THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, RETENTION FACTORS AND PERCEIVED JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Jeannette van Dyk, student number 33107092, declare that this dissertation of limited scope entitled, "**The relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness**", is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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

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SUMMARY

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, RETENTION
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The objectives of the study were: (1) to determine the relationship between organisational commitment (measured by the Organisational Commitment Scale), retention factors (measured the Retention Factor Scale) and job embeddedness (measured by the Job Embeddedness Questionnaire), and (2) to determine whether employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. A quantitative survey was conducted on a purposive sample (N = 206) of medical and IT service staff in the South African client service sector.

Correlational and inferential statistical analyses revealed significant relationships between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Significant differences between gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups were also found. The findings contribute valuable insight and knowledge to the field of Career Psychology that can be applied in the retention of employees in the medical and IT industry. The study concludes with recommendations for future research and practice.

KEY TERMS

Organisational commitment; affective commitment; normative commitment; continuance commitment; retention factors; compensation; job embeddedness.

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CHAPTER 1
SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

This study focuses on the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. This chapter discusses the background to and motivation for the research topic; formulates the problem statement and the research questions; states the general and specific theoretical and empirical objectives; discusses the paradigm perspective that guides the boundaries for the study and describes the research design and methodology. It concludes with an outline of the dissertation.

1.1   BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The focus of this research is an investigation of the relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness as they relate to the retention of staff. The context of this study is the difficulty experienced in retaining scarce and critical skills, in particular as they apply to medical and IT staff in the South African service industry. There seems to be consensus that skills shortages are major obstacles to economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Bhorat, Meyer & Mlatsheni, 2002; Kraak, 2008; Rasool & Botha, 2011). The term *skills shortages* refers to the quantity of skills, particularly in certain career categories where the demand for some skills far exceeds their supply (Trendle, 2008). Thus, it may be easy for medical and IT professionals to land new jobs. The aforementioned context is important in this study, as research has shown that medical (Hill, 2011; Holtom & O'Neill, 2004) and IT professionals have a strong tendency to leave their organisation (Korunka, Hoonakker & Carayon, 2008) and their country (Bezuidenhout, Joubert, Hiemstra & Struwig, 2009; Rasool & Botha, 2011).

LeRouge, Nelson and Blanton (2006) state that the loss of IT personnel has a severe impact on the competitive advantage and the ultimate survival of organisations. Since medical (Holtom & O'Neill, 2004) and IT professionals have specialised and hard-to-replace skills (McKnight, Philips & Hardgrave, 2009), it may be costly to replace and train new employees in these industries. Moreover, lack of commitment to the organisation may result in individuals seeking alternative positions (Reed, Kratchman & Strawser, 1994). Over the past few decades, the role of commitment in organisations has received considerable theoretical attention. This topic is still deemed important today, as it may assist in understanding the

nature of the psychological process through which people choose to identify with an organisation and how they find purpose in life (Cohen, 2003). The biggest challenge in this regard is to determine how commitment is affected by the changes in the world of work brought about by increased global competition, global economic uncertainty and downsizing (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organisational commitment has been identified as an important factor in organisational functioning and is also essential for explaining employees' work-related behaviour (Meyer & Hertscovitch, 2001). Porter, Crampton and Smith (1976) describe employee commitment as a strong connection with the organisation and participation in a particular organisation. Similarly, Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974) view organisational commitment as comprising three major components: one component represents the acceptance of the organisation's goals, the second represents a willingness to exert energy and work on behalf of the organisation, and the third is a strong intention to stay in the organisation (Porter *et al.*, 1974).

Meyer and Allen (1991) view organisational commitment as a psychological condition that connects the individual to the organisation. These authors suggest that commitment has three distinct dimensions: affective commitment refers to how emotionally connected to, linked with and involved an employee is in the organisation; normative commitment refers to an employee's sense of indebtedness toward the organisation; and continuance commitment is related to the observation of the damage when employees leave the organisation. Durkin and Bennett (1999) describe employee commitment as a frame of mind that connects the individual to the organisation, while Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) propose a general model of workplace commitment that could be applied to a broader range of workplace commitment studies. The latter authors suggest a more generalised view of workplace commitment that recognises the various forms of commitment employees may have. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) view commitment as a multidimensional construct and focus on both the entity to which commitment is directed and the course of action of relevance to the entity. Furthermore, they suggest that, by identifying the implied commitment, researchers can better predict the behavioural outcome of commitment. Meyer and Allen's (1991) commitment perspective will be relevant to this study since it will explore the three dimensions, *affective*, *normative* and *continuance commitment*.

Durkin and Bennett's (1999) research findings indicated that a low intent to leave was related to high levels of identification commitment; in contrast, low levels of internalised

commitment were the result of significant changes in the case organisation. The employees did not accept these changes readily. In addition, a high level of identification commitment in employees more than compensated for the potential increase in a propensity to leave. Identification commitment, therefore, seems to be a powerful retention factor, which supports the rationale for employers to strive to become an "employer of choice" (Kotze & Roodt, 2005). Commitment in the workplace can take various forms and, arguably, has the potential to influence organisational effectiveness and employee wellbeing (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

High employee commitment is a prominent feature of world-class organisations. Nevertheless, even the best performing organisations experience turnover and commitment-related problems (Jiang & Klein, 2001). Hence, the appointment of suitable and effective employees is critical. An organisation's ability to retain employees by providing a satisfying work environment is of even greater significance. However, people still leave highly esteemed organisations, and sometimes join an organisation perceived to be mediocre, leaving management confused (Jiang & Klein, 2001). Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) argue that a clear understanding of organisational commitment is virtually imperative in the organisation, as it will help management to understand what the real issues in the organisation are, which areas need attention and what can be done to address the identified gaps. According to McElroy (2001), the organisation's ability to create a committed workforce is undoubtedly crucial to its success. Thus, there is a need for management to understand the concept of organisational commitment: what it is and, most importantly, the behaviour exhibited by committed employees. To this end, Suliman and Iles (2000) identified a number of important aspects of organisational commitment, namely, commitment fosters better superior–subordinate relationships, enhances organisational development, growth and survival, improves the work environment, negatively influences withdrawal behaviour such as turnover, lateness and absenteeism, and has a positive impact on employees' readiness to innovate and create. In addition, commitment is related to the way employees respond to dissatisfaction with events at work (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Against the background of increasing local and global competitiveness, it is crucial for any organisation, particularly those in developing countries with limited skills resources such as South Africa, to ensure that it consistently develops and retains a loyal, committed and able workforce. This presupposes employees who are satisfied with the work they do and with

the culture of the organisation they are employed by, and who are consequently motivated to continue their relationship with that organisation. Apart from the potential impact on an organisation, the loyalty and retention of professional, well-trained and optimally productive personnel also has economic implications on both a national and, increasingly, an international level (Roos & Van Eeden, 2005). In addition, commitment refers to the attachment of people to their jobs. The assumption can thus be made that employee turnover is closely related to organisational commitment (Spector, 2008).

In general terms *intention to leave* is simply referred to as an employee's intention to leave his or her present organisation. This concept is considered interchangeable with the term *turnover*; however, intention to leave is distinct from actual turnover (Yoshimura, 2003). Intention to leave is considered a conscious and deliberate desire to leave an organisation within the near future and is the last part of a sequence in the withdrawal cognition process (Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978). Turnover has been directly linked to rising employee recruitment and training costs and low levels of employee morale (Gray, Niehoff & Miller, 2000).

Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) refer to a number of factors that may have a bearing on an organisation's ability to retain employees. These factors include compensation, benefit packages, morale and motivation, career development, leadership, the nature of the job itself, training and development, performance management and work environment (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Organisational commitment has been found to be related to the major work outcomes of turnover intention and actual turnover. Research findings indicated that employees who are strongly committed to their organisation are less likely to leave (Delobbe & Vandenberghe, 2000; Spector, 2008).

