

**A framework for staff retention in the higher education environment: effects of
the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust**

by

Anna Margaretha Snyman

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Supervisor: Prof M Coetzee

Co-supervisor: Prof N Ferreira

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DECLARATION

Name: A.M Snyman

Student number: 58529098

Degree: PhD (Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies)

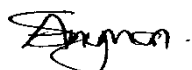
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13/01/2021

Anna Margaretha Snyman

Date

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ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

A FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT: EFFECTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT, ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND TRUST

by

Anna Margaretha Snyman

SUPERVISOR : Prof M Coetzee
CO-SUPERVISOR : Prof N Ferreira
DEPARTMENT : Human Resource Management
DEGREE : Doctor of Philosophy (Management Studies)

The general aim of the research was to construct a framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The elements of the retention framework were based on the results obtained from empirically examining the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with a complex set of human resource (HR) practices that influence staff retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). The framework also took into account the moderating effect of the socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, job level and tenure on the individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, as well as their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention factors.

A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted on a purposively selected population of full-time employees, both academic and support staff with a final random sample of participants (n = 493) from a single open distance learning institution in South Africa participated in the study. Descriptive, correlation and inferential statistics provided evidence that employees' beliefs about employer and employee mutual obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract compose the fabric of the psychological contract that predicts satisfaction with the retention practices through the psychological mechanisms of, especially, distributive justice and trust relationships with supervisors and managers. No significant moderating effects were observed. Employees differed in their perceptions of

employer obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract, but not necessarily in their perceptions of justice and trust. These differences confirmed the psychological contract as an essential aspect of the employer-employee relationship, and as key to retention considerations. Correlational links and differences among certain groups regarding the need for retention practices, such as training and development and career opportunities, further signal the importance of integrating retention practices as an element of the psychological contract. The framework for staff retention was constructed based on the key insights derived from the core significant findings. The research extended the classical social exchange theory and contributed new knowledge to psychological contract and retention theory. Recommendations for HR retention practice were made based on the proposed retention framework for the higher education setting.

KEY TERMS

Distributive justice, higher education environment, higher education institution, open distance learning, organisational justice, organisational trust, psychological contract, retention factors, retention practices, social exchange theory, trust relations with supervisors/managers

OPSOMMING

'N RAAMWERK VIR PERSONEELBEHOUD IN DIE HOËRONDERWYSOMGEWING: UITWERKINGS VAN DIE SIELKUNDIGE KONTRAK, ORGANISATORIESE GEREGTIGHEID EN VERTROU

deur

Anna Margaretha Snyman

PROMOTOR : Prof M Coetzee
MEDEPROMOTOR : Prof N Ferreira
DEPARTEMENT : Mensehulpbronbestuur
GRAAD : Doktor in die Filosofie (Bestuurstudie)

Die algemene oogmerk van die navorsing was om 'n raamwerk vir personeelbehoud in die hoëronderwysomgewing te skep. Die elemente van die behoudsraamwerk is gebaseer op die resultate wat verkry is van empiriese ondersoek na die bemiddelende uitwerking van organisatoriese geregtigheid en vertroue op die verhouding tussen die sielkundige kontrak en werknemers se tevredenheid met 'n komplekse versameling faktore wat met mensehulpbronne (MH) verband hou en wat personeelbehoud beïnvloed (insluitende vergoeding, poskenmerke, opleiding- en ontwikkelingsgeleenthede, promotorondersteuning, loopbaangeleenthede en beleide oor werk-lewe-balans). Hierdie raamwerk hou ook rekening met die versagende uitwerking van individue se sosio-demografiese eienskappe soos hul ras, geslag, ouderdom, posvlak en ampsbekleding op hul persepsies van die sielkundige kontrak, sowel as hul persepsies van organisatoriese geregtigheid en vertroue wanneer hul tevredenheid met MH-behoudsfaktore voorspel word.

'n Deursnee-kwantitatiewe opname is gedoen onder 'n doelbewus gekose steekproef van voltydse werknemers bestaande uit sowel akademiese as ondersteuningspersoneel (n = 493), met 'n finale ewekansige steekproef van 'n enkele oopafstandsleer-instelling in Suid-Afrika. Beskrywende, inferensiële en korrelasiestatistiek het bewyse opgelewer dat werknemers se oortuigings oor werkgevers en werknemers se wedersydse verpligtinge, werkstevredenheid en stand van die sielkundige kontrak die stof is waaruit die sielkundige kontrak bestaan, en wat tevredenheid met behoudpraktyke voorspel deur die sielkundige meganismes van veral die regverdigheid van die inkomsteverdeling en vertrouensverhoudinge met toesighouers en

bestuurders. Geen beduidende moderering uitwerkings is waargeneem nie. Werknemers se persepsies van werkgewerverpligtinge, werkstevredenheid en stand van die sielkundige kontrak het verskil, maar nie noodwendig hul persepsies van geregtigheid en vertrouwe nie. Hierdie verskille het bevestig dat die sielkundige kontrak 'n noodsaaklike aspek van die werkgewer-werknemer-verhouding is en deurslaggewend vir behoudoorwegings is. Korrelasieskakels en -verskille tussen sekere groepe ten opsigte van die behoefte aan behoudspraktyke soos opleiding en ontwikkeling, en loopbaangeleenthede, dui verder op die belangrikheid daarvan om behoudspraktyke te integreer as 'n element van die sielkundige kontrak. Die raamwerk vir personeelbehoud is ontwikkel op grond van die sleutelinsigte afkomstig van die kern- beduidende bevindings. Die navorsing het die klassieke sosiale-uitruiling-teorie uitgebrei en nuwe kennis bygedra tot die teorie oor sielkundige kontrak en behoud. Aanbevelings vir MH-behoud-praktyk is gedoen op grond van die voorgestelde behoudsraamwerk vir die hoërondewysmilieu.

SLEUTELTERME

Regverdigheid van die inkomsteverdeling, hoërondewysomgewing, hoërondewysinstelling, oopafstandsleer, organisatoriese geregtigheid, organisatoriese vertrouwe, sielkundige kontrak, behoudsfaktore, behoudspraktyke, sosiale-uitruiling-teorie, vertrouensverhoudinge met toesighouers/bestuurders

NGAMAFUPHI/NGOKUFUSHANE

**UHLAKA OLUHLOSE UKUGCINA ABASEBENZI BANGAKHAMBHI KWISIZINDA
SEMFUNDO ESEMAZIKWENI APHAKEME: IMITHELELA YESIVUMELWANO
SENGQONDO, UBULUNGISA NOKUTHEMBEKA KWINHLANGANO (*FRAMEWORK
FOR STAFF RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT: EFFECTS OF
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT, ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND TRUST*)**

Ibhalwe ngu

Anna Margaretha Snyman

UMELULEKI : Prof M Coetzee
UMNCEDISI KAMELULEKI : Prof N Ferreira
UMNYANGO : Human Resource Management
IZIQU : Doctor of Philosophy (Management Studies)

Inhloso yonke yocwaningo kwabe kuwukwakha umbhalo owuhlaka oluhlose ukugcina abasebenzi bangakhambi kwisizinda sezemfundo emazikweni aphezulu. Izinsika zohlaka oluhlose ukugcina abasebenzi bezisuselwa phezu kwemiphumela efunyenwe kucwaningo oluphathekayo oluhlola umthelela osizayo wobulungisa nokuthembeka kwenhlangano mayelana nobudlelwano obuphakathi kwesivumelwano sengqondo kanye nezinga lokwaneliseka kwabasebenzi ngemfumba yezinhloko ezinzima zohlelo lwezokuqhashwa kwabasebenzi (*human resource (HR)*) okuwuhlelo ezithinta ukugcinwa kwabasebenzi emsebenzini (kuxutshwa phakathi ukunxeshelwa, izimpawu zomsebenzi, amathuba okuqeqeshwa nokuthuthukiswa, uxhaso oluvela kubaphathi, amathuba okufundela umsebenzi kanye nemigomo eletha uzinzo empilweni yomsebenzi). Uhlaka futhi lubheke imithelela elingene yezimpawu zenhlalo-yabantu ngokwedemografi ezinjengobuhlanga, ubulili, iminyaka, kanye nesikhathi sokusebenza kwemiqondo yesivumelwano sengqondo Kanye nemiqondo yayo wobulungisa Kanye nokuthembeka kwinhlangano mayelana nokubikezela izinga lokwaneliseka kwayo ngezinhloko sokugcina abasebenzi ngohlelo lwe-HR. Uhlelo lwesaveyi eyehlukaniswe izigaba ezimbili (*cross-sectional quantitative survey*) lwenziwa ngesampuli ekhethwe ngenhloso yabasebenzi abasebenza isikhathi esigcwele, bobabili abasebenzi bomnyango wezemfundo nabasebenzi bomnyango oxhasayo (n = 493), abavela kwiziko elilodwa le-ODL eNingizimu Afrika. Ukuchazwa, ukuhlobana kwamanani Kanye namanani eabizwa nge-*inferential statistics* anikeze ubufakazi bokuthi izinkolelo

zabasebenzi ngomqhashi Kanye nesibopho esiyisivumelwano sokusebenzisana, izinga lokwaneliseka ngomsebenzi Kanye nesimo sesivumelwano sengqondo siqukethe insika yesivumelwano sengqondo esibikezela ngezenzo zokwaneliseka mayelana nokugcinwa kwabasebenzi emsebenzini ngokusebenzisa izindlela zomqondo ikakhulu ubulungisa bokwahlukaniselana ngokulinganayo kanye nobudlelwano bokwethembeka izinduna kanye nabaphathi. Ayikho imithintela yokulinganisa eboniwe. Abasebenzi bebehlukile ngokwemiqondo yabo mayelana nezibopho zabaqhashi, izinga lokwaneliseka ngomsebenzi Kanye nesivumelwano somqondo, kodwa hayi emiqondweni yabo yobulungisa Kanye nokwethembeka. Le mehluko iqinisekise isibophezelo somqondo njengento esemqoka kubudlelwano obuxuba umqhashi nesisebenzi futhi njengento ebalulekile ekugcineni abasebenzi bangahambi. Izinhlaka ezifanayo zokuqondiswa kwezigwegwe Kanye nokwehlukahlukana phakathi kwamanye amaqembu mayelana nesidingo sezenzo zokugcina abasebenzi ezinjengokuqeqeshwa nokuthuthukiswa Kanye namathuba omsebenzi kuqhubeka nokuveza ukubaluleka kokuhlanganiswa kwezenzo zokugcina abasebenzi njengensika yokubophezeleka ngokomqondo. Uhlaka lokugcina abasebenzi bangaphumi emsebenzini lwakhiwa ngolwazi olungaphakathi olususelwa olwazini olubalulekile oluyinsika. phezu kolwazi oluqukethwe lolwazi olutholakele. Ucwangingo lunwebe umqondo we- *classical social exchange theory* futhi lwagalela ulwazi olusha kwisibophezelo somqondo Kanye nasemqondweni wokugcinwa kwabasebenzi. Izincomo zengqubo yokugcinwa kwabasebenzi yi-(*HR retention practice*) zisuselwe phezu kohlaka oluphakanyisiwe lokugcinwa kwabasebenzi kwisizinda semfundo ephakeme.

AMAGAMA ASEMQOKA

Ubulungiswa obuhlukaniselana ngokulinganayo, isizinda semfundo ephakeme, iziko lezemfundo ephakeme, uhlelo lokufunda ukude, ubulungisa kwinhlangano, ukwethembeka kwenhlangano, isibophezelo somqondo, izinhlaka zokugcina abasebenzi, izenzo zokubamba abasebenzi, umqondo we-*social exchange theory*, ubudlelwano bokwethembana phakathi kwezinduna/kwabaphathi nabasebenzi.

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ACRONYMS

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	=	CIPD
Confirmatory factor analysis	=	CFA
Higher education institution	=	HEI
Human resource management	=	HRM
Human resource	=	HR
Open Distance Learning	=	ODL
Organisational Justice Measure	=	OJM
Psychological contract	=	PC
Psycones Questionnaire	=	PQ
Retention Factor Measurement Scale	=	RFMS
South Africa / South African	=	SA
Structural equation modelling	=	SEM
Social exchange theory	=	SET
Trust Relationship Audit	=	TRA

CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on constructing a retention framework for the higher education environment. The first chapter of this thesis discusses the background to the research, as well as the motivation for conducting it. Based on this discussion, the problem statement and the research questions are formulated, followed by a statement of the research aims. Subsequently, in order to provide structure to the research process, the research paradigm, research method and research design are discussed, and finally, the chapter layout is presented.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

1.1.1 Context of the study and retention in the higher education environment

The context of this research study is staff retention in the higher educational environment in South Africa (SA) as relevant to a single open distance learning (ODL) higher education institution (HEI). Accordingly, the study examines the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust in the link between the psychological contract and a complex set of human resource (HR) practices that influence staff retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, and work-life balance policies). The study also aims to determine the moderating effect of individual socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and HR practices influencing staff retention practices. The results of this study may potentially result in the development of a retention framework that may possibly provide useful information for human resource professionals concerned with human resource practices in relation to the retention of employees in a South African HEI.

The African continent as a whole and, even more so, HEIs in Africa and, specifically, in SA, face massive problems in terms of skilled human resources (Abugre, 2018; Debrah et al., 2018). This lack of skilled resources has a devastating effect on socio-economic and political development (Debrah et al., 2018; Erasmus et al., 2015; Gerstein & Friedman, 2016; Robyn, 2012; Sehoole, 2013; Tettey, 2006). Previous research has suggested that by 2020, there may be as much as a 13% shortage of academic and support staff employees at HEIs worldwide (Abugre, 2018; Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Dewhurst et al., 2013). Gerstein and Friedman (2016), as well as Tettey (2006), maintain that HEIs have a vital role to play in the advancement of a country through the development of the teachers required in primary,

secondary and tertiary education, and also the doctors, nurses and community workers required for better health facilities. This equally applies to accountants and economists, and also the journalists, required for better private business and improved governance. Erasmus et al. (2015) and Van den Berg et al. (2008) affirm this by stating that HEIs play a vital role in the socio-economic development of South Africans through the cultivation of future talent and knowledge.

However, HEIs in SA face a complex environment because of their diverse workforce. Thus, HEIs have a crucial role to play in the reconstruction and development of SA to accelerate economic growth, reduce poverty and supply scarce skills (Cross et al., 2002; Erasmus et al., 2015; HESA, 2011; Kin et al., 2018; Sehoole, 2013). The retention of staff (academics and support staff) at HEIs is also crucial to societal life because these institutions are responsible both for educating the future leaders of society and for conducting scientific research, while, in so doing, advancing knowledge (Coetzee & Rothmann, 2004; Robyn, 2012; Sehoole, 2013).

In order to ensure the success and efficient functioning of HEIs, these institutions are dependent on the knowledge, skills and abilities of their staff members as these individuals are fundamental to the functioning and success of any university (Bernard & Appolonius, 2014; Erasmus et al., 2015; King et al., 2018; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). High quality staff enable the education institution to ensure the sustainability and quality of its outputs over the long term (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). The retention of employees in the higher education environment are, therefore, crucial because these valuable staff members ensure that universities reach their goals, missions and visions and become high quality establishments (Bernard & Appolonius, 2014; Erasmus et al., 2015; Hagedorn, 2000; Hailu et al., 2013; King et al., 2018; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Potgieter et al., 2018; Takawira et al., 2014).

Furthermore, HEIs need to retain their employees (academics and support staff) to enable them to fulfil their wider role in the development of the country through various activities, such as mechanisms to fast-track economic development, lessen poverty and produce the scarce skills that are so desperately needed in SA (HESA, 2011). HEIs, and specifically in SA, have increasingly become susceptible to losing their academic and support staff members to organisations in the private sector, or other international HEIs (Erasmus et al., 2015; Grobler & Jansen van Rensburg, 2019; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011; Oni & Fatoki, 2017; Potgieter et al., 2018).

Balakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi (2014) also point out that highly qualified candidates often prefer to work for corporate organisations in the private sector rather than in educational

institutions because of more attractive growth opportunities and the higher remuneration packages offered by these corporate organisations. Research by Theron et al. (2014) determined that 33.8% of employees in HEIs showed a moderate to strong intention to leave the institutions where they were working. The Higher Education of South Africa (HESA, 2011) as well as Lindathaba-Nkadimene (2020), likewise, found that HEIs are experiencing significant difficulties in retaining their vital, talented employees (whether academics or support staff) and that there is an intense need for concentrated research to investigate the practices that influence the retention of these employees. ODL institutions specifically are experiencing pressing problems retaining their employees (Erasmus et al., 2017; Van den Brink et al., 2013).

In common with other organisations, HEIs have to function in a responsible manner. The public's trust in higher education in general is based on the belief that these institutions will follow rigorous administrative practices and develop and retain their sources, especially their employees, in the most resourceful and effective manner possible (Bernard & Appolonius, 2014; Buck & Watson, 2002). It may be concluded that South African HEIs cannot afford to keep losing their valued and talented employees; because, when top employees voluntarily leave the organisation, this leaves a gap that is expensive to fill and challenging to manage (Potgieter et al., 2018; Theron et al., 2014).

Previous research studies estimate that the replacement costs for employees who leave an institution amount to 100% to 150% of the annual salary of such an employee (Somaya & Williamson, 2008). According to Takawira et al. (2014) and Pienaar and Bester (2008), a concerning percentage of HEI employees are leaving their organisations annually. Moreover, staff turnover at the ODL institution where the current research was conducted, is an alarming concern for the institution that is losing high numbers of their top talent annually (Erasmus et al., 2015). This highlights the critical need for research into the retention of higher education employees. However, despite the acknowledgement of these retention management problems in HEIs, it would appear that extremely limited empirical research has been conducted in developing countries, such as SA, to explain this retention crisis in the higher education environment (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Together with the need to investigate this retention management challenge; there is an even more pressing need for the development of measurements to diagnose and prevent the turnover of employees in the higher education environment (Grobler & Jansen van Rensburg, 2019; Ng'ethe et al., 2012).

This aforementioned high staff turnover in HEIs, and specifically, at the ODL institution under investigation, is the reason why it is incumbent on these institutions to apply retention

strategies because, regardless of the type of turnover, voluntary or involuntary, turnover is associated with negative effects on organisational performance including recruitment and replacement costs and disruptions in service delivery (Nienaber & Masibigiri, 2015). Studies have shown that concrete turnover becomes dysfunctional when an employee voluntarily leaves the organisation, even though the organisation's valuation of such an employee remains positive (Oluwafemi, 2013). Thus, in order to avoid voluntary turnover, it is essential that HEIs implement effective retention strategies that will result in employees being committed to their institution (Grobler & Jansen van Rensburg, 2019).

Employee retention is described as the policies and practices which organisations apply to prevent valuable employees from leaving the organisation (Hong et al., 2012; Jackson & Schuler, 2004; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). Retention strategies are implemented by organisations to prevent employees from leaving the organisation. These strategies include rewarding employees for good performance, ensuring satisfying working relationships and reserving a safe, healthy working atmosphere (Netswera et al., 2005; Van Dyk et al., 2013). In a South African study, which was led by Döckel (2003), six crucial retention factors were identified which South African organisations need to consider in the retention of employees with high technology skills (Döckel et al., 2006; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). These factors include compensation, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. These retention factors are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Effective talent management, staff retention as well as the type of relationship, which develops between employees and employers, determine the success of HEIs (Armstrong, 2009; Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Guo, 2017). Previous studies concur with this statement and found that there is a strong link between the type of relationship which exists between employers and their employees, and employee retention (Dhanpat & Parumasur, 2014; Gondo et al., 2016). Employees are one of the most important assets of any organisation but, especially, HEIs as the success of all organisations depends primarily upon a healthy relationship between the employer and the employee (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015).

1.1.2 The psychological contract, organisational justice and trust within the context of the study

The relationship between an employer and an employee is typically guided by formal agreements, for example, the individual contract of employment, collective agreements and labour legislation. There is, however, a further unwritten contract that may be even more

important, namely, the psychological contract between the employer and the employee (Wärnich et al., 2015).

Any employment relationship is governed mainly by the psychological contract, which is usually open ended and incomplete (Le Roux & Rothman, 2013; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). The psychological contract comprises an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a joint exchange agreement between that person and another person (Guo, 2017; Peirce et al., 2012; Rousseau, 1989). The psychological contract is largely determined by a belief that a promise has been made and a deliberation offered in exchange which binds the parties to a set of mutual responsibilities (Schreuder et al., 2017; Rousseau, 1989). The psychological contract forms the foundation of the employment relationship and is comprised of the expectations of employees regarding the benefits to which they believe they are entitled (Wärnich et al., 2015). Thus, the psychological contract is a subjective, individual perception of the obligations that an employee has towards his/her organisation and of the obligations that the employer has towards his/her employee (Maharaj, Ortlepp, & Stacey, 2008; O'Meara, Bennet, & Niehaus, 2016; Rousseau, 2011).

Psychological contracts are described as mental models through which employees interpret and envisage their employment relationships (Bal & Kooij, 2011; Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau et al., 2013). The state of the psychological contract is determined primarily by whether employees perceive that the promises made and perceived obligations have been met, whether they are reasonable and their implications for employees' trust in the organisation (Guest, 2004; Rousseau, 2011; Schreuder et al., 2017). In the higher education environment, the psychological contract encompasses a set of expectations on the part of new staff members regarding the promises made as part of the new job although these promises have not been formally cited in the appointment letter or employment contract (Peirce et al., 2012). Peirce et al. (2012) add that these may include a collegiate atmosphere, casual mentorship, preliminary schooling burden, staff support, office and laboratory space, as well as laboratory equipment. Employees working at HEIs have been found to have expectations of collegial communication, fair rewards, autonomy, as well as a voice in organisational decision-making (O'Meara et al., 2016).

A study conducted by Randmann (2013) concluded that demographical variables, such as age, gender, race, qualification, job level and tenure, may have an effect on the state of the psychological contract and the perceptions of employees as to whether the obligations towards them have been met. The study further discovered that an employee's position or job level in the organisation and his/her tenure have an important effect on the strength of the

perceived employee and employer obligations in psychological contracts (Randmann, 2013). In the SA higher education environment, with its diverse workforce, demographic variables such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure are important factors, which may affect the psychological contract.

Psychological contract breach refers to the perception that one's organisation did not meet one or more commitments within the psychological contract (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; De Ruiter et al., 2016; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Seeck & Parzefall, 2010). Therefore, in essence, psychological contract breach refers to the identification of perceived unmet responsibilities and obligations. Psychological contract violation, however, is a responsive and emotional state that may follow from the perception that the organisation has been unsuccessful in adequately upholding the psychological contract (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Tziner et al., 2017). De Ruiter et al. (2016), as well as Sparrow and Cooper (2003), define psychological contract violation as strong emotional responses to more extreme breaches of psychological contract, such as feelings of inequality, unfaithfulness and deeper psychological anguish, whereby the person experiences anger, bitterness and a sense of unjust detriment. In the narrowest sense psychological contract violation refers to a failure to comply with the terms of that contract (Rousseau, 1995; 2011). Thus, psychological contract breach has more to do with cognition whereas psychological contract violation is more narrowly associated with the feelings that develop after a psychological contract breach (Guerro & Naulleau, 2016; Peirce et al., 2012).

Agarwal and Bhargava (2013), Guest (1998), and Lapointe et al. (2014) consider the state of the psychological contract to be an important determinant of employee behaviour and attitudes. Previous research studies on the psychological contract have further concluded that the psychological contract influences job satisfaction, organisational commitment, a sense of organisational security, employment relations, motivation, organisational citizenship as well as the intention of the employee to leave the organisation (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; Bonilla, 2018; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development [CIPD], 2020; Collins, 2010; De Ruiter et al., 2016; Guest, 1998; Kraak et al., 2017; Lapointe et al., 2014; Tziner et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2007). Thus, when employees perceive the state of their psychological contract as positive, they are likely to be more committed to and less likely to leave the organisation if compared to those who view their psychological contract as negative. Committed employees are regarded as a vital factor in the success of an organisation (Bonilla, 2018; Rafiee et al., 2015).

Effective psychological contracts may not necessarily result in excellent performance, but less satisfying psychological contracts tend to act as de-motivators and may reflect in lower organisational commitment and heightened absenteeism and job turnover (Bonilla, 2018; Maguire, 2001; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). A perceived breach of the psychological contract may alter an employee's commitment to the organisation and lead to an employee either considering leaving or actually leaving the organisation thus resulting in staff turnover (Baharuddin et al., 2017; Bunderson, 2001; CIPD, 2020; Clinton & Guest, 2014; Collins, 2010; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Guo, 2017; Raja et al., 2004; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016; Sauzo et al., 2005; Schreuder et al., 2017; Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

Psychological contract breach also leads to negative feelings, which in turn may lead to the intention to leave, and thus, staff turnover (Agarwal & Bhargava, 2013; Baharuddin et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2007). A study by Van der Vaart et al. (2013) also found that psychological contract breach may lead to various negative emotions; whereas a positive state of the psychological contract may lead to employee well-being. In this regard, Schreuder et al. (2017) and Zhao et al. (2007) maintain that psychological contract breach affects a wide range of organisational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, in-role performance, turnover intentions and actual turnover. Empirical evidence further shows that there is a positive relationship between perceived psychological contract fulfilment and employee commitment to the organisation (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; Bonilla, 2018; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Lapointe et al., 2014; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Tziner et al., 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013).

According to Conway and Briner (2005), comparatively little research has been conducted and specifically designed to evaluate the contents of the psychological contract. In addition, even though empirical research has progressed considerably during the past decade, there is extremely limited empirical research on the psychological contracts of employees in the higher education environment (Bordia, Bordia, & Restubog, 2015; Fako et al., 2018; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Nutakki et al., 2015). Johnston (2016) and O'Toole and Prince (2015) confirm this by adding that the construct of psychological contract has been widely used in management and organisation studies but there has been limited use of this construct in the context of higher education.

Similarly, there is extremely limited empirical research investigating the relation between the core retention practices/factors including compensation, job characteristics, training and

development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies in the higher education environment, especially, regarding the link between employees' psychological contracts, and their satisfaction with the core retention factors (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Theron et al., 2014; Walker, 2017). Thus, HEIs need to identify the value attributed to these retention factors during the formulation of organisational retention policies to develop effective retention strategies to retain their knowledgeable, skilled and valued employees. The application of the psychological contract may foster a better understanding of the relative importance of the retention factors which are valued by employees (De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Dhanpat & Parumasur, 2014; Fako et al., 2018; Gondo et al., 2016).

An additional variable which may play an important role in the relationship between the psychological contract and retention factors is organisational justice (Nimmo, 2018). Employees' perceptions of justice is an important component of the way in which employees evaluate organisational situations (Gastón & Harrison, 2012). Greenberg (1987) defines organisational justice as individuals' perceptions of and reactions to fairness in an organisation. Organisational justice may also be referred to the fairness of the treatment meted out to employees in their workplace (Greenberg, 1987). In other words, organisational justice refers to employees' perception of fairness in the workplace (De Coninck & Johnson, 2009; Gelens et al., 2014). Colquitt et al. (2001) and Xerri (2014) view organisational justice as a field that focuses on the experiences and consequences of fairness in the dissemination of outcomes, and the fairness of the procedures used to determine the outcome dispersal. Fairness in an organisation makes employees feel that they are valued, while fair treatment makes people feel respected (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). Fairness is an essential element in employees' perceptions of organisational justice (Coetzee & Botha, 2012; Xerri, 2014).

Perceptions of organisational justice stem from the social interactions at work. Employees may feel unjustly treated by a colleague, manager, or the organisation itself in terms of its processes or the allocation of work and/or resources (Gelens et al., 2014; Gluschkoff et al., 2017; Sayers et al., 2011). According to a large study conducted by Colquitt (2001), organisational justice comprises four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. These types of justice perceptions are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Fairness and trust are crucial social conditions in employee-employer relationships and depend on four universally accepted standards, namely: objectivity, equity, consistency and reciprocity (Strydom et al., 2014). Organisational justice generally refers to the notion that

something is morally right, and this may be defined from an ethical, fairness, equitable or legislative perspective (Chowwen et al., 2014; Gluschkoff et al., 2017). The concept of organisational justice may be a useful management tool in creating a fair, productive and satisfied working environment (Smit, 2012). A study conducted by Cohen and Avrahami (2006) determined that perceptions of organisational justice are affected by demographic variables such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure. In addition, employees' perceptions of justice are strongly moderated by factors such as whether they are experienced employees; whether they have been employed by the organisation for a long period, or the specific job level that they hold (Cohen & Avrahami, 2006).

According to Morrison and Robinson (1997) and Tziner et al. (2017), organisational justice has a significant effect on the state of employees' psychological contracts and whether they experience contract violation. Morrison and Robinson (1997) explain that an employee's assessment of psychological contract fulfilment or violation is largely determined by the employee's perception of how fairly he/she was treated (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). In a large study by Blacero et al. (2007) it was concluded that, when employees experience feelings of injustice, unfairness and discrimination, this is negatively related to psychological contract fulfilment. In more recent studies by DelCampo et al. (2010) as well as Nimmo (2018), it was found that employee perceptions of injustice, unfairness and discrimination are positively related to psychological contract violation.

The scholars, Cropanzano et al. (2007) conclude that positive perceptions regarding organisational justice may create important benefits for the organisation including improved trust, organisational commitment, positive citizenship outcomes and less conflict in organisational relationships than may otherwise have been the case. Various scholars, such as Kaya et al. (2016) and Khalid et al. (2018) concur with these findings and add that there is a significant relationship between perceived organisational justice and employees' intention to leave an organisation. Employees' experiences of organisational injustice may, thus, lead to psychological contract breach which may result in psychological contract violation and this may have a direct effect on employee turnover (Agarwal, 2014; Karatepe & Shahriari, 2014; Kaya et al., 2016; Tekleab, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2005). Borstorff and Marker (2007) and Rodwell and Gulyas (2013) found that employees who are in a favourable work environment in which they perceive themselves to be treated justly will experience higher job satisfaction and lower intention to leave the organisation. Kgomo and Swarts (2010), Perreira et al., (2018), and Tamta and Rao (2016) concur with this finding by stating that the perception of an unfair employment relationship and unfair employment practices correlates positively with employees' intention to leave an organisation and employee turnover.

Organisational justice in an organisation is strongly related to fairness and trust (Potgieter et al., 2015). When employees experience greater perceptions of fairness, they will be more trusting towards their organisation (Othman, 2008). The contrary is also true in the sense that, when employees perceive that they are being treated unfairly and unjustly, they may develop strong negative feelings towards the organisation and this may erode their trust in the organisation (Othman, 2008). Research studies have confirmed that there is a strong correlation between the overall perceptions of justice of employees and organisational trust levels (Agarwal, 2014; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Jiang et al., 2017; Mishra et al., 2015; Oosthuizen et al., 2018; Tulubas & Celep, 2012; Xu et al., 2016). Organisational justice is thus a crucial element in the development of trust.

Mayer et al. (1995) view trust as a state in which one party is willing to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will act in a particular way which is important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability of the party to monitor or control the other party. Trust develops when favourable expectations are met (Möllering, 2001). In addition, trust also has an effect on employees' behaviours and their interpretation of the behaviour of others (Agarwal, 2014; Othman, 2008). When there is trust in an organisation, the employees have faith and confidence in the organisation and they rely on the organisation (Martins, 2010; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Martins (2002) views trust as the process whereby a trustor relies on a trustee (a person or group of people) to act according to explicit expectations that are important to the trustor and without taking advantage of the defencelessness of the trustor. According to Martins (2000), trust is a dynamic phenomenon that depends on the interplay of various factors that may affect the building of a model of trust. Von der Ohe (2016) adds that the various definitions of trust may be summarised as a workplace-relevant belief or attitude towards another organisational member, in other words, it is a psychological state, and may be investigated from both a micro-organisational and a behavioural perspective.

Studies by Afsar et al. (2018), Basit and Duygulu (2018), as well as Schoorman et al. (2007), concluded that there is a positive correlation between organisational trust and organisational commitment. Studies have also linked organisational trust to commitment and positive behavioural intentions (Brown et al., 2015; Bruning, 2002; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Ki & Hon, 2007; Mishra et al., 2015; Seargent & Lee, 2004). Brockner (1990) as well as Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) likewise found that there is a strong negative correlation between organisational justice, organisational trust and employee intention to leave the organisation. Yozgat et al. (2014) add that organisational trust enhances job attitudes, organisational citizenship and job satisfaction and also helps to facilitate empowerment, collaboration and, in particular, organisational commitment.

A study conducted by Rafiee et al. (2015) concluded that demographic differences between employees are among the most important factors, which predict organisational commitment and may also help organisations to reach their goals and enhance productivity. Organisational commitment has a positive correlation with the education, age, working years in an organisation (tenure), general working record and managerial record of employees (Rafiee et al., 2015). Thus, taking into account the age, race, working and managerial records and education of employees may help to strengthen organisational commitment and also be effective in improving employees' perceptions of organisational justice, gaining organisational trust and enhancing retention practices (Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Rafiee et al., 2015).

Trust, the psychological contract, equity and justice in any organisation are extremely important in ensuring harmony among the labour force and should be entrenched in any retention management practices (Strydom et al., 2014). Previous studies have concluded that a strong perception of organisational justice and fairness, as well as a strong feeling of trust; result in a more positive state of the psychological contract (Ahmad, Nisar, & Naqvi, 2016; Brockner, 2002; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Cropanzano et al., 2007; Othman, 2008; Rani et al., 2018). Studies have also determined conclusively that a positive state of the psychological contract may result in stronger organisational commitment and lower intention to leave the organisation than may otherwise have been the case (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

There is a dearth of research investigating the constructs of the psychological contract in relation to organisational justice and trust and, in turn, in relation to satisfaction with HR retention factors or practices in the context of retention. There is further a pressing need for such research in the higher education environment in SA due to the large-scale retention problems being experienced by these institutions. This research study aims to extend the existing research literature on academic and support staff retention in the South African higher education environment by assessing the joint association between these constructs in a single study.

1.1.3 Levels of investigation in the study

This study aimed to explore these constructs on two levels. Firstly, the study investigated the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust (represented by individuals' experiences of organisational justice and trust as mediating variables) on the link between the psychological

contract (independent variable) and individuals' satisfaction with a complex set of HR practices that influence staff retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies as dependent variables). On this level, organisational justice and trust were the mediating variables, the psychological contract was the predictor variable, and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence staff retention, the criterion variable.

The reason why the constructs of organisational justice and trust were chosen as the mediating variables in this study, is because both organisational justice and trust have been proven to mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and employment related factors such as job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, work engagement, change management, intention to leave and leadership (Agarwal, 2014; Brockner, 1990; Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). However, to the knowledge of the researcher, never in a single study has the constructs of organisational justice and trust been examined with regard to their mediation effect on the link between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with a complex set of HR practices that influence staff retention.

The study thus endeavoured to assess whether perceptions of the psychological contract significantly predict individuals' satisfaction with HR retention practices and whether this association is significantly strengthened or weakened (mediated) by their perceptions of organisational justice and trust. It was anticipated that organisational justice and trust would positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Secondly, the study investigated the moderating effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) on the relationship between employees' psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and their satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. In other words, the investigation focused on evaluating whether there is a significant interaction effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating person-centred variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics were selected as moderating variables for this research, because previous studies have determined that socio-demographic characteristics have a moderating effect on individuals' state of their psychological contract (Randmann,

2013), their perceptions of organisational justice (Cohen & Avrahami, 2007), their levels of commitment (Rafiee, 2015), their turnover intentions (Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Al-Hussami et al., 2015), as well as their levels of trust in their organisation (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Studies have also proven that demographic factors have a moderating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and organisational justice (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Rodwell & Gulyas, 2013), between the psychological contract and trust (Atkinson, 2007), between organisational justice and trust (Aryee et al., 2002), and also between the psychological contract and retention factors (Bushe, 2012; Deas, 2017; Gaiduk & Gaiduk, 2009; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). However, there is a sparsity of research which has been conducted where the moderating effect of socio-demographic characteristics were examined on the relationship dynamics between employees' psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention; such as the case is in the current study.

It was anticipated that there would be a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention. It was further expected that the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust would positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices. Also, it was anticipated that there would be a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Lastly, it was anticipated that individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups would differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

The ultimate purpose of the investigation was to construct a retention framework for employees in the distance learning, higher educational environment context in SA. Based on the discussion above it was proposed that there is a relationship between employees' psychological contract and their satisfaction with HR retention practices. It was proposed that employees' perceptions of organisational justice and trust may have an effect on this relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with retention practices. It was hoped that investigating the relationship between these constructs would assist in the construction of a retention framework for the higher education environment and

which would inform retention practices and assist human resource professionals with the development of retention strategies.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

HEIs in SA have become increasingly vulnerable to employee turnover (Erasmus et al., 2015; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011) and employee turnover has become a frustrating and costly reality for the management of personnel in HEIs (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Voluntary employee departures are generally considered to undesirable, disruptive and costly for both the organisation and its customers (Buck & Watson, 2002; Oluwafemi, 2013). It is thus of the utmost importance that HEIs recognise the forces that keep employees in their positions; and that they attract and retain talented and qualified academic and support staff (Takawira et al., 2014).

Despite the pressing problem concerning the retention of staff in HEIs, there is a dearth of research on the relationship between employee perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices in the higher education environment (Bordia et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Larkin et al., 2016; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Nutakki et al., 2015). In addition, there is a lack of research on the effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices (Rafiee et al., 2015). Agarwal (2014) adds that there is also a lack of research on the status of justice and trust in the context of the psychological contract, while research on whether organisational justice and trust mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices is also lacking, especially in the South African higher education environment (Strydom et al., 2014).

It is the task of HR managers, practitioners and specialists in HEIs to apply empirically tested and systematically improved approaches to managing the retention of employees (both academic and support staff) successfully. An understanding of the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on employees' psychological contract in relation to their satisfaction with HR retention practices was deemed to play a significant role in shaping retention practices for employees in HEIs. Accordingly, this research study endeavoured to develop a feasible retention framework by taking into account the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence the retention of employees in the higher education environment.

In constructing this viable retention framework, the study took into account the moderating effect of socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) on individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

1.2.1 Formulation of the research hypotheses

For the purposes of the present doctoral thesis research, and for reasons of parsimony in dealing with a large number of variables, the following overarching research hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract, and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.

H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

1.2.2 Main research question

The background to and motivation for the research study, the research problem statement, the research hypotheses outlined above, as well as the research problem statement resulted in the formulation of the following main research question:

What are the effects of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust on individuals' satisfaction with the human resource practices that influence the retention of employees in the higher educational environment context of SA?

Based on the above general research question, the following specific research questions were formulated in terms of the literature review and the empirical study:

1.2.3 Research questions in terms of the literature review

In terms of the literature review, the following specific research questions were formulated:

Research question 1: How are the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, conceptualised in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment?

Research question 2: What are the inter-dynamics among the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices, and how can these dynamics be used to inform a retention framework?

Research question 3: What are the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment?

1.2.4 Research questions in terms of the empirical study

In terms of the empirical study, the following specific research questions were formulated:

Research question 1: What is the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants in the higher educational environment in SA? This research question is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

Research question 2: Do the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices empirically? This research question is related to the testing of research hypothesis H2.

Research question 3: Is there a significant interaction effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices? This research question is related to the testing of research hypothesis H3.

Research question 4: Do organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention? This research question related to the testing of research hypothesis H4.

Research question 5: Do the variable empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and to what extent do the data inform the construction of a retention framework? This research question is related to the testing of research hypothesis H5.

Research question 6: Do individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices? This research question is related to the testing of research hypothesis H6.

Research question 7: What conclusions can be drawn and what recommendations may be made for human resource management (HRM) retention practices and future research?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

On the basis of the above research questions, the following research aims were formulated:

1.3.1 General aim

The general aim of the research study was to construct a framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The elements of the retention framework were based on the results obtained from empirically examining the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with a complex set of human resource (HR) practices that influence staff retention (including

compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). The framework also took into account the moderating effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, on their perceptions of the psychological contract, as well as their perceptions of organisational justice and trust, in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention factors.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

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

1.3.2.1 Specific aims in terms of the literature review

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

Research aim 1: To conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment.

Research aim 2: To postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices.

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment.

1.3.2.2 Specific aims in terms of the empirical study

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

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H2.

Research aim 3: To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H3.

Research aim 4: To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H4.

Research aim 5: To conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H5.

Research aim 6: To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H6.

Research aim 7: To formulate conclusions and make recommendations for human resource management (HRM) retention practices and future research.

1.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The fundamental factors present in the challenge of developing a retention framework for staff retention are both complex and diverse. The role of organisational justice and trust in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention (such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor feedback, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) and the potential role of these variables in the development of a retention framework for staff retention are multidimensional and have not yet been well researched in the higher education environment of SA.

This research study may be seen as a starting point in investigating the mediating role of organisational justice (Greenberg, 1987) and trust (Martins, 2000) in the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995); and satisfaction with retention practices (Döckel, 2003) in the retention management context. Thus, this research study may be seen as breaking new ground and extending the existing retention research literature by shedding new light on the complex relationship dynamics among the constructs, such as the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust and satisfaction with HR retention practices, which have not previously been jointly explored in a single study.

1.4.1 Potential contribution on a theoretical level

On a theoretical level, this study may be valuable in extending the retention research literature by critically evaluating the theoretical inter-dynamics among the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices including factors, such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor feedback, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. The literature review may shed new light on how the inter-dynamics among the constructs extend the social exchange theory (SET) as overarching theoretical lens. The observed theoretical inter-dynamics may also be helpful in postulating a retention framework that can be empirically tested. In addition, exploring the way in which individuals' socio-demographic characteristics influence the manifestation and development of these constructs may prove to be valuable in comprehending retention in the higher educational environment. In Chapter 7, the researcher critically reflects on the theoretical contribution made by the study.

1.4.2 Potential contribution at an empirical level

At an empirical level, the research study may contribute to constructing an empirically tested retention framework that may be used to inform retention management practices for higher education employees. This framework was to be based on the results derived from determining the empirical interrelationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention, and as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA. In the event of no relationship being found between the variables, the usefulness of this study would be limited to the exclusion of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust as predictors of retention. This would mean that researchers could then transfer their energy to other research studies and avenues that may produce significant proof in relation to solving the problem of staff retention in the higher education environment.

In addition, this study may indicate whether the relationship between individuals' psychological contract and their perceptions regarding organisational justice and trust, and the effect of this relationship on their satisfaction with retention practices, is influenced by differences in race, gender, age, job level and tenure. Regarding the prevailing current South African higher education context that is characterised by a diverse workforce and high turnover rates, the results may play a valuable role in the development of an empirically tested retention framework by indicating differences relating to the socio-demographic information that would meet the needs of a diverse group of staff members.

Furthermore, should practical significant relationships between the constructs be found, the results may prove useful for future researchers wishing to explore the effect of employees' perceptions regarding organisational justice and trust on the relationship between their psychological contracts and their satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. Furthermore, the results of this research may add to the existing body of knowledge in relation to the factors that influence the retention of employees in the higher educational environment in SA. In Chapter 7, the researcher critically reflects on the empirical contribution made by the study.

1.4.3 Potential contribution at a practical level

On a practical level, this research study may inform HR managers and practitioners of the pivotal role that employees' psychological contracts with their employers, and their perceptions about organisational justice and trust play in the retention of key employees. Furthermore, this study may enlighten HR managers and practitioners regarding organisational and individual-level interventions and strategies that organisations could implement to strengthen their employees' psychological contracts and so doing, improving their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in the organisation, and as a result, improving their satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices. In SA, HEIs, and specifically, the ODL institution where this research was conducted, may gain important knowledge from this study's results to improve the high turnover currently being experienced and to improve employees' satisfaction with their institution's retention practices. In Chapter 7, the researcher critically reflects on the practical contribution made by the study and presents recommendations for practice based on the findings.

1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL

The model developed by Mouton and Marais (1996) served as a framework for this research. According to the seminal work of Mouton and Marais (1996), research in the social sciences can be defined as an accommodating human action in which social reality is studied to reach a valid understanding of it (Babbie, 2016; Mouton & Marais, 1996).

The assumption underlying their model is that it characterises a social process. It is described as a systems theoretical model with three interrelated subsystems, which also interrelate with the research domain of a specific discipline (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The specific discipline which, was relevant to this research study was the human resource management (HRM). HRM is the term used to describe the formal systems devised for the management of people within an organisation. The main purpose of HRM is to maximise the productivity of an organisation by optimising the effectiveness of its employees (Storey, 2015). The subsystem of HRM represents the intellectual climate, the market of intellectual resources and the research process itself (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

1.6 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

In the social sciences, a paradigm includes the known principles, models, prevailing body of knowledge and the methodologies of a particular perspective (Babbie, 2016; Mouton, 2001; Mouton & Marais, 1996). A paradigm is a worldview that influences the way in which people think, ask questions and perceive situations (Kotze, 2010). The foundation of a paradigm is primarily philosophical and cannot be tested, nor is it meant to be tested. This research study was conducted in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM). The literature review was presented based on the humanistic-developmental and open systems paradigms, while the empirical study was based on the positivist research paradigm.

1.6.1 The intellectual climate

The literature review was presented from the perspective of the humanistic-developmental and open systems paradigm and the empirical study from the post-positivist research paradigm perspective.

1.6.1.1 *The literature review*

The following section describes the humanistic paradigm, the developmental contextual framework as well as the open systems paradigm. These are the paradigms that formed the definitive boundary of the literature review presented in the study.

(a) *The humanistic paradigm*

The humanistic paradigm emphasises the independence, self-worth, and potential of human beings (Brockett, 1997; Pirson, 2013). The basic norms of the humanistic paradigm are as follows that man is individuals are virtuous, at liberty to make their own choices and integrally motivated towards self-actualisation as well as the development of their self-concepts (Aanstoos, 2003). Furthermore, the humanistic paradigm proposes that individual and societal growth is limitless, individual perceptions are the basis of reality and that individuals have responsibilities to both themselves as well as society (Aanstoos, 2003). Thematically, the humanistic paradigm relates to the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention factors by focusing on people's strength, their perceptions of reality and their need for personal growth.

(b) *Developmental contextual framework*

According to this framework, human development emerges through complex exchanges between individuals and their environment (Aanstoos, 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The environmental factors influencing an individual may be divided into the following four structures (Puffer, 1998):

- *The microsystem*: Contains the individual and the ultimate proximal ecological influence directly influencing developmental evolution. Individuals are part of a number of microsystems, including family, peers, and school.
- *The meso-system*: Involves the environmental forces formed when two microsystems interacting or connecting with each other and creating shared links. These networks have a wider network of socialising agents as a result, which mutually interact and offer various developmental influences than in the case of a single microsystem.
- *The exo-system*: Encompasses social powers from supplementary surroundings influencing the individual.
- *The macro-system*: Consists of the constituents of an individual's cultural background.

Vondracek et al. (1986) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that the four environmental subsystems are entrenched within each other (Puffer, 1998). Thematically, the developmental contextual framework relates to the constructs of the psychological contract (through the meso-system), organisational justice (through the microsystem and the macro-system), trust (through the microsystem and the exo-system) and retention factors (through the meso-system and exo-system) focusing on the environmental factors manipulating people's behaviour.

(c) *The open systems paradigm*

The open systems paradigm views the individual as an element of the organisation, which interrelates with the outside environment (Ashmos & Huber, 1987). An organisation is a network of parts that work together as an integrated whole to reach the objectives of the organisation (Hodge et al., 2003). According to Cunliffe (2008), the assumptions of the open system paradigm are that an open system continually adjusts to changes in the environment. It is a combination of several co-dependent subsystems that work together to form a whole, while it attempts to reach equilibrium to balance its inputs and outputs so that a stable flow of activity can be sustained. In addition, it develops mechanisms to offer feedback to ensure that this process occurs.

Thematically, the open systems paradigm relates to the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention factors as these constructs focus on the individual as part of an organisation that interacts with the outside environment.

1.6.1.2 *The empirical research*

The empirical research was presented from the perspective of the post-positivist research paradigm. Post-positivism is a term used for an approach in terms of which a scientific method is applied to the study of human action; in other words, the reality under investigation is based on scientific research and the discovery of theory (Schwandt, 2007; Scotland, 2012). The post-positivistic perspective furthermore accepts that there is a reality, which exists, autonomous from one's thinking and which may be systematically considered. However, it is not possible for that reality to be known with certainty (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Polgar & Thomas, 2013). Ontologically, this perspective is unique in that it agrees to a precise reality that may be measured and captured only in a flawed way (Betz & Fassinger, 2011) due to human limitations (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Polgar & Thomas, 2013). Epistemologically, this perspective has the stance that unspoiled neutrality is not attainable, however welcome it may

be (Betz & Fassinger, 2011). Axiologically, this perspective changed the belief that the researcher was autonomous from the subject of study through the acknowledgement of the contextual understanding, theories and hypotheses captured by the researcher, as these may have a strong influence on what is perceived (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Scotland, 2012).

Thematically, the empirical research study dealt with the effect of the variables of organisational justice and trust on the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). The empirical research study also addressed the effect of socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) on individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

This study used an objective cross-sectional, quantitative research design approach and focused on quantifiable characteristics of human behaviour. The data was analysed through apparent statistical procedures. Chapter 5 gives a detailed description of the various statistical procedures employed to test the various research hypotheses.

1.6.2 The market of intellectual resources

According to Babbie (2016), the market of intellectual resources refers to the assortment of principles that has a direct impact on the epistemic status of scientific declarations. For the purpose of this study, the theoretical models, meta-theoretical statements and conceptual descriptions relating to the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, as well as compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies (as a set of retention factors), central hypotheses and theoretical and methodological assumptions are discussed below.

1.6.2.1 Meta-theoretical statements

The meta-theoretical statements symbolised an important category of the assumptions underlying the theories, models and paradigms applicable in this research study (Babbie, 2016). Each research study is grounded on underlying theories, models and paradigms, which form the definitive context of the specific study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Meta-theoretical statements represent these assumptions.

This research study was conducted in the context of human resource management as a sub-field of business management. The human resource practitioner recognises the interdependence of individuals, organisations and society and the effect of factors such as increasing government influences, growing consumer awareness, skills shortages, and the changing nature of the workforce (Landy & Conte, 2004, 2016; Storey, 2015). The human resource practitioner facilitates responses to issues and problems involving people at work by serving as an advisor and catalyst for business, industry, labour, public, academics, community, and health organisations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Landy & Conte, 2004, 2016). Thus, the human resource practitioner is a scientist who derives principles of individual, group and organisational behaviour through research; a consultant and staff psychologist who develops scientific knowledge and applies it to solving problems at work; and a teacher who trains in the research and application of Human Resource Management (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Landy & Conte, 2004, 2016).

This study examined the effect of the constructs of organisational justice and trust on the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract, and the HR practices which influence retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) to develop a viable framework for staff retention in the higher education environment.

1.6.2.2 Conceptual descriptions and theoretical models

The theoretical beliefs that are discussed here refer to statements that are testable, with regard to the 'what' (prescriptive) and 'why' (interpretive) of human behaviour and social phenomena. All the declarations that form part of hypotheses, typologies, models, theories and conceptual descriptions form part of these theoretical beliefs (Babbie, 2016). The following conceptual descriptions served as the point of departure for the discussion in this research study:

a. Psychological contract

The psychological contract theory of Rousseau (1989, 1990, 1995) as well as that of Rousseau et al. (2013) served as the theoretical lens to study the construct of the psychological contract. The psychological contract comprises an individual's beliefs about an exchange agreement between him/herself and another party (Rousseau, 1989). Thus, the psychological contract may be defined as a subjective, individual perception of the obligations that an employee has towards his/her organisation and of the obligations that the employer

has towards his/her employee (Maharaj et al., 2008). The psychological contract comprises the expectations of employees regarding the benefits to which they believe they are entitled, and it forms the foundation of the employment relationship (Wärnich et al., 2015). For the purposes of this study the psychological contract of employees was measured using the Psycones Questionnaire (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006), which measured the psychological contract by specifically examining individuals' perceptions regarding employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and the state of the psychological contract (Guest et al., 2010).

b. Organisational justice

Colquitt's (2001) organisational justice model served as the theoretical lens through which to study the construct of organisational justice in this research study. Organisational justice may be defined individuals' perceptions of and reactions to fairness in an organisation (Greenberg, 1987). Organisational justice also relates to the fairness of the treatment, which employees receive in their workplace (Greenberg, 1987). In other words, organisational justice refers to employees' perceptions of the fairness, which they experience in the workplace (De Coninck & Johnson, 2009; Gelens et al., 2014; Xerri, 2014). Colquitt et al. (2001) refer to organisational justice as the experiences and consequences of fairness in the distribution of outcomes, and the fairness of the procedures used to determine the distribution outcomes. In this study, the participants' justice perceptions were measured using Organizational Justice Measure (Colquitt, 2001), which specifically measured individuals' perceptions regarding procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

c. Trust

The research study examined the construct of trust through the theoretical lens of Martins' (2000, 2002) trust model. Trust refers to the process whereby a trustor relies on a trustee (a person or group of people) to act according to specific expectations that are important to the trustor and without taking advantage of the vulnerability of the trustor (Martins, 2000). Thus, the concept of trust may be summarised as a workplace-related belief or attitude towards another member of the organisation and is a psychological state that may be investigated from a micro-organisational and a behavioural perspective (Von der Ohe, 2016). The trust levels of individuals in this study were measured using the Trust Relationship Audit (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005), which measured trust by examining the content of the trust relationship between employees and their direct supervisors as well as organisational trust

that is concerned with the trust relationship between top management, the immediate manager and colleagues (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005).

d. Retention

Döckel's (2003) retention factors were used as the theoretical framework through which to study the core HR retention practices. Employee retention is referred to as the policies and practices, which organisations apply to prevent valuable employees from leaving the organisation (Erasmus et al., 2015; Hong et al., 2012; Jackson & Schuler, 2004; Pienaar & Bester, 2008). Organisations implement retention strategies to prevent employees from leaving the organisation. Employees' satisfaction with retention practices in this study was evaluated using the Retention Factor Measurement Scale, which measured individuals' perceptions regarding their compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006). The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006) measures satisfaction with core HR practices that are regarded as important factors of retention.

e. Overarching meta-theoretical lens

The overarching theoretical lens through which the relationship dynamics between the various constructs (the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention) was studied is the classical social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). The SET is based on the notion that parties to an employment relationship (employers and employees) form part of an exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013; Lub et al., 2016). When promises and obligations in this exchange relationship are not adhered to, or kept, it could lead to negative outcomes for the relationship (Blau, 1964; Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013; Lub et al., 2016).

The psychological contract, organisational justice and trust all have their foundations in the SET (Adams, 1965; Blau, 1964; Chaudhry & Tekleab, 2013; Rayton et al., 2015). The psychological contract and social exchange theories both suggest that parties to an exchange relationship are to be expected to counter those obligations/promises that are of importance to them (Chaudhry & Tekleab, 2013; Rayton et al., 2015).

The model of organisational justice and the SET both propose that employees compare their contributions in the workplace with the rewards they receive, and if this is not perceived to be

just and equal, it could lead to negative feelings and behaviours that could have a detrimental effect on the exchange relationship (Adams, 1963; 1965; Colquitt et al., 2013; Greenberg, 1990). Similarly, the model of trust is in agreement with the SET, seeing that both are based on the argument that employees and employers are parties to an exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Lub et al., 2016; Rayton et al., 2015). These parties share an obligation to correspondingly reward each other for the contributions made by each party, and to act in a reasonable and fair way to ensure the productive preservation of the exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Lub et al., 2016; Rayton et al., 2015).

Table 1.1 on the next page provides an overview of the core constructs relevant in this research study.

Table 1.1
Overview of Core Constructs

Construct	Sub-constructs	Description	Theoretical models	Measuring instrument
Psychological contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Employer obligations – Employee obligations – Job satisfaction – State of the psychological contract 	The unwritten contract between an employee and his/her employer regarding the perceived promises, which have been made during the employment relationship.	Rousseau (1989; 1990; 1995) Rousseau, Tomprou, & Montes, 2013	<i>Psycones Questionnaire</i> (Guest et al., 2010)
Organisational justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Informational justice – Interpersonal justice – Distributive justice – Procedural justice 	The perceptions of employees regarding the fairness of decisions, processes, rewards and interactions in the organisation and/or in relation to the employee's supervisor.	Greenberg (1990; 1993) Colquitt (2001) Colquitt, Greenberg, and Sapata-Phelan (2005)	<i>Organisational Justice Measure</i> (Colquitt, 2001)
Organisational trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Relationship with supervisor/ manager – Organisational trust 	The belief of one party in the reliability, truth or ability of another party and the assurance that the other party will act in a fair, just, ethical and a predictable manner.	Martins (2000; 2002) Martins & Von der Ohe (2005) Von der Ohe (2014; 2016)	<i>Trust Relationship Audit</i> (Martins (2000); Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005)
HR retention practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Compensation – Job characteristics – Training and development – Supervisor support – Career opportunities – Work-life balance 	The HR retention practices are those aspects which are likely to have an effect on whether an employee will remain committed to an organisation or will leave the organisation.	Döckel (2003) Döckel et al. (2006)	<i>Retention Factor Measurement Scale</i> (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006)

Source: Author's own work

1.6.2.3 *Central hypothesis*

The central hypothesis of this research was formulated as follows:

Organisational justice and trust have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. Furthermore, individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention. The hypothesis lastly assumes that, based on the empirically derived relationship dynamics between the variables, it was possible to construct an overall retention framework to inform retention management practices for employees in the higher educational environment context of SA.

1.6.2.4 *Theoretical assumptions*

- There is a necessity for basic research that aims to isolate the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, in relation to satisfaction with retention practices.
- Environmental, socio-demographic and psychological factors, such as socio-cultural background, race/ethnicity, gender, life span development, individuals' psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, will influence the value people assign to retention practices.
- The constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices may be moderated by socio-demographic factors such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure.
- An understanding of an individual's psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices will increase the understanding of factors that may possibly advise retention management practices for employees in higher educational institutions.
- The relationship dynamics between the different variables constitute a framework that may be empirically tested and that may guide retention management practices in the higher education environment.

1.6.2.5 *Methodological assumptions*

Methodological assumptions are regarded as the theories concerning the basic principles of social science and scientific research. Methodological beliefs are more than just

methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ensures accurate research. According to Babbie (2016), there is a direct relationship between methodological beliefs and the epistemic status of research findings.

The following main epistemological assumptions represent the methodological assumptions that affect the nature and structure of the research domain and relate to the methodological choices, assumptions and suppositions that ensure comprehensive research (Babbie, 2016):

- **Sociological dimension**

The sociological dimension conforms to the requirements of the sociological research ethic that makes use of the research community for its sources of theory development. This may be viewed as a joint or collaborative activity. Research within the bounds of the sociological dimension is analytical, experimental and exact as the subjects being researched are subject to quantitative research (Babbie, 2016; Katz, 2015).

- **Ontological dimension**

The ontological dimension covers that which is investigated in reality. It relates to the study of humankind in all its diversity and comprises human actions, features, organisations, conduct and product (Katz, 2015). This research study measured the properties of the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention practices.

- **Ideological dimension**

The ideological dimension implies that social sciences research is deliberate and goal-directed, with its main aim being the comprehension of the phenomena being studied (Babbie, 2016).

- **Epistemological dimension**

The epistemological dimension may be regarded as the epitome of the model of science, namely, the quest for truth. Accordingly, the primary objective of research in the social sciences is to produce valid findings, that is, that the findings of the research should approximate reality as closely as possible (Babbie, 2016). This research study attempted to realise this truth through a proper research design and reliable and valid results.

- **Methodological dimension**

Methodological assumptions are beliefs about the nature of social science and scientific research. In order to test the theoretical hypothesis formulated a study uses an acceptable research design which incorporates relevant methods. Research methodologies may be classified as qualitative or quantitative (Babbie, 2016; Katz, 2015). This research study used exploratory and descriptive research in the form of a literature review on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention, while quantitative research (descriptive and explanatory) was used in the empirical study.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design may be regarded as the processes that are applied in conducting a study. Its objective is to help to find the most suitable answers to the research questions (Cohen et al., 2001; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2009). In other words, it is a plan or a blueprint of how a researcher intends to conduct a research study (Creswell, 2014; Mackey & Gass, 2016; Saunders et al., 2012; Mouton, 2001). The research design for this study is discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 with reference to the types of research conducted. This is followed by an explanation of validity and reliability.

1.7.1 Exploratory research

According to Saunders et al. (2012), exploratory research examines the relationship between different variables. This approach is used when a researcher studies a new field or when the field of study is fairly new (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Mackey & Gass, 2016). This research study was exploratory because it compared numerous theoretical viewpoints on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention. Empirically, the exploratory nature of the study related to the cross-sectional design of the study. The limitations of a cross-sectional research design include that the research cannot be used to analyse behaviour over a period to time, this type of research design does not assist to determine cause and effect and the results are not guaranteed to be representative (Levin, 2006; Mann, 2003). The advantages of a cross-sectional research design include that the findings can be used to prove and/or disprove assumptions, it is not a costly design and it does not require a lot of time, it captures information/perceptions/opinions a specific point in time, it has the possibility to contain multiple variables at a single time and outcomes can be analysed to create new theories and studies or in-depth research (Levin, 2006; Mann, 2003).

1.7.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research refers to the account of the features of an existing phenomenon (Salkind, 2018). According to Babbie (2016) and Mouton and Marais (1996), descriptive research involves the inclusive explanation of an individual, situation, group, organisation, culture, subculture, interactions and/or social objects. The main purpose of descriptive research is to scientifically identify the relationships between variables in a specific research area (Saunders et al., 2012). In the literature review of this study, the descriptive research involved the conceptualisation of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention practices, while, in the empirical study, descriptive research was applied in relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample of participants, and their mean scores related to the various measuring instruments.

1.7.3 Explanatory research

Babbie (2016) and Mouton and Marais (1996) describe explanatory research as a process which involves more than simply demonstrating that a relationship exists between variables. The main purpose of explanatory research is to indicate the degree of connectedness between variables or events (Saunders et al., 2012). In the empirical study, the explanatory research applied to the relationship between organisational justice, trust and the psychological contract and the effect of this relationship on the HR practices that have an influence on retention. The end goal of the research study was to formulate a conclusion on the relationship dynamics between the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and employees' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention through the construction of an empirically tested retention framework. Thus, this study fulfilled the requirements of the type of research as outlined above.

1.7.4 Validity

The foremost purpose of the research design is to plot and structure the research project in such a manner that the project pledges that the literature review and empirical study are valid in terms of the variables in the study (Creswell, 2014; Mackey & Gass, 2016; Mouton & Marais, 1996). The validity of research refers to both internal and external validity. For research to be internally valid, the constructs should be measured in a valid manner (Saunders et al., 2012). For its part, external validity refers to the extent to which the research results of a particular study may be generalised from the original sample to the entire population from which the sample originated (Salkind, 2018). Saunders et al. (2012) argue that both internal and external

validity are necessary and required in relation to research design. To ensure validity, a series of well-versed judgements are necessary in terms of the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigms that will be used, the context within which the research will take place, as well as the techniques that will be used to collect and analyse the requisite data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

1.7.4.1 Validity of the literature review

In this research study, the validity of the literature review was ensured by making use of literature that was both relevant and current in terms of the nature, problems and aims of the study. Efforts were made to guarantee that the most recent literature sources were sought and used, although a quantity of classical and contemporary mainstream research studies were also referred to, due to their pertinence to the conceptualisation of the constructs relevant to the research.

1.7.4.2 Validity of the empirical research

The internal validity of the empirical research was ensured by making use of appropriate and standardised measuring instruments (Creswell, 2014; Mackey & Gass, 2016). Accordingly, a critical investigation of the measuring instruments was conducted in efforts to conclude their construct-validity (the extent to which the measuring instruments measure the theoretical constructs they purport to measure) and content validity. Internal validity was also ensured by minimising bias in the selection of participants through targeting employees working at a single HEI in SA. The sample selected was also as large as possible, and the research questionnaire booklet included standard instructions and information for all participants. The statistical procedures carried out, moreover, controlled for socio-demographic variables.

According to Salkind (2018), external validity refers to the degree of possibility of generalising from the data gathered, as well as the context of the research study to larger populations and environments. It also includes the procedures used for sampling, the time and place of the research and the circumstances under which the research is conducted (Saunders et al., 2012). The external validity of this study was ensured by the results being relevant to all individuals working at a particular HEI in SA. The total population of employees in a single HEI was targeted to increase the generalisability of the results to the target population. The results are not generalisable to other HEIs, seeing that the research was only conducted at a single HEI in SA.

The following elements helped to ensure the validity of the data gathering instruments:

- The constructs in the study were measured in a valid way by the use of questionnaires that were methodically verified and accepted as the most appropriate in terms of face validity, content validity and construct validity.
- Efforts were made to ensure that the data collected was accurate and that it was precisely coded and suitably analysed to ensure content validity. The statistical analysis was conducted by a knowledgeable expert, and the most recent and sophisticated computer packages were employed.
- The researcher ensured that the findings of the research were based on the data which had been analysed to ensure its content validity. The reporting and interpretation of results were done in accordance with relevant statistical procedures.
- The researcher ensured that the final conclusions, implications and recommendations were based on the findings of the study.

1.7.5 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the data collection techniques provide consistent results, and that similar observations would be made or conclusions drawn by other researchers (Punch, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2014). In other words, reliability is the extent to which a test is repeatable and yields consistent results indicated by what is measured. Thus, reliability in the research context quantifies the precision of the measuring instruments used over numerous, consistent administrations or replications (Rubin & Babbie, 2014). The reliability of the literature review was ensured by making use of quality literature sources and specific theories, models or frameworks applicable to the proposed study, in addition to collecting information that was correct, comprehensive and unbiased (Punch, 2014).

The reliability of the empirical study was guaranteed by the use of a representative sample. Disturbance variables were lessened through the sampling procedure used, as well as the use of measuring instruments of which the reliability had been proven in previous research studies. This is discussed in Chapter 5 (research method). In addition, the internal consistency reliability of each of the scales used was also tested before proceeding with the statistical analysis (Chapter 6).

1.7.6 The unit of research

Babbie (2016) is of the opinion that, in the main, the objective of research in the social sciences is the individual human being. Thus, in terms of individual measurement, the unit of analysis is the individual. In this research study, the unit of analysis comprised full-time employees working at a HEI in SA. This unit of analysis included all levels of full-time employees at the institution, ranging from academic staff (all levels) to support staff.

1.7.7 The variables

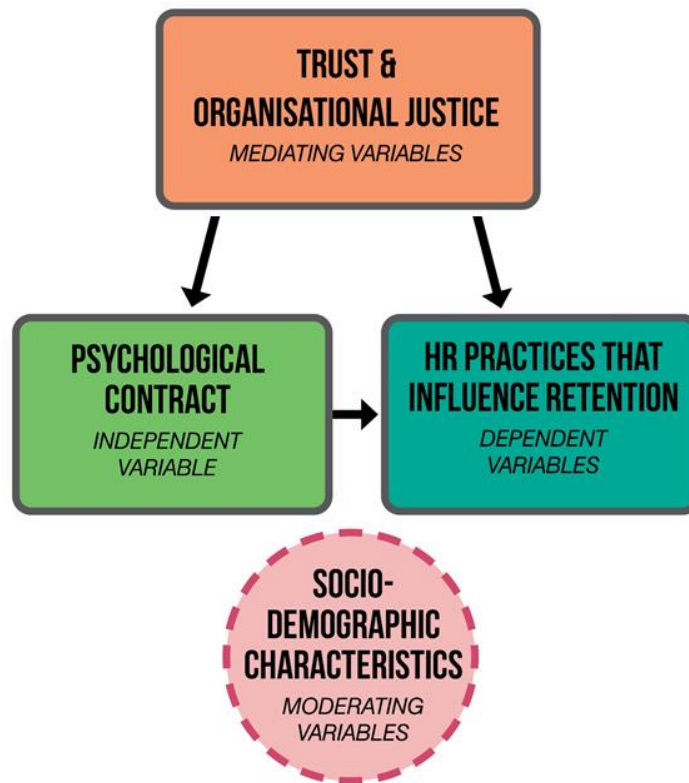
This study attempted to measure the following:

- The effect of organisational justice and trust [mediating variables] on the relationship between the psychological contract [independent (predictor) variable] and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence staff retention [dependent (criterion) variables]; and
- The moderating effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (race, gender, age, qualification, job level and tenure) and their perceptions of the psychological contract and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

The terms independent and dependent variables imply a causal relationship in terms of which the independent variable is believed to influence the dependent variable in relation to a response or outcome. In view of the fact that this study was cross-sectional in nature, the focus was not to establish cause and effect but, rather, to establish the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables with the view to constructing an overall retention framework.

Figure 1.1 on the following page presents the variables relevant to this research study and the relationship between these variables.

Figure 1.1
Levels of the Investigation



Source: Author's own work

In summary, in addition to investigating the relationship dynamics between all the variables, the study aimed to assess the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence staff retention. In other words, the analysis conducted focused on assessing whether the mediation variables (organisational justice and trust) modified the strength or direction of the relationship between psychological contract and the individuals' levels of satisfaction with the HR practices, which influence retention. It was anticipated that the findings would inform retention management practices at both the individual and the organisational level. The ultimate purpose of the investigation was to construct a framework for the retention of staff in the higher education environment.

