of work ethics climate than it was amongst those with a low level. The participants who scored higher on training and development also achieved significantly higher scores than their counterparts for organisational commitment.

Table 6.5 (Model 4) also indicated, in terms of the main effects, that supervisor support acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = .31$; $p \leq .001$), while work ethics climate ($\beta = .32$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a predictor of organisational commitment. However, in terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate did not significantly moderate the relationship between the job characteristics variable and organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .29$; $\Delta F = 27.29$; $f^2 = .03$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

Furthermore, Table 6.5 (Model 5) indicated, in terms of the main effects, that career development acted as a significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = .41$; $p \leq .001$), while work ethics climate ($\beta = .34$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a predictor of organisational commitment. However, in terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate did not significantly moderate the relationship between the job characteristics variable and

organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .34$; $\Delta F = 34.99$; $f^2 = .04$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

As Table 6.5 indicated, in terms of the main effects, work life balance acted as a negative significant predictor of organisational commitment ($\beta = -.21$; $p \leq .001$), while work ethics climate ($\beta = .40$; $p \leq .001$) acted as a predictor of organisational commitment. However, in terms of the interaction effects, work ethics climate did not significantly moderate the relationship between the job characteristics variable and organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2 = .20$; $\Delta F = 18.20$; $f^2 = .03$; $p \leq .001$). Overall, the interaction effects were small in practical effect size.

Interaction effects between work ethics climate with retention factors on organisational commitment (N = 200)

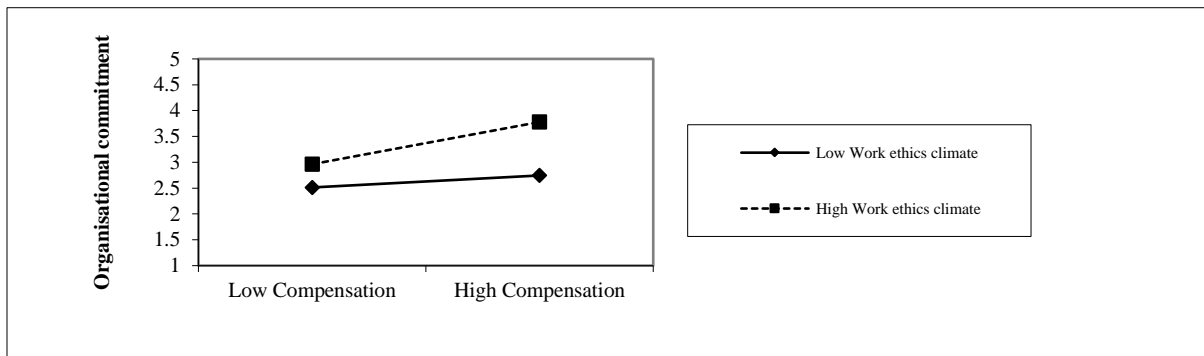


Figure 6.1: Interaction effects between work ethics climate with compensation on organisational commitment (N = 208)

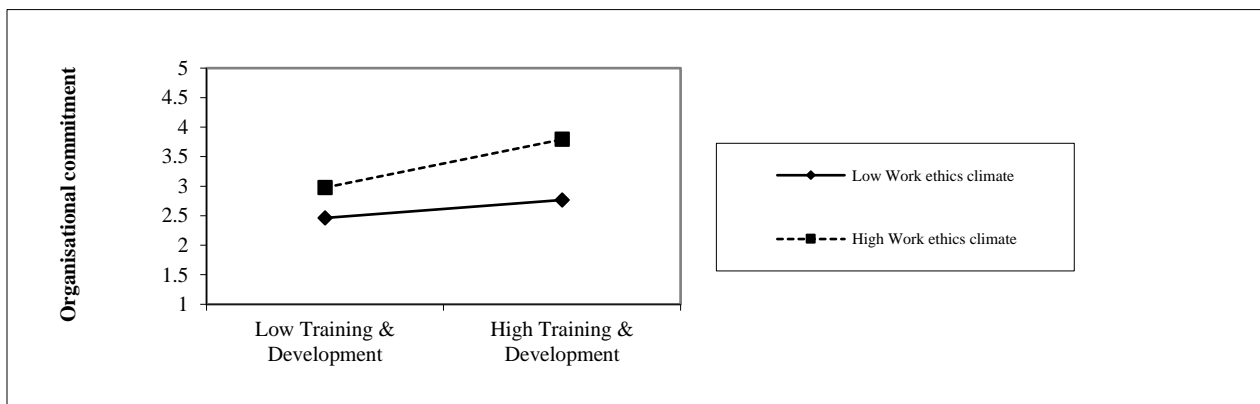


Figure 6.2: Interaction effects between work ethics climate with job characteristics on organisational commitment (N = 208)