From a financial perspective, turnover costs are important but often hidden from managers. There are no profit-and-loss statements that specifically capture the "cost of voluntary turnover". Instead, the costs are buried in line items like recruitment, selection, temporary staffing and training (Eberly, Holtom, Lee & Mitchell, 2008). Or worse still, the real but unmeasured costs that result from losses of customer service continuity or critical implicit knowledge are never calculated. Estimates of the losses for each employee vary from a few thousand dollars to more than twice the person's salary, depending on the industry, the content of the job, the availability of replacements and other factors (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000).

In some industries, chronic shortages of qualified employees have driven up the costs of turnover much faster than the rate of inflation (Eberly *et al.*, 2008).

Despite the amount of research focused on turnover, the issue continues to feature as a major problem in South Africa. According to Simelane (1999), South Africa has experienced three peaks in emigration: in 1977 after the Soweto riots; in 1986 during the states of emergency; and in 1994 during the introduction of the ANC government. Moreover, the past year has seen a dramatic rise in the number of South Africans immigrating to countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Statistics South Africa, 2005). Statistics show that between 1997 and 2001 South Africa lost an estimated 310 000 citizens, including 50 000 professionals (Statistics South Africa, 2005). Moreover, between 2002 and 2003, there was a further increase in the immigration figures in terms of South Africa's skilled workforce: 65% of those who left the country were economically active and 26.7% were professionals (Statistics South Africa, 2005). This migration trend is increasing every year in South Africa (Merwood, 2008). It is a huge problem for the country and needs to be addressed urgently, as employees continue to leave their organisations and their country.

A high level of job embeddedness can serve as a buffer to shocks and dissatisfaction which are precursors to turnover (Holtom, & Inderrieden, 2006; Holtom, Mitchell, & Lee, 2006). However, if job satisfaction or organisational commitment is low it can stimulate turnover for many reasons. Unlike turnover theories that rely on affective predictors of turnover, job embeddedness is a prescriptive theory. Accordingly, it would seem that management needs specific and accessible levers for influencing turnover. Organisational job embeddedness can be manipulated by increasing the use of work teams or providing work, salary, and benefit flexibility that most employees would not want to sacrifice (Bowman, 2009).

Although some researchers occasionally describe job embeddedness as feeling "stuck" in a job, it is important to note that job embeddedness can be the result of positive forces (Ng & Feldman, 2007). For instance, employees often value developing close ties with co-workers and workgroups (links). Moreover, individuals are usually pleased to find jobs that are compatible with their goals and values (fit) and that provide desirable perks (sacrifice) (Ng & Feldman, 2007). Thus, embeddedness can be a good thing for both the employee and employer, particularly when it is borne in mind that turnover is expensive, especially when it

entails replacing highly trained employees or employees who cannot easily pass on their knowledge to their replacements (Johnson, Sachau & Englert, 2010).

The concept of being embedded in a job involves a wide array of options that influence employee retention. Building on the turnover models of Steers and Mowday (1981), Mitchell and Lee (2001) advanced their model by adding a new dimension to the understanding of turnover; a counter-intuitive notion that individuals might leave an organisation for reasons other than job dissatisfaction. Caldaroloa (2010) defines job embeddedness as a multidimensional construct that focuses on the factors that make an individual more likely to *stay* in the job, namely the work and social attachments that are developed over a period of time.

Individuals who are highly embedded in their jobs might choose to stay with an employing organisation, even if circumstances are less than ideal (Caldarola, 2010). Mitchell and Lee (2001) suggest that an individual's decision to leave an organisation is not made in isolation but is shaped by the environment in which the individual is "embedded". Moreover, people become embedded in the job in many ways, depending on circumstances, age, occupation and other variables. Lee, Mitchell, Sablynski, Burton and Holtom (2004) view job embeddedness as a retention construct that reflects employees' decisions to directly participate both on and off the job.

How well an employee perceives him or herself to be a good job "fit" in his or her current job or with the organisation is likely to affect his or her incentive to stay within the organisation. When an employee is deciding whether or not to leave a job, embeddedness is also considered as a measure of how much has to be sacrificed to leave. Job attachments in terms of perks, satisfying routines and professional involvement are considered part of embeddedness (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez, 2001b). In addition, Mitchell and Lee (2001) suggest that when individuals have multiple attachments to an organisation, these attachments are likely to hold them back from leaving, even if they think about leaving as a result of particular circumstances (e.g. getting a better offer or a company relocation to a non-preferred location*). Therefore, this represents the collective, generally non-affective reasons why an employee would not leave a job. Mitchell *et al.*'s (2001b), embeddedness perspective will thus be relevant to this study since it explores the organisational dimensions of person-fit, organisation-fit, links and sacrifice.

In the context of the knowledge economy, competent and talented employees have become the centre of attention in the new world of work (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004). These "knowledge workers" are those individuals who are governed by their own expertise (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). The end result is highly employable employees, who present organisations with the challenge to retain their valuable services. On the one hand, skilled individuals' mobility is increased by the national skills shortage which leads to an abundance of vacant positions (Munsamy & Bosch-Venter, 2009), while, on the other, it is crucial for organisations to have employment stability and to consider the cost implications in recruiting, selecting and training of new staff (Kriek, 2006).

The new world of work has brought with it numerous changes. Lifetime employability is replacing lifetime employment (Sutherland & Jordaan, 2004) and employees are no longer committed to their organisation but rather to themselves; their own career, development and employability. Employability refers to individuals' value concerning future employment opportunities as determined by the accumulation of skills, knowledge, experience and reputation, which can be invested in new employment contracts (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). According to Cohen (2003), the current changes in employment practices affect organisational commitment, which is based on the unwritten loyalty contract between employers and employees. Employment practices such as layoffs, downsizing and mergers are stimulated by the need to be competitive, but, in return, employees may start to view their organisational commitment differently (Cohen, 2003). Moreover, these practices may influence retention factors (employees' intention to stay).

The concept of *embeddedness* may help leaders to obtain a broader picture of turnover intentions. An embeddedness model may also help organisational leaders find the primary drivers of retention. For instance, Johnson *et al.* (2010) found that the variables related to fit were also related to turnover and embeddedness. Other aspects of fit involve matching employees to the organisational culture. This suggests that good selection techniques that match applicants' tastes, interests, values and behaviour to the organisational culture will also increase embeddedness (Johnson *et al.*, 2010).

In summary then, attracting and retaining talent is becoming more difficult. This challenge makes it imperative that companies understand what employees want from employment and the factors that influence employees' intention to stay at their organisations. Once obtained,

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that understanding becomes fundamental to the development of retention strategies and to sustaining a competitive advantage.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the amount of research that has focused on turnover, the issue continues to dominate as a major problem in South Africa. It has been estimated that for every skilled South African who leaves the country ten redundancies are created. Consequently, migration may cost the country hundreds of millions of rand per year in lost tax revenue (Ellis, 2008). According to consultancy firm Grant Thornton's (2009) business report, skills shortages are South Africa's biggest constraint. The solution lies in embracing the urgency of managing human capital and acting on it since talent and skills drive business success. Moreover, an effective talent management strategy can lead to better performance by more effectively identifying, sourcing, developing, rewarding, motivating and retaining the talent that keeps the organisation ahead of its competitors (Witthuhn, 2009).

Against this background, it is evident that knowledge of organisational commitment, retention factors, perceived job embeddedness and the relationship between these variables is crucial, as such knowledge could enhance an understanding of the aspects that influence employee commitment, the intention to stay and job embeddedness.