1.7.8 Delimitations

This research study was a cross-sectional study, which involved the analysis of data collected from a population at one specific point in time in a single institution, thus indicating that cross-sectional data was collected (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Longitudinal studies make comparisons over time but this was not possible in this study (Punch, 2014). The cross-sectional research

design was appropriate because the empirical inter-dynamics among the set of constructs are an unknown phenomenon which needs exploration as a first phase of investigation to assess the viability of future longitudinal studies (Spector, 2019).

There are several disadvantages to cross-sectional studies, including the fact that the data cannot be used to analyse behaviour over a period to time. Furthermore, this type of study does not determine cause and effect, and the sample is not guaranteed to be representative because the data is collected at one specific time (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In view of the fact that this study was cross-sectional in nature, the focus was, thus, not on establishing cause and effect but, rather, on establishing the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables with the view to constructing an overall retention framework. Chapter 5 and chapter 7 further elaborate on the limitations of cross-sectional mediation designs.

This study was also confined to research on the effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention. In an attempt to identify oblique factors that may have influenced the individuals' psychological contract, the variables used as control variables were limited to race, gender, age, job level and tenure. A control variable is a variable that has the potential to influence the dependent variable (Salkind, 2018).

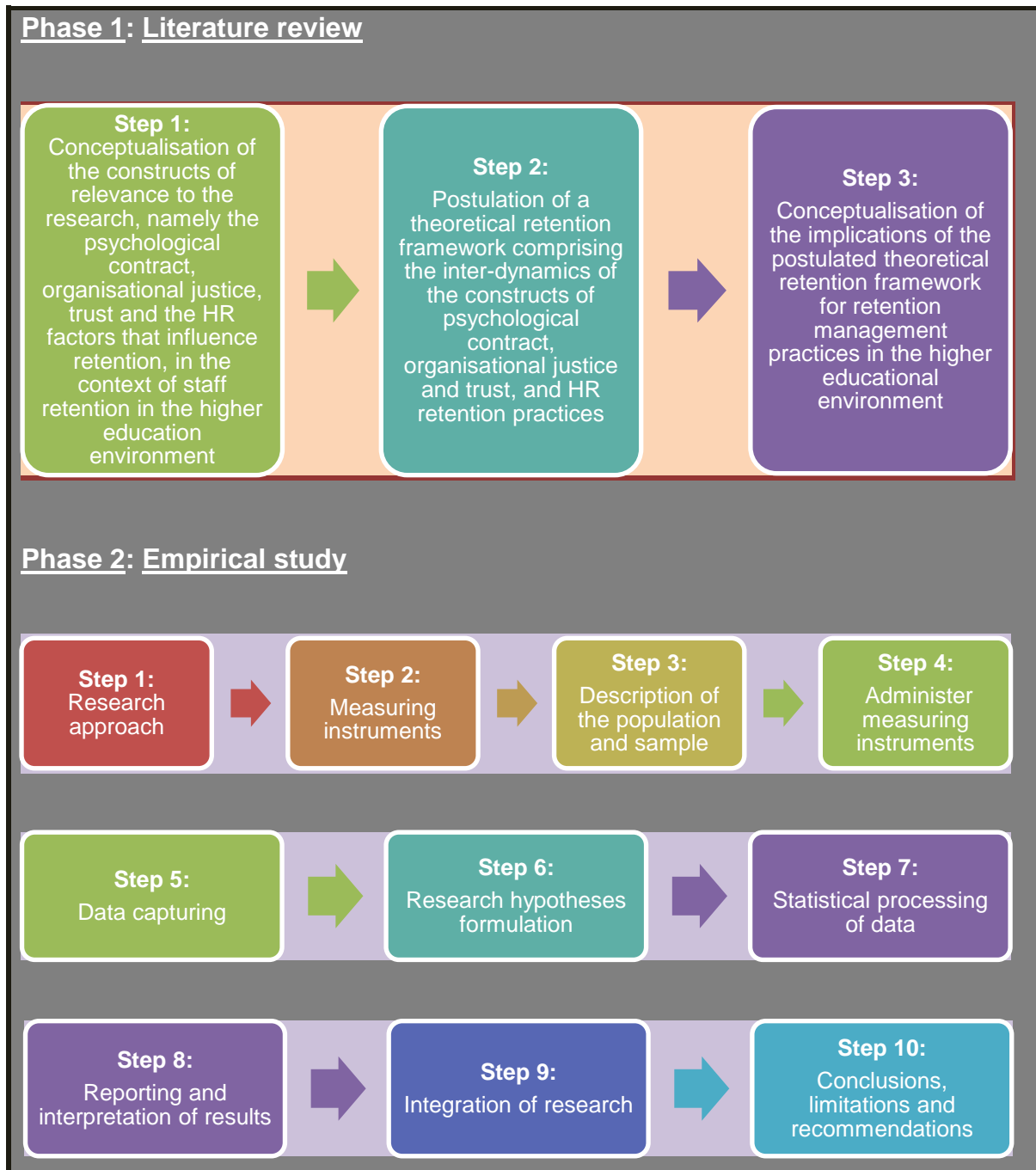
The researcher made no attempt either to manipulate or to classify any of the information, results or data based on family background, spiritual beliefs and psychological and/or physical factors. The study was intended to be ground research that limited its focus to the effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention. Should a significant effect be found, it was anticipated that the groundwork information could be useful for future researchers to use to address other issues relating to the constructs in question.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional, quantitative survey approach and employed standardised, valid and reliable measuring instruments. The population of the study included academic and support staff from a HEI in SA. The population was purposively targeted, and a random sampling technique was employed as the total population was targeted for data collection purposes. The sampling method and population are described in more detail in Chapter 5. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and inferential and multivariate statistics were used to test the research hypotheses. These aspects are discussed in detail in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

The research was conducted in two phases, which each comprised various steps (see discussion in the section below). Figure 1.2 below provides an overview of the different phases.

Figure 1.2
Overview of the Research Methodology



Source: Author's own work

1.8.1 Phase 1: The literature review

The literature review consisted of a review of the existing literature on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention.

Step 1: This step addressed research aim 1 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. This was addressed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Step 2: This step addressed research aim 2 of the literature review, namely, to postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices. This was addressed in Chapter 4.

Step 3: This step addressed research aim 3 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment. This was also addressed in Chapter 4.

1.8.2 Phase 2: The empirical study

The empirical study was conducted at an ODL institution in the higher educational environment in SA.

Step 1: Research approach

The detail relating to the research approach followed in this study is discussed in Chapter 5.

Step 2: Measuring instruments

The instruments used to measure the constructs of the psychological contract, retention factors, organisational justice and trust are discussed in Chapter 5. A socio-demographic questionnaire containing data relevant to the participant's race, gender, age, job level and tenure was used in addition to the four quantitative instruments. The instruments used included the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ) (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006); the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) developed by Döckel (2003) and Döckel et al. (2006); the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM) developed by Colquitt (2001) and the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) developed by Martins (2000) and Martins and Von der Ohe (2005).

Step 3: Description of population and sample

The determination and description of the population and sample are discussed in Chapter 5.

Step 4: Administer measuring instrument

This step involved the collection of data from the sample and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Step 5: Data capturing

The participants' responses to the questionnaires were captured in an electronic database, which was then converted into an SPSS data file.

Step 6: Formulation of research hypothesis

The research hypotheses aimed at achieving the research objectives were formulated during this step (Chapter 5).

Step 7: Statistical processing of data

The statistical procedures used in the research study during this step are explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

Step 8: Reporting of results

The results of the study were illustrated in tables, diagrams and/or graphs, while the discussion of the findings was presented in a systematic and logical framework, thus ensuring that the findings of the study were conveyed in a distinct and accurate manner. Chapter 6 reports on the results.

Step 9: Integration of research

The results were interpreted and discussed in Chapter 7.

Step 10: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

In the final step, the conclusions relating to the study results and their integration with the relevant theory are discussed in Chapter 7. The limitations of the study are also discussed in Chapter 7, and recommendations were made in relation to the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, as the constructs used to inform effective retention management practices.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters in the study are as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research study

Chapter 2: Meta-theoretical context of the study: Retention in the higher education environment

Chapter 3: Psychological contract, organisational justice and trust

Chapter 4: Theoretical integration: Towards constructing a theoretical framework for staff retention

Chapter 5: Research method

Chapter 6: Research results

Chapter 7: Discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

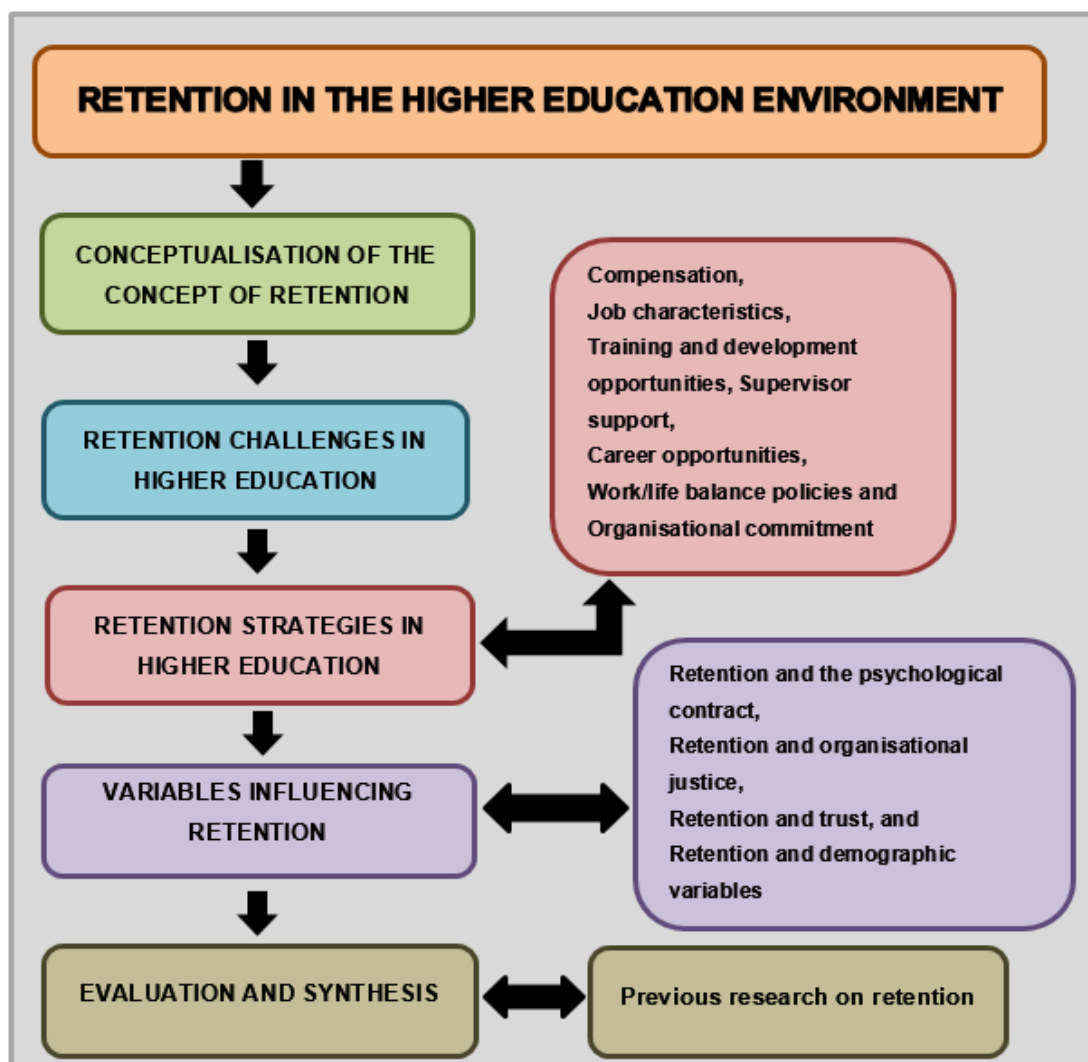
The background to and motivation for the research, the aim of the study, the research model, the paradigm perspectives, the theoretical research, its designs and methodology, the central hypothesis and the research method were discussed in this chapter. The motivation for this study was based on the fact that no known research has been conducted on the effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) in the context of retention management.

Chapter 2 addresses the first research aim of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. This chapter includes a critical evaluation of retention in the higher education environment, with specific reference to the ODL institution where this study was conducted, as well as a discussion of the variables influencing retention in higher education.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

The aim of this chapter is to place this study in perspective by outlining the meta-theoretical context that constituted the conclusive boundaries of the study, namely, staff retention in the higher education environment. This chapter deals with the first research aim of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. This chapter critically evaluates retention in the higher education environment and the variables influencing retention in this environment. Thereafter, previous research on retention in higher education is examined. Figure 2.1 below provides an overview of the core themes of this chapter.

Figure 2.1
Overview of the Core Themes in Chapter 2



Source: Author's own work

2.1 RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

The following sections deal with the conceptualisation of the construct 'retention', the various challenges in the higher education environment in SA, and the retention strategies applied within the higher education context in SA at the time of the study.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation: Retention

As discussed in Chapter 1, major employee turnover and the retention of key employees are of enormous concern to HEIs in SA because they are losing their highly skilled and qualified employees to better offers in the private sector (Erasmus et al., 2015; Kinman, 2016; Robyn, 2012; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013). At the ODL institution where this study was conducted, retention of qualified, valuable employees is of enormous concern for the institution as its turnover rates are alarmingly high (Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; & Dube Ngulube, 2013). Retaining employees in HEIs is of the utmost importance as they ensure that universities attain their visions and missions and play a vital role in accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty and supplying much needed, scarce skills (HESA, 2011; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). It is, therefore, clear that South African HEIs, specifically the ODL institution under examination, cannot afford to keep losing their talented, skilled and valued employees (Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Theron et al., 2014).

Retention is defined as the efforts made by organisations to retain highly skilled, talented and excellent performing employees as a means to achieve their goals and objectives (Fatima, 2011; Iqbal & Hashmi, 2015; Kumar & Santhosh, 2014). Thus, retention is a deliberate effort by an employer to retain the current employees in an organisation (Masango & Mpofo, 2013). Employee retention also refers to the various policies, procedures and practices applied to ensure that valuable employees remain loyal to the organisation for the maximum period of time (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014; Idris, 2014).

Retention may furthermore be described as the measures taken by an organisation to avoid employees from departing from the organisation, for example, rewarding employees for worthy performance, ensuring an enjoyable working environment as well as pleasant working relations as well as ensuring that the working environment is both safe and healthy (Van Dyk et al., 2013; Netswera et al., 2005). Employee retention may thus be defined as the whole range of human resource policies, strategies and activities implemented by an organisation to ensure that the finest talent, skills and capabilities are attracted and retained for the longest period of time (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014; Idris, 2014; Shekshnia, 1994). For the

purpose of this research study, retention is defined as all human resource policies, practices and strategies designed to ensure that an organisation's employees remain at the organisation for the longest possible time.

Retention strategies such as improving employees' compensation packages, introducing flexible working environments, improving employees' career development and training opportunities, and so forth, are critical in a global market which is faced with the shortage of skilled workers and, in particular, in the South African economy where HEIs are facing the growing problem of major employee turnover (Chabault et al., 2012; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). The retention of knowledgeable, talented employees from all demographic groups is of immense importance to HEIs, particularly in view of the potential financial returns from these employees in the long term as well as the detrimental effects of high turnover rates on an organisation (Döckel et al., 2006; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010).

When any employee is appointed, an organisation invests considerable time and money in that employee in terms of recruitment, selection, onboarding and training to ensure that the employee reaches a point at which he/she is able to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation's objectives (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014). Thus, it is an enormous loss when skilled and trained employees leave an organisation (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014). Theron et al. (2014) concur with this view and add that, when top-performing employees leave an organisation, they leave a gap, which is both expensive and difficult to fill.

Voluntary turnover refers to the movement of an individual across the membership and boundaries of an organisation (Price, 2001). Erasmus et al. (2015) add that voluntary turnover refers to an employee choosing to leave an organisation and, by so doing, terminating the employer-employee relationship. Involuntary turnover is controlled by the organisation in the form of dismissal, retrenchment, retirement, ill-health or death whereas voluntary turnover is within the control of the employee (Erasmus et al., 2015; Masoga, 2013; Theron et al. 2014). Voluntary turnover through resignations has a number of negative effects on an organisation, including loss of skills, knowledge and experience, disruption of service and delivery, declining morale, disruptions of the productivity of the work group and work stress caused by the vacancies (Erasmus et al., 2015; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Smyth, Zhai, & Li, 2009; Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

Masango and Mpfu (2013) concur that various costs arise from employee turnover, including separation costs such as exit interviews, administrative tasks and severance pay, vacancy

costs such as the net costs of augmented overtime or temporary employees minus savings in salaries, replacement costs such as the costs surrounding the enticing, interviewing and examining candidates, training costs involved in training new workers, and performance differential costs such as the reduced output of new employees. Retention strategies are thus crucial to avoid the negative effects of turnover such as the high economic costs and unsettled social and communicative arrangements and channels within an organisation (Robyn & Du Preez, 2013). In HEIs retention takes added importance because the sustainability and survival of these institutions depend on scarce human and specialist skills (Pienaar & Bester, 2008).

In short, this section conceptualised retention as a significant human resource strategy in the workplace and one that adds to the competitive advantage of an organisation. Without apt retention management strategies and supportive HR practices, organisations may endure high turnover rates and, in turn, suffer financial losses because of the high turnover expenses. HEIs are finding it difficult to retain vital talented staff in the higher education environment (HESA, 2011; Theron et al., 2014). It is thus evident that employee retention is enormously significant for an organisation's competitive advantage and that the loss of key personnel may have a damaging influence on the productivity and profitability of an organisation (Idris, 2014). This principle also applies to HEIs and thus the following section explores the retention challenges encountered in higher education in SA.

2.1.2 Retention challenges in higher education

Retention is a crucial aspect in all organisations, especially in HEIs. If organisations are not able to retain their employees for a reasonable period of time, they will not be able to remain competitive and render quality services (Hailu et al., 2013). South African HEIs, specifically the ODL institution relevant to the current study, face enormous challenges when it comes to the retention of key employees (Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Kinman, 2016; Mafini, 2014; Masango & Mpofo, 2013; Oni & Fatoki, 2017; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Tettey, 2010).

In SA, employment equity legislation requires the staff profile of in particular public institutions such as HEIs, to include previously disadvantaged (designated) groups (Masango & Mpofo, 2013). However, the staff composition of these institutions is often predominantly white due to the country's discriminatory past and the fact that HEIs used to be historically white institutions. This results in these institutions not meeting employment equity targets (HESA, 2011; Masango & Mpofo, 2013). Badat (2010) concurs and adds that South African HEIs face a

complex challenge because they were both racialised and gendered and this resulted in a predominantly white male workforce. Ngulube (2013) add that most of the senior staff members in the ODL institution under investigation are white males. The pronouncements that resulted from the transformation efforts after 1994 had a detrimental effect on the retention of valuable higher education employees (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Mafini, 2014).

Senior academic employees in HEIs are extremely valuable to these institutions as they are required to produce research outputs, supervise postgraduate students and also mentor and train young academics (Badat, 2010; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Mmako & Shultz, 2016). However, there is not a high influx of young employees entering HEIs, in 10 years, most senior employees in HEIs may be retired (Badat, 2010; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Mmako & Shultz, 2016). HESA (2011) has also highlighted that almost half of the professoriate and 20% of the higher education workforce will be retiring within the next ten years. This aging workforce in HEIs is causing both a void and an imbalance in terms of scholarly and academic productivity and excellence. The ODL institution where the current research was conducted faces a situation where 14% of the academics at professorship level will retire within the next few years and 18% of other staff members, who are mostly well-known professors and top-rated academics, are due to retire within the next decade (Erasmus et al., 2017; Dube & Ngulube, 2013).

HEIs in SA are not only losing valuable employees as a result of retirement but also they face numerous other challenges related to the retention of key employees, including downsizing, financial constraints, emigration, employment equity, mergers, acquisitions, globalisation and uncompetitive remuneration packages (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Martins, 2010; Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Notshulwana, 2011; Tettey, 2006; 2010; Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011). Kinman (2016) adds that poor salaries, limited promotion opportunities and job insecurity are some of the foremost factors, which contribute to high turnover rates in HEIs. Possible explanations for the high turnover rate in HEIs and specifically the ODL institution under investigation, include compensation and remuneration packages, lack of promotion opportunities, lack of funding for research, cultural differences at the institutional level, and heavy workloads (Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Theron et al., 2014).

According to Mmako and Schultz (2016), HEIs face an overload of demands, such as financial constraints, employment equity, uncompetitive remuneration packages, limited promotion opportunities and a lack of resources; but are not equipped with the response mechanisms or strategies required to address these demands. This overload of demands on the employees at HEIs often leads to employees leaving the institution (Mmako & Shultz, 2016). In addition,

HEIs also have to compete with other HEIs for students, employees and subsidies and this intensifies the demands placed on employees and on the institution as a whole (HESA, 2011; Obers, 2014). Employees at HEIs are required to perform tasks which require a high level of complexity within an increasingly demanding environment but without the necessary job resources and this leads to stress and lower organisational commitment (Barkhuizen et al., 2013; Mmako & Shultz, 2016). Kinman and Wray (2016) concur, adding that the demands placed on employees at HEIs have increased over time but that the resources, which were conventionally supposed to protect staff from work stress, such as autonomy, support and role clarity, have decreased substantially.

Research studies have identified possible reasons for the intensification of work in higher education and specifically the ODL in institution where this research was conducted. These include the “massification” of higher education, student profiles from diverse social, cultural and educational backgrounds, more stringent requirements for accountability and efficiency, increased pressure to publish, more “judgemental” performance management systems and more intense monitoring of students’ experiences (Bently et al., 2013; Dube & Nguluble, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Kinman, 2016; Kinman & Wray, 2016; Shin & Jung, 2014; Ter Bogt & Scapens, 2012; Yusoff & Khan, 2013). When HEIs face increased employee turnover, it creates instability and places additional workload and stress on the remaining employees, which then leads to job dissatisfaction, lower commitment and a higher possibility of more turnover (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

Another major challenge that HEIs face is that the majority of suitable, qualified and knowledgeable employees prefer to work in the corporate/private sectors due to attractive growth opportunities and more attractive remuneration packages (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). Robyn and Du Preez (2013) agree and comment that insufficient financial remuneration packages in HEIs are one of the most prominent reasons why HEIs find it almost impossible to recruit and/or retain young, proficient employees in their institutions. Pienaar and Bester (2008) note that a career in an HEI is no longer deemed to be an attractive and desirable career choice and this further intensifies the challenge for HEIs to retain their employees. Globalisation, liberalisation and the fast growth in technology have resulted in even further challenges for HEIs and have further contributed to the so-called “brain drain” in the higher education environment (Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013).

Table 2.1 on below summarises the retention challenges faced by HEIs in SA, and specifically the ODL institution relevant to this study, and as discussed in the paragraphs above.

Table 2.1

Retention Challenges in Higher Education

Key retention challenges in South African HEIs	
Financial constraints	Employment equity
Uncompetitive remuneration packages	Mergers
Poor salaries	Acquisitions
Limited promotion opportunities	Job insecurity
Limited growth and development opportunities	Unfair/ inconsistent/ judgemental performance management systems
Lack of resources	Globalisation
Overload of demands placed on employees	Emigration

Source: Author's own work

It is clear that it is vital that retention strategies are implemented in HEIs to counter the challenges described in the above sections, as well as to ensure the sustainability of HEIs (Badat, 2010; Dube & Ngulube, 2013). Armstrong (2009) adds that organisations should understand the factors that impact on whether employees leave or stay, to develop and implement effective retention strategies. Retention factors refer to those HR practices that support the facilitation of an employee's decision as whether to remain in or leave an organisation (Netswera et al., 2005; Van Dyk, 2011). The following section explores the retention strategies currently employed in HEIs and discusses Döckel's (2003) Retention Factor Framework.

2.1.3 Retention strategies in higher education

Retention strategies refer to HR practices that are introduced to encourage employees to remain with their organisations (Kumar & Santhosh, 2014). Retention factors include fair compensation, opportunities for career development, work-life balance, a vigorous organisational culture, a fair performance management system, supervisor support and independence in the working environment (Kumar & Santhosh, 2014) and these factors are crucial in the development of retention strategies. Ferreira (2012) adds that it is essential that organisations take note of various retention factors in the development of retention strategies, which may include rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively, ensuring

agreeable work relations, and maintaining a pleasant working environment, in their efforts to retain their employees.

Retention factors refer to those HR practices that steer an employee's inclination to stay or leave an organisation and should be incorporated in and transformed into retention strategies (Netswera et al., 2005; Van Dyk, 2011). Thus, organisations use retention factors to develop strategies aimed at retaining their valuable employees such as include financial inducements such as increased compensation, benefits, incentives and promotions, as well as non-financial benefits which include flexible working arrangements, work-life balance, skills development and control (D'Amato & Hersfeldt, 2008; Straz, 2014).

In HEIs in SA, and moreover, at the ODL institution under investigation, several retention strategies are applied to counter the massive retention problems currently being experienced. These strategies are discussed in the following paragraphs. Creating employment conditions that facilitate the satisfaction of the needs of employees at HEIs is deemed to be an overarching retention strategy applied by most HEIs in SA (Mafini, 2014). In order to satisfy the needs of their employees, HEIs need to take five satisfaction practices into account, namely, workplace flexibility, skills utilisation, cooperation, compensation and self-sufficiency (Filiz, 2013; Ignat & Clipa, 2012; Mafini, 2014). Balakrishnan and Vijayalakshmi (2014) mention that HEIs should apply the following basic practices, namely, hire the right people, empower employees, provide employees with support, information and knowledge, recognise and appreciate their performance, and keep their morale high. Terera and Ngirande (2014) add that the training and development of staff in HEIs are crucial for retention, as this will increase employees' motivation, job satisfaction and commitment, and lower their intention to leave their organisation.

An additional strategy employed in HEIs is the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model (Siegrist, 1996). The ERI model may improve the working conditions in HEIs by helping them to focus on financial rewards, esteem/support and job security (Kinman, 2016). According to Mmako and Schultz (2016), a retention framework for HEIs should focus on recognition and feedback, training and development programmes, management support, open communication, a positive and supportive organisational culture, mentoring programmes and empowering staff (Tareef, 2013). A similar strategy that should be employed is that of Dube and Ngulube (2013) who maintain that talent management, mentorship programmes, career conversations, exit interviews and career development are the most crucial aspects of a retention strategy. According to Dube and Ngulube (2013), talent management, mentorship programmes, career conversations, exit interviews and career development will increase employees' commitment

to their organisations and lower their intention to leave their organisations, and thereby benefit retention.

According to a study by Walker (2001), there are seven retention factors that organisations need to take into account when developing a retention strategy, namely, the establishment of challenging work, opportunities to learn and develop, positive collegial relationships, recognition of strengths and good work performance, performance contributions, work-life balance and strong communication within the organisation. Erasmus et al (2015) as well as Erasmus et al., (2017) concur and state that employees' intention to remain with their organisation is influenced by the way in which employees perceive their work and the leadership in their work, their relationship with their supervisors as well as the compensation they receive. Thus, employees' perceptions of their work and the leadership in their working environment, their relationship with their supervisors and the compensation that they receive, have a significant effect on retention.

Therefore, it can be summarised that there are definite factors that contribute to the retention of employees. In this regard, Radford et al. (2015) identified job satisfaction, work environment, compensation, career opportunities and job security as important retention factors. In a South African study which was led by Döckel (2003), six crucial retention factors were identified which organisations need to consider in relation to the retention of employees with high technology skills – such as the case in HEIs (Das & Baruah, 2013; Döckel et al., 2006; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). These factors include compensation, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. These six retention factors identified by Döckel (2003) were deemed to be the most relevant and comprehensive for the purposes of this research study as they enabled the researcher to examine the retention strategies from various perspectives to develop a retention framework for the higher education environment.

2.1.3.1 Compensation

Compensation refers to whether an organisation's compensation packages are competitive, how the organisation's remuneration policy is structured, and the salary increases that are offered to the organisation's employees (Döckel, 2003; Van Dyk et al., 2013). These are probably the most significant factors in employee retention (Ibidunni et al., 2016; Kakar et al., 2015), and include both the financial and non-financial rewards which are offered in return for an employee's service (Döckel, 2003; Roy, 2015). Financial rewards comprise salary, and salary add-ons, such as benefits and incentives, such as bonuses and profit sharing (Mubarak

et al., 2012; Pfeffer, 1998), while non-financial rewards refer to indirect financial rewards that employees receive for their efforts (Döckel, 2003; Schlechter et al., 2015).

For the purpose of this study, compensation was investigated by determining employees' perceptions regarding their benefits packages, raises and how raises are determined, how information about pay issues are communicated, their satisfaction with their total salary package, including base pay, benefits and incentives, as well as the competitiveness of their total salary package (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006). Furthermore, the employees' views about the influence his/her supervisor has on their pay, the consistency of the specific ODL institution's pay policies, and also how the institution administers pay, the number of benefits they receive, and lastly, the size of employees' current financial incentive (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Compensation has a noteworthy impact on the retention of employees because it affords a feeling of satisfaction and worthiness, as employees feel they are being rewarded for the efforts they put in (Farris, 2000; Mubarak et al., 2012). Various scholars, such as Ng'ethe et al. (2012), Presbitero et al. (2016), as well as Rosser (2004), concluded that more than 50% of the employees in South African HEIs indicated in a national study that they were dissatisfied with their salaries and fringe benefits.

Compensation provides employees with a sense of financial security, independence, freedom, acknowledgment, plus an enhanced feeling of dignity (Döckel et al., 2006). A study conducted by Theron et al. (2014) in a HEI, found that over 50% of the participants indicated a strong dissatisfaction with the compensation they were receiving, while 34% indicated that they intended to leave the institution due to their dissatisfaction with the compensation. Various studies have further concluded that there is a positive relationship between remuneration, the equality of compensation and employee commitment to an organisation (Döckel et al., 2006; Ibidunni et al., 2016; Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992; Kee et al., 2016; Korsakienėa et al., 2015; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Panaccio et al., 2014; Schaubroeck et al., 1994; Yang et al., 2008).

2.1.3.2 Job characteristics

Job characteristics are related to certain aspects of a job, and include variety and autonomy in tasks, challenging projects, opportunities to work with and learn from the top people, flexibility and the opportunity to take on interesting and stimulating responsibilities (Döckel, 2003; Coetzee et al., 2015; Van Dyk et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, job characteristics comprised of whether employees felt that their jobs require them to use a

number of complex or high-level skills, whether their jobs afford them with the opportunity to use their own resourcefulness or judgement in performing their job tasks, if their jobs gave them satisfactory prospect for individuality and autonomy in how they do the work, and lastly, whether their jobs were interesting, challenging and varied (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Highly educated and experienced employees are the most satisfied with jobs in which a wide variety of skills are utilised and which offer job autonomy (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Robbins (1993) confirms these statements and adds that employees prefer work which is intellectually challenging, and which offers them the opportunity to utilise a range of tasks, autonomy and feedback on their performance. According to Döckel (2003), job characteristics may lead to the development of stronger organisational commitment due to employees feeling competent and involved in meaningful work. Researchers in previous studies have found a significant relationship between skill variation and organisational commitment (Döckel et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2012; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Zanibonia et al., 2013).

2.1.3.3 Training and development

Training and development are defined as a planned activity that is aimed at improving employees' performance by improving their levels of skills and capabilities (Forgacs, 2009; Presbitero et al., 2016). Armstrong (2009) also defines training and development as an organised process to advance employee competences to achieve organisational goals. A research study by Terera and Ngirande (2014) has shown that the majority of employees have a pressing desire to acquire new skills. The purpose of training and development, as well as educational investment, is to provide opportunities for employees to progress and advance (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). It is crucial for employers to realise that in the South African job market, one of the key means of retaining qualified employees is training and development (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

For the purpose of this research, employees' views regarding training and development were assessed by determining whether employees felt that the ODL institution where they are employed provided them with job-specific training, if adequate time was assigned for training, whether employees felt that they could apply the training they received in this institution, if there were enough development opportunities for each employee in the organisation, whether sufficient money was allocated for training and also whether employees had the opportunity to be involved in activities that promoted their professional development (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Employee efficiency and competence are two of the most significant requirements for the continuous enhancement of an organisation through the improvement of employees' skills, knowledge and capabilities (Mubarak et al., 2012). Giving employees adequate training and development opportunities forms a crucial part of the fulfilment of the employees' psychological contract with their organisation and enhances employee attachment and commitment to the organisation (Bergiel et al., 2009; Van Dyk et al., 2013). A study by Chin and Hung (2013) also revealed that training and development opportunities had a significant effect on employees' turnover intentions.

According to Ng'ethe et al. (2012), professional development is a vital component, which makes universities the main epicentres of ideas, innovation and advancement. When academic employees attend professional proceedings and national and international conferences they tend to thrive on reciprocal and intellectual inspiration from their peers (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Training and development provide employees with opportunities for growth and make employees feel that they are appreciated and an important asset to their organisation, which results in perceptions of dignity and organisational commitment (Kakar et al., 2015; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Van Dyk, 2011). Döckel (2003) confirms this and adds that employee commitment to an organisation may be improved through encouragement, arrangement and investment in employees' development and by investment in their education.

2.1.3.4 Supervisor support

Supervisor support denotes to the acknowledgement and constructive feedback that employees receive from their supervisors (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). When employees receive continuous encouragement, recognition and feedback, they develop strong feelings of loyalty towards the organisation (Döckel et al., 2006). In this research, supervisor support was investigated by determining employees' opinions regarding whether their supervisors looked for opportunities to praise and recognise positive performance, if they felt valued by their supervisors, whether their supervisors gave them constructive feedback about their work, and if their supervisors would reward good ideas by executing it and giving credit to the responsible employee(s) (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Both Spector (1997) and Karatepe (2014) found that a supervisor's behaviour towards his/her employees is a strong determinant of job satisfaction. Employees' job satisfaction will improve if an immediate supervisor treats them in an understanding and friendly manner, offers recognition and praise for good performance, listens to their concerns and shows a personal interest in them (Robbins, 1993). Numerous research studies have indicated that supervisor

support has a positive effect on the retention of valued employees (Allen et al., 2003; Bergiel et al., 2009; Guchait et al., 2015; Karatepe, 2014; Nei et al., 2015; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012; Van Dyk et al., 2013; Vandenberghe et al., 2019). George (2015) concurs and adds that numerous studies have found that it is more important for employees to experience support from their supervisors than it is to experience support from the organisation.

Employees working in the higher education environment comprise the core of any HEI and thus it is essential that these institutions realise that employees' contributions should be recognised, for them to feel appreciated (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). When employees are given recognition and commendation for good performance as well as constructive and regular feedback, they will develop stronger feelings of organisational fit, loyalty and commitment to an organisation (Döckel et al., 2006; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Karatepe, 2014; Nei et al., 2015; Van Dyk et al., 2013).

2.1.3.5 Career opportunities

Career opportunities refer to both the internal and external career possibilities that are given to employees in an organisation (Presbitero et al., 2016; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Internal career opportunities denote to prospects within an employee's present organisation, for instance, a promotion or placement in another position within the same organisation (Wärnich et al., 2015). On the other hand, external career opportunities refer to prospects in a different company (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). In this study, employees' views regarding their career opportunities were assessed by determining whether employees felt that the ODL institution where they are employed provided them with enough career opportunities, if their chances for being promoted were good, whether the organisation filled job vacancies from inside or outside the organisation, if it would be easy to find a job in another department and lastly whether employees' career development were important to this institution (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Career opportunities have been found to be the most significant retention tool in comparison to any other type of reward (Döckel et al., 2006; Kochanski & Ledford, 2001; Lamba & Choudhary, 2013). According to a large research study conducted by Tettey (2006), the procedures involved in applying for promotion in a HEI are often time consuming and stressful for the employees and, in some instances, the requirements are arbitrary. Previous research studies have determined that there a positive relationship exists between career opportunities such as internal promotions, training and development and job security, and commitment to the organisation (Baruch, 2004; Döckel et al., 2006; Gutierrez et al., 2012; Lamba &

Choudhary, 2013; Presbitero et al., 2016; Van Dyk et al., 2013;). Van Dyk (2001) as well as Lamba and Choudhary (2013) confirm this and add that career opportunities have a significant effect on employees' organisational commitment. There is also overwhelming agreement in the literature that lower employee turnover rates are evident in organisations which employ successful career development programmes to assist their employees to develop and manage their careers (Presbitero et al., 2016).

2.1.3.6 Work-life balance

Work-life balance is referred to as the perception of an acceptable balance between an employee's personal life and work programme, as well as the ability to fulfil the many roles that individuals need to fulfil in their personal and work life without conflict (Döckel, 2003; Presbitero et al., 2016). Work-life balance policies may comprise flexible working programmes, family leave policies, authorising employees to be away from work to attend to family issues and also childcare support facilities (Döckel et al., 2006). Employees' perceptions about their work-life balance in the current study was evaluated by determining whether employees felt like there is too much work to do, if their work schedules were in conflict with their personal lives, if their jobs affected their roles as spouses and/or parents and also whether their jobs had an overall negative effect on their personal lives (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006).

Studies by Sturges and Guest (2004), and Deery and Jago (2015) found that an organisation's policies and practices should help the employees to accomplish a balanced relationship between their work and their personal lives, and that organisations foster stronger organisational commitment through support for employees' lives outside of work and the effective management of aspects of the psychological contract. Research studies have confirmed that employees working for organisations with work-life balance policies demonstrate both a stronger organisational commitment and considerably lower intentions to leave their organisations compared to those who work for organisations with no such policies in place (Deery & Jago, 2015; Döckel et al., 2006; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Nei et al., 2015; Presbitero et al., 2016).

Table 2.2 on the next page provides a summary of the core HR practices that influence retention, as discussed above.

Table 2.2

Core HR Practices that Influence Retention

Core HR practices that influence retention	Brief description
Compensation	An organisation's remuneration packages, remuneration policy, salary increases and incentives such as bonuses
Job characteristics	The extent to which an employees' job comprises variety and autonomy in tasks, challenging projects, interesting and stimulating responsibilities and freedom in their work performance
Training and development	Whether employees got job-specific training, if adequate time and money was allocated for training, whether employees felt that they could apply the training they received, if there were enough development opportunities and opportunities for professional development
Supervisor support	The extent to which employees received acknowledgement, constructive feedback, encouragement and recognition from their supervisors, and whether supervisors looked for opportunities to praise and recognise good performance as well as the extent to which employees felt valued by their supervisors
Career opportunities	This refers to internal (promotion or movement to another position) and external career possibilities (opportunities in a different organisation) that are given to employees in an organisation and whether employees' career development were important to this institution
Work-life balance	Acceptable balance between an employee's personal life and work programme, and the ability to fulfil the various roles that individuals need to fulfil in their personal and work lives without conflict

Source: Döckel et al. (2006, pp. 21–23)

In short, the discussion above demonstrated that HR practices relating to compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance are critical factors in the retention of employees. In 2013 the South African Board of Personnel Practice (SABPP) developed a set of national Human Resource (HR) standards

that were reviewed and updated in 2016 (SABPP, 2017). The HR standards developed by the SABPP are intended as guidelines for organisations and contain a set of standards and practices that an organisation should have in place to build a workforce which is aligned, engaged and productive, and that will achieve the organisation's objectives (SABPP, 2017). These HR standards that were developed by the SABPP include strategic HR management, talent management, HR risk management, workforce planning, learning and development, performance management, reward and recognition, employee wellness, employment relations, organisation development, HR service delivery and HR technology (SABPP, 2017). The HR standards for talent management, employment relations, learning and development, performance management, employee wellness, and reward and recognition are in line with and correspond to the six crucial factors that influence retention and that were identified by Döckel (2003), as discussed above.

According to Dube and Ngulube (2013), there is a pressing need to highlight, formalise and institutionalise a tested retention framework to ensure the retention of key employees in HEIs. Accordingly, this study aimed to develop a formal retention framework for employees in the higher education environment.

The previous sections shed some light on the enormous retention challenges currently facing HEIs in SA. It is clear that empirical research is pressingly needed so that these institutions can better understand the core HR retention factors, particularly employees' satisfaction with these HR practices, which lead to employees staying at their organisations, so that effective retention strategies can be developed and implemented. In a recent study conducted by Deas (2017), also in the higher education, and specifically, the ODL environment, it was concluded that individuals' psychological contracts and their satisfaction with retention practices were significantly related. This study, furthermore, found that the psychological contract, specifically, positive perceptions of employer obligations and the state of the psychological contract, are important in forecasting the retention factors of compensation, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance (Deas, 2017). The current study builds on that research, not only investigating the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention, but by studying the effect of two additional variables, namely, organisational justice and trust.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, both organisational justice and trust have been proven to mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and employment-related factors, such as job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, work engagement, change management, intention

to leave and leadership (Agarwal, 2014; Brockner, 1990; Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). However, never in a single study have the constructs of organisational justice and trust been studied pertaining to their mediation effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with a complex set of HR factors that influence staff retention, especially in the higher education environment.

In addition, Deas (2017) found that individuals' psychological contracts and their demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) are significantly related to their satisfaction with HR retention factors. Other previous studies have also determined that socio-demographic characteristics have a moderating effect on individuals' state of their psychological contracts (Randmann, 2013), their perceptions of organisational justice (Cohen & Avrahami, 2007), their levels of commitment (Rafiee, 2015), their turnover intentions (Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Al-Hussami et al., 2015), and their levels of trust in their organisations (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Studies have, furthermore, established that demographic factors have a moderating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and organisational justice (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Rodwell & Gulyas, 2013), between the psychological contract and trust (Atkinson, 2007), between organisational justice and trust (Aryee et al., 2002), as well as between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices (Bushe, 2012; Deas, 2017; Gaiduk & Gaiduk, 2009; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). However, there is a dearth of research as to the moderating effect of socio-demographic characteristics on the relationship dynamics between employees' psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention within the context of the higher education environment; such as the case is in the current study.

The next sections examine the variables influencing retention in higher education, focusing especially on the variables relevant to this study, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and demographic variables.

2.2 VARIABLES INFLUENCING RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Various variables may have an effect on staff retention. Previous studies have found that an employee's intention to stay with his/her organisation relies on three core factors, namely: 1) the individual features of the employee, for example, age, gender, and job level; 2) the nature of the employee's current job; and 3) a pleasant working environment, such as, good quality supervision, promotion prospects, training and development opportunities and communication within an organisation (Bushe, 2012; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Prior research has also found that

gender, race and marital status are important factors influencing retention, as people from a particular race or gender tend to depict differing turnover behaviour (Ng'ethe et al., 2012).

The psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in an organisation have been found to be crucial in ensuring harmony in the workforce, and are noteworthy factors influencing staff retention (Strydom et al., 2014). Previous research has established that a feeling of organisational justice and fairness, as well as a strong feeling of trust, lead to a more positive state of the psychological contract (Ahmad et al., 2016; Brockner, 2002; Cropanzano et al., 2007; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Othman, 2008). Previous studies have also concluded irrefutably that a positive state of the psychological contract leads to stronger organisational commitment and lower intention to leave the organisation (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Deas, 2017; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

Accordingly, the variables influencing employee retention and which were deemed to be relevant to this study, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, and demographic variables, as well as their relation to and effect on retention, are discussed in the following subsections.

2.2.1 Retention and the psychological contract

The psychological contract may be described as the mutual expectations of employers and employees regarding the relationship between them (Shruthi & Hemanth, 2012). Armstrong (2006) as well as Grobler and Grobler (2016) describe the psychological contract as a set of unwritten expectations which is a dynamic and reciprocal transaction in view of the fact that employees' expectations change as their commitment, social and emotional characteristics change. Grobler (2014) indicates that the psychological contract comprises the obligations, rights, justice and rewards to which employees believe they are entitled from their employer in return for their work, commitment, responsibility and loyalty. For the purpose of this study, the psychological contract is defined as the mutual expectations of employers and employees regarding the promises made and perceived obligations met in their employment relationship (Rousseau, 1995; Guest, 1998). In the current research, the psychological contract was measured with the Psycones Questionnaire (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006) by assessing employer obligations, employee obligations, individuals' levels of job satisfaction and the state of their psychological contracts (Guest et al., 2010).

In the current research, employees' psychological contract was assessed by investigating if they perceived that their employer (the ODL institution where this study was conducted) had kept the promises and commitments which it had made to its employees, whether the employees felt that they had kept the promises and commitments that they had made to their organisation and also if they experienced job satisfaction in their employment with this institution (Psycones, 2006). Employees' state of their psychological contract with their employer (the ODL institution under investigation) was evaluated by determining if employees felt that they were rewarded fairly for the amount of effort they put into their jobs, whether they trusted their supervisor and senior management to look after their best interests, if they felt that organisational changes were implemented fairly in the institution, if they trusted their organisation to keep its promises and commitments to them and other employees, whether they felt that they were fairly paid for their work and lastly if they felt that they were fairly treated by managers and supervisors (Psycones, 2006).

Fundamentally, any employment relationship is governed by the psychological contract and it forms the foundation of the employment relationship (Le Roux & Rothman, 2013; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Wörnich et al., 2015). The psychological contract has an immense effect on employee retention, because if employees has a strong psychological contract with their employer, they are less likely to leave their organisation and more likely to be committed to their employer (Chin & Hung, 2013; Deas, 2017; Grobler, 2014; Grobler & Grobler, 2016; Kraak et al., 2017; Lee, 2001; Peirce et al., 2012; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Van der Vaart et al., 2015). A perceived breach of the psychological contract can affect an employee's commitment to the organisation and result in them leaving the organisation, which then increases turnover and has a detrimental effect on retention (Chin & Hung, 2013; Peirce et al., 2012; Van Dijk & Ramatswi, 2016).

Previous studies confirm that a perceived breach of the psychological contract may increase both intended and actual turnover and has a negative effect on work attitudes and behaviour (CIPD, 2020; Clinton & Guest, 2013; Kraak et al., 2017; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Van Dijk & Ramatswi, 2016). Research by Ahmad et al. (2016), Chin and Hung (2013), Isach and Paloma (2015) as well as Tekleab et al. (2005) found that psychological contract breach leads to a higher intention to leave and increased staff turnover. A recent study by Stormbroek and Blomme (2017) also concluded that employees' intention to leave an organisation and staff turnover are directly linked to psychological contract fulfilment.

The results of a study by Deas (2017), revealed noteworthy positive correlations between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention. These results propose that positive psychological contract-related perceptions are associated with high satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention, namely, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies (Deas, 2017).

According to Van Straaten et al. (2011), there is well-established empirical evidence to prove that the state of employees' psychological contract is directly linked to both their commitment to the organisation and their intention to leave the organisation. Van der Vaart et al. (2015) agree that an organisation's fulfilment of the promises made to their employees and thus the state of the employees' psychological contracts with their employer have a significant effect on the employees' commitment to the organisation, intention to leave the organisation and thus on turnover. Van der Vaart et al. (2015) go on to state that the answer to the question as to why employees leave their organisations is to be found in the psychological contract. Similarly, Mishra and Kumar (2017) found in their study that psychological contract fulfilment may likely lead to reduced staff turnover.

As discussed in this chapter, in the higher education environment, specifically at the ODL institution where this study was conducted, psychological contract breach may take place as a result of numerous factors and challenges (Erasmus et al., 2017; Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013; Peirce et al., 2012). It is thus evident that the psychological contract undoubtedly has a significant effect on employee retention and is an important variable to be taken into account when retention strategies are developed. The psychological contract was a crucial variable in this study, especially in view of the fact that an investigation into the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices was one of the aims of this research. The effect of organisational justice on retention in the higher education environment is discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Retention and organisational justice

Organisational justice refers to the extent to which the treatment of employees within an organisation is perceived as fair (Greenberg, 1987; Jašková, 2015). Organisational justice may be viewed as employees' perceptions and actions in relation to justice and fairness within an organisation (Colquitt, 2001; Ehlers, 2013; Sparrow & Cooper, 2003).

There are four types of organisational justice perceptions, which were deemed to be relevant to this research study, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2005; Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2015; Nowakowski & Conlon, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2009; Usmani & Jamal, 2013), and these will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. In this study, organisational justice was measured by the Organisational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001) which assessed individuals' perceptions of organisational justice specifically using these four types of justice perceptions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. Table 2.3 below presents a brief summary of these four justice perceptions relevant to this study.

Table 2.3

Organisational Justice Perceptions

Justice perception	Description
Distributive justice	The equitable distribution of work and organisational resources. It may also be referred to as the perceived fairness of the allocation of reward in an organisation. Employees' observations in terms of the proportion of what they obtain from the organisation contrasted with what they put into their work, determine employees' perceptions of distributive justice.
Procedural justice	The principled, just and consistent application of legal requirements, employment contract provisions and workplace policies and procedures. Employees' perceptions of procedural justice are determined by the process which is followed with regard to reward allocation as well as all other organisational processes.
Interpersonal justice	The fairness of interpersonal treatment, as well as the sensitivity, politeness and respect for people that superiors display during interactions.
Informational justice	The demonstration of dependability, consistency and general fairness in organisational relationships. It involves the manner in which management communicates with its subordinates as well as the degree of honesty and respect, which is shown to them. Thus, informational justice involves the explanations provided to people that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain fashion.

Source: Adapted from Colquitt (2001)

Employees' perceptions of organisational justice may result in a chain of employee attitudinal and behavioural reactions (Chen et al., 2015; Tekleab et al., 2005). When employees deem

the treatment towards them in the organisation to be unfair, this may lead to negative attitudes and behaviours (Kgomo & Swarts, 2010). Sayers et al. (2011) agree that employees' observations regarding organisational injustice may lead to both negative feelings and negative work behaviour.

According to Cropanzano et al. (2007) and Cropanzano and Ambrose (2015), organisational justice also has the potential to create numerous benefits for both organisations and employees, for example, increased trust and commitment, improved job performance and lower turnover rates. In addition, employees' perceptions of organisational justice have a significant influence on their job satisfaction, commitment and intention to remain with the organisation (Burcu et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2015; Khalid et al., 2018; Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). Thus, if employees perceive that the organisation is treating them unjustly and unfairly, the chances of their leaving the organisation are significantly higher than may otherwise have been the case (George & Wallio, 2017).

Coetzee and Shreuder (2010) and Coetzee and Botha (2012) add that, if an employee is not treated fairly, job satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay with an organisation will undoubtedly decline. A study by Rokhman (2013) established that distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice all have substantial positive effects on organisational commitment and job satisfaction and significant negative impacts on employee turnover intentions. The results of a study led by Imran and Allil (2016) also revealed that all four dimensions of organisational justice have a positive and significant effect on employee retention.

In the higher education environment in SA, there are numerous aspects which challenge the retention of key employees and which may have a negative effect on the employees' perceptions of organisational justice (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Kinman, 2016; Martins, 2010; Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Notshulwana, 2011; Tettey, 2006, 2010; Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011). Thus, if HEIs were to put strategies in place to increase their employees' positive feelings of organisational justice, it may lead to higher commitment on the part of the employees and lower turnover rates.

In short, it is evident from the preceding discussion that organisational justice is a variable, which has a substantial impact on employee retention. Organisational justice has the potential to influence employee commitment to an organisation, their intention to leave the organisation as well as the actual turnover. The following section examines the concept of trust in relation to staff retention in the higher education environment.

2.2.3 Retention and trust

Trust may be defined as the one party's disposition to be exposed to the actions of another party based on the prospect that the other party will act in a certain way, which is significant to the trustor – this is regardless of the trustor's ability to monitor or control the other party (Ertürk, 2014; Mayer et al., 1995). This vulnerability, which is part of trust emanates from the risks and uncertainty involved because the one party does not know what the other party's intentions are (Aryee et al., 2002).

In this study, employees' levels of trust were evaluated by using the trust relationship audit (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005). This questionnaire assessed individuals' trust levels by determining whether they had an open and trusting relationship with their supervisor or manager, if the person they reported to openly and honestly revealed important work related facts to them, was fair in judging their performances, demonstrated good intentions and motives towards them, and also whether the person they reported to was truthful and credible (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005). Furthermore, the employees' levels of trust in their organisation (the ODL institution where this study was conducted) was assessed by evaluating whether employees trusted top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues (team members), if their immediate manager trusted them, whether top management trusted employees, and also if they believed that their colleagues trusted them (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005). Lastly, this study assessed if the organisation (the ODL institution under investigation) responded swiftly to changes in its external environment, managed change in the organisation efficiently, and if employees felt that they were well prepared for change that might affect them (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005).

According to various scholars (Bews & Martins, 2002; Hay, 2002; Martins, 2000; Schoorman et al., 2007; Van der Berg & Martins, 2013; Whitener et al., 1997), trust has three common characteristics, namely, a confidence that the other party will act compassionately, a preparedness to be defenceless and to risk the prospect that the other party may not fulfil the expectation of compassionate behaviour, and dependence between the parties, meaning their performance is influenced by one another. Trust, therefore, involves a willingness to be defenceless and take risks and also involves a level of dependence on the other party because the actions of the one party have a direct influence on the outcomes of the other party (Holland et al., 2016; Whitener et al., 1998). For the purpose of this study, trust is defined the workplace-relevant belief or attitude towards another organisational member, whereby a trustor depends on a trustee (a person or group of people) to act according to certain expectations that are

important to the trustor and without taking advantage of the defencelessness of the trustor (Martins, 2000; Von der Ohe, 2016).

Trust represents the level of confidence that an individual has in another individual, the manager or the organisation as a whole to act in a fair, just, ethical and predictable manner (Yozgat et al., 2014). If an employee has trust in the organisation, this implies that he/she expects and believes that the organisation will act compassionately towards him/her (Agarwal, 2014; Whitener et al., 1998). It is thus apparent that if an employee trusts that his/her organisation to act in a positive and favourable manner towards him/her, and the organisation acts in a negative and degrading manner, the employee's trust would be damaged.

Employment relations within SA, and especially, in the higher education environment have changed significantly in the past 15 years. These changes have, in turn, had an effect on the type of work employees do, as well as on the quality of employment relationships (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Rothmann, 2003). Studies by Martins (2000) and Esterhuizen and Martins (2008) found that organisations are trusted less than in the past and, specifically, in SA. This lack of trust may be detrimental to an organisation's success because trust is an essential component of the effectiveness and performance of an organisation (Van der Berg & Martins, 2013).

Employees' trust in their organisation also plays an important role in the quality of their work life (Van der Berg & Martins, 2013). If an employee does not trust his/her employer and/or, experiences a breach of trust or feelings of injustice and unfairness, this may have a detrimental effect on the state of the psychological contract as well as on his/her commitment to and their intention to stay with the organisation (Brown et al., 2015; Mishra et al., 2015). In studies by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) as well as Yozgat et al. (2014), it was concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between organisational justice, organisational trust and employee intention to leave the organisation. In addition, employees' perceptions of organisational justice in an organisation relate closely to fairness and trust (Potgieter et al., 2015). When employees experience strong positive perceptions of fairness and justice, they will, in all likelihood also experience stronger feelings of trust towards the organisation than may otherwise have been the case (Othman, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 1, previous studies have concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between employees' perceptions of organisational justice and the organisational trust levels (Agarwal, 2014; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Mishra et al., 2015; Tulubas & Celep, 2012). Organisational justice is, therefore, a crucial element in the development of trust.

Various studies, such as that of Aryee et al. (2002) and Lehmann-Willenbrock et al. (2013) found that organisational trust has a noteworthy impact on both organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Consequently, employees' trust in the organisation plays an important role in their commitment to the organisation, as well as their intention to remain with the organisation, and should thus be considered as a crucial factor in the development of any retention strategy. Previous research studies have confirmed that organisational justice and trust mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and employment related factors such as job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, work engagement, change management, intention to leave and leadership (Agarwal, 2014; Brockner, 1990; Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). For this reason, the constructs of organisational justice and trust were chosen as mediating variables in the current study to determine the mediating effect that organisational justice and trust have on the relationship between the psychological contract and retention factors.

In the higher education environment in SA, there are several aspects which are deemed to constitute alarming challenges to the retention of valuable employees and which may possibly have a negative effect on employee trust in the institution (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Kinman, 2016; Martins, 2010; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Notshulwana, 2011; Tettey, 2006, 2010; Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011). It is thus apparent that trust plays an important role in the retention of employees. Thus, if HEIs succeed in increasing their employees' trust in the organisation, this may possibly lead to higher commitment on the part of the employees and lower degrees of turnover.

To summarise, from the three prior discussions on the influence of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust on retention in the higher education environment, it is clear that these variables may have a significant effect on staff retention in HEIs. It is, furthermore, evident that there is a definite relationship between the employees' psychological contract and staff retention, and also that organisational justice and trust may have an important effect on this relationship. Accordingly, for the purpose of the first level of investigation in this research study, the effect of organisational justice and trust are used as mediating variables to investigate their potential influence on the relationship between the psychological contract (independent variable) and a complex set of HR factors that influence staff retention (namely, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) (dependent variables). It was anticipated that organisational justice and trust would positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention.

The next section explores the influence of demographic variables on retention, specifically, in the higher education environment.

2.2.4 Retention and demographic variables

The demographic variables relevant to this research included race, gender, age, job level and tenure. This section explores the influence that demographic variables may have on employee retention, especially in the higher education environment. Previous studies have determined that employees' intention to stay with their organisation is strongly impacted upon by the individual features of the employee, for instance, age, gender and level of employment (Bushe, 2012; Gaiduk & Gaiduk, 2009; Ng'ethe et al., 2012).

A study by Cropsey et al. (2008) found that the attrition among minority and female employees in HEIs was the result of fears about professional development opportunities, low compensation and discontent with leadership (51% response rate) (Pololi et al., 2012). Studies have also concluded that female and minority employees in HEIs hold the perception that they are exposed to both unconscious and conscious bias in their working environment (Pololi et al., 2012; Pololi, 2010), and also that females were more likely than their male counterparts to contemplate leaving the higher education environment due to the high level of job stress (Blix et al., 1994). Studies further found that females were more likely to leave employment at HEIs if they were not satisfied with aspects of their professional work life (Ryan et al., 2012). Moreover, studies by Ehrenberg et al. (1990) and Mubarak et al. (2012) concluded that full-time female professors demonstrate a high tendency to leave their organisations. The study by Deas (2017) found that female employees at an ODL institution were more worried about compensation than males, and that males at the same institution were more committed to the institution than females were.

Research by Ryan et al. (2012) concluded that ethnic minorities in South African HEIs were more inclined to leave their institution and the higher education environment altogether as compared to their white colleagues. Studies have also found that gender and race are significant retention factors with employees from a specific race or gender showing varying turnover behaviour (Mubarak et al., 2012). Likewise, Mensele and Coetzee (2014) found that employees differed in terms of their race and gender groups with regard to turnover behaviour. In research by Deas (2017) it was concluded that black and white employees in the higher education environment contrast significantly in terms of their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Deas (2017) furthermore determined that black employees were found to be more

concerned about career opportunities and work-life balance, and less committed to the organisation than white employees.

Another significant variable that influences employee intentions to leave the higher education environment is age (Ng'ethe et al., 2012) with younger employees being more likely to leave the institution because of discontent than older employees (Pololi et al., 2012). Younger and older generations have different work styles and attitudes, which pose a challenge to HEIs (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). In research studies by Chew (2004) and also Ng'ethe et al. (2012) it was found that younger personnel were more encouraged by compensation, training and development opportunities, career advancement, opportunities to grow, acknowledgement and interesting job tasks, while older workers were more driven by independence, mentoring prospects and stimulating work. Moreover, Deas (2017) concluded that employees from different age groups differ significantly with regard to their satisfaction with HR retention factors, such as that younger employees were less likely to be satisfied with career opportunities and work-life balance than older employees. On the other hand, younger employees were found to be more committed to their organisation (Deas, 2017). Heymann (2010) concluded that demographic variables such as age, gender and race have a significant influence on the voluntary turnover of employees with specialised knowledge and skills, such as is the case in HEIs.

An additional variable that influences retention is tenure. Research studies have established that remuneration and tenure have an impact on the retention of employees in HEIs (Amutuhaire, 2010; Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) found that employees who were employed for between 16 and 20 years (64%) and for between 26 and 30 years (60%), were anxious and unsatisfied in their work environment because of a lack of opportunities for development at work. The same study also discovered noteworthy relationships between employees' turnover intentions and their tenure, qualifications and gender.

James and Mathew (2012) concluded that both age and tenure relate to employees' turnover intentions. Younger employees and employees who have been employed for a shorter period have been found to be more likely to resign from their organisation than older employees or those with a longer tenure (James & Mathew, 2012). Studies by Zagenczyk et al. (2011) and Chin and Hung (2013) concluded that age and tenure have a significant effect on retention with employees who have been employed by an organisation for longer periods, and they tend to have lower turnover rates, seeing that they have a deficiency of career opportunities at other organisations.

Sibiya et al. (2014) also argue that age, tenure and education are demographic variables that may have an effect on employees' intentions to stay or leave an organisation. Research by Radford et al. (2015) likewise determined that age, family and tenure played a significant role in an employee's decision in relation to either leaving or staying with an organisation. Furthermore, a study conducted by Le Roux and Rothmann (2013) within the higher education environment determined that employees' work experience and job level predicted turnover.

It is evident from the preceding discussion that there are several demographic variables that may affect the retention of employees. Even though there has been a considerable amount of research conducted within the context of staff turnover in SA, the precise reasons for employees' turnover intentions remain unclear (Sibiya et al., 2014). In short, demographic characteristics may have a significant effect on the retention of employees. It was hypothesised that the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust would positively and significantly predict HR retention practices; and also that there would be a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

The next section critically evaluates previous research on retention in the higher education environment to identify possible gaps in the research and to substantiate the need for this specific research study.

2.3 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

The higher education environment has been experiencing alarming challenges in the past two decades with regard to the retention of its key employees (Mafini, 2014; Masango & Mpofo, 2013; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Tettey, 2010). There is thus a pressing need for intensive research into the retention of staff in the higher education environment (Ng'ethe et al., 2012). Although numerous research studies have been conducted in recent years on retention in the higher education environment (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Masango & Mpofo, 2013; Mensele & Coetzee, 2014; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Samuel & Chipunza, 2013; Takawira et al., 2014; Theron et al., 2014), none of these studies have examined the complex relationship dynamics between the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with satisfaction with HR retention factors in the context of the higher education environment in SA in a single study.

Previous research has concluded that, in view of the fact that psychological contract breach leads to lower commitment and higher turnover rates, while a positive state of the psychological contract leads to higher commitment and lower intention to leave the organisation, there is a distinct positive relationship between the psychological contract and staff retention, (Ahmad et al., 2016; Chin & Hung, 2013 CIPD, 2020; Deas, 2017; Kraak et al., 2017; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Tekleab et al., 2005; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Van Straaten, Theron, & Dodd, 2011; Van Dijk & Ramatswi, 2016).

Studies have also determined that there is a strong correlation between employees' perceptions of organisational justice and employee retention because, when employees perceive an organisation to be treating them unjustly and unfairly, it has a negative impact on their commitment and intention to stay with an organisation. Moreover, the chances of an employee who has a negative perception of organisational justice staying with the organisation are also significantly lower (Burcu et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2015; Cropanzano et al., 2007; Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2015; George & Wallio, 2017; Imran & Allil, 2016; Rokhman, 2013; Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). Likewise, employees' trust in their organisation has been linked conclusively to employees' intention to stay with an organisation and their commitment to an organisation. Thus, if an employee does not trust an organisation, there is a good chance that this may lead to actual turnover (Aryee et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013; Mishra et al., 2015; Yozgat et al., 2014).

Various previous research studies have, furthermore, found that demographic variables, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, have an influence on employee retention and thus that these variables should be considered when retention strategies are developed (Bushe, 2012; Gaiduk & Gaiduk, 2009; Le Roux & Rothman, 2013; Mensele & Coetzee, 2014; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Radford et al., 2015; Sibiya et al., 2014).

It is evident from the literature review that research studies have proved the existence of the relationship between the psychological contract and staff retention. In addition, studies have also demonstrated that organisational justice and trust may have a significant influence on this relationship between the psychological contract and retention. Research has, moreover, also determined that demographic variables may have an impact on employee retention. It is, however, necessary to examine previous research studies that have been conducted specifically regarding retention in the higher education environment in SA to fully comprehend the context of and the need for this study.

Research by Robyn and Du Preez (2013) found that factors that have a significant effect on staff retention, specifically in HEIs, include employee engagement, job satisfaction, remuneration and rewards, recognition, leadership and support of supervisors. Masango and Mpofo (2013) also determined that HEIs should focus their retention strategies on conducting exit interviews, the provision of development and promotion opportunities, communication, transparency, mentoring and succession planning. In a large study by Samuel and Chipunza (2013) in which retention in ten HEIs in SA was investigated, it was determined that staff retention in the higher education environment was influenced by interpersonal relationships at work, competitive salary and fringe benefits, stimulating and challenging work, job security, work autonomy, workload, flexibility and the availability of resources.

A study by Theron et al. (2014) concluded that the factors that would encourage employees to remain at HEIs were satisfactory compensation and remuneration packages, recognition as well as support from managers, supervisors and/or direct line managers. The same study determined that employees at HEIs would tend to leave their organisations as a result of dissatisfaction with financial compensation, limited promotion opportunities and unhappiness with career development opportunities (Theron et al., 2014). Research by Dube and Ngulube (2013) determined that retention in HEIs would be promoted through effective talent management, mentorship programmes, career conversations, exit interviews and career development.

Mensele and Coetzee (2014) suggested that retention strategies in HEIs should focus on a number of aspects, namely, a clearly formulated orientation programme, clearly documented policies on promotion and training, development of employee assistance programmes, creation of promotion, training and development opportunities, improvement of organisational support and provision of generous total benefit packages, including remuneration and other benefits such as flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies. Takawira et al. (2014) likewise proposed that HEIs should promote training programmes, growth opportunities, support from supervisors and non-financial incentives such as sabbatical leave or flexible working schedules in their retention efforts. A study by Erasmus et al. (2015) concluded that HEIs should develop retention tools by focusing on career discussions, setting of personal goals, mentoring, coaching, identification and facilitation of development and training needs as well as adjusted remuneration packages.

As mentioned previously, a South African study led by Döckel (2003) found that there are six crucial retention factors that South African organisations need to consider in the retention of employees with high technology skills (Döckel et al., 2006; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). These

factors include compensation, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. This research by Döckel (2003) and Döckel et al. (2006) was conducted in a South African telecommunications company and, thus, it would clearly be beneficial to study employee satisfaction with these retention factors in the higher education environment.

It may be concluded from the foregoing evaluation of previous research on retention in the higher education environment that there was a definite need for this research study. The relationship dynamics between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, together with the effect of organisational justice, trust as well as demographic variables have not, thus far, been investigated together in a single study. In particular, in view of the pressing need for research on retention in the higher education environment as well as the development of a retention framework for the HEIs on SA, this study sought to address this gap.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the first research aim of the literature review, namely, conceptualising the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. An explanation of the way in which an individual's demographic characteristics influence these retention factors was also provided and was followed by an evaluation of existing research on retention in the higher education context.

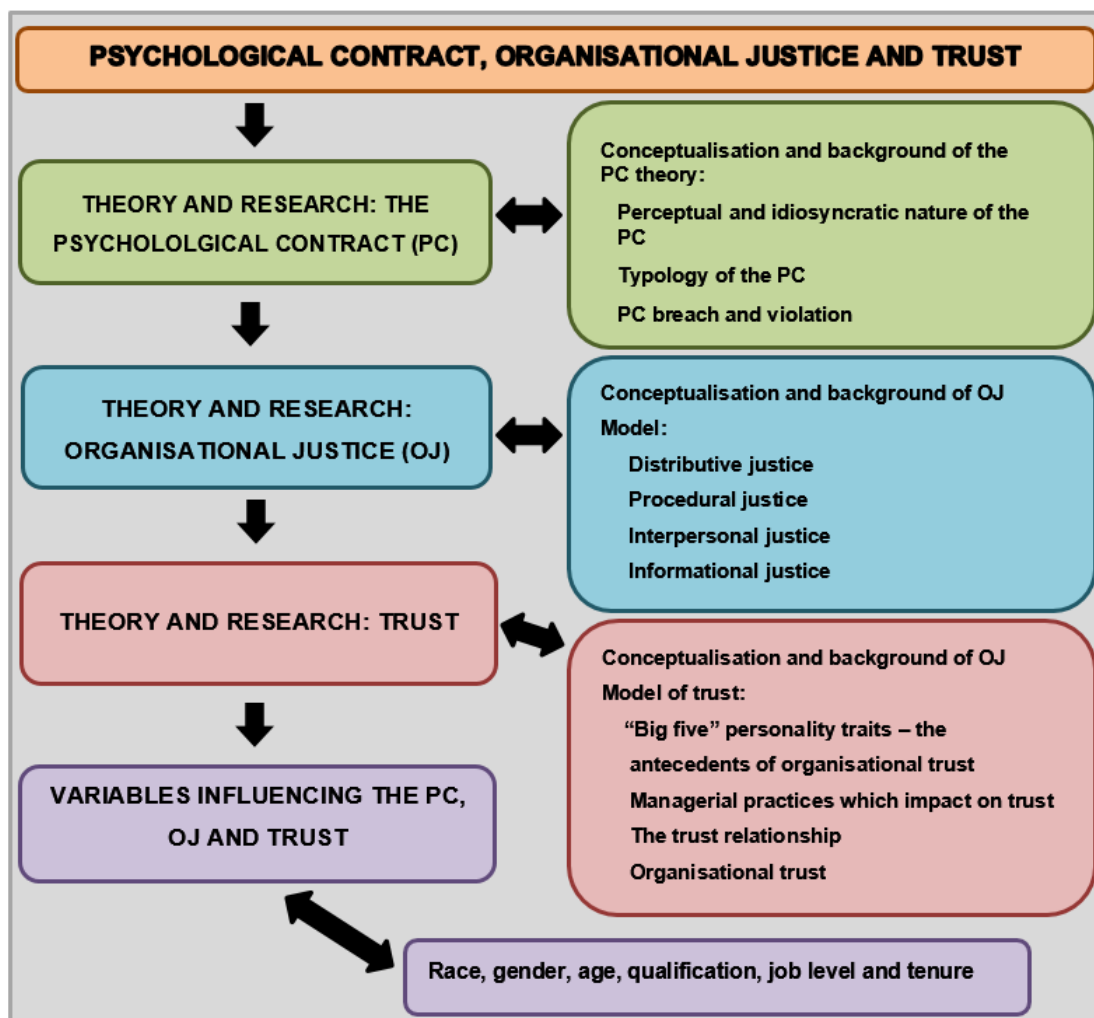
Herewith research aim 1 (to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment) has been partly achieved.