6.4.2 Decisions regarding the research hypotheses

The decisions in Table 6.6 were made in connection with the hypotheses and based on the study's findings. Table 6.6 presents the null hypotheses that were formulated for the study; they were rejected because an association was found between the work ethics climate, retention factors, and organisational commitment constructs.

Table 6.6: Decisions regarding the research hypotheses

Research hypotheses	Decision
H01 – There is no relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.	Not supported
Ha1 – There is a relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.	Supported
H02 – There is no relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment.	Not supported
Ha2 – There is a relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment.	Supported
H03 – There is no relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.	Not supported
Ha3 – There is a relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.	Supported
H04 – Work ethics climate did not act as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.	Not supported
H04 – Work ethics climate did act as a moderator in the relationship between (compensation and training and development) retention factors and organisational commitment.	Partially supported

6.5 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The next section integrates and examines the results and discusses these in terms of each of the specified research aims.

6.5.1 Biographical profile of the sample and frequencies

The biographical profile obtained from the sample indicated that it comprised predominantly single black females between the ages of 18 and 30, with a secondary level of schooling, and who had worked for the hospital for 0-10 years. These key sample characteristics had to be considered for the interpretation. Therefore, it seems as if participants in this group could benefit from improved work ethics climate and retention factors, which might enhance their psychological attachment and eventually retain them as skilled workers.

6.5.2 Descriptive statistics: Interpretation of the results

In the following sections interpretation of the results is presented.

6.5.2.1 Work behaviour variables profile

Table 6.1 is relevant to this section.

The behaviour profile of the sample shows that the participants perceived high levels of work ethics climate, law and code, independence, caring and rule. The participants recorded a moderate level for instrumental. The current findings are in line with different studies conducted in various organisations by Dinc and Huric (2017), Bekir (2017), and Mobarakeh and Ghorbani (2015). In terms of the retention factors, participants were satisfied with their work-life balance. In terms of job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, and career development, participants were located between neutral and satisfied. The current findings are consistent with those of Iqbal and Hashmi (2015), and Singh and Prakash (2013). Participants recorded a high level on

normative commitment, while in terms of affective and continuance commitment, they perceived a moderate level. The current findings are consistent with those of Kou (2012).

Except for supervisor support, independence, instrumental and normative commitment, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of all other variables were above the guidelines of .70 recommended by (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

6.5.3 Empirical research aims 1, 2 and 3: Interpretation of the correlation results

Research aims 1, 2 and 3 determined the statistical nature of the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses in a South African hospital.

6.5.3.1 Correlation between work ethics climate and retention factors

Table 5.2 is relevant to this section.

The results suggest that the participants who perceived a high level of work ethics climate seemed to be more satisfied with the job characteristics, supervisor support and career development, compared to the other participants. These findings are similar to those of Sabiu et al. (2019), who found that ethical climate influences human management practices. Organisational climate is a shared perception of what the organisation is like in terms of practices, policies, procedure and rewards (Mulki & Lask, 2019). It has become apparent that employees who perceived their work environment to be ethically favourable, will likely perceive a high level of autonomy, task variety, psychological support from their supervisors, and opportunity for growth (Eustace & Martins, 2014).

Some HR practices are considered to be retention factors or resources that may allow organisations to retain their key skilled workers (Stewart et al., 2011). Workplace culture, as an organisational context variable, related positively with employee retention (Tetteh

& Brenyah, 2016). Positive work ethics climate results in decreasing stress levels, job attitudes and lower turnover intentions (Mulki et al., 2008; Numminen et al., 2015).

Participants who perceived a high level of care were less likely to be satisfied with job characteristics, compensation, training and development, and work-life balance. This implies that employees who perceive a positive ethical atmosphere in the organisation, and who are given autonomy to work in their jobs, will likely be satisfied with rewards policies, opportunities for growth, and be able to balance between work and his or her personal life. These findings correspond with those of Rubel et al. (2017), Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), and Mitonga-Monga (2018), who report that when an organisation's ethical climate strength is high, employees are more likely satisfied with the level of autonomy, compensation, and opportunity for training and development.