Although numerous studies point to the reasons why people leave their organisations, there seems to be a paucity of studies on the factors that influence the turnover and retention of employees in a South African organisational context (Mitchell, Holtom & Lee, 2001a). Moreover, previous research has focused on each of the concepts of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness separately or in relation to other variables. Further, there appear to be a paucity of such research in the South African medical and IT services environment. In this regard, research on the relationship between these variables could make an important contribution to retention strategies in the medical and IT sector.

This research aims to benefit industrial psychologists, human resource professionals and researchers in further understanding the factors that influence the commitment of knowledge workers in an evolving world of work in the 21st century. The findings may enable

organisations to develop better retention strategies and implement reward and organisational development initiatives, which may, in turn, contribute to increased overall organisational commitment and job embeddedness in employees.

The following research questions arise in lieu of a description of the problem statement:

1.2.1 Research questions with regard to the literature review

The general research question that requires further research is as follows:

What is the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness and do people from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ regarding these variables?

1.2.2 Research questions

In terms of the literature review, the following specific research questions will be addressed in this study:

- How is "organisational commitment" conceptualised in the literature?
- How are "retention factors" conceptualised in the literature?
- How is "perceived job embeddedness" conceptualised in the literature?
- What are the theoretical linkages between the concepts of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness?
- What are the implications of the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness for organisational retention practices?

In terms of the empirical study, the following specific research questions will be addressed:

- Does an empirical relationship exist between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness as manifested in a sample of respondents in the medical and IT services context in South Africa?

- Do gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in a sample of respondents in the medical and IT services context in South Africa?
- What recommendations can be formulated for the practice of Industrial and Organisational Psychology regarding retention practices and for further research based on the findings of this study?

1.3   AIMS

From the above research questions, the following general and specific aims are formulated.

1.3.1   General aim of the research

The general aim of this research is to explore the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness and to determine whether individuals from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding these three variables.

1.3.2   Specific aims of the research

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

1.3.1.1 Literature review

In terms of the literature review, the specific aims are to conceptualise:
- organisational commitment from a theoretical perspective.
- retention factors from a theoretical perspective.
- perceived job embeddedness from a theoretical perspective.
- the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.
- the implications of the theoretical relationship between the organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness variables for retention practices.

1.3.1.2   Empirical study

The specific aims of the empirical study are to:

- investigate the empirical relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness as manifested in a sample of participants employed in the medical and IT services context in South Africa.
- determine whether gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.
- formulate recommendations for the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, particularly with regard to retention practices and further research.

1.4   THE PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

Paradigms refer to the intellectual climate or variety of meta-theoretical values or beliefs and assumptions underlying the theories and models that form the definitive context of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). Coleman (2009) defines a paradigm as a pattern, stereotypical example, model, or general conceptual framework within which theories in a particular area of research are constructed. A theoretical paradigm is the identification of the underlying basis that is used to construct a scientific investigation (Krauss, 2005); or, "a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts, and propositions that orientates thinking and research" (Bogdan & Biklan, 1982, p. 30). In other words, a paradigm acts as a map that guides the research or investigation. In this research, the term paradigm is used in its meta-theoretical or philosophical sense to denote a conceptual framework that represents an implicit or explicit view of reality. The paradigm perspective serves to clearly articulate the intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources that form the definitive boundary of the present study.

1.4.1   The intellectual climate

Thematically, the literature review of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness is presented from the humanistic paradigm. The empirical

study of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness is presented from the positivist research paradigm.

1.4.1.1 Literature review

The literature on organisational commitment, retention factors that influence the intention to stay and perceived job embeddedness is presented from the humanistic paradigm. The basic assumptions underlying the humanistic paradigm are the following: (a) individuals are dignified human beings and have higher psychological dimensions that distinguish them from animals and lifeless objects; (b) the psychologically healthy person should be the criterion in examining human functioning; (c) the individual should be studied as an integrated and unique whole or *Gestalt*; (d) the person is an active being and there is active participation of individuals in determining their own behaviour, a person does not simply react to external environment stimuli, or merely submit to inherent drives over which the individual has no control, and (e) the conscious processes of the individual dictate individual decision-making (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). The individual as an organism, who interacts constantly with the changing world of work, is studied as a total being (physical and psychological functioning). The individual's behaviour is determined by the subjective perception of the world and meaning the person attaches to it (Meyer *et al.*, 2008). The humanistic paradigm is relevant to this study since it assumes that individuals have the capacity to decide whether they are satisfied within a particular organisation, whether they will remain committed to the organisation and whether they choose to move to another organisation.

1.4.1.2 Empirical study

The empirical study of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness is presented from the positivist research paradigm. Philosophical assumptions or a theoretical paradigm about the nature of reality are crucial to understanding the overall perspective from which the study is designed and carried out (Krauss, 2005). In the positivist research paradigm researchers tend to separate themselves from the world of study, while researchers within other paradigms acknowledge that they have to participate in real-world, to some extent, in order to understand and express its developing properties and characteristics better (Healy & Perry, 2000).

Positivism is an approach to the creation of knowledge through research which emphasises the model of natural science: the scientist adopts the position of objective researcher, who collects facts about the social world and then builds up an explanation of social life by arranging such facts in a chain of causality (Finch, 1986). Thus, positivism is based on a natural science model for dealing with facts and is therefore more closely associated with quantitative methods of analysis (Noor, 2008). Positivism predominates in science and assumes that science quantitatively measures independent facts about a single apprehensible reality (Healy & Perry, 2000). In other words, the data do not change when observed but are rather viewed through a "one-way mirror" (Healy & Perry, 2000). Thematically this quantitative study focuses on investigating the relationship dynamics between the variables organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

1.4.2 The market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to a collection of beliefs that has a direct bearing upon the epistemic status of scientific statements. The two major types that can be differentiated are namely, theoretical beliefs about the nature and structure of phenomena and methodological beliefs concerning the nature and structure of the research process (Mouton & Marais, 1996). For the purposes of this study the following section presents the meta-theoretical statements; the theoretical models; the conceptual descriptions of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, and the central hypothesis.

1.4.2.1 Meta-theoretical statements

Any meta-theoretical statement or world view may include different schools of thought, which are described as different ways of approaching and studying a shared reality or view of the world (Morgan, 1980). More specifically, in this study the focus in the literature survey is on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. In addition, the meta-theoretical statements presented in the study include those on: Industrial and Organisational Psychology within the context of the sub-fields of Organisational Psychology; Career Psychology; Personnel Psychology and Psychometrics.

Industrial and Organisational Psychology is defined as an applied division of Psychology concerned with the study of human behaviour as it relates to work, organisations and productivity (Cascio, 2001). This study explores employees' commitment and perceived job embeddedness with regard to their organisation within the context of Organisational Psychology. Hence, Organisational Psychology concentrates on organisational responsiveness to psychological, socio-political and economic forces, which focuses on individual, group and system-level interventions (Watkins, 2001). Work in this area focuses on group dynamics, personal feelings of commitment to an organisation and patterns of communication within an organisation (Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 1998). Retention factors are studied within the context of Career Psychology. Career Psychology is the study of career development and career behaviour as an integral part of human development. According to Greenhaus, Callanan and Godschalk (2000), career development refers to an ongoing process by which an individual progresses through a series of stages, each of which is characterised by a relatively unique set of issues, themes or tasks.

This study explores the retention factors that influence organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness in order to measure the differences between employees within a Personnel psychology context. Personnel Psychology focuses on behaviour that influences productivity and employee satisfaction by means of assessment and selection procedures, job evaluation, performance appraisal, ergonomics and career planning methodologies (Watkins, 2001). In this study, questionnaires were used to measure individuals' organisational commitment, factors that influence their intention to stay at their organisation and employees' perceived job embeddedness. Psychometrics relates to the principles and practices of psychological measurement, referring to the entire process of compiling information about a person and using it to make inferences about characteristics and to predict behaviour (Gregory, 2004). This includes activities such as the development and standardisation of psychological tests and related statistical procedures.