Chapter 3 also addresses research aim 1 and explores the existing theory and research on the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in detail. The chapter also discusses the conceptualisation of the theoretical relationship between the psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice and trust, as well as the HR practices influencing retention.

CHAPTER 3: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT, ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND TRUST

This chapter builds on research aim 1 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. In this chapter, the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust are firstly conceptualised, where after the theory and research relating to these constructs are critically evaluated. In Chapter 4, the theoretical framework for staff retention, which develops from the theoretical relationship between the constructs, is developed and discussed. Figure 3.1 below provides an overview of the core themes of this chapter.

Figure 3.1
Overview of the Core Themes in Chapter 3



Notes: PC = Psychological contract; OJ = Organisational justice

Source: Author's own work

3.1 THEORY AND RESEARCH: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

In this section, the focus is on the conceptualisation and background of the psychological contract construct as well as Rousseau's (1995) theoretical theory of the psychological contract.

3.1.1 Conceptualisation and background

The notion of the psychological contract originated from ancient Greeks' social contract, which was absorbed by Hobbes and Locke in their seventeenth century, political theories (Schein, 1980). According to these theories, people have natural rights that they submit to the powers that be for reciprocal benefit (for instance, paying tax in exchange for protection) (Roehling, 1997). These ideas were incorporated in Barnard's (1938) theory of equilibrium: the organisation reimburses its staff for services provided and the employees will stay as long as the paybacks related to the relationship are equal or surpass the input required to continue with the relationship (Roehling, 1997).

In the 1960s, Argyris (1960) united the notions of the implied understanding existing in an employment relationship and a contractual relationship into the "psychological work contract" (Thomas et al., 2003). Both Argyris (1960) and Levinson et al. (1962) have been given acknowledgement for presenting the term "psychological contract" (Agarwal, 2015; Chin & Hung, 2013; Thomas et al., 2003). Argyris (1960) first used the concept of the psychological contract to define the relationship between foremen and employees in a factory (Agarwal, 2015; Maharaj, 2003). He contended that foremen would report less grievances and have a higher production level if they respect the norms and culture of their employees (Agarwal, 2015; Maharaj, 2003). In 1962, Levinson et al. (1962) defined the psychological contract as an unwritten contract, which is mutual and explicit. Levinson et al. (1962) also saw the psychological contract as a sequence of shared outlooks of which the parties to the relationship may not themselves be explicitly aware but which nevertheless direct their relationship to each other (Manxhari, 2015). A decade later, Schein (1970) expanded the psychological contract concept by emphasising the various expectations that exist between the employee and employer (Agarwal, 2015).

Even though the term psychological contract was first used in the 1960s, it is only in the 1980s that it arose as an imperative topic of theoretical and empirical research (Guerrero & Naulleau, 2016; Guest, 1998). The motive for the growing popularity of the concept in the 1980s and 1990s is the many organisational changes which took place in those years, which put

'traditional' employment relationships to the test (Freese & Schalk, 2008). Denise Rousseau has redefined and researched the concept of the psychological contract since the late 1980s (Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995) and has emphasised its importance for the understanding and management of modern employment relationships (Freese & Schalk, 2008). Rousseau (1989; 1990; 1995) has played a momentous contribution to the development of the concept of the psychological contract (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016).

Rousseau (1989) defines the psychological contract as a person's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a mutual exchange agreement between the principal person and another party. A psychological contract exists when one party has faith in or is of the view that a promise of future earnings has been made, a contribution has been given and, resultantly, an obligation and responsibility has been shaped to provide future benefits (Rousseau, 1989). Rousseau (1995) augments that the psychological contract encompasses individual, subjective perceptions, moulded by the organisation, on the terms of an exchange agreement between employees and the organisation where they are employed. These subjective beliefs are promises made, accepted and relied upon within the individual relationship between the employee and employer (Rousseau, 1995).

Armstrong (2003) defines the psychological contract as views that individuals have in terms of promises made, accepted and committed to, between themselves and another party. Within the organisational setting, these parties consist of the employee, client, manager and/or organisation as a whole. Moreover, Leigh (2008) defines the psychological contract as subjective perceptions held by an individual employee and the employer regarding what they expect of one another. The psychological contract embodies expectations and obligations versus the concrete content of the paper-based employment contract (Leigh, 2008).

More recently, Payne et al. (2015) define the psychological contract as the views that employees have regarding the terms and conditions of their employment relationship. In summary, the concept of the psychological contract denotes to an individual's opinions and perceptions regarding the reciprocal obligations due by the employer to the employee plus the employee to the employer, concerning the social exchange relationship that is present between them (Agarwal, 2016; Bordia et al., 2015; Guo, 2017; Karagonlar et al., 2016; Lam, & De Campos, 2015; Le Roux, & Rothmann, 2013; Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). The psychological contract is thus built on the concept of exchange and mutuality, where people engage in social exchanges and anticipate that other persons should respond in the same way (Bal et al., 2008; Seopa et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the concept of the psychological contract signifies employees' belief that, in return for their offerings made to the employer, including their work efforts and devotion, they should receive certain enticements, such as competitive remuneration, benefits and job satisfaction (Lam & De Campos, 2015; Rousseau, 1990). Payne et al. (2015) maintain that job performance, dependability, flexibility and collegiality are denoted to as employee obligations, while employer obligations include compensation, training, career development, regard for employee welfare, and also support.

The difference between the psychological contract and formal employment contracts is that the psychological contract is not grounded on physical, written, legal contracts, but on the views of individuals (Li et al., 2016). The psychological contract is thus founded on the perceptions of individuals regarding common responsibilities in the employment relationship and it is normally an undocumented and unspoken contract (O'Meara et al., 2016). In the work setting, the psychological contract is an unwritten agreement binding employers and employees to it and which sets out the reciprocal responsibilities between them (Li et al., 2016; Robbins, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, the concept of the psychological contract is defined as the perceived, unwritten contract that is present between employees and their employers with regard to the mutual obligations such as compensation, job satisfaction, loyalty and hard work in the employment relationship.

This research study measure the psychological contract with the Psycones Questionnaire (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006) which measured the psychological contract by specifically determining:

- individuals' perceptions regarding employer obligations (the perceived duties and responsibilities that an employer has in the employment relationship such as fair compensation, satisfactory training and development, fair treatment and a pleasant working environment);
- employee obligations (the perceived duties and responsibilities that an employee has in the employment relationship such as good work performance, loyalty, commitment and keeping the organisations name in good faith);
- job satisfaction (employees' assessment of their work, working environment and employment conditions); and

- the state of the psychological contract (the extent to which employees feel that they are rewarded and paid fairly, whether they trust senior management to look after their best interests, to keep its promises and commitments (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006).

3.1.2 Psychological contract theory and the social exchange theory

The psychological contract theory relevant to the current research has its roots in the SET (Blau, 1964). The SET proposes that employees and employers are parties to an exchange relationship, and they feel obligated to counter offerings made by the other party in an equivalent manner, in order to act in a fair and just manner, and to aid in the successful continuation of the exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Lub et al., 2016; Rayton et al., 2015).

The SET (Blau, 1964) holds that if a discrepancy occurs pertaining to the achievement of commitments and promises, it will have destructive outcomes for the social exchange relationship; and when there are positive attitudes and experiences within the social exchange relationship, it will likely have constructive outcomes for the relationship (Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013). Social exchanges are directly correlated with workers' job satisfaction, welfare and work actions, for instance, intention to quit (Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013).

The psychological contract and social exchange theories both suggest that parties to an exchange relationship will likely react to those commitments that are of significance to them (Chaudhry & Tekleab, 2013; Rayton et al., 2015). However, these theories differ in that the SET is concerned with the outcomes that were provided within the exchange relationship, while the psychological contract theory focuses on whether the outcomes that were conveyed, met the hopes of the parties in the exchange relationship (Chaudhry & Tekleab, 2013; Rayton et al., 2015).

As discussed in the previous section, the idea of the psychological contract was first presented by Argyris (1960) and Levinson (1962) in the early 1960s, but it was only in the late 1980s and 1990s, with the pioneering publications of Denise Rousseau (1989; 1990; 1995), that the notion of the psychological contract gained intensive interest (Manxhari, 2015). Rousseau (1989) redefined the psychological contract theory by testing previous scholars' assumptions and determinations about the psychological contract (Restubog et al, 2015). Rousseau (1995) defined the psychological contract as individual employees' perceptions, shaped by the organisation in which they are employed, regarding the state of an exchange agreement between that employee and the organisation.

Rousseau (1995), moreover, identified the most important features of the psychological contract (Restubog et al., 2015), namely, that the psychological contract is based on individual, innermost, unique perceptions; that there are three types of psychological contracts, namely, the transactional contract, the relational contract and the balanced contract; and also that breach and violation of the psychological contract forms the basis through which psychological contracts impact on employees' outlooks and actions.

These three characteristics of the psychological contract are discussed in the following sections.

3.1.2.1 Perceptual nature of the psychological contract

The psychological contract is based on an employee's beliefs regarding the mutual obligations in their employment relationship (Guo, 2017; Rousseau, 1990). It is thus directly related to an individual employee's perceptions of obligations and promises that are reciprocally exchanged with the organisation where he/she is employed (McGrath et al., 2016). The development of the psychological contract is founded on the individual perception of employees concerning the exchanges made in the employment relationship (Bordia et al., 2015). Subsequently, the main characteristic of the psychological contract is that it has an idiosyncratic nature and is founded on the perceptions of people about the implicit and explicit promises made within the social exchange relationship (Bordia et al., 2015; Botha, 2007; Guo, 2017; Lu et al., 2015; Persson & Wasieleski, 2015; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1995; Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). As a result of this subjective nature of the psychological contract, each contract is distinctive, individual and specific to a person and encompasses the innermost views of this person, which are formed and kept individually (George, 2009).

Seeing that the psychological contract is based on these innermost, individual, it is not only idiosyncratic but also active in nature and may subsequently lead to complications and misunderstandings between the parties in the exchange relationship (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). In contrast to written or formal contracts, the psychological contract is formed by perceptions, expectations and emotions (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). Therefore, researchers contend that the active nature of the psychological contract is undisputed as it is continuously moving and evolving over time through experiences (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015; Van den Heuvel et al., 2016).

The individual experiences that each employee has in his/her employment history has a direct influence on the development of his/her schema of the employment relationship, which in turn

leads to the establishment of the psychological contract (Karagonlar et al., 2016). Rousseau (2001) summarises several phases in the formation of the psychological contract. These are concisely described in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1
Phases of Psychological Contract Formation

Phase in the employment relationship	Foundations of impact
Pre-employment	Specialised standards; Public views
Recruitment	Dynamic promise exchange; Appraisal of gestures by both organisation and employee
Initial socialisation	Continuing promise exchange; Dynamic information pursuing by employees
Advanced experiences	Sporadic promise exchange; Less active information seeking by employees
Assessment (revision or violation)	Varying information results in assessment; Inducements/charges of change effect revision

Source: Rousseau (2001, p. 512)

It can be seen from Table 3.1 that the psychological contract is formed long before the actual employment relationship commences. The psychological contract is established gradually with both vertical and horizontal arranging, and it advances from discrete views about intricate organised schemas assembled from many interconnected beliefs (Rousseau, 2001). Maharaj (2003) adds that these schemas will influence the nature of employees' employment relationship with their employer, because of the fact that the schemas are developed from individual experiences and these schemas aid to organise experiences in a meaningful way. This means that the psychological contract can convert into actions (Maharaj, 2003).

Given that the psychological contract is subjective and perceptual in nature, employees may cultivate the perception that there are certain obligations that they have towards the organisation and that organisation consequently has certain obligations towards them (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). The psychological contract thus encompasses particular constituents that the employee perceives as the organisation's duty towards him/her (Bordia et al., 2015; Rousseau, 1995).

Although it is difficult to offer a comprehensive list of the exact constituents of a psychological contract, studies conducted by Herriot et al. (1997), Freese and Schalk (2008) as well as Guest et al. (2010), identified employer obligations, employee obligations, individuals' levels of job satisfaction and the state of their psychological contract as the essential components, which constitute the content of the psychological contract. These are also the components that were used in this study to measure individuals' psychological contracts (Guest et al., 2010) and these are discussed below.

(a) Employer obligations

Employer obligations are regarded as an employer's duty to provide satisfactory induction and training, to ensure justice and fairness in organisational procedures and to allow employees to participate in decision-making (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997). It is also an employer's obligation to meet employees' personal or family needs, to provide flexibility, to consult and communicate with employees, to permit employees to use their own discretion in the performance of their jobs and to provide employees with interesting and challenging work (Delobbe et al., 2015; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997).

An employer is furthermore obligated to show kindness to employees, acknowledge employees' contributions and provide a harmless, safe and pleasant working environment and atmosphere (Delobbe et al., 2015; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997). Employer obligations are moreover to provide fair and adequate compensation, benefits and a sense of job security (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997). Lastly, an employer is obligated to provide an employee with opportunities to advance and grow as well as to help its employees deal with problems they encounter outside their work (Delobbe et al., 2015; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010).

(b) Employee obligations

Employee obligations in terms of the psychological contract are firstly to work the contracted hours, perform good quality and quantity of work, be a good team player, to volunteer to do tasks outside an employee's job requirements and to work extra hours if and when required (Bordia et al., 2014; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997). It further refers to the obligation of employees to be honest and loyal to their organisation, to treat organisation's property with care and respect, to protect the organisation's image and to

adhere to the organisation's rules and regulations (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997; Low et al., 2016).

Employee obligations also include an employee's duty to dress and behave appropriately and politely with customers and colleagues (Bordia et al., Herriot et al., 1997). Employees are, moreover, obligated to develop their skills and careers, meet performance expectations in their jobs, to provide the organisation with innovative suggestions for improvement, and to work enthusiastically on all tasks (Bordia et al., 2014; Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010). Lastly, employee obligations refer to the duty of employees to be flexible and have a positive attitude towards their work and their organisation (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010; Herriot et al., 1997).

(c) Job satisfaction

Overall job satisfaction concerns an employee's evaluation of his/her work, his/her working environment and his/her employment conditions (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Zhao et al., 2007). Job satisfaction is the extent to which an employee's job needs are fulfilled and how much of this fulfilment is perceived by that particular employee (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). It is a positive or negative conclusion that an employee makes about his/her job or job situation (Callea et al., 2016).

Job satisfaction is not simply an emotional state or an affective response, but rather an evaluation of an emotional state (Antonakia & Trivellasb, 2014). In other words, job satisfaction is determined by what an employee feels and thinks about his/her job (Callea et al., 2016; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Job satisfaction in terms of the psychological contract can be measured by determining the extent to which an employee feels happy, pleased and grateful about his/her job and/or job situation; or whether an employee feels angry, violated and disappointed regarding his/her job and/or job situation (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010).

(d) State of the psychological contract

The state of employees' psychological contracts is determined by the extent to which employees feel that they are rewarded and paid fairly for the amount of effort they put into their jobs and whether employees feel that organisational changes are implemented fairly in their organisation (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010). Furthermore, the state of an employee's psychological contract relies on the extent to which an employee trusts senior

management to look after his/her best interests, to keep its promises and commitments to the employee and also whether an employee feels that he/she is fairly treated by managers and supervisors (Freese & Schalk, 2008; Guest et al., 2010).

The constituents discussed above indicate what employees believe the organisation to have promised them, or employer obligations, and what they have promised to the organisation, employee obligations, are vital mechanisms that constitute the content of the psychological contract. It furthermore indicates that an employee's evaluation of and perception about his/her job and job situation, or job satisfaction, is another key component of the psychological contract.

Lastly, employees' state of their psychological contract with their employer – whether employees feel they are treated and paid fairly and they can trust their supervisors and the organisation as a whole – is another crucial component of the psychological contract. These components have been grouped by various researchers into two general typologies of psychological contracts, namely, transactional and relational, and these are discussed in the following section. It is imperative for organisations to understand and manage the expectations of its employees in order to fulfil its obligations in terms of their psychological contracts (Festing & Schäfer, 2014).

3.1.2.2 Types of psychological contracts

Psychological contracts can be categorised into three types, namely, transactional, relational and balanced contracts (Lub et al., 2016; O'Meara et al., 2016; Persson & Wasieleski, 2015; Restubog et al., 2015; Rousseau, 1990). These types of psychological contracts have their roots in the stability and the time frame of the exchange relationship between the employer and the employee (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). Therefore, they are based on what the individual believes will be exchanged (O'Meara et al., 2016). As indicated in Table 3.2 on the subsequent page, the type of psychological contract can be ascertained using six broad contract characteristics (McLean et al., 1998; O'Donohue et al., 2015; Rousseau, 1995; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003):

Table 3.2

Explanatory Outline for Psychological Contracts

Contract type	Transactional PC	Relational PC
Salient recipient	Self	Shared (self and organisational community)
Content emphasis	Monetary, physical, for instance, remuneration in return for hours worked	Social, emotional, immaterial, for example, job security in exchange for devotion
Organisation's obligations	Afford sustained work, harmless working situation, just reimbursement	Job security, make training, career development, and promotion opportunities available
Individual's obligations	Fulfil specified requirements	Fulfil general obligations, loyalty, commitment, organisational citizenship actions
Range and concreteness	Constricted, precise, visible, non-flexible mutuality	Universal, less specific, subjective, flexible reciprocity
Stability and time period	Stagnant, close-ended, explicit time-frame	Dynamic, open-ended indefinite time-frame

Note: PC = Psychological contract

Sources: McLean et al. (1998); O'Donohue et al. (2015); Rousseau (1995); Thompson & Bunderson (2003)

The first type of psychological contract, the transactional contract, is distinguished by unambiguous exchanges, with a restricted series of actions over a fixed time frame (Manxhari, 2015). This type of contract is focused on financial interactions, which have a short-term nature, such as merit pay, and does not involve a lot of involvement from either the employee or employer (Agarwal, 2015; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Seopa et al., 2015). It has its foundations in the expectations of employees regarding financial and other rewards in exchange for their time and efforts (O'Meara et al., 2016) and is characterised by certain roles and responsibilities (Seopa et al., 2015).

The transactional contract is built on the terms of conditions of an employment relationship when there are detailed responsibilities on top of a short-term period (Rousseau, 2004). According to Gardner et al. (2015), this type of contract is based on a *quid pro quo* transaction that boils down to an employer providing compensation to an employee for his/her work efforts.

In the transactional contract, neither party is concerned with aspects such as trust, commitment and affection, because these contracts are defined explicitly in terms of a financial exchange, within detailed time frames and tasks accomplished (Seopa et al., 2015).

The second type of psychological contract, the relational contract, in contrast to the transactional contract, is not bound by a specified time frame. The relational contract is distinguished by on-going or longstanding, comprehensive exchange relationships, and embraces the exchange of financial and non-financial rewards (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015; Seopa et al., 2015). The exchange of social and emotional characteristics, for instance, trust, commitment and reliability, along with monetary resources, form the foundation of these unrestricted types of psychological contract (Agarwal, 2015; Gardner et al., 2015). In relational contracts, the relationships between employers and employees are active in nature, and comprise mutual obligations amid them (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015).

The relational contract has a comprehensive range, and it affects employees' private and personal lives, and necessitates substantial investments from both the employees and the employers, with constant career development and training. This leads to a high level of mutual interdependence (DelCampo, 2007; Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Rousseau, 1995). Aspects, such as loyalty, depict the relational psychological contract, where the employee and employer are devoted to meeting each other's desires and the sustainability of a long-term relationship (Manxhari, 2015). One of the primary drivers of the relational contract is the development of an enduring, lasting relationship that is mutually favourable for both the employee and the employer (Gardner et al., 2015).

The motivations and benefits contained in a relational contract include opportunities for training and development, impartial chances for promotion, unwavering earnings and benefits, job security, and decision-making that is based on the longstanding welfare of employees (Gardner et al., 2015). The development of the relational contract is reliant on a number of aspects. Firstly, the relationship between employee and employer should be able to advance over time (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). Secondly, through time, past information develops, which contributes in the establishment of the views and expectations that exist between the parties in the relationship (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015).

The third and final type of psychological contract is the balanced contract. This type is a blend of the transactional contract and the relational contract (Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). The balanced contract is a combination of the unceasing time period and reciprocal mutuality of the relational contract, and the performance burdens of the transactional contract (Rousseau,

2004). Therefore, the balanced contract is categorised by long-lasting connections, with larger flexibility in contract agreements that allow for emerging and developing conditions (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Persson & Wasieleski, 2015).

Psychological contract researchers have begun to take note of the variances in the types of psychological contracts and work results (Lu et al., 2016). Positive relational psychological contracts are constantly related to positive employee reactions to facets in the work situation, such as organisational commitment, conducts of organisational citizenship, job satisfaction, as well as the intention to stay (Behery et al., 2016; Gardner et al., 2015; Li et al., 2006). Negative relationships have been found between the relational contract and turnover intentions (Behery et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2016). In contrast, transactional contracts have been found to be positively correlated with turnover intentions and negatively associated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Lu et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2017).

3.1.2.3 Psychological contract breach and violation

The psychological contract is the foundation of the employee-organisation relationship. The state of the psychological contract is a measure of the perceptions of fairness, justice and trust held by an employee in their employer, but nonetheless, employees often perceive their organisation as having failed to sufficiently fulfil their side of the contract (De Ruyter et al, 2016; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). This is called psychological contract breach (Person et al., 2011; Rayton et al., 2015).

Breach of the psychological contract has many negative outcomes for an organisation, such as loss of trust, reduced job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions (Guo, 2017; Person et al., 2011). Morrison and Robinson (1997) refer to psychological contract breach as an employee's perception that the other party to the exchange relationship has failed to meet one or more obligations within his/her psychological contract (Lam & De Campos, 2015; Tziner et al., 2017). Therefore, in essence, breach refers to the identification by parties to the exchange relationship of perceived unmet responsibilities and obligations and broken promises (Li et al., 2016). Guo (2017) and Pate et al. (2003) concur that breach of the psychological contract is usually short term and individuals generally return to their fairly stable psychological contract state.

Researchers have determined that there are three core bases for an employee perceiving the psychological contract to be breached, namely, deliberate renegeing, unintentional renegeing

(disruption) and incongruence (De Ruyter et al., 2016; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Rousseau, 1995).

Deliberate renegeing is when the organisation conclusively reneges on a promised expectation, for example, if an organisation breaks its promises regarding job security and salary increases for its own financial gain, it may be seen as deliberate renegeing (De Ruyter et al., 2016; Robinson & Morrison, 2000).

Unintentional renegeing takes place when an organisation is eager but incapable of delivering on its promises (De Ruyter et al., 2016). This happens, for example, when the organisation is under financial pressure and is not in a position to deliver on promises such as performance bonuses or increases (Tziner et al., 2017). The most substantial and distinctive characteristic of this type of renegeing is that, seeing that it is a result of external factors which are not under the control of the organisation, the organisation is not accountable for the renegeing of the psychological contract (De Ruyter et al., 2016; Guo, 2017). The promise may have thus been made in good faith, but circumstances may have prevented the fulfilment of the obligation.

Incongruence occurs when an organisation has the perception that it has delivered on its promises, while the employee observes that the organisation has not kept its promises (De Ruyter et al., 2016; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). Incongruence, therefore, occurs when employees and agents of the organisations hold different beliefs about a given obligation or set of obligations (Guo, 2017; Robinson & Morrison, 2000). In cases where incongruence occurs, the parties to the exchange relationship have differing opinions regarding their reciprocal responsibilities (Vantilborgh et al., 2016). Three main factors contribute to incongruence. Firstly, the degree to which the employee and agents of the organisation hold different cognitive schemata with regard to employment obligations. Secondly, the complexity and uncertainty of the perceived obligations between them; and lastly, a lack of sufficient communication regarding the obligations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Tziner et al., 2017). Robinson and Morrison (2000) explain that intentional and unintentional renegeing, as well as incongruence, may result in a perception of a contract breach by creating a contradiction between an employee's understanding of what was promised and the employee's perception of what was in fact delivered or met (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016).

The concepts of psychological contract breach and psychological contract violation have been used by various scholars interchangeably. Kraak et al. (2017) and Persson and Wasieleski (2015), however, believe that these two concepts are not the same. Psychological contract breach refers to the realisation of an employee that his/her efforts and inputs made to his/her

organisation have not been correspondingly countered by the employer. However, psychological contract violation refers to an emotional state that is the result of psychological contract breach (Kraak et al., 2017; Persson & Wasieleski, 2015). Psychological contract violation is, therefore, a direct result of psychological contract breach (Wang & Hsieh, 2014). In essence, psychological contract breach is the experience of unmet expectations, while psychological contract violation is the emotional reactions that follow. Thus, breach leads to violation.

Psychological contract violation can be defined as an emotional and affective state characterised by an aversion, resentment and frustration, which may be because of the perception that vowed obligations have not been countered in an exchange relationship (Guerrero & Naulleau, 2016; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Sparrow and Cooper (2003) also define psychological contract violation as strong emotional reactions to breaches of the psychological contract; such as feelings of unfairness, treachery and deeper psychological anguish, whereby the victim experiences anger, bitterness, and a sense of unjust harm.

Failure to meet the terms of a psychological contract thus can lead to more than just unmet expectations; it can lead to destruction of the exchange relationship between the employee and the organisation (Rousseau, 1989; Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). Fundamental to a psychological contract is trust, which originates from a belief that contributions will be reciprocated (Guo, 2017). When this trust relationship between employer and employee is damaged through psychological contract breach, it leads to psychological contract violation, which is not easily repaired (Rousseau, 1989; Tomprou et al., 2015).

Large numbers of previous studies have shown that fulfilment of the psychological contract has several positive consequences for organisational outcomes, such as trust in the organisation, employee satisfaction, job performance, organisational commitment, a feeling of organisational security, increased motivation and organisational citizenship, as well as and lower levels of employees with intention to leave the organisation and a decrease in actual turnover (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; De Ruiter et al., 2016; Guest, 1998; Guo, 2017; Kraak et al., 2017; Lapointe et al., 2014; Robinson, 1996; Tziner et al., 2017; Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009; Zhao et al., 2007).

Perceived psychological contract breach, in contrast, is associated with amplified organisational pessimism, poor organisational citizenship actions, lower devotion and job satisfaction, decreased organisational commitment, an augmented intention to leave the organisation and greater staff turnover (Bunderson, 2001; CIPD, 2020; Clinton & Guest, 2014;

Collins, 2010; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Guo, 2017; Li et al., 2016; Pate, 2006; Raja et al., 2004; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016; Rousseau, 1989; Sauzo et al., 2005; Schreuder et al, 2017; Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

As mentioned previously, the psychological contract has its foundation in the SET, which is based on the notion that employers and employees are parties to an exchange relationship (Blau, 1964) and if promises are not kept and obligations not fulfilled, it could have a detrimental effect on the successful continuation of the exchange relationship (Lub et al., 2016). The psychological contract is the perceived, unwritten contract that is present between employees and their employers with regard to the mutual obligations in the exchange relationship (Rousseau, 1989; Van den Heuvel et al., 2016).

The content of the psychological contract comprises individuals' perceptions regarding their employers' obligations towards them, their own (employees') obligations towards their employer, their feelings and thoughts about their job situation (job satisfaction) and their perceptions about whether they are treated fairly by their employer and can trust their employer (state of their psychological contacts).

The relationship between psychological contract fulfilment or breach, and behavioural outcomes such as commitment, intention to leave and turnover is mediated by the concepts of justice, fairness and trust (Ahmad et al., 2016; Clinton & Guest, 2014; De Ruiter et al, 2016; Grobler & Grobler, 2016; Guest, 2004; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Van der Vaart et al, 2015). The state of the psychological contract can thus be considered as a significant precursor of employee attitudes and behaviour, which extends the variances clarified through the content of the psychological contract (Guest, 1998; Van der Vaart et al., 2013).

From the literature study, it became clear that organisational justice and trust may be seen as psychological extensions of the psychological contract, as psychological contract fulfilment may likely result in positive perceptions of organisational justice and strong trust relationships between colleagues, supervisors and the organisation as a whole, and may lead to the successful continuation of the exchange relationship between employers and employees.

There have been significant amounts of research done over the past decade regarding the important role that is played by the psychological contract in employment relationships. There is, however, a lack of research specifically with regard to the mediating effect that

organisational justice and trust have the relationship between the psychological contract and retention of employees, especially in the higher education environment, and even more so in the ODL context (Bordia et al., 2015; Deas, 2017; Erasmus et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2007; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Larkin et al., 2016; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Nutakki et al., 2015; Strydom et al., 2014; Van der Vaart et al., 2013). This study therefore aimed to determine the role that organisational justice and trust play in the relationship between the state of the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with the human resource (HR) factors that influence staff retention (as discussed in Chapter 2). The construct of organisational justice is discussed in the following section.

3.2 THEORY AND RESEARCH: ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE

In this section, the focus is on the conceptualisation and background of the organisational justice construct as well as Colquitt's (2001) theoretical model of organisational justice.

3.2.1 Conceptualisation and background

Perceptions of fairness and justice have their roots in the social interactions that people have in their working environments (Sayers et al., 2011). The importance of the concept of fairness or justice has become progressively more visible in the social sciences over the past three to four decades (Colquitt, 2001; Rodell et al., 2017). There are various definitions and perceptions of justice and fairness in the literature (Ehlers, 2013).

The scholars, Scholl et al. (1987) defined organisational justice as the degree of fairness that employees experience at their workplaces. Greenberg (1987), similarly, defined organisational justice as the fairness of the treatment that employees receive in their working environment. Hendrix et al. (1998) were also of the view that organisational justice is related to employees' perceptions of the fairness of the exchange he or she has with an organisation. Othman (2008) added that organisational justice is related to the fair and ethical treatment of employees in organisations. In short, organisational justice examines employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace (Eib & Soenen, 2017; Greenberg, 1987; Jašková, 2015; Matta et al., 2017; Rodell et al., 2017).

Initially, researchers focused on the justice or fairness of the outcomes of decisions, namely, *distributive justice* (Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975; Homans, 1967; Leventhal, 1976). Distributive justice is concerned with the equity, justice or fairness of the allocation of outcomes in an organisation (Eib & Soenen, 2017; Colquitt, 2001; Rodell et al., 2017).

Researchers later on focussed also on the justice and fairness of the processes and procedures leading to the decisions and outcomes in organisations, termed *procedural justice* (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal et al., 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Procedural justice is concerned with the extent to which employees are able to take part in the decision-making processes in their organisations (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) or with fair procedures, such as consistency, lack of bias, correctability, accuracy and ethicality, in organisations (Eib & Soenen, 2017; Colquitt 2001; Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal et al., 1980; Rodell et al., 2017).

Later research that aimed to determine the impact of fairness and justice on effective organisational functioning, found support for *organisational justice* being explained through a two-factor conceptualisation model by combining distributive and procedural justice (Greenberg, 1987, 1990). The validity two-factor model of organisational justice was questioned by the introduction of *interactional justice*, which is the interpersonal treatment that people receive when procedures are enacted and decisions are made (Bies & Moag, 1986). Various researchers have viewed interactional justice as a third type of justice (Aquino, 1995; Barling & Phillips, 1993; Bies & Shapiro, 2011; Cropanzano et al., 2007; De Coninck & Johnson, 2009; Ehlers, 2013; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Sparrow & Cooper, 2003; Tata & Bowes-Sperry, 1996).

Greenberg (1993), however, argued that organisational justice could be best conceptualised through a four-factor structure. Greenberg (1993) suggested that the respect and sensitivity aspects of interactional justice would best be viewed as *interpersonal justice* and that another important aspect with regard to justice should be viewed as the fourth element of justice, namely, *informational justice*. Informational justice can be viewed as the information provided to employees about aspects within their organisation (Greenberg, 1993).

Many researchers into organisational justice have, over the years, debated whether organisational justice is comprised of three factors, namely, distributive, procedural and interactional justice; or four factors, namely, distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice. In 2001, Colquitt conducted two independent studies as a construct validation measure, and the results of both studies strongly suggested that organisational justice is best conceptualised as four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001). Recently several researchers have concurred with Colquitt's (2001) findings regarding the four-factor model of organisational justice (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt et al., 2015; Eib & Soenen, 2017; Jašková, 2015; Matta et al., 2017; Nowakowski & Conlon, 2005; Rodell et al., 2017).

Thus, for the purpose of this study, the concept of organisational justice is defined as employees' perceptions regarding the fairness of the way they are treated in their organisations and has four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. In this study, individuals' perceptions regarding these four dimensions of organisational justice were examined by the Organisational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

3.2.2 Organisational justice model

The organisational justice model relevant to the current research has its roots in the *equity theory* of Adams (1965). The equity theory is an extension of the SET (Blau, 1964). According to the equity theory, employees compare their perceived work inputs (their contributions) with the perceived outcomes they receive (the rewards they get) with each other (Adams, 1963; Adams, 1965; Colquitt et al., 2013; Greenberg, 1990). If the ratios are unequal, the party whose ratio is lower, is theorised to be inequitably underpaid and to feel angry and unsatisfied, whereas equal ratios are proposed to produce equitable states and are associated with feelings of satisfaction (Adams, 1963; Adams, 1965; Colquitt et al., 2013; Greenberg, 1990). The equity theory, moreover, suggests that individuals adjust their own or the comparison other's actual or perceived inputs or outcomes to change unpleasant inequitable states to more pleasant and equitable ones (Greenberg, 1984; Jašková, 2015). The focus of the equity theory is thus employees' reactions to pay inequities, and as previously alluded to, this refers to distributive justice.

As discussed in the previous section, researchers later on determined that the processes and procedures leading to the decisions and outcomes in organisations, termed 'procedural justice', also influenced the feelings of justice that employees experienced in their organisations, together with the fairness of the allocation of outcomes (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal et al., 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). However, it was only in 1993 with Greenberg's ground-breaking argument of a four-factor model of organisational justice that the concept's real importance in organisations came to researchers' attention (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt et al., 2015; Jašková, 2015).

As previously mentioned, Greenberg (1993) suggested that organisational justice is comprised of four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. In 2001, Colquitt conducted two independent studies, one in a field setting and one in a university setting, and the results of both of these studies conclusively determined that organisational justice is best conceptualised as four

distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Colquitt's (2001) organisational justice model serves as the theoretical lens through which the construct of organisational justice in this research study is examined, and thus, the concepts of distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.2.2.1 *Distributive justice*

As mentioned in the previous section, the organisational justice model relevant to this research, as well as distributive justice specifically, has its roots in the equity theory of Adams (1965). Distributive justice deals with the distribution of conditions and outcomes in an organisation, which has an effect on individual (psychological, social and economic) well-being (Deutsch, 1975). It represents the degree to which decision outcomes followed the equity rule (Adams, 1965; Leventhal, 1976). Distributive justice is, furthermore, concerned with the manner in which an outcome is perceived by the recipient of that particular outcome as being fair and just (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997).

There are three allocation rules that lead to distributive justice, namely, equality, equity and need (Adams, 1965; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2015; Deutsch, 1975; Leventhal, 1976; Wagstaff, 1994), and these are briefly outlined in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3

Three Allocation Rules that form the Basis of Distributive Justice

Equality	Equity	Need
Outcomes and resources need to be distributed equally among all employees in an organisation. Thus, to each the same.	Outcomes and resources should be distributed according to the individual contribution, which each employee has made to the organisation. Thus, to each in accordance with contributions.	Outcomes and resources have to be distributed to those employees who are the most deserving and who need it the most. Thus, to each in accordance with the most urgency.

Sources: Adams (1965); Colquitt (2001); Colquitt et al. (2015); Deutsch (1975); Leventhal (1976); Wagstaff (1994)

In distributive justice, employees compare a wide-ranging variety of inputs that the individual contributes to the organisation, for example, experience, skill, effort, time, education and training, loyalty and commitment, the inputs of others, as well as a wide range of outputs which an individual receives from their organisation, for example, salary, bonuses, recognition, support from supervisors, pleasant working atmosphere, training and career development opportunities, and so forth; with the outputs that the others in the organisations gain (Jašková, 2015; Rodell et al., 2017). In short, distributive justice is concerned with whether people in an organisation feel they are being fairly rewarded for the efforts that they put in (Deutsch, 1975; Jašková, 2015; Rodell et al., 2017). Lastly, distributive justice can be summarised as employees' perceptions regarding the equitable distribution of work and resources in an organisation (Colquitt et al., 2015; Ehlers, 2013).

3.2.2.2 *Procedural justice*

Procedural justice is concerned with the amount of control that employees have over the procedures in organisations, especially when it comes to settling grievances and disputes, and also with regard to the amount of control they have over the outcomes of decisions in organisations (Greenberg, 1990; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). A key component of procedural justice is employee *voice* (Donald et al., 2014; Folger, 1977). Thus, allowing employees in an organisation, especially in disciplinary or legal proceedings, a voice at the time of the proceedings (Donald et al, 2014; Folger, 1977). And so doing, even if the outcome is unsatisfactory to the participants, having had a voice in the proceedings can lighten unhappiness (Donald et al, 2014; Folger, 1977).

Procedural justice, furthermore, deals with individuals' perceptions regarding the fairness of various procedural elements in organisations, for example, in recruitment, selection, performance evaluations, reward evaluations, procedures for appeals, safeguards against abuse of power, and so forth (Colquitt et al., 2015; Jašková, 2015; Leventhal, 1980). Leventhal (1980) identified six criteria for determining procedural fairness, in other words, to determine if a process is fair (Colquitt, 2001). These are briefly described in Table 3.4 on the following page.

Table 3.4

Criteria for Procedural Justice

Consistency	Procedures and processes should be applied evenly and consistently for all employees in an organisation. Similar behaviours should render similar results for all employees.
Bias free	Procedures and processes should be free from personal bias, inclinations or prejudices for or against any employees or groups in an organisation.
Accuracy	Procedures have to be applied with a high level of quality, and processes have to be correct and precise.
Correctability	Procedures and processes have to be corrected if it should be determined that there is an aspect that is unfair, biased or inconsistent.
Representation of all stakeholders	All procedures and processes should be designed to allow for the representation for all stakeholders, that is, employees' needs have to be considered when procedures are applied.
Ethicality	Procedures and processes in organisations should be applied with a high standard of ethical principles.

Source: Colquitt (2001, p. 388)

Employees consider organisational processes and procedures to be fair if they have the opportunity to voice their needs and arguments before decisions are made and before resources are allocated (Jašková, 2015). In short, procedural justice is about whether employees that the organisational processes and procedures leading to the allocation of rewards are fair (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Procedural justice can thus be summarised as the fairness of procedures applied in an organisation (Greenberg, 1990; Jašková, 2015; Rodell et al., 2017).

3.2.2.3 *Interpersonal justice*

In the late 1980's, organisational justice researchers concerned with procedural justice focussed their attention away from the structural aspects with regard to processes and procedures, and turned their attention towards the interpersonal aspects of how information was communicated to employees in organisations (Greenberg, 1990; Jašková, 2015; Khan et al., 2017). Interpersonal justice is defined as the degree to which participants in the decision-making process are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2015; Greenberg, 1990; Jašková, 2015). Interpersonal justice is concerned with the manner

in which information is shared with employees and interested parties in an organisation (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2015).

Cropanzano et al. (2002) explain that if a supervisor provided beneficial and constructive feedback to an employee regarding his/her outputs, for example, during a performance appraisal, this evaluation would likely be more positively accepted than if no explanation was provided. Gichira et al. (2017) and Greenberg (1993) agree that interpersonal justice perceptions have been found to increase individuals' support of the decisions made by authorities in their organisations. Research has shown that people experiencing positive interpersonal fairness treatment tend to accept unpleasant outcomes as being fair and hold positive feelings about their supervisors (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). In short, interpersonal justice stems from the perception of fairness with regard to the *manner* in which information is communicated in an organisation, independent of the actual content of the information (Jašková, 2015; Khan et al., 2017; Perreira, 2018; Rodell et al., 2017).

Interpersonal justice focuses on the manner in which workplace procedures are enacted and information is shared within an organisation and it is reliant on five supervisor behaviours, namely, satisfactory consideration of employees' inputs, elimination of personal bias, regular and consistent application of decision-making criteria, appropriate feedback and rationalisation for decisions (Bies & Moag, 1986; Gichira et al., 2017). These factors play an important role in affecting employees' perceptions of fairness, acceptance of decisions, and attitudes toward the organisation (Perreira et al., 2018; Son et al., 2014). Perceptions with regard to interpersonal fairness have been proven to have an effect on individuals' attitudes and behaviours and can have a direct impact on employees' commitment to an organisation and their intention to leave their organisation (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Gishira et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2017; Perreira et al., 2018; Son et al., 2014).

3.2.2.4 *Informational justice*

Informational justice, unlike interpersonal justice, concerns itself with the actual content of the information which is communicated (Jašková, 2015). The term informational justice was first used by Greenberg (1990) who defined it the solidness and appropriateness of the clarifications offered to employees in an organisation. Greenberg and Colquitt (2005) likewise describe information justice as an element of organisational justice which encompasses the legitimacy and truthfulness of the information which is communicated within an organisation (Liu & Yu, 2017; Shin et al., 2015). The importance of informational justice lies in the fact that employees are likely to accept outcomes in an organisation more positively if they perceive

the information to be accurate, legitimate and truthful (Jašková, 2015; Liu & Yu, 2017; Shin et al., 2015).

In summary, the concept of the organisational justice can be described as employees' perceptions regarding whether they are treated with fairness and equity in their workplaces and it has four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. Organisational justice, as the psychological contract, has its roots in the SET (Adams, 1965; Blau, 1964). If employees perceive that they are not being treated justly in their organisation, it could have a detrimental effect on the positive prolongation of the exchange relationship between an employer and its employees (Adams, 1965; Colquitt et al., 2013). Organisational justice can have a direct impact on employees' behaviours and emotions and consequently, impact on their commitment to an organisation and their intention to leave their organisation – resulting in either retention or turnover. Organisational justice is thus an indispensable construct to the current study, seeing that the assumption can be made, based on an analysis of the literature, that if employees experienced a positive and fulfilled psychological, they may likely perceive their supervisor(s), management and their organisation as fair and equitable, and, furthermore, be satisfied with their organisation's retention practices, be committed to their organisation and remain with their organisation.

Previous research have similarly concluded that employees' perceptions regarding organisational justice has an impact on retention (Gomes et al., 2017; Karatepe & Shahriari, 2014; Imran & Allil, 2016; Osman & Noordin, 2015; Perreira et al., 2018; Tziner et al., 2017), but there is a dearth of research linking organisational justice, trust as well as the psychological contract to retention – particularly in the higher education sector (Bordia et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2007; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Larkin et al., 2016; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Nutakki et al., 2015; Strydom et al., 2014; Van der Vaart et al., 2013).

As mentioned previously, this study aimed to determine the role that organisational justice and trust play in the relationship between the state of the psychological contract and the satisfaction with human resource (HR) factors that influence staff retention (as discussed in Chapter 2). The construct of organisational justice was discussed in the foregoing section, and the concept of trust is examined in detail in the following section.

3.3 THEORY AND RESEARCH: TRUST

In this section the focus is on the conceptualisation and background of the construct of trust as well as Martins' (2000; 2002) model of trust.

3.3.1 Conceptualisation and background

Trust is one of the main components of any relationship (Von der Ohe et al., 2004). Trust is a crucial element in organisations and its imperativeness for successful organisational relations came to the forefront when researchers started focusing on this construct extensively throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s (Lamertz & Bhawe, 2017; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2002; Tekingündüz et al., 2017).

Arrow (1974) was one of the first researchers focusing on the importance of trust, describing trust as a significant emollient of a social system (Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010). Trust is particularly significant in organisations, because it means that people can rely on that which other people promise (Arrow, 1974; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011). Cook and Wall (1980) defined trust as the extent to which a person is willing to assign positive and honest intentions to and have faith in the words and deeds of other people.

Trust is defined by various researchers as a person's vulnerability to the actions of other people and the belief that others' intents and conducts will lead to positive outcomes (Hakanen & Soudunsaari, 2012; Kreitner & Kinicki, 1995; Li & Wang, 2018; Mayer et al., 1995; O'Brien, 2001; Tekingündüz et al., 2017). Mayer et al. (1995) argue that a party elects to trust another (the trustee) based on certain expectations about how the other party will act in future, based on the perceived trustworthiness of the trustee. Cummings and Bromiley (1996) describe trust in an organisational context as the belief by a party or group that another party or an organisation will try, in a well-meaning manner, to act in accordance with their promises, that they will be truthful because of the promises made in past relationships, and that they will not take advantage of others, even if there is an opportunity to do so (Van den Heuvel et al. 2017). Trust is thus strongly related to the psychological contract, seeing that it relies on mutual expectations and reciprocal faith that each party to a relationship has that the other party will fulfil their promises and treat the other party benevolently (Kreitner & Kinicki, 1995; Van den Heuvel et al., 2017).

According to various authors (Bews & Martins, 2002; Hay, 2002; Li & Wang, 2018; Jena et al., 2017; Lämsä & Pučétaité, 2006; Martins, 2000; Nooteboom, 2002; Rossouw & Van Vuuren,

2004; Schoorman et al., 2007; Whitener, 1997), trust has three common characteristics, namely, that trust in another party replicates a belief that the other party will act compassionately and kindly; it comprises a disposition of being vulnerable and risking the possibility that the other party may not fulfil the expectation of compassionate and kind behaviour. In addition, trust encompasses dependency between the parties, which means that their performance is influenced by one another. Concurring, Martins (2000; 2002) states that numerous features appear to emerge from the current models and definitions of trust, which include characteristics, such as integrity, competence, openness, vulnerability, reliability and expectations, on both the part of the trustee and trustor (Von der Ohe, 2016).

Trust is a multidimensional construct, and consists of a cognitive dimension (belief about another's trustworthiness), an affective dimension (role of emotions in the trust process) and a behavioural dimension (relying on another and disclosing sensitive information) base (Schoorman et al, 2007; Tekingündüz et al., 2017; Van den Heuvel et al., 2017). For this reason, the definition that was adopted for the purpose of this study, is also multidimensional. Trust is, therefore, defined as the process where one party, the trustor, relies on another party, the trustee (a person or group of people) to act according to a certain set of expectations that are important to the trustor, to act with positive and kind intentions towards the trustor, and not to take advantage of the trustor's vulnerable state (Martins, 2000; 2002).

For the purpose of this research, trust was measured with the Trust Relationship Audit (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005) by examining employees' trust relationship with their direct supervisors and their organisation, as well as the trust relationship between top management, the immediate manager and colleagues.

3.3.2 Model of trust

The model of trust relevant to this research, similar to the psychological contract, has its roots in the SET (Blau, 1964). As explained previously, the SET is based on the contention that employees and employers are parties to an exchange relationship, and there is an obligation between the parties to equally compensate each other for the offerings made by each party, and to act in a reasonable and fair way to ensure the fruitful maintenance of the exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Lub et al., 2016; Rayton et al., 2015).

Various researchers have examined the construct of trust, including Butler (1991), Castelfranchi and Falcone (1998), Du Plessis (2006), Lau et al. (2008), Mayer et al. (1995), Shaw (1997) and others. Mayer et al. (1995) developed a model of trust and through this

research, the key factors contributing to a trust relationship were identified as ability, benevolence and integrity. Shaw (1997) also developed a model of trust that incorporates the organisation as an entity and comprises the formal structures and processes as well as the organisational culture (Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Von der Ohe, 2016). He describes the most important features of a trust relationship as accomplishing results, acting with integrity and signifying concern (Shaw, 1997; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Von der Ohe, 2016).

Pennington (1992) contends that to earn and maintain the trust of others, it is necessary for leaders to shine in five areas, namely, character, competence, communication, consistency and courage (Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Von der Ohe, 2014). Ground-breaking research done by Martins et al. (1997) led to the theory that trust in organisations is formed by both personality factors and managerial practices. This research by Martins et al. (1997) set out to determine the relationship between personality, managerial practices and trust on a basic level. This research, however, did not empirically investigate the exact facets of personality and managerial practices that are fundamental to a positive trust relationship (Von der Ohe, 2014). Martins (2000; 2002) consequently developed a complete model that outlines the explicit personality traits or features of a trust relationship, also taking into account specific aspects of managers' actions (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2010; 2011; Von der Ohe, 2014).

Table 3.5 on the next page summarises the elements in a trust relationship as supported by various scholars.

Table 3.5
Elements in a Trust Relationship

Dimensions	Kreitner & Kinicki (1995)	Mayer et al. (1995)	Pennington (1992)	Shaw (1997)	Martins (2000)	Martins (2002)	Von der Ohe & Martins (2010)	Martins & Von der Ohe (2011)
Ability/ competence (team management)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Benevolence		√						
Communication (information sharing)	√		√		√	√	√	√
Fairness (trust relationship)	√			√	√	√	√	√
Integrity/ concern		√		√				
Organisational trust			√		√	√	√	√
Predictability (credibility)	√		√		√	√	√	√
Respect (trust relationship)	√		√		√	√	√	√
Support (work)	√				√	√	√	√
Changes					√	√	√	√

Note: Dimensions in brackets refer to dimensional names used in Martins' (2000) model

Sources: Martins & Von der Ohe (2011); Von der Ohe & Martins (2010, p. 302)

Martins' (2000; 2002) model of the manifestations of trust in organisations, which served as the theoretical lens for studying the construct of trust, comprises four elements, namely, the 'Big Five' personality traits of employees that lead to strong trust relationships in organisations, the managerial practices that have an influence on organisational trust, the trust relationship between employees and their superiors and organisational trust (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011). These four elements that encompass this model of trust are briefly discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.2.1 'Big Five' personality traits – the antecedents of organisational trust

Barrick and Mount (1991) conducted research in which five personality characteristics, referred to as the 'Big Five' or the five-factor model of personality, were identified as crucial elements which could contribute to work performance in manufacturing situations (Von der

Ohe, 2014; 2016). The *personality factors* are agreeableness, conscientiousness, resourcefulness, emotional stability and extraversion (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Martins, 2000; Martins, 2002; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011; 2014; 2016). These 'Big Five' personality characteristics (agreeableness, conscientiousness, resourcefulness, emotional stability and extraversion) were proven by Martins et al. (1997) to be noteworthy contributors to interpersonal trust relationships among employees and their managers (Martins et al., 1997; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011).

3.3.2.2 *Managerial practices which impact on organisational trust*

Managers play a vital role in enhancing organisational trust (Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Martins, 2000). Previous studies show that trust in one's manager enables resourceful performance by the employees in an organisation, supports job satisfaction, commitment, and intention to stay with an organisation (Aryee et al., 2002; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013; Ozyilmaz, 2010), and empowers employees (Mullarkey et al., 2011). The *managerial practices* proven to facilitate a strong trust relationship are credibility, team management, information sharing and work support (Martins et al., 1997; Martins 2000; Martins 2002; Von der Ohe, 2014; 2016).

Credibility comprises of a manager's disposition to listen, consider proposals by employees, permit other parties to freely express their feelings, accept slipups by employees, and ensure that employees enjoy respect and reliability in the organisation (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011). Team management refers to the efficient and successful supervision of teams and groups in an organisation, to ensure that both teams and individuals reach their goals (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011). The managerial practice of team management is also related to the effective the handling of conflict within groups (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011).

Information sharing is concerned with a manager's preparedness to provide individual feedback on performance and to divulge business associated information in an authentic way to groups (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011). Lastly, work support is related to a manager's willingness to provide support to employees when required and to offer job-related information relevant to the achievement of aims (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011).

3.3.2.3 *Trust relationship*

The *trust relationship* dimension in the model relevant to this research is related to the organisational trust itself and deals with several aspects related to trust between employees

and their direct supervisors (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005). The trust relationship dimension echoes the level of trust present in the relationship between employees and their immediate supervisors in terms of openness, honesty, fairness and intention to encourage employees (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010). In Martins' (2000) model, the trust relationship between employees and their supervisors is measured by determining whether they had an open and trusting relationship with their supervisor or manager, if the person they reported to openly and honestly revealed important work-related facts to them, was fair in judging their performances, demonstrated good intentions and motives towards them, and also whether the person they reported to was truthful and credible (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005).

3.3.2.4 *Organisational trust*

Organisational trust is concerned with the trust relationship between top management, the immediate manager and colleagues (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2014). Organisational trust levels in Martins' model are determined by evaluating whether employees trusted top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues (team members); if their immediate manager trusted them, whether top management trusted employees, and further, if they believed that their colleagues trusted them (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005). Organisational trust is also related to whether an organisation responded quickly to changes in its external environment, managed change in the organisation effectively, and if employees felt that they were well prepared for change that might affect them (Martins, 2000; Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, only the sections relating to the trust relationship and organisational trust were utilised for data collection. This mainly because the "Big five" personality traits and the managerial practices which impact on organisational trust are not specifically relevant to the study. The aim of this research was to determine what the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust are the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with set of HR factors that influence staff retention. Thus, the research aimed to measure employees' levels of trust in their organisation, supervisor and top management, and not the personality traits and managerial practices that have an effect on trust.

In summary, the concept of trust is the process where one party (the trustor) has the expectation of another party (the trustee) to act in a positive manner towards him/her. Trust, similar to the psychological contract and organisational justice, has its origin in the SET (Blau,

1964). In other words, if employees experienced psychological contract fulfilment, it may result in the perception that they are being treated positively, fairly and that they can trust their organisation, their supervisor and their colleagues, which may lead to a fruitful continuation of the exchange relationship between an employer and its employees.

Trust has been proven to impact on employees' commitment to an organisation and it can be concluded that a lack of trust or a damaged trust relationship with one's supervisor or organisation can lead to a breakdown in the exchange relationship between employers and employees, causing higher levels of intention to leave as well as turnover (Aryee et al., 2002; Brown et al., 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2013; Mishra et al., 2015; Yozgat et al., 2014). Furthermore, previous studies have found that organisational justice and trust are closely related concepts, and that organisational justice is a crucial factor in the development of trust (Agarwal, 2014; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Brown et al., 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Mishra et al., 2015; Potgieter et al., 2015; Spector, 2001; Tulubas & Celep, 2012; Yozgat et al., 2014). Moreover, there is also strong correlation between both organisational justice and trust, and the psychological contract and these concepts are crucial to the successful, fruitful and positive maintenance of the exchange relationship between an employer and its employees (Ahmad et al., 2016; Agarwal, 2014; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015).

As mentioned previously, there is a lack of research studies that have examined these three concepts in a single study, in relation to retention. Furthermore, there is a complete dearth of research regarding this in the higher education environment – especially in an ODL institution (Bordia et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Garcia et al., 2007; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Larkin et al., 2016; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Nutakki et al., 2015; Strydom et al., 2014; Van der Vaart et al., 2013). Thus, the current study aimed to develop a retention framework for the higher education environment, by considering the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

In this chapter thus far, the theory and research relating to the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust were examined in detail, with specific focus on the specific theory or model relating to each construct, which is relevant to this study. In the following section, the variables that influence on the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust are discussed.

3.4 VARIABLES INFLUENCING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT, ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND TRUST

The following variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) influence the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust:

3.4.1 Race

Several research studies have concluded that employees from different race groups differ significantly with regard to their psychological contracts (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Maree, 2016; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Snyman et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2016). Employees from racial minority groups within an organisation may have varied outlooks on the psychological contract (Chrobot-Mason, 2003; Pant & Vijaya, 2015). Chrobot-Mason (2003) established that the psychological contract of minority employees had unique elements and distinctive outcomes associated with psychological contract violation. The study by Thomas et al. (2003) concluded that individuals from different racial groups differ with regard to the formation of the psychological contract, their perceptions of violations of the psychological contract, as well as their responses to perceived violations.

Snyman et al. (2015) found that significant differences existed between designated groups (women, disabled people and black people, namely, Africans, Asians and Coloureds) and non-designated groups (white males) regarding their perceptions about the psychological contract. Thomas et al. (2016) likewise determined that individuals from different culture and racial groups showed varying preferences with regard to the formation and fulfilment of their psychological. Mishra and Kumar (2017) also found that employees from different race and cultural groups differ with regard to their perceptions and expectations concerning the psychological contract.

Organisational justice and trust moderate employees' interpretations of psychological contract breach and violation and this is especially the case among minority racial groups (Chrobot-Mason, 2003). Individuals' perceptions of organisational justice differ among varying racial groups (Esterhuizen & Martins, 2008; McMillan-Capehart & Richard, 2005; Ojo, 2017; Wesolowski & Mossholder, 1997). Studies by Arya et al. (2017), and De Jong and Visser (2000), similarly, found that white and black individuals differed significantly with regard to their perceptions about organisational justice and what was regarded as fair and just treatment in an organisation.

In addition to the above, race also has an impact on trust relationships, seeing that individuals from varying racial groups form trust and trust relationships differently from each other (Kung et al., 2018; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010). Düweke (2004) adds that regulations in the South African working environment, such as employment equity and affirmative action, might lead to white males having much lower levels of trust in their employers than their black colleagues.

3.4.2 Gender

Gender in this context can be defined as the roles, behaviours, actions, and characteristics that a particular social order considers suitable for men and women (Chin & Hung, 2013). Gender plays an important role in professional growth (Marušić & Bodroža, 2015). Gender may have an impact on the perceptions of employees regarding an organisation (Bellou, 2009) as each gender respond varyingly to human resource management practices (Chin & Hung, 2013). Various studies have found that men and women differ with regard to the expectations that form the basis of their psychological contracts (Bellou, 2009; Blomme et al., 2010; Chin & Hung, 2013; Snyman et al., 2015; Kakarika et al., 2017; Marušić & Bodroža, 2015; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2016).

Women have been found to place more value on pleasant work, the accomplishment of objectives and gaining acknowledgement for their contributions (Bellou, 2009). Women have also been found to place more value on intrinsic job features, such as stimulating work prospects, training and development and a responsive working atmosphere, while men have been found to be more focused on extrinsic job features, such as improved reward, fringe reimbursements and job security (Bellou, 2009).

Blomme et al. (2010) determined that for women, promotion prospects and work-life balance were important factors in the fulfilment of their psychological contracts, and were directly related to turnover intentions. However, for men, the precision of the job description was an important factor in their psychological contract fulfilment and a direct predictor for leaving their organisation (Blomme et al., 2010). Peltokorpi et al. (2015) found in their study that gender moderated the relationship between organisational embeddedness, the psychological contract and turnover. Older women have been found to experience psychological contract breach sooner than their male counterparts would in the same situation (Kakarika et al., 2017). However, research studies regarding the psychological contracts of women, as well as the development, retention and advancing of women is still lacking in organisations (Kakarika et al., 2017; Walsh et al., 2016).

With regard to organisational justice, studies have determined that women and men place different values on fairness in the workplace and their perceptions of organisational justice differ (Aramide & Aderibigbe, 2014; Kivimäki et al., 2004; Peltokorpi et al., 2015). In studies by Arya et al., 2017; Inoue et al. (2015) as well as Ojo (2017) it was concurrently determined that men and women differed significantly with regard to their views about organisational justice. Contrary to these findings, in a study by Nwanzu (2017) it was concluded that men and women do not differ significantly with regard to perceived organisational justice.

Over and above the foregoing, it has been found that gender plays a role in the development of trust in organisations and that men and women can differ with regard to their trust relationships (Yoon & Occeña, 2015). Zeffane et al. (2018) determined in their research that gender had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between trust, job satisfaction, supervisor support and perceived organisational performance.

3.4.3 Age

Various studies have concluded that employees' psychological contracts differ among varying age groups (Bal, 2017; Bal et al., 2017; Deas, 2017; Garcia et al., 2017; Kraak et al., 2017; Lub et al., 2016; Lub et al., 2014; Lub et al., 2012; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Takase et al., 2016). According to Bal (2017), age impacts on the psychological contract in three ways.

Firstly, age can have an effect on the type of obligations employees exchange with their employers; secondly, age can have an impact through influencing the type of psychological contract (relational or transactional) have with their employers; and finally, age influences employees' reactions towards psychological contract breach and violation (Bal, 2017). Results of the studies by Bal et al. (2017), Deas (2017) as well as Garcia et al. (2017) similarly revealed that employees from differing age groups had differing experiences and expectations regarding psychological contract fulfilment as well as psychological contract breach. In the study by Takase et al. (2016) it was likewise found that employees' ages were negatively correlated with their psychological contract fulfilment as well as their turnover intentions and that psychological contract fulfilment and development opportunities were imperative factors in reducing employees' turnover intentions, especially among younger employees.

Kraak et al. (2017) and Ng and Feldman (2009) found that an employee's age has a significant impact in the manner in which that employee will experience and react to psychological contract breaches and injustices (Peltokorpi et al., 2015). For example, older women have been found to experience psychological contract breach sooner than younger women would

in the same situation (Kakarika et al., 2017). Employees of different ages also have been found to vary in terms of their perceptions regarding organisational justice (Peltokorpi et al., 2015). Ojo (2017) also established that organisational justice perceptions differed significantly among individuals from varying age groups.

Basit and Duygulu (2017) have confirmed that employees' levels of trust vary among age groups. Their study found that employees in the young age group with one to nine years' work experience had significantly higher levels of trust in their managers and their organisations than the other age groupings (Basit & Duygulu, 2017). Yoon and Occeña (2015) as well as Zeffane et al. (2018), similarly, found that trust was moderated by age.

3.4.4 Job level

Previous research has indicated that the content of the psychological contract differs amongst groups of employees at differing job levels, hierarchical levels and types of contracts within the organisation (Callea et al., 2016; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; McDonald & Makin, 2000; Ng & Feldman, 2009; Pant & Vijaya, 2015). Thus, this content will differ between shop floor workers, supervisors and managers (Pant & Vijaya, 2015). McDonald and Makin (2000) established that the psychological contract, organisational commitment and job satisfaction of temporary staff differed substantially from those of permanent staff. Likewise, De Cuyper and De Witte (2006) as well as Callea et al. (2016) determined that permanent employees, when compared with temporary ones, differed with regard to their attitudes, job-security, well-being and psychological contract perspectives. Jackson and Wilton (2017) along with Ng and Feldman (2009) also found that job level and work experience shape how employees experience psychological contract breaches.

The results of studies by Esterhuizen and Martins (2008) as well as Gelens et al. (2014) indicated statistically significant differences in fairness and organisational justice perceptions between different job levels. Aramide and Aderibigbe (2014) explored organisational justice as a predictor of intention to quit and found that management staff significantly scored higher on turnover intention than non-management staff and there were also significant differences between the organisational justice perceptions of management versus non-management employees.

With regard to the construct of trust, a study by Hay (2002) showed that individuals from different groups, teams and management levels developed varying levels of trust. This is affirmed by Martins and Von der Ohe (2014) who state that employees representing different

job levels do not experience trust in the same way. Top and senior management usually experience the highest levels of trust in their organisations (Martins & Von der Ohe, 2014). This confirms the findings of previous research by Bews and Uys (2002), Esterhuizen and Martins (2008), as well as Tekingündüz et al., 2017, namely, that employees at higher job levels have more trust in their direct supervisors as well as in top management, if compared to those at lower job levels.

3.4.5 Tenure

Organisational tenure can be defined as the period of time that an employee has rendered his/her service to a particular organisation, along with the experience this employee has accumulated in this organisation (Jiang et al., 2016). A short-tenured employee will likely have greater anticipations of career development, intrinsic tasks and self-control (Jiang et al., 2016). Various studies have determined that organisational tenure plays significant moderating role in the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment, employee performance and commitment to the organisation (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012; Jiang et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2016). Thus, employees with different organisational tenures will have different expectations with regard to psychological contract fulfilment (Lee et al., 2016).

Research studies have also found that less experienced, shorter tenured employees had different perceptions of organisational justice than longer tenured, more experienced employees (Cohen & Avrahami, 2007; Ojo, 2017; Olowodunoye, 2015). Furthermore, employees develop trust over time, and shorter tenured employees had different levels of organisational trust than longer tenured, more proficient employees (Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Hay, 2002).

In conclusion, different individual characteristics may have an effect on the psychological contract of employees as well as their perceptions of organisational justice and trust. There is a clear distinction between males and females with regard to their expectations regarding their employment relationship. Age and race are also important factors when considering the psychological contract of employees and their views of organisational justice and trust. The psychological contracts and perceptions of organisational justice and trust of employees with differing qualification levels, and from various job levels and employment tenures might also differ.

There is a lack of research on the impact of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics on their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and its relation

to their satisfaction with HR retention factors (Deas, 2017; Rafiee et al., 2015). Thus, this study strived to determine the moderating effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure on their perceptions of the psychological contract as well as their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

3.5 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

The foregoing literature study concluded that the psychological contract is a perceived, unwritten contract, which is based on the mutual expectations of employees and their employers regarding the perceived promises made in their employment relationship. The psychological contract has its foundations in the SET and is subjective in nature. It was, furthermore, concluded that the content of the psychological contract comprises employer obligations, employee obligations, employees' levels of job satisfaction as well as the state of their psychological contracts. An evaluation of the literature indicated that the psychological contract is a crucial factor that may influence retention of employees and for this reason, the psychological contract was the independent variable in this study and the HR practices that influence retention, the dependent variables.

Organisational justice was, similarly, found to be subjective in nature, seeing that it is based on the perceptions of employees regarding the fairness and justice of the manner in which they are treated in their organisations. As discussed previously, organisational justice has four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. The concept of trust was similarly examined in the literature study, and it was concluded that trust is the process where one party relies on another party to treat him/her with kindness and compassion. Trust is also subjective in nature and employees' trust relationship with their direct supervisors and their organisation, as well as the trust relationship between top management, the immediate manager and colleagues, was found to be relevant in the current research.

It became evident through the literature study that organisational justice and trust are important outcomes of the psychological contract. It is thus suggested that if an employee had a positive psychological contract, this employee might likely have strong, positive perceptions of organisational justice as well as trust in his/her organisation, supervisor and colleagues. On the other hand, if an employee experienced psychological contract breach and violation, it could result in a perception of unfair and unjust treatment and an untrusting relationship the organisation, supervisor and colleagues. This might then lead to dissatisfaction with the

organisation's retention practices as well as turnover. For this reason, organisational justice and trust were the mediating variables in this study.

The foregoing literature study lastly found that socio-demographic variables, namely, race, gender, age, job level and tenure could have an effect on the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention. Individuals' varying socio-demographic characteristics have a significant interaction effect on their psychological contracts, their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. This is the reason why socio-demographic variables were the moderating variables in the current research.

As discussed earlier, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust as well as retention have been researched previously, however, there is a dearth of research on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and employees' satisfaction with HR retention factors in the higher education environment, especially in the context of an ODL institution. The higher education sector and especially the ODL institution relevant to this research have enormous retention challenges, and therefore, this study aimed to address this gap.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the concepts of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust were conceptualised and the theory and research relating to these constructs critically evaluated. The variables influencing these three concepts were also discussed. Herewith research aim 1 (to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment) has been achieved. In Chapter 4, the theoretical framework for staff retention, which emerged from the theoretical relationship between the constructs; is developed and discussed.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL INTEGRATION: TOWARDS CONSTRUCTING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF RETENTION

HEIs, and specifically the ODL institution relevant to this research, are experiencing alarmingly high rates of staff turnover, and among HEIs there is an apparent inability to retain talented academic and support staff employees that these institutions so desperately need to be successful (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Kinman, 2016; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Robyn, 2012; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Theron et al., 2014). It is, therefore, imperative to understand what HEIs, with specific reference to the ODL institution under investigation, can do to improve their retention strategies (Erasmus et al., 2017; Pant & Vijaya, 2015).