The results suggest that work ethics climate related with supervisor support and career development. This could be explained by the fact that when employees are provided with a favourable ethical environment, they will likely be satisfied with autonomy, the reward systems, learning opportunities, promotion, support, and time for socialising. This is in line with Mitonga-Monga (2018), and Van Dyk and Coetzee's (2012) findings.

The results suggest that participants who perceived a high level of the rule seemed to be happy with their supervisor support and career development. This implies that participants who perceived their organisation to have a fair rule and norms seemed to be satisfied with their supervisor support, and the opportunity provided for further development. Similarly, these findings mirror those of Mitonga-Monga (2018).

The results suggest that participants who perceived a high level of instrumental seemed to be satisfied with their job characteristics, compensation, opportunity for training, supervisor support, career development, and work-life balance. This can be explained by the fact that when employees feel that they are working for the interests of the organisation, they will most likely be satisfied with their job, fair rewards, learning opportunities, positive feedback, and opportunity to realise their career aspirations.

These findings are in line with those of Mitonga-Monga (2018). The employees who are concerned with the interests of the organisation are likely to perceive a high level of autonomy and task verity, be happy with their rewards system, and training development. These findings mirror those of Malam et al. (2019), who reported that ethical climate-related to training and development.

6.5.3.2 *Correlation between work ethics climate and organisational commitment*

Table 5.2 is relevant to this section.

The results suggest that a high-level work ethics climate was associated with their level of organisational commitment. This implies that when participants perceive a positive and ethical atmosphere, moral beliefs, and clear regulations and rules, they would likely show psychological commitment, and extend their membership with the employing organisation. Similarly, these findings mirror those by Mitonga-Monga (2018), who found that a work ethics climate related positively with organisational commitment.

The results suggest that a high level of caring is associated with continuance commitment. This implies that when participants perceive their organisation to be caring, with concern for their well-being, they will likely choose to stay at the organisation for a long time. In contrast, those participants who perceived a low level of caring are more likely to leave their organisation. This finding is similar to that of Mitonga-Monga (2018), who indicates that employees who are likely to perceive a lesser level of caring from their employer, are likely to leave the organisation.

The results suggest that law, code and rule are associated with total organisational commitment, as well as affective, continuance and normative commitment. This means that those participants that perceived that their organisation has a positive code of conduct, regulations and policies, were likely to identify with their organisation's goals, and would likely maintain their organisational membership. These findings mirror those of Mitonga-Monga (2018), and Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012).

The results suggest that independence and instrumental are associated with organisational commitment, and (affective, continuance and normative) commitment variables. This implies that participants who were perceived to act according to their personal moral beliefs, and who work in the interests of the organisation, were likely to be psychologically attached to it, and feel happy and obliged to stay with the employing organisation. This is in line with Mitonga-Monga (2018) and Osei et al., (2018) findings, which revealed that when employees perceived that they are working in the interests of their employer, they would be likely to extend their stay and contribute to the accomplishment of the organisation's goal(s).

6.5.3.3 *Correlation between retention factors and organisational commitment*

Table 5.3 is relevant to this section.

The results suggest that total retention factors (job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career development and work-life balance) are associated with total organisational commitment (affective and normative). Participants who were satisfied with job characteristics seemed to be committed, involved and identified with the organisation's goals. These findings correspond with those by Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), as they found that retention factors associated with employees' level of commitment.

Participants who were happy with the training and development seemed to be psychologically attached and obliged to remain in the organisation. In contrast, those who were less satisfied with training and development were more likely to leave the organisation. These findings are similar to those of Morrow (2011) and Abba (2018), who reported that employees with high levels of learning orientation respond to development support with greater commitment.

The results suggest that participants who were content with support from their supervisor seemed to show loyalty to their employer. This implies that when participants are satisfied with their involvement in decision-making, the discretionary power provided to

them by their supervisor, they would likely be psychologically attached, show loyalty, and feel obliged to remain in the organisation. These findings are similar to those of Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012).

Participants who were content with their career and development seemed to identify and become involved in the organisation's goals. This implies that participants who perceived that they were allowed to develop, were likely to be committed to and extend their membership with the employing organisation. In contrast, those participants who were less satisfied with career opportunities were more likely to be psychologically prepared to leave the organisation. These findings are in line with those of Dockel et al. (2006) and Coetzee et al. (2014) who found that career development relates positively with employees' levels of organisational commitment.