1.4.3 The relevant theories

The literature survey covered theories related to the constructs of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. A theory can be defined as an attempt to explain and/or predict a particular phenomenon (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2009). The literature survey on organisational commitment is presented in terms of O'Reilly and Chatman's model (1986), Morrow's model (1993) and the model of Meyer and Allen (1997). Moreover, the literature survey on retention factors is presented in terms of Sheridan and Abelson's (1983) Cusp catastrophe model and Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model of voluntary turnover (1994). Finally, the literature survey on perceived job embeddedness is presented in terms of the forced compliance model of Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) and the unfolding model of voluntary turnover from Lee and Mitchell (1994).

1.4.4 The central hypothesis

The central hypothesis for this study is formulated as follow:

A relationship exists between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Moreover, individuals from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in terms of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative survey design with a focus on descriptive, correlational and inferential analysis was used to achieve the research objectives and to test the research hypothesis. A survey research design examines the relationships that occur between two or more variables at one time (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The results obtained from the survey, which is administered to a sample of a population, can then be generalised to the entire population. Survey research is usually a quantitative method that requires standardised information in order to define or describe variables or to study the relationship between variables. This design is ideally suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correlational research. No

control group will be used in the study, and all the variables will be measured at the same time (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

In this study, the dependent variables are organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness and the independent variables are retention factors and biographical data. This research focuses on determining whether a significant empirical relationship exists between these variables. The data will be processed by means of descriptive, correlation and inferential statistics.

Moreover, specific measures will be applied to ensure a valid and reliable research process. When deciding on a research design, both internal and external validity are deemed to be important and desirable. In order to ensure validity, a series of informed decisions should be made about the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigms used in the research, the context within which the research takes place and the research techniques used to collect and analyse the data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). In this research study internal validity will be ensured by

- selecting models and theories that are relevant to the research topic, the problem statement and the aims
- selecting measuring instruments in a responsible and representative way and presenting them in a standardised manner.

External validity will be ensured by the selection of the sample that was representative of the total population. Moreover, design validity will be ensured by identifying plausible rival hypotheses and eliminating their impact.

Reliability is the extent to which a test is repeatable and yields consistency in the results which is indicated by that which is measurable. To ensure the reliability of the measuring instruments, Cronbach Alpha coefficients and inter-item correlation coefficients will be determined (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

A unit of analysis distinguishes between the characteristics, conditions, orientations and actions of individuals, groups, organisations and social artefacts (Mouton & Marais, 1996). In terms of individual measurement, the unit of analysis in this study is the individual. The

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researcher focuses on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness of the individual with the intention of ascertaining whether there is a relationship between these variables. When investigating the differences between biographical groups, the unit of analysis will be the sub-groups (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

Ethical guidelines and standards form the basis for this research. Therefore, ethical considerations will form an important part of every step of the research process, in order to ensure that they guide the researcher and the study. Accordingly, informed and voluntary consent will be obtained from all the relevant participants and all information, data and results will be kept confidential. In addition, the research is designed in such a way that individuals, organisations and the community derive benefit from it and no harm is done to anyone involved in the research process (Lefkovitz, 2008).

Moreover, the results from the research will be made available to the participants and the relevant organisation. Furthermore, the researcher strives to remain objective and to conduct the research with integrity.

1.6   RESEARCH METHOD

As illustrated in figure 1.1, the research method consisted of two phases, namely a literature review and an empirical study.

1.6.1   Phase One: Literature review

The literature review focuses on exploring the constructs of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The general aim of the literature study is to establish the theoretical link in the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, and to identify differences between biographical groups. These relationships are explored in order to determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices.

1.6.2   Phase Two: Empirical study

The description of the empirical study covers the population and sample used in the study, the research design, the measuring battery, the procedure and the statistical analyses. The

section that follows will highlight only the key aspects of the empirical study, and a more detailed description of the empirical study will be given in Chapter 3.

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

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Conceptualisation of constructs.
- Conceptualise the theoretical relationship between constructs.
- Discussion of implications for retention.

Sampling
- Purposive
- Population: SA medical and IT service staff

Choosing psychometric battery
- Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCS)
- Retention Factors Scale (RFS)
- Perceived Job Embeddedness Scale (JES)

Data collection
- Survey design

STATISTICAL PROCESS OF DATA

- **Stage 1**: Reliability; means; standard deviations
- **Stage 2:** Pearson product momentum correlation
- **Stage 3:** Multiple regression
- **Stage 4:** T-tests; ANOVAs

TEST RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

REPORT AND INTERPRET THE RESULTS

INTEGRATE RESEARCH FINDINGS

DRAW RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 1.1. Flow diagram of the research method.

1.7 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters are presented in the following manner:

Chapter 2:   Literature review: Organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness

Chapter 3:   Research article

Chapter 4:   Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the scientific orientation to the research. In addition, it described the background to and motivation for the research, the problem statement, the aims of the study, paradigm perspectives, and the research design and methodology of the study. The motivation for this study is based on the fact that, by exploring the relationship that exists among organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, organisations may be helped to develop more effective retention strategies. Chapter 2 comprises of an in-depth literature review of the constructs *organisational commitment*, *retention factors* and *perceived job embeddedness*.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, RETENTION FACTORS AND PERCEIVED JOB EMBEDDENESS

Chapter 2 conceptualises the constructs organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The practical implications of the theoretical relationship between these constructs are explained through relevant models.

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

This section conceptualises organisational commitment and provides an overview of Meyer and Allen's (1997) commitment model. The section concludes with a discussion of the variables influencing organisational commitment and its implications for talent retention.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation

Over the years researchers have conceptualised organisational commitment in many different ways. Meyer and Allen (1991) describe organisational commitment as an inner condition that connects employees to a certain organisation. Hence, organisational commitment is regarded as a psychological connection that individuals have with their organisation, which is characterised by a strong connection with the organisation and a desire to contribute to the achievement of the organisation's objectives. This is in agreement with the view of O'Reilly (1989), who suggests that an individual's connection to the organisation includes a feeling of job engagement, devotion and an acceptance of the organisation's values. In addition, Miller and Lee (2001) describe organisational commitment as a state of existence in which employees are bound by behaviours and beliefs that sustain their activities and their participation in the organisation. Similarly, Miller (2003) views organisational commitment as a condition in which an employee associates with a particular organisation and its aims, and wishes to stay with the organisation. Commitment can also be viewed as a psychological state that represents an employee's bond with the organisation and the implications this has for his intention to stay or leave (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993).

Research has indicated that the attitudinal approach to conceptualising organisational commitment indicates the strongest correlations with the variables linked to commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Suliman & Ilse, 2000). Attitudinal commitment refers to both a process and an approach in terms of which individuals consider their values and goals in relation to those of the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Similarly, Sheldon (1971) views commitment as a positive evaluation of the organisation, which includes the intention to work towards the organisation's goals. In addition, Morrow (1993) characterises organisational commitment by means of attitude and behaviour. Furthermore, Morrow (1993) views organisational commitment as an attitude that reflects emotional states such as a bond and an association with, and devotion to, the organisation.

In terms of a behavioural approach, organisational commitment is regarded as behaviour where individuals are committed to a particular course of action rather than an entity (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This means that employees who are committed to their organisation might develop a more positive view of these organisations consistent with their behaviour in order to avoid cognitive dissonance or to maintain positive self-perceptions (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Similarly, Becker (1960) states that commitment is based on the theoretical ideas of people who are consciously engaged in carrying out a course of action primarily because they want to maintain some valued action outcomes, such as a promotion or a pay rise. On the other hand, a motivational approach focuses on the state of commitment, known as cognitive predisposition (Martin & Roodt, 2008). Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) argue that commitment should be related to an intrinsic motivational force, since highly committed individuals may be motivated to exert a high level of energy on behalf of the organisation. In agreement with this view, Kanter (1968) defines commitment as the willingness of social actors to give energy and loyalty to the organisation. Reichers (1985, p. 468), on the other hand, is of the opinion that "organisational commitment as behaviour is visible when organisational members are committed to existing groups within the organisation".