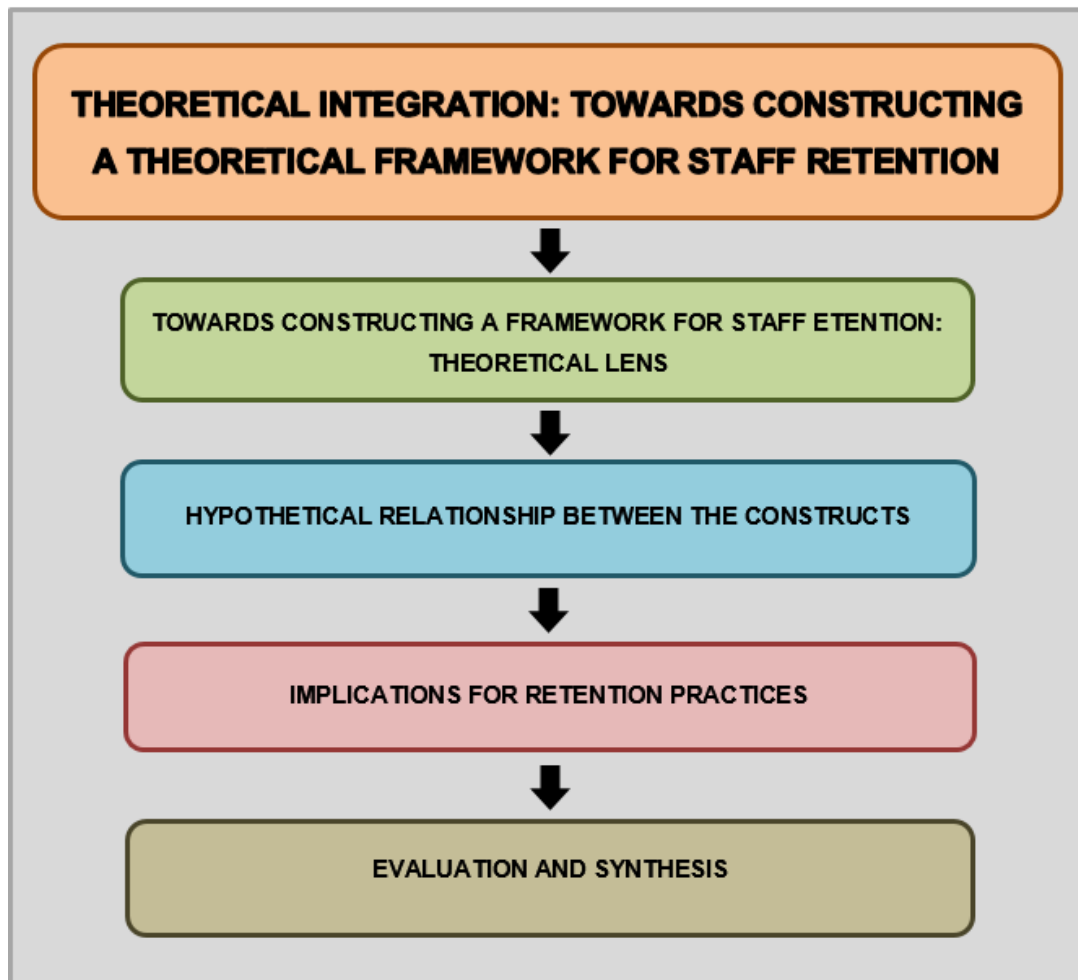
The focus of this research is thus to identify the mediation effect of psychological factors, namely, organisational justice and trust, on the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices. Organisational justice and trust are viewed as extensions of the psychological contract, namely, psychological mechanisms by means of which the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices can be explained. This research thus aims to extend current research on the SET, by adding a fresh stance on the mechanisms that explain staff satisfaction with HR practices, with the view to make recommendations for the retaining of staff. The study also seeks to utilise the basic theory of SET to better understand the exchange relationship from a linear (employee) and not the SET bidirectional perspective because the focus is on employees' perceptions and needs for retention satisfaction.

Although psychological contract changes have received a great deal of attention in the psychological contract literature (Birtch et al., 2016; Low & Bordia, 2011; Low et al., 2016), there is a dearth of research on how employees' perceptions of organisational justice and their trust relationships with their employees influence the link between their psychological contract perceptions and satisfaction with retention practices (Colquitt, 2001; Ehlers, 2013; Jašková, 2015; Martins, 2000; Martins, 2002; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011; Rodell et al., 2017; Von der Ohe, 2014; Von der Ohe, 2016).

Chapters 2 and 3 provided a comprehensive review of the literature on the dependent variable (staff satisfaction with retention practices), the independent variable (the psychological contract), the mediating variables (organisational justice and trust) as well as the moderating variables (socio-demographic characteristics of race, gender, age, job level and tenure). These chapters addressed research aim 1 of the literature study.

Research aim 2 is addressed in this chapter, namely, to postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising of the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust and HR retention practices. This chapter, furthermore, addresses research aim 3, which is to conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment. Figure 4.1 below provides an overview of the core themes of this chapter.

Figure 4.1
Overview of the Core Themes in Chapter 4



Source: Author's own work

4.1 TOWARDS CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF RETENTION: THEORETICAL LENS

The overarching theoretical lens through which the current study and the relevant concepts are examined, is the SET (Blau, 1964). The SET is based on the view that employees and employers are parties to a social exchange relationship and that the successful, positive and fruitful continuation of this exchange relationship is dependent on the fulfilment of the promises and obligations that the parties to this relationship expect (Blau, 1964; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). The concepts relevant to this study, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust all have their roots in the SET and thus, crucial to this successful prolongation of any social exchange relationship, are perceptions of kept promises, fulfilled expectations, fair and just treatment, and strong trust relationships (Alcover et al., 2016; Aryee et al., 2013; Bordia et al., 2015; Ertürk & Vurgun, 2014; Yu et al., 2018). However, it should again be emphasised, the study seeks to utilise the basic theory of SET to better understand the exchange relationship from a linear (employee) and not the SET bidirectional perspective because the focus is on employees' perceptions and needs for retention satisfaction.

While positive perceptions of the psychological contract are expected to positively correlate with high levels of satisfaction with retention practices (Kraak et al, 2017; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van den Heuvel et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017), the mediating variables of organisational justice and trust may function as psychological mechanisms which explain why and how this link between perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction levels exist (Perreira, 2018). In other words, organisational justice and trust may function as explanatory mechanisms of the social exchange relationship denoted by the link between perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

As outlined in Figure 4.2, this study aimed to develop a framework for staff retention, by examining the relationship dynamics between all of the concepts relevant to this research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention; but in addition, by specifically examining the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Keeping the principles of the SET in mind, this study proposes that organisational justice and trust function as explanatory mechanisms of the link between perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Organisational justice and trust may thus alleviate or buffer negative perceptions of the psychological contract or strengthen positive

perceptions of the psychological contract, which in turn may help to either weaken satisfaction with retention practices (if low levels of organisational justice and trust exist) or strengthen satisfaction with retention practices (if high levels of organisational justice and trust exist). Interventions for strengthening the social exchange relationship between employers and employees, may therefore focus on enhancing perceptions of the psychological contract which may help to strengthen organisational justice and trust as extensions of the effect of the psychological contract, which in turn may positively enhance satisfaction levels with retention practices.

As explained in the foregoing paragraphs, Figure 4.2 provides a diagrammatic illustration of the proposed integrated theoretical relationship between the psychological contract, the HR practices that influence retention, as well as organisational justice and trust – within the context of the current study. The proposed theoretical retention framework postulated for the present study is anchored in the SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The following core principles of SET were considered in postulating the retention framework:

- Social exchange involves a series of interdependent interactions that generate obligations between employees and their employers. Within SET, these interactions are generally contingent on the reciprocal actions of another entity and have the potential to generate high-quality relationships (satisfaction) between the two parties involved in the reciprocal relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).
- The suggested retention framework builds on the basic SET premise that the building of organisational justice and trust perceptions are important psychological processes that strengthen the social exchange relationship that develop between employees and their employing organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The retention framework alludes to the notion that the reciprocal social relationship is expressed in employees' psychological contract beliefs (and needs), and their perceptions of obligations being met by the employer in the form of satisfaction with organisational HR retention practices.
- The theoretical retention framework assumes that retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) represent the employer's obligations toward the employee in the negotiated exchange.
- The conceptual mediational design of the research assumes that retention practices are an important obligation aspect of the psychological contract and that the manner in which they are managed and present (espoused) in the organisation are related to

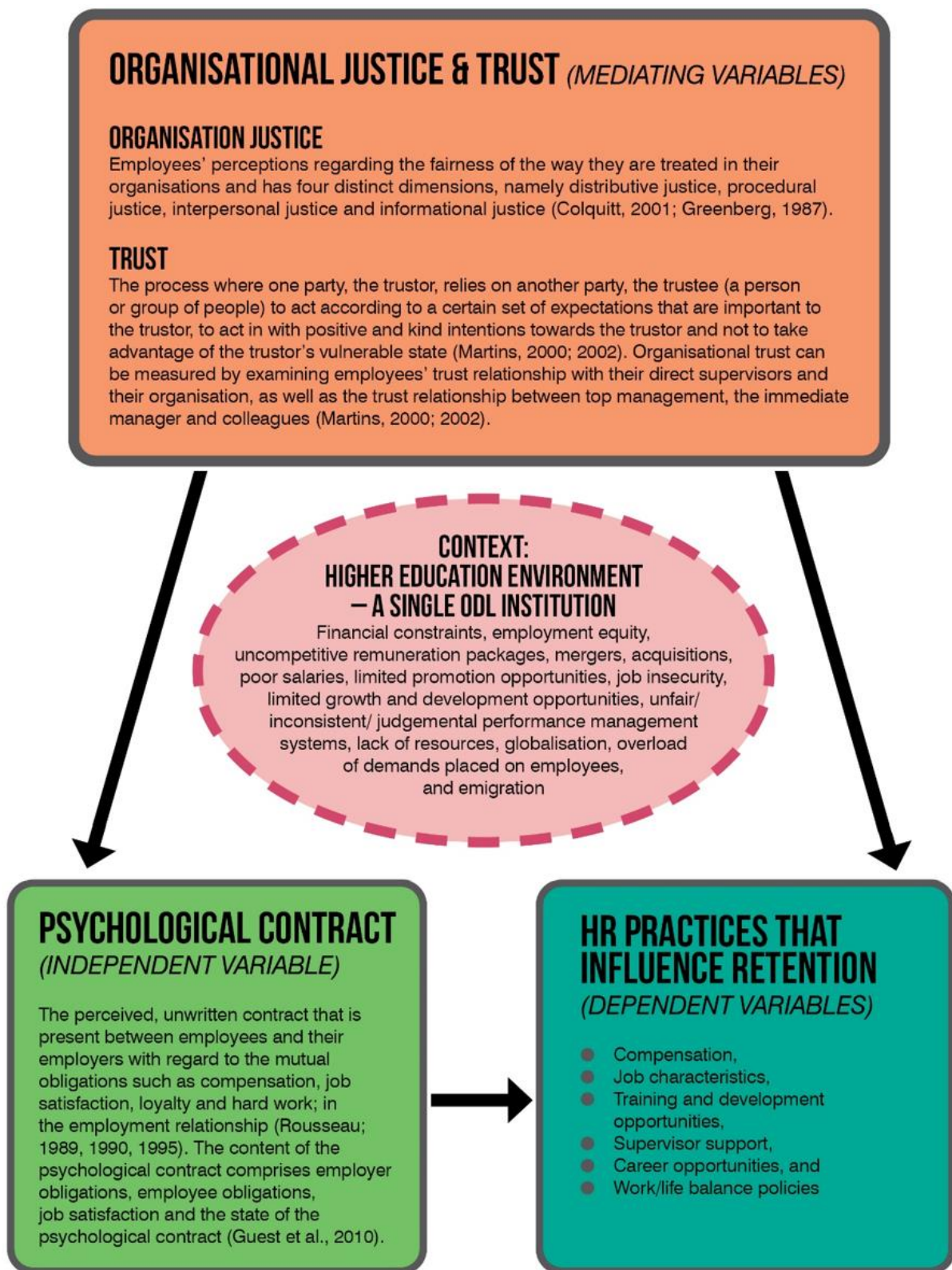
employees' perceptions of trust and justice, and as outcome, their satisfaction with retention practices.

- According to SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), reciprocity implies something has to be given and something returned. The theoretical retention framework proposed that positive psychological contract beliefs (what employees believe they received in terms of met obligations) enhance organisational justice and trust perceptions (what employees give in return for obligations being met), which consequently, enhance satisfaction with retention practices (how employees feel about what they receive from the organisation).
- The theoretical retention framework also considers the SET principle of reciprocity as folk belief and individual orientation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) in the form of exploring the moderating effects of socio-demographic characteristics of individuals and potential differences among diverse groups of individuals.
- In general, the theoretical retention framework positions satisfaction with retention practices as a socio-emotional outcome that signals that employees feel valued and supported by employers meeting their obligations toward employees. The retention framework further extends SET (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) by considering the idiosyncratic nature of the psychological contract which predicts not only unique needs and beliefs in terms of trust and justice and retention practices for different cultural groups, but also, as an extension of SET, for race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups.

Figure 4.2 on the next page provides an integrated overview of the hypothesised relationship between the psychological contract, the HR practices that influence retention, and organisational justice and trust within the context of this study.

Figure 4.2

Integrated Overview of Hypothesised Relationship between the Psychological Contract, the HR Practices that Influence Retention, and Organisational Justice and Trust



Source: Author's own work

The following aspects within Figure 4.2 are briefly explained below in an attempt to illuminate the relationship between the different constructs, namely, the psychological contract, the HR practices that influence retention, as well as organisational justice and trust, within the context of this research.

4.1.1 Retention management in the Higher Education environment

The context of the current research, the higher education environment, was deliberated in detail in Chapter 2 and is illustrated in Figure 4.2 above. It became evident from the literature review that the retention of high quality, treasured employees is crucial for the survival and success of HEIs (Coetzee & Rothmann, 2004; Erasmus et al., 2015; HESA, 2011; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Robyn, 2012; Sehoole, 2013; & Takawira et al., 2014). It also became apparent that retention of employees is a major cause for concern and a complex issue for the higher education environment, and more specifically, the ODL institution relevant to the current study (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Kinman, 2016; Oni & Fatoki, 2017; & Bester, 2008; Theron et al., 2014).

Employees in HEIs are parties to a social exchange relationship with their employer, and along with their intellectual property, expertise, relationships and business processes, they are the most valuable assets that HEIs possess (Byerly, 2012). The focus of this research is thus to determine the effect of the psychological contract, as well as organisational justice and trust as extensions of the psychological contract, on employees' satisfaction with retention practices. If employees experience positive perceptions of the psychological contract, it could likely lead to positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust, which may lead to employees experiencing satisfaction with their organisation's retention practices; and this may result in a successful, fruitful continuation of the social exchange relationship between employees and employers in HEIs.

4.1.2 The psychological contract

The psychological contract construct was conceptualised in section 3.1 of Chapter 3 and is also illustrated in Figure 4.2. The psychological contract theory relevant to this research was discussed by linking the psychological contract to the principles of the SET, which serves as the overarching theoretical lens used to examine concepts in this research. The SET is based on the notion that employers and employees are parties to a social exchange relationship and if promises and commitments to this exchange relationship are not adhered to, it could lead to a breakdown in the relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2016).

The psychological contract serves as a fundamental element in the SET, seeing that the psychological contract is based on promises and expectations within an exchange relationship, and when perceptions exist that promises and expectations are not fulfilled, breach of the psychological contract is the result, which could have a negative effect on this relationship, leading among other things, to turnover (Bordia et al., 2017). In this research, as a study of the social exchange relationship between employers and employees, the psychological contract represents the independent variable, seeing that the psychological contract is expected to have an effect on employees' satisfaction with retention practices (dependent variables). Organisational justice and trust serve as the mediating variables as extensions of the psychological contract, by means of psychological mechanisms by which employees' perceptions of the psychological contract could be alleviated or buffered, and this could then, have an effect on satisfaction with retention practices.

The psychological contract theory relevant to this research was, furthermore, deliberated by discussing the basis of the social exchange relationship between employers and employees, analysing the characteristics of the psychological contract, including the perceptual and idiosyncratic nature of the psychological contract, its content, its typology, breaches and violation of the contract, as well as the state of the psychological contract. These characteristics relate to the subscales of the psychological contract, which include employer obligations, employee obligations, satisfaction and state of the psychological contract. The psychological contract can help to explain employees' satisfaction levels with retention practices (retention factors such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) as aspects of the social exchange relationship.

4.1.3 Organisational justice

The organisational justice construct was conceptualised in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3 and this is similarly illustrated Figure 4.2. In this discussion, the four dimensions of organisational justice relevant to this research, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice were discussed in detail. As discussed previously, the SET is the overarching theoretical lens through which the constructs in this research are studied. Within the SET, organisational justice is a buffering or heightening mechanism in the link between employees' perceptions of the psychological contract and their satisfaction with retention practices. Perceptions of the psychological contract can either link positively or negatively with satisfaction with retention practices through organisational justice and trust. In other words, employees' perceptions of the psychological contract influence their perceptions

of organisational justice and trust, which in turn influence their satisfaction with retention practices. These two constructs of organisational justice and trust thus add new dynamics to the principles of SET.

4.1.4 Trust

The construct of trust was conceptualised in Section 3.3 of Chapter 3 and this is illustrated in Figure 4.2. The concept of trust was discussed within the basis of the SET, and the model of trust relevant this study, was deliberated in detail, with specific reference to organisational trust and the trust relationship dimension. Within the SET, trust is a buffering or heightening psychological mechanism through which the relationship between employees' perceptions of the psychological contract and their satisfaction with retention practices can be affected. In other words, it is anticipated that if employees experience positive perceptions of their psychological contracts and psychological contract fulfilment, it may likely lead to positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust in their organisation, their supervisors, their colleagues and top management. This may, in turn, lead to employees experiencing satisfaction with retention practices. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the two constructs of organisational justice and trust thus bring a new dimension to the SET and serves to convey a fresh insight into the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

4.1.5 The HR practices that influence retention

The HR practices that influence retention was defined and explained in Figure 4.2 and all these HR practices that influence retention, such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and commitment, were discussed in detail in Chapter 2. The demographic characteristics influencing satisfaction with retention practices; as well as the relationships between the four constructs relevant to this research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, were explored in Chapter 2. Within the SET, employees' satisfaction with retention practices, serves as the dependent variable, namely, the outcome of psychological contract fulfilment, and as consequences of the psychological contract, positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust. On the contrary, dissatisfaction with retention practices may be a direct result of the breach of the psychological contract, and through this breakdown of the psychological contract, negative perceptions arise of organisational justice and there is mistrust in the organisation.

The basis of the discussion on these concepts lies in the SET. As stated before, the SET is based on the notion that employers and employees are parties to an exchange relationship, and the outcomes of the exchanges between these parties, and each party's satisfaction with these outcomes, can either lead to a successful continuation or a breakdown of this exchange relationship (Blau, 1964). Taking this study's fresh stance towards the SET into account, it is expected that fulfilment of the psychological contract may result in positive perceptions of organisational justice and strong, positive trust relationships, which may in turn, further enhance satisfaction with retention practices. This may then lead to a fruitful continuation of the exchange relationship between an employer and an employee.

The mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, is crucial to this research. The rationale is that when employees experience a positive state of the psychological contract and psychological contract fulfilment, it may result in perceptions that they are treated justly, that resources are distributed fairly, procedures are applied justly, information is shared equitably in the organisation, and personal interactions are fair and just; and moreover, it may lead to perceptions that their supervisors and colleagues in the organisation are to be trusted and the organisation as a whole is trustworthy. As a result of these positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust, employees may likely experience satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices.

In conclusion, the general aim of the research study was to construct a retention framework for staff retention in the higher education environment, based on the central hypothesis of this research, namely, that organisational justice and trust have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

4.2 HYPOTHETICAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTS

Based on the hypothesised theoretical models presented in the preceding sections, the following theoretical hypothetical relationships are proposed, as discussed in the sections to follow.

4.2.1 Hypothetical relationship between the socio-demographic variables, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention

Research hypothesis 1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 1, which is to assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA. The psychological contract refers to an individual's perception of the terms and conditions of a mutual exchange agreement between him/her and the organisation (Rousseau, 1989); this contract and how it relates to satisfaction with retention practices will differ between individuals. The psychological contract has its foundations in the SET (Blau, 1964), which suggests that employees and employers are parties to an exchange relationship where they feel obligated to reciprocate contributions made by the other party equally, to ensure the positive continuation of the exchange relationship.

Each employee has a unique perception of the promises and contributions made between employee and organisation and the mutual obligations implied as well as the state of the psychological contract. Individual employees will differ in terms of what they expect from their organisation, for example, the compensation with which they will be satisfied with, the job characteristics that they will be content with, the training and development opportunities that they will need, or the type of supervisor support they would be inclined to. Each individual employee would also have unique needs when it comes to career opportunities as well as work-life balance, when one keeps the needs of mothers with small children versus men with grown-up children in mind. An individual who is dissatisfied with his/her psychological contract and the state of his/her psychological contract will be more difficult to retain. Such dissatisfaction may lead to a breach of the psychological contract, which may in turn have a negative effect on employee behaviour (Kraak et al., 2017; Van den Heuvel et al., 2017). Organisations will therefore have to ensure that employees are satisfied with the terms of their psychological contracts.

Organisational justice is employees' perceptions regarding the fairness of the way they are treated in their organisations and has four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1987). Organisational justice has its foundation in the equity theory (Adams, 1965), which is an extension of the SET (Blau, 1964). According to the equity theory (Adams, 1965), employees compare their perceived contributions with the perceived outcomes they receive with each other. Individuals' perceptions of organisational justice may have a noteworthy effect on their psychological contracts, commitment, job satisfaction, trust in their organisation as well as their intention to stay with their organisation (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Khalid et al., 2018; Tamta & Rao, 2016; Tziner et al., 2017).

Trust is the process where one party, the trustor, relies on another party, the trustee (a person or group of people) to act according to a certain set of expectations that are important to the trustor, to act in with positive and kind intentions towards the trustor and not to take advantage of the trustor's vulnerable state (Martins, 2000; 2002). Trust, similarly, has its foundations in the SET (Blau, 1964). Organisational justice and trust are crucial social conditions in employee-employer relationships, and research studies have determined that there is a strong correlation between the perceptions of organisational justice of employees and their trust levels (Agarwal, 2014; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Jiang et al., 2017; Mishra et al., 2015; Potgieter et al., 2015; Strydom et al., 2014; Tulubas & Celep, 2012; Xu et al., 2016).

The assumption can thus be made that a negative psychological contract, namely, perceptions that the mutual obligations in the exchange relationship were not fulfilled, might be linked to negative perceptions of organisational justice and a negative trust relationship with an employee's supervisor and organisation. This, in turn, could lead to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, negative employee attitudes and behaviours, which could result in employee turnover behaviour. Organisational policies and procedures regarding the retention practices thus have to ensure a positive psychological contract between employees and their employer, and resulting from that, strong positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust in their organisation and supervisors.

Socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, are strongly related to the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. The reason for this is because individuals from different race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly with regard to their psychological contracts, their perceptions of organisational justice and trust, as well as their satisfaction with the HR retention practices which predict their retention (Aramide &

Aderibigbe, 2014; Arya et al., 2017; Bal et al., 2015; Bal, 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Blomme et al., 2010; Callea et al., 2016; Chin & Hung, 2013; Maree, 2016; Esterhuizen & Martins, 2008; Garcia et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2017; Gelens et al., 2014; Hay, 2002; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kakarika et al., 2017; Kivimäki et al., 2004; Kraak et al., 2017; Kulkarni et al., 2015; Kung et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Lub et al., 2012; Lub et al., 2014; Lub et al., 2016; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2014; Marušić & Bodroža, 2015; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017; Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Snyman et al., 2015; Takase et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2016; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Walsh et al., 2016; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Zeffane et al., 2018).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the hypothetical relationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention from a crucial element in the construction of a retention framework for the higher education environment, which is the ultimate goal of this research. It is thus hypothesised, that there is a positive relationship between individuals' socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and their satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention.

The relationships between socio-demographic variables and the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust as well as individuals' satisfaction with retention practices have been researched separately, but the interrelationship between these variables have never been researched in a single study (Colquitt, 2001; Ehlers, 2013; Jašková, 2015; Martins, 2000; Martins, 2002; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2011; Rodell et al., 2017; Von der Ohe, 2014; Von der Ohe, 2016). This research aimed to address this gap, specifically in the higher education environment.

4.2.2 Variables (socio-demographic, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust) which hypothetically predict HR retention

<p>Research hypothesis 2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.</p>

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 2, namely, to empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

The psychological contract, organisational justice and trust all have a significant impact on the retention of employees (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2007; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Nisar & Naqvi, 2016; Othman, 2008; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics also impact on the retention of employees, seeing that individuals from differing race, gender, age, job level and tenure groupings, differ significantly regarding their psychological contracts as well as their perceptions about organisational justice and trust, and their satisfaction with the HR practices, which predict their retention (Aramide & Aderibigbe, 2014; Arya et al., 2017; Bal et al., 2015; Bal, 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Blomme et al., 2010; Callea et al., 2016; Chin & Hung, 2013; Maree, 2016; Esterhuizen & Martins, 2008; Garcia et al., 2014; Garcia et al., 2017; Gelens et al., 2014; Hay, 2002; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kakarika et al., 2017; Kivimäki et al., 2004; Kraak et al., 2017; Kulkarni et al., 2015; Kung et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Lub et al., 2012; Lub et al., 201; Lub et al., 2016; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2014; Marušić & Bodroža, 2015; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017; Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Snyman et al., 2015; Takase et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2016; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Walsh et al., 2016; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Zeffane et al., 2018).

In other words, individuals from different socio-demographic groups will have differing perceptions of the obligations of each party to the exchange relationship, and will therefore experience psychological contract fulfilment/breach, job satisfaction/dissatisfaction and a positive/negative state of their psychological contracts, in different circumstances and for different reasons. Likewise, individuals with different socio-demographic characteristics will have varying perceptions about organisational justice and differing trust relationships with their supervisors, managers and employers – in different situations. Lastly, individuals with unique socio-demographic features will respond differently to HR retention practices and their satisfaction with HR retention factors will likely be distinctive. Consequently, socio-demographic variables are inseparable from the constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust. Moreover, the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust are critical elements in the prediction of individuals' satisfaction with retention practices.

The importance of these variables, namely, socio-demographic variables, the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in the development of a retention framework for the

higher education environment can be explained as follows. Employees are in a social exchange relationship with their employer, wherein they have certain expectations regarding promises made to them – this comprises the psychological contract. The psychological contract has the stance that employees and employers are in a mutual exchange relationship wherein each party has certain obligations; and if one party does not fulfil their obligations to this relationship, it has negative outcomes of the social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Lub et al., 2016; Rayton et al., 2015).

Breach and violation of the psychological contract result in negative perceptions of organisational justice as well as poor trust in supervisors and the organisation and this strongly affects the exchange relationship between employees and their employer. The psychological contract, organisational justice as well as trust impact directly on retention of employees, seeing that, as mentioned before, psychological contract breach and violation, leads to negative perceptions of organisational justice and low levels of trust, since this employee might view the obligations of the exchange relationship not being met. Thus, psychological contract breach and violation may lead to negative feelings - such as injustice perceptions and mistrust - and behaviour and is strongly linked to a dissatisfaction with retention practices, lower commitment, higher intention to leave and higher turnover (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

To summarise, the relationship between these variables – the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust – should form an integral part organisational approach to implement HR practices that support the retention of employees. Along with these variables mentioned, individual demographic characteristics should, furthermore, be kept in mind when retention strategies are developed, seeing that individuals from different race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ considerably regarding their psychological contracts, their perceptions about organisational justice and trust, as well as their satisfaction with HR retention factors that impact their retention (Arya et al., 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kakarika et al., 2017; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017; Zeffane et al., 2018).

The establishment and implementation of policies, procedures and HR practices relevant to (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) should thus ensure that the exchange relationship between employers and employees produce a positive psychological contract where employees have positive organisational justice and trust perceptions, while

being mindful of the demographic characteristics of the specific employees. It is therefore hypothesised, that socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Retention of valuable employees is of major concern in the higher education environment, particularly in the ODL institution relevant to this research (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Kinman, 2016; Oni & Fatoki, 2017; & Bester, 2008; Theron et al., 2014), and there is a lack of research on the variables predicting employees' satisfaction with retention practices (Bordia et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Krivokapic-Skoko et al., 2009; Larkin et al., 2016; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Nutakki et al., 2015). Individuals' socio-demographic variables, psychological contracts, and perceptions of organisational justice and trust have not been researched in a single study as predictors of individuals' satisfaction with retention practices (Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Deas, 2017; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Rafiee, 2015), and thus this study intended to address this void.

4.2.3 The hypothetical moderating effect of socio-demographic characteristics of individuals on their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices

Research hypothesis 3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 3, namely, to determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Numerous research studies have found that individuals' demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, have a significant interaction (moderating) effect on their psychological contracts, their perceptions of organisational justice, their trust relationships with their supervisors, colleagues and organisation, as well as their satisfaction with the retention practices within their organisation (Arya et al., 2017; Bal et al., 2015; Basit

& Duygulu, 2017; Blomme et al., 2010; Callea et al., 2016; Chin & Hung, 2013; Deas, 2017; Esterhuizen & Martins, 2008; Garcia et al., 2014; Gelens et al., 2014; Hay, 2002; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kakarika et al., 2017; Kivimäki et al., 2004; Kulkarni et al., 2015; Kung et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Lub et al., 2012; Lub et al., 2014; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2014; Marušić & Bodroža, 2015; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017; Pant & Vijaya, 2015; Takase et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2016; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Yoon & Occeña, 2015; Zeffane et al., 2018).

Research studies have concluded that employees' satisfaction with retention practices is strongly influenced by their demographic characteristics, which include race, gender, age, job level and tenure (Bushe, 2012; Chin & Hung, 2013; Gaiduk & Gaiduk, 2009; Heymann, 2010; James & Mathew, 2012; Le Roux & Rothmann, 2013; Mensele & Coetzee, 2014; Mubarak et al., 2012; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011; Pololi et al., 2012; Pololi, 2010; Radford et al., 2015; Rafiee et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2012; Sibiya et al., 2014; Zagenczyk et al., 2011).

The importance, in terms of this study, lies in the fact that individuals' demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) may interact with their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their levels of satisfaction with the retention practices within their organisation. Individual demographic differences may thus influence individuals' satisfaction with retention practices, and that is the reason why these demographic variables are regarded as moderating variables, seeing that moderation explains for whom satisfaction levels will be lower or higher.

Consequently, the assumption can be made that individual demographic variables may have a significant interaction effect with the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting the variance in individuals' satisfaction with HR practices.

As mentioned previously, former studies have concluded that individual demographic variables have a moderating effect on individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, their perceptions of organisational justice as well their levels of trust, in explaining their satisfaction with retention practices (Arya et al., 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Mensele & Coetzee, 2014; Zeffane et al., 2018). However, the moderating effect of the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals on their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices, have not been researched in a single study – especially not in the higher education environment. Thus, this study aimed to address this gap.

4.2.4 The hypothetical mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention.

Research hypothesis 4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 4, which is to empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

As discussed previously, psychological contract fulfilment, job satisfaction and a positive state of the psychological contract, could likely lead to positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust and in turn, satisfaction with retention practices, commitment and retention of employees (Abu-Doleh & Hammou, 2015; Agarwal & Bhargava, 2013; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Dhanpat & Parumasur, 2014; Lapointe et al., 2014; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Schreuder et al., 2017; Tziner et al., 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007). Likewise, psychological contract breach and violation may have a negative effect on the social exchange relationship between employers and employees and consequently result in negative perceptions of organisational justice and adverse organisational trust, which could then lead to negative attitudes and behaviour as well as turnover (Bunderson, 2001; CIPD, 2020; Clinton & Guest, 2014; Collins, 2010; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Johnson & O’Leary-Kelly, 2003; Gondo et al., 2016; Guo, 2017; Lapointe et al., 2014; Raja et al., 2004; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016; Sauzo et al., 2005; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Schreuder et al., 2017; Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007). Accordingly, the psychological contract plays a crucial role in employees’ satisfaction with an organisation’s retention practices and their retention.

Organisational justice is a vital component in the development of trust and organisational justice and trust cannot easily be separated (Agarwal, 2014; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Jiang et al., 2017; Mishra et al., 2015; Othman, 2008; Potgieter et al., 2015; Tulubas & Celep, 2012; Xu et al., 2016). Organisational justice and trust both have a noteworthy effect on the social exchange relationship between an employer and an employee, and thus serves as a psychological mechanism that can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Previous research studies

have concluded that psychological contract fulfilment and a positive state of the psychological contract, result in perceptions of organisational justice and trust in one's supervisor, management and organisation as a whole (Blancero et al., 2007; Brown, 2015; Bruning, 2002; DelCampo et al., 2010; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Ki & Hon, 2007; Mishra et al., 2015; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Seargent & Lee, 2004; Schoorman et al., 2007; Tziner et al., 2017; Yozgat et al., 2014). In the context of this research, organisational justice and trust are thus treated as outcomes of perceptions of the psychological contract, and if the psychological contract is fulfilled, positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust are expected. In other words, this research takes a new approach to the role of organisational justice and trust in the SET.

Previous studies have proven that psychological contract breach, and the resulting perceptions of unjust and unfair treatment, and mistrust in an employee's supervisor, manager, colleagues or organisation, can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, employees developing an intention to leave the organisation and actual turnover (Agarwal, 2014; Brockner, 1990; Cassar & Buttigieg, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Previous research has also found that there is a strong, positive interrelationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with the HR practices that impact on retention (Clinton & Guest, 2014; Guo, 2017; Schreuder et al., 2017; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Tziner et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2007). Therefore, organisational justice and trust are essential buffering mechanisms in the link between psychological contract fulfilment or breach and satisfaction with retention practices and for this reason it is argued in this study, that organisational justice and trust may have a strong mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and HR retention practices.

When developing HR policies that support the key retention practices as a retention strategy, organisations should implement practices that ensure that employees experience psychological contract fulfilment and as a result, justice, fairness and trust in their exchanges with their employer, as this could likely lead to employees' satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, lower turnover and higher retention rates. Employees' compensation, the characteristics of their jobs, the training and development opportunities they are provided, the support that supervisors provide to employees, their career opportunities and work-life balance arrangements should be crafted to ensure that employees perceive that promises and commitments made in the exchange relationship between them and their employer are adhered to, as this may lead to positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust and in turn, satisfaction with retention practices and higher retention rates.

Table 4.1 below summarises the hypothetical mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention.

Table 4.1

The Mediating Effect of Organisational Justice and Trust on the Relationship between the Psychological Contract and the HR Practices that Influence Retention

Independent (predicting) variable	Mediating variables	Dependent (outcome) variables
Psychological contract breach/violation	Organisational justice	Satisfaction with HR retention practices
1. An employee who holds the perception that his/her employing organisation has failed to meet one or more of its obligations in terms of the psychological contract ismore likely to feel that he/she is not treated justly and fairly by his/her employer, that resources are not distributed equitably, that procedures within the organisation are not fair, that information is not communicated in a just manner and that his/her manager/supervisor does not treat him/her fairly on an interpersonal level and in turn be less likely to experience satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, which could likely lead to lower retention and higher turnover.
Psychological contract breach/violation	Trust	Satisfaction with HR retention practices
2. An employee who holds the perception that his/her employing organisation has failed to meet one or more of its obligations in terms of the psychological contract is more likely to lose trust in his/her organisation and also experience feelings of mistrust towards his/her supervisor, managers, top management and colleagues and in turn be less likely to experience satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, which could likely lead to lower retention and higher turnover.
Psychological contract fulfilment/satisfaction	Organisational justice	Satisfaction with HR retention practices
1. An employee who holds the perception that his/her employing organisation has met its obligations in terms of the psychological contract and fulfilled the promises and expectations	...more likely to feel that he/she is being treated justly and fairly by his/her employer, that resources are distributed equitably, that procedures within the organisation are fair, that information is communicated	... and in turn be more likely to experience satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, which could likely lead to higher retention and lower turnover.

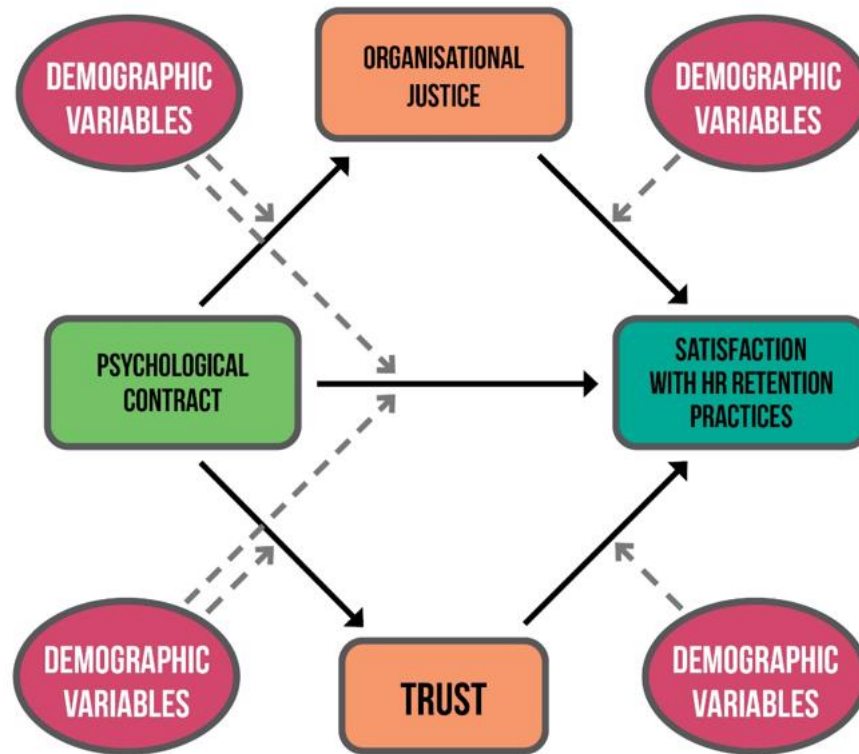
Independent (predicting) variable	Mediating variables	Dependent (outcome) variables
of the psychological contract is ...	in a just manner and that his/her manager/supervisor treats him/her fairly on an interpersonal level ...	
Psychological contract fulfilment/satisfaction	Trust	Satisfaction with HR retention practices
2. An employee who holds the perception that his/her employing organisation has met its obligations in terms of the psychological contract and fulfilled the promises and expectations of the psychological contract is more likely to have a strong feeling of trust in his/her organisation and also experience strong trust relationships with his/her supervisor, managers, top management and colleagues and in turn be more likely to experience satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, which could likely lead to higher retention and lower turnover.

Source: Author's own work

Figure 4.3 on the following page graphically illustrates the hypothetical mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention.

Figure 4.3

Hypothesised Mediating Effect of Organisational Justice and Trust on the Relationship between the Psychological Contract and the Satisfaction with HR Practices that Influence Retention



Source: Author's own work

To summarise, it is hypothesised that organisational justice and trust mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. In other words, it is hypothesised that if an employee had a positive state of his/her psychological contract and experienced psychological contract fulfilment, it may possibly result in more positive perceptions of organisational justice and positive trust relations with his/her supervisor and organisation, which would then lead to satisfaction with HR retention practices. On the contrary, if an employee experienced breach of the psychological contract, it could result in negative perceptions of organisational justice and a poor trust relationship with his/her supervisor and organisation, and this could lead to dissatisfaction with retention practices, poor commitment, intention to leave his/her organisation and actual turnover.

There is a lack of research on the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship dynamics between employees' psychological contracts and their satisfaction with retention practices (Strydom et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2016) and by adding a fresh stance on the

social exchange relationships between employers and employees, this study aimed to address this gap in the research.

4.2.5 The hypothetical extent to which the variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data

Research hypothesis 5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 5, which is to conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework. The previous research hypotheses and empirical results informed the testing of this research hypothesis and this is addressed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

4.2.6 The hypothetical extent to which individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention factors

Research hypothesis 6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

This hypothesis relates to empirical research aim 6, which is to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

Socio-demographic variables have a strong correlation with the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention. Research studies have concluded that individuals from different race, gender, age groupings, as well as individuals with differing qualifications, job levels and tenures vary significantly with regard to their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust (Aramide & Aderibigbe, 2014; Bal, 2017; Bellou, 2009; Chin & Hung, 2013; Conway et al., 2012; Deas, 2017; Garcia et al., 2017; Gelens et al., 2014; Inoue et al., 2015; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Jiang et al., 2016; Kraak et al., 2017; Kulkarni et

al., 2015; Kung et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2016; Lub et al., 2016; Maree, 2016; Marušić & Bodroža, 2015; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Nwanzu, 2017; Olowodunoye, 2015; Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Rousseau, 2001; Snyman et al., 2015; Spanier et al., 2014; Tekingündüz et al., 2017; Von der Ohe & Martins, 2010; Walsh et al., 2016; Wilton, 2017; Zeffane et al., 2018).

Every individual, with his/her unique socio-demographic characteristics, has distinctive perceptions of the obligations of the employee and the employer in the exchange relationship, and thus each employee will have different perceptions regarding psychological contract fulfilment or breach. Likewise, every individual has unique perceptions about the circumstances that would be deemed as unfair, unjust and that would lead to an employee's trust to be broken. As discussed previously, psychological contract breach/violation and the resulting negative perceptions of organisational justice and trust could lead to dissatisfaction with retention practices, as well as negative reactions and behaviours from employees, including turnover.

The retention framework for the higher education environment, which is the ultimate aim of this research, should be mindful of the different demographical groupings in this research and their characteristics, seeing that the satisfaction with HR retention practices that impact an employee's retention will be different among the differing groupings. Employees from different demographic groups might also experience psychological contract breaches or fulfilment at dissimilar instances and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust might also be distinct. Organisational policies and procedures aimed at retention, therefore, cannot be developed without keeping the crucial effect of demographic characteristics on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and ultimately on employee retention, in mind.

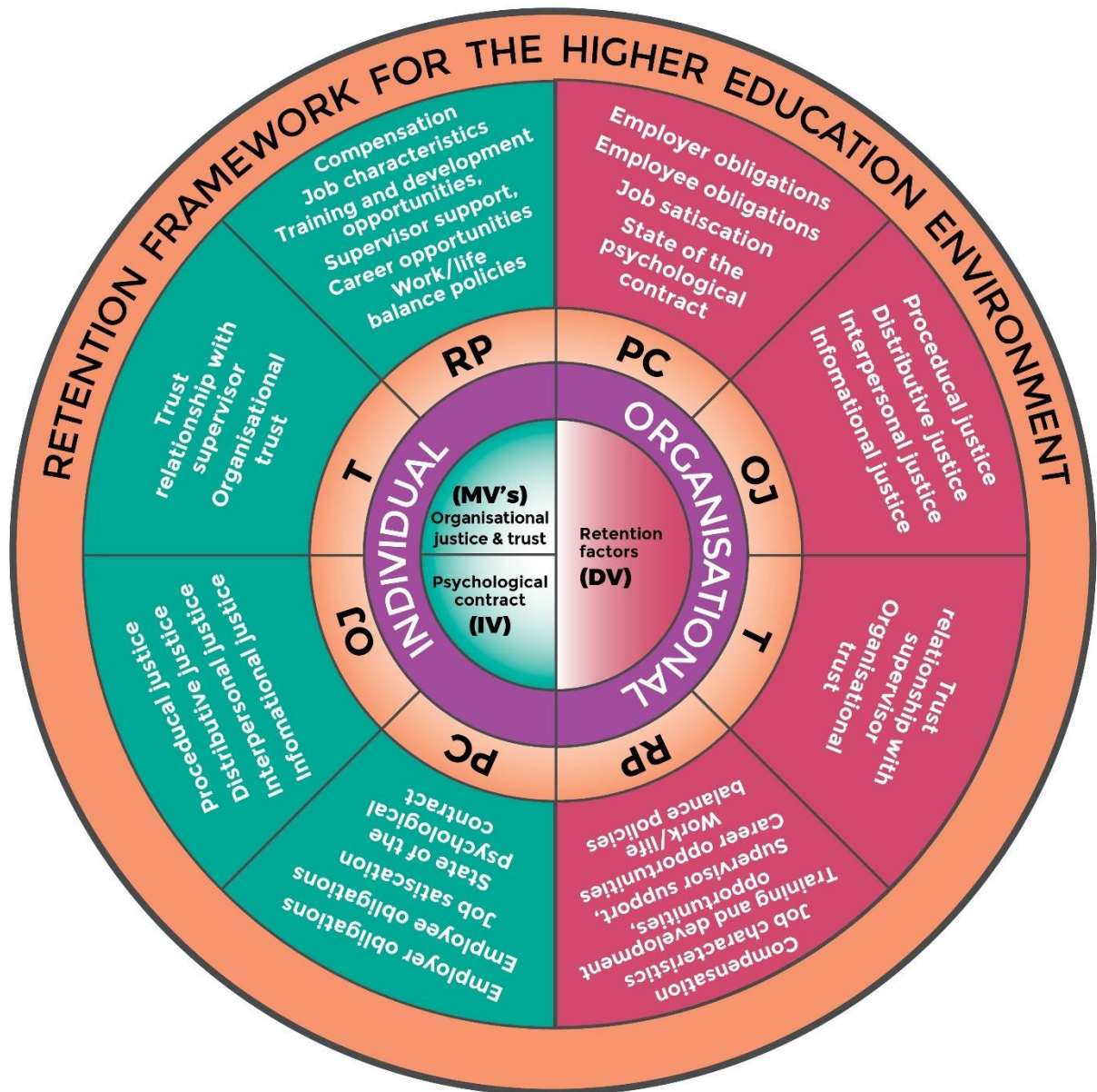
Thus, it is hypothesised, that individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, previous studies have indeed proven that individuals from different demographic groupings differ with regard to their psychological contracts (Bordia et al., 2017; Lub et al., 2016), their perceptions of organisational justice (Abekah-Nkrumah & Atinga, 2013) and trust (Tekingündüz et al., 2017), and their satisfaction with HR retention practices (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). However, the variations in these variables in different demographic groupings have not been researched in a single study, specifically, not in the higher education environment. This research intended to fill this void.

4.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR RETENTION PRACTICES

Figure 4.4 below provides an illustrated presentation of the theoretical retention framework for the higher education environment.

Figure 4.4

Illustrated Theoretical Retention Framework for the Higher Education Environment



Note: PC: Psychological contract; OJ: Organisational Justice; T: Trust; RP: Retention practices; MV's: Mediating Variables; IV: Independent variable; DV: Dependent variable.

Source: Author's own work

As shown in Figure 4.4, the theoretical retention framework has two dimensions, namely, organisational and individual.

4.3.1 Organisational level retention practices

Organisation-level retention practices are primary turnover prevention interventions. These organisational level retention practices refer to policies, procedures and interventions which are aimed at strengthening the psychological contracts of employees, to ensure positive perceptions of organisational justice and strong positive trust relationships with the organisation, which could then lead to satisfaction with retention practices, and higher retention and lower turnover (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

Organisational level interventions should ensure that employees trust their organisation to keep their promises and commitments made to them. These interventions should aim to focus on psychological contract fulfilment. Such interventions can safeguard that employees feel satisfied with their remuneration and rewards, the level of complexity in their tasks and the support that they receive from top management and from their supervisors (Psycones, 2006). Organisational interventions could further focus on employees and creating a more interesting work environment, such as assistance with the assurance of commitments made by employers to their employees. Also, interventions should ensure that promises made with regard to the balance between employees' work and personal lives are adhered to, and also that the organisation provides employees with opportunities to advance and grow in their careers and to improve their future employment prospects (Psycones, 2006).

Further, at an organisational level, the first and foremost place where the psychological contract is formed and either strengthened or weakened, is onboarding and orientation. When new employees commence duty at an organisation, their expectations are shaped by the onboarding and orientation process (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode, Mossholder, & Walker, 2017). Each organisation needs an orientation and onboarding policy in place to ensure that employees are introduced to their job functions, job descriptions, supervisors, performance agreements and the organisational culture in an accurate manner so that their expectations are in line with what the organisation and their supervisors expect of them. At an organisational level, the orientation and onboarding policy should provide for open discussions regarding job descriptions, expectations and the organisational culture to ensure that employees' and the

organisation's perceptions and expectations regarding the possibilities related to working together in a pleasant way are consistent (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017).

The performance management process in an organisation and the performance agreement between an employee and his/her supervisor or manager are other crucial aspects through which the psychological contract can be either strengthened or weakened (Harrington & Lee, 2015). A performance management policy should be put in place that ensures that employees understand what is expected of them, and also what the consequences of both outstanding and unsatisfactory performance will be. Employees need to perceive that the remuneration they receive for the work and efforts they put in are in line with that which they perceive the organisation promised them and what they expected it to be (Harrington & Lee, 2015).

Interventions could include policies regarding the linking of compensation to performance (Harrington & Lee, 2015; Sunil, 2004), so that employees feel that the organisation has kept the promises regarding their compensation, and that they are rewarded fairly for the amount of effort they put in. Furthermore, policies could provide that bonuses and profit-sharing form part of performance feedback, so that employees understand and appreciate the bonuses, salary increases and/or profit sharing they receive, and that they feel valued by the organisation (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). Policies could also be aimed at providing employees with indirect financial rewards and time off (Farris, 2000), security policies, education programmes, as well as house and vehicle allowances (Haider et al., 2015). These indirect financial rewards might ensure that employees perceive that the organisation has kept its promises or commitments, and are flexible in matching demands of non-work roles with work and to provide a good working atmosphere, and this in turn, might have a positive effect on retention (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; Farris, 2000; Haider et al., 2015; Harrington & Lee, 2015; Sunil, 2004).

Organisations should ensure that policies and interventions are implemented to ensure that the organisation keeps its promises and/or commitments to provide employees with interesting and challenging work. This means that HR policies should provide for employees to take part in decision-making and to use a variety of skills in their jobs. There should be mechanisms in place to identify when employees are required to do repetitive, tedious tasks in their job performance, regular communication and feedback sessions between employees and supervisors, and to implement a variety of skill levels and tasks in their jobs. At an organisational level there needs to be a policy in place that supports these communication sessions. Moreover, this is where a job design policy is crucial to ensure skill variety and

interesting, stimulating job characteristics (Holman & Axtell, 2016; Sinding, Kreitner, & Kinicki, 2018).

In order to strengthen employees' psychological contract experiences, organisations should also develop a career development plan, which should include a training and development policy and mentoring system, to enable employees to have access to training workshops to enhance their skills, broaden their knowledge and develop their proficiency and understanding of their field of expertise, to develop and advance in their careers (Akkermans et al., 2015; Tareef, 2013; Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Hernandez et al., 2018; Sok et al., 2018).

A career development plan should ensure that the needs of the employees are met, and that the training programmes and/or the mentoring system offered to employees are perceived as useful, applicable and desirable by them (Haider et al., 2015). A career development plan should, furthermore, ensure that mechanisms are in place to ensure that employees identify their career development needs and that programmes – such as a mentoring system – are in place to ensure that employees can develop and advance in their careers. An organisational career development plan should ensure that promises or commitments to provide employees with a career, opportunities to advance and grow and to improve their future employment prospects, are kept. Such an organisational career development plan will assist to promote employees' perception that the organisation is concerned about their career advancement and that they are supported by the organisation, which may strengthen their psychological contract (Akkermans et al., 2015; Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Haider et al., 2015; Hernandez et al., 2018; Sok et al., 2018).

Another vital aspect in psychological contract fulfilment is the support that employees receive from their direct supervisors (Guchait et al., 2015). Supervisor support is not only crucial as an integral part of onboarding and orientation as well as performance management, but also ongoing in employees' day-to-day job performance. From an organisational level, organisations should develop a supervisor support programme that is aimed at equipping supervisors with the skills needed to provide sufficient support to their subordinates. Furthermore, a support programme should provide opportunities for employees to voice concerns and supervisors to provide support, understanding and solutions to these concerns so that employees feel that management and their supervisors treat them fairly and can be trusted (Guchait et al., 2015).

In order to ensure that the psychological contact is strengthened, organisations should implement a work-life balance system (Beauregard & Henry, 2010; Chimote & Srivastava,

2013; Kraak et al., 2018), that provides for the implementation of flexible schedules and flexible working hours (Alexandre & Pallais, 2017; Hayman, 2009; Hill et al., 2001), family friendly policies for creating a family orientated working environment (Feeney & Stritch, 2019; Russo, Shteigman, & Carmeli, 2016; Vyas et al., 2017; Yu, 2018), workplace social support programmes (Hwang, 2018) as well as policies that provide for regular team-building exercises (Arms, 2010; Hechanova & Caringal-Go, 2018; Redman & Mathews, 2002).

Organisations could also implement policies and programmes to encourage a healthy lifestyle among their employees (Zheng et al., 2015), as well as childcare policies (Hill et al., 2001; Thakur & Bhatnagar, 2017). Employees need to know that the organisation is flexible in matching the demands of non-work roles with work roles, and that the organisation is willing to assist its employees in dealing with problems they encounter outside work.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, organisational justice as well as trust are viewed in the current study as extensions of the psychological contract, in other words, psychological mechanisms by means of which the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices can be clarified. Thus, employees' perceptions of organisational justice and their trust in their supervisors, colleagues as well as the organisation as a whole need to be positively enhanced on both an individual as well as an organisational level.

At an organisational level, organisational justice and trust can be improved by introducing a participative management style (Huong, Zheng, & Fujimoto, 2016). This could be executed by developing an intervention to enhance transparency within the organisation to inform the organisational policy structure (Laundon et al., 2019). By enhancing the transparency within the organisation, issues surrounding organisational justice and trust can be dealt with in a more acceptable manner, and it will possibly enhance the perceptions of justice and trust in the organisation (Huong et al., 2016). This intervention should introduce mechanisms to ensure that procedures are applied justly, employees are rewarded fairly for the amount of effort they put in, and that remuneration, workload and other benefits and opportunities are equitably distributed among employees, and also in comparison to other employees in the job same market. Job evaluation should form an integral part of this process (Huong et al., 2016; Laundon et al., 2019).

In addition, employees' feelings about how they are treated and supported by their direct supervisors, as well as how openly, honestly and justly relevant information is communicated to employees, is strongly related to perceptions of organisational justice and trust, and should

be addressed in this intervention. Organisations could also implement feedback sessions or newsletters as a part of this intervention, where the organisation's financial and other drawbacks and successes are explained to employees, ensuring that employees feel valued by the organisation, perceive that promises made to them have been kept, that information is communicated openly and honestly, resources are distributed fairly and that the organisation is trustworthy (Huong et al., 2016).

Furthermore, as part of a participative management style, organisations could introduce a joint decision-making policy (Huong et al., 2016; Laundon et al., 2019) to ensure that employees are empowered to influence procedures and the distribution of resources in the organisation, express their views, feelings and/or questions and uncertainties about any procedure being followed in the organisation, and that procedures are applied consistently, free of bias and based on accurate information. Organisational justice and trust could also be enhanced by means of an appeal procedure, which enable employees to appeal any decisions and/or procedures with regard to remuneration, benefits, performance agreements, working hours, career development opportunities, communication of information and the distribution of resources in general (Huong et al., 2016; Laundon et al., 2019).

Lastly, organisational justice and trust could be enhanced through the implementation of a change management plan (Georgalis et al., & Lu, 2015) to ensure that employees feel that the organisation responds quickly to changes in its external environment, that change in the organisation is managed effectively and that employees in the organisation are prepared for change that might affect them.

In summary, when organisation-level policies and interventions are designed to ensure that employer and employee expectations within the exchange relationship are met, it might likely result in fulfilment of the psychological contract and a positive state of the psychological contract. The psychological contract can only have a positive impact on retention if organisations keep the promises made to employees. This in turn might result in stronger perceptions of organisational justice and sense of trust in their organisation, which could likely result in employees' satisfaction with these retention practices (George, 2015; Paul & Hung, 2018; Sok et al., 2018; Thatcher, Stepina, & Boyle, 2004; Vandenberghe et al., 2018). If policies and interventions are designed to ensure that employees are justly and equitably rewarded and feel that their compensation, incentives and/or other bonuses are fair, that their jobs are stimulating and interesting, that they have access to and support towards excellent training, development and career development opportunities, it could lead to fulfilment of the

psychological contract and a positive state of the psychological contract, seeing that employer and employee obligations have been met.

Furthermore, if organisational policies and interventions are designed to ensure that supervisors provide adequate support and encouragement to their employees, that employees have a balance between their work and their personal life and that employees are committed to their organisation and their supervisor, it could lead to fulfilment of the psychological contract and a positive state of the psychological contract, which could likely result in positive justice perceptions, trust in their supervisor and organisation and ultimately employees who are satisfied with the retention practices, more committed and less inclined to leave their organisation, which reduces turnover and strengthens retention (Baharuddin et al., 2017; Guo, 2017; Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016; Schreuder et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2007).

4.3.2 Individual-level retention practices

Individual-level retention practices are secondary turnover prevention interventions. Where organisation-level retention practices are the policies, interventions and plans which are aimed at enhancing individuals' psychological contracts and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust, individual-level retention practices are the execution of these policies and interventions at an individual level. At an individual level, the retention of individuals may be subject to employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and the state of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995; Guest, 2004).

Individual-level retention practices should aim to strengthen employees' psychological contracts, which may result in positive perceptions of organisational justice, stronger trust relationships with supervisors, colleagues and the organisation as a whole, which may in turn lead to satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, greater commitment and lower staff turnover (Ahmad et al., 2016; CIPD, 2020; Collins, 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Guest, 1998; Isach & Paloma, 2015; Robinson, 1996; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2007).

At an individual level, onboarding and orientation plays a crucial role in how individuals' psychological contracts are formed, seeing that when new employees start employment at an organisation, their expectations are shaped with the onboarding and orientation process (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017). Organisations should ensure that onboarding and orientation is performed thoroughly so that employees know exactly what the organisation and individual supervisors expect of them and what they can expect from the organisation,

their supervisors as well as their colleagues. During orientation and onboarding, supervisors should discuss individuals' job descriptions and tasks openly with them as well as the performance management criteria in the organisation or department, the performance agreement between the employee and the organisation and importantly the organisational culture, namely, 'the way things are done' (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017).

Furthermore, during orientation and onboarding, the new employees should be able to clarify any questions and uncertainties they may have, to avoid misunderstandings or feelings that promises made have not been kept. If orientation and onboarding is not given the attention that it deserves, individuals may feel that their expectations are not being met, which may have a detrimental effect on the psychological contract (Caldwell & Peters, 2018).

As mentioned before, performance management in an organisation and the individual performance agreement between employees and the organisation, plays a vital role in individuals' psychological contracts (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The performance management system in the organisation should be explained thoroughly to employees, so that employees are clear on the expectations that the organisation has of them and importantly, the promises and commitments the individual is prepared to make towards the organisation. Performance agreements should be discussed individually with each employee, and the performance criteria and goals for each employee should be agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor (representing the organisation) (Harrington & Lee, 2015).

Also, the compensation that individual employees receive for the efforts that they put in, should be viewed as fair and in line with their expectations. Essentially, any financial and/or other incentive linked to performance should be deliberated and should be deemed fair and reasonable by the supervisor and the individual employee. Furthermore, employees should receive timely, regular, individual feedback from their supervisors regarding their performance, to ensure that performance-related incentives or bonuses are perceived by the employees as fair and just (Ramlal, 2004). In addition, performance appraisals should also be done individually between supervisors and individual employees and should create an opportunity where open and honest discussions can take place regarding individual performance and areas of improvement. If employees understand the performance system and their performance targets and perceive it as fair, their expectations will likely be met and their psychological contracts strengthened (Ramlal, 2004).

When it comes to individual-level retention practices, the support that employees receive from their supervisors is one of the most crucial aspects that enhance employees' psychological

contracts (Guchait et al., 2015). Supervisors should engage in coaching of employees (Zafar, 2015), creating the “big picture” of each individual employee’s role within the organisation’s strategic objectives and creating the sincere perception that the supervisor and the organisation values each employee’s contribution and cares about each employee’s well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2015).

Supervisors should allow each employee to communicate openly and honestly with his/her supervisor and without the fear of intimidation, judgement or victimisation (Holland et al., 2016), creating an environment free from harassment. Furthermore, supervisors should support each employee with their individual performance and career development needs and goals and allow employees to take part in decision-making, creating a participating culture. Employees should be able have an open, respectful and trusting relationship with their supervisors, such an open-door policy where an employee is always welcome to walk into his/her supervisor’s workspace and have open discussions where information always stays confidential. This may ensure that employees perceive that promises or commitments from the organisation to provide a good working atmosphere are adhered to, thus enhancing the psychological contract of employees (Holland et al., 2016).

Another important aspect that may either strengthen or weaken individuals’ psychological contracts are employees’ perceptions of the characteristics of their jobs (Holman & Axtell, 2016; Sinding et al., 2018). Individuals should feel that promises and commitments made to them regarding interesting and stimulating job tasks, have been kept. Supervisors should regularly investigate the tasks that individual employees are required to do in their job performance, and if an employee is required to do monotonous, boring tasks in his/her job performance, the supervisor should intervene and rectify this (Holman & Axtell, 2016; Sinding et al., 2018).

Supervisors and managers of various departments or sections in an organisation should ensure that job design is performed accurately and adequately for each individual employee, to ensure that employees engage in interesting, stimulating tasks within their job performance (Holman & Axtell, 2016). Supervisors could also delegate responsibility to individual employees to provide them with a sense of enablement and contentment, allow employees to take part in decision-making and provide employees with clear direction for the outcomes that they require of a task or project (Birtch et al., 2016). Furthermore, through individual discussions, supervisors could allow employees to set their own schedules and responsibilities (Birtch et al., 2016; Holman & Axtell, 2016).

To ensure that employees' psychological contracts are enhanced, the career development plan, training and development policy and the mentoring system that were developed at the organisational level, should be implemented diligently at an individual level. Supervisors should openly and honestly discuss individuals' career development needs, as well as their training and development needs, with them individually. Employees' expectations regarding their career goals and the areas that require training and development should be met for these to enhance their psychological contracts (Fletcher et al., 2016; Paul & Hung, 2018; Sok et al., 2018).

Mentors should be made available to less experienced employees, to assist them with developmental and work-related issues or goals at an individual level (Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Hernandez et al., 2018; Sok et al., 2018). Individual employees need to feel that the organisation as a whole, but especially their supervisors, keep their promises and commitments to provide employees with opportunities to advance and grow in their careers level (Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Hernandez et al., 2018; Sok et al., 2018).

In order to strengthen individuals' psychological contracts, the work-life balance system, which needs to be developed at an organisational level, has to be implemented at an individual level (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013; Kraak et al., 2018). Individuals' expectations regarding the balance that they desire between their work and their personal lives, should be determined before these practices can be implemented. This can take place, once again, through individual, open and honest discussions with employees regarding their expectations. This aspect needs to be addressed in the onboarding and orientation phase of the employment relationship, but individuals' needs in this regard can also change with time as employees' circumstances change. Once employees' needs and expectations regarding work-life balance have been determined, practices such as flexible working hours, family days, workplace school facilities and so forth, should be implemented to meet individual expectations (Kraak et al., 2018).

Organisational justice and trust are both strongly related to the psychological contract (Ahmad et al., 2016; Rani et al., 2018; Strydom et al., 2014) and in this research, organisational justice and trust are viewed as the mediating variables in the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices. Thus, at an individual level, organisational justice and trust also need to be enhanced, as an extension of psychological contract improvement, to ensure the employees' satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices.

An intervention to enhance transparency should be developed at organisational level, and should be implemented at an individual level. There should be open and honest discussions between employees and their supervisors regarding their remuneration, workload and other benefits and opportunities, to ensure that these are equitably distributed among employees, and are in comparison to other employees in the same job market (Laundon et al., 2019). The procedures in an organisation should involve involvement and participation from employees to ensure that employees perceive them as fair and just. Furthermore, supervisors should communicate important information to individuals in an open, honest and transparent manner. If employees perceive the distribution of resources, workload, the application of procedures and the communication of important information in an organisation to be open, understanding, fair and just, it may enhance positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust at an individual level (Laundon et al., 2019).

Furthermore, employees should feel that they have an open, trusting, individual relationship with the person that they report to, and that this person openly and honestly reveals important work-related facts to them and is fair in judging their performances. Employees should also perceive that the organisation as a whole, but especially their supervisors, have good intentions towards each individual employee. If employees trust their immediate supervisors and have an open, honest and trusting relationship with them, it may improve their perceptions of organisational justice and trust (Laundon et al., 2019).

To summarise, organisations should implement individual-level measures to ensure positive psychological contracts and psychological contract fulfilment, which will enhance positive perceptions about organisational justice and a strong trust relationship with their supervisors and management. This will likely result in satisfaction with retention practices and possibly stronger commitment and lower staff turnover.

4.3.3 Implications for retention practices: general discussion

The hypothetical relationships discussed in Section 4.2 have several implications for retention practices in the higher education environment, and especially in the ODL in institution relevant to the current study, on both an organisational level and an individual level (as discussed in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2). The retention framework for the higher education environment, which is the ultimate objective of this research, has to ensure that employees' psychological contracts are fulfilled and that they have positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust regarding their organisation, colleagues and supervisors. The retention framework should, furthermore, take cognisance of employees' individual demographic characteristics. The key

to this retention framework is for HEIs to determine employees' levels of satisfaction with the different key retention factors (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies), to determine the specific factors/practices that ensure psychological contract fulfilment, organisational justice and trust.

Organisations will have to consider the individual expectations of employees, if retention strategies are to be successful. Employers and employees are parties to a social exchange relationship and each employee has a unique perception of the promises made between employee and organisation and the mutual obligations implied as well as the state of the psychological contract. Individual employees will differ in terms of what they expect from their organisation: an individual who is dissatisfied with his/her psychological contract and the state of his/her psychological contract will be more difficult to retain (Kraak et al., 2017; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017; Van der Vaart et al., 2013; Van der Vaart et al., 2015).

Such dissatisfaction may lead to a breach of the psychological contract, which may in turn have a negative effect on employee behaviour. As discussed previously, psychological contract fulfilment is based largely on the individual perception that promises made in the employment relationship, have been kept (Guest et al., 2010; O'Meara et al., 2016; Rousseau, 1989). Retention practices can only be successful if promises made in the exchange relationship between an employer and employee are kept. Moreover, these promises made in the relationship are subjective, specific and varies between individuals (Guest et al., 2010; O'Meara et al., 2016; Rousseau, 1989). Thus, retention practices cannot be generic for all employees, it should be individually implemented based on the unique expectations of each employee.

Organisations, furthermore, need to make sure that retention practices are designed in such a manner that employees feel that they are treated justly and fairly on all levels (distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice), and that employees experience trust in their immediate supervisor or manager and in their organisation. Perceptions of organisational justice and trust are also, like the psychological contract, subjective and vary between individuals (Colquitt, 2001). The retention framework developed as a result of this research, should thus ensure that retention strategies bear individual needs in mind as to which specific retention practices would ensure psychological contract fulfilment, which would likely result in positive perceptions of organisational justice and trust in the organisation, supervisors and colleagues. This, in turn, could lead to satisfaction with HR retention practices, stronger retention and lower turnover. In other words, organisations need

to take cognisance of the important effect that psychological contract fulfilment and/or breach has on organisational justice and trust, and the impact this could possibly have on retention.

Lastly, organisations need to take individuals' socio-demographic characteristics into account when implementing retention strategies. This is seeing that individuals from varying race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly with regard to the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, as well as their satisfaction with retention practices (Arya et al., 2017; Bal, 2017; Lub et al., 2016; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017). The retention framework constructed as a result of this study should thus indicate which specific age groups, racial groups or job level groupings, value which of the key retention factors. For example, an employee who is longer tenured might place value on career development opportunities and compensation, whereas a newly appointed employee might hedge more value on support from his/her supervisor and training opportunities.

Implementation of this study's retention framework at HEIs in SA, and especially at the ODL institution relevant to this research, will likely have a positive effect on staff retention and will result in more committed employees with lower intention to leave the institution as well as lower actual turnover (Anitha & Begum, 2016; Bibi et al., 2018; Döckel et al., 2006; Mubarak et al., 2012; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Potgieter et al., 2018; Potgieter & Mawande, 2017; Selesho, 2014).

Table 4.2 on the subsequent page provides a summary of the foregoing discussions on individual and organisational level retention practices, along with a summary of the implications of these practices for the psychological contract, organisational justice as well as trust.

Table 4.2

Recommendations for Interventions for Retention Practices

Prevention (primary interventions): Organisation level	Intervention (secondary interventions): Individual level	Implications for psychological contract	Implications for Organisational justice and trust	Retention practices (factor)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – orientation and onboarding policy – performance management policy – job design policy – career development plan – training and development policy – mentoring system – supervisor support programme – work-life balance system – participative management style – appeal procedures – intervention to enhance transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – individual orientation and onboarding to ensure the expectations of employees and the organisation are in line – open, honest discussions between supervisors and their employees regarding the expectations that both parties have in terms of performance, compensation and the balance between their work and private lives – supporting, open relationships between employees and their supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employee perceptions that expectations within the social exchange relationship have been met – employee perceptions that promises made in the employment relationship have been kept – employee perceptions that commitments made in terms of their psychological contracts have been adhered to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employee perceptions that resources, workload and assets within the organisation are distributed justly and fairly – employee perceptions that procedures are applied justly and fairly – employee perceptions that relevant information is communicated openly and honestly – perceptions that the organisation and supervisor is trustworthy to manage change and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Compensation – Job Characteristics – Training and development – Supervisor support – Career development opportunities – Work-life balance

Prevention (primary interventions): Organisation level	Intervention (secondary interventions): Individual level	Implications for psychological contract	Implications for Organisational justice and trust	Retention practices (factor)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – joint decision-making policy – change management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – open, honest discussions regarding individual employees' job tasks, their training and development needs as well as their career development needs – open and honest communication from the organisation and supervisors to individual employees – individual mentoring for less experienced employees – understanding and engaging relationship between employees and supervisors – participative culture – joint decision-making 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communicate openly and honestly – trust in the organisation to ensure that employees are treated fairly on all levels 	

Source: Author's own work

4.4 EVALUATION AND SYNTHESIS

The main objective of the literature review was to determine the relationship dynamics between an individual's psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice and trust and his/her satisfaction with several HR practices that influence retention (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, and work-life balance) within the context of the South African higher education environment.