The results suggest that participants who were not satisfied with their work-life balance seemed to be less committed to the organisation. This implies that when participants perceived imbalance between work and social life, they were less likely to be committed to the organisation. These findings are similar to those of Deery and Jago (2015), who found work-life balance to be a key variable when addressing issues of employee management and employee retention.

6.5.4 Empirical research aim 4: Interpretation of the hierarchical regression

Research aim 4 was meant to determine if the work ethics climate acted as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment in a sample of nurses at a South African hospital.

6.5.4.1 Work ethics climate as a moderator in the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment

Table 6.5 is relevant to this section.

The results show that work ethics climate influences the relationship between compensation and organisational commitment. This implies that employees who perceived a high level of ethical climate were likely to perceive high levels of compensation, which in turn led them to demonstrate high levels of commitment. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) maintain that when employees are satisfied with reward systems applied by their employer, as well as the workplace atmosphere, they would likely be committed to the organisation.

The results show that work ethics climate moderate the association between training and development, and organisational commitment. This implies that high levels of work ethics climate are associated with both levels of training and development commitment. Employees who perceived a positive and favourable ethical work environment and who are happy with training and development opportunities, will most likely be psychologically attached to, and loyal to the employing organisation. These findings are similar to those by Joaõ and Coetzee (2012), who maintains that training and development is an important organisation facet to retain qualified employees. Organisations that strive for an ethical work environment, and that offer opportunities for growth, could send a message to employees that they are investing in them and regard as valuable resources (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). The results revealed that work ethics climate did not moderate the relationship between job characteristics, supervisor support, career development, work-life balance and organisational commitment. These findings mirror those studies of Numminen et al. (2015) and Schulte et al. (2001), who reported no significant association between work ethics climate and employee retention.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the salient points of the literature and empirical study. The findings of the study were interpreted and explained succinctly.

The following empirical research aims were achieved:

Research aim 1: To determine the statistical nature of the relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors in a sample of nurses at a South African hospital;

Research aim 2: To determine the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment;

Research aim 3: To determine the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment; and

Research aim 4: To determine whether work ethics climate moderates the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment.

The following chapter (Chapter 7) contains a broad discussion of the conclusions drawn from the study's findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for both future research and practical application of the findings.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's conclusions, limitations and recommendations. The chapter begins with the conclusions reached in terms of the literature and the study's empirical findings. Thereafter, it presents the study's limitations and recommendations for further research.

7.1.1 Conclusions regarding the aims of the study

The general aim of this research was to examine whether a relationship exists between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment amongst nurses at a South African hospital. The general aims were accomplished by addressing and achieving the specific aims of the study.

7.1.2 Conclusions regarding the specific literature aims of the study

7.1.2.1 Conceptualisation of the construct work ethics climate and retention factors

The literature review's aim of conceptualising the construct, work ethics climate and retention factors, was achieved in Chapter 2 of this study. From this conceptualisation, the following conclusion was drawn:

Based on the reviewed literature, a work ethics climate is explained as the shared perception of ethically acceptable behaviour, and how organisations address ethical issues (Numminen et al., 2015). Shafer (2015) and Hansen et al. (2016) concur that top management will influence employee perceptions of the work ethics climate in their organisational sub-unit or organisation. Victor and Cullen's (1988) theoretical ethical climate model comprises two dimensions; the first dimension, ethical criterion, is characterised by three constructs: (1) egoism; (2) benevolence (utilitarianism); and (3) principle (deontology). These dimensions are the implicit guidelines by which ethical

decisions are framed (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Putranta & Kingshott, 2011). The second dimension, the locus of analysis, comprises individual, local and cosmopolitan constructs. The dimension, locus of analysis, taps the basis on which an employee's ethical decisions are made (Putranta & Kingshott, 2011).

The work ethics climate is influenced by organisational normative systems such as policies, procedures, rewards, and control systems (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000). Factors affecting work ethics climate, and based on current literature, are classified as (1) individual personality, and (2) organisational factors (Malloy & Agarwal, 2003).

Previous studies have proved that there is a positive theoretical relationship between work ethics climate and lower turnover intentions (Mulki et al., 2008; Numminen et al., 2015; Hart, 2005).