Hrebiniak and Allutto (1973) considered commitment as the unwillingness to leave the organisation for increments in pay, status, or professional freedom or for greater colleagueal friendship. Thus, when employees feel that there is too much to lose when leaving their organisation they may choose to stay despite their discontent, which is congruent to the continuance dimension of commitment. On the other hand, Wiener (1982, p. 471) defined commitment as the "totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way which meets

organisational goals and interests", and suggested that individuals exhibit behaviours solely because "they believe it is the "right" and moral thing to do".

Meyer and Allen's (1991) view of organisational commitment has received a large amount of modern-day focus and will be relevant to this study (Suliman & Iles, 2000). Table 2.1 provides an overview of the various definitions of organisational commitment.

Table 2.1

Organisational commitment definition.

Author	Definition
Becker (1960)	Commitment is the tendency to persist in a course of action.
Kanter (1968)	Commitment is the willingness of social actors to give energy and loyalty to the organisation.
Sheldon (1971)	Commitment is a positive evaluation of the organisation and the intention to work toward the organisation's goals.
Hrebiniak & Allutto (1973)	Commitment is the unwillingness to leave the organisation for increments in pay, status, or professional freedom or for greater colleagueal friendship.
Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979, p. 226)	Organisational commitment is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation".
Wiener (1982, p. 471)	Commitment is the "totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way which meets organisational goals and interests", and suggested that individuals exhibit behaviours solely because "they believe it is the "right" and moral thing to do" (p. 421).
Reichers (1985, p. 468)	"Organisational commitment as behaviour is visible when organisational members are committed to existing groups within the organisation".

Author	Definition
O'Reilly (1989, p. 17)	Organisational commitment is the "individual's psychological bond to the organisation, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organisation".
Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 67)	Organisational commitment "is a psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation".
Morrow (1993)	Organisational commitment is characterised by attitude and behaviour. Organisational commitment as an attitude reflects feelings such as attachment, identification and loyalty to the organisation as an object of commitment.
Meyer and Allen (1997)	Organisational commitment is a psychological connection individuals have with their organisation, characterised by strong recognition with the organisation and a yearning to contribute towards the accomplishment of organisational goals.
Miller and Lee (2001)	Organisational commitment is a state of being in which organisational members are bound by their actions and beliefs that sustain their activities and their own involvement in the organisation
Miller (2003, p. 73)	Organisational commitment is "a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organisation".

2.1.2 Meyer and Allen's three-component commitment model

Meyer and Allen (1991) adopted a multidimensional approach by integrating attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment in order to create three distinct dimensions, namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment refers to an employee's connection through an emotional bond, linkage to and engagement with the organisation. Normative commitment refers to an employee's sense of indebtedness toward the relevant organisation; accordingly, employees may feel obligated to stay at their

organisation. Continuance commitment refers to the employee's observation of the benefits and advantages that may be lost when one leave the relevant organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The affective and normative components reflect employee's attitudinal dispositions, whereas the continuance component indicates their behavioural orientation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1997) argue that this approach includes factors associated with positive work experiences, personal characteristics and job characteristics, while the outcomes include increased performance, reduced absenteeism and reduced employee turnover.

Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that one can achieve a better understanding of an employee's attachment to the organisation when all three forms of commitment are taken into consideration. Allen and Meyer (1990) view affective, continuance and normative commitment as different psychological components, each of which can be experienced by differing degrees. Consequently, Meyer and Allen (1991) hypothesise that each component develops as a result of different experiences and has different implications for on-the-job behaviour.

2.1.2.1 Affective commitment

Meyer and Allen (1984) view affective commitment as the positive feelings that help employees to form a bond with, and to participate in, the organisation. The development of affective commitment is based on the exchange principle. Employees commit themselves to the organisation in return for the rewards received or the punishments avoided (Meyer & Allen, 1997). However, employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to (Meyer, Allen & Gellatly, 1990). Affective commitment is relevant to this study as it may help to determine employees' feelings of attachment to the organisation.

2.1.2.2 Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment is viewed as the degree to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Thus, employees do not want to lose certain benefits or advantages that the organisation may offer and will therefore remain at the organisation. Continuance commitment is expected to be related to anything that increases the cost associated with

leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees with a strong continuance commitment remain with the organisation because they feel they need to (Meyer *et al.*, 1990). Continuance commitment is relevant to this study as it may help to determine employees' intention to continue working at their current organisation.

2.1.2.3 Normative commitment

Normative commitment is regarded as the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment develops as a result of beliefs that are internalised through socialisation processes, both familial and cultural, that occur both before and after entry into the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Thus, employees with a strong normative commitment remain in the organisation because they feel they should (Meyer *et al.*, 1990). Normative commitment is relevant to this study as it may help to determine employees' sense of duty and responsibility towards their organisation.

Affective commitment creates emotional bonds that can make the employee develop a sense of responsibility and duty (normative commitment) towards the organisation. On the other hand, employees may behave correctly because they have an obligation to do so, even though they do not feel affection for the organisation and are unhappy there. In addition, normative commitment can lead to continuance commitment owing to the emotional involvement with the organisation, which may lead to the desire for continuation (Martin, 2008).

2.1.3   Variables influencing organisational commitment

In general, research indicates that overall job satisfaction is a significant predictor of organisational commitment, and that individual dimensions of job satisfaction influence organisational commitment to varying degrees (Rutherford, Boles, Hamwi, Madupalli & Rutherford, 2009). Job satisfaction can be viewed as an attitudinal variable which reflects how people feel about their jobs overall, as well as about various aspects of the jobs. Thus, job satisfaction is the extent to which people like their jobs, while job dissatisfaction is the extent to which they dislike them (Spector, 2000). Commitment, on the other hand, is related to how employees respond to dissatisfaction with events at work (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Sheldon (1971) found that commitment was related to social involvement with colleagues and to such personal investments as length of organisational service, age and hierarchical position. Hrebiniak and Alutto (1973) found that the best predictors of commitment for their sample were role tension, years of organisational service (Buchanan, 1974), and dissatisfaction with the bases of organisational advancement.

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), employees tend to develop a stronger affective attachment to the organisation if their experiences within their organisation are consistent with their expectations and their basic needs are satisfied, than those employees whose experiences are less satisfying. Moreover, continuance commitment may develop as employees recognise that they have accumulated investments (Becker, 1960). For example organisational benefits such as a car allowance, medical aid or study leave that may be lost if they leave their current organisation, or if alternative employment possibilities are limited. Also, normative commitment develops as the result of socialisation experiences that emphasise the appropriateness of remaining loyal to one's employer (Wiener, 1982).

2.1.3.1 Age

Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) found older employees to be affectively and normatively more committed to their organisations than their younger counterparts.

2.1.3.2 Race groups

Coetzee, Schreuder and Tladinyane (2007), Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) and Lumley (2009) did not find significant differences between the organisational commitment levels of the various race groups. On the other hand, Coetzee *et al.* (2007) found that black participants in the service industry appear to be more committed to an organisation that provides them with the opportunity to express their sense of service or dedication to the people component of the business.

2.1.3.3 Gender

Coetzee *et al.* (2007) found that male participants in the service industry appear to be committed to the organisation that provides them with the autonomy to do their job in an

independent fashion, while female and white participants seemingly tend to be especially committed to the organisation that respects personal and family concerns. On the other hand, women who seem to perceive less access to opportunities for job development and mentoring in male-dominated occupations (Lai, Lin, & Leung, 1998; Ohlott, Ruderman, & McCauley, 1994) may as a result be less committed to their organisations (Martins & Coetzee, 2007). However, Coetzee *et al.* (2007) and Marshall and Bonner (2003) found that females are just as committed as males. Meanwhile, research findings by Pretorius and Roodt (2004) also indicate that gender is an important variable in predicting and explaining organisational commitment.