The literature study found that South African HEIs, specifically the ODL institution under investigation in this research, is finding it extremely difficult to retain its highly valuable and quality employees (both academics and support staff) who can continue to provide services to humanity and ensure the success and proficiency of these institutions (Coetzee & Rothmann, 2004; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; HESA, 2011; Ng'ethe et al., 2012; Oni & Fatoki, 2017; Robyn, 2012; Sehoole, 2013; Takawira et al., 2014).

Retention failure does not merely imply that an employee departs from an organisation, it is associated with various turnover costs to these institutions, including separation costs (Byerly, 2012; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Schlechter et al., 2015;), vacancy costs (Byerly, 2012; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Schlechter et al., 2015; Takawira et al., 2014), replacement costs (Byerly, 2012; James & Mathew, 2012; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Schlechter et al., 2015; Takawira et al., 2014), training costs (Byerly, 2012; James & Mathew, 2012; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Schlechter et al., 2015; Takawira et al., 2014) and performance differential costs (Byerly, 2012; James & Mathew, 2012; Takawira et al., 2014).

Possible reasons for the retention challenges in HEIs, and especially, the ODL institution relevant to the current study, which were identified in the literature review are financial constraints, employment equity, uncompetitive remuneration packages, poor salaries, limited promotion opportunities, job insecurity, limited growth and development opportunities, unfair/inconsistent/judgemental performance management systems, lack of resources, mergers and acquisitions, globalisation, an overload of demands placed on employees and emigration (Badat, 2010; Balakrishnan & Vijayalakshmi, 2014; Barkhuizen et al., 2013; Erasmus et al., 2015; Erasmus et al., 2017; Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Kinman, 2016; Kinman & Wray, 2016; Mafini, 2014; Masango & Mpofu, 2013; Mmako & Shultz, 2016; Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011; Ngulube, 2013; Pienaar & Bester, 2008; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Tettey, 2006; 2010; Theron et al., 2014; Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011).

In an effort to assist human resource practitioners, Döckel (2003) identified six critical retention factors to consider in the retention of high technology skills employees. These factors are key HR practices relating to compensation, job characteristics, opportunities for training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. The purpose of this study was therefore to determine how the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust-related to employees' satisfaction with Döckel's (2003) six retention factors within the context of the higher education environment.

The literature review found that the psychological contract, shaped by employees' expectations in a mutual exchange relationship between the employer and an employee, can have a noteworthy influence on retention (De Ruiter et al., 2017; Lam & De Campos, 2015). The other two variables that might assist in the development of a retention framework for the higher education environment, are organisational justice and trust and the literature review showed that organisational justice and trust were strongly related to the psychological contract, and thus, as previously explained, the assumption can be made that organisational justice and trust would mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and the HR practices that influence retention.

The literature review determined that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics are important to bear in mind when constructing and implementing this study's retention framework, seeing that individuals demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) may interact with (moderate) their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their levels of satisfaction with the retention practices within their organisation (Arya et al., 2017; Bal, 2017; Lub et al., 2016; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017).

This study is limited in a number of ways, seeing that the study does not address other factors that might impact on staff retention, such as job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, work engagement, change management, intention to leave and leadership. The study only focuses on the relationship dynamics between constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR factors that have an impact on staff retention. The study's context is furthermore limiting, seeing that the research was conducted at a single ODL institution, thus comparisons between various institutions is not possible.

The core central hypothesis of this study is that organisational justice and trust have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and HR practices that influence retention, and that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics,

such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, have a significant impact (moderating) on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention. The literature review has indeed made it clear that the psychological contract is directly related to the retention of employees, and that organisational justice and trust is a psychological extension of the psychological contract that can have an effect on retention. The literature review has, furthermore, found that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics have an important effect on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and HR practices influencing retention, seeing that individuals from different racial, gender and age groups, as well as with varying job levels and tenures, differ with regard to their psychological contracts, their perceptions of organisational justice, their trust in their organisation, colleagues and supervisors, and their satisfaction with key the retention practices.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter addressed research aims 2 and 3 of the literature review, namely, to postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices; and to conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment.

Herewith, the literature research aims 1, 2 and 3 were achieved:

Research aim 1: To conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment.

Research aim 2: To postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices.

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment.

In Chapter 5, the empirical investigation, with the specific aim of determining the statistical strategies are discussed. This part of the study investigated the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust; and the HR practices that

influence retention (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and commitment).

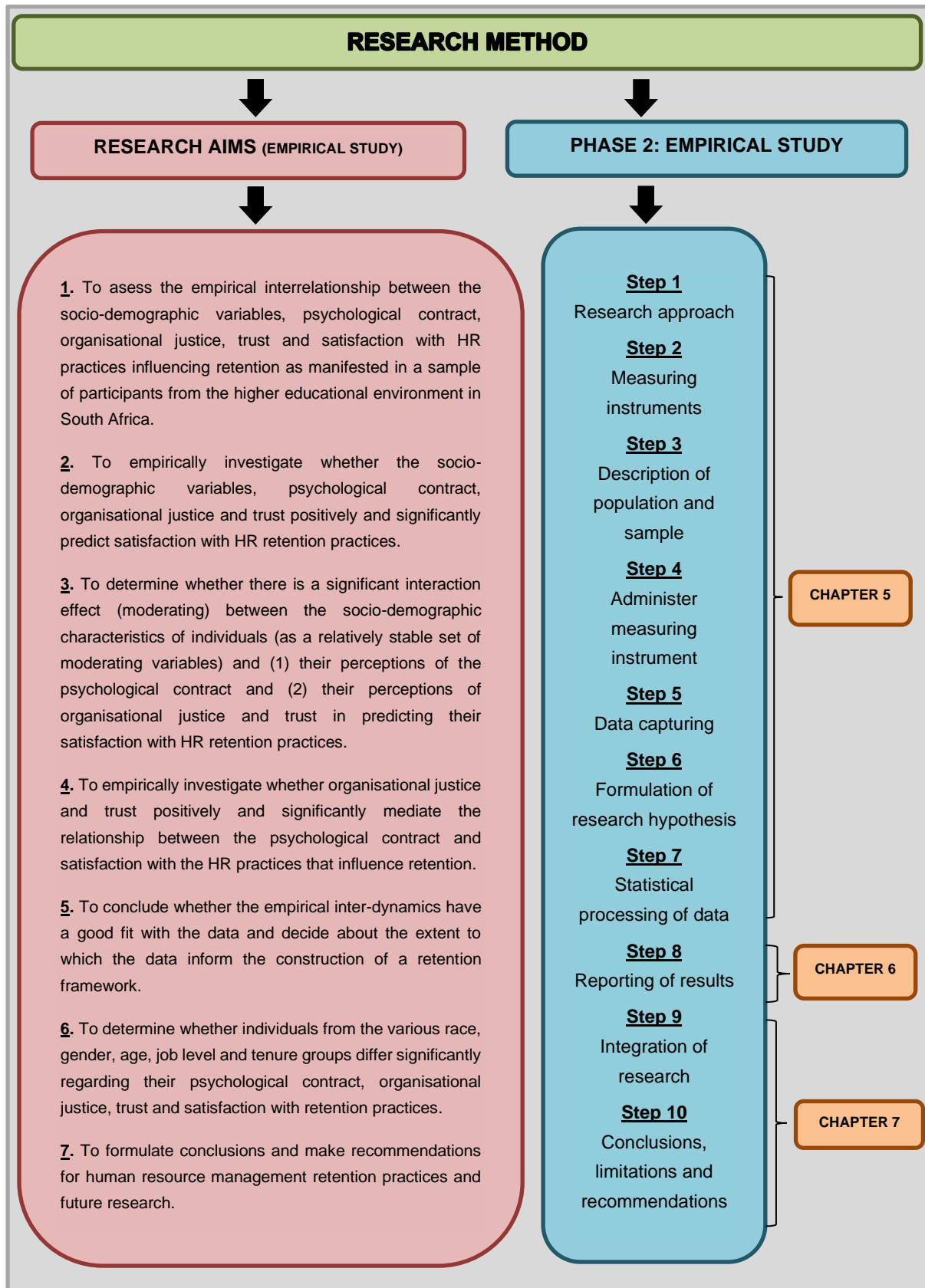
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the statistical strategies used to test the empirical research hypotheses for the purpose of identifying core construct dynamics that would inform the construction of a retention framework. This was done by investigating the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with a complex set of human resource (HR) practices that influence staff retention (including compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). Furthermore, the moderating effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure on their perceptions of the psychological contract as well as their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices, was also investigated and taken into account in the construction of this retention framework.

This chapter commences by presenting a discussion of the research approach of this study, followed by an overview of the sample size and population of the research study, which is followed by discussing and justifying the choice of the measuring instruments that were used in the study. The data collection and statistical processing methods are then described. Finally, the formulation of the research hypotheses is explained.

As indicated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.8.2), the empirical phase of the research consists of ten steps aimed at addressing the empirical research aims as illustrated in Figure 5.1. Steps one to seven of the empirical study are addressed in this chapter, while the remaining steps are addressed in Chapters 6 (research results) and 7 (discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations). Figure 5.1 on the subsequent page provides an overview of the core themes of this chapter.

Figure 5.1
The Empirical Study – Research Aims and Steps



Source: Author's own work

5.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

A deductive research approach was applied in this study. Deductive research makes use of empirical data to test theoretically hypothesised relationships between recognised variables (Saunders et al., 2016). This approach empowered the researcher to (1) identify and conceptualise the variables of relevance in the proposed framework for staff retention in the higher education environment; (2) suggest relationships between these variables based on the existing literature; and (3) acquire empirical confirmation and/or substantiation of these theoretically postulated relationships.

A cross-sectional quantitative research design was used for this study. Empirical data was collected by the use of an electronic survey, from individual employees in a single ODL institution in SA. Collecting primary data ensured that the information that was collected, was in agreement with the aims of the research, and that the utilisation of the variables was in line with the theoretical conceptualisation thereof (Hair et al., 2016). The population was purposively targeted and a random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativity of academic and support staff.

Even though a cross-sectional research design has several limitations, including that the results cannot be used to analyse behaviour or attitudes over a period of time, and it does not lend itself to make causal inferences from the data (Levin, 2006; Mann, 2003; Spector, 2019), it was considered to be suitable for the aims of this study. The appropriateness for a cross-sectional research design was due to the exploratory nature of the study (Spector, 2019), and also because it is useful in the collection of large-scale data from a large target population.

This research design is also relatively inexpensive, it does not require a lot of time and it captures information/perceptions/opinions at a specific point in time (Spector, 2019). Furthermore, this design has the possibility to contain multiple variables at a single time, the outcomes can be analysed to create new theories and studies or in-depth research, and it can be used to prove and/or disprove assumptions (Levin, 2006; Mann, 2003; Saunders et al., 2016). Furthermore, the cross-sectional research design was appropriate because the empirical inter-dynamics among the set of constructs are an unknown phenomenon which needs exploration as a first phase of investigation to assess the viability of future longitudinal studies (Spector, 2019).

In this study, the quantitative nature of the data enabled the researcher to obtain descriptive, inferential and explanatory information that could be used to test hypotheses relating to the interrelationships between the variables (Bell et al., 2018).

5.2 SELECTING AND MOTIVATING THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The literature review informed the selection of the psychometric battery; the measuring instruments were selected based on their applicability to the theories and models of this research study. The literature review can be regarded as exploratory research, seeing that numerous theoretical viewpoints on the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention were presented in an integrated manner. Measuring instruments were selected on their validity, reliability, cost effectiveness and suitability in evaluating these constructs.

The selected measuring instruments (as listed below) are discussed in the following sections.

- A socio-demographic information questionnaire
- The Psycones Questionnaire (PQ) (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006)
- Organizational Justice Measure (OJM) (Colquitt, 2001)
- Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005)
- The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006)

5.2.1 The Psycones Questionnaire (PQ)

The following section describes the rationale, purpose, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and reasons for selecting the PQ.

5.2.1.1 Rationale and purpose

The PQ (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006) is a self-rating measure, developed by the Psycones project (de Cuyper et al., 2011). This questionnaire contains questions relating to specific employer and employee obligations, satisfaction with the psychological contract and state of the psychological contract, as perceived by the individual (Freese & Schalk, 2008). The purpose of this measuring instrument is to determine whether an individual evaluates their psychological contract positively.

5.2.1.2 Dimensions of the PQ

The questionnaire comprises 44 questions which are divided into four subscales. The following sub-sections provide a detailed description of the four dimensions:

- **Employer obligations**

The employer obligations subscale relates to an individual's perception of promises made by the organisation and comprises 15 questions, including, for example, questions such as: *"Has your organisation promised or committed itself to providing you with a job that is challenging?"* and *"Has your organisation promised or committed itself to allowing you to participate in decision-making?"*

- **Employee obligations**

The employee obligations subscale relates to an individual's perception of his/her promises made to the organisation and consists of 16 questions, including questions such as: *"Have you promised or committed yourself to showing loyalty to your organisation?"* and *"Have you promised or committed yourself to being a good team player?"*

- **Job satisfaction**

The job satisfaction subscale contains 6 statements to determine the emotions associated with the psychological contract. Statements include: *"I feel happy"*, *"I feel sad"*, *"I feel pleased"*. Participants have to state the extent to which they agree with a statement.

- **State of the psychological contract**

Finally, the fourth subscale relates to the overall state of the psychological contract and consists of 7 statements, including: *"Do you feel that organisational changes are implemented fairly in your organisation?"* and *"Do you feel fairly treated by managers and supervisors?"*.

5.2.1.3 Administration

The PQ is a self-administered instrument and participants are given clear directions on how to complete it. The questionnaire takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

5.2.1.4 Interpretation

Each subscale (employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract) is measured separately and reveals an individual's perceptions and feelings pertaining to these dimensions. These subscales are discussed below.

- **Employer and employee obligations**

Both these subscales have to be answered on a 6-point Likert-type scale. Participants are asked to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a list of statements regarding promises and commitments that an individual can make towards their organisation, and an organisation towards its employees. Participants also rate the extent to which such a promise has been fulfilled, using the following scale:

- 0 = No, the promise has not been made
- 1 = Yes, but promise has not been kept at all
- 2 = Yes, but promise only kept a little
- 3 = Yes, promise half-kept
- 4 = Yes, promise largely kept
- 5 = Yes, promise fully kept

Consequently, 0 (*No*) and 1–5 (*Yes*), refers to the content of the psychological contract. The scale from 1 to 5 refers to the degree of fulfilment of the psychological contract. The higher the score, the higher the degree of fulfilment of the psychological contract will be.

- **Job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract**

Both these subscales are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a specific statement, using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly agree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither disagree nor agree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

The scale from 1 to 5 refers to the degree of satisfaction with the psychological contract and the state of the psychological contract. Hence, the higher the score, the higher the satisfaction with the psychological contract and the state of the psychological contract will be.

5.2.1.5 Reliability and validity of the PQ

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the PQ have been reported by previous research as very high, with employer and employee obligations ($\alpha = .95$), emotions associated with the psychological contract ($\alpha = .70$), and the state of the psychological contract ($\alpha = .93$) (Psycones, 2006). Furthermore, the PQ was identified as a recommended measurement for psychological contract research through an analysis done by Freese and Schalk (2008), where the following was determined: The Psycones Questionnaire is theory based and inductive; its content assesses mutual obligations and/or promises and its measures allow for the determination of psychological contract violation and the overall evaluation of the psychological contract. This confirms that the Psycones questionnaire is a reliable and valid measuring instrument.

5.2.1.6 Motivation for using the PQ

The PQ was designed for the measurement of individuals' psychological contracts, which is relevant to this research. The purpose of this study was to explore several tendencies and relationships between variables, but not to make individual forecasts based on the PQ. As a result, the PQ had the potential of propose deeper insights into the construct of the psychological contract in this research study.

5.2.2 Organisational Justice Measure (OJM)

This section explores the rationale, purpose, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and reasons for selecting the OJM.

5.2.2.1 Rationale and purpose

The OJM is a self-rating questionnaire developed by Colquitt (2001). The OJM contains questions regarding participants' perceptions about the procedural and distributive justice as well as the interpersonal and informational justice they experience within their organisation (Colquitt, 2001). The purpose of the OJM is to measure individuals' perceptions regarding the

fairness and justice they experience in their organisation, on procedural, distributive, interpersonal and informational levels (Colquitt et al., 2001).

5.2.2.2 Dimensions of the OJM

The OJM contains 20 items and consists of four. The following provides a comprehensive description of the four dimensions:

- **Procedural justice**

The procedural justice subscale refers individuals' perceptions regarding the justice and fairness of the procedures applied within the organisation. The procedural justice subscale comprises 7 questions, including for example questions such as: "To what extent": "*Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?*", "*Have you had influence over the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?*", "*Have those procedures been applied consistently?*", "*Have those procedures been free of bias?*", "*Have those procedures been based on accurate information?*", "*Have you been able to appeal the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?*" and "*Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?*".

- **Distributive justice**

The distributive justice subscale deals with perceptions that participants have concerning the fairness and equity of the distribution of resources in an organisation. The distributive justice subscale includes 4 questions, such as: "To what extent": "*Does your (outcome) reflect the effort you have put into your work?*", "*Is your (outcome) appropriate for the work you have completed?*", "*Does your (outcome) reflect what you have contributed to the organization?*" and "*Is your (outcome) justified, given your performance?*"

- **Interpersonal justice**

The third subscale in the OJM refers to interpersonal justice and focuses on the supervisor/authority figure that enacts procedures within an organisation. Thus, interpersonal justice refers to individuals' perceptions regarding the fairness of the treatment they receive from their supervisors. This subscale encompasses questions for instance: "To what extent": "*Has (he/she) treated you in a polite manner?*", "*Has (he/she) treated you with dignity?*", "*Has (he/she) treated you with respect?*" and "*Has (he/she) refrained from improper remarks or comments?*"

- **Informational justice**

OJM's last subscale deals with perceptions regarding the fairness and justice of information communicated in an organisation. In other words, informational justice relates to whether individuals perceive the information being communicated within their organisation, as true and just. This subscale includes questions such as: "To what extent": "*Has (he/she) been candid in (his/her) communications with you?*", "*Has (he/she) explained the procedures thoroughly?*", "*Were (his/her) explanations regarding the procedures reasonable?*", "*Has (he/she) communicated details in a timely manner?*" and "*Has (he/she) seemed to tailor (his/her) communications to individuals' specific needs?*".

5.2.2.3 Administration

The OJM is a self-administered questionnaire and participants are provided with clear instructions on how to complete it. The questionnaire takes around 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

5.2.2.4 Interpretation

Each subscale is measured separately and discloses an individual's perceptions and outlooks concerning these dimensions. The subscales all have a 5-point Likert-type scale and participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a set of statements regarding the fairness and justice of the procedures in the organisation, the distribution of resources, the interactions with their supervisors and the information which is communicated within the organisation. Participants have to rate each statement using the following scale:

- 1 = To a very small extent
- 2 = To a small extent
- 3 = To a moderate extent
- 4 = To a relatively large extent
- 5 = To a large extent

Consequently, these statements refer to the degree of individuals' perceptions of organisational justice in an organisation. The higher the score, the higher the degree of organisational justice.

5.2.2.5 Reliability and validity of the OJM

Colquitt (2001) reported a high level of general reliability coefficient for this measure with a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .91$. Furthermore, Judge and Colquitt (2004) reported the reliabilities of the four scales of the OJM as follows: distributive justice $\alpha = .84$, procedural justice $\alpha = .84$, interpersonal justice $\alpha = .96$, and interactional dimensions $\alpha = .90$.

5.2.2.6 Motivation for using OJM

The OJM was designed for the measurement of individuals' perceptions of organisational justice, which is applicable to this research. The purpose of this study was to explore several tendencies and relationships between variables, but not to make individual forecasts based on the OJM. Thus, the OJM offered deeper insights into the construct of organisational justice this research study.

5.2.3 Trust Relationship Audit (TRA)

The subsequent section describes the rationale, purpose, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and reasons for selecting the TRA.

5.2.3.1 Rationale and purpose

The TRA, developed by Martins and Van der Ohe (2005; 2008), is a self-rating questionnaire aimed at determining participants' perceptions regarding trust within their organisations. For the purpose of this study only two sections of the TRA were be used which is relevant to the aims of the research. Firstly, participants' perceptions regarding the trust within their relationships with their direct manager/supervisor were determined, and secondly participants' perceptions relating to organisational trust (Martins & Van der Ohe, 2005; 2008).

5.2.3.2 Dimensions of the TRA

For the purpose of this study only two subscales, containing 14 items, of the TRA was used which is relevant to the aims of the research. These two subscales are discussed on the following page.

- **Relationship with supervisor/manager**

The relationship with supervisor/manager subscale is aimed at determining participants' perceptions regarding the trust that exists within this relationship. This subscale comprises five statements regarding a participant's relationship with his/her direct manager/supervisor, for example: *"I have an open, trusting relationship with the person I report to"*; *"The person I report to, openly and honestly reveals important work-related facts to me"* and *"I believe what the person I report to says"*.

- **Organisational trust**

The organisational trust subscale relates to participants' perceptions of the trust that they have in the organisation as a whole, in top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues. This subscale includes nine statements relating to organisational trust, such as: *"I trust top management"*, *"I trust my immediate manager"*, *"I trust my colleagues (team members)"* and *"The organisation responds quickly to changes in its external environment"*.

5.2.3.3 Administration

The TRA is a self-administered instrument and participants are provided with clear instructions on how to complete it. The questionnaire takes nearby 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

5.2.3.4 Interpretation

Each subscale (relationship with supervisor/manager and organisational trust) is measured separately and reveals an individual's perceptions and feelings relating to these dimensions. These subscales are discussed below.

- **Relationship with supervisor/manager**

This subscale is answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Participants are asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a specific statement, using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Unsure
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

The scale from 1 to 5 refers to the degree of trust that a participant experiences within his/her relationship with their direct supervisor/manager. Hence, the higher the score, the higher the level of trust within this relationship will be.

- **Organisational trust**

This subscale has a 5-point Likert-type scale. Participants have to rate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a specific statement, using the following scale:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Seldom
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Usually
- 5 = Always

Consequently, these statements refer to the degree of individuals' trust in top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues. The higher the score, the higher the degree of organisational trust.

5.2.3.5 Reliability and validity of the TRA

Von der Ohe (2014) reported a high level of general reliability coefficient for the TRA with a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .94$. Additionally, Von der Ohe and Martins (2010) reported the reliabilities of the two scales of the TRA used for this study as $\alpha = .92$ for the trust relationship dimension and $\alpha = .88$ for the organisational trust dimension.

5.2.3.6 Motivation for using the TRA

The two sections of the TRA which were used for this study was designed for the measurement of individuals' perceptions regarding their trust relationships with their immediate supervisors as well as their trust in their organisation (top management, manager and colleagues), which is pertinent to this research. The purpose of this study was to explore several inclinations and relationships between variables, but not to make individual predictions based on the TRA. Therefore, the TRA could provide deeper understandings into the construct of trust in this research study.

5.2.4 The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

The next section explores the rationale, purpose, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and reasons for selecting the RFMS.

5.2.4.1 Rationale and purpose

The RFMS, developed by Döckel (2003), is a self-rating measure. It was designed to determine participants' satisfaction with six core practices within their organisation, including compensation, job characteristics, training, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance (Döckel et al., 2006).

5.2.4.2 Dimensions of the RFMS

The RFMS consists of 35 items with six subscales where participants have to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they feel about their organisation regarding certain statements.

- **Compensation**

The compensation subscale measures participants' opinions about the importance of compensation. The compensation subscale consists of 13 items and contains, for example, statements such as: "*My benefits package*" and "*My most recent raise*".

- **Job satisfaction**

In the job satisfaction subscale, participants' views with regard to the importance of job satisfaction, is measured. The job satisfaction subscale consists of four items and comprises statements, for instance: "*The job requires me to use a number of complex or high level skills*" and "*The job is quite simple and repetitive*".

- **Training**

The training subscale measures participants' views on the significance of training. The training subscale consists of six items, for example: "*This company provides me with job-specific training*" and "*Sufficient time is allocated for training*".

- **Supervisor support**

In the supervisor support subscale, participants' perceptions about the importance of supervisor support, is measured. It encompasses six items, including: *"I feel undervalued by my supervisor"* and *"My supervisor seldom recognises an employee for work done well"*.

- **Career opportunities**

The career opportunities subscale determines participants' outlooks on the significance of career opportunities. The subscale consists of six items, for instance: *"My chances for being promoted are good"* and *"It would be easy to find a job in another department"*.

- **Work-life balance**

The work-life balance subscale examines participants' views on the importance of a work-life balance. The work-life balance subscale is made up of four items, for example: *"I often feel that there is too much work to do"* and *"My work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life"*.

5.2.4.3 Administration

The RFMS is a self-administered questionnaire. Participants are provided with clear instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. It takes between 10 and 15 minutes to complete, and participants answer on a 6-point Likert-type scale to statements concerning the degree to which they feel satisfied or dissatisfied about certain retention practices within their organisation.

5.2.4.4 Interpretation

The six subscales (compensation, job characteristics, training, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) are measured separately and are designed to measure the participants' satisfaction with these retention factors. Through this, the researcher can determine if the dimensions are considered by the participants to be true or false. The higher the score given to a statement, the truer it is for the participant. The subscale with the highest mean scores indicates the retention factor that is most valued by the participants. The ratings for the first six subscales are as follows:

- 1 = Strongly dissatisfied
- 2 = Moderately dissatisfied
- 3 = Slightly dissatisfied
- 4 = Slightly satisfied
- 5 = Moderately satisfied
- 6 = Strongly satisfied

5.2.4.5 *Reliability and validity of the RFMS*

Construct validity of the questionnaire was confirmed through a factor analysis which Döckel (2003) conducted. Döckel et al. (2006) reported on the internal consistency reliability through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each of the subscales: compensation ($\alpha = .90$), job characteristics ($\alpha = .41$), opportunities for training and development ($\alpha = .83$), supervisor support ($\alpha = .90$), career opportunities ($\alpha = .76$) and work-life balance ($\alpha = .87$).

5.2.4.6 *Motivation for using the RFMS*

The RFMS was designed to measure participants' satisfaction with six core retention practices provided by their organisation and was consequently relevant to this research. The purpose of this study was to study several trends and relationships between variables, not to make individual estimates based on the RFMS. Including the RFMS provided greater insight into the retention factors construct in this research study.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

This research study made use solely of self-report measures. Self-report instruments are designed to measure a participant's perceptions regarding his/her personal experiences of his/her individual behaviour or opinions through questionnaires, surveys or interviews (Costa & Hauck, 2019). Self-reporting instruments pose a number of disadvantages, including that they are characteristically subjective and susceptible to overstatement (Costa & Hauck, 2019). Furthermore, self-reporting instruments assume that participants are capable of answering direct questions about their personal opinions, attitudes and behaviour (Stangor, 2014). Though reactivity may hinder the sincerity of responses, participants may respond differently to questions if they know their responses are being recorded (Stangor, 2014).

Another limitation of self-report instruments is a phenomenon called social desirability (Babbie & Roberts, 2018). Socially desirable responding means that participants may try to mask their

personal perceptions, attitudes and behaviour by providing unauthentic or false responses, especially if their true responses may be regarded as socially unacceptable (Babbie & Roberts, 2018).

To minimise the effects of the aforementioned limitations and disadvantages of self-reporting measures, the participants were clearly informed of the purpose and aims of the research (Cohen et al., 2013). Participants were also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality of their responses (Costa & Hauck, 2019). Moreover, existing, reliable and valid measuring instruments were used to improve construct validity (Babbie & Roberts, 2018). Lastly, intricate relationships between the dependent and independent variables, that is, mediating and moderating effects as guided by relevant theory, were conceptualised (Chang et al., 2010).

Although the various instruments as outlined in the foregoing sections (PQ, OJM, TRA & RFMS) were thus considered as appropriate to assist in reaching this study's aims, it is recognised that some limitations exist. These limitations were taken into consideration during the interpretation of the findings resulting from the research results.

5.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

A population refers to a vast pool of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics that are relevant to a research study (Hair et al., 2016). A sample is a small percentage of a population drawn for observation and analysis to answer a certain set of research questions (Salkind, 2018). There are several important factors to consider when choosing a specific sampling method for a research study, including the representivity of the total population (Salkind, 2018), the availability and geographic distribution of the population, the time frame, and the resources available for the research (Saunders et al., 2016).

The population in the current study included all the full-time employees from a single ODL institution in SA, both academic and support staff. The population was purposively targeted and a random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativity of academic and support staff. The random sample included employees across all colleges and departments from an ODL institution in SA (N = 4882) to ensure that a maximum number of usable questionnaires could be obtained. By following a random sample of the total population of participants, comprising randomly all the various job levels at a HEI (research assistant, secretary, administrative assistant, administrative officer, junior lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor), the researcher aimed at producing a representative sample of the population. Random sampling ensured that every individual

observation has equal probability to be selected into a sample. In random sampling, there is no pattern when drawing a sample. Random sampling was appropriate because the research targeted both academic and support staff of a purposively chosen population (from different races, genders, ages, job levels, and tenure groups) that is employed in the HEI. Participants were required to complete an online survey of the five measuring instruments, and 493 usable questionnaires were received ($n = 493$). Thus, a response rate of 10.1% was obtained. This response rate was regarded as a limitation of the study, that is to say, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population.

The profile of the sample is described according to the following socio-demographic variables: race, gender, age, job level, tenure, marriage status, qualification and employment status. However, only race, gender, age, job level and tenure were used in the analysis of the findings as control variables. These categories (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) of socio-demographic variables were included, grounded on an investigation of the literature regarding the variables of relevance in the theorised retention framework for the higher education environment, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance and commitment).

5.4.1 Distribution of race groups in the sample

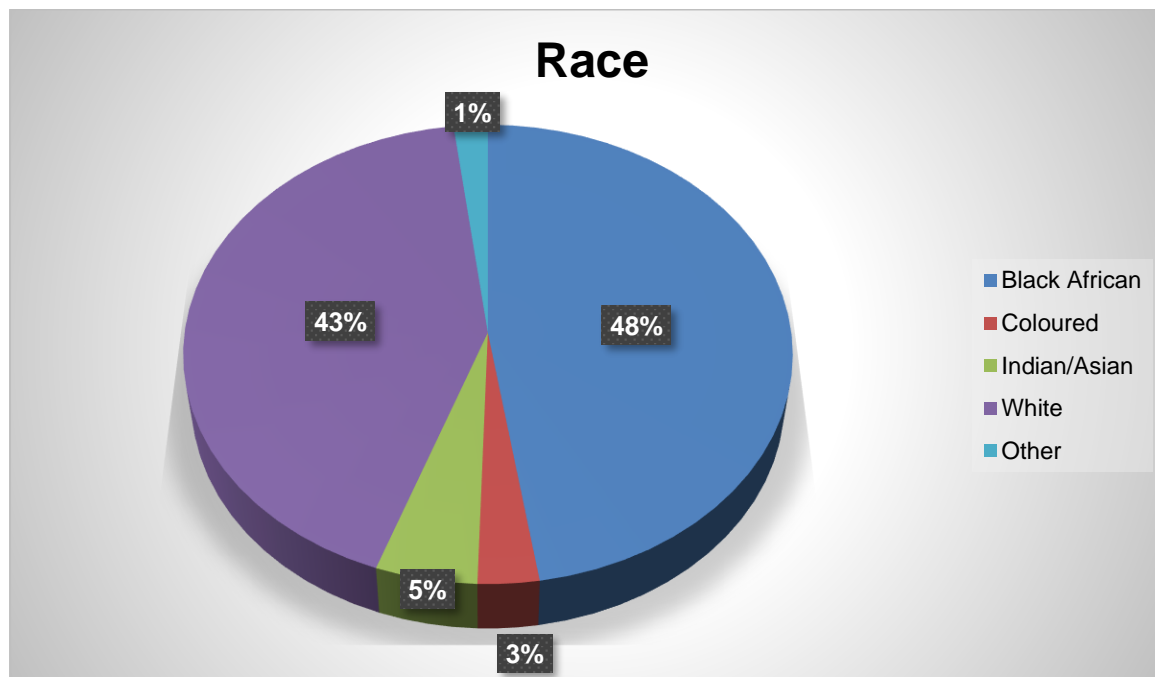
Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2 illustrate the racial distribution in the sample. Black Africans comprised 47.9%, Coloureds comprised 2.8%, Indian/Asians, 5.1% and Whites 42.6% of the total sample of research participants ($n = 493$). These frequencies showed that the black African racial group comprised the majority of the sample (47.9%). Overall, participants from black ethnic origins (Africans, Coloureds and Indian/Asians: 56%) were the majority of the sample.

Table 5.1
Race Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

Race group		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black African	236	47.9	47.9	49.5
	Coloured	14	2.8	2.8	52.3
	Indian/Asian	25	5.1	5.1	57.4
	White	210	42.6	42.6	100
	Other	8	1.6	1.6	1.6
Total		493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.2
Sample Distribution by Race (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.2 Distribution of gender groups in the sample

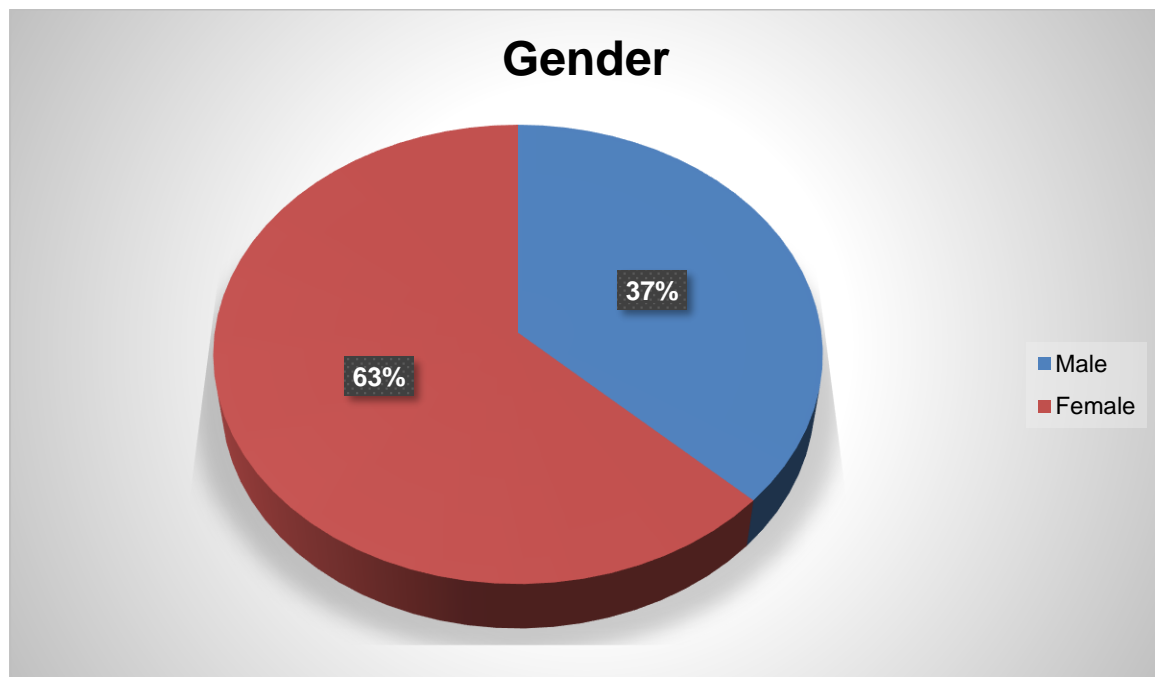
Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3 illustrate the distribution of gender groups of participants in the sample. Male participants made up 37% of the sample and female participants, 63% (n = 493).

Table 5.2
Gender Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Males	183	37.1	37.1	37.1
	Females	310	62.9	62.9	100
Total		493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.3
Sample Distribution by Gender (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.3 Distribution of age groups in the sample

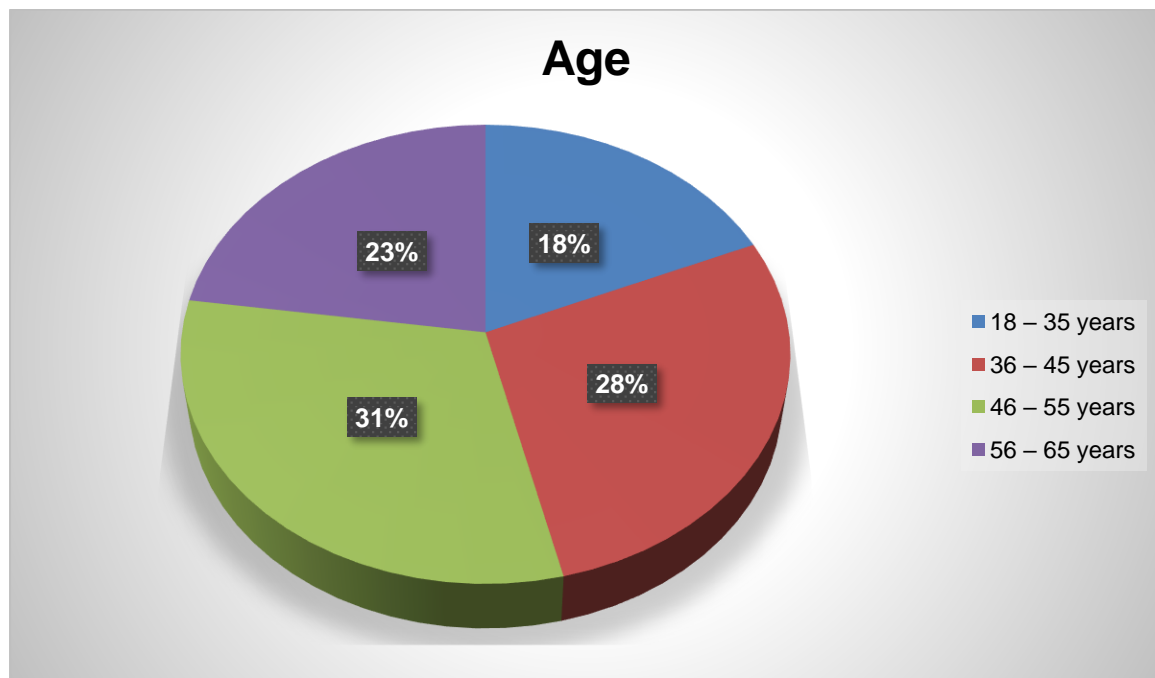
Table 5.3 and Figure 5.4 illustrate the distribution of the age groups in the sample. The ages of the participants were grouped into categories, ranging between 18 years to 65 years. The frequencies were relatively equally distributed among the age groups. Participants aged 18 to 35 years made up 18.5% of the sample; those between 36 to 45 years comprised 27.8%. Participants aged between 46 to 55 years encompassed 31% of the sample and the group of 56 to 65 years made up 22.7% of the total sample (n = 493). The mean age of the sample of participants was 46 ($SD = 10.21$).

Table 5.3
Age Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

Age group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18 – 35 years	91	18.5	18.5	18.46
36 – 45 years	137	27.8	27.8	46.25
46 – 55 years	153	31.0	31	77.28
56 – 65 years	112	22.7	22.7	100.00
Total	493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.4
Sample Distribution by Age (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.4 Distribution of job level groups in the sample

Table 5.4 and Figure 5.5 indicate the job level distribution in the sample: .4% of the participants worked as research assistants; .4% worked as secretaries; 3.3% worked as administrative assistants; 21.5% worked as administrative officers; 1.6% worked as junior lecturers; 17% worked as lecturers; 13.6% worked as senior lecturers; 6.1% worked as associate professors and 7.9% worked as professors. Overall, the sample distribution showed that a total of 25.2%

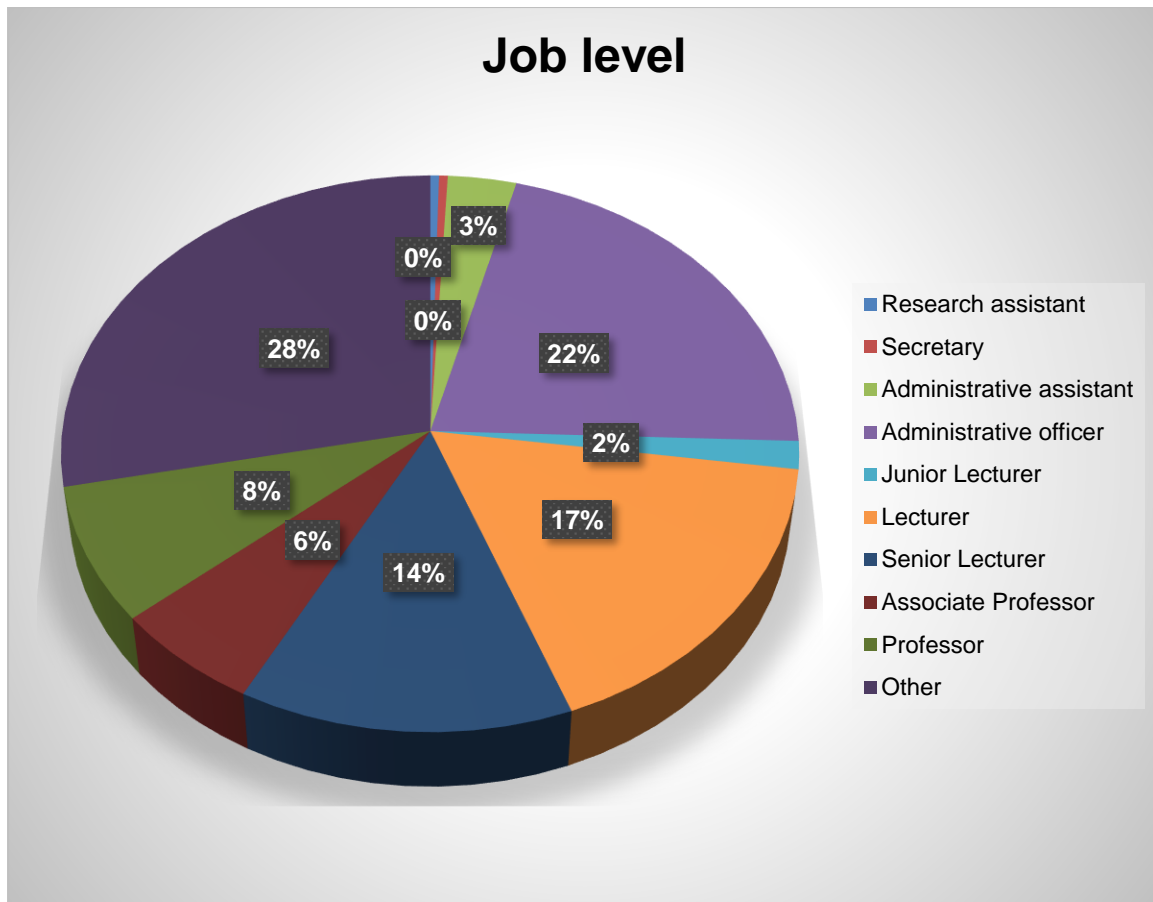
of the participants worked as support staff, 46.2% of the participants as academic staff and 28.2% indicated that they worked in 'other' posts.

Table 5.4
Job Level Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

		Job level			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Research assistant	2	.4	.4	28.6
	Secretary	2	.4	.4	29
	Administrative assistant	16	3.3	3.3	32.3
	Administrative officer	106	21.5	21.5	53.8
	Junior lecturer	8	1.6	1.6	55.4
	Lecturer	84	17	17	72.4
	Senior lecturer	67	13.6	13.6	86.0
	Associate professor	30	6.1	6.1	92.1
	Professor	39	7.9	7.9	100.0
	Other	139	28.2	28.2	28.2
	Total	493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.5
 Sample Distribution of Job Level (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.5 Distribution of tenure groups in the sample

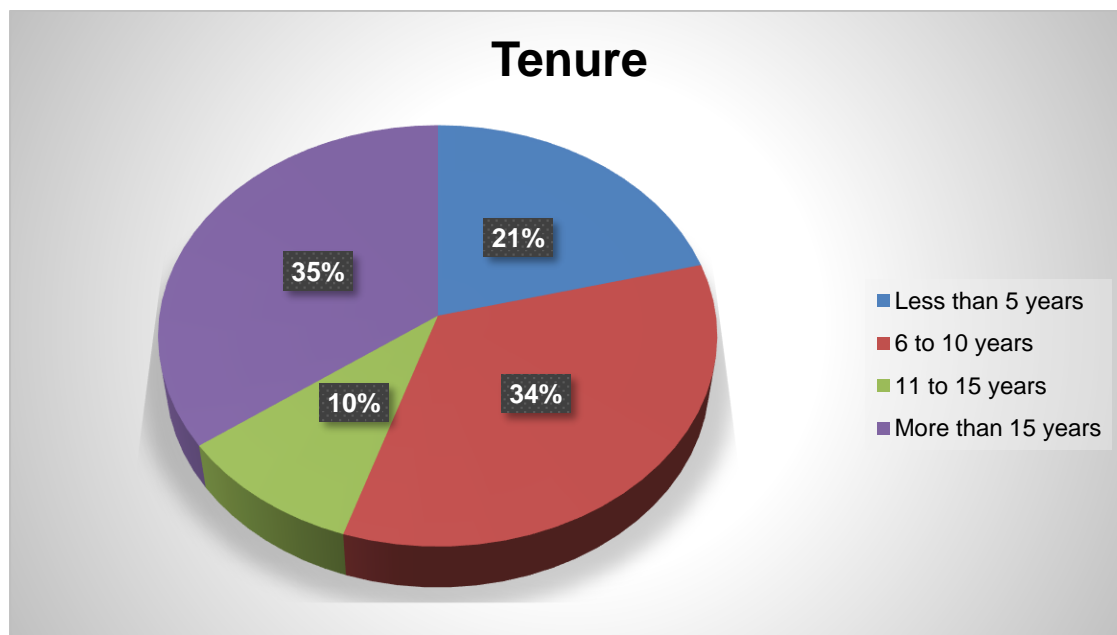
Table 5.5 and Figure 5.6 illustrate the tenure distribution of the sample. This distribution showed that 21.3% of the participants had been employed for less than 5 years in the institution; 33.9% had worked there between 6 and 10 years; 9.9% had worked there between 11 and 15 years; and 34.9% indicated that they had worked in the institution for more than 15 years. Overall, 55.2% of the participants indicated that they had worked in the institution for less than or equal to 10 years, and 44.8% of the participants indicated that they had worked in the institution for more than 10 years.

Table 5.5
Tenure Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

Tenure					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 5 years	105	21.3	21.3	21.3
	6 to 10 years	167	33.9	33.9	55.2
	11 to 15 years	49	9.9	9.9	65.1
	More than 15 years	172	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.6
Sample Distribution by Tenure (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.6 Distribution of marital status in the sample

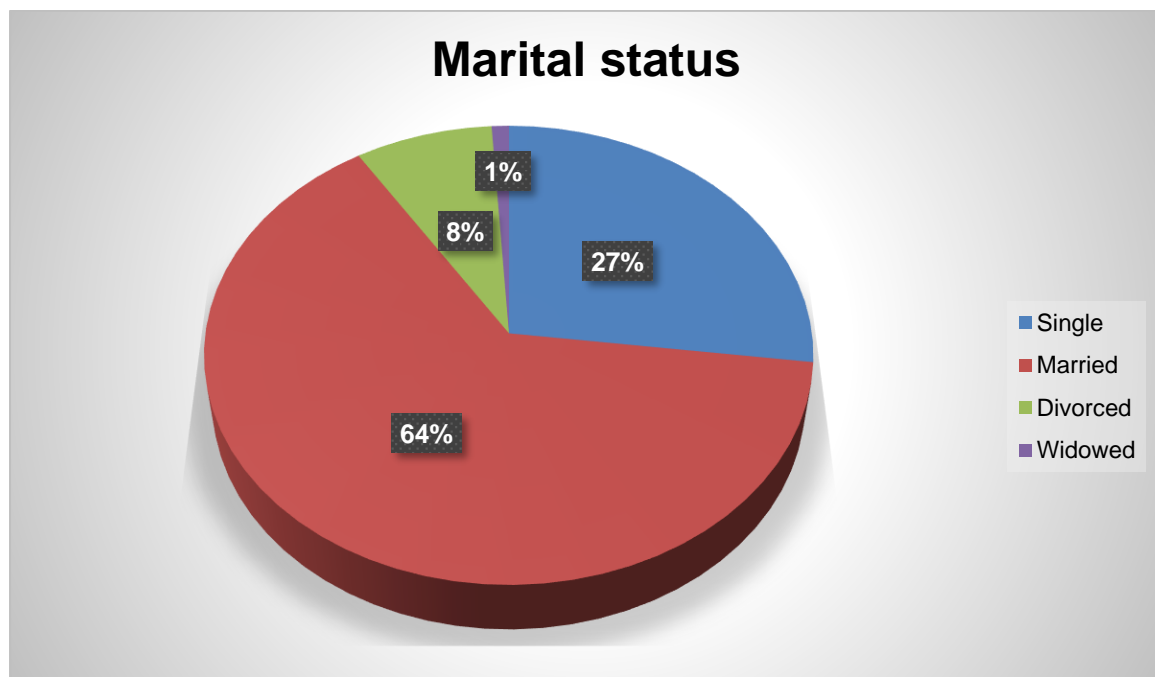
Table 5.6 and Figure 5.7 illustrate the marital status distribution of the sample. The distribution showed that 64% of the participants were married and 27% single. 8% of the participants indicated that they were divorced and only 1% widowed.

Table 5.6
Marital Status Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

		Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	131	26.6	26.6	26.6
	Married	315	63.9	63.9	90.5
	Divorced	41	8.3	8.3	98.8
	Widowed	6	1.2	1.2	100.00
Total		493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.7
Sample Distribution by Marital Status (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.7 Distribution of qualifications in the sample

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.8 indicate the distribution of educational qualifications in the sample. This distribution was as follows: 6.9% of the sample had obtained an NQF level 4 qualification (matric/National Senior Certificate); 2.2% had an NQF level 5 qualification (higher certificate); 6.9% had an NQF level 6 qualification (diploma or advanced certificate); 11.8% had an NQF

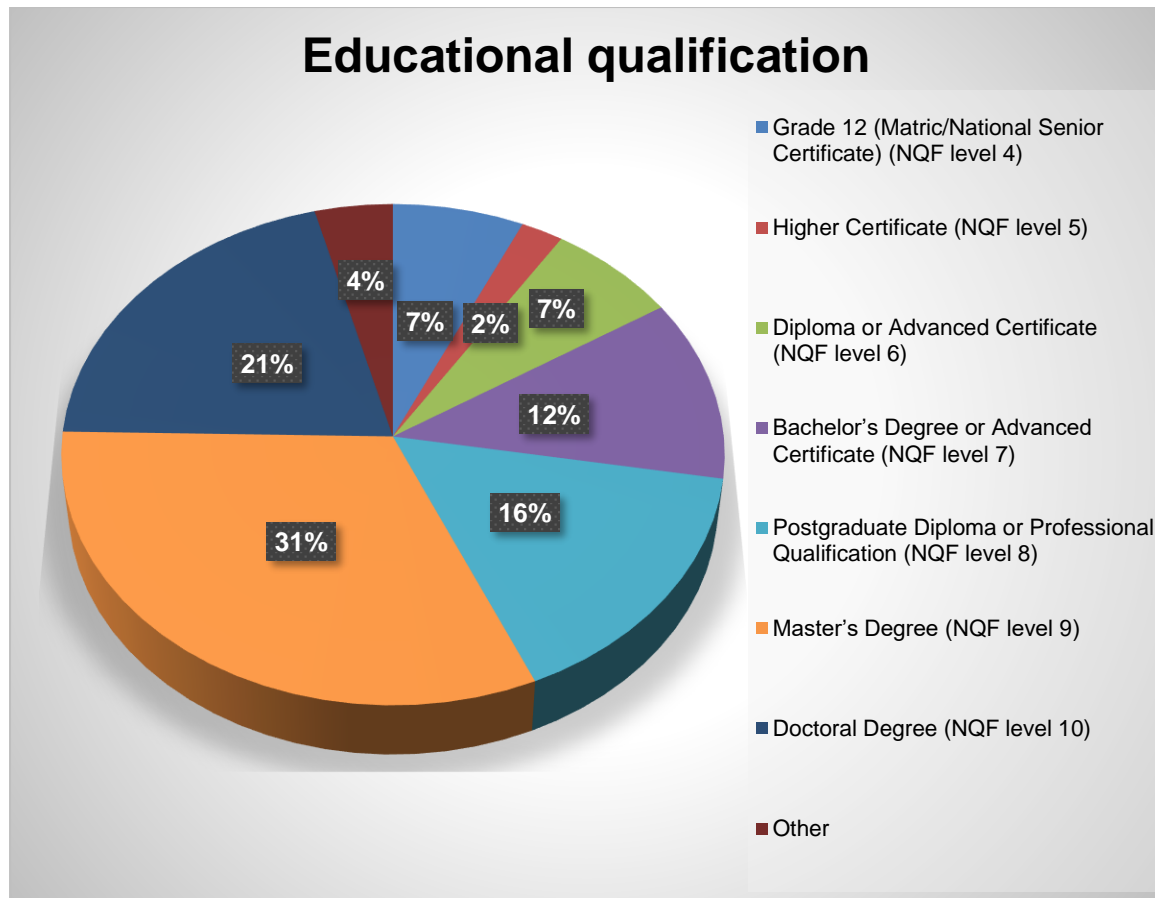
level 7 qualification (bachelor’s degree or advanced certificate); 15.8% had obtained an NQF level 8 qualification (postgraduate diploma or professional qualification); 31.6% had an NQF level 9 qualification (master’s degree); 20.7% had obtained an NQF level 10 qualification (doctoral degree). Overall, 16% of the participants indicated that they had obtained either a matric/National Senior Certificate, a higher certificate or a diploma or advanced certificate, and 79.9% of the participants indicated that they had obtained either bachelor’s degree or advanced certificate, a postgraduate diploma or professional qualification, a master’s degree, or a doctoral degree. 4.1% of the sample indicated that they had other qualifications. Overall, majority of the participants had a post graduate level qualification.

Table 5.7
Educational Qualification Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

Qualification				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Grade 12 (NQF level 4)	34	6.9	6.9	11
Higher certificate (NQF level 5)	11	2.2	2.2	13.2
Diploma or Advanced Certificate (NQF level 6)	34	6.9	6.9	20.1
Bachelor’s Degree or Advanced Certificate (NQF level 7)	58	11.8	11.8	31.9
Postgraduate Diploma or Professional Qualification (NQF level 8)	78	15.8	15.8	47.7
Master’s Degree (NQF level 9)	156	31.6	31.6	79.3
Doctoral Degree (NQF level 10)	102	20.7	20.7	100.0
Other	20	4.1	4.1	4.1
Total	493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author’s own work

Figure 5.8
 Sample Distribution by Educational Qualification (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.8 Distribution of employment status in the sample

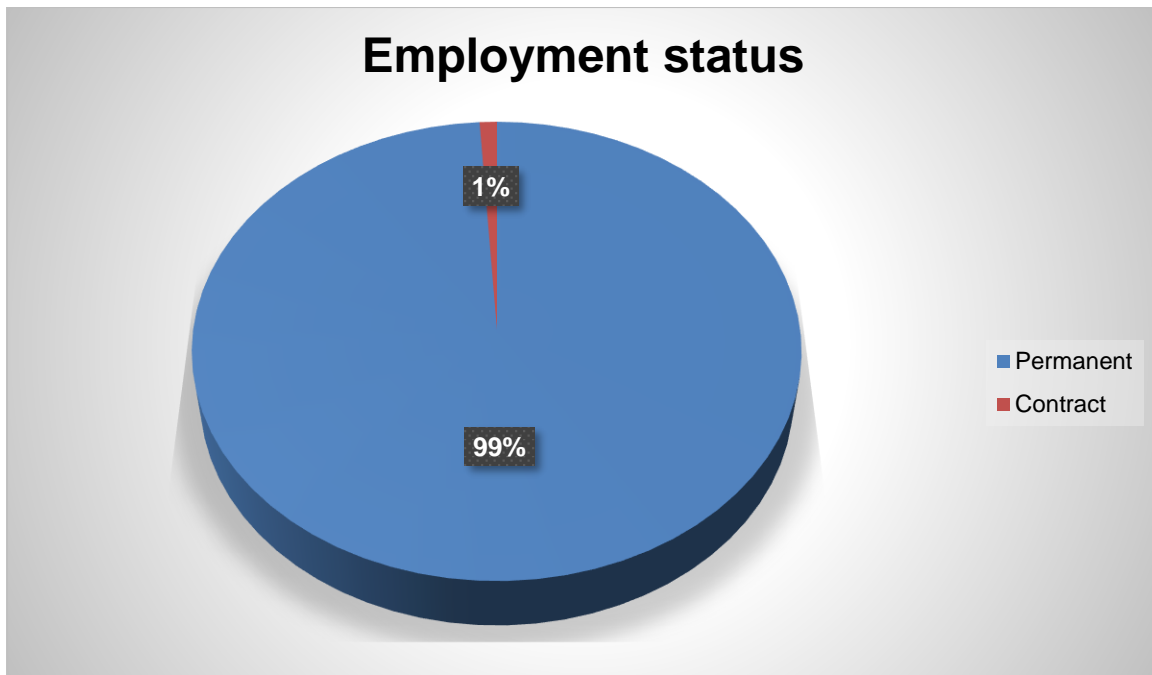
Table 5.8 and Figure 5.9 indicate the distribution of employment status in the sample. The distribution showed that 99% of the participants indicated that they were permanently employed and only 1% were employed on a contract basis.

Table 5.8
 Employment Status Distribution in the Sample (n = 493)

Employment status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Permanent	486	98.6	98.6	98.8
	Contract	7	1.4	1.4	100.00
	Total	493	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.9
Sample Distribution by Employment Status (n = 493)



Source: Author's own work

5.4.9 Summary of socio-demographic profile of sample

In summary, the socio-demographic profile of the sample indicated that important features to be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the empirical results were as follows: race, gender, age, job level and tenure. The participants in the sample were predominantly permanently employed, married, Black African, females, aged between 46 and 55 years. "Other" job levels, administrative officers and senior lecturers were the most predominant job levels in the sample. Most of the participants had either been working for the institution for 6 to 10 years, or longer than 15 years. Also, the majority of the participants in the sample had a Master's or a Doctorate degree. Table 5.9 reflects the main characteristics of the sample profile.

Table 5.9
The Main Characteristics of the Sample Profile

Socio-demographic variable	Predominant characteristic	Percentage
Race	Black African	48%
	White	43%
Gender	Females	63%
Age	Between 26 and 35 years	28%
	Between 46 and 65 years	23%
Job Level	Other	28%
	Administrative officer	22%
	Senior lecturer	14%
Tenure	Between 6 and 10 years	34%
	Longer than 15 years	35%
Marital status	Single	27%
	Married	64%
Qualification	Master's Degree (NQF level 9)	32%
	Doctoral Degree (NQF level 10)	21%
Employment status	Permanent	99%
	Contract	1%

Notes: N = 493

Source: Author's own work

5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ADMINISTRATION OF THE PSYCHOMETRIC BATTERY

This step involves the collection of data from the sample. The following approach was followed:

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee (ethical clearance certificate reference number: 2016_RPSC_076 – refer to Appendix A). The researcher adhered to the moral principles of ethics as outlined in the UNISA Research Ethics Policy, which are the following (UNISA, 2013):

- Autonomy (the research will respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of the participants)
- Beneficence (the research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people)

- Non-maleficence (the research will not cause harm to the participants specifically or to people in general)
- Justice (the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people).

The researcher also obtained permission from the HEI involved in this research. Once permission had been obtained, the questionnaires were distributed to the sample of employees via an online survey. An invitation to voluntarily take part in this research study was emailed to every employee. The email comprised the following information: the purpose of the research study; the role of participants; the projected time necessary for completion of the questionnaire; the researcher's individual and contact information and; a clarification and assurance of the participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality; and an explanation of planned future use of the data gathered; and a description of voluntary participation in this research study. Completion of the online survey was viewed as informed consent from participants.

The online survey did not require participants to provide any personal information that could identify them, thus ensuring anonymity of participants during data collection as well as data analysis. Seeing that no personal details of participants (for example, names or personnel numbers) were recorded, participants could not be linked to their responses. Participants' answers were codified and are referred to in this manner in the data, publications, and in any future conference proceedings. The researcher received the completed questionnaires through an external online survey platform to guarantee confidentiality.

Ethical concerns related to discrimination were also considered. The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) requires all psychological tests and other similar assessments to be valid, reliable, fair and free from prejudice against any employee or any specific group of employees. In order to comply with legislation, the instruments included in the psychometric test battery were scientifically valid and reliable, could be applied fairly to all employees, and were not biased against any employee or group. The process of data collection was reliable and the data were analysed, reported and interpreted in a fair, valid and reliable way.

The researcher aimed throughout the research process to conduct the study with the utmost integrity, unceasingly endeavouring to attain objectivity and legitimacy in the collection, recording and analysis of data and the interpretation of results, transparency in terms of the research process and avoiding plagiarism.

5.6 CAPTURING OF CRITERION DATA

An online survey package was used to distribute the survey and to collect responses from participants. The web-based software also exported the data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for processing and analysis. Using an electronic platform for the recording of the data eliminated the element of human error in the data capturing process, in that way improving the accuracy of the data (Salkind, 2018). Furthermore, the accuracy of the data was guaranteed by means of applicable statistical techniques (see the description of the statistical processing and analysis of the data in Section 5.8).

As mentioned, participants' responses to each item on the four questionnaires were captured on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Each row represented a participant and each column, a question. This spreadsheet containing data from the completed questionnaires was scored by an independent statistician. The statistical programs, namely, SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013) and PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Release version 3.0 (Hayes, 2018a), were used to import and analyse the data.

5.7 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The research hypotheses were formulated to achieve the aims of this study. A research hypothesis is a preliminary, tentative, explanation for a phenomenon, which has to be empirically proven before it can be regarded as factual and integrated into a theory (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The hypotheses for this research resulted from the literature study and the central hypothesis (see Section 1.6.2.3 in Chapter 1) and aligned with the stated empirical research aims (see Section 1.3.2.2).

Note: Overarching research hypotheses were stated to achieve the overall aim of the doctoral study, which was to construct an empirically tested framework for retention from a large number of construct variables. For reasons of parsimony, the overarching research hypotheses were more suitable for achieving the overall purpose of the doctoral research, rather than the micro-level research hypotheses that one would expect in a research article.

The research hypotheses are summarised Table 5.10 on the following page:

Table 5.10
Research Hypotheses

Research aim	Research hypothesis	Statistical procedures
Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA.	H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.	Bi-variate correlation analysis
Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices empirically	H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.	Stepwise regression analysis
Research aim 3: To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.	H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.	Moderated mediation regression analysis

Research aim	Research hypothesis	Statistical procedures
Research aim 4: To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.	H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.	Moderated mediation regression analysis
Research aim 5: To conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework	H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.	Structural equation modelling
Research aim 6: To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.	H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.	Tests for significant mean differences

Source: Author's own work

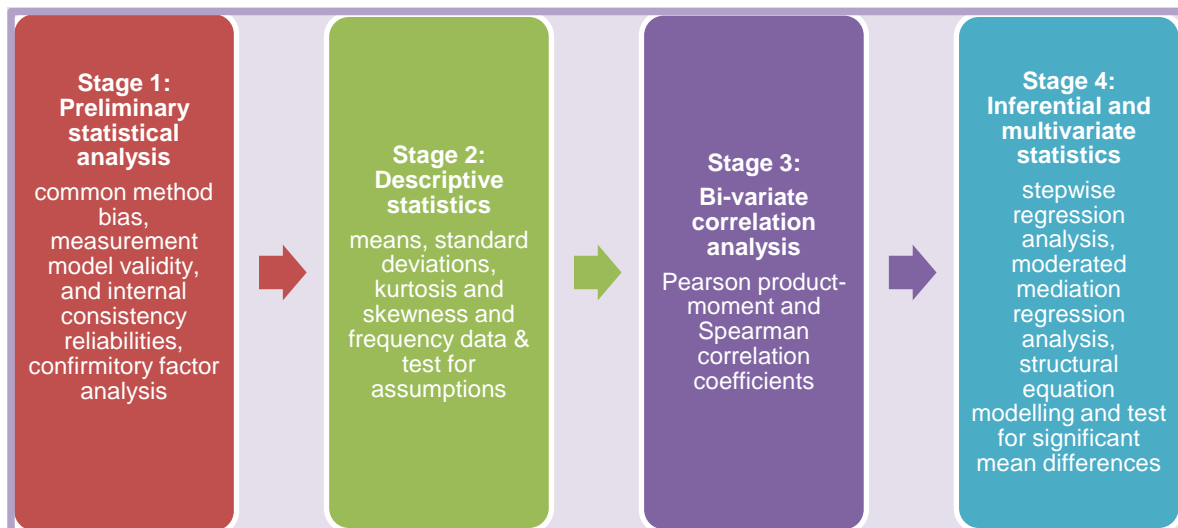
5.8 STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF THE DATA

The statistical procedures followed in this research study included a preliminary statistical analysis (common method variance, measurement model validity and internal consistency reliabilities and confirmatory factor analysis), descriptive statistical analysis (means, standard deviations, kurtosis, and skewness, frequency data and test for assumptions); bi-variate correlation analysis (Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and Spearman correlations); and inferential and multivariate statistics (stepwise regression analysis, moderated mediation regression analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM) and tests for significant mean differences).

The data analysis process consisted of four stages described in Figure 5.10 below.

Figure 5.10

Overview of the Data Analysis Process and Statistical Procedures



Source: Author's own work

5.8.1 Stage 1: Preliminary statistical analysis

Preliminary statistical analysis was done so as to determine the common method variance, measurement model validity and internal consistency reliabilities of the data.

5.8.1.1 Step 1: Testing for common method bias

Common method bias refers to an inconsistency in experiential measures due to a specific measurement method which is used in a study, rather than the construct under examination

(Garger et al., 2019; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Common method bias thus refers to discrepancies in responses, resulting from the collection method instead of from the relationships between the constructs (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Garger et al., 2019). Common method bias can be viewed as a confounding variable that systematically influences both of the independent and dependent variables (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Spector et al., 2019). According to various researchers, the incidence of common method bias can be largely ascribed to using the same survey respondent to provide responses to the measures for both the independent and dependent variables (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019; Garger et al., 2019; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Spector et al., 2019). In this study, the Harman's single-factor test and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (one factor solution) were used to test the model fit data for each of the measurements' scales.

The Harman's single-factor test loads all the items from each of the constructs into an exploratory factor analysis to conclude if a single factor or one general factor accounts for a majority of the covariance between the measures (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019; Chang et al., 2010; Fuller et al., 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2003). If neither a single factor, nor a general factor, accounts for the majority of the covariance between the measures, it means that common method bias does not pose a threat to the research findings (Fuller et al., 2016; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015).

CFA can also be used to test for common method bias (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), CFA is a more sophisticated test to determine if a single factor could account for the variance in a data set than Harman's single-factor test is. CFA loads all the items of the research constructs into the CFA to ascertain if a single factor was the cause of the main variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In the current study, the results of the Harman's single-factor test were interpreted in combination with the model fit statistics attained from a CFA to evaluate common method bias (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015).

5.8.1.2 Step 2: Assessing construct validity and reliability of the measurement scales

CFA was conducted to assess the construct validity of the measurement model in order to improve model fit of each scale, as well as to assess the construct validity of the overall measurement model. CFA is an objective test to determine if a theoretical model is acceptable, that is to confirm or reject a measurement theory (Perry et al., 2015; Yu, 2018). Construct

validity refers to whether conclusions can be drawn about test scores related to the model being studied (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Stone, 2019). Simply put, construct validity is the extent to which a test measures what it aims to be measuring (Stone, 2019). CFA is regarded as useful tool to investigate the construct validity of hypothesis-based testing in the verification of a model (Atkinson et al., 2011; Levine, 2005). CFA is a popular statistical method for providing support of construct validation in research such as the current study (DiStefano & Hess, 2005; Yu, 2018). When CFA is conducted to determine construct validity and model fit, the absence or existence of misspecifications, which are errors between the prescribed model and the estimated parameters, are examined (Perry et al., 2015). In the current study, two CFA's were performed on each measurement scale. Model one involved testing the data fit of the original multifactor model, while model two involved an optimised version of the respective measurement scale to improve the model fit of the scale.