Previous literature defines retention as a long-term strategy by organisations to ensure that competent employees choose to join their organisations and cement their employment relationship (Idris, 2014). Employee retention is a process of persuading employees to stay with the organisation (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). Michael et al. (2016) define retention as an organisation's ability to hold onto employees that it wants to maintain longer than its competitors. Dockel (2003) indicates that there are six retention factors, which were significant for this study: compensation; job characteristics; training and development opportunities; supervisor support; career opportunities; and work life balance.

The literature indicates that retention factors are influenced by age, gender, job level, economic conditions, career success, and career mobility (Van Dyk, 2011; Pauw, 2011).

Relevant research on retention factors found strong evidence of the relationship between work environment and employee retention in which it was determined that work environment significantly affects employee retention (Mandhanya, 2015). In the same

vein, Laddha et al. (2012) conclude that there is a positive correlation between a healthy positive work environment culture and employee retention.

7.1.2.2 *The conceptualisation of the construct organisational commitment*

The literature review's aim of conceptualising the construct, organisational commitment, was accomplished in Chapter 3 of this study, allowing for the conclusion presented below.

Organisational commitment comprises an emotional bond, which includes the organisation's values and goals because of the organisation itself, and not its instrumental values (Gamgai & Agrawal, 2015). Organisational commitment is a highly effective influential strategy to connect employees and their organisation, providing cohesion and enhancing employees' efforts to address external factors and to meet customer needs (Kou, 2012). Four main approaches have emerged to conceptualise and explore organisational commitment: the motivational approach; the attitudinal approach; the behavioural approach; and the multidimensional approach, which Roodt (2004) identified. Meyer and Allen (1991) developed the tri-dimensional model to conceptualise organisational commitment in three dimensions: affective; continuance; and normative commitments.

Previous literature indicates that age, gender, compensations, work environment, and management style all influence organisational commitment (Coetzee & Botha, 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

Previous studies indicated that there is a positive significant correlation between organisational commitment and organisational culture (Manetje & Martins, 2009). This theoretical link between organisational culture and organisational commitment indicates that organisational commitment is a result of organisational culture (Manetje & Martins, 2009).

7.1.2.4 *The conceptualisation of the theoretical relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment*

The literature review's aim of conceptualising the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment was achieved in Chapters 4 of this study, allowing for the conclusions presented below.

Schwepker (2001) found a positive significant relationship between work ethic climate and organisational commitment in a study. Putranta and Kingshott (2011) conducted a study on ethical climates and organisational commitment and established a negative relationship between egoistic climates and affective commitment, whereas a benevolent climate was indicated to have the potential to increase the affective and egoistic commitment. Schulte et al. (2001) concluded that there is a positive significant correlation between ethical climate and employee retention.

Van Dyk and Coetzee's (2012) study's results indicated that employee satisfaction with retention factors has a significant relationship with organisational commitment. Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) state that a positive significant relationship exists between organisational commitment and retention factors.

7.1.3 Conclusions in terms of the empirical aims of the study

7.1.3.1 Measure work ethics climate by means of the Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) in a South African public hospital

In Chapter 5 the empirical aim for this study was achieved. The Ethical Climate Questionnaire (ECQ) was completed by a sample of 208 participants who are employees at a South African hospital. The data analysis drew the following conclusions:

- The high mean score obtained for the dimension caring (3.17) indicates that the majority of the participants look out for each other's wellbeing, and that their most important concern is the good of all employees;
- In terms of the dimension low and code, the high mean score (3.66) indicates that employees display professional characteristics;
- The high mean score observed for the dimension rule (3.08) reflects that employees adhere to organisational goals and procedures, and obey and respect the organisation's rules;
- The dimension independence had a high mean score (3.33), suggesting that most employees decide for themselves what is right and/or wrong;
- The instrumental dimension had an average mean score (2.80), which indicates that less than half of the employees at the organisation look out for their own self-interest, ignoring the interests of their colleagues;
- Overall, the work ethics climate score demonstrated a high mean score of 4.10, which indicates that employees are happy with the organisation's work ethics climate; and
- The ECQ, therefore, considered to be a reliable instrument to measure work ethics climate and its dimensions.

7.1.3.2 *Measure retention factors by means of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) in a South African public hospital*

In Chapter 5 the empirical aim for this study was achieved. The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) was completed by a sample of 208 participants who are employees at a South African hospital. The data's analysis revealed the following conclusions:

- Participants obtained an average mean score for the factors of retention: job characteristics (2.46); compensation (2.44); training and development (2.43); supervisor support (2.71); and career development (2.74). This indicates that fewer than half of the employees in the organisation are not satisfied with the retention factors, except the retention factor of work life balance that had a high mean score (3.21). This indicates that there is a high work life balance at the organisation; and
- Overall, participants obtained an average mean score of 3.01, which indicates that only half of the employees are satisfied with the organisation's retention factors.