2.1.3.4 Marital status

Research findings by Martin and Roodt (2008) indicate that marital status can be related to commitment, since married people may have greater financial responsibilities towards their family commitments.

2.1.3.5 Tenure

Research findings indicate that tenure relates positively to organisational commitment, more specifically tenure and affective commitment are related (Döckel, Basson, & Coetzee, 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

2.1.4 Implications for talent retention

In general, it is expected that organisational commitment reduces abandonment behaviours, which include tardiness and turnover. In addition, employees who are committed to their organisation may possibly be more willing to participate in "extra-role" activities, such as being creative or innovative, which frequently guarantee an organisation's competitiveness in the market (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Research by Martin (2008) indicates that affective commitment positively influences normative commitment, and continuance commitment is determined by normative commitment and affective commitment. Nevertheless, affective commitment made a stronger impact than normative commitment on the desire and intention to continue working in the organisation.

Research by Ferreira, Basson and Coetzee (2010) indicates that employees who prefer a managerial and freedom/autonomy career tend to feel emotionally attached to their organisation. Similarly, Beck and Wilson (2000) suggest that individuals who are dedicated on an emotional level usually remain with the organisation because they see their individual employment relationship as being in harmony with the goals and values of the organisation for which they are currently working. Ferreira *et al.* (2010) suggest that participants, who perceive themselves as having the skills to plan, implement and manage their career goals in innovative ways, tend to feel emotionally attached to the organisation. Moreover, people who are emotionally well educated are able to form supportive social networks, which increase their sense of belonging to the organisation (Sinclair, 2009).

Manetje and Martins (2009) conclude that respondents who are affectively committed to the organisation are more willing to maintain their relationship with the organisation than those who are normatively and continuance committed. Affectively committed employees may therefore portray feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the organisation. In addition, Martin (2008) argues that when employees trust their organisation; are satisfied with their job and the labour conditions; feel there is flexibility to adapt to changing conditions; feel their opinions are valuable to the organisation and the relevant information is provided, then employees will commit affectively to the organisation, will be responsible at work (normative commitment) and will have a desire to continue working in the same organisation (continuance commitment).

2.2   RETENTION FACTORS

This section discusses Döckel's (2003) retention factor framework, the variables influencing retention factors and the implications for talent retention.

2.2.1   Conceptualisation

Retention refers to an organisation's efforts to keep in employment those employees of whom the organisation has a positive evaluation, and who would normally only leave the organisation through voluntary resignation (Mengel, 2001). Thus, employers need to retain their high performers who have knowledge and skills that are critical for the organisation to maintain a competitive advantage. In addition, Cascio (2003) describes retention as

initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation, such as rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively; ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers; and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment.

Netswera, Rankhumise and Mavundla (2005) refer to retention factors as factors that would facilitate the stay or exit of employees and the decision to leave or stay, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities. Döckel (2003), in a literature survey that considered the retention of high technology employees, identified six critical factors. These factors are relevant to this study and include compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work–life policies.

To summarise, while the importance of employee retention to organisational effectiveness and efficiency is clear, there is currently no single framework that guides research and practice (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Regardless of which theoretical model is considered, there are situations in which voluntary employee turnover may be unavoidable and beyond the control of management (Dalton, Todor, & Krackhardt, 1982). Hence, the focus of this study is on factors that management can control and that may influence workers to stay with the organisation. In order to improve our understanding of the effectiveness of retention factors it is important to relate them to employees' views on their importance, as such views may indicate how and which retention factors influence their decision to stay or leave.

2.2.2 The Retention Factor Framework of Döckel

Döckel (2003) identified 8 factors to retain valuable employees as summarised in Table 2.1. The following 6 factors are relevant to this study: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life balance.

2.2.2.1 Compensation

Compensation can be divided into monetary and non-monetary rewards. According to Döckel (2003), monetary rewards are extrinsic financial rewards that organisations pay to

their staff for the services them deliver. Monetary rewards may include the base salary, incentives and stock options. Non-monetary rewards, on the other hand, are indirect financial rewards employees receive for their labour (Döckel, 2003), which may include flexible working hours, medical aid and pension. Döckel's (2003) research findings indicate that employees in the high technology industry are not very satisfied with the way their raises are determined. Accordingly, it would seem that employees prefer to know how their compensation is determined and how they can increase their salary (Döckel, 2003). Thus, employees want to feel that they have an influence on their compensation.

2.2.2.2 *Job characteristics*

In this study, job characteristics will include skill variety and job autonomy since highly specialised knowledge workers prefer jobs where they can use a variety of skills and experience challenging assignments and job autonomy. The term "knowledge workers" refers to employees who have critical knowledge and skills of core products and services (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). In this context, autonomy in the workplace refers to employees' abilities to make decisions about how and when to undertake workplace tasks (De Jonge, 1995).

Job autonomy can refer to employees who: (a) value the opportunity to be independent; (b) prefer working on their own; (c) create new ideas to make work easier or more efficient (creativity); (d) or prefer to make decisions on their own (Sharf, 2010). Task variety is the extent to which a job requires many different things using a variety of skills and talents (Thatcher, Liu, Stepina, Goodman, & Treadway, 2006). Job complexity and job control are considered to be two important work characteristics (Frese, Garst, & Fay, 2007; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Low-complexity jobs are monotonous and repetitive in nature, whereas more complex jobs demand high levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Job control refers to the possibility of choosing one's actions from multiple options and to have an influence on various dimensions of work, such as its sequence and pace, content of goals, quantity and quality of production, techniques and strategies, working conditions and feedback (Frese, 1989). Job complexity has been defined as "the level of stimulating and challenging demands associated with a particular job" (Fried, Melamed, & Ben-David, 2002,

p. 133). Job characteristics may include varied work; opportunities to solve challenging problems; opportunities to work with the best people; freedom; flexibility and being able to pursue interesting assignments (Döckel, 2003). Döckel (2003) states that job characteristics will increase the retention of employees and feelings of increased competence and meaningfulness of work may develop more organisational commitment.

2.2.2.3   Training and development opportunities

Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden and Bravo (2011) state that organisations can provide programmes and opportunities that support employee growth and development. Employees can participate in formal development activities provided by the organisation as well as informal experiences of quality developmental relationships with senior managers (e.g. career mentoring). Training is intended to provide opportunities for advancement and can also make employees feek that they are valuable to the organisation and may also provide a sense of self-worth, thus increasing affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Döckel (2003) argues that development opportunities should be seen as essential and invaluable to the organisation. Organisations can encourage, plan and invest in employees' development and investments in edication can make employees more committed to their careers. Organisations should view these investments as their social responsibility to build a better South Africa (Döckel, 2003).

2.2.2.4   Supervisor support

Supervisor support refers to how much support employees feel they receive from their supervisors. In this study, supervisor support will include recognition and feedback from supervisors to employees since various research studies indicate the importance of recognition and feedback in the retention of valuable employees (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003). Perceived supervisor support is a construct that describes the extent to which a supervisor values a follower's contributions and cares about the wellbeing of that follower (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), while job feedback is the degree to which a job provides the employee with information about his or her job performance (Thatcher *et al*., 2006).