Model optimisation was done by means of the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure for covariance structure analysis (Levenberg, 1944; Marquardt, 1963). The Levenberg-Marquardt Algorithm is a popular statistical and mathematical technique which can be utilised to optimise the fit of a model (Bellavia et al., 2018). Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion was used to assess the convergent validity of the measurement models of each scale. Convergent validity refers to the extent to which an instrument is significantly correlated with instruments measuring related constructs (Francis et al., 2019; Heale & Twycross, 2015).

The Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion aims to determine the degree of common variance between the latent variables in a model, using the average variance extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2014). AVE concludes the overall quantity of variance that can be attributed to a construct, relative to the quantity of variance attributed to measurement error (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Teo, 2011). CR determines the overall quantity of variances and covariances in the scores of the combination of indicator variables associated with the constructs, and by dividing this sum by the total variance in the combination (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Teo, 2011). An AVE value of $\geq .50$ is considered to be acceptable, while an AVE value of $\geq .70$ is regarded as a good statistic (Hair et al, 2014). These values show the construct reliability and convergent validity of a scale (Hair et al., 2014). A CR value $\geq .70$ is regarded as satisfactory and is an indicator of good model fit (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Sideridis et al., 2018).

According to Hair et al. (2014), CR is also utilised to determine the construct measures' internal consistency reliability. Internal consistency is traditionally assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). However, CR provides a more appropriate

and robust measure of internal consistency reliability, seeing that Cronbach's alpha (α) has a tendency to minimise reliability (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2016). Internal consistency reliability refers to the degree of interrelatedness between items on a scale that is aimed at measuring the same construct (Rose et al., 2014; Supino & Borer, 2012). Thus, if a multiple-item construct measure is administered to participants, the extent to which participants rate those items in a comparable way is an indication of internal consistency (Supino & Borer, 2012).

In this study, each measurement scale was assessed for internal consistency reliability by means of the Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) and the composite reliability (CR) coefficient. The internal consistency reliability of the four research instruments as well as the average homogeneity between the various test items was concluded. A Cronbach alpha coefficient of $\geq .70$ is an acceptable threshold to show reliability of the scale (Rose et al., 2014), and a CR value $\geq .70$ is considered acceptable (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Sideridis et al., 2018).

The last step in the preliminary statistical analysis was to determine the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity represents the extent to which the construct is empirically distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2014). In other words, it enables the researcher to discriminate between dissimilar constructs (Ali & Haseeb, 2019). Discriminant validity is established when maximum shared variance (MSV) $<$ AVE and average shared variance (ASV) $<$ AVE (DeVellis, 2016).

5.8.2 Stage 2: Preliminary descriptive statistical analysis

This stage consisted of two steps, namely, to determine the means and standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness of the categorical and frequency data; and to test underlying assumptions. This study utilised descriptive statistics to clarify those characteristics of the data which related to the main construct variables, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

5.8.2.1 Step 1: Means and standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness and frequency data

SAS software version 9.4 (2013) was used to calculate the means and standard deviations for all the dimensions of the psychological contract-related construct variables (employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract), the organisational justice-related construct variables (distributive justice, procedural justice, informational justice and interpersonal justice), the trust-related construct variables

(relationship with supervisor/manager and organisational trust) as well as the satisfaction with retention practices-related construct variables (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) were calculated.

Descriptive statistics provides a summary of the data and the purpose of these statistics is to give an overall, coherent and straightforward picture of a large amount of (Punch, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2014; McCarthy et al., 2019). Furthermore, descriptive statistics sums up the broad nature of the data that is obtained; for example, how certain measured characteristics are 'on average', how much variability exists among different pieces of data, or how strongly two or more features are interrelated (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; McCarthy et al., 2019). Categorical and frequency data, including means and standard deviations, were determined for the total sample to assist in the application of the statistical procedures.

When the mean score is calculated, the sum of the confirmed values is divided by the total number of values in a group (Chalmer, 2020 & Flick, 2015). The mean score is calculated mainly to determine the central tendency of the sample, and the standard deviation is calculated to determine the inconsistency of the sample responses (Gravetter et al., 2020). The standard deviation is the average amount by which each of the individual scores varies from the mean of the set of scores (Salkind, 2018). The larger the standard deviation, the more variable the set of scores (Gravetter et al., 2020; Salkind, 2018).

Skewness refers to the degree of which a distribution of scores variates from flawless symmetry (Chalmer, 2020). When the data of a sample group is parallel on both sides of the middle viewpoint, it is regarded as symmetrical (Salkind, 2018). When distributions are skewed to the left they are regarded as negatively skewed distributions and those distributions which are skewed to the right are regarded as positively skewed (Gravetter et al., 2020). The 'peakedness' of a distribution is referred to as the kurtosis and this indicates the extent to which a distribution is flat or peaked with respect to the normal curve (Salkind & Frey, 2019).

5.8.2.2 Step 2: Test for assumptions

Research studies in general, aim to form valid conclusions from a sample of data obtained from a population. Unfortunately, challenges may transpire when samples from bigger populations are used to provide specific values which are applicable to the total population. Therefore, in the current study, statistical procedures were utilised to ascertain the extent to which certain conclusions could be drawn about the research findings.

The following assumptions lay beneath the multivariate procedures and tests for significant mean differences that were conducted in this study:

- (a) the accuracy of data entered into the data file and missing values;
- (b) the ratio of cases to independent variables;
- (c) outliers (univariate and multivariate);
- (d) normality, linearity and homoscedasticity; and
- (e) multicollinearity and singularity.

(a) The accuracy of data entered into the data file and missing values

To ensure that miscoding did not occur and to guarantee the accurateness of the data, the dataset was screened. By using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), frequency statistics for the respective scales and items were recovered. The minimum and maximum values and the means and standard deviations were inspected to certify data precision. It was determined that all items fell within the probable range of values, therefore the data were found to be suitable for further analysis. Only fully completed questionnaires were accepted, thus no missing values were discovered.

(b) Ratio of cases to independent variables

In order to warrant the statistical power of a research study, the sample size is of extreme importance (Gravetter et al., 2020). The size of a sample influences the extent to which the sample represents the population (Khalilzadeh & Tasci, 2017). According to De Vaus and De Vaus (2013), the general rule of thumb when determining the adequateness of a sample size for testing a multiple correlation coefficient, is $N \geq 50 + 8m$ (where m is the number of independent variables). In this case the required sample size was $N = 58$, based on the above-mentioned calculation. Thus, the sample size of $N = 493$ in this study was considered adequate to accomplish acceptable statistical power. This was required for the determination of effects through correlation and regression analysis.

(c) Outliers

An outlier is a specific value which is considerably dissimilar from other specific values in the dataset (Gravetter et al., 2020). Thus, an outlier is an individual data point which differs profoundly from other individual data points in the same data set (Chalmer, 2020). An outlier test has the main aim of determining the extent to which an outlier value is a result of chance,

or whether it is so great that it could indicate an error in the measurement instrument (Salkind, 2018).

Graphing methods for residuals are utilised in the identification of possible outliers (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2015). In the current study, outliers were identified by inspecting the graphic boxplots of each variable's standardised normal scores.

(d) Normality, linearity and homoscedasticity

The assumption of the multivariate normality is based on the belief that every single variable should have a normal distribution so as to follow a multivariate normal distribution (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). In this study, skewness and kurtosis were utilised, along with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to test for multivariate normality seeing that was found to be the most applicable test for examining multivariate normality (Pituch & Stevens, 2016).

The assumption of linearity advises that linear relationship occurs between all dependent variable pairs and all covariate pairs through all groups (Salkind, 2018). In this research, scatterplots of dependent variable pairs for each group were observed to determine linearity (Salkind, 2018). A linear relationship is shown by an elliptically shaped scatterplot (Harrell, 2015).

The homoscedasticity assumption is based on the notion that the levels of variability amid quantitative dependent variables should be equivalent across a sequence of independent variables (Salkind, 2018). Homoscedasticity violations are determined through the use of a graphical method such as scatterplots (Salkind, 2018). In order to assess for test for both linearity and homoscedasticity in the current study, bivariate scatterplots were created for all impending pairs of variables. No problems were found within these scatterplots.

(e) Multicollinearity and singularity

Multicollinearity occurs when two or more variables are strongly correlated with one another ($r \geq .80$) (Cohen & Cohen, 2014). Also, when undue redundancy exists among the variables, this is referred to as multicollinearity (Cohen & Cohen, 2014). Singularity, in contrast, transpires when the variables are perfectly correlated ($r = 1.00$). In this study, the variance inflation factor (VIF), tolerance, eigen-values and condition indices were used to test for multicollinearity and singularity. These tests specified no incongruities.

5.8.3 Stage 3: Bi-variate correlation analysis

Bi-variate correlation analyses are statistical procedures which assess and describe the nature of the relationship that occurs between variables (Chalmer, 2020; Rovai et al., 2013). Cohen and Cohen (2014) explain that when a change in one variable is supplemented by a continuous and anticipatable change in another variable, this is an indication that a relationship exists between these variables. In the current research study, bi-variate correlation analysis, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), were applied to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), the psychological contract (employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract), organisational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice), trust (relationship with supervisor/manager and organisational trust) and satisfaction with retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies).

Correlation analysis was used to test research hypothesis 1:

H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

Specifically, to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables in this study, the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) was applied. Also, in order to determine the relations between the socio-demographic variables and the construct variables, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (p) was employed. Humphreys et al. (2019) as well as Liu (2019) explain that the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient is a bivariate correlation coefficient utilised to clarify the linear relationship between two variables measured on at least an interval scale. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient measures the degree to which the relationship between two variables can be explained by means of a monotonic function (Prion & Haerling, 2014). The following have been identified as the most important features of the r and the p (Humphreys et al., 2019; Prion & Haerling, 2014; Rovai et al., 2013):

- The r and p values range from -1 (relationship with a perfect converse), to 0 (no relationship), to +1 (perfect direct relationship);

- Values that are grouped around a straight line on scatterplots, are shows linear relationships;
- When values are assembled tightly around the straight line, the linear correlation is deemed to be high; and
- Values which are widely spread around the straight line, is an indication of weak relationships.

In order to establish the practical significance of correlation coefficients, the cut-off points applied in this study was $r \geq .30$ (medium effect) and $p \leq .05$ (Humphreys et al., 2019; Liu, 2019).

5.8.4 Stage 4: Inferential and multivariate statistical analysis

In order to draw conclusions from the data, inferential and multivariate statistics were utilised. This stage entailed the following four steps:

Step 1: Stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), was used to test whether the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predicted satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Step 2: Moderated mediation regression analysis, using PROCESS Procedure for SPSS (release 3.00), developed by Hayes (2013), was applied to assess whether there is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Moderated mediation regression analysis was furthermore used to determine whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediated the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Step 3: SEM, using the SAS CALIS procedure with maximum likelihood estimation of the covariance structure analysis, was used to observe the fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural model and the theoretically hypothesised model.

Step 4: Tests for significant mean differences, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), were used to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

5.8.4.1 Step 1: Stepwise regression analysis

Stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), was used to determine whether the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices (research aim 2). Thus, stepwise regression analysis was applied to test research hypothesis 2 (H2):

H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Stepwise regression analysis is a statistical method that scrutinises the statistical significance of each independent variable within the model (Cohen et al., 2013; Li et al., 2020). Stepwise regression analysis is the step-by-step creation of a regression model that includes automatic selection of independent variables (Silhavy et al. 2017). The primary purpose of stepwise regression analysis is to determine the best combination of independent variables which predict the dependent variables (Cohen et al., 2013; Li et al., 2020). In order to find the set of independent variables that significantly predict the dependent variables, stepwise regression utilises a series of statistical tests (F-tests, t-tests) (Kenton, 2019; Pituch & Stevens, 2016).

In this study, the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), and the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) constructs were treated as independent variables and the overall Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) as dependent variable.

Due to the number of independent variables, a stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination procedure was applied to identify the variables that significantly predict the RFMS. Backward elimination commences with a collection of independent variables, removing one by one, then testing to see if the removed variable is a statistically significant variable (Darlington & Hayes, 2017; Kenton, 2019).

Stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination has several advantages, including that it allows the discovery of the variables' cooperative predictive ability, it has the capacity to manage great quantities of possible predictor variables and to modify the model with the aim of choosing the best predictor variables from the obtainable options, it provides results more rapidly than other automatic model selection methods, and it delivers valuable information on the value of the predictor variables (Cohen et al., 2013; Dallal, 2012; Darlington & Hayes, 2017; McDonald, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019)

5.8.4.2 Step 2: Moderated mediation regression analysis

Moderated mediation regression analysis, using PROCESS Procedure for SPSS (release 3.00), developed by Hayes (2013), was used to determine whether there is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices (research aim 3). Moderated mediation regression analysis was additionally used to assess whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediated the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention (research aim 4). Thus, moderated mediation was used to test both hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4 (H3 and H4):

H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Moderated mediation analysis a statistical technique which is used both to explain the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable as transmitted through a single intervening (mediating) variable, as well as to clarify the extent to which a moderating variable affects the strength of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable (Aguinis et al., 2016; Hayes, 2013; 2015; 2018a; Preacher et al., 2007).

In other words, moderated mediation analysis is utilised to describe and comprehend the conditional nature of the mechanisms by which a variable transfers its effect on another variable, and the testing of hypotheses regarding such conditional effects (Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2018a; Hu & Jiang, 2018). That is to say, moderated mediation examines questions about how (mediation, or indirect effects) and under what circumstance (moderation, or interaction effects) certain effects function (Hayes, 2018b; Hsu et al. 2011; Preacher et al., 2007). The design of the research was cross-sectional and non-experimental in nature, and thus causal interpretations were not attained from the data analysis (Aguinis et al., 2016; Park, 2018). All continuous variables were mean centred before the analysis was done to eradicate the risk of multicollinearity between the main and interaction effects (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Hayes, 2018b).

A parallel multiple mediation model was tested by using the PROCESS procedure developed by Hayes (2013) for SPSS (release 3.00). The bootstrapping approach with 5000 bootstrapping samples was used. The parallel mediation procedure involved testing both the indirect effect of justice (M1) and trust (M2) in the model, with psychological contract (X) as independent variable and satisfaction with retention practices (Y) as dependent variable. Moderation effects were also tested in the same model by testing the interaction effects between psychological contract (X) and job level (W - interaction 1) in predicting (1) organisational justice, (2) trust and (3) satisfaction with retention practices (Y). Interaction (moderation) and indirect (mediating) effects were examined. The significance of the direct and indirect effects was interpreted by implementing the more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% lower level (LLCI) and upper level (ULCI) confidence interval levels, which excluded zero (Hayes, 2018a). Partial mediation as the baseline model was hypothesised because of the presence of multiple mediators. Partial mediation occurs when the indirect effect $\beta_{yx.m}$ does not drop to zero and when the mediation (indirect effect of X on Y) is still significant (Preacher & Kelley, 2011).

5.8.4.3 Step 3: Structural equation modelling

SEM was used to determine whether the variable empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and to decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework (research aim 5). Therefore, SEM was used as a baseline and covariance structural analysis was applied to test research hypothesis 5 (H5):

H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.

SEM was conducted using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013). The SEM in this study was based on the significant mediation effect of the mediating variables (organisational justice and trust) on the relationship between the independent (psychological contract) and dependent construct (satisfaction with retention practices) variables. Hence, founded on the data from the moderated mediation analysis, two SEM models were tested so that the best model fit data for the final empirically manifested retention framework could be obtained.

SEM is a statistical technique which is mainly used to fit networks of constructs to data (Barret, 2007; Marsh et al., 2020). This multivariate method combines both factor analysis and path analysis (Marsh et al., 2020). SEM is frequently utilised to measure unobservable 'latent' constructs (Hooper et al., 2008; Sadikaj et al., 2019). The primary goal of SEM is to clarify and explain the relationships between latent and observed variables in diverse kinds of theoretical models (Hooper et al., 2008; Sadikaj et al., 2019). Put differently, SEM's objective is to conclude whether the sample data is in support of the theoretical model (Marsh et al., 2020).

SEM is generally executed in either one- or two-stage methods (Moutinho & Hutcheson, 2011; Westland, 2016), as follows:

- One-stage method: to carry out the statistical analysis with synchronised estimations of both measurement and structural models.
- Two-stage method: to commence with the development of the measurement model and then to modify it with the intention of estimating the structural model.

In the current study, SEM analysis was applied to assess the relationship between the data from the sample and the theoretical model of staff retention. Schumacker and Lomax (2016) as well as Keith (2014) cite the following benefits of SEM:

- SEM permits a researcher to statistically model and test relationships between several variables;
- SEM takes the measurement error into account during the statistical data analysis process;
- The process of SEM, the occurrence of misleading results is reduced;
- SEM has the ability to explain the reason behind research findings; and

- Enhanced SEM software has enabled researchers to evaluate complex theoretical models of multifaceted events with improved competency.

SEM applies CFA to establish the relationships between latent variables and their indicators (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). Absolute fit indices are utilised in CFA to assess how well the model fits, or replicates, the data. The absolute fit indices comprise the chi-squared test, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit index (CFI), the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and the Bentler-Bonett non-normed index (NNI).

In order to compare the fit of nested models to the data, the chi-squared test was applied (Keith, 2014). The chi-squared test of model fit has the disadvantage that a model with a good fit might be excluded because of a large sample size, and a model with a poor fit may perhaps not be rejected owing to a small sample size (Keith, 2014; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). Consequently, additional goodness-of-fit tests have been developed.

The NNI examines the discrepancies amongst the chi-squared value of the hypothesised model and the chi-squared value of the null model (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). The comparative fit index (CFI) shows the fit of the hypothesised model in contrast to the baseline model (Keith, 2014; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). The Akaike information criterion (AIC) is a predictive fit index and it is typically utilised to connect non-hierarchical hypothesised models with related data (Keith, 2014; Mueller & Hancock, 2018). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), plus the standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR) were determined. The RMSEA has the primary goal of determining the degree to which the model does not fit the data (Gao et al., 2020). In other words, the RMSEA calculates the total level of inaccuracy and indicates the fitting function value associated with the degrees of freedom (Gao et al., 2020). A further technique applied to determine model fit is the standardised RMR (SRMR) (Shi et al., 2018). The SRMR is regarded as the standardised difference between the detected correlation and the predicted (hypothesised) correlation (Shi et al, 2018; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016).

In summary, for the purpose of this study, a structural model was developed to assess the fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural model and the theoretically hypothesised model. The fit was based on the statistical relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

5.8.4.4 Step 4: Test for significant mean differences

Tests for significant mean differences were calculated to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices (research aim 6). Thus, tests for significant mean differences were applied to assess whether the results provided significant evidence in support of research hypothesis 6 (H6):

H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

In order to test whether the data had a normal distribution, using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013), the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises, and the Anderson-Darling tests were applied. The null-hypothesis of the above-mentioned tests is that the population had a normal distribution. When the p -value is larger than the selected alpha level, the null hypothesis that the data originated from a normally distributed population, cannot be rejected (Ho & Yu, 2015).

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Cramer-von Mises and the Anderson-Darling tests showed that the data was normally distributed, and thus, parametric tests had to be used to establish the significant mean differences. To measure the differences between the socio-demographic variables of race, age, job level and tenure, ANOVAs were conducted. Also, to assess the differences between the genders, a T-test and Tukey's studentised range test were used (Lee & Lee, 2018).

Over and above the ANOVAs, post-hoc tests were applied to determine the significant mean differences between the variables of race, age, job level and tenure as these socio-demographic variables consisted of more than more two groups (Lee & Lee, 2018). Moreover, Cohen's d test was utilised to establish the practical effect size with regard to the differences between the relevant groups (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013).

5.8.5 Statistical significance level

The level of statistical significance indicates the likelihood of making a Type I error (Heston & King, 2017). A Type I error signifies the rejection of a true null hypothesis, while a Type II error

constitutes the inability to reject a false null hypothesis (Gravetter et al., 2020). In the case of the current study, the statistically significant level of $p \leq .05$ was chosen. This level of statistical significance provided for a 95% confidence level in the research results. A significance level of $p \leq .05$ ensures that if the null hypothesis is rejected, there is only a 5% chance of being wrong (Gravetter et al., 2020).

The statistical significance level is generally set at either .05 or .01 (Morgan et al., 2016). If it happens that the test for significance specifies a $p \geq .05$ value, it can be concluded that the results are not statistically significant (Morgan et al., 2016). Thus, results showing a p -value less than .05 will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis and consequently the results will be statistically significant.

5.8.5.1 Level of significance: bi-variate correlation analysis

In order to determine whether an outcome is applicable to the actual world, the effect size is considered (Cohen et al., 2013). Thus, when determining practical significance, the effect size is established (Morgan et al., 2016; Rovai et al., 2013). The Pearson Product moment Correlation Coefficient (r) is often used to determine the effect size (Morgan et al., 2016; Rovai et al., 2013), where $r \leq .29$ indicates a small practical effect at $p < .05$, $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ shows a medium practical effect at $p < .05$ and $r \geq .50$ represents a large practical effect at $p < .05$. For the purpose of this study, the significance levels of $p \leq .05$ and $r \geq .30$ (medium practical effect size) were chosen as the limit for rejection of the null hypotheses (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013).

Table 5.11 indicates the various levels of statistical significance (Morgan et al., 2016):

Table 5.11
Levels of Statistical Significance of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlations

Practical effect size	Significance at $p \leq .05$
Small effect	$\geq .10 \leq .29$
Moderate effect	$r \geq .30 \leq .49$
Large effect	$r \geq .50$

Source: Author's own work

5.8.5.2 Level of significance: stepwise regression analysis

In order to determine significance in terms of the stepwise regression analysis, the ANOVA (Fp) was calculated. A low Fp -value ($< .05$) is an indication that the null hypothesis can be rejected. Consequently, when a predictor value has a low Fp -value ($p < .05$), it is likely that this variable significantly predicts the dependent variable. When stepwise multiple regression is conducted, the adjusted R^2 value specifies the degree to which the independent variable clarifies the variation in the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2016). The adjusted R^2 value always ranges between 0% and 100%, and this shows whether the model clarifies none (0%) or all (100%) of the inconsistency of the response data around its mean (Hair et al., 2016).

The problematic aspect of the R^2 value however, is that it becomes higher when more variables are added. This could mistakenly show that a model with an increased number of variables had a better fit to the data merely owing to the fact it had more relationships (Hair et al. 2010). To counter for this problem, the adjusted R^2 is calculated and the explanatory power of the corresponding models compared with a different number of predictors (Hair et al., 2010). As a result, the adjusted R^2 is an unprejudiced estimation of the R^2 value and is interpreted in the same way as the R value (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 5.12 shows the different practical effect sizes of the adjusted R^2 cut-off values at $Fp \leq .05$ (Cohen et al., 2013; Salkind, 2012).

Table 5.12

Levels of Statistical Significance of Stepwise Multiple Regression

Practical effect size	Significance at $p \leq .05$
Small effect	$R^2 \geq .02 \leq .12$
Moderate effect	$R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$
Large effect	$R^2 \geq .26$

Source: Author's own work

5.8.5.3 Level of significance: moderated mediation analysis

Hayes (2015, 2018) and Zhang et al. (2019), advise that bootstrapping confidence interval should be utilised when forming conclusions regarding the outcome of regression coefficients. Bootstrapping is a statistical procedure where individuals from the original dataset are selected randomly and then a new dataset is developed which comprises of the same number of individuals (Jose, 2013; Zhang et al., 2019). In order to produce a bootstrap confidence

interval, a random sample from the initial dataset is repeatedly taken, with replacement, and then approximating the indirect effect in each resample (Jose, 2013). This procedure is repeated numerous times and then arranged from low to high (Hayes, 2015). These values are a representation of the lower and upper boundaries of the 95% confidence interval level (Hayes, 2018).

In the current study, bias-corrected bootstrapping was performed with 5000 bootstrap samples to explore the moderated mediation effects of H3 (moderation) and H4 (mediation). As recommended by Preacher et al. (2007), the bootstrapping process was completed three times: firstly, at the mean values of the moderator; secondly with the value one standard deviation above (+1 SD); and thirdly with the value one standard deviation below (-1 SD) the mean. The more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% lower level (LLCI) and upper level (ULCI) confidence levels, excluding zero in the LLCI and ULCI range, were used to interpret the significance level ($p < .05$) of the main and interaction effects (Hayes, 2015).

5.8.5.4 Level of significance: SEM

The measurement procedure applied in SEM is CFA. SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013), specifically the CALIS procedure with maximum likelihood, was used to determine the fit indices through the Levenberg-Marquardt optimisation procedure in the CFA process. The Levenberg-Marquardt optimisation procedure has the advantage that it can speedily and accurately resolve generic curve-fitting problems (Levenberg, 1944; Marquardt, 1963).

In CFA, the goodness of fit index (GFI) values range between 0 and 1 and model will have an acceptable fit with the data when the GFI values are near 1.0 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). Absolute fit indices consist of the chi-squared test, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR), the comparative fit Index (CFI), the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and the Bentler-Bonett non-normed index (NNI). These absolute fit indices were established using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013).

Chi-square values indicate of the degree to which the observed and the predicted covariances are different from one another (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). A smaller value of chi-square shows small variances between the covariance, hence signifying a better fit to the data (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2013).

A NNI value between .90 and .95 is regarded as borderline, above .95 is good, and below .90 is perceived to be a model with a poor fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Keith, 2014). In this study

CFI values close to $>.90$ and higher were considered to show a satisfactory model fit (Keith, 2014). Low AIC values indicate a marginal fit versus model that fails to fit the data (De Carvalho & Chima, 2014; Kline, 2011). Chai and Draxler (2014) and Kline (2011) advise that a borderline value of RMSEA and SRMR for model approval is $< .10$, whereas a value of $< .08$ and lower, is regarded as satisfactory for model fit.

5.8.5.5 Level of significance: tests for significant mean differences

A significance level of $p \leq .05$ shows that the tests of mean differences are significant and valid. In order to determine the effect size of the mean differences, Cohen's d is utilised. The practical effect sizes of Cohen's d are suggested in Table 5.13 below (Cohen et al., 2013; Gravetter et al., 2020):

Table 5.13
Levels of Statistical Significance of Cohen's d

Practical effect size	Significance at $p \leq .05$
Small effect	$d = .02$
Medium effect	$d = .05$
Large effect	$d = .08$

Source: Author's own work

5.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

As a result of the design of the research there were a number of limitations to this study's research design, which were taken into consideration in the interpretation of the findings:

- The cross-sectional design of the study did not enable the researcher to control the research variables.
- The cross-sectional design furthermore did not permit the researcher to determine the causal connectedness of the significant relationships between the research variables. Thus, his research design did not allow the researcher to establish cause and effect, but rather to establish the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables with the view of constructing an overall retention framework.
- The cross-sectional design is predisposed to common method variance. In this study however, this was addressed by testing for common method variance.

- The cross-sectional mediational analysis utilised in this research made the study susceptible to the possibility of bias, and the support for mediation effects when there is no true mediation process in the sample (Fairchild & McDaniel, 2017). In this study, however, the cross-sectional mediation analysis did not aim to assess causal effects, but rather the direction and magnitude of links between variables. Cross-sectional mediation analysis for clarification offers understanding into the possible reason for results (that is, levels of satisfaction with retention practices), and per se help produce ideas for future longitudinal mediational designs (Mitchell & Maxwell, 2013).
- The socio-demographic variables were limited to race, gender, age, job level and tenure.
- The sample size ($n = 493$) was not large enough to permit the conclusions of the study to be generalised to the whole South African HEI working population.

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter was to discuss the empirical investigation. Included in the discussion were the population and description of the sample; the selection of and motivation for using the psychometric battery; the administration and scoring of the psychometric battery; ethical considerations; capturing of criterion data; the formulation of the research hypotheses; the statistical processing of the data, including the three stages (descriptive, correlational and inferential statistical analysis) conducted during the empirical investigation; and the statistical significance levels which were used to interpret the data.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information on the results of the various statistical analyses that were conducted in the study. The purpose of conducting these analyses was to test the formulated research hypotheses as outlined in Table 5.7 (Chapter 5). In this chapter, the statistical results of the empirical study are reported by means of descriptive statistics, correlations and inferential statistics. The chapter uses tables and figures to present the statistical results. The empirical results are integrated and interpreted in the discussion section of this chapter.

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

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H2.

Research aim 3: To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract, and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H3.

Research aim 4: To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H4.

Research aim 5: To conclude whether the variable empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and make a decision about the extent to which the data inform the construction

of a retention framework. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H5.

Research aim 6: To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H6.

6.1 PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS: TESTING FOR COMMON METHOD BIAS

The four scales, namely, the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) were subjected to tests for common method bias as explained in Chapter 5. Due to the cross-sectional research design approach and self-report measurement instruments used in this study, it was important to test for common method bias (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019).

Common method bias was established by using the Harman's one factor solution and a one factor CFA procedure (N = 493). A Harman's one factor test value of $>.50$ implies a one factor scale and presence of common method bias. Similarly, CFA good model fit of the one factor implies the presence of common method bias.

The results of these tests are summarised in Table 6.1 on the following page. Goodness-of-fit is indicated where RMSEA and SRMR are $\leq .08$ and CFI and NNI $\geq .90$ or higher (Garger et al., 2019; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). The analyses were done using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013).

Table 6.1
Harman's One Factor Solution and One-Factor CFA

	%	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
The Psycones Questionnaire (PQ)										
Harman's one factor solution	10.31%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
One factor CFA	n/a	7470.43	902	8.28	<.0001	.12	.12	.50	.47	7646.43
Organisational Justice Measure (OJM)										
Harman's one factor solution	11.60%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
One factor CFA	n/a	5073.89	170	29.85	<.0001	.24	.24	.59	.58	5153.89
Trust Relationship Audit (TRA)										
Harman's one factor solution	7.00%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
One factor CFA	n/a	1538.17	77	19.97	<.0001	.19	.21	.76	.75	1594.17
The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)										
Harman's one factor solution	11.42%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
One factor CFA	n/a	7651.40	819	9.34	<.0001	.13	.13	.44	.44	7819.40

Note: N = 493

Source: Author's own work

6.1.1 Common method bias of the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ)

Table 6.1 indicates that the Harman's one-factor solution for the PQ loaded onto one construct explained only 10.31% of the covariance between the scale variables. When the various factors of the PQ were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA one-factor model, the fit indices showed a poor model fit. A value of < 3 for the chi-squared (chi-square/df ratio) is

considered a good fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 8.28, which was too high. The RMSEA and SRMR should preferably be between 0 and 1. A value closer to 0 represents a better model fit; a value < .05 is considered a good fit, between .05 and .10 is considered to be a moderate fit and > .10 represents a poor fit. CFI and NNI values of >.90 are considered to be an acceptable fit. The one factor CFA fit indices were: RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .12; CFI = .50; NNI = .47; AIC = 7646.43. Overall, the one-factor CFA of the PQ indicates a poor fit. These results proposed that common method bias was not a severe threat to interpreting the findings concerning the PQ.

6.1.2 Common method bias of the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM)

Table 6.1 shows that the Harman's one-factor solution for the OJM loaded onto one construct explained only 11.60% of the covariance between the scale variables. When the various factors of the OJM were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA one-factor model, the fit indices indicated a poor model fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 29.85, which was too high. The one factor CFA fit indices were as follows: RMSEA = .24; SRMR = .24; CFI = .59; NNI = .58; AIC = 5153.89. Overall, the one-factor CFA of the OJM indicates a poor fit. These results suggested that common method bias was not a grave threat to interpreting the findings pertaining to the OJM.

6.1.3 Common method bias of the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA)

Table 6.1 shows that the Harman's one-factor solution for the TRA loaded onto one construct explained only 7.00% of the covariance between the scale variables. When the different factors of the TRA were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA one-factor model, the fit indices indicated a poor model fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 19.97, which was too high. The one factor CFA fit indices were: RMSEA = .19; SRMR = .21; CFI = .76; NNI = .75; AIC = 1594.17. Overall, the one-factor CFA of the TRA indicates a poor fit. These results proposed that common method bias was not a serious threat to interpreting the findings with regard to the TRA.

6.1.4 Common method bias of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

Table 6.1 shows that the Harman's one-factor solution for the RFMS loaded onto one construct explained only 11.42 % of the covariance between the scale variables. When the various factors of the RFMS were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA one-factor model, the fit indices indicated a poor model fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 9.34, which was too

high. The one factor CFA fit indices were as follows: RMSEA = .13; SRMR = .13; CFI = .44; NNI = .44; AIC = 7819.40. Overall, the one-factor CFA of the RFMS indicates a poor fit. These results suggested that common method bias was not a severe concern to interpreting the findings pertaining to the RFMS.

In summary, it was apparent that the one-factor CFA results for the various scales were consistent with the guidelines of Podsakoff et al. (2003), which suggest that common method bias was not a probable threat to the research findings.

6.2 PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS: ASSESSING CONSTRUCT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASUREMENT SCALES

The four scales, namely, the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) were also subjected to multifactor Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs), using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013) with the CALIS procedure, to assess the construct validity of the measurement model of each scale. This strategy helped to improve the model fit of each scale before proceeding with the testing of the research hypotheses. Table 6.2 reports the CFA results for each scale.

Two CFAs were performed on each measurement scale. Model one tested the data fit of the initial multifactor model, while model two tested an optimised version of the corresponding measurement scale in order to improve the model fit of the scale. Model optimisation was done by means of the Levenberg-Marquardt Optimisation procedure for covariance structure analysis (Levenberg, 1944; Marquardt, 1963).

The Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion was used to further assess the convergent validity of the measurement models of each scale. The Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion focuses on determining the amount of shared variance between the latent variables in a model, using the average variance extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2014). A CR of $>.70$ is accepted as an indicator of good model fit and an AVE value $>.70$ is accepted as a good statistic, while an AVE value of $\geq .50$ is considered to be acceptable. Such values indicate the construct reliability and convergent validity of a scale (Hair et al., 2014).

AVE measures the extent of variance detected by a construct versus the level that is a result of measurement error (Teo, 2011). According to Melnyk and Morrison-Beedy (2012), measurement error refers to the variance between the correct value of a variable and the value

measured through data collection. There are several factors that may cause measurement error, such as participants' responses to the researcher, mistakes in the measuring instrument, indecisive questions, and factors in the environment, for instance, noisy areas, as well as factors specific to the participant, such as fatigue or pain (Melnyk & Morrison-Beedy, 2012).

Discriminant validity is established when maximum shared variance (MSV) < AVE and average shared variance (ASV) < AVE (DeVellis, 2016). Each measurement scale was also evaluated in terms of internal consistency reliability by means of the Cronbach alpha coefficient and the more robust composite reliability (CR) coefficient (Raykov's rho). A Cronbach alpha coefficient of $\geq .70$ is an acceptable threshold to show reliability of the scale (Rose et al., 2014), and a CR value $\geq .70$ is considered acceptable (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Sideridis et al., 2018).

6.2.1 Assessing construct validity and reliability of the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ)

Table 6.2 below reports the CFA results for the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ).

Table 6.2
Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the PQ

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	<i>p</i>	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
CFA model 1	3847.63	896	4.29	<.0001	.08	.06	.78	.73	4035.63
CFA optimised model 2	1886.55	755	2.50	<.0001	.06	.06	.91	.86	2098.55

N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Model 1 indicated the following fit indices: Chi-square = 3847.63; df = 896; Chi-square/df = 4.29; *p* = < .0001; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .06; CFI = .78; NNI = .73; AIC = 4035.63. A value of < 3 for the chi-squared (chi-square/df ratio) is considered a good fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 4.29, which was too high. The RMSEA and SRMR should preferably be between 0 and 1. A value closer to 0 represents a better model fit; a value < .05 is considered a good fit, between .05 and .10 is considered to be a moderate fit, and > .10 represents a poor fit. The RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .08 and .06 respectively. This indicates a moderate fit, seeing that the RMSEA and the SRMR values were between .05 and .10. CFI and NFI values of >.90 are considered to be an acceptable fit. The CFI = .87 and the NNI = .73, which shows a poor fit.

Model 2 (optimised multifactor model) showed the following fit indices: Chi-square = 1886.55; df = 755; Chi-square/df = 2.50; $p = < 0001$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .06; CFI = .91; NNI = .86; AIC = 2044.21. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 2.43, which was a good fit. RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .06 and .06 respectively, which indicates a moderate model fit. In model 2, the CFI = .91 which shows an acceptable fit, and the NFI = .86, which is close to .90 and deemed acceptable for the purpose of the research.

Model 1 consisted of observed variables only, and in order to improve the model fit, the items were loaded on the latent variables as well (optimised model 2). When comparing the optimised model 2 with the model 1, model 2 showed a better fit than model 1. The AIC of the optimised model was also lower than the AIC value of model 1. Thus, the best fit CFA measurement model (2) of the PQ was used in the further statistical analyses conducted.

The internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the PQ are reported in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3
Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the PQ

Scale dimension	Cronbach alpha coefficient	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Construct validity CR > AVE AVE > .50	Discriminant validity MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Employer obligations	.94	.94	.50	.80	.55	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	No MSV > AVE ASV > AVE
Employee obligations	.90	.90	.41	.21	.15	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Job satisfaction	.90	.89	.58	.80	.52	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Partially MSV > AVE ASV < AVE
State of the PC	.87	.90	.46	.80	.57	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	No MSV > AVE ASV > AVE
Overall PQ	.94	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: N = 493; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; ASV: average shared variance; PC: Psychological contract

Source: Author's own work

The Cronbach alpha coefficients and CR values were all above $>.85$ which shows high internal consistency reliability of the PQ. Table 6.3 also provides evidence of convergent validity of the PQ with the CR values being larger than the AVE values, and the AVE values of employer obligations (.50) and job satisfaction (.58) being $\geq .50$, which is acceptable. The AVE values of employee obligations (.41) and state of the psychological contract (.46) fell just below the threshold of $\geq .50$. As shown in Table 6.3, some issues concerning discriminant validity may be present due to measurement error within the employee obligations and state of the psychological contract subscales. Further refinement may be needed in future research in order to further improve the discriminant validity of the PQ. The discrepancies in discriminant and convergent validity of the PQ were considered in the interpretation of the findings.

Overall, the structural construct validity of PQ, as provided by the CFA results, confirmed that further statistical analysis was warranted and valid. Furthermore, the PQ partially achieved construct validity, and the all four of the subscales obtained high reliabilities. The AVEs employee obligations and state of the psychological contract fell short of the threshold of $.50$. Thus, the PQ showed acceptable construct validity and reliability for the purpose of this research.

6.2.2 Assessing construct validity and reliability of the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM)

Table 6.4 below reports the CFA results for the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM).

Table 6.4
Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the OJM

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
CFA model 1	12060.89	190	63.49	<.0001	.08	.03	.96	.94	744.90
CFA optimised model 2	522.54	163	3.21	<.0001	.07	.03	.97	.95	646.54

N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Model 1 indicated the following fit indices: Chi-square = 12060.89; df = 190; Chi-square/df = 63.49; $p = < .0001$; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .03; CFI = .96; NNI = .94; AIC = 744.90 The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 63.49, which was too high. The RMSEA in the model = .08 which shows a moderate fit. SRMR value in the model = .03 and this indicates a good fit. The CFI = .96 and the NFI .94, which indicates an acceptable fit.

Model 2 (optimised multifactor model) showed the following fit indices: Chi-square = 522.54; df = 163; Chi-square/df = 3.21; $p < .0001$; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .03; CFI = .97; NNI = .95; AIC = 646.54. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 3.21, which was acceptable. The RMSEA in the model = .07 which indicates a moderate fit. SRMR value in the model = .03 and this indicates a good fit. CFI and NNI values of $>.90$ are considered to be an acceptable fit. The CFI = .97 and the NNI .95, which indicates an acceptable fit.

Model 1 consists of observed variables only and in order to improve the model fit, the items were loaded on the latent variables as well (optimised model 2). When comparing the optimised model 2 with the model 1, the fit indices of model 2 fell within the same ranges as model 1. However, when the values of model 1 are compared to the optimised model 2, it is clear that model 2 (with lower AIC value) indicated a better fit than model 1. Thus, the best fit CFA measurement model (2) of the OJM was used in the further statistical analyses conducted.

The internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the OJM are reported in Table 6.5 underneath.

Table 6.5
Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the OJM

Scale dimension	Cronbach alpha coefficient	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Construct validity CR > AVE AVE > .50	Discriminant validity MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Distributive justice	.96	.93	.67	.66	.61	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Procedural justice	.96	.93	.67	.67	.61	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV ≤ AVE ASV < AVE
Interpersonal justice	.96	.95	.85	.55	.52	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Informational justice	.96	.97	.87	.81	.63	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Overall OJM	.93	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: N = 493; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; ASV: average shared variance

Source: Author's own work

The Cronbach alpha coefficients and CR values were all above $>.90$ indicating high internal consistency reliability of the OJM. Table 6.5 provides evidence of convergent validity of the OJM with the CR values being larger than the AVE values, and all AVE values being $\geq .50$, which is adequate. Table 6.5 also shows acceptable discriminant validity of the OJM, with all the MSV and ASV values being smaller than the AVE values.

Overall, the structural construct validity of OJM, as provided by the CFA results, confirmed that further statistical analysis was defensible and valid. Furthermore, the OJM achieved construct validity, the subscales obtained high reliabilities and the AVEs for all four of the subscales fell above the threshold of $.50$. Therefore, the OJM indicated acceptable construct validity and reliability.

6.2.3 Assessing construct validity and reliability of the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA)

Table 6.6 below reports the CFA results for the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA).

Table 6.6
Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the TRA

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	<i>p</i>	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
CFA model 1	1317.89	76	17.34	<.0001	.18	.13	.79	.79	1375.89
CFA model 2	148.62	59	2.52	<.0001	.06	.05	.99	.98	240.62

N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Model 1 indicated the following fit indices: Chi-square = 1317.89; df = 76; Chi-square/df = 17.34; $p = < .0001$; RMSEA = .18; SRMR = .13; CFI = .79; NNI = .79; AIC = 1375.89. A value of < 3 for the chi-squared (chi-square/df ratio) is considered a good fit. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 17.34, which was too high. The RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .18 and .13 respectively. This indicates a poor fit, seeing that the RMSEA and the SRMR values were between $> .10$. The CFI = .79 and the NNI .79, which shows a poor fit.

Model 2 (optimised multifactor model) showed the following fit indices: Chi-square = 148.62; df = 59; Chi-square/df = 2.52; $p = < .0001$; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .05; CFI = .99; NNI = .98;

AIC = 240.62. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 2.52, which was a good fit. RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .06 and .05 respectively, which indicates a moderate model fit. In model 2, the CFI = .99 and the NNI = .98, which shows an acceptable fit.

Model 1 consists of observed variables only and in order to improve the model fit, the items were loaded on the latent variables as well (optimised model 2). When comparing the optimised model 2 with the model 1, model 2 (with lowest AIC value) showed a better fit than model 1. Thus, the best fit CFA measurement model (2) of the TRA was used in the further statistical analyses conducted.

The internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the TRA are reported in Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7
Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the TRA

Scale dimension	Cronbach alpha coefficient	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Construct validity CR > AVE AVE > .50	Discriminant validity MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Relationship with supervisor/manager	.97	.97	.87	.89	.89	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	No MSV > AVE ASV > AVE
Organisational trust	.84	.74	.28	.89	.89	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	No MSV > AVE ASV > AVE
Overall TRA	.92	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: N = 493; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; ASV: average shared variance

Source: Author's own work

The Cronbach alpha coefficients and CR values were all above $>.70$, indicating good internal consistency reliability of the TRA. Table 6.7 also provides evidence of convergent validity of the TRA with the CR values being larger than the AVE values, and the AVE value of relationship with supervisor/manager subscale (.87) is $\geq .50$, which is acceptable. However, the AVE value of the organisational trust subscale (.28) fell short of the threshold of $\geq .50$. Some issues are indicated with regard to discriminant validity, with the MSV and the ASV values being larger than the AVE values. These inconsistencies may be present due to measurement error within the subscales. Further refinement may be needed in future research

to further improve the discriminant validity of the TRA. The discrepancies in discriminant validity of the TRA were considered in the interpretation of the findings.

Generally, the structural construct validity of TRA, as provided by the CFA results, confirmed that further statistical analysis was warranted and valid. Furthermore, the TRA achieved construct validity, and the subscales obtained high reliabilities. The AVE for organisational trust fell short of the threshold of .50. Thus, the TRA showed acceptable construct validity and reliability.

6.2.4 Assessing construct validity and reliability of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

Table 6.8 beneath reports the CFA results for the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS).

Table 6.8
Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the RFMS

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
CFA model 1	2423.32	798	3.04	<.0001	.06	.07	.87	.81	2633.32
CFA optimised model 2	1820.21	749	2.43	<.0001	.05	.06	.91	.86	2044.21

N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Model 1 indicated the following fit indices: Chi-square = 2423.32; df = 798; Chi-square/df = 3.04; $p = < .0001$; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .07; CFI = .87; NNI = .81; AIC = 2633.32. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 3.04, which was acceptable. The RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .06 and .07 respectively. This indicates a moderate fit, seeing that the RMSEA and the SRMR values were between .05 and .10. The CFI = .87 and the NNI .81, which shows a poor fit.

Model 2 (optimised multifactor model) showed the following fit indices: Chi-square = 1820.21; df = 749; Chi-square/df = 2.43; $p = < .0001$; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .06; CFI = .91; NNI = .86; AIC = 2044.21. The chi-square/df ratio in the model = 2.43, which was a good fit. RMSEA and the SRMR values in the model = .05 and .06 respectively, which indicates a moderate model fit. In model 2, the CFI = .91 which shows an acceptable fit, and the NNI = .86, which was close to .90 and deemed acceptable for the purpose of the research.

Model 1 consists of observed variables only and in order to improve the model fit, the items were loaded on the latent variables as well (optimised model 2). When comparing the optimised model 2 with the model 1, model 2 (with lowest AIC) showed a better fit than model 1. Thus, the best fit CFA measurement model (2) of the RFMS was used in the further statistical analyses conducted.

The internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the RFMS are reported in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9
Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the RFMS

Scale dimension	Cronbach alpha coefficient	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	Construct validity CR > AVE AVE > .50	Discriminant validity MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Compensation	.94	.94	.56	.44	.33	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Job characteristics	.64	.60	.30	.48	.37	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	No MSV > AVE ASV > AVE
Training and development opportunities	.90	.90	.61	.57	.39	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Supervisor support	.85	.83	.47	.44	.29	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Career opportunities	.80	.80	.46	.57	.36	Partially CR > AVE AVE < .50	Partially MSV > AVE ASV < AVE
Work-life balance	.89	.90	.70	.20	.15	Yes CR > AVE AVE > .50	Yes MSV < AVE ASV < AVE
Overall RFMS	.93	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes: N = 493; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; ASV: average shared variance

Source: Author's own work

The Cronbach alpha coefficients and CR values were all above $>.70$ (with the exception of the job characteristics subscale), indicating good internal consistency reliability of the RFMS. The reliability coefficients for the job characteristics subscale ($\alpha = .64$; $CR = .60$) were regarded as acceptable for large group analysis purposes. However, the lower reliability of the subscale was considered in the interpretation of the findings.

Table 6.9 provides additional evidence of convergent validity of the RFMS with the CR values being larger than the AVE values, and the AVE values of compensation (.56), training and development opportunities (.61) and work-life balance (.70) being $\geq .50$, which is acceptable. The subscales of job characteristics (.30), supervisor support (.47) and career opportunities (.46) subscale fell just below the threshold of $\geq .50$. However, some issues pertaining to discriminant validity may be present due to measurement error within the job characteristics and career opportunities subscales. Further refinement may be needed in future research in order to further improve the discriminant validity of the RFMS. The discrepancies in discriminant validity of the RFMS were considered in the interpretation of the findings.

Overall, the structural construct validity of RFMS, as provided by the CFA results, confirmed that further statistical analysis was warranted and valid. Furthermore, the RFMS achieved construct validity, and the subscales obtained high reliabilities except for the job characteristics subscale. The AVEs for job characteristics, supervisor support and career opportunities fell short of the threshold of $.50$. However, for the purpose of the present research, the RFMS showed acceptable construct validity and reliability.

6.3 CFA: ASSESSING DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF THE OVERALL MEASUREMENT MODEL

CFA, using SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013), was conducted to assess whether the measurement model including all four scales and their respective subscales, namely, the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) and their constructs had discriminant validity before testing the research hypotheses. This strategy helped to assess the possibility of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity arises when there are strong correlations between two or more independent/predictor variables ($r \geq .80$) (Assaf et al., 2019; Rovai et al., 2013). Multicollinearity creates redundant data, skewing the results of a model. (Kalnins, 2018; Salkind, 2018).

CFA was conducted to assess the discriminant validity of the overall measurement model, both by means of a one factor solution CFA as well as a multi factor solution CFA. As shown in Table 6.10, the results of the multi factor solution CFA showed a better goodness-of-fit and were used for further analysis.

The results of the CFA are summarised in Table 6.10 below. Goodness-of-fit were indicated if RMSEA and SRMR values were $\leq .08$ and NNI and CFI values $\geq .90$ or higher (Assaf et al., 2019; Bentler & Bonnet, 1980; Brown & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 2014; Kaizad, 2010)

Table 6.10
CFA: Discriminant Validity

	One factor solution (CFA)	Multi factor solution (CFA)
Overall measurement model	Chi-Square/df = 5.34	Chi-Square/df = 1.66
	RMSEA = .09	RMSEA = .04
	SRMR = .11	SRMR = .07
	CFI = .36	CFI = .91
	NNI = .35	NNI = .90
	AIC = 37322.953	AIC = 11554.3045

Source: Author's own work

The CFA for the overall multifactor measurement model showed construct validity, with the fit indices indicating RMSEA and SRMR of below .08 and a CFI and NNI $\geq .90$. (Chi-square/df ratio = 1.66***; $p < .000$; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .07; CFI = .91; NNI = .90; AIC = 11554.3045).

The CFA results therefore provided evidence of the discriminant validity of the overall measurement model and justified proceeding with the testing of the research hypotheses. The fit statistics also indicated that multicollinearity was not a threat to interpreting the findings.

6.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics is considered to be statistical methods that effectively describe or encapsulate the characteristics of a collection of data (Ho & Yu, 2015). In this section, the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis for each of the measuring instruments (Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS), are reported.

A mean score is ascertained by calculating the sum of all the individual scores for each subscale and then dividing the total score by the number of scores in each subscale (Trafimow et al., 2018). The means afford an indication of the normality of the data, while the skewness specifies whether the data are non-parametric (Trafimow et al., 2018). The standard deviation shows how the data points are clustered around the mean, and the kurtosis indicates whether the dataset contains too many outliers (Ho & Yu, 2015).

6.4.1 Means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ)

Table 6.11 below reports the means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ).

The PQ scores were determined by calculating the mean scores for all the items relating to the subscales of employer obligations, employee obligations, satisfaction with the psychological contract and the state of the psychological contract. The employer obligations and employee obligations subscales were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale where 0 indicated that promises had not been made and 5 indicated that promises had been made and fully kept; the higher the score, the higher the degree of fulfilment of the psychological contract.

The satisfaction with the psychological contract and state of the psychological contract subscales were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Again, the higher the score, the higher the satisfaction with the psychological contract and the state of the psychological contract was deemed to be. Table 6.11 provides the descriptive information on the PQ subscales.

Table 6.11
Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis of the PQ

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Employer obligations	3.56	1.26	-.26	-.36
Employee obligations	5.27	.69	-1.93	-.78
Job satisfaction	4.06	.96	-.49	6.30
State of the PC	2.98	.89	-.21	-.24
Overall PQ	4.09	.72	-.16	-.36

Notes: N = 493; PC: Psychological contract

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.11 indicates that the data were negatively skewed for all of the subscales of the PQ, with the skewness = -.16 for the overall scale. All of the data points were on the higher side of the scale. The mean = 4.09 and the standard deviation = .72 for the overall scale. The kurtosis of the overall scale was -.36, indicating that there were few outliers. The kurtosis for a larger sample, such as the one used in this study, would be fairly high because of the sample size.

The mean (5.27) and the standard deviation (1.26) of the sub-factor ‘Employee obligations’ was the highest, while the mean (2.98) and standard deviation (.89) of the factor ‘State of the psychological contract’ was the lowest. The mean score of 5.27 for employee obligations is a relatively high score implying positive perceptions of fulfilling obligations toward the employer. The perceptions about the state of the psychological contract were relatively moderate.

6.4.2 Means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM)

Table 6.12 underneath reports the means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM).

The OJM scores were determined by calculating the mean scores for all the items pertaining to the subscales of procedural justice, distributive justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice. All of the subscales were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where participants had to respond to different statements regarding the degree of their perceptions of organisational justice in an organisation. The higher the score, the higher the degree of organisational justice. A null result (0) indicated that organisational justice was experienced to a very small extent, whereas 5 indicated that organisational justice was experienced to a large extent. Table 6.12 provides the descriptive information on the OJM subscales.

Table 6.12
Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis of the OJM

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Procedural justice	2.61	1.02	.12	-.65
Distributive justice	3.23	1.16	-.39	-.62
Interpersonal justice	3.40	1.18	-.45	-.55
Informational justice	3.06	1.15	-.07	-.74
Overall OJM	3.00	.93	-.11	-.48

Note: N = 493

Source: Author’s own work

Table 6.12 indicates that the data were negatively skewed for most of the subscales of the OJM, with the skewness = $-.11$ for the overall scale. Most of the data points were on the higher side of the scale. The mean = 3.00 and the standard deviation = $.93$ for the overall scale. The kurtosis of the overall scale was $-.48$, indicating that there were few outliers. The kurtosis for a larger sample, such as the one used in this study, would be fairly high because of the sample size.

The mean (3.40) and standard deviation (1.18) of the sub-factor 'Interpersonal justice' was the highest, while the mean (2.61) and standard deviation (1.02) of the factor 'Procedural justice' was the lowest. The mean score of 3.40 for interpersonal justice is a relatively high score implying positive perceptions of fairness and respect in interpersonal treatment. The perceptions about procedural justice were relatively moderate.

6.4.3 Means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA)

Table 6.13 on the following page reports the means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA).

The TRA scores were determined by calculating the mean scores for all the items connected to the subscales of relationship with supervisor/manager as well as organisational trust. Both the subscales were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the measurement of the relationship with supervisor/manager subscale, participants had to indicate the degree to which they disagreed or disagreed with statements regarding their relationships with their supervisor or manager, where 1 indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement, and 5 indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement.

The higher the score, the higher the level of trust within this relationship. The organisational trust subscale was measured by participants indicating to what extent they trusted in top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues. The higher the score, the higher the degree of organisational trust, where 1 indicated that they never experienced organisational trust, and 5 indicated that they always experienced organisational trust.

Table 6.13

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis of the TRA

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Relationship with manager	3.60	1.16	-.63	-.42
Organisational trust	3.02	.73	.08	.13
Overall TRA	3.23	.80	-.35	-.19

Note: N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.13 indicates that the data were negatively skewed for the 'Relationship with supervisor/manager' subscale as well as for the overall TRA (-.35). The data points the two subscales of the TRA that were used in this study, were on the higher side of the scale. The mean = 3.23 and the standard deviation = .80 for the overall scale. The kurtosis of the overall scale was -.19, indicating that there were few outliers. The kurtosis for a larger sample, such as the one used in this study, would be fairly high because of the sample size.

The mean (3.60) and standard deviation (1.16) of the sub-factor 'Relationship with supervisor/manager' was the highest, while the mean (3.02) and standard deviation (.73) of the factor 'Organisational trust' was the lowest. The mean score of 3.60 for relationship with supervisor/manager is a relatively high score implying positive perceptions of trusting relationships with the supervisor/manager. The perceptions pertaining to organisational trust were also relatively high.

6.4.4 Means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

The RFMS scores were determined by calculating the mean scores for all the items concerning the subscales of compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance. Participants had to respond to statements with regard to the extent to which they felt satisfied or dissatisfied with various retention constructs, on a 6-point Likert-type scale. The subscale with the highest mean scores showed the retention factors most valued by the participants. Table 6.14 on the next page reports the descriptive information for the RFMS subscales.

Table 6.14

Means, Standard Deviations (SD), Skewness and Kurtosis of the RFMS

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Compensation	3.50	.82	-.35	-.16
Job characteristics	4.40	1.05	-.57	.41
Training and development opportunities	3.94	1.30	-.45	-.65
Supervisor support	3.96	1.30	-.22	-.57
Career opportunities	3.16	1.26	.18	-.74
Work-life balance	3.35	1.55	.02	-1.16
Overall RFMS	3.74	.72	-.28	-.02

Note: N = 493

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.14 indicates that the data were negatively skewed for most of the subscales of the RFMS, with the skewness = $-.28$ for the overall scale. Most of the data points were on the higher side of the scale. The kurtosis of the overall scale was $-.02$, indicating that there were few outliers. The kurtosis for a larger sample, such as the one used in this study, would be fairly high because of the sample size.

The mean = 3.74 and the standard deviation = $.72$ for the overall scale. The mean (4.40) and standard deviation (1.05) of the sub-factor 'Job characteristics' was the highest, while the mean (3.16) and standard deviation (1.26) of the factor 'career opportunities' was the lowest. The mean score of 4.40 for job characteristics was relatively high implying high level of satisfaction with job characteristics. The satisfaction with career opportunities was also relatively high.

In summary, the following core conclusions were drawn from the descriptive results described in the foregoing section:

The highest score on Psycones Questionnaire (PQ) (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006), was for employee obligations (5.27), indicating that participants felt that they had made and kept most of their promises to their employer. The score for employer obligations (3.56) was an indication that participants felt that the organisation had made promises but had not kept all of them. Job satisfaction's score (4.06) showed that participants indicated relatively positive emotions associated with their psychological contracts. The score on the state of the

psychological contract (2.98) indicated that participants were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the state of their psychological contract.

The highest score on the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM) (Colquitt, 2001), was for interpersonal justice (3.40), which showed that participants experienced relatively high levels of organisational justice within their interpersonal relationships with their supervisors and felt that they were treated reasonably fair by their supervisors. The score for distributive justice (3.23) also showed that participants felt moderately positive about the fairness and equity of the distribution of resources within their organisation. With regard to informational justice (3.06), participants similarly perceived the fairness and justice of information communicated them at moderate levels. The score for procedural justice indicated that participants perceived the levels of fairness and justice in the application of procedures within their organisation only to a small degree.

With regard to the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005), the highest score was for relationship with supervisor/manager (3.60), and it indicated that participants felt that there were moderate levels of trust within this relationship. The score for organisational trust (3.02) showed that participants often perceived that they could trust the organisation as a whole, top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues.

The participants gave moderate scores on most of the subscales of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006), indicating that they were slightly satisfied with these retention factors. Job characteristics scored the highest (4.40), indicating that participants felt relatively satisfied with their job characteristics. The scores for training and development opportunities (3.94) and supervisor support (3.96) showed that participants slightly satisfied with these retention practices. Career opportunities (3.16) and work-life balance (3.35) were rated lowest, suggesting that participants felt somewhat dissatisfied about these two retention factors. The scores for compensation were on the borderline between slightly satisfied and slightly dissatisfied (3.50).

6.5 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the socio-demographic variables and the four scales, namely, the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS). Correlations were performed, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), to assess the

empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention (research aim 1). Moreover, they were used to assess whether the results provided significant evidence in support of research hypothesis 1 (H1).

H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

6.5.1 Correlations between the demographic variables and the scale constructs

Spearman correlations and SAS software version 9.4 (2013) software were used to determine the relationship between the socio-demographic and the construct research variables.

Table 6.15 below provides a summary of the correlations between the socio-demographic variables and the constructs which are applicable to this research.

Table 6.15

Bivariate Correlations of the Socio-demographic, Independent, Mediator and Dependent Variables

Variables	Race	Gender	Age	Job level	Tenure
Employer obligations	-.06	.03	.02	.09*	-.09
Employee obligations	-.14***	.03	.04	.01	-.03
Job satisfaction	-.17***	.05	-.12	.02	-.17***
State of the PC	-.16***	-.02	.01	.05	-.07
Overall PQ	-.11**	.05	.03	.08	-.09
Distributive justice	-.00	-.00	.04	.05	-.04
Procedural justice	-.04	-.06	-.01	.03	-.02
Interpersonal justice	-.00	.06	.02	-.03	-.01
Informational justice	-.05	.04	.03	-.03	-.08
Overall OJM	-.02	.01	.03	.00	-.05
Relationship with manager	-.02	.04	.04	.04	-.00
Organisational trust	-.07	-.00	.03	.00	-.08
Overall TRA	-.06	.02	.03	.03	-.06
Compensation	.03	.06	.00	.09	-.02
Job characteristics	.02	-.02	.14	.20***	.03

Training and development opportunities	-07	-.01	.04	.06	-.04
Supervisor support	-.01	.03	.04	.11**	-.01
Career opportunities	-.27***	.02	-.14	-.05	-.30***
Work-life balance	-.38	-.10	-.22	-.15***	-.15
Overall RFMS	-.12	.02	-.00	.06	-.11**

Notes: N = 493; *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$; $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (moderate practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical effect size)

Source: Author's own work

6.5.1.1 Race

As indicated in Table 6.15, the results showed a significant negative bivariate correlation between race and employee obligations [PQ scale] ($r = -.14$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$); job satisfaction [PQ scale] ($r = -.17$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$); and state of the psychological contract [PQ scale] ($r = -.16$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$).

The results further showed a significant negative bivariate correlation with the overall PQ ($r = -.11$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .01$) career opportunities [RFMS] ($r = -.27$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$). There were no significant bivariate correlations between race and any of the subscales or overall scales of the OJM and TRA.

6.5.1.2 Gender

In terms of gender, Table 6.15 shows no significant bivariate correlations between gender and any of the subscales and overall scales of the PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS.

6.5.1.3 Age

In terms of age, Table 6.15 shows no significant bivariate correlations between age and any of the subscales and overall scales of the PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS.

6.5.1.4 Job level

As indicated in Table 6.15, the results showed a significant positive bivariate correlation between job level and job characteristics [RFMS] ($r = .20$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$); supervisor support [RFMS] ($r = .11$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .01$); work-life balance

[RFMS] ($r = .15$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$); and employer obligations [PQ scale] ($r = .09$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .05$) There were no significant bivariate correlations between job level and any of the subscales or overall scales of the OJM and TRA.

6.5.1.5 *Tenure*

As indicated in Table 6.15, the results showed a significant negative bivariate correlation between tenure and job satisfaction [PQ scale] ($r = -.17$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .001$).

The results further showed a significant negative bivariate correlation with career opportunities ($r = -.30$; moderate practical effect size; $p \leq .001$) and the overall RFMS ($r = -.11$; small practical effect size; $p \leq .01$). There were no significant bivariate correlations between tenure and any of the subscales or overall scales of the OJM and TRA.

6.5.2 Correlations between the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

Pearson-product moment correlations were calculated to establish the relationship between the respective research variables. Table 6.16 on the following page summarises the results of these correlations.

Table 6.16

Bivariate Correlations of the Independent and Dependent Variables

Variables	Compensation	Job characteristics	Training and development opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work-life balance	Overall RFMS	Employer obligations	Employee obligations	Job satisfaction	State of the PC	Overall PQ	Procedural justice	Distributive justice	Interpersonal justice	Informational justice	Overall OJM	Relationship with manager	Organisational trust	Overall TRA	
Compensation	-																				
Job characteristics	.25***	-																			
Training and development opportunities	.45***	.35***	-																		
Supervisor support	.29***	.32***	.31***	-																	
Career opportunities	.32***	.24***	.48***	.28***	-																
Work-life balance	.14***	-.07	.01	.18***	.09	-															
Overall RFMS	.75***	.49***	.73***	.63***	.64***	.36***	-														
Employer obligations	.48***	.39***	.50***	.38***	.47***	.13	.66***	-													
Employee obligations	.16***	.19***	.18***	.17***	.15***	-.01	.23***	.23***	-												
Job satisfaction	.46***	.36***	.43***	.36***	.44***	.35***	.68***	.56***	.13	-											
State of the PC	.63***	.31***	.48***	.53***	.50***	.25***	.77***	.70***	.15	.65***	-										
Overall PQ	.54***	.42***	.52***	.45***	.51***	.18***	.73***	.90***	.53***	.68***	.78***	-									
Procedural justice	.34***	.24***	.31***	.33***	.34***	.08	.45***	.48***	.16***	.38***	.54***	.51***	-								
Distributive justice	.38***	.18***	.29***	.31***	.32***	.16***	.46***	.45***	.18***	.39***	.42***	.48***	.52***	-							

Variables	Compensation	Job characteristics	Training and development opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work-life balance	Overall RFMS	Employer obligations	Employee obligations	Job satisfaction	State of the PC	Overall PQ	Procedural justice	Distributive justice	Interpersonal justice	Informational justice	Overall OJM	Relationship with manager	Organisational trust	Overall TRA
Interpersonal justice	.30***	.23***	.29***	.45***	.34***	.13	.49***	.48***	.17***	.45***	.51***	.52***	.57***	.47***	-					
Informational justice	.29***	.22***	.32***	.49***	.37***	.16***	.51***	.47***	.17***	.44***	.54***	.52***	.65***	.51***	.79***	-				
Overall OJM	.39***	.26***	.37***	.47***	.42***	.15***	.57***	.56***	.20***	.49***	.61***	.61***	.86***	.73***	.84***	.89***	-			
Relationship with manager	.34***	.29***	.27***	.72***	.29***	.17***	.58***	.46***	.20***	.40***	.61***	.53***	.42***	.33***	.62***	.61***	.59***	-		
Organisational trust	.41***	.27***	.35***	.46***	.44***	.14***	.59***	.59***	.29***	.48***	.67***	.66***	.50***	.40***	.59***	.58***	.62***	.63***	-	
Overall TRA	.42***	.31***	.35***	.64***	.41***	.17***	.64***	.59***	.27***	.49***	.71***	.67***	.51***	.41***	.67***	.66***	.67***	.89***	.92***	-

Notes: N = 493; *** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$; $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (moderate practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical effect size); PC: Psychological contract

Source: Author's own work

As specified in Table 6.16, the results showed significant positive correlations between the four subscale dimensions of the PQ, which ranged between $r \geq .15 \leq .90$ (small to large practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). The four subscale dimensions of the PQ also had significant and positive correlations with the overall RFMS, OJM and TRA scales ($r \geq .45 \leq .67$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .001$), indicating the construct validity of the overall construct of psychological contract.

In terms of the OJM, significant positive correlations were observed between the four subscale dimensions, which ranged between $r \geq .16 \leq .79$ (small to large practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). The four subscale dimensions of the OJM also had significant and positive correlations with the overall RFMS, OJM and TRA scales ($r \geq .57 \leq .67$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .001$), indicating the construct validity of the overall construct of organisational justice.

In terms of the TRA, significant positive correlations were observed between the two subscale dimensions, which ranged between $r \geq .14 \leq .72$ (small to large practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). The two subscale dimensions of the TRA also had significant and positive correlations with the overall RFMS, PQ and OJM scales ($r \geq .64 \leq .67$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .001$), indicating the construct validity of the overall construct of trust.

As specified in Table 6.16, the results showed significant correlation between the six subscale dimensions of the RFMS, in the range of $r \geq .14 \leq .48$ (small to large practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). The six subscale dimensions of the RFMS also had significant and positive correlations with the overall PQ, OJM and TRA scales ($r \geq .64 \leq .73$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .001$), indicating the construct validity of the overall construct of satisfaction with HR retention factors.

In general, the results show significant correlations among the socio-demographic variables of race, job level and tenure, the variables on the PQ scale, the OJM scale, the TRA scale and the RFMS, with the values varying from small to large practical effect size. Thus, the results for the correlation analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1 (H1).

H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

6.6 INFERENCE STATISTICS: STEPWISE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

This section reports on the stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), which was used to determine whether the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices (research aim 2). Stepwise regression analysis was used to assess whether the results provided significant evidence in support of research hypothesis 2 (H2).

H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

As explained in Chapter 5, stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination procedure was applied to identify the variables that significantly predict the RFMS. Fourteen steps were performed in order to eliminate the non-significant variables, and only the final step (step 14) is reported in Table 6.17.

The results of the final step of the stepwise regression analysis with backward elimination are reported in Table 6.17 below.

Table 6.17
Final step: Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variable	Estimate (β)	Standard error	t-value	p	Tolerance
Intercept	.95	.18	5.38	<.0001	.
Job level	-.17	.05	-3.53	.001	.90
Employer obligations	.06	.03	2.32	.02	.44
Employee obligations	.07	.03	2.08	.04	.90
Job satisfaction	.23	.03	7.15	<.0001	.54
State of the psychological contract	.31	.04	7.49	<.0001	.35
Distributive justice	.05	.02	2.48	.01	.77
Relationship with supervisor/ manager	.06	.02	2.66	.02	.60
Model info					
F	94.53				
p	<.0001				
Adjusted R^2	.68				

Note: $n = 347$ (146 missing values)

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.17 shows that the overall model ($F = 94.53$; $p = <.0001$; adjusted $R^2 = .68$; large practical effect) accounted for 68% of the variance explained in the RFS construct. The *state of the psychological contract* contributed the most in explaining the variance in the RFMS construct ($\beta = .31$; $p = <.0001$), followed by *job satisfaction* as an aspect of PQ ($\beta = .23$; $p = <.05$) and job level as a socio-demographic variable ($\beta = -.17$; $p = <.001$).