The RFMS was considered to be a reliable instrument to measure overall retention factors, but not to measure all its factors.

7.1.3.3 *Measure organisational commitment by means of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) in a South African public hospital*

In Chapter 5 the empirical aim for this study was achieved. The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was completed by a sample of 208 participants who are employees at a South African hospital. The following conclusions were drawn:

- The average mean score of the dimension affective commitment (2.92) indicates that less than half of the organisation's employees do not have a desire to work for the organisation;
- The dimension continuance commitment had an average mean score (2.62), which signifies that almost half of the organisation do not regard leaving their organisation as a high cost;
- Just one dimension had a high mean score, while two had an average mean score, which was considered to be acceptable for this study. Overall, the mean score (2.8) indicates that below half of the organisation's employees are committed to the organisation; and
- The OCQ was, therefore, considered to be a reliable instrument to measure organisational commitment, but not to measure all its factors.

7.1.3.5 *Determine the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment*

This empirical aim was achieved in Chapter 5 of this study. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between work ethics climate and organisational commitment, and its three dimensions. This analysis allowed for the following conclusions:

- There is a significant positive correlation of medium effect (0.41) between work ethics climate and organisational commitment;
- The dimension of organisational commitment (affective commitment) has a non-significant positive correlation of low effect (0.12) with work ethics climate;

- The other dimensions of organisational commitment (normative commitment (0.33) and continuance commitment (0.41) have a significant positive relationship of medium effect with work ethics climate; and
- In summary, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between work ethics climate and organisational commitment and its dimensions.

7.1.3.4 *Determine the relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors*

The empirical aim was achieved in Chapter 5 of this study. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.

There is a significant positive correlation of medium effect (0.18) between work ethics climate and retention factors. There is also no relationship between two factors of retention (training and development (0.00) and work life balance (0.00)) with work ethics climate. However, work ethics climate has a significant positive relationship with the other dimensions of retention factors, namely job characteristics (0.15), supervisor support (0.22) and career development (0.16). Overall, there is a statistically significant relationship between work ethics climate and retention factors.

7.1.3.6 *Determine the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment*

The empirical aim was achieved in Chapter 5 of this study. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between retention factors and organisational commitment. There is a significant correlation of medium effect between retention factors and organisational commitment (0.47) There is also a significant positive correlation of large effect on the dimensions of organisational commitment (affective (0.67) and normative commitment (0.71)), and a significant negative correlation of small effect between retention factors and the dimension of organisational commitment (continuance commitment) Overall, there is a statistically significant correlation between retention factors and commitment.

7.1.3.7 *Work ethics climate as a moderator between retention factors and organisational commitment*

In terms of this empirical aim, it was achieved in Chapter 5 of this study. Standard regression analysis was conducted between the overall work ethics climate as the moderator between retention factors and organisational commitment and its three dimensions. The dimensions of retention factors were used as the dependent variable. The following conclusions were drawn:

- Work ethics climate did moderate the relationship between the dimension of retention, training and development, and organisational commitment;
- Specifically, the dimensions of retention, training and development and organisational commitment relationships were stronger for participants with a high perception of work ethics climate than those with low perceptions of work ethics climate; and
- Most of the retention factor dimensions and work ethics climate predicted organisational commitment positively and significantly, except for work life balance.

- In summary, the results of the relationship among variables are illustrate in figure 7.1 below.