2.2.2.5 Career opportunities

Career opportunities may include the internal and external career options that an employee may have. Internal career opportunities may be in the employee's current organisation; for example a promotion or be moved to a different position inside the same organisation. External career opportunities, on the other hand, may be to obtain a position at another organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). These career orientations of employees may have important implications for their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

2.2.2.6 Work/life balance

Parkes and Langford (2008) describe work–life balance as an individual's ability to meet both their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities. In addition, Munsamy and Bosch-Venter (2009) state that the focus of work/life balance is on the notion of a flexible and stress-free work environment by making provision for childcare facilities and access to families. Location is important, as is the amount of travel away from home, recreational facilities in distant locations and hours of work, leave time, overtime and flexi time. Increasing flexibility around work has therefore become more important to dual income families. Döckel (2003) argues that organisations need to accommodate employees by providing remote access for telecommuting, childcare centres, referral programmes and employee assistance programmes. As a result of this organisations may then be perceived as concerned employers; which positively influences employees' attachment to the organisation. Employees will then have more positive attitudes towards their organisations (Döckel, 2003).

Table 2.2

Factors identified by Döckel (2003).

RETENTION FACTORS	FREQUENCY OF FACTORS IN HIGH TECHNOLOGY LITERATURE	RANK ORDER OF FREQUENCY
Training and development opportunities	32	1
Supervisor behaviour/ support or feedback	25	2
Career opportunities	23	3
Skill variety	20	4
Quality of life/ work/life policies	19	5
Job autonomy	17	6
Job challenge	15	7
Base salary	14	8
Total	339	Range 1 to 19

2.2.3 Variables influencing retention factors

The following variables may have an influence on retention factors: age, trust, gender, job levels, scarce skills, aging workforce, economic conditions, recruitment, career mobility and career success. De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen and Mäkikangas (2011) found that age and family status are significantly related to turnover intentions.

2.2.3.1 Age

Age is a significant factor in turnover behaviour (Boxall, Mackey & Rasmussen, 2003). Average tenure levels increase with age in the UK (Burgess & Rees 1998), while in New Zealand, Boxall *et al.* (2003) found that employees younger than 30 years are most likely to use job mobility to gain better pay and better access to good training opportunities. This is congruent with Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert (2011), who found a positive relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to stay; and a negative relationship between age and retention regarding the intention to leave. The findings indicate that younger employees are significantly more likely to leave their current organisation than older employees, as older employees experience more difficulties in finding new jobs since they suffer from negative stereotyping and age discrimination (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Ng and Feldman (2009) argue that the relationship between age and turnover might have changed over the last twenty years owing to changes in the work environment and in norms of job mobility.

2.2.3.2 Trust

Bal, Ciaburu, and Jansen (2010) argue that employees with high commitment, in particular trust, feel betrayed by unfair treatment and respond with higher turnover behaviour. For workers with a weak relation with the leader, injustice will be a mere signal from the organisation that employees are not valued. However, for those with high trust, injustice is perceived as an act of betrayal on the part of the organisation, and poses a threat to self-identity and self-worth (Brockner, Tyler, & Cooper-Schneider, 1992). Similarly, older workers with high trust may feel betrayed by injustice, and consequently look for alternative employment opportunities (Bal, de Lange, Ybema, Jansen & van der Velde, 2011).

2.2.3.3 Gender

Generally, gender has an effect on employees' subjective experience of work (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Metcalfe and Dick (2002) found that women assign a significantly higher rating to intrinsic values and may value the following intrinsic values higher than men: challenging job, development opportunities, quality of feedback and autonomy. Also, women who are professionally trained and qualified reflect a preference for a spiral career pattern.

This type of pattern occurs when an employee has a preference for moving on to another field of specialisation after developing in a given field for a length of time (Marshall, 1995; Woodd, 2000). Furthermore, the gender distribution within an industry also influences mobility opportunities. Women who work in male-dominated occupations have more difficulty moving up the hierarchy, presumably because of gender bias (Maume, 1999). They may also have less access to opportunities for job development and mentoring in male-dominated occupations (Lai *et al.*, 1998; Ohlott *et al.*, 1994). Gender as a variable has been included in the study since females may have different career needs and expectations to males in the 21st century workplace.

2.2.3.4   Different job levels

McDonnell (2011) argues that talent management tends to be overly focused on leaders. While clearly strategically important, there is a fear that they are treated in isolation and other positions are not appraised in terms of their value in achieving the corporate objectives (McDonnell, 2011). There may be more functional and technical type roles that have a sizeable strategic impact on organisational performance (Cappelli, 2009). The needs, expectations and motivational drivers may differ for different level employees. Thus, different job levels have been included as a variable in this study to determine retention factors of employees on all levels of the relevant organisation.

2.2.3.5   Aging workforce

Hankin (2005) predicted future trends that will have a major influence on the 21st century world of work. Accordingly, there will be an increasingly ageing yet active population and lifestyle changes and medical advances will keep people alive and fit into their nineties. Moreover, in the United States, the number of workers under the age of 45 will shrink by 6% over the next ten years as birth rates decline and the population ages (Wardell, 2005). In South Africa it seems that the Aids pandemic may also influence the age gap. Thus, employees with certain skills in technical or complex work may become scarce in the years to come (Hankin, 2005).

2.2.3.6 Economic conditions

Feldman (2002b) suggests that perceptions of favourable economic conditions increase young adults' aspirations for more fulfilling jobs. In contrast, a weak economy may make individuals more risk averse and unwilling to leave whatever jobs they do have, even if those jobs are unsatisfying (Leana & Feldman, 1994). Benevolent policies towards unemployment may contribute to individuals' being more selective about which jobs they will accept and more willing to experience long periods of unemployment to find the best available jobs for themselves in the labour market (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

Poor economic conditions make it financially more difficult for individuals to accumulate enough resources to invest in new occupational training. In addition, poor economic conditions also decrease the number of new positions in firms and the number of new firms created. These economic conditions can increase job insecurity, thereby making individuals less likely to give up any longevity-based employment security or compensation benefits accrued in their current firms (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

2.2.3.7 Career mobility

Feldman and Ng (2007) argue whether the encouragement of mobility or embeddedness should be closely tied to corporate strategy. Mobility and embeddedness may be a way of linking human resource practices to overall corporate goals. Also, mobility at individual level is motivated by the quantity and quality of the jobs available in the overall labour market (Haveman & Cohen, 1994).

The emergence of new firms increases external mobility since individuals have more alternatives in the labour market. When industry growth is fuelled by increases in firm size, greater opportunities for upward internal mobility increase (Schniper, 2005). Thus, employees' intention to stay at their current organisation may increase when there are more career opportunities within the organisation.

Once individuals come to identify with others in an occupation and their self-concepts are defined, there is more psychological resistance to changing career paths (Allen, 2006). Whether an occupation is characterised by rigid or permeable mobility, structures can also influence individuals' mobility or embeddedness. Some organisations have higher barriers to

entry than others (Feldman & Ng, 2007). It might be that when the barriers to enter certain occupations are high, the result will be that these individuals will prefer to stay, as opposed to individuals who can enter occupations more easily. This may result in individuals with higher occupational mobility. For example, it is much more difficult to enter occupations such as doctors, psychologists and specialists than it is to enter careers such as secretaries, receptionists or clerks. High barrier occupations normally have a lot of rules and regulations which make it very difficult to enter in contrast to lower barrier occupations. High barrier occupation individuals usually prefer to practise independently and, as a result, prefer lower occupational mobility in contrast to individuals who can enter their occupations more easily (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

The following section discusses the way subjective career success can be linked to occupational mobility.

2.2.3.8 Career success

Individuals often enter new careers with high expectations for job satisfaction and these expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies. Through the processes of cognitive dissonance, individuals may raise their evaluations of their new occupations to justify the sacrifices incurring in leaving their prior jobs. Therefore, subjective career success is likely to be positively associated with occupational mobility (Feldman, 2002a). Arthur, Khapova and Wilderom (2005) define subjective career success as an internal apprehension and evaluation of the employee's career across different dimensions that are of relevance to the individual. Therefore, subjective career success may differ for each employee, depending on what the employee perceives as important to achieve in his or her career.