Relationship with supervisor/manager as an aspect of TRA ($\beta = .06$; $p = <.05$), *employer obligations* ($\beta = .07$; $p = <.05$) and *employee obligations* ($\beta = .06$; $p = <.05$) as aspects of the PQ, as well as *distributive justice* as an aspect of OJM ($\beta = .05$; $p = <.05$), contributed to a lesser extent to explaining the variance in the RFMS construct. The tolerance values were all relatively high and all above the threshold of $<.20$ for concerns about multicollinearity.

In summary, the results indicated that job level (socio-demographic variable), employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and the state of the psychological contract (PQ scale), distributive justice (OJM scale), as well as relationship with supervisor/manager (TRA scale), positively and significantly predicted satisfaction with HR retention practices (RFMS). Thus, the results for the stepwise regression analysis produced partial support for research hypothesis 2 (H2).

H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

Preliminary analysis 1: Towards constructing a framework for staff retention

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis 1 (H1)

The correlation results in section 6.5 provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H1. Overall, these results showed significant bivariate correlations between the socio-demographic variables of race, job level and tenure, as well as the subscales of the PQ scale, the OJM, the TRA scale and the RFMS, which were small to large in practical effect size. With regard to the construction of a framework for staff retention, this implies that certain relationship dynamics between the constructs were apparent that justified further examination.

In summary, the following core conclusions were drawn:

Socio-demographic variables, Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

- Race was significantly, negatively correlated with employee obligations, job satisfaction, and state of the psychological contract as well as the overall PQ scale with small practical effect sizes. Race was also significantly negatively correlated with training and development opportunities and showed a small practical effect size.
- In terms of job level, significant positive correlations were observed with job characteristics, supervisor support and work-life balance. Job level was also significantly, positively correlated with employer obligations. All these correlations had small practical effect sizes.
- With regard to tenure, the results showed significant negative correlations with training and development opportunities with a moderate practical effect size, as well as with job satisfaction and the overall RFMS with a small practical effect size.
- Race, job level and tenure showed no significant correlations with any of the subscales or overall scales of the OJM and TRA.
- Gender and age did not reveal any significant correlations with any of the subscales and overall scales of the PQ, OJM, TRA or RFMS.

Psycones Questionnaire (PQ), Organisational Justice Measure (OJM), Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

- Significant positive correlations were found between the four subscale dimensions of the PQ with small to large practical effect sizes. The four subscale dimensions of the PQ also had significant and positive correlations with the overall OJM, TRA and RFMS with large practical effect sizes.
- Significant positive correlations were observed between the four subscale dimensions of the OJM, with small to large practical effect sizes. The four subscale dimensions of the OJM had significant and positive correlations with the overall PQ, TRA and RFMS as well with large practical effect sizes.
- With regard to the TRA, the results showed significant positive correlations between the two subscale dimensions, with small to large practical effect sizes. Furthermore, the two

subscale dimensions of the TRA also had significant and positive correlations with the overall RFMS, PQ and OJM scales with large practical effect sizes.

- There were significant positive correlations between the six subscale dimensions of the RFMS, with small to large practical effect sizes. In addition, the six subscale dimensions of the RFMS likewise showed significant and positive correlations with the overall PQ, OJM and TRA scales with large practical effect sizes.
- These correlations indicate the construct validity of the overall constructs of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis 2 (H2)

The stepwise regression results, outlined in section 6.6, provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis H2. Overall, the results showed that job level was the only socio-demographic variable that acted as a significant predictor of satisfaction with HR retention practices. Furthermore, the results showed that all the dimensions of the PQ scale, namely, employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and the state of the psychological contract, positively and significantly predicted satisfaction with HR retention practices. With regard to the OJM scale, only distributive justice, and in the TRA scale, only relationship with supervisor/manager was found to be significant predictors of satisfaction with HR retention practices.

In conclusion, the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment, which was the main aim of this research, should take into account that employees' job levels, in other words their specific positions and hierarchical levels, predict their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Furthermore, the retention framework should bear in mind that employees' perceptions regarding the promises and commitments that their organisation have made towards them, the expectations that employees have regarding the promises and commitments that they made towards their organisation, as well as employees' levels of job satisfaction and the state of their psychological contracts with their organisation, all predict their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Also, the retention framework should take cognisance that employees' perceptions regarding the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation, as well as their trust relationships with their supervisors and managers, also predict their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

The next step was to assess the relationship dynamics among the construct variables by means of moderated mediation regression analysis to further inform the construction of the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment.

6.7 INFERENCE STATISTICS: MODERATED MEDIATION REGRESSION ANALYSIS

This section reports on the moderated mediation regression analysis, using PROCESS Procedure for SPSS (release 3.00), developed by Hayes (2013), which was used to determine whether:

- Research aim 3: there is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.
- Research aim 4: organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Thus, regression-based moderated mediation analysis was used to assess whether the results provided significant supportive evidence for research hypotheses 3 and 4 (H3 and H4).

H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Based on the results of the stepwise regression results (section 6.6), only job level was considered as moderating (control) variable. Overall psychological contract was treated as independent variable, organisational justice and trust were treated as mediating variables and satisfaction with retention practices was treated as dependent variable.

Moderated mediation regression analysis is a statistical method used to assess whether the relationship between an independent/predictor variable and a dependent/outcome variable is impacted by a mediator variable (organisational justice and trust) or a moderator variable (Hayes, 2015; Hayes, 2018a). This procedure enables researchers to outline and understand the conditional nature by which a variable assigns its effect on a different variable and analysing hypotheses about conditional effects such as these (Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2018a; Hu & Jiang, 2018). Consequently, moderated mediation is applied to test research questions about how (mediation, or indirect effects) and under what circumstance (moderation, or interaction effects) certain effects function (Hayes, 2018b; Hsu et al., 2011; Preacher et al., 2007).

6.7.1 Moderation effects

Table 6.18 beneath reports the moderated mediation regression results indicating the moderating effect of job level on the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting satisfaction with HR retention factors.

Table 6.18
Interaction and Indirect Effects of the Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis

	<i>Coefficient/ effect (β)</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)</i>	
					<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Outcome variable: Organisational justice						
Psychological contract	.71	.08	8.94	.000	.56	.88
Job level	.48	.48	1.02	.31	-.45	1.43
Psychological contract x job level	-.11	.12	-.95	.34	-.34	.12
Model info						
<i>F</i> = 235.94						
<i>p</i> = .000						
<i>R</i> ² = .34						
Outcome variable: Trust						
Psychological contract	.73	.07	10.67	.000	.59	.86
Job level	.27	.41	.68	.50	-.52	1.07
Psychological contract x job level	-.06	.10	-.56	.57	-.25	.14
Model info						
<i>F</i> = 46.77						

$p = .000$

$R^2 = .40$

Outcome variable: Satisfaction with retention practices						
Psychological contract	.49	.10	8.16	.000	.37	.60
Job level	-.16	.30	-.54	.59	-.76	.43
Psychological contract x job level	.01	.07	.16	.87	-.13	.16

Model info

$F = 69,57$

$p = .000$

$R^2 = .59$

Note: $N = 354$ (missing values = 139); LLCI: lower level confidence interval; ULCI: upper level confidence interval; SE: standard error

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.18 shows that the overall model testing the interaction effect between the psychological contract and job level, in predicting organisational justice was significant ($F = 35.94$; $p = .000$; $R^2 = .34$; large practical effect) and it accounted for 34% of the variance explained in the organisational justice construct. Only psychological contract had a significant main effect on organisational justice ($\beta = .72$; $p = .000$; LLCI = .56; ULCI = .88). Job level did not have a significant main effect ($\beta = .49$; $p = .31$; LLCI = -.45; ULCI = 1.43) nor a significant interaction effect ($\beta = -.11$; $p = .34$; LLCI = -.34; ULCI = .12) in explaining the variance in organisational justice.

Table 6.18 also indicates that the overall model testing the interaction effect between the psychological contract and job level, in predicting trust was significant ($F = 46.77$; $p = .000$; $R^2 = .40$; large practical effect) and it accounted for 40% of the variance explained in the trust construct. Only psychological contract had a significant main effect on trust ($\beta = .73$; $p = .000$; LLCI = .59; ULCI = .86). Job level did not have a significant main effect ($\beta = .27$; $p = .50$; LLCI = -.52; ULCI = 1.07) nor a significant interaction effect ($\beta = -.06$; $p = .57$; LLCI = -.25; ULCI = .14) in explaining the variance in trust.

Table 6.18 lastly shows that the overall model testing the interaction effect between psychological contract and job level, in predicting satisfaction with retention practices was significant ($F = 69.57$; $p = .000$; $R^2 = .59$; large practical effect) and it accounted for 59% of the variance explained in the satisfaction with retention practices construct. Only psychological contract had a significant main effect on satisfaction with retention practices ($\beta = .49$; $p = .000$; LLCI = .37; ULCI = .60). Job level did not have a significant main effect ($\beta = -.16$; $p = .59$; LLCI =

= -.76; ULCI = .43) nor a significant interaction effect ($\beta = .01$; $p = .87$; LLCI = -.13; ULCI = .16) in explaining the variance in satisfaction with retention practices.

In summary, the results indicated that job level (socio-demographic variable), did not moderate either individuals' their perceptions of the psychological contract or their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Thus, the results for the moderated mediation regression analysis did not provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3 (H3).

H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

6.7.2 Moderated mediation effects

Table 6.19 below reports the moderated mediation regression results indicating the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, with job level as moderator.

Table 6.19

Interaction and Indirect Effects of the Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis

Conditional indirect effects of psychological contract on satisfaction with retention practices through organisational justice and trust at level of the moderator job level					
<i>Justice as mediator</i>	<i>Job level</i>	<i>Effect (β)</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>Boot LLCI</i>	<i>Boot ULCI</i>
	.00	.21	.03	.15	.28
	.00	.62	.27	.01	.12
	1.00	.93	.02	.05	.14
	1.00	.06	.02	.03	.09
<i>Indices of partial moderated mediation</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>Boot LLCI</i>	<i>Boot ULCI</i>		
	Job level	-.01	-.05	.01	
<i>Trust as mediator</i>	<i>Job level</i>	<i>Effect (β)</i>	<i>Boot SE</i>	<i>Boot LLCI</i>	<i>Boot ULCI</i>
	.00	.30	.04	.21	.38
	.00	.09	.04	.01	.16
	1.00	.13	.03	.08	.19

	1.00	.08	.02	.05	.13
<i>Indices of partial moderated mediation</i>	Index	<i>Boot LLCI</i>	<i>Boot ULCI</i>		
Job level	-.01	-.05	.03		

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.19 shows that the link between psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, through the mediating effect of organisational justice was significant for all the job level groups with the bootstrap LLCI and ULCI range containing no zero. However, the indices for the partial mediating effect of organisational justice in the link between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices showed that the mediating effect was not conditional upon job level.

Table 6.19 also shows that the link between psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, through the mediating effect of trust was significant for all the job level groups with the bootstrap LLCI and ULCI range containing no zero. However, the indices for the partial mediating effect of trust in the link between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices showed that the mediating effect was not dependent upon job level.

In summary, the results indicated that organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. Consequently, the results for the moderated mediation regression analysis provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 4 (H4).

H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

6.8 INFERENCE STATISTICS: SEM

In the following section, two structural equation models, based on the significant mediating relationship found between the independent (psychological contract) and dependent construct (satisfaction with retention practices) variables were investigated. SEM was used as a baseline and covariance structural analysis was conducted to test research hypothesis 5 (H5) empirically.

H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.

Table 6.20 below provides the goodness-of-fit statistics for the two SEM models that were tested. Model 1 only included the overall constructs, while model 2 included the items of each construct loading onto the relevant overall construct of each scale. The SAS CALIS procedure with maximum likelihood estimation of the covariance structure analysis was applied.

Table 6.20
Model Fit Statistics: Competing Structural Models

Model	Chi-square/df	P	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	AIC
1	110.67	.000***	.54	.09	.90	.90	128.67
2	1.73	.000***	.04	.10	.90	.80	11972.79

Note: *** $p < .001$

Source: Author's own work

Both SEM models were compared. Model 1 had very high RMSEA and chi-square/df values, while model 2 showed improvement regarding the RMSEA and chi-square/df values but lower NNI and higher (but acceptable) SRMR. However, the CFI was acceptable for model 2.

As shown in Table 6.20, model 2 had a lower chi-square value (1.73) than model 1 (110.67). Although the AIC value for model 1 (128.67) was considerably lower than that of model 2 (11972.79), the decision was made to retain model 2 as the measurement model with the best fit because of the better RMSEA and chi-square/df fit indices. The overall parallel indirect (mediating effect) for model 2 was $\beta = .41$; $p < .0001$; $SE = .03$ and $t = 15.17$.

Once the structural model with the best fit had been identified, the standardised path coefficients were evaluated to determine the convergent validity for the structural model's factor structure. A significant standardised path coefficient of .30 or more, is an indication that a variable contributes effectively to the construct it was intended to measure (Kline, 2011; Loewenthal, & Lewis, 2018). The results of the standardised path coefficients of the final best fit structural equation model (model 2) are reported in Table 6.21 on the following page.

Table 6.21

Standardised Path Coefficients for the Final Hypothesised Structural Equation Model

Observed variables	Latent variables	Estimate	Standard error	t-value
Psychological contract	Justice	.53	.03	16.54***
Psychological contract	Trust	.55	.03	21.04***
Justice	Satisfaction with retention practices	.38	.04	9.76***
Trust	Satisfaction with retention practices	.37	.03	11.11***

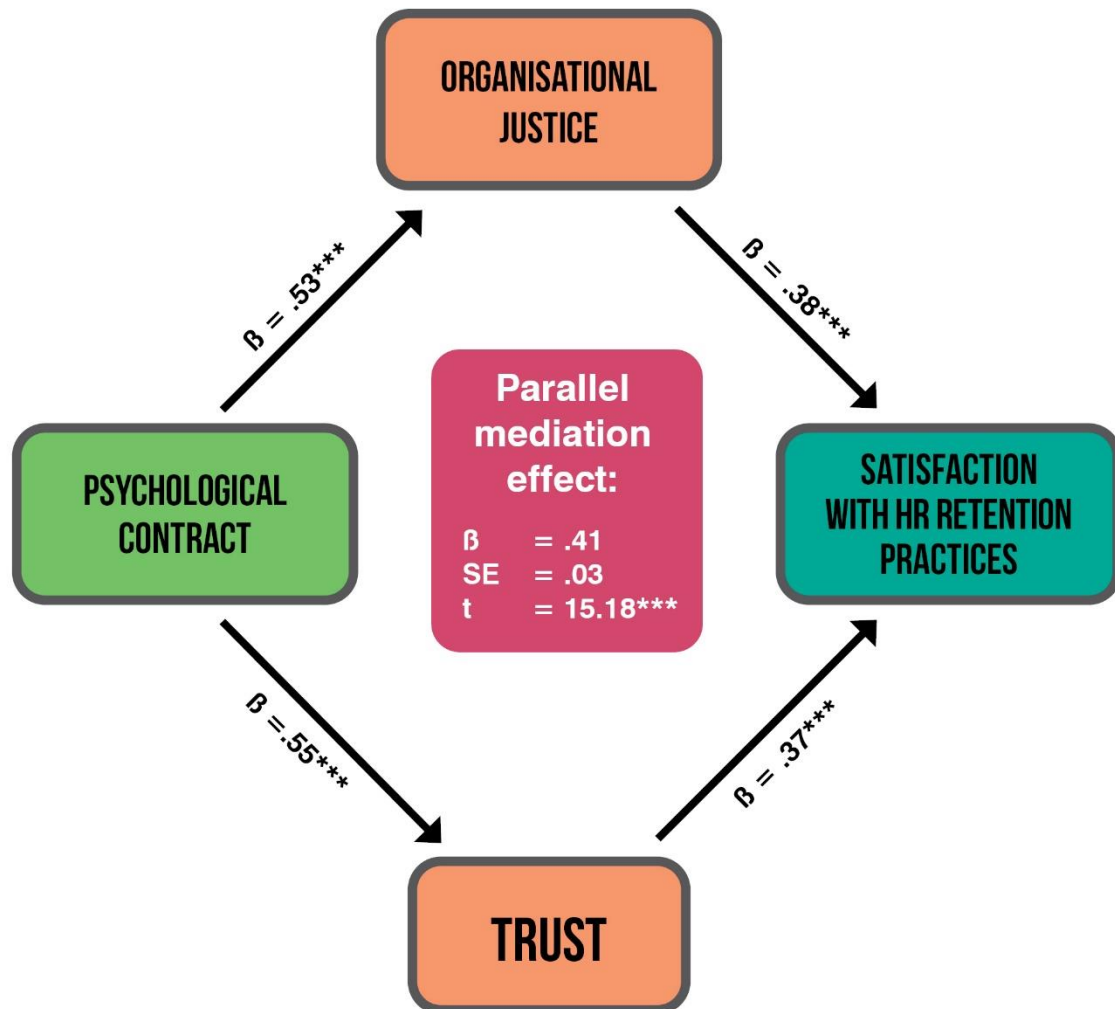
Notes: N = 493; **t-values > 2.56 ($p < .01$); *t-values > 1.96 ($p < .05$)

Source: Author's own work

Figure 6.1 on the next page provides a diagrammatic illustration of the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship dynamics between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

Figure 6.1

Illustration of the Mediating Effect of Organisational Justice and Trust on the Relationship between the Psychological Contract and Satisfaction with Retention Practices



Source: Author's own work

In summary, the results of the SEM and the subsequent final best fit structural equation model indicated that the psychological profile derived from the empirical relationship dynamics among the variables had a good fit with the data and could assist in constructing a retention framework from the data. Hence, the SEM provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 5 (H5).

H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.

Preliminary analysis 2: Towards constructing a framework for staff retention

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis 3 (H3)

The results of the moderated mediation analysis, with specific reference to the moderation effects (Section 6.7.1), did not provide supportive evidence for H3. Overall, the results indicated that the socio-demographic variable of job level, did not have a significant moderating effect on the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting satisfaction with HR retention factors.

Thus, individuals' job levels, in other words their specific positions and hierarchical levels within an organisation, did not affect the strength or direction of the relationship between their psychological contracts, and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with their organisation's HR retention practices. Even though the stepwise regression analysis revealed that job level did predict satisfaction with HR retention practices, the moderated mediation analysis showed that job level did not moderate the relationship between individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and their satisfaction with retention practices.

The framework for staff retention in the higher education environment, which was the main aim of this study, would consequently not focus on job level as a significant interactor between the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypotheses 4 (H4) and 5 (H5)

The moderated mediation results contributed new insights into highlighting the relationship dynamics between the variables. The results of the moderated mediation analysis, with specific reference to the mediation effects (Section 6.7.2), provided supportive evidence for H4. Thus, the results showed that organisational justice and trust significantly and positively mediated the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Organisational justice and trust can be seen as psychological mechanisms resulting from individuals' psychological contracts, which explain the relationship between their perceptions of the psychological contract and their satisfaction with retention practices.

The framework for staff retention in the higher education environment, which was the main aim of this study, would therefore have to focus on individuals' perceptions of promises and

commitments made by the organisation to its employees, seeing that this could lead to positive perceptions of the fairness and justice in the organisation, as well as improve trust levels of employees within the organisation, and as a result lead to satisfaction with the organisation's HR retention practices. In essence, the moderated mediation analysis (testing H3 and H4) added new insights that contributed towards the dynamics of the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The parallel mediating effect indicated that both positive perceptions of justice and trust are important mechanisms that help to strengthen the link between positive perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

6.9 INFERENCE STATISTICS: TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANT MEAN DIFFERENCES

This section reports on the tests for significant mean differences, using SAS software version 9.4 (2013), which was used to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices (research aim 6). Thus, tests for significant mean differences were used to assess whether the results provided significant evidence in support of research hypothesis 6 (H6).

H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

This section will only report on the variances between variables that were significant for the socio-demographic variables of race, gender, age, job level and tenure.

After the results had revealed a normal distribution of the data, SAS software version 9.4 (SAS, 2013) was used to conduct parametric statistical analysis. ANOVAs and post hoc tests were used to measure the differences between the socio-demographic variables of race, age, job level and tenure (as these variables had multiple different groups), whilst *t*-test procedures and Tukey's studentised range test were used to test for significant mean differences between the genders (as this variable had only two groups). Cohen's *d* test was utilised to determine the practical effect size in terms of the differences between the respective groups for each of the variables.

6.9.1 Race

Table 6.22 provides a summary of the ANOVAs and post hoc tests investigating the relationship between the socio-demographic variable of race and the psychological contract-related variables (PQ), the organisational justice-related variables (OJM), the trust-related variables (TRA) and the satisfaction with retention-related variables (RFMS).

Overall, PQ, job satisfaction, and state of the psychological contract (PQ scale), as well as overall RFMS, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance (RFMS) showed significant mean differences and are reported in Table 6.22 on the following page.

Table 6.22

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Race

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d		
Psychological contract-related variables (PQ)												
Overall PQ	Black African	236	4.17	.79	7.71	1.93	3.75	.005	Indian/Asian – White: .46***	.71		
	Coloured	14	3.86	.50								
	Indian/Asian	25	4.45	.65								
	Other	8	3.85	.63								
	White	210	3.99	.65								
Job satisfaction	Black African	236	4.22	.96	17.07	4.27	4.77	.0009	Black African – White: .35***	.37		
	Coloured	14	3.75	1.07								
	Indian/Asian	25	4.35	.81								
	Other	8	3.96	.96								
	White	210	3.87	.93								
State of the psychological contract	Black African	236	3.11	.90	14.03	3.51	4.58	.0012	Indian/Asian – White: .53***	.59		
	Coloured	14	2.69	.74							Black African – White: .28***	.32
	Indian/Asian	25	3.36	.95								
	Other	8	2.72	.89								
	White	210	2.83	.84								
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables (RFMS)												
Overall RFMS	Black African	236	3.82	.72	8.77	2.19	4.33	.002	Indian/Asian – White: .45***	.59		
	Coloured	14	3.48	.49							Black African – White: .20***	.27
	Indian/Asian	25	4.08	.84								

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
	Other	8	3.50	.90						
	White	210	3.63	.68						
Supervisor support	Black African	236	3.98	1.21	16.76	4.19	2.50	.041	Indian/Asian – White: .80***	.61
	Coloured	14	3.64	1.33						
	Indian/Asian	25	4.66	1.21						
	Other	8	4.31	1.40						
	White	210	3.86	1.39						
Career opportunities	Black African	236	3.48	1.35	66.01	16.50	11.24	.0001	Indian/Asian – White: .83***	.73
	Coloured	14	3.27	.87					Black African – White: .72***	.59
	Indian/Asian	25	3.59	1.20						
	Other	8	2.50	1.03						
	White	210	2.76	1.07						
Work-life balance	Black African	236	3.94	1.45	172.60	43.15	20.85	.0001	Black African – White: 1.21***	.85
	Coloured	14	3.23	1.2					Black African – Other: 1.67***	1.13
	Indian/Asian	25	3.42	1.74						
	Other	8	2.28	1.48						
	White	210	2.73	1.40						

Notes: N = 493; 95% Confidence limit; *** $p \leq .0001$

Source: Author's own work

According to Table 6.22, significant mean differences were found in terms of race as a socio-demographic variable.

With regard to the *psychological contract-related variables*, **Indians/Asians** scored significantly higher than **whites** on overall PQ (**Indians/Asians**: $M = 4.45$; $SD = .65$; **whites**: $M = 3.99$; $SD = .65$; $d = .71$; moderate practical effect) as well as state of the psychological contract (**Indians/Asians**: $M = 3.36$; $SD = .95$; **whites**: $M = 2.83$; $SD = .84$; $d = .59$; moderate practical effect). Furthermore, **Black Africans** scored significantly higher than **whites** in terms of job satisfaction (**Black African**: $M = 4.22$; $SD = .96$; **whites**: $M = 3.87$; $SD = .93$; $d = .37$; small practical effect) as well as state of the psychological contract (**Black African**: $M = 3.11$; $SD = .90$; **whites**: $M = 2.83$; $SD = .84$; $d = .32$; small practical effect).

In terms of the *satisfaction with retention practices-related variables*, **Indians/Asians** scored significantly higher than **whites** for overall RFMS (**Indians/Asians**: $M = 4.08$; $SD = .84$; **whites**: $M = 3.63$; $SD = .68$; $d = .59$; moderate practical effect), supervisor support (**Indians/Asians**: $M = 4.66$; $SD = 1.21$; **whites**: $M = 3.86$; $SD = 1.39$; $d = .61$; moderate practical effect), as well as career opportunities (**Indians/Asians**: $M = 3.59$; $SD = 1.20$; **whites**: $M = 2.76$; $SD = 1.07$; $d = .73$; moderate practical effect). In addition, **Black Africans** scored significantly higher than **whites** in terms of overall RFMS (**Black African**: $M = 3.82$; $SD = .72$; **whites**: $M = 3.63$; $SD = .68$; $d = .27$; small practical effect), career opportunities (**Black African**: $M = 3.48$; $SD = .1.35$; **whites**: $M = 2.76$; $SD = 1.07$; $d = .59$; moderate practical effect), and work-life balance (**Black African**: $M = 3.94$; $SD = 1.45$; **whites**: $M = 2.73$; $SD = 1.40$; $d = .85$; large practical effect). **Blacks** also scored significantly higher than **other** racial groups in terms of work-life balance (**Black African**: $M = 3.94$; $SD = 1.45$; **other**: $M = 2.28$; $SD = 1.48$; $d = 1.13$; large practical effect).

6.9.2 Gender

The results of the t-test and mean scores investigating the relationship between the socio-demographic variable of gender and the psychological contract-related variables (PQ), the organisational justice-related variables (OJM), the trust-related variables (TRA) and the satisfaction with retention-related variables (RFMS) are reported in Table 6.23.

Only work-life balance (RFMS scale) showed significant mean differences and are reported in Table 6.23 on the next page.

Table 6.23

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Gender

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	t-value	95% confidence CL Mean		p	Cohen d
						Minimum	Maximum		
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables (RFMS)									
Work-life balance	Male	183	3.54	1.54	2.13	3.32	3.77	.03	.19
	Female	310	3.24	1.54		3.06	3.41		

Note: N = 493; 95% Confidence limit; *** $p \leq .0001$; CL: confidence limit

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.23 indicates the results for the *t*-test procedure. Significant mean differences were obtained between **males** and **females** for work-life balance (**males**: $M = 3.54$; $SD = 1.54$; **females**: $M = 3.24$; $SD = 1.54$; $t = 2.13$; $d = .19$; small practical effect) in terms of the satisfaction with the retention practices-related variable work-life balance.

6.9.3 Age

Table 6.24 provides a summary of the ANOVAs and post hoc tests investigating the relationship between the socio-demographic variable of age and the psychological contract-related variables (PQ), the organisational justice-related variables (OJM), the trust-related variables (TRA) and the satisfaction with retention-related variables (RFMS).

Significant mean differences were only observed for the RFMS subscales of job characteristics, career opportunities and work-life balance and are reported in Table 6.24 on the subsequent page.

Table 6.24

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Age

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables (RFMS)										
Job characteristics	18 – 35 years	91	4.06	.94	15.12	5.04	4.68	.003	46-55 years – 18-35 years:	.48
	36 – 45 years	137	4.40	1.01					56-65 years – 18-35 years:	.48
	46 – 55 years	153	4.55	1.08						
	56 – 65 years	112	4.50	1.08						
Career opportunities	18 – 35 years	91	3.40	1.21	19.49	6.50	4.16	.006	18-35 years – 56-65 years:	.52
	36 – 45 years	137	3.21	1.27					46-55 years – 56-65 years:	.33
	46 – 55 years	153	3.22	1.37						
	56 – 65 years	112	2.81	1.07						
Work-life balance	18 – 35 years	91	3.70	1.50	63.21	21.07	9.21	<.0001	36-45 years – 46-55 years:	.36
	36 – 45 years	137	3.73	1.56					36-45 years – 56-65 years:	.59
	46 – 55 years	153	3.17	1.54					18-35 years – 46-55 years:	.35
	56 – 65 years	112	2.86	1.41					18-35 years – 56-65 years:	.58

Notes: N = 493; 95% Confidence limit; *** $p \leq .0001$

Source: Author's own work

As indicated in Table 6.24, significant mean differences were found with regard to the socio-demographic variable of age.

In terms of the *satisfaction with retention practices-related variables*, job characteristics showed significant mean differences between the **46-55 years** and **18-35 years** age groups (**46-55 years**: $M = 4.55$; $SD = 1.08$; **18-35 years**: $M = 4.06$; $SD = .94$; $d = .48$; small practical effect) as well as the 56-65 years and 18-35 years age groups (56-65 years: $M = 4.50$; $SD = 1.08$; 18-35 years: $M = 4.06$; $SD = .94$; $d = .48$; small practical effect).

In the case of career opportunities, significant mean differences were observed between the age groups of **18-35 years** and **56-65 years** (**18-35 years**: $M = 3.40$; $SD = 1.21$; **56-65 years**: $M = 2.81$; $SD = 1.07$; $d = .52$; moderate practical effect), as well as between 46-55 years and 56-65 years (**46-55 years**: $M = 3.22$; $SD = 1.37$; **56-65 years**: $M = 2.81$; $SD = 1.07$; $d = .33$; small practical effect).

Lastly, in terms of work-life balance, significant mean differences were found between the age groups of **36-45 years** and **46-55 years** (**36-45 years**: $M = 3.73$; $SD = 1.56$; **46-55 years**: $M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.54$; $d = .36$; small practical effect), **36-45 years** and **56-65 years** (**36-45 years**: $M = 3.73$; $SD = 1.56$; **56-65 years**: $M = 2.86$; $SD = 1.41$; $d = .59$; moderate practical effect), **18-35 years** and **46-55 years** (**18-35 years**: $M = 3.70$; $SD = 1.50$; **46-55 years**: $M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.54$; $d = .35$; small practical effect), as well as between **18-35 years** and **56-65 years** (**18-35 years**: $M = 3.70$; $SD = 1.50$; **56-65 years**: $M = 2.86$; $SD = 1.41$; $d = .58$; moderate practical effect).

6.9.4 Job level

The results of the ANOVAs and post hoc tests examining the relationship between the psychological contract-related variables (PQ), the organisational justice-related variables (OJM), the trust-related variables (TRA) and the satisfaction with retention-related variables (RFMS) and the socio-demographic variable of job level are provided in Table 6.25.

Significant mean differences were only observed in terms of employer obligations (PQ scale), and job characteristics, training and development opportunities and work-life balance (RFMS) and are reported in Table 6.25 on the following page.

Table 6.25

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Job Level

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
Psychological contract-related variables (PQ)										
Employer obligations	Administrative assistant	16	3.54	1.38	30.44	3.38	2.17	.02	Professor – Other: .60***	.36
	Administrative officer	106	3.19	1.25					Professor – Administrative officer: 1.14***	.68
	Associate Professor	30	3.78	1.25					Professor – Administrative assistant: 1.19***	.34
	Junior Lecturer	8	3.43	1.48					Associate Professor – Administrative officer: .78***	.47
	Lecturer	84	3.82	1.17					Lecturer – Administrative officer: .75***	.52
	Other	139	3.51	1.44					Senior Lecturer – Administrative officer: .58***	.41
	Professor	39	3.95	.98						
	Research assistant	2	3.27	1.51						
	Secretary	2	2.67	.38						
	Senior Lecturer	67	3.65	.96						
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables (RFMS)										
Job characteristics	Administrative assistant	16	3.86	.89	57.15	6.35	6.33	<.0001	Professor – Other: .60***	.58
	Administrative officer	106	3.90	1.06					Professor – Administrative officer: 1.14***	1.12
	Associate Professor	30	4.68	1.04					Professor – Administrative assistant: 1.19***	1.27

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
	Junior Lecturer	8	4.09	1.25					Associate Professor – Administrative officer: .78***	.74
	Lecturer	84	4.65	.87					Lecturer – Administrative officer: .75***	.77
	Other	139	4.45	1.06					Senior Lecturer – Administrative officer: .58***	.58
	Professor	39	5.04	.97					Other – Administrative officer: .55***	.52
	Research assistant	2	3.75	1.06						
	Secretary	2	4.50	.00						
	Senior Lecturer	67	4.48	.93						
Training and development opportunities	Administrative assistant	16	4.11	1.34	67.40	7.49	4.77	<.0001	Professor – Administrative officer: .99***	.84
	Administrative officer	106	3.42	1.27					Lecturer – Other: .56***	.43
	Associate Professor	30	4.22	1.04					Lecturer – Administrative officer: .90***	.71
	Junior Lecturer	8	3.77	1.63						
	Lecturer	84	4.32	1.26						
	Other	139	3.75	1.40						
	Professor	39	4.41	1.08						
	Research assistant	2	3.83	2.83						
	Secretary	2	3.17	.47						
	Senior Lecturer	67	4.31	.92						

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
Work-life balance	Administrative assistant	16	4.06	1.56	141.24	15.70	7.28	<.0001	Administrative assistant – Professor: 1.63***	1.15
	Administrative officer	106	4.03	1.49					Administrative officer – Lecturer: .92***	.63
	Associate Professor	30	2.73	1.51					Administrative officer – Senior Lecturer: 1.21***	.85
	Junior Lecturer	8	3.84	1.70					Administrative officer – Associate Professor: 1.30***	.87
	Lecturer	84	3.10	1.45					Administrative officer – Professor: 1.59***	1.16
	Other	139	3.48	1.55					Other – Professor: 1.04***	.74
	Professor	39	2.44	1.25						
	Research assistant	2	5.75	.00						
	Secretary	2	4.00	.35						
	Senior Lecturer	67	2.82	1.34						

Notes: N = 493; 95% Confidence limit; *** $p \leq .0001$

Source: Author's own work

As shown in Table 6.25, significant mean differences were found in terms of the socio-demographic variable of job level.

With regard to the *psychological contract-related variables*, employer obligations showed significant mean differences between the job level of **professor** and the 'other' grouping (**professor**: $M = 3.95$; $SD = .98$; **other**: $M = 3.51$; $SD = 1.44$; $d = .36$; small practical effect), **professor** and **administrative officer** job level (**professor**: $M = 3.95$; $SD = .98$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.25$; $d = .68$; moderate practical effect), as well as **professor** and the job level of **administrative assistant** (**professor**: $M = 3.95$; $SD = .98$; **administrative assistant**: $M = 3.54$; $SD = 1.38$; $d = .34$; small practical effect).

Furthermore, significant mean differences were observed between the job levels of **associate professor** and **administrative officer** (**associate professor**: $M = 3.78$; $SD = 1.25$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.25$; $d = .47$; small practical effect), **lecturer** and **administrative officer** (**lecturer**: $M = 3.82$; $SD = 1.17$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.25$; $d = .52$; moderate practical effect), including between **senior lecturer** and **administrative officer** (**senior lecturer**: $M = 3.65$; $SD = .96$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.25$; $d = .41$; small practical effect).

In terms of the *satisfaction with retention practices-related variables*, significant mean differences were found between the job levels of **professor** and **administrative officer** for job characteristics (**professor**: $M = 5.04$; $SD = .97$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.06$; $d = 1.12$; large practical effect), training and development opportunities (**professor**: $M = 4.41$; $SD = 1.08$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.42$; $SD = 1.27$; $d = .84$; large practical effect), and work-life balance (**professor**: $M = 2.44$; $SD = 1.25$; **administrative officer**: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.49$; $d = 1.16$; large practical effect).

Also, significant mean differences were found between the job levels of **professor** and **administrative assistant** for job characteristics (**professor**: $M = 5.04$; $SD = .97$; **administrative assistant**: $M = 3.86$; $SD = .89$; $d = 1.27$; large practical effect) and work-life balance (**professor**: $M = 2.44$; $SD = 1.25$; **administrative assistant**: $M = 4.06$; $SD = 1.56$; $d = 1.15$; large practical effect).

Also with regard to the *satisfaction with retention practices-related variables*, significant mean differences were observed between the job level of **lecturer** and various job levels, including **administrative officer** (**lecturer**: $M = 4.65$; $SD = .87$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.06$; $d = .77$; moderate practical effect) for job characteristics; "other" job levels (**lecturer**: M

= 4.32; $SD = 1.26$; **other**: $M = 3.75$; $SD = 1.40$; $d = .43$; small practical effect) and **administrative officer** (**lecturer**: $M = 4.32$; $SD = 1.26$; **administrative officer**: $M = 3.42$; $SD = 1.27$; $d = .71$; moderate practical effect) for training and development opportunities; as well as **administrative officer** for work-life balance (**lecturer**: $M = 3.10$; $SD = 1.45$; **administrative officer**: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.49$; $d = .63$; moderate practical effect).

The job level of **administrative officer** likewise showed significant mean differences with numerous job levels, excluding the ones already mentioned, including **associate professor** (**administrative officer**: $M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.06$; **associate professor**: $M = 4.68$; $SD = 1.04$; $d = .74$; moderate practical effect), **senior lecturer** (**administrative officer**: $M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.06$; **senior lecturer**: $M = 4.48$; $SD = .93$; $d = .58$; moderate practical effect) and ‘**other**’ job levels (**administrative officer**: $M = 3.90$; $SD = 1.06$; **other**: $M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.06$; $d = .52$; moderate practical effect) for job characteristics; as well as **senior lecturer** (**administrative officer**: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.49$; **senior lecturer**: $M = 2.82$; $SD = 1.34$; $d = .85$; large practical effect), **associate professor** (**administrative officer**: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.49$; **associate professor**: $M = 2.73$; $SD = 1.51$; $d = .87$; large practical effect), and ‘**other**’ job levels (**administrative officer**: $M = 4.03$; $SD = 1.49$; **other**: $M = 3.48$; $SD = 1.55$; $d = .74$; moderate practical effect) for work-life balance.

6.9.5 Tenure

Table 6.26 provides a summary of ANOVAs and post hoc tests investigating the relationship between the psychological contract-related variables (PQ), the organisational justice-related variables (OJM), the trust-related variables (TRA) and the satisfaction with retention-related variables (RFMS) and the socio-demographic variable of tenure. Overall RFMS, training and development opportunities, career opportunities and work-life balance (RFMS), as well as overall PQ and job satisfaction (PQ scale) showed significant mean differences and are reported in Table 6.26 on the next page.

Table 6.26

Tests for Significant Mean Differences: Tenure

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
Psychological contract-related variables (PQ)										
Overall PQ	11 to 15 years	49	4.16	.72	4.28	1.43	2.75	.04	Less than 5 years – More than 15 years: .24***	.34
	6 to 10 years	167	4.05	.74						
	Less than 5 years	105	4.26	.68						
	More than 15 years	172	4.02	.73						
Job satisfaction	11 to 15 years	49	4.09	.94	12.83	4.28	4.75	.002	Less than 5 years – More than 15 years: .44***	.47
	6 to 10 years	167	4.06	.96						
	Less than 5 years	105	4.33	.91						
	More than 15 years	172	3.89	.96						
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables (RFMS)										
Overall RFMS	11 to 15 years	49	3.78	.66	6.57	2.19	4.30	.01	Less than 5 years – More than 15 years: .28*** Less than 5 years – 6 to 10 years: .29***	.38
	6 to 10 years	167	3.66	.71						
	Less than 5 years	105	3.95	.70						
	More than 15 years	172	3.67	.74						
Training and development opportunities	11 to 15 years	49	3.78	1.36	19.44	6.48	3.93	.01	Less than 5 years – 6 to 10 years: .52***	.41

Variable	Source of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova Sum of squares	Mean square	F	p	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
	6 to 10 years	167	3.74	1.31						
	Less than 5 years	105	4.26	1.21						
	More than 15 years	172	4.00	1.29						
Career opportunities	11 to 15 years	49	3.07	1.22	69.56	23.19	15.90	<.0001	Less than 5 years – 6 to 10 years: .47***	.38
	6 to 10 years	167	3.27	1.29					Less than 5 years – 11 to 15 years: .67***	.56
	Less than 5 years	105	3.74	1.18					Less than 5 years – More than 15 years: 1.01***	.87
	More than 15 years	172	2.73	1.14					6 to 10 years – More than 15 years: .54***	.44
Work-life balance	11 to 15 years	49	3.16	1.65	35.28	11.76	5.01	.002	6 to 10 years – More than 15 years: .57***	.38
	6 to 10 years	167	3.60	1.48					Less than 5 years – More than 15 years: .55***	.35
	Less than 5 years	105	3.57	1.56						
	More than 15 years	172	3.03	1.53						

Notes: N = 493; 95% Confidence limit; *** $p \leq .0001$

Source: Author's own work

Table 6.26 indicates the significant mean differences which were found pertaining to the socio-demographic variable of tenure.

In terms of the *psychological contract-related variables*, significant mean differences were found between the groups tenured **less than 5 years** and **more than 15 years** for overall PQ (**less than 5 years**: $M = 4.26$; $SD = .68$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 4.02$; $SD = .73$; $d = .34$; small practical effect), and job satisfaction (**less than 5 years**: $M = 4.33$; $SD = .91$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 3.89$; $SD = .96$; $d = .47$; small practical effect). Likewise with regard to the *satisfaction with retention-related variables*, significant mean differences were also found between the groups tenured **less than 5 years** and **more than 15 years** for overall RFMS (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.85$; $SD = .70$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 3.67$; $SD = .74$; $d = .38$; small practical effect), training and development opportunities (**less than 5 years**: $M = 4.26$; $SD = 1.21$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 4.0$; $SD = 1.29$; $d = .41$; small practical effect), career opportunities (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.74$; $SD = 1.18$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 2.73$; $SD = 1.14$; $d = .87$; large practical effect) as well as work-life balance (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.57$; $SD = 1.56$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 3.03$; $SD = 1.53$; $d = .35$; small practical effect).

Furthermore with the *satisfaction with retention-related variables*, significant mean differences were observed between the groups tenured **less than 5 years** and **6 to 10 years** for overall RFMS (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.95$; $SD = .70$; **6 to 10 years**: $M = 3.66$; $SD = .71$; $d = .41$; small practical effect) and career opportunities (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.74$; $SD = 1.18$; **6 to 10 years**: $M = 3.27$; $SD = 1.29$; $d = .38$; small practical effect). Additionally, significant mean differences were found between the groups tenured **6 to 10 years** and **more than 15 years** for career opportunities (**6 to 10 years**: $M = 3.27$; $SD = 1.29$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 2.73$; $SD = 1.14$; $d = .54$; moderate practical effect) and work-life balance (**6 to 10 years**: $M = 3.60$; $SD = 1.48$; **more than 15 years**: $M = 3.03$; $SD = 1.53$; $d = .38$; small practical effect). For career opportunities, significant mean differences were also found between the tenure groups of **less than 5 years** and **11 to 15 years** (**less than 5 years**: $M = 3.74$; $SD = 1.18$; **11 to 15 years**: $M = 3.07$; $SD = 1.22$; $d = .56$; moderate practical effect).

In summary, the empirical results obtained from the tests for significant mean differences found that individuals from various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly in terms of their psychological contracts as well as their satisfaction with retention practices. The results furthermore showed that individuals from various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups do not differ significantly regarding their perceptions of organisational justice and trust. Thus, the results of the tests for significant mean differences provided partial

supportive evidence for accepting research hypothesis H6 in terms of race, gender, age, job level and tenure:

H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

Table 6.27 on the following page indicates the socio-demographic variables that differed significantly in terms of the retention framework variables.

Table 6.27

Summation of Socio-demographic Differences of Staff Retention Framework Variables

Variable	Source of difference	Highest ranking	Lowest ranking
Psychological contract-related variables			
Overall PQ	Race	Indian/Asian	Other
	Tenure	11 to 15 years	More than 15 years
Employer obligations	Job level	Professor	Secretary
Job satisfaction	Race	Indian/Asian	Coloured
	Tenure	Less than 5 years	More than 15 years
State of the psychological contract	Race	Indian/Asian	Coloured
Satisfaction with retention practices-related variables			
Overall RFMS	Race	Indian/Asian	Coloured
	Tenure	Less than 5 years	6 to 10 years
Job characteristics	Age	46 – 55 years	18 – 35 years
	Job level	Professor	Research assistant
Training and development opportunities	Job level	Professor	Secretary
	Tenure	Less than 5 years	6 to 10 years
Supervisor support	Race	Indian/Asian	Coloured
Career opportunities	Race	Indian/Asian	Other
	Age	18 – 35 years	56 – 65 years
	Tenure	Less than 5 years	11 to 15 years

Work-life balance	Race	Black/African	Other
	Gender	Male	Female
	Age	36 – 45 years	56 – 65 years
	Job level	Research assistant	Professor
	Tenure	6 to 10 years	More than 15 years

Source: Author's own work

Preliminary analysis 3: Towards constructing a framework for staff retention

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis H6

The results of the tests for significant mean differences added new insights for the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The results suggested that HEIs should consider the needs of participants from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups when developing and implementing retention strategies for diverse groups of employees. These interventions should be aimed at enhancing the psychological contracts of employees, through their perceptions of organisational justice and their trust levels, as this may strengthen their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

More specifically the results showed that individuals from different race, tenure and job level groups, differ significantly with regard to their overall perceptions of the psychological contract, their perceptions of employer obligations, job satisfaction and the state of their psychological contract. Also, the results revealed that individuals from varying race, age, tenure and job level groups differ meaningfully regarding their overall satisfaction with retention practices, as well as their perceptions of their job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support and career opportunities. Lastly, individuals from different race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups showed significant differences in terms of their work-life balance preferences.

6.10 DECISIONS REGARDING RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 6.28 on the next page provides a summary of the main inferences regarding the research hypotheses.

Table 6.28

Decisions Regarding the Research Hypotheses

Research aim	Research hypothesis	Supportive evidence provided	Supportive evidence provided
Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA.	H1: There is a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.	Bi-variate correlation analysis	Yes , the results of the correlation analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1 (H1).
Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices empirically	H2: The socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.	Stepwise regression analysis	The results for the stepwise regression analysis produced partial support for research hypothesis 2 (H2).
Research aim 3: To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and	H3: There is a significant interaction (moderating) effect between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating socio-demographic variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice	Moderated mediation regression analysis	No , the results for the moderated mediation regression analysis did not provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3 (H3).

Research aim	Research hypothesis	Supportive evidence provided	Supportive evidence provided
trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.	and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.		
Research aim 4: To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.	H4: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.	Moderated mediation regression analysis	Yes , the results for the moderated mediation regression analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 4 (H4).
Research aim 5: To conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework	H5: The variable inter-dynamics derived from the empirical study have a good fit with the data and a retention framework can be constructed from the data.	Structural equation modelling	Yes , the SEM provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 5 (H5).
Research aim 6: To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.	H6: Individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.	Tests for significant mean differences	The results of the tests for significant mean differences provided partial supportive evidence for accepting research hypothesis H6 in terms of race, gender, age, job level and tenure:

Source: Author's own work

6.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the findings of the preliminary statistical analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and inferential statistics in order to determine the nature of the empirical relationships between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, and the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), as well as the retention-related construct variables (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance policies). The findings of the empirical research were interpreted, and decisions made in terms of the extent to which the results provided support for the research hypotheses.

Herewith, the empirical research aims 1 to 6 were achieved:

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H2.

Research aim 3: To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H3.

Research aim 4: To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H4.

Research aim 5: To conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H5.

Research aim 6: To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H6.

Chapter 7, based on an integration of the results from the literature review and the empirical research, focuses on research aim 7, namely, to formulate conclusions and make recommendations for HRM retention practices and future research.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a discussion and integration of the results of the study, including a discussion on the findings in terms of the socio-demographic profile of the participants, the descriptive statistics, the empirical research aims, and the limitations of the literature review and the empirical study. The empirical results reported in the previous chapter are integrated with the results obtained from the preceding literature review and interpreted to assess the extent to which the results supported the stated research hypotheses. Furthermore, the elements of the postulated framework for staff retention in the higher education environment are outlined and the suggested framework presented, after which the chapter addresses the conclusions drawn from the literature review and the empirical study. Finally, recommendations for future research as well as retention practices are made, and the contribution of the study discussed.

7.1 DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

This section provides a discussion and integration of the results of the study.

7.1.1 Socio-demographic profile of the sample

As discussed in Section 5.4, the socio-demographic profile of the sample was predominantly represented by permanently employed, married, Black African and White females, between the ages of 46 and 55 years. The most predominant job levels in the sample were administrative officers and senior lecturers. The sample profile further showed that the majority of the participants had either been employed by the institution for 6 to 10 years, or longer than 15 years. Lastly, most of the participants in the sample were in possession of a post graduate qualification.

The socio-demographic profile of the sample provided a relatively equal representation of both administrative staff and academic employees, shorter and longer tenured employees as well as employees from different age groups. Employees from coloured and Indian/Asian ethnic origin as well as males were underrepresented, while most participants were permanently employed. Although the sample profile is generally a reflection of the wider higher education population of SA (Council on Higher Education South Africa, 2018), the underrepresentation of certain groups were considered as a potential limitation of the study. It should be stated that the results of the empirical study were interpreted as being applicable to the specific sample of participants and not the broader HEI population.

The above-mentioned aspects pertaining to the socio-demographic profile of the sample were considered in the interpretation of the results and in the construction of the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment.

7.1.2 Discussion of the descriptive statistics

The following section provides an interpretation and discussion of the mean scores reported for each of the four measurement instruments, PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS of relevance in this study. The results reported in Tables 6.11 to 6.14 (see Chapter 6) are applicable to this section.

7.1.2.1 Sample profile of participants: Psychological contract

Table 6.11 (Chapter 6) is applicable to this section. With regard to the mean scores of the Psycones Questionnaire (PQ) (Guest et al., 2010; Psycones, 2006), the sample profile revealed that participants felt that they had kept promises and commitments which they had made towards their employer. Thus, employees held the perception that they had largely fulfilled their obligations towards their employer. Furthermore, as reflected in the mean scores in terms of employer obligation, the sample profile indicated that participants felt that their organisation had made promises and commitments towards them but had not kept them all. Therefore, participants held the perception that even though they had adhered to the promises, commitments and obligations made towards their employer, their employer had not done the same.

Previous research has shown that when employees feel that their employer has not tried to reciprocate their inputs, an incongruence within the exchange relationship may take place and this could result in psychological contract breach (Bal et al., 2017). Furthermore, research shows that employees who hold the perception that their employer has not fulfilled the promises made to them, may withhold their own inputs to the organisation (Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016). Thus, as shown in the mean scores, the sample profile indeed indicated that a perceived imbalance existed between the inputs (promises and commitments) made by participants and the inputs from the organisation.

The sample profile revealed that participants felt fairly positive about their psychological contracts, and the emotions associated with participants' psychological contracts were found to be relatively optimistic. Lastly, the sample profile indicated that participants did not feel satisfied nor dissatisfied with the state of their psychological contracts. The state of the

psychological contract concerns the fairness of the promises made within an exchange relationship (Guest, 2004; Van der Vaart et al., 2013).

In summary, when employees hold positive perceptions of the extent to which promises in the exchange relationship have been kept, as well as of the fairness of these promises, it may have a positive impact on employees' intention to stay with an organisation (Worthy, 2019). On the contrary, when employees feel that their employer has not kept promises and commitments made to them, and/or that these promises were not just, it might result in higher intentions to leave the organisation and actual turnover (Alcover et al., 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that the fact that participants felt that their employer had not kept promises made to them, together with the fact that participants neither felt satisfied nor dissatisfied with the state of their psychological contracts, could result in them leaving the institution in future.

7.1.2.2 Sample profile of participants: Organisational justice

Table 6.12 (Chapter 6) is of relevance to this segment. The mean scores of the Organisational Justice Measure (OJM) (Colquitt, 2001), and the resulting sample profile that was revealed in terms of organisational justice, showed that participants held relatively positive perceptions about the interpersonal justice. This indicated that participants experienced fairly high levels of organisational justice within their interpersonal relationships with their supervisors and felt that they were treated reasonably fair by their supervisors. Previous research found that positive interpersonal relationships between employees and their supervisors, may have a positive impact on job satisfaction and retention (Soga, 2014).

In terms of distributive justice, the sample profile showed that participants held moderately positive perceptions about the fairness and equity of the distribution of resources within their organisation. Participants also showed moderately positive feelings about the fairness and justice of information communicated to them, which refers to informational justice. Furthermore, the sample profile revealed that in terms of procedural justice, participants perceived the fairness of the application of procedures within their organisation, only to be fair to a small extent. When employees perceive the distribution of resources as well as the communication of information in an organisation in a positive light, it may assist in retaining employees (Wang et al., 2017). However, research has shown that distributive justice and procedural justice are equally important to employees and if negative emotions are experienced by employees in this regard, it may have a detrimental impact on employee retention and employees' turnover intentions (Gim & Desa, 2014).

In summary, in case of the current study, even though participants felt relatively positive about the distribution of resources within their organisation, participants were found to feel only moderately positive regarding distributive and informational justice. Participants were also not positive about the application of procedures within their organisation, which shows that participants might consider leaving their organisation if any of these aspects pertaining to organisational justice were to worsen.

7.1.2.3 Sample profile of participants: Trust

Table 6.13 (Chapter 6) is relevant to this section. In terms of trust, the mean scores of the Trust Relationship Audit (TRA) (Martins, 2000; Martins & Von der Ohe, 2005), and the sample profile showed that participants felt that there were moderate levels of trust within their relationships with their supervisors/managers. Also, participants indicated that participants often perceived that they could trust the organisation as a whole, top management, their immediate manager and their colleagues. Previous research has shown that positive interpersonal relationships between employees and supervisors and high organisational trust levels may have a positive impact on organisational engagement, organisational commitment as well as employee retention (Kundu & Lata, 2017). In summary, the sample profile in terms of trust revealed that participants had relatively positive perceptions regarding trust within their relationships with their supervisors as well as the organisation.

7.1.2.4 Sample profile of participants: Satisfaction with retention practices

Table 6.14 (Chapter 6) is applicable to this segment. The results from the mean scores of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) (Döckel, 2003; Döckel et al., 2006), indicated that participants gave moderate scores on most of the subscales. Thus, the sample profile pertaining to satisfaction with retention practices revealed that participants neither felt strongly dissatisfied, nor strongly satisfied regarding their organisation's retention practices. The sample profile furthermore revealed that the retention factor with which participants felt the most satisfied, was job characteristics. More specifically, participants indicated that they felt moderately satisfied with their job characteristics. Job characteristics entail the skill variability and self-sufficiency in an employee's job (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). Research studies have found that there is a strong correlation between job characteristics and employee turnover and that positive perceptions regarding the characteristics of one's job may assist in employees' intention to stay with their organisation as well as retention (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018; De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the sample profile showed that participants felt slightly satisfied with their training and development opportunities as well as supervisor support. When employees are satisfied with the training and development opportunities which are available to them, as well as the perceived support they receive from their supervisors, it may result in positive psychological contracts and higher retention (Chen, 2014; Guhait et al., 2015; Shi & Gordon, 2020).

In terms of compensation, the sample profile revealed that participants felt neutral about their compensation packages. This shows that participants did not hold a particularly positive perception regarding compensation, which may have a detrimental impact on psychological contract fulfilment as well as retention (Bhatnagar, 2014; Deas & Coetzee, 2020). Negative employee perceptions regarding compensation have been found to be a strong predictor of low organisational commitment and turnover (Deas, 2017; Döckel et al., 2006).

Regarding the mean scores for career opportunities and work-life balance, the sample profile showed that participants felt somewhat dissatisfied about the career opportunities the organisation offered as well as the work-life balance policies within the institution. Previous studies have proven a strong relationship between organisations which provide employees with fruitful career development prospects and higher employee commitment (Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Presbitero et al., 2016). Moreover, organisations that do not value the work-life balance of its employees have been found to have significantly higher staff turnover rates than those that do (Chang et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020).

In summary, pertaining to participants' satisfaction with retention practices, the sample profile revealed that employees showed moderate levels of satisfaction with the institution's retention practices. Especially in terms of career opportunities and work-life balance policies, in which case participants indicated that they felt slightly dissatisfied with these practices, the organisation might be at risk for its employees to leave the institution as a result. Lastly, seeing that compensation is regarded as a crucial factor in the retention of employees, the fact that employees felt neutral about their compensation, could indicate that they would leave the institution for a better offer.

7.1.2.5 Integration of main findings

To conclude, the sample profile on the various scales revealed that participants felt that they had largely kept promises and commitments made to their employer, but that the employer had not kept its promises and commitments in return. Participants also indicated relatively positive feelings about their interpersonal relationships with their supervisors as well as the

distribution of resources within the institution, but not about the application of procedures and the fairness and accuracy of the information communicated to them. Furthermore, participants specified that they could trust their immediate supervisor/manager to a larger extent than the organisation as whole could be trusted. Finally, participants showed dissatisfaction with their career opportunities and the institution's work-life balance policies, whereas they experienced their job characteristics, their available training and development opportunities and the support they received from their supervisors in a more positive light. These aspects revealed in terms of the sample profile were taken into account in the development of the framework for staff retention in the higher education environment.

7.1.3 Research aim 1: Discussion of the correlation results

Research aim 1 was to assess the statistical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), psychological contract, organisational justice, trust; and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention.

7.1.3.1 Relationship between the socio-demographic, independent, mediator and dependent construct variables

Table 6.15 (Chapter 6) is relevant to this section. The results of the bivariate correlation analysis showed that race was significantly and negatively related to employee obligations, job satisfaction, state of the psychological contract, as well as overall perceptions of the psychological contract. Previous research, similarly, found race to be significantly related to the psychological contract (Deas, 2017; Maharaj et al., 2008; Oosthuizen et al., 2016; Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). The results also showed race to be significantly and negatively related to career opportunities. This finding was consistent with previous research confirming the relationship between race and the retention practice of career opportunities (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; Deas, 2018; Hofhuis et al., 2014). The implication for retention practices in the South African higher educational context is that an employees' racial background could be a determining factor in their psychological contract perceptions. Therefore, it is crucial for employers to ensure that promises and commitments made to employees in terms of the psychological contract, are adhered to, and that satisfactory career opportunities are provided to all racial groups within the workforce, in order to enhance staff retention.

The results of the bivariate correlation analysis furthermore showed that job level was significantly and positively related to employer obligations. This implies that an employees' job level may influence how they perceive the extent to which their employer has adhered to the

promises and commitments made to them in terms of the psychological contract. Singh (2018) confirms that an employee's job level may affect how they perceive the psychological contract-related obligations within the exchange relationship. Job level was also found to be significantly and positively related to job characteristics, supervisor support and work-life balance. This finding was supported by previous research linking the relationship between job level and retention practices (Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Van Dyk et al., 2013).

Tenure related significantly and negatively to job satisfaction. This indicates that the length of an employee's employment tenure may impact on the extent to which an employee's job needs are fulfilled and how much of this fulfilment is perceived by that employee (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Tenure was, moreover, significantly and negatively related to career opportunities and the participants' overall satisfaction with retention practices. Previous studies confirm that tenure is an important factor to consider when developing retention strategies (Deas, 2017; Oosthuizen et al., 2016), specifically among academic employees in the higher education sector (Nokes et al., 2013). The implication for retention practices is that individuals' tenure may influence their satisfaction with retention practices. Therefore, HEIs should develop and implement retention strategies which are targeted at the various tenure groups, seeing that strategies may differ among tenure groups.

Contrary to the findings of previous studies (Arya et al., 2017; Aramide & Aderibigbe, 2014; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Kung et al., 2018; Ojo, 2017; Tekingündüz et al., 2017; Zeffane et al., 2018), none of the socio-demographic variables were significantly related to organisational justice and trust, the mediator variables. Even though race, job level and tenure showed significant relationships with the psychological contract (independent variable) and satisfaction with retention practices (dependent variables), neither gender nor age were significantly related to them.

In summary, the results for the correlation analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1, seeing that the socio-demographic variables of race, job level and tenure were significantly related to the psychological contract (the independent construct variable) and satisfaction with retention practices (the dependent construct variables).

7.1.3.2 Relationship between the independent variable, the mediator and the dependent construct variables

As shown in Table 6.16 (Chapter 6), the results of the bivariate correlation analysis showed that the four dimensions of the psychological contract (the independent variable), namely, employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract were all significantly and positively related to each other. Furthermore, the results revealed significant and positive relationships between the psychological contract and participants' overall perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. This implies that when employees have positive psychological contract-related perceptions, specifically regarding the extent to which promises made within the exchange relationship have been kept by employees and employers, the extent to which their job needs have been fulfilled and positive emotions associated with the psychological contract, it may result in positive perceptions about organisational justice, trust and higher levels of satisfaction with retention practices.

Previous research studies confirm that psychological contract fulfilment may increase positive perceptions regarding organisational justice (Karatepe & Shahriari, 2014; Nimmo, 2018; Rodwell & Ellershaw, 2016; Rodwell & Gulyas, 2015; Tziner et al., 2017), improve employees' trust in their supervisors and organisation (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Samuel, 2017; Van der Nest, 2014; Trybou et al., 2014), and as a result, strengthen staff retention (Festing & Schäfer, 2014; Karatepe & Shahriari, 2014; Trybou et al., 2014; Tziner et al., 2017). The implication for retention practices in the higher education environment is that institutions should develop and implement retention strategies aimed at strengthening employees' psychological contracts, seeing that this may result in stronger organisational justice and trust, and in so doing, improve employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

The correlation results, furthermore, revealed that the four dimensions of organisational justice (a mediator variable), namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice, were all positively and significantly related to one another. The results also showed that overall, organisational justice had a significant and positive relationship with participants' perceptions of the psychological contract, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. This implies that positive perceptions of the justice, fairness and equity of the distribution of resources within one's organisation, the application of procedures, the communication of information, and the justice within one's interpersonal supervisor relationship, may improve psychological contract perceptions and have a noteworthy impact on employees' levels of trust, as well as their satisfaction with the organisation's retention

practices. This finding is confirmed by Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019), Idris and Fauziah (2015), as well as Samuel (2017), who found that there is a strong and positive relationship between organisational justice, the psychological contract, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

The results of the present study showed that the two dimensions of trust (a mediator variable), namely, the relationship with supervisor/manager and organisational trust, were significantly and positively correlated with each other. Furthermore, the results revealed significant, positive relations between employees' trust levels, and their overall perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and satisfaction with retention practices. In line with the research by Agarwal (2014), and Donohue and Tham (2019), the implication for retention practices is that when employees have a positive trust relationship with their supervisors/managers and trust in their colleagues, top management and the organisation as a whole, it may enhance psychological contract fulfilment, positive organisational justice perceptions, and also increase employees' satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices.

In terms of satisfaction with retention practices, significant positive correlations were reported between the six retention practices relevant to the current study, namely, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies (the dependent variables). Also, these retention practices revealed significant and positive correlations with participants' overall perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust. This suggests that when employees experience favourable perceptions with regard to their compensation packages, the variety and autonomy in their tasks, the training and development opportunities available to them, the support they receive from their supervisors, the career opportunities the organisation provides, as well as the organisation's work-life balance policies, it may enhance positive perceptions in terms of the psychological contract, organisational justice and improve employees' trust levels. This finding agreed with previous research studies which, similarly, confirmed the relatedness of individuals' satisfaction with retention practices, the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust (Strydom et al., 2014), especially, in the South African higher education environment (Muleya, 2017).

To summarise, the psychological contract (the independent construct variable), organisational justice (mediator variable), trust (mediator variable) and satisfaction with retention practices (dependent construct variables) were all significantly related to each other. Therefore, the results for the correlation analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1.

7.1.3.3 Main findings

In general, the bivariate correlation analysis produced significant findings, seeing that significant and positive correlations were observed between the four dimensions of the psychological contract, the four subscales of organisational justice, the two dimensions of trust, as well as the six subscales of the retention practices variables. Furthermore, significant and positive relationships were revealed between all these subscale dimensions and participants' overall psychological contract perceptions, overall organisational justice perceptions, overall trust levels and overall satisfaction with retention practices.

This suggested that when employees experience psychological contract fulfilment, they will be more likely to experience positive perceptions regarding organisational justice, higher trust levels, and therefore, be more likely to be satisfied with the organisation's retention practices. Therefore, the HEIs should implement retention strategies aimed at strengthening employees' psychological contracts, ensuring that promises and commitments made within the exchange relationship are adhered to, seeing that this may enhance perceptions of organisational justice, trust levels and employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

In terms of the socio-demographic variables, and concurring with previous studies (Deas, 2017; Pretorius, 2012), significant findings revealed that race, job level and tenure were related to the psychological contract variables, including employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract, as well as to some of the retention practices variables, including career opportunities, job characteristics, supervisor support and work-life balance.

7.1.3.4 Counter-intuitive findings

The socio-demographic variables of gender and age showed no significant relationships with any of the dimensions of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust or satisfaction with retention practices. This is in contrast previous studies which concluded age to be significantly related to the psychological contract (Bal, 2017; Sharif et al., 2017), as well as to satisfaction with retention practices (Deas, 2017; Potgieter & Mawande, 2017; Stoltz, 2014). This finding also contrasts with the findings of research by Blomme et al. (2010), Tromp (2010) as well as Chin and Hung (2013), which found gender to be significantly related to both the psychological contract and retention.

7.1.4 Research aim 2: Discussion of the stepwise regression results

Research aim 2 was to empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices.

7.1.4.1 Main findings

Table 6.17 (Chapter 6) is applicable to this section. The results of the stepwise regression analysis revealed that job level was the only socio-demographic variable that significantly predicted participants' satisfaction with retention practices. This finding is in line with previous research concluding that employees' job levels predicted their satisfaction with their organisation's retention practices (Coetzee et al., 2015; De Sousa Sabbagha et al., 2018; Guan et al., 2014; Potgieter et al. 2018; Stoltz, 2014). In general, the higher the job level, the more interesting and stimulating tasks become and the more career development opportunities are available to an employee, which may enhance satisfaction with retention practices (Stoltz, 2014). The implication for retention practices in the higher education context is that HEIs need to take cognisance of the preferences of various job levels and implement retention strategies targeted at the various job levels, seeing that strategies for job levels may differ.

Moreover, the stepwise regression results revealed that all the dimensions of the psychological contract, namely, employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and the state of the psychological contract, positively and significantly predicted satisfaction with retention practices. Thus, individual perceptions regarding the extent to which both the employer and the employee had kept promises and commitments made within the exchange relationship, the extent to which individual job needs had been met, and the state of emotions associated with the psychological contract, all significantly predicted individual satisfaction with retention practices. Previous research, similarly, concluded that the psychological contract predicted satisfaction with retention practices (Bisht, Chaubey, & Thapliyal, 2016; Deas & Coetzee, 2020) and turnover (Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017).

Lastly, distributive justice, a dimension of organisational justice, which is comprised of employees' perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of resources within an organisation, and the relationship between employees and their supervisors/managers, which is a dimension of trust, also significantly predicted participants' satisfaction with retention

practices. This finding was consistent with the findings of Matarid et al. (2018) and Ozturk et al. (2014), and implies that HEIs should ensure the fair distribution of outcomes and resources within the organisation, as well as maintaining strong, interpersonal relationships between employees and their supervisors (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013), in order to aid satisfaction with retention practices.

To summarise, the stepwise regression analysis revealed that job level, all the dimensions of the psychological contract, distributive justice and relationship with supervisor, significantly predicted employees' satisfaction with retention practices. Thus, the results for the stepwise regression analysis produced partial support for research hypothesis 2.

7.1.4.2 Counter-intuitive findings

The results of the stepwise regression analysis showed that job level significantly predicted satisfaction with retention practices. This finding seems by implication somewhat counterintuitive when considering previous research findings, which concluded that job level was not a significant predictor for turnover (Du Plooy & Roodt, 2013)). Also, in the current study, distributive justice was found to predict satisfaction with retention practices, which contrasts with the findings of a study by Frost (2006) that found procedural justice to be a more significant predictor of retention than distributive justice was. This implies that in the current study, employees' perceptions regarding the fairness of the distribution of resources within their organisation, was found to have a stronger impact in the retention of employees, than, employees' perceptions of the fairness of procedures in their organisation. Lastly, contrary to the findings in the current study which showed that job level significantly predicted satisfaction with retention practice, Rathi and Lee (2017) determined that employees' relationships with their supervisors may enhance quality of work-life but may not have a significant impact on commitment or turnover.

7.1.5 Research aim 3: Discussion of the moderating effects

Research aim 3 was to determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices.

7.1.5.1 Main findings

Table 6.18 (Chapter 6) is of relevance to this section. As mentioned in Chapter 6 (Section 6.7), based on results of the stepwise regression, only job level was considered as a moderating (control) variable for parsimony reasons in achieving the general aim of this research. Overall psychological contract was treated as an independent variable, organisational justice and trust were treated as mediating variables, and satisfaction with retention practices was treated as a dependent variable. The results of the moderated mediation analysis, specifically regarding the moderation effects, revealed that participants' job levels did not moderate their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting satisfaction with retention practices. This finding concurs with previous studies which concluded that job level did not moderate individual perceptions in terms of the psychological contract (Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Ferreira, 2012), organisational justice (Hamman-Fisher, 2009; Kassahun, 2005) and trust (Mwendwa, 2017), in predicting satisfaction with retention practices.