|

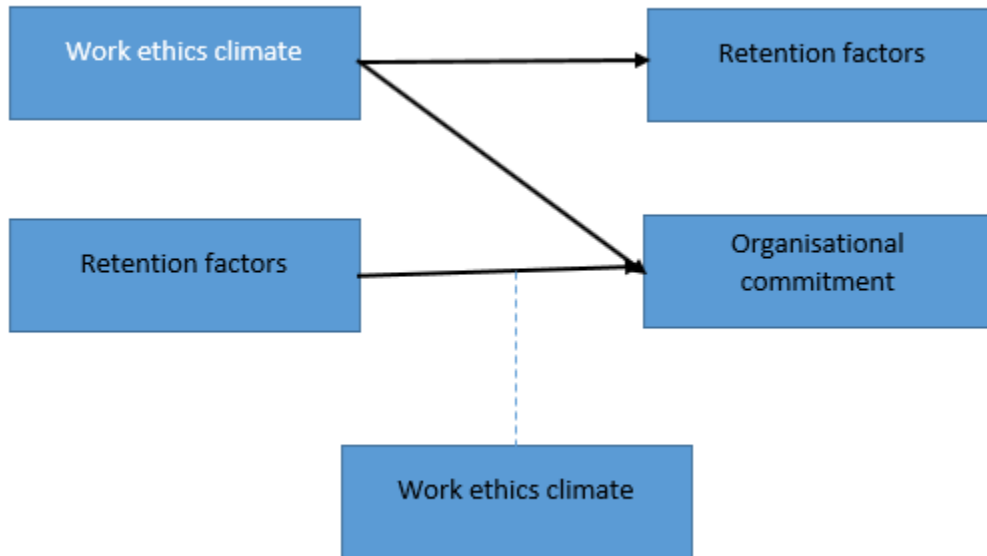


Figure 71: The results of the relationship between variables

7.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Certain limitations of the study were apparent in the literature review and empirical study.

7.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

There is an ample amount of international literature regarding the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment

However, there is a shortage of literature on the theoretical relationship between these three variables, especially in the context of the South African health sector. This hampered the researcher's efforts to find recent data, and also to refer to local studies and benchmark the results of this study against similar research.

7.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The first limitation relates to employees who were on leave and hence did not have the opportunity to take part in the study. The second limitation of the empirical study is that a small sample of 208 respondents was used for the study, which may not be representative of all employees in the researched organisation.

The third limitation involves the extent to which these findings can be generalised to other healthcare sector organisations, because the study was conducted in a single government hospital. The results cannot be generalised to other private or government hospitals in South Africa.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the aforementioned conclusions and limitations, certain recommendations have been compiled.

7.3.1 Recommendations for further research

Recommendations for further research on the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment are made based on the study's conclusions and limitations.

The current study provided insight into the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment. The research results should contribute valuable information in the body of knowledge relating to employee commitment amongst nurses in a South African public hospital. To increase external validity, further research should focus on a larger representative sample. The sample should be expanded in terms of biographic variables, which would render a better representation of different levels of work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

There is also a need for further research to be conducted on work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment specifically in a South African context. Further research should focus on obtaining a larger representative sample of nursing staff in public hospitals. Diverse models should also be used to investigate the relationship between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

Further longitudinal studies should be conducted to test the consistency of the relationship that exists between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment. Employees who are satisfied with their organisational work ethics and retention factors reciprocate in terms of their commitment towards their organisation.

7.3.2 Recommendations for the participating state hospital

The researcher is of the view that the results of the study should be communicated to all employees to create an awareness of the hospital's employees' current perceptions of work ethics climate, retention factors and employee commitment levels.

In most cases government hospitals face challenges, which include being understaffed, having ineffective management and a lack of resources, stressful working conditions, and long working hours. Considering these factors, organisational commitment is significant to ensure the state hospital's effectiveness.

These organisations should improve their work ethics and retention factors, which would help to retain nurses and other employees at such hospitals.

7.3.3 Recommendations for the field of human resource management

The reviewed literature on work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment could potentially provide a useful framework to design retention practices and methods that could influence both employees and the organisations. The empirical

study confirmed that there are indeed significant relationships between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

The roles of human resource management in organisations are often to fulfil the functions of retention managers, whilst guiding employees to make appropriate and informed decisions when considering leaving and resigning from the organisation. Such managers should also play a role in guiding the organisation to develop human resource strategies, and to implement mechanisms to improve work ethics climate and enhance retention factors as means to increase employee commitment.

Human resource management plays an important role, ensuring that the different human resource functions namely selection, training, recruitment, compensation, and so forth are aligned in order to retain employees (da Silva & Shinyashiki, 2014). Therefore, an understanding of the link between work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment will enable human resource managers and practitioners to increase employee commitment.

7.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the study's conclusions, limitations and recommendations. The chapter commenced with the conclusions, based on the general aim, literature aims, empirical aims, as well as the study's research hypothesis; these were discussed, and future research suggestions were made. Recommendations were also made for the participating South African public hospital, and the chapter concluded with recommendations for the field of HRM regarding work ethics climate, retention factors and organisational commitment.

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