This finding implies that individuals' job levels, which is their specific positions and hierarchical levels within an organisation, did not have an impact on the strength or direction of the relationship between their individual observations with regard to the psychological contract, and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust, in forecasting their satisfaction with their organisation's HR retention practices. This is interesting, seeing that the stepwise regression analysis indeed showed that job level predicted participants' satisfaction with retention practices. The main effect of job level implies that HEIs should thus consider the differing needs of individuals at various job levels. The main effect of job level implies that when developing and implementing retention strategies, along with their psychological contract, organisational justice and trust-related perceptions, seeing that these may be key in predicting employees' satisfaction with retention practices. However, the moderated mediation analysis revealed that the relationship between individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and their satisfaction with retention practices was not conditional upon job levels per se. Accordingly, these results did not provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3.

7.1.5.2 Counter-intuitive findings

The current study found that job level did not moderate individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting satisfaction with retention practices. However, Blomme et al. (2010) found job content and education level to be significant moderators in the relationship between the psychological contract and turnover

intentions in a study among highly educated employees. In addition, job level may play a role in psychological contract perceptions when considering that previous research, Carbery et al. (2003) concluded that managerial competencies and job levels significantly explained the variance in employees' perceptions of psychological contract violation and turnover intentions.

7.1.6 Research aims 4 and 5: Discussion of the mediating effects and the SEM results

Research aim 4 was to empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention.

Research aim 5 was to conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework.

7.1.6.1 Main findings

As shown in Table 6.19 (Chapter 6), the results of the moderated mediation analysis, with specific reference to the mediation effects, revealed that organisational justice (especially distributive justice) and trust (particularly trust relationship with supervisor/manager) were significant mediators in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Also, as indicated in Tables 6.20 and 6.21 (in Chapter 6), the results of the SEM confirmed these findings and revealed the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices to be profoundly significant (Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6).

These results provided renewed insights with regard to the SET (Blau, 1964), and importantly, provided new understandings that contributed towards the dynamics of the proposed framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The SET (Blau, 1964) is based on the notion of reciprocity within a social exchange relationship and the successful maintenance of this exchange relationship is dependent on the fulfilment of the promises made and the expectations of the parties to this relationship (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). Employers and employees are parties to a social exchange relationship (Blau, 1964) and if promises are not kept and commitments not adhered to, it could have a harmful outcome on the fruitful prolongation of the exchange relationship (Lub et al., 2016).

Thus, based on this study's findings, organisational justice and trust function as illuminating mechanisms of the social exchange relationship represented by the connection between individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract and their satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Individual and organisational level retention strategies should concentrate on enhancing perceptions of the psychological contract which may help to strengthen organisational justice and trust as extensions of the effect of the psychological contract, which in turn may positively enhance satisfaction levels with retention practices. Previous research similarly concluded that the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices is significantly mediated by organisational justice (Huang et al., 2019; Pate, 2006; Samuel, 2017) and trust (Agarwal, 2014; Samuel, 2017). Samuel's (2017) study was conducted within both private and State organisations, and Bhatnagar's (2013) research was conducted among knowledge workers (such as the case is in a HEI); however, none of these studies were conducted within the unique South African, higher education context. This highlights the exceptional contribution of this study, seeing that the results provided fresh insights on the SET, specifically for the higher education environment.

The implication for retention practices in the higher education environment is that HEIs need to ensure that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship, are kept. At an organisational level, HEIs should develop and implement primary turnover prevention interventions, specifically, policies and programmes aimed at ensuring that promises made within the exchange relationship are kept, expectations are met, policies to ensure that employees' job needs are fulfilled and to ensure positive feelings within the psychological contract. The organisation-level retention policies, interventions and plans, should be executed at a personal level. Thus, organisational-level and individual-level turnover interventions should be aimed at enhancing individuals' psychological contracts, and consequently, their perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation, and their trust relationships with their direct supervisors or managers. As a result, this will increase employees' satisfaction with retention practices (see Sections 7.2 and 7.5.2 in Chapter 7 for more detail in terms of specific suggested interventions).

Subsequently, the results for the moderated mediation regression analysis and the SEM provided supportive evidence for research hypotheses 4 and 5.

7.1.6.2 Counter-intuitive findings and new insights derived from the results

The current study found that organisational justice and trust play a significant mediating role in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

However, Estreder et al. (2019) and Rani et al. (2018), found the mediation effect of organisational justice and trust, on the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' intention to leave the organisation, to be non-significant.

Furthermore, previous research concluded that organisational justice (Adzie, 2016) and trust (Terera, 2019) moderated the relationship between the psychological contract, commitment and turnover. In other words, the current research found that organisational justice and trust explain the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices (mediation), whereas Adzie (2016) and Terera (2019) found organisational justice and trust to impact the strength of the relation between these variables (moderation).

The intervening role of organisational justice and trust as revealed in the current study, in addition to the conditional role of these variables, adds new insights into and extends the psychological contract theory and the SET. Organisational justice and trust can thus be regarded as psychological mechanisms which can explain the relationship between the psychological contract and employees' satisfaction with retention practices and mechanisms that potentially impact the strength and direction of this relationship. This implies that individual perceptions in terms of the extent to which promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship have been adhered to, may result in improved perceptions of the organisational justice and stronger trust relationships, which may then lead to enhanced satisfaction with retention practices. Furthermore, these individual perceptions in terms of organisational justice and trust may also influence the strength of the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

It is crucial to note, though, that the current study did not measure commitment, intention to leave or turnover, but satisfaction with organisational retention practices, which is regarded as a precursor to turnover. Also, even though organisational justice and trust may be treated as both moderators and mediators in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with organisational retention practices, the present study did not measure moderation and only confirmed the significant mediating effect of these variables on the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Therefore, HEIs should implement retention strategies aimed at strengthening employees' psychological contracts, improving individual perceptions about the distribution of resources and trust within employee-supervisor relationships, and thereby, improving satisfaction with retention practices, in order to lessen actual turnover within the institution.

7.1.7 Research aim 6: Discussion of the tests for significant mean differences

Research aim 6 was to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices.

7.1.7.1 Race: Differences in terms of the framework for staff retention

Table 6.22 (Chapter 6) is relevant to this section. The tests for significant mean differences revealed that participants' overall psychological contract-related perceptions, their job satisfaction, and the state their psychological contracts, as well as participants' overall satisfaction with retention practices, their relationships with supervisors, their perceptions regarding the career opportunities available to them, and the work-life balance in their working environment showed significant mean differences in terms of different racial groupings, especially between the White and Black African employees, seeing that these groups comprised the majority of the sample.

Specifically, participants from Indian/Asian origin were found to be significantly more satisfied than their white colleagues with their overall psychological contracts, as well as the state of their psychological contracts. This finding is in agreement with Shuping (2009) who suggested that employees from the Indian/Asian racial group generally experienced more positive feelings in terms of their psychological contracts than the white racial group. Moreover, black African employees presented significantly more positive perceptions concerning their job satisfaction, as well as the state of their psychological contracts than the white racial group. Numerous previous research studies concur with the current study's finding in this regard, and concluded that Black African employees, generally perceived their psychological contracts more positively than their white counterparts (Ehlers & Jordaan, 2014; Hofhuis et al., 2014; Strydom, 2009; Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). In contrast to this finding, Oosthuizen et al. (2016) found that white employees experienced higher levels of job satisfaction than black African employees. Within the higher education environment (Deas, 2017), and in the general public sector (Ronnie, 2016), black African employees were also found to experience more optimistic feelings with regard to their psychological contracts than white employees.

With reference to satisfaction with retention practices, the results once again showed employees from Indian/Asian ethnic origin to be significantly more satisfied with their institution's overall retention practices, their relationships with their supervisors, and their career opportunities than their white colleagues. The results, furthermore, revealed black

African participants to perceive their organisation's overall retention practices, their career opportunities, and their work-life balance much more positively than the white participants did. Black Africans also showed significantly more positive perceptions about the institution's work-life balance than all the other races in the study. Oosthuizen et al. (2016) and Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), similarly, concluded that black employees were more satisfied than other racial groupings regarding work-life balance. These results might be related to the South African employment equity regulations which are aimed at eradicating the racial discrimination from the apartheid past, and which might make white employees feel deprived of work-related opportunities.

Coetzee and Stoltz (2015), João and Coetzee (2012), as well as Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), found black employees to be more satisfied than white employees regarding career development opportunities, training and development opportunities and work-life balance, specifically, in the higher education context (Deas, 2017), thus supporting the results of the current study.

Various studies suggest that white workers might experience less satisfaction than other racial groupings in terms of their psychological contracts and their company's retention practices, as a result of the employment equity legislation and affirmative action measures within South African workplaces (Fernandez, 2020; Maharaj et al., 2008; Oosthuizen et al., 2019; Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). These measures are aimed at eradicating the racial discrimination from the apartheid past by reserving more favourable work-related opportunities for non-white employees (Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). This might leave white employees feeling isolated and less appreciated by their employer than their colleagues from other races. This could explain why in the current study, as well as in various previous studies, white participants were less satisfied in terms of their psychological contracts, and also less satisfied with retention practices than employees from Indian/Asian and black African groupings.

To conclude, the results revealed that there were significant mean differences for race in terms of the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

7.1.7.2 Gender: Differences in terms of the framework for staff retention

As shown in Table 6.23 (Chapter 6), the results revealed that male participants were found to be significantly more satisfied with the organisation's work-life balance policies than females. This finding is consistent with previous studies that concluded female employees to be less satisfied with their employer's work-life balance policies than their male colleagues

(Dilmaghani & Tabvuma, 2019; Ip et al., 2020), especially in HEIs (Szelényi & Denson, 2019). Research has shown that lower satisfaction among females in terms of work-life balance, might be as a result of their primary role in household responsibilities and childcare (Baptiste et al., 2017; Bellou, 2009).

7.1.7.3 Age: Differences in terms of the framework for staff retention

Table 6.24 (Chapter 6) is applicable to this section. The results revealed that participants from varying age groups differed significantly in terms of their satisfaction with retention practices in terms of job characteristics, career opportunities and work-life balance. More specifically, individuals from the ages of 46 and 55 years and 56 to 65 years were significantly more satisfied with the characteristics of their jobs than individuals from the ages of 18 to 35 years. This finding aligns to Traymbak and Kumar's (2018) study which indicated that younger employees tended to be less satisfied than older employees with skill variety, task significance and autonomy in their jobs. Singh et al. (2014) also concluded that older employees tended to be more satisfied in their jobs due to high skill variety and autonomy. Boumans et al. (2012) found that older employees had a stronger need for challenging and fulfilling jobs than younger employees did, thus supporting the current study's finding in this regard. However, this finding contrasts with the findings of Zacher et al. (2017), as well as that of Truxillo et al. (2015), which suggested that younger employees were more concerned with task variety and task significance, when compared to older employees.

In terms of career opportunities, individuals in the 18 to 35-year age group were significantly more satisfied with the career opportunities available to them than the individuals in the 56 to 65-year age group. Participants between the ages of 46 and 55 years were also found to be significantly more satisfied with their career opportunities than those between 56 and 65 years of age. Previous studies concur that younger employees were often more satisfied than older employees with the career development opportunities available to them (Boumans et al., 2012; Innocenti et al., 2013). This might be a result of younger employees generally being at the starting phases of their careers with ample career development opportunities at their feet (Innocenti et al., 2013), whereas older employees often have fewer promotional and development opportunities at their disposal (Bown-Wilson, 2011). Employees in the age group of 46 to 55 years are not generally at the start of their careers. However, individuals in this age group are normally still 10 to 20 years from retirement, which means that they may still be able to advance in their careers and build their funds for retirement (Boumans et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the results revealed that individuals between the ages of 36 and 45 years were significantly less satisfied with the organisation's work-life balance policies than individuals between the ages of 56 and 65 years and the ages of 46 and 55 years. Participants from the 18 to 35-year age group likewise showed significantly less satisfaction with the organisation's work-life balance policies than the two older age groupings. This finding is consistent with Coetzee's (2014) finding that younger employees had greater concerns with the balance between their work and personal lives than older employees did. Also, Cox (2017) and Richert-Kaźmierska and Stankiewicz (2016), found younger employees to be significantly less satisfied with their organisation's work-life balance policies, which concurs with the current study's finding in this regard.

In conclusion, the results showed that there were significant mean differences with reference to participants' satisfaction with retention practices in terms of job characteristics, career opportunities and work-life balance.

7.1.7.4 Job level: Differences in terms of the framework for staff retention

Table 6.25 (Chapter 6) is of relevance to this section. The results revealed that participants from various job levels differed significantly regarding their perceptions of employer obligations in terms of their psychological contracts, as well as their satisfaction with retention practices concerning job characteristics, training and development opportunities and work-life balance.

More strictly speaking, the results revealed that Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers and lecturers, namely, academic employees, were found to be significantly more satisfied in terms of employer obligations than secretaries, administrative officers and administrative assistants, that is, administrative employees. This implies that academic staff members felt that the institution had kept its promises and commitments within the exchange relationship, to a larger extent than administrative staff members did. Deas (2017), similarly, found academic employees to be more satisfied in terms of employer obligations than administrative employees were. This finding contrasts with the findings of Shen (2010) who revealed that perceptions regarding the psychological contract fulfilment of academic employees were lower than it was among administrative employees.

Furthermore, the results showed that Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers and lecturers, once again, were significantly more satisfied with the characteristics of their jobs than administrative officers and administrative assistants were. The implication of this is that academic employees experienced more autonomy and flexibility in tasks, and took part in

more stimulating and challenging projects than administrative employees did. This finding is in line with the findings of Deas (2017) and Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008), which concluded that academic staff experienced more satisfaction in terms of their job characteristics than administrative staff did. With regard to training and development opportunities, participants on Professor and lecturer job levels were found to be significantly more satisfied with their available training and development opportunities than those on administrative officer and secretarial job levels.

In terms of work-life balance, administrative employees, including administrative assistants, administrative officers and secretaries showed significantly more positive experiences of the balance between their work and personal lives than academic employees did. Deas (2017) and Fontinha, Easton and Van Laar (2019), similarly, found academic employees to be less satisfied with their work-life balance than administrative employees were, thus supporting the current study's finding. This contrasts with Barkhuizen and Rothmann's (2008) finding which concluded academic employees to experience high levels of work-life balance.

In summary, the results revealed that individuals from different job levels, especially academic and administrative employees, differed significantly in terms of their perceptions of employer obligations, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, and work-life balance.

7.1.7.5 Tenure: Differences in terms of the framework for staff retention

As shown in Table 6.26 (Chapter 6), the results revealed that participants differed significantly in terms of tenure, specifically regarding their overall psychological contract perceptions and job satisfaction, as well as their overall satisfaction with retention practices, and their satisfaction with their available training and development opportunities, career opportunities and work-life balance.

In terms of the psychological contract-related variables, the results indicated that employees working for the institution for less than 5 years, were significantly more satisfied with their overall perceptions about their psychological contracts, as well as their job satisfaction than employees working for the institution for more than 15 years. This finding is in line with Bellou (2009), who concluded that shorter tenured employees were more likely to experience psychological contract fulfilment than longer tenured employees. This is, however, in contrast to the finding of Agarwal and Bhargava (2013), which concluded that longer tenured employees were more satisfied in terms of their psychological contracts than shorter tenured

employees, arguing that the longer an employee stays with an organisation, the more attached he/she grows to the organisation.

Furthermore, participants with less than 5 years' tenure, showed significantly more satisfaction with their overall retention practices than those with 6 to 10 years and the more than 15 years' tenure. Less than 5 years tenured participants also revealed significantly more satisfaction in terms of the training and development opportunities available to them than 6 to 10-year tenured participants. Similarly, participants in the less than 5-year tenure group showed significantly more satisfaction with their career opportunities, more than all the other tenure groups. Lastly, employees working for the organisation for 6 to 10 years, as well as those with less than five years, indicated that they were significantly more satisfied with the organisation's work-life balance policies than those individuals employed for longer than 15 years.

Contrary to the current study's findings in terms of tenure and satisfaction with retention practices, Chastain (2018) determined that there were no differences between shorter and longer tenured employees with regard to retention and turnover. Also, Boyas, Wind and Ruiz (2013) found shorter tenured employees to be less likely to leave their organisation than employees with a longer history and employment with their employer.

In summary, shorter tenured employees showed significantly more satisfaction than longer tenured employees with reference to the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

7.1.7.6 Main findings

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that socio-demographic differences should be taken into consideration in construction of a staff retention framework for the higher education environment. All the socio-demographic variables, race, gender, age, job level and tenure showed significant differences with regard to their perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction with organisational retention practices, namely, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. These differences are of great importance when developing a retention framework and HEIs should consequently take these differences in terms of socio-demographic characteristics into account when developing retention strategies for their employees. Thus, the tests for significant mean differences provided partial support for research hypothesis 5.

7.1.7.7 Counter-intuitive findings

The tests for significant mean differences showed no significant differences regarding any of the socio-demographic variables and any of the organisational justice and trust-related construct variables, which is in contrast to previous studies which found that employees from different racial groups (Atkin-Plunk et al., 2019), gender groups (Halemba, 2018; Tekingündüz et al., 2017), job levels (Gelens et al., 2014), and tenure groups (Olowodunoye, 2015) differed significantly in terms of their perceptions about organisational justice and trust. Also, the tests for significant mean differences showed no significant differences in terms of compensation, which is contrary to previous research which found that employees from different race, age, gender and job level groups differed significantly with regard to their compensation-related preferences (Nicholls, 2012; Snelgar et al., 2013).

7.2 INTEGRATION: CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The central hypothesis of this study was that organisational justice and trust had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. The study, furthermore, hypothesised that, individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, had a significant effect (moderating) on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention factors. The hypothesis lastly assumed that, based on the empirically derived relationship dynamics between the variables, it would be possible to construct an overall retention framework to inform retention management practices for employees in the higher educational environment context of SA.

The results of the study provided evidence in support of the central hypothesis stated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.6.2.3). The framework for staff retention was constructed based on key insights that were derived from the core significant findings in the discussion and integration section (Section 7.1.1 to 7.1.8 in Chapter 7). These insights serve as basic underpinning premises for the retention framework (see Figure 7.1) constructed for the purposes of achieving the general aim of the research. It is acknowledged that the empirically manifested retention framework could only be considered for its relevance to the sample of participants and not the broader HEI environment. The empirical results provided valuable new insights for future replication studies.

7.2.1 Key insights pertaining to the higher education context

The significant relationships between the variables emphasised the following aspects that should be considered when contemplating the retention of staff in the higher education environment:

- The psychological contract, as the foundation of the employment relationship, constitutes employees' idiosyncratic or subjective beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between employees and the employer (Rousseau, 1989; 1990; 1995). This research provides additional evidence that the psychological contract functions as a mental model that guides employees' perceptions of organisational justice and trust, which in turn predict their levels of satisfaction with organisational retention practices.
- Employees' psychological contract beliefs remain important in defining the employee-organisation relationship, and moreover, in determining mutual expectations that guide and shape perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with organisational retention practices (job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies).
- Employees' satisfaction with retention practices are influenced by the following psychological mechanisms:
 - Employees' job levels (individuals' hierarchical and/or responsibility levels within an organisation)
 - Employees' beliefs about (1) employer psychological contract obligations (individual perceptions of employees regarding the extent to which promises and commitments made to them by their employer, have been fulfilled), (2) employee obligations (individual beliefs about the extent to which promises and obligations made by employees to their employer, have been adhered to), (3) job satisfaction (employees' evaluation of their work, working environments and employment conditions), and (4) the state of the psychological contract (employees' feelings associated with the psychological contract);
 - Employees' perceptions of distributive justice (perceived fairness of the allocation of reward for efforts); and

- Employees' trust relationships with their supervisors/managers (employees' perceptions regarding the level of trust within their relationships with their immediate supervisors).
- Beliefs about employer and employee mutual obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract compose the fabric of the psychological contract that predict satisfaction with retention practices through the psychological mechanisms of organisational justice and trust.
- Employees' perceptions of especially distributive justice and trust relationships with their supervisors/managers are important intermediary mechanisms that explain the link between employees' psychological contract beliefs (employer and employee obligations, job satisfaction, state of the psychological contract) and their satisfaction with retention practices.
- Employees differ in their perceptions of employer obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract but not necessarily in their perceptions of organisational justice and trust. These differences confirm the psychological contract as the fabric of the employer-employee relationship and as key to retention considerations. Key observed differences that signal the need for individual and group retention interventions include the following:
 - In the current sample/research setting, psychological contract interventions (namely, beliefs about employer obligations being met, job satisfaction and state of psychological contract) are especially required for employees at secretary level, people of coloured ethnicity, and those with tenure longer than 15 years. The psychological contract beliefs of these groups of employees seem to be

Psychological contract interventions (for example, appropriate onboarding and orientation, clearly contracted personal development plans, fairness in performance management and appraisal, open discussions, mentoring support, transparency, joint decision-making, and relevant training and development opportunities) for these groups may help to increase their perceptions of distributive justice and trust relationships with their immediate supervisor/manager, which in turn, may enhance satisfaction with retention practices.

- Employees in the age group 56-65 years seem to be in need of clearly contracted career opportunities, as part of the psychological contract. In the higher education setting, the 56-65 age group is regarded as knowledge workers with experience, and they remain important for retention purposes because of the institution's need for mentoring and knowledge transfer to younger generations. The 56 to 65 years age group, along with employees on professor level and women, seem to have a stronger need than younger age groups and men, for clearly contracted work-life balance policies and supervisor support.

Psychological contract interventions for these groups may include: continuing education opportunities, participation in professional organisations and professional development opportunities, as well as work-life balance opportunities, such as working remotely and flexi time. Furthermore, improved supervisor support may be improved by, for example, open discussions, mentorship programmes, sincerity in setting performance goals, and ensuring that supervisors focus on productivity, rather than hours.

7.2.2 Key insights pertaining to the extension of the social exchange theory

The research findings corroborate the power of the classical SET (Blau, 1964) to explain the foundational dynamics involved in the psychological contract as a reciprocal exchange agreement between employees and the employer (Rousseau, 1989). The key insights that underpin the constructed framework for retention (see Figure 7.1), allude to the SET principle that social exchange involves a series of interdependent interactions that generate obligations. Within SET, these interactions are generally contingent on the actions of another entity (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). However, it should be noted that focus of the study was to apply the principles of SET from a linear, employee perspective as its core focus. This approach helped to provide new insights to the application of SET in the HEI employee context.

The research findings corroborate the SET notion that these interdependent transactions have the potential to generate high-quality relationships (satisfaction) between the two parties involved in the reciprocal relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In this regard, the suggested retention framework builds on the basic SET premise that the building of organisational justice and trust perceptions are important psychological processes that strengthen the social exchange relationship that develop between employees and their

employing organisation. The retention framework alludes to the notion that the reciprocal social relationship is expressed in employees' psychological contract beliefs (and needs), and their perceptions of obligations being met by the employer in the form of organisational retention practices.

The principle of reciprocity is key to SET theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and to the proposed retention framework. The research findings contributed new insights that build especially on, and extend the principle of reciprocity within SET, as elaborated upon by the SET review of Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005):

(a) Reciprocity as interdependent and negotiated exchanges

SET theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) assumes a bi-directional exchange transaction between two parties (that is, employees and employers in the psychological contract context). The present research did not test bi-directionality in an exchange relationship, but rather assessed linear regression links between psychological constructs (namely, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices) that are assumed to be important in the retention context as seen from the employee's perspective. However, the research assumed that retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies) represent the employer's obligations toward the employee in the negotiated exchange.

Overall, the research findings showed that retention practices are an important obligation aspect of the psychological contract, and that the manner in which they are managed and present in the organisation are related to employees' perceptions of, especially, distributive justice and trust relationships with supervisors/managers. As such, the research contributes important new knowledge that HEIs should consider when negotiating the psychological contract with prospective employees and the current workforce.

The retention framework (see Figure 7.1) illustrates that employees' perceptions of organisational justice and trust explain the relationship between psychological contract beliefs (which imply certain needs), and their perceptions of obligations being met by the employer in the form of retention practices. Reciprocity implies something has to be given and something returned. The research findings showed that positive psychological contract beliefs (namely, what employees believe they received in terms of met obligations) enhance organisational justice and trust perceptions (that is, what employees give in return for obligations being met),

which consequently, enhance satisfaction with retention practices (namely, how employees feel about what they receive from the organisation).

The retention framework illustrates the SET principle of interdependence, which involves mutual and complementary arrangements that are contingent on the actions of the two parties involved in the relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employers are required to meet their obligations in the form of offering job satisfaction, fair practices, and supporting retention practices; employees are required to meet their obligations toward the organisation, and in exchange, they exhibit greater trust in and improved perceptions of distributive justice about the organisation. The framework assumes that retention will be a positive outcome for the organisation and is dependent on the social exchange relationship between employee and employer.

The framework suggests that supportive individual and organisational level retention interventions may serve as important negotiated exchanges to enhance the interdependent psychological contract-retention practices' relationship which is strengthened through the perceptions of organisational justice and trust.

(b) Reciprocity as a folk belief and individual orientation

The retention framework illustrates this SET principle of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) in the form of the insights derived from the observed differences between race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups. A 'folk belief' refers to cultural expectations. The retention framework corroborates the idiosyncratic nature of the psychological contract which predicts not only unique needs and beliefs for different cultural groups, but also, as an extension of SET, for race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups. The retention framework provides supporting evidence of the existence of cultural and individual differences in the social exchange relationship.

The retention framework also illustrates the SET principle of exchange resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005):

- The retention practices allude to concrete or tangible resources that are essential for the reciprocal social exchange relationship. Employees' satisfaction with these resources (that is, retention practices) is explained by less concrete resources in the form of their psychological contract beliefs and their perceptions of organisational justice and trust.

- Retention practices represent important sources for employees, while employers require employees' resources in the form of their satisfaction, positive beliefs about the employer and perceptions of organisational justice and trust.

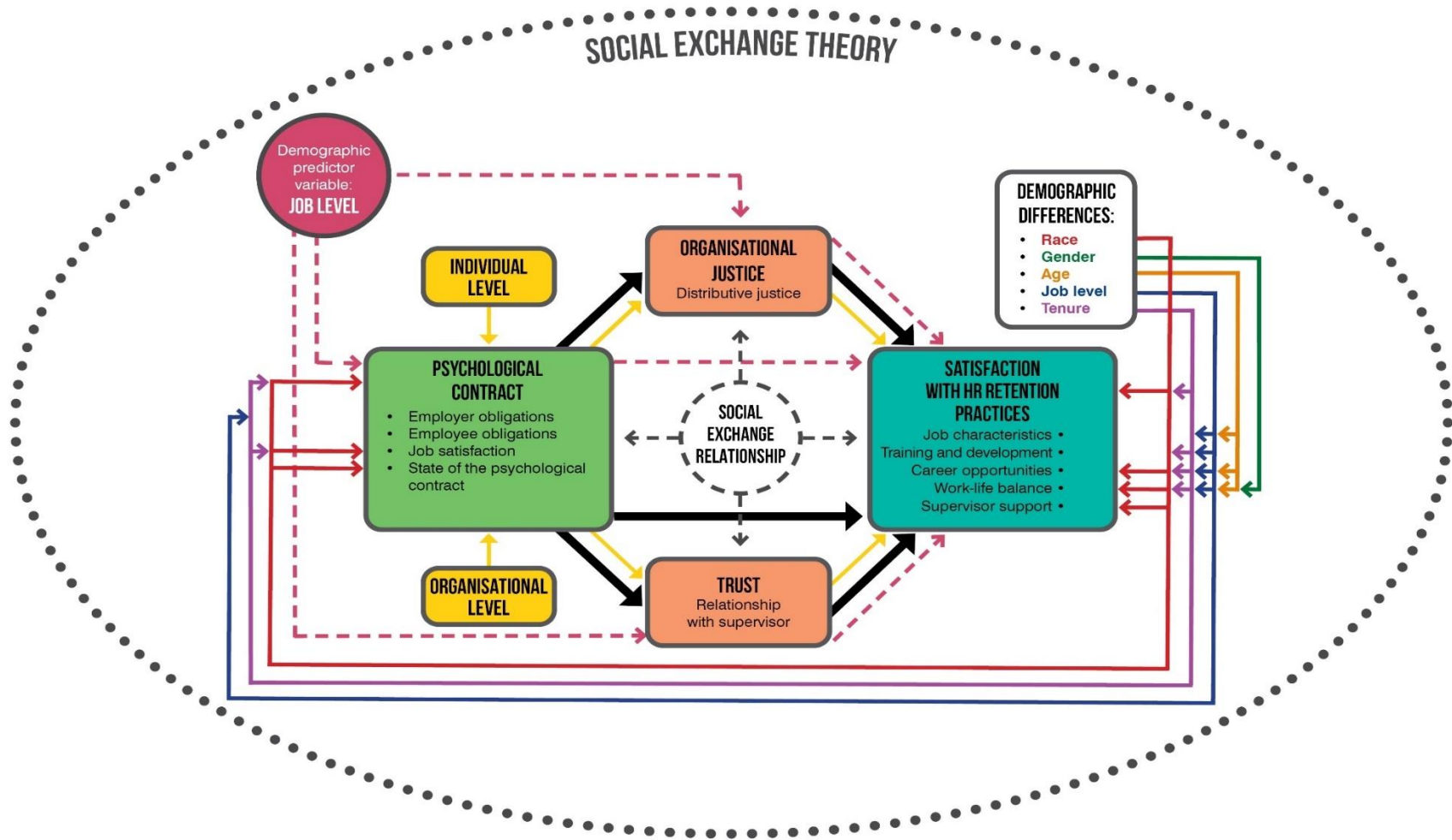
Overall, the retention framework positions satisfaction with retention practices as a socio-emotional outcome that signals that employees feel valued and supported by employers who are meeting their obligations toward their employees.

An overview of the empirically manifested staff retention framework is provided in Figure 7.1 on the next page. This framework can be implemented when formulating retention management strategies for the higher education environment.

Figure 7.1

Empirically Manifested Staff Retention Framework for the Higher Education Environment

FRAMEWORK FOR STAFF RETENTION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT



Source: Author's own work

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides the conclusions that are based on both the literature review and the empirical study, in accordance with the research aims as outlined in Chapter 1.

7.3.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

In terms of the literature review, the study aimed to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention practices, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment. Furthermore, the study aimed to postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of these constructs, and to conceptualise the implications of this theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment.

With regard to each of the specific theoretical research aims, the following conclusions were drawn in terms of the relationship dynamics between the variables of relevance to the study:

7.3.1.1 Research aim 1

The first aim, namely, to conceptualise the constructs of relevance to the research, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and the HR practices that influence retention, in the context of staff retention in the higher education environment was achieved in Chapter 2 (Meta-theoretical context of the study: Retention in the higher education environment) and Chapter 3 (Psychological contract, organisational justice and trust).

The literature study showed that South African HEIs, specifically the ODL institution relevant to this study, experience extreme difficulties retaining their skilled and valuable employees. Retention failure and high levels of turnover is associated with undesirable consequences and severe costs to these institutions. The literature review furthermore revealed that these retention challenges might be as a result of numerous factors, including financial constraints, employment equity, uncompetitive remuneration packages, limited promotion opportunities, job insecurity, limited growth and development opportunities, unreliable performance management systems, lack of resources and an overload of demands placed on employees. It was also revealed through the literature study that the content of the psychological contract comprises employer obligations, employee obligations, employees' levels of job satisfaction, and the state of their psychological contracts. The psychological contract, shaped by employees' perceptions within a social exchange relationship between the employer and

employee, has a significant impact on staff retention. Similarly, the literature review showed that organisational justice with its four distinct dimensions, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice, and trust, which relates to employees' trust relationship with their direct supervisors, as well as their trust in the organisation, is strongly related to the psychological contract. The literature study exposed that the psychological contract, through organisational justice and trust, is a crucial element which may impact employees' satisfaction with HR retention practices. The core organisational retention practices identified in the literature review are compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies.

Finally, the literature review showed that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics are important to bear in mind when constructing and implementing retention strategies to address the high turnover levels in HEIs. In this regard, the literature review showed that individuals from diverse racial, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ in terms of their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their levels of satisfaction with the retention practices within their organisation.

7.3.1.2 Research aims 2 and 3

The second and third aims, namely, to postulate a theoretical retention framework comprising the inter-dynamics of the constructs of psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and HR retention practices, as well as to conceptualise the implications of the postulated theoretical retention framework for retention management practices in the higher educational environment were achieved in Chapter 4.

Based on the literature review, an integrated theoretical retention framework for the higher education environment (Figure 4.4 in Chapter 4) could be constructed. The SET informed the theoretical retention framework in terms of explaining the dynamics among the constructs. The theoretical retention framework revealed that the psychological contract may have a noteworthy effect on individuals' satisfaction with organisational retention practices and turnover. The literature review, furthermore, revealed that the impact of the psychological contract on individuals' satisfaction with retention practices is strengthened through the organisational justice and trust that functions as psychological mechanisms in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices.

Moreover, the literature review showed that turnover prevention interventions are needed in the higher education environment on both the individual and organisational levels. These interventions should aim to strengthen individuals' psychological contracts, which may improve perceptions of organisational justice and trust, and in so doing, increase individuals' satisfaction with HR retention practices. Lastly, the literature review revealed that individuals from various socio-demographic groups differ in terms of their perceptions and needs in terms of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. Thus, HEIs should take cognisance of these differences when designing and implementing organisational retention strategies.

7.3.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical study

The empirical aim of this study was to address the following seven specific aims:

- To assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA (H1).
- To empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices empirically (H2).
- To determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices (H3).
- To empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention (H4).
- To conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data and decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework (H5).

- To determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices (H6).
- To formulate conclusions and make recommendations for human resource management retention practices and future research.

7.3.2.1 *Research aim 1*

The first aim, namely, to assess the empirical interrelationship between the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR practices influencing retention as manifested in a sample of participants from the higher educational environment in SA, was achieved in Chapter 6. Supportive evidence was provided for research hypothesis H1.

Conclusion: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, their perceptions in terms of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, and their satisfaction with organisational retention practices are all significantly related.

In terms of the socio-demographic variables, race, job level and tenure are significantly related to the psychological contract (the independent construct variable) and satisfaction with retention practices (the dependent construct variables). Therefore, HEIs should take cognisance of the needs and perceptions of different racial groups, job levels and tenure groups when constructing and applying retention strategies.

Furthermore, the psychological contract (the independent construct variable), organisational justice (mediator variable), trust (mediator variable) and satisfaction with retention practices (dependent construct variables) are all significantly related to one another. Thus, when employees feel that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship are kept, they may experience positive organisational justice-related perceptions and stronger trust relationships, which may then result in higher levels of satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices. HEIs should thus develop and implement retention strategies specifically aimed at ensuring psychological contract fulfilment, seeing that this may enhance perceptions of organisational justice, trust levels and employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

7.3.2.2 *Research aim 2*

The second aim, namely, to empirically investigate whether the socio-demographic variables, psychological contract, organisational justice and trust positively and significantly predict satisfaction with HR retention practices, was achieved in Chapter 6. Partial supportive evidence was provided for research hypothesis H2.

Conclusion: Job level, all the dimensions of the psychological contract, distributive justice and relationship with supervisor significantly predict employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

Therefore, HEIs should develop organisational and individual-level turnover prevention strategies aimed at ensuring that commitments made within the social exchange relationship between employers and employees are adhered to, that outcomes and resources within the organisation are distributed fairly, and that employees experience strong, interpersonal relationships with their supervisors, on all job levels, seeing that this may result in stronger satisfaction with retention practices and lower turnover.

7.3.2.3 *Research aim 3*

The third aim, namely, to determine whether there is a significant interaction effect (moderating) between the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals (as a relatively stable set of moderating variables) and (1) their perceptions of the psychological contract and (2) their perceptions of organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with HR retention practices, was addressed in Chapter 6. Supportive evidence was not provided for research hypothesis H3.

Conclusion: Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (in this case, their job levels) do not moderate their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust in predicting their satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Thus, the relationship between individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, and their satisfaction with retention practices is not conditional upon job levels as such.

7.3.2.4 *Research aims 4 and 5*

The fourth research aim, namely, to empirically investigate whether organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract

and satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention; as well as the fifth research aim, namely, to conclude whether the empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data, and to decide about the extent to which the data inform the construction of a retention framework, were achieved in Chapter 6. Supportive evidence was provided for research hypotheses H4 and H5.

Conclusion: Organisational justice and trust positively and significantly mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with organisational retention practices; and based on the empirical inter-dynamics of this significant mediation effect, a retention framework for the higher education environment could be constructed (Section 7.2 & Figure 7.1). This implies that organisational justice and trust function as psychological mechanisms which explain the relationship between individuals' perceptions with regard to their psychological contracts (their needs in terms of the social exchange relationship) and their satisfaction with organisational retention practices (their perceptions of obligations met by the employer).

Employers and employees are in a reciprocal social exchange relationship and the psychological contract is based on the individual perceptions of these parties in terms of the extent to which promises within this relationship have been kept in a manner that creates trust relationships and perceptions of distributive justice. In terms of the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with HR retention practices, this research revealed that organisational justice and trust are extensions of the psychological contract which can alleviate or buffer this relationship. Thus, positive psychological contract perceptions (what employees feel they received in terms of kept promises) improve organisational justice and trust perceptions (what employees give in response to kept promises), which then enhances satisfaction with retention practices (how employees perceive what they obtain from the organisation). This shows the unique and important contribution of this study, seeing that this research added a fresh stance on the SET, by highlighting the significant role that organisational justice and trust play in the relationship between the psychological contract and organisational retention practices.

7.3.2.5 *Research aim 6*

The sixth research aim, namely, to determine whether individuals from the various race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly regarding their psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices, was achieved in Chapter 6. Supportive evidence was provided for research hypothesis H6.

Conclusion: Individuals from different race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly in terms of their psychological contracts and their satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Specifically, employees from different race, tenure and job level groups, differ significantly relating to their overall perceptions of the psychological contract, their perceptions of employer obligations, job satisfaction and the state of their psychological contracts. Also, individuals from varying race, age, tenure and job level groups differ regarding their overall satisfaction with retention practices, as well as their perceptions of their job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support and career opportunities. Lastly, individuals from different race, gender, age, job level and tenure groups differ significantly in terms of their work-life balance preferences. The different socio-demographic groups do not differ with regard to their perceptions of organisational justice and trust.

Based on the empirical results, the following conclusions could be drawn:

- Indian/Asian and black African employees seemed to be significantly more satisfied in terms of their psychological contracts than white employees. Black African employees also experienced more job satisfaction than white employees. Therefore, it appears that they experienced that promises made in terms of the social exchange relationship between employees and employers had been kept to a larger extent than their white counterparts. Thus, in order to retain valuable and knowledgeable white employees, HEIs should ensure that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship are adhered to, for all racial groupings.
- Employees from Indian/Asian ethnic origin appeared to be more satisfied with their institution's overall retention practices, their relationships with their supervisors and their career opportunities than white employees. This implies that white employees have a greater need for improved support from their supervisors and enhanced career opportunities.
- Black African employees perceived their institution's overall retention practices, their career opportunities and their work-life balance, much more positively than white employees. Black African employees also appeared to be significantly more satisfied with the institution's work-life balance policies than all the other race groups. White employees are more strongly in need of contracted career opportunities and work-life balance opportunities.

- Males appeared significantly more satisfied with the organisation's work-life balance policies than females. This implies that females, possibly due to their primary role in household responsibilities and childcare, have a greater need for work-life balance opportunities than males do.
- Individuals from the ages of 46 and 55 years and 56 to 65 years appeared to be significantly more satisfied with the characteristics of their jobs than individuals from the ages of 18 to 35 years. This implies that older employees, possibly as a result of being further advanced in their careers, felt that they were involved in more challenging and interesting tasks than younger employees. Younger employees thus displayed the need for more interesting and stimulating job tasks.
- Employees in the 18 to 35-year age group as well as the 46 and 55-year age group, seemed to be significantly more satisfied with the career opportunities available to them than individuals in the 56 to 65-year age group. Thus, older employees, nearing retirement, showed a greater need for contracted career development opportunities than young employees and employees in the middle stages of their careers.
- Individuals between the ages of 36 and 45 years perceived the organisation's work-life balance policies much more positively than individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 years, 46 and 55 years and 56 and 65 years. This could be a result of the 36 to 45-year age group being in the stage of their careers where career advancement is a priority to them to a larger extent than their work-life balance. Thus, younger employees, as well as the older age groups, showed a need for improved work-life balance policies.
- Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers and lecturers, namely, academic employees, appeared to be significantly more satisfied in terms of employer obligations than secretaries, administrative officers and administrative assistants, that is, administrative employees. Consequently, academic employees felt that their employer had kept promises and commitments made to them to a larger extent than administrative employees did. This implies that HEIs should ensure that the obligations towards administrative employees are adhered to, and that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship between employees and employers are kept for all job levels within the organisation.

- Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers and lecturers, once again, academic staff, showed significantly more positive perceptions in terms of the characteristics of their jobs and the training and development opportunities available to them than administrative officers, administrative assistants and secretarial job levels. This implies that administrative employees have a need for more interesting and challenging tasks and relevant training opportunities being made available to them.
- In terms of work-life balance, administrative employees, including administrative assistants, administrative officers and secretaries appeared to feel significantly more positive about the balance between their work and personal lives than academic employees. Academic employees thus have a need for improved work-life balance, possibly as a result of academics being involved in teaching, as well as research projects and supervision of students which are often too complex and time consuming to complete within office hours.
- Employees with a tenure of less than 5 years, seemed to be significantly more satisfied with their overall perceptions about their psychological contracts, as well as their job satisfaction than employees working for the institution for more than 15 years. This implies that shorter tenured employees felt more positively about their work and employment conditions than longer tenured employees. Shorter tenured employees also experienced that promises made in terms of the social exchange relationship between employees and employers had been kept to a larger extent than longer tenured employees. Employees working at the institution for more than 15 years are thus in need of clearly contracted psychological contract-related expectations.
- Employees working at the institution for less than 5 years appeared to be significantly more satisfied with their overall retention practices as well as the training and development opportunities available to them than those with 6 to 10 years, and the more than 15 years tenure. This implies that organisations often focus on providing training opportunities and guidance to new and shorter tenured employees, but neglect to provide these to longer tenured employees as well. Hence, longer tenured employees require relevant training and development opportunities from their employer.
- Employees in the less than 5-year tenure group appeared to be significantly more satisfied with their career opportunities than all the other tenure groups. Thus, shorter tenured employees perceive their careers as being open to them for advancement,

whereas longer tenured employees have a stronger need for clearly contracted career development opportunities.

- Employees working for the organisation for 6 to 10 years, as well as less than five years, seemed to be significantly more satisfied with the organisation's work-life balance policies than those employed for longer than 15 years. Consequently, longer tenured employees require improved work-life balance opportunities.

7.3.3 Conclusions relating to the central hypothesis

The central hypothesis of this study, as indicated in Chapter 1, was that organisational justice and trust had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with the HR practices that influence retention. The study furthermore hypothesised that, individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, had a significant effect (moderating) on the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with the HR practices influencing retention factors. The hypothesis lastly assumed that, based on the empirically derived relationship dynamics between the variables, it would be possible to construct an overall retention framework to inform retention management practices for employees in the higher educational environment context of SA. Both the literature review and the empirical study provided supportive evidence for the central hypothesis.

7.3.4 Conclusions relating to the field of human resource management

The conclusions and interpretations made from the literature review, along with the results of the empirical study, should make a contribution to the field of HRM and retention practices in the higher education environment.

The literature review provided new understandings into retention in the higher education environment and the role that individuals' psychological contracts play in their satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Furthermore, the literature provided new insights into organisational justice and trust and how these interact with the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Lastly the literature review provided a new understanding of various concepts and theoretical models that foster the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and HR retention practices.

The literature review provided grounds for the construction of a theoretical staff retention framework for the higher education environment, indicating the important buffering effect that organisational justice and trust have on the relationship between individuals' psychological contracts and their satisfaction with their organisation's retention practices. Furthermore, the theoretical retention framework showed the individual and organisational level elements that have to be considered when developing and implementing retention strategies. From the findings it is evident that HEIs and HR managers and practitioners should focus on the concepts and theoretical models that influence the variables of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and retention practices.

The empirical study provided new information on the relationship dynamics between the socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure), the psychological contract (employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction and state of the psychological contract), organisational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice), trust (relationship with supervisor/manager and organisational trust) and satisfaction with retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). The empirical study also provided new insights into the mediating effect of organisational justice (especially distributive justice) and trust (specifically relationship with supervisor/manager) on the relationship between individuals' psychological contracts and their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Lastly, the empirical study provided new understandings about the differences between the different socio-demographic groups, in terms of their perceptions and needs regarding the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR retention practices.

The new information gained from the empirical study extended the SET and aided to form a broader perspective of how individuals' psychological contracts, their perceptions of organisational justice and trust, explain their satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Job level, employer obligations, employee obligations, job satisfaction, state of the psychological contract, distributive justice and relationship with supervisor/manager seemed to be the most significant contributing factors in predicting employees' satisfaction with retention practices.

By bearing in mind these findings, organisations should develop a deeper understanding of individuals' needs in terms of their psychological contracts, seeing that retention strategies should be constructed and implemented with psychological contract fulfilment as its main aim. The empirical study showed that organisation justice and trust function as extensions of the

psychological contract and thus HEIs should aim to strengthen their employees' psychological contracts, seeing that this may improve their perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation and their trust relationships with their supervisors/managers, and this may assist satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices. The empirical results should assist HEIs to change or develop their retention policies, practices and strategies accordingly.

Lastly, the findings revealed that HR managers and practitioners should continue to pay attention to the psychometric properties of particular measuring instruments (PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS) before implementing them in organisational initiatives. Organisations should ensure that trained and qualified specialists are consulted during the administration and interpretation of the results attained from the aforementioned instruments to guarantee fairness and equality. Employees should receive feedback that is clear and understandable, in a caring and unthreatening setting. Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure, should also be considered during the development of employee retention strategies, as has been accentuated in the findings of this study.

7.4 LIMITATIONS

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

7.4.1 Limitations of the literature review

This exploratory research into the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, socio-demographic characteristics (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) and satisfaction with HR retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) in the higher educational environment context of SA, was limited by the following aspects, as discussed below:

- There are various psychological variables which could predict satisfaction with retention practices, however, only the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust were explored in this study. There are also several psychological variables which may mediate the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, though, only organisational justice and trust were studied as mediators in this research. Furthermore, there are numerous socio-demographic variables which could predict satisfaction with retention practices, and/or moderate the relationship between perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice

and trust on satisfaction with HR retention practices. However, only race, gender, age, job level and tenure were explored. Lastly, there are other variables which may act as precursors to staff turnover, such as organisational commitment or intention to leave, but only satisfaction with retention practices was studied as outcome variable in this study. For these reasons, the study was unable to provide a holistic indication of the factors that may potentially have an impact on retention strategies in South African HEIs.

- There are various industries in SA experiencing difficulties in retaining their competent and valuable employees, however, this study only studied retention in the higher education environment. For this reason, the findings cannot be generalised to organisations in other sectors of SA.
- Although previous studies have been conducted on the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, little research has been done in in the South African context, nor in the unique higher education environment of SA. Furthermore, to the researcher's knowledge, no previous studies have been conducted with regard to the mediating effect of organisational justice and trust on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, specifically in the South African higher education environment.
- The research and interpretation of the findings were limited to the disciplinary boundary of HRM. Future research should contemplate identifying constructs from other disciplinary viewpoints and studying the patterns that may come forth.

7.4.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The generalisability of the findings could be limited in terms of the size and characteristics of the research sample, and the psychometric properties of the PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS. The following limitations should be considered:

- Though the sample comprised N = 493 participants, a larger sample was required to found a confident relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, satisfaction with retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work/life balance and commitment) and the socio-demographic and the retention practices (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) in this study. It is acknowledged that the empirically manifested

retention framework could only be considered for its relevance to the sample of participants and not the broader HEI environment because of the underrepresentation of certain groups. However, as an exploratory study, the empirical results provided valuable new insights for future replication studies.

- The sample primarily consisted of permanently employed, married, Black African and White females, between the ages of 46 and 55 years, in a single HEI. This limited the generalisability of the findings to the broader South African higher education workforce.
- The measuring instruments (PQ, OJM, TRA and RFMS) are self-report questionnaires which are aimed to determine the personal views, feelings, perceptions and experiences of the participants, which may have prejudiced the validity of the research results.
- A subscale of the RFMS (job characteristics) revealed a low internal consistency reliability and was consequently a limitation on the interpretation of the findings.
- Numerous psychological variables which could impact on satisfaction with retention practices, as well as other variables which may act as precursors to turnover, were omitted from this study. If these variables had been included, they may have influenced the findings on the study.
- The socio-demographic variables were limited to race, gender, age, job level and tenure. Other socio-demographic variables might have had a dissimilar effect on the research outcomes.
- The study used a cross-sectional mediational analysis.
 - Although social science researchers generally tend to critique cross-sectional mediation designs, cross-sectional studies employing mediation analysis are also seen to contribute new theoretical insights in exploratory research (Disabato, 2016). Although researchers tend to argue for longitudinal research designs when employing mediation analysis, it is also recognised that longitudinal design are costly, require several follow-ups, and may also be prone to bias and lack of true causal effects (Disabato, 2016; Mitchell & Macwell, 2013). The researcher also tested for common method bias in chapter 6 and no issues of bias were observed.

- One limitation of cross-sectional mediation analysis recognised by this study, is the possibility of bias, and the support for mediation effects when there is no true mediation process in the sample (Fairchild & McDaniel, 2017). However, it was clearly stated in this study that the research did not aim to assess causal effects, but rather the direction and magnitude of links between variables.
- In this regard, it is important to emphasise that the research design employed mediation analysis for explanation purposes and not mediation for design (that is, true causal effects over time) purposes. The focus was to probe underlying mechanisms as to why a relation exists between a predictor (psychological contract beliefs) and an outcome (satisfaction with retention practices). Mitchell and Maxwell (2013) posit that cross-sectional mediation analysis for explanation lends insight into the probable reason for outcomes (levels of satisfaction with retention practices), and as such, helps generate ideas for future longitudinal mediational designs.
- The research did not assess the bi-directionality of the social exchange relationship. The research tested linear links between the research constructs as seen from only the employees' perspective. Future research should consider studies that assess perspectives from both the employees' and employer's perspective. Such studies could, for example, include canonical correlation and other appropriate multivariate designs to test for the bi-directionality of the exchange relationship.

Regardless of the abovementioned limitations, the study still displayed the ability to investigate the relationships between the variables which impact staff retention in the higher education environment, namely, the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with retention practices. The findings have highlighted the important dynamics of the social exchange relationship between employees and employers that should be considered in the development of retention strategies. The results of this study can be viewed as a first step in moving forward and inspiring further research into staff retention practices in the South African higher education context.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the research findings, conclusions and limitations, the following recommendations for HRM and additional research in this field are discussed below.

7.5.1 Recommendations for future research

The sample was made up mainly of permanently employed, married, black African and white females in a single HEI. In order to increase the generalisability of the findings, future research studies should make use of bigger, autonomous samples in various sectors that are more representative of several socio-demographic and occupational groupings.

It is also recommended that future research should focus in more detail on the investigation of the relationship between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, HR retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) and socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure). The findings of this study permitted only a restricted understanding of these variables. Such future research studies would be valuable for HR managers and practitioners in improving employee retention strategies at an organisational and individual level.

It is moreover suggested that future research should conduct longitudinal studies so as to evaluate cause-and-effect relationships between the variables in several occupational settings. Future replication studies should also consider implementation guidelines, finance and economic implications and anticipated implementation challenges to strengthen the framework's viability and sustainability. This would assist HR managers and practitioners to interpret the findings and develop a framework that would aid organisations in retaining valued staff.

7.5.2 Recommendations for retention practices

The research findings and significant relationships that arose from the study could contribute to the development of the following organisational and individual-level interventions in terms of retention practices:

- In terms of the sample profile, employees from the white and Coloured ethnic groupings, and administrative employees (administrative officers, administrative assistants and secretarial job levels), older employees (56 – 65 years) and employees working for the institution for longer than 15 years, showed a greater need in terms of their psychological contracts. The institution, therefore, needs to ensure that promises and commitments to these groups are kept within the social exchange relationship. The concerns of these groups of employees are specifically related to their training and development

opportunities, career opportunities available to them, and the support that these individuals receive from their supervisors.

- The sample profile, furthermore, showed that employees from white ethnicity, women, academic employees (Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers and lecturers), older employees (56 – 65 years) and employees with a tenure longer than 15 years showed a need for appropriate work-life balance opportunities.
- Lastly, the sample profile revealed that administrative employees and younger employees (18 – 35 years) need more interesting and stimulating job characteristics.
- These groups of employees thus require psychological contract interventions at both organisational and individual levels. These interventions should be aimed at strengthening employees' psychological contracts, thereby improving their perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of resources within the institution, as well as the trust within their relationships with their supervisors, and subsequently, will lead to an improvement in the employees' satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices.

7.5.2.1 Organisational level psychological contract interventions

- The institution should develop and implement a comprehensive onboarding and orientation programme which creates the opportunity for new staff members to be introduced to their job functions, job descriptions, supervisors, performance agreements and the organisational culture, in an appropriate and comfortable manner organisation (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017). The onboarding and orientation programme should ensure that new employees' expectations are in line with what their supervisors and the organisation expect of them, as well as what they can expect from the organisation. This might assist in the commencement of a fruitful social exchange relationship between employees and the employer, seeing that parties to this relationship will not form inaccurate or unrealistic expectations which may result in feelings of psychological contract breach.
- The institution should, furthermore, develop and implement a fair and transparent performance management system which provides for clearly contracted performance management plans, performance agreements and performance appraisal systems (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The performance management system should be designed in such a way that supervisors and employees are in agreement regarding the setting of

performance standards and targets, as well as the possible outcomes of standards and/or targets not met. If the institution designs its performance management system in such a fair and transparent manner, employees' expectations within the social exchange relationship will be met, and employees will not feel deprived or misled. This might aid in feelings of psychological contract fulfilment, which may then result in employees perceiving the distribution of resources within the organisation as fair, and experience trust within their relationship with their supervisors, which may in turn, lead to satisfaction with the organisation's performance management system and other retention practices.

- Also, the institution should construct and implement a comprehensive career development plan (Akkermans et al., 2015; Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Hernandez et al., 2018; Sok et al., 2018). The career development plan should provide for clearly contracted personal development plans, fair and appropriate training and development opportunities, a career development programme and a mentoring system. Especially the administrative staff members, along with the older, longer tenured employees in the current study's sample, showed a greater need for relevant training and development workshops and programmes, as well as career development opportunities which enable them to advance in their careers. The career development plan should sustain regular and open discussions between employees and supervisors, where both parties are able to communicate their requirements and expectations in terms of employees' personal development, training and development, and career development needs. As a result of this, realistic expectations can be developed by both parties to avoid feelings of deficiency and unkept promises within the social exchange relationship.
- The institution should additionally develop and implement appropriate and feasible work-life balance opportunities (Alexandre & Pallais, 2017; Chimote & Srivastava, 2013; Feeney & Stritch, 2019; Hechanova & Caringal-Go, 2018; Hwang, 2018; Kraak et al., 2018; Russo et al., 2016; Vyas et al., 2017; Yu, 2018). In the sample of the current study, academic employees, women, and once more, the older, longer tenured employees, specifically showed a need for clearly contracted work-life balance opportunities, which may include flexible working schedules and working hours, opportunities for working remotely, and policies which create a family-friendly working environment. Work-life balance policies such as these may result in feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment in terms of employees' psychological contracts, seeing that their personal needs are considered and recognised by their employer. This might then lead to positive feelings about organisational justice, and strong trust within the social exchange relationship, which could result in stronger satisfaction with the work-life balance available to them.

- Moreover, and importantly, the institution should construct and implement a supervisor support programme which is aimed at equipping supervisors to provide the necessary support to their subordinates (Guchait et al., 2015). The supervisor support programme should empower supervisors with knowledge and insight about the importance of supervisor support, and also provide them with the skills and tools to support their subordinates appropriately. Employees from Coloured ethnicity specifically showed a greater need in terms of supervisor support. If supervisors provide the necessary and appropriate support for their subordinates by means of regular, open and honest discussions regarding performance management, training opportunities, career development, work-life-balance opportunities, as well as the design and division of resources, responsibilities and tasks within the organisation, this could leave employees feeling appreciated and understood by their supervisors, which may have a positive impact on employees' psychological contracts.
- Lastly, the institution could improve employees' perceptions of their job characteristics, especially younger, administrative employees, by introducing a participative management style (Holman & Axtell, 2016; Huong et al., 2016; Sinding et al., 2018). This should provide for joint decision-making opportunities and regular communication and feedback sessions between employees and their supervisors and top management. Also, a proper job design policy and other HR policies should ensure that employees are provided with interesting and stimulating tasks that cater for their individual needs, and that concerns with regard to job tasks are identified before they result in feelings of unmet expectations and broken promises.

These organisational level interventions outlined above, should assist the organisation to put policies, programmes and procedures in place which ensure that promises and commitments within the social exchange relationship between the employer and employees are adhered to. This may improve employees' perceptions about the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation, their relationships with their supervisors, and thereby, improve employees' feelings of satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices.

7.5.2.2 Individual-level psychological contract interventions

- First and foremost, the individual-level support that employees receive from their immediate supervisors is vital in strengthening their psychological contracts (Guchait et al., 2015; Holland et al., 2016; Kurtessis et al., 2015; Zafar, 2015). In the current study's sample profile, especially employees from Coloured ethnicity showed a need for their

supervisors to create an environment where employees may communicate their needs and expectations in an open and honest manner, without fear of judgement or intimidation. These open discussions between parties may assist in the clarification and alignment of both parties' expectations and alleviate perceptions of unkept promises within the social exchange relationship. Positive, individual-level supervisor support could result in psychological contract fulfilment, through their perceptions of the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation and a strong trust relationship with their supervisors, which may result in higher levels of satisfaction with the institution's retention practices.

- The institution should also deliver thorough, individual-level, onboarding and orientation to new staff members (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017). Orientation and onboarding should provide for open and honest discussions between employees and their supervisors. Employees should be given the opportunity to clarify uncertainties and gain all the necessary information in terms of the organisational culture, their job tasks and performance requirements, in a safe and supportive environment. These discussions should establish and elucidate the expectations of both parties to the social exchange relationship between employees and their employer. Individual-level onboarding and orientation is extremely important for the development of appropriate, reciprocal expectations from both parties (Caldwell & Peters, 2018; DeBode et al., 2017). If employees' expectations are not shaped accurately at the commencement of their employment, it may cause feelings of unmet expectations, which may have a harmful effect on the psychological contract.
- The institution should also ensure that the management of employees' performance by means of performance agreements and appraisals are executed personally, confidentially and fairly (Harrington & Lee, 2015). The individual-level performance management of employees should ensure that both employees and their supervisors (representing the organisation) are in agreement in terms of performance goals and criteria. Thus, to avoid unmet expectations and the resultant psychological contract breach, the performance-related expectations and commitments of both parties should be aligned.
- Furthermore, supervisors should have regular individual, open and honest discussions with employees regarding their needs and expectations in terms of their career development goals, the training and development they require in order to reach these

goals, and/or their mentoring needs (Hafsteinsdóttir et al., 2017; Hernandez et al., Fletcher et al., 2016; Paul & Hung, 2018; Sok et al., 2018). These discussions should create the opportunity for accurate expectations to be developed by both parties, to avoid feelings of deprivation and unkept promises within the social exchange relationship.

- Another aspect which could aid employees' (especially academic employees, women and older, longer tenured employees in the current study's sample) psychological contracts, is the work-life balance opportunities available to them. Individuals' expectations concerning work-life balance opportunities should be addressed at an individual level (Chimote & Srivastava, 2013; Kraak et al., 2018). Employees' needs in terms of work-life balance, as well as the work-life balance opportunities that the organisation is prepared to offer, should be clarified from the commencement of employment, and should be addressed in the onboarding and orientation of new staff members. However, the work-life balance needs of employees may change as their circumstances change, and therefore, regular, open discussions between supervisors and their subordinates are essential to ensure that both employees and the employer's expectations are harmonised.
- Finally, specifically administrative employees who are younger in age displayed a need for more interesting and stimulating job tasks. Individual employees should have frequent opportunities to voice their concerns and needs in terms of their job characteristics to their supervisors, as well as their expectations in terms of the distribution of resources, such as training and mentorship opportunities, and the distribution of responsibilities within their department or section (Holman & Axtell, 2016; Sinding et al., 2018). This might result in feelings of contentment and enablement and psychological contract fulfilment, which may in turn, lead to positive perceptions about the distribution of resources in the organisation, a strong sense of trust in their supervisors, and improved satisfaction with their job characteristics and the organisation's retention practices.

These individual-level psychological contract interventions outlined above, should assist the institution to address the expectations and needs of individual employees on a personal level. Consequently, employees will not be left feeling deprived and misled, which may improve their perceptions about the extent to which promises and commitments within the social exchange relationship have been adhered to. Through positive psychological contract perceptions, employees' perceptions about the fairness of the distribution of resources within the

organisation and their trust relationships with their supervisors should be enhanced, and in so doing, the employees' feelings of satisfaction with the organisation's retention practices, should be increased.

7.6 EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to construct a framework for staff retention for the higher education environment by, firstly, investigating the mediating role that organisational justice and trust play in the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with organisational retention practices; and secondly, by exploring the moderating effect of a set of socio-demographic variables on the aforementioned relationship. The results showed that organisational justice and trust indeed have a meaningful and significant mediation effect on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices within the higher education context. The results, furthermore, revealed that all of these variables are significantly related to each other, and that the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust, indeed predicted satisfaction with retention practices. No significant moderation effects were observed. Lastly, the results revealed that employees from different socio-demographic groupings differ significantly regarding their perceptions of the psychological contract and satisfaction with organisational retention practices, namely, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies. Thus, the findings of this study bring an improved understanding into staff retention in the higher education environment.

7.6.1 Value added at a theoretical level

The literature review extended the SET (Blau, 1946) by shedding new light on the inter-dynamics among the constructs. The literature review firstly revealed that significant relationships existed between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR retention practices. The literature furthermore showed that the South African higher education environment is experiencing high turnover rates which exposed a need for HEIs to improve their retention strategies. The psychological contract, organisational justice and trust are regarded as crucial features which may influence the retention of employees. Finally, the literature review revealed that the differences and similarities among various socio-demographic groups in terms of their psychological contracts, perceptions of organisational justice, trust and satisfaction with HR retention practices, should also be taken into consideration when developing and implementing retention strategies.

On a *theoretical level*, the literature review was valuable and contributed to the existing literature through the identification of the relationship that exists between psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) and satisfaction with retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance policies). The literature review showed that the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and differences such as race, gender, age, job level and tenure could act as predictors of retention practices valued by employees in the higher education environment. The literature review also revealed that organisational justice and trust may be regarded as crucial elements which could explain the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. Lastly, a review of the literature showed that individuals' socio-demographic characteristics may impact on the strength and direction of the relationship between their perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and their satisfaction with HR retention practices. Thus, the literature review enabled the researcher to develop a theoretical staff retention framework, shaped by the principles of the SET, for the higher education environment.

7.6.2 Value added at an empirical level

On an *empirical level*, this study contributed by developing an empirically tested staff retention framework that could be used to inform retention practices in the South African higher education context. The study is possibly ground-breaking, through its extension of the SET (Blau, 1964), and its combination of the various constructs. The study utilised several statistical procedures that revealed vital variables in explaining the retention framework for the higher education environment. In addition, there has been no prior research in the context of the South African higher education environment, on the specific relationship dynamics between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) and satisfaction with HR retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) particularly.

Based on the conclusions of the empirical study, it can be maintained that this study is innovative in terms of its analysis of the inter- and overall relationships between the specific constructs. Specifically, the study extended the SET (Blau, 1946) and contributed to the current literature on the SET, the psychological contract and retention by determining that organisational justice and trust function as psychological mechanisms which explain the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices. The

study also contributed through finding that the relationship between individuals' perceptions of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust and their satisfaction with organisational retention practices is not conditional upon socio-demographic differences per se. Lastly, the study contributed by determining that individuals from different socio-demographic groups differ significantly in terms of their psychological contract preferences and their satisfaction with retention practices. The empirically tested staff retention framework could be beneficial in enhancing the retention of employees in the South African higher education context.

7.6.3 Value added at a practical level

On a *practical level*, this study contributed by determining that significant relationships did exist between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, socio-demographic variables (race, gender, age, job level and tenure) and satisfaction with HR retention practices (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance). The study also contributed on a practical level by finding that individuals' job levels, their psychological contracts (specifically, perceptions of employer obligations, employee obligations, state of the psychological contract and job satisfaction), organisational justice (explicitly perceptions about distributive justice) and trust (specifically trust relationships with supervisors) predicted their satisfaction with the organisational retention practices provided by their employer (specifically, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance).

The study also contributed on a practical level by determining that organisational justice and trust act as psychological mechanisms which may either strengthen or weaken the relationship between the psychological contract and individuals' satisfaction with organisational retention practices. Thus, if employees feel that the promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship have been adhered to and their expectations have been met, it may result in the fulfilment of their psychological contracts. The study provided practical recommendations for retention practices which are aimed at enhancing employees' psychological contracts, positive perceptions about the fairness of the distribution of resources within the organisation, and stronger, positive trust relationships with their supervisors, which may give rise to higher levels of satisfaction with retention practices and lower turnover.

Organisations, such as the HEI of relevance to this study, should ensure that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship between employers and employees are adhered to. Organisations should also ensure that they do not create

expectations that they cannot fulfil or deliver. The SET (Blau, 1964) has, furthermore, been extended through determining the important effect that the psychological contract, through organisational justice and trust, has on employees' satisfaction with HR retention practices. The mediating effect of organisational justice and trust, especially on the relationship between the psychological contract and satisfaction with retention practices, has also extended the psychological contract theory and the theory on retention. Additionally, the differences between socio-demographic showed unique HRM practices for diverse groups of employees in a retention framework.

In summary, the researcher is optimistic that the findings of this study will offer a better understanding of how the inter- and overall relationships between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, socio-demographic variables and satisfaction with HR retention practices can inform the construction of an empirically tested framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. It is expected that HR managers and will be able to utilise this new knowledge in improving retention strategies to retain their valuable staff. These findings have therefore made a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the retention of employees in the context of South African HEIs.

7.7 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCHER'S GRADUATENESS AND DOCTORATENESS

In conclusion, the researcher's own understanding of the inter- and overall relationships between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, HR retention practices and socio-demographic variables was broadened immensely through completion of the study. The researcher also gained particular insight into these relationships by using the SET (Blau, 1964) as a lens to understand the reciprocal nature of the social exchange relationship between employers and employees.

The staff retention framework emanating from the research findings offered an improved understanding of how the inter- and overall relationships between the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, HR retention practices and socio-demographic variables can inform the construction of an empirically tested framework for staff retention in the higher education environment. The researcher is also optimistic that the results of this study have provided new insights into the current literature on the SET (Blau, 1964), as well as the retention of employees in the higher education environment. The framework for staff retention in the higher education environment adds a wider perspective on how employees' job levels,

psychological contracts, organisational justice and trust predict their satisfaction with organisational retention factors within the higher education environment.

Throughout this study, the researcher personally gained deeper insights into the concepts of the psychological contract, organisational justice, trust, HR retention practices and socio-demographic variables. The researcher also attained an incredible volume of knowledge in terms of data analyses and reporting on statistics. From the data analyses and reporting, the researcher learned to focus on the broader perspective in terms of retention and not take results at face value. By finishing this study, the researcher learned treasured lessons in determination, tolerance, collegiality, and multi-tasking.

The study contributed to the doctorateness and graduateness of the researcher as an academic and HR practitioner. As an academic, the researcher gained insight into the ways in which HRM as a field of study and practice, might be extended by assuming a social exchange perspective and concentrating on reciprocity and the mutual expectations of employers and employees. The study also contributed to the Unisa research niche area of knowledge generation and human capital development in response to the needs of SA and the African continent. As an HR practitioner, the researcher benefited by gaining an understanding of how the retention of employees might be enhanced by ensuring that promises and commitments made within the social exchange relationship are adhered to. The practical recommendations originating from the research findings should guide the researcher in her role as a HRM consultant in her endeavours to help organisations deal with staff retention.

The doctorateness achieved by completing the current study should enable the researcher to contribute to the national objectives in terms of the enhancement of education, training and innovation by growing the percentage of PhD qualified employees in HEIs. Moreover, the researcher should make a contribution to research and the improvement of qualifications that are regarded as critical components of transformation in the South African higher education environment.

7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed and integrated the results of the study, after which the elements of the suggested framework for staff retention in the higher education environment were outlined and presented. The conclusions of the study were then discussed in terms of both the theoretical

and empirical aims. The potential limitations of both the theoretical and the empirical study were then discussed, followed by recommendations for the field of HRM and future research. The contribution of the study was then discussed, emphasising the extent to which the research outcomes provided support for the construction of a framework for staff retention in the South African higher education environment, resulting from the effects of the psychological contract, organisational justice and trust.

Herewith, empirical research aim 7 was achieved:

Research aim 7: To formulate conclusions and make recommendations for human resource management (HRM) retention practices and future research.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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M_015_Signed.pdf

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION CERTIFICATE



2016_RPSC_076 Ms
A Snyman approval