Schneider, Goldstein and Smith (1995), suggest that when employees are terribly unhappy at the organisation they are most likely to self-select out early in their tenure and so the remaining long-term employees tend to be relatively satisfied. On the other hand, when employees change jobs to take advantage of more interesting and involved duties and responsibilities, external job mobility is likely to be associated with greater subjective perceptions of career success (Hall & Chandler, 2005). In contrast, when turnover is motivated by a desire to escape the present job rather than from any genuine interest in the new position, there is no reason to expect that feelings of subjective career success will be

any higher (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). Subjective career success is highly likely with promotions and highly unlikely with demotions (Feldman & Ng, 2007).

2.2.3.9 Employability

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006, p. 348) define employability as "a person's value in terms of future employment opportunities, which is determined by the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience and reputation, which can be invested in new employment opportunities as they arise". Furthermore, employability is determined by performance and flexibility; the individual works for multiple firms, multiple networks of associates and peer-learning relationships are developed, on-the-job training is provided, milestones in the career are learning related and success is measured by meaningful work. Many employees no longer feel satisfied with a job that merely pays the bills. They want meaningful work; they want to feel part of something that is larger than they are, to be challenged and to sharpen their skills (Casio, 2003).

2.2.4   Implications for talent retention

In this section, the implications for talent retention are discussed for compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work–life balance.

2.2.4.1 Compensation

Employees are reluctant to change jobs unless a noticeable pay raise forms part of the package. Many employees who are unsuccessful in being promoted seek out opportunities for promotions in the external market and frequently take them when offered (Feldman & Ng, 2007). Lesabi and Nkosi (2007) indicate that monetary rewards contribute a great deal towards employees' decisions to stay or leave the organisation. Similarly, Munsamy and Bosch-Venter (2009) found that direct financial rewards (the cash component) are an important factor since employees want to be recognised for their efforts. In contrast, Britton, Chadwick and Walker (1999) state that people work for more than money. Employees derive value from their affiliation with or simply belonging to their organisation; their opportunity to pursue a career; the satisfaction of making an impact through meaningful work that is

recognised and benefit programmes that help to make employees feel financially secure (Britton *et al.*, 1999). Hays (1999), argues that managers who reward performance with money only may find it difficult to retain employees, since there are more powerful motivators, for example freedom and flexibility in the organisation (Hays, 1999). Finally, salary has been proven to be a precursor to turnover intention both directly and indirectly. This confirms the importance of financial incentives in the staff retention goal (Luna-Arocas & Camps, 2008).

2.2.4.2   *Job characteristics*

Increased autonomy shifts responsibilities from supervisors to workers and results in more intensive and demanding work. The new jobs tend to favour educated workers over those with less education and skills (Powell & Snyman, 2004).

2.2.4.3   *Training and development opportunities*

Another key factor in the retention of skilled workers is the provision of training and development (Holland, Sheehan & de Cieri, 2007). Boxall *et al.* (2003) identify the lack of training opportunities as a determining issue in the decision made by employees to leave their employer. Arnold (2005), Herman (2005) and Hiltrop (1999) also confirm that effective training and development opportunities enhance employee retention. In addition, Steel, Griffeth and Hom (2002) state that job enrichment initiatives might be an effective means for enhancing employee retention. Thus, training and development opportunities are considered to be an important retention strategy.

Career development should be encouraged since employers will benefit from productive employees with skills, knowledge and attitudes (Naris & Ukpere, 2010). Govaerts *et al.* (2011) found that employees who experience an appreciative learning climate in their organisation are more inclined to stay. It seems that when organisations provide employees with opportunities to learn in addition to appreciation for their efforts, employees may be more inclined to stay.

Research shows that as long as employees feel that they are learning and growing, they will be less inclined to leave. On the other hand, once employees feel they are no longer

growing, they begin to search for external job opportunities (Rodriguez, 2008). In addition, Echols (2007) argues that when learning and development are combined with selective promotion and salary actions, the process can be a strong retention activity.

2.2.4.4 Supervisor support

The relation between supervisor support and affective commitment is strongly significant. Supervisor support provides individuals with the chance to make a difference on the job, try out new skills, exercise discretion and receive feedback on their performance (Döckel, 2003). Döckel (2003) found that supervisor support makes employees feel important and responsible in that they can use their innovation and skill to the advantage of the organisation. In addition, the extent to which employees' feel that their contributions are valued and that their employers care for their wellbeing is inversely related to voluntary turnover (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002).

2.2.4.5 Career opportunities

Employees can have different values and pursue different types of career. Some employees may value advancement or freedom above all else, while others may value the intrinsic excitement of work, and still others may place the most significance on security and balance in their lives (Schein, 1975).

2.2.4.6 Work / Life policies

Dual career couples often experience inter-role conflict when the role pressures from their work and family domains are mutually incompatible, leading to strain-based conflict (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). Helping workers balance their work and family lives is increasingly viewed as a business and social imperative (Carlson, Grzywacz & Zivnuska, 2009). An inability to create a balance between work and personal life could influence employees' effectiveness and productivity in the workplace (Elloy & Smith, 2003). The areas of work/life balance and family-friendly benefits may be linked to the attraction and retention of employees and the re-engagement of older workers (Holland *et al.*, 2007).

Finally, De Vos and Meganck (2009) found a discrepancy between Human Resource (HR) management and employees' views regarding financial rewards. HR management views financial rewards as the most important factor involved in voluntary employee turnover. HR management also spends much effort in developing retention policies relating to financial rewards. Nevertheless, as employees view financial rewards as less important, management efforts may turn out to be ineffective. It is therefore crucial for organisations to determine the exact needs of employees' for retention purposes. Mitchell and Lee (2001) suggest that an individual's decision to leave an organisation is not made in isolation but is shaped by the environment in which the individual is "embedded".

2.3   PERCEIVED JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

In this section, the concept of job embeddedness is explored and an overview of the voluntary turnover model (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) is provided. In addition, variables influencing perceived job embeddedness and their implications for talent retention are discussed.

2.3.1   Conceptualisation
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People become embedded in the job in many ways, depending on circumstances, age, occupation, and other variables. Embeddedness "represents the collection of forces keeping an employee in the job" (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008, p. 242). Lee *et al.* (2004) view job embeddedness as a retention construct that reflects employees' decisions to directly participate both on and off the job. Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) suggest that job embeddedness consists of three independent elements: the fit (match) between the people's jobs and communities and their personal life space; the links people have to other people or activities; and the extent to which people would have to make a sacrifice to break these links – hence it is what an employee will sacrifice on leaving the organisation.

The construct of embeddedness views employees as embedded in a field of forces that influences turnover decisions, addresses a variety of forces such as affect, fit and structural ties, and stresses the importance of relationships (Allen, 2006). Applicants develop perceptions of fit with organisations based on their values and identities, and will self-select themselves out of the recruitment process if they perceive a lack of fit (Ng & Burke, 2005).

Fit can be defined as an employee's perception of compatibility with his or her organisation or environment. Moreover, links are characterised as formal and informal connections between a person, institutions or other people. Embeddedness suggests that a number of strands connect an employee to his or her family in a social, psychological and financial web. This web includes work and non-work friends, groups, the community and the physical environment in which the employee lives. The greater the number of links between the person and the web, the more an employee is bound to the job and the organisation (Mallol, Holtom & Lee, 2007). Sacrifice represents the perceived cost of monetary and non-monetary benefits that are forfeited by organisational departure (Holtom *et al.*, 2006). Thus, the benefits that an employee may sacrifice on leaving his or her organisation may include performance or annual bonus, company car, flexible working hours and a supportive working environment. The employee may therefore be hesitant to give up these benefits and may decide to stay at his or her current organisation.

Perceived job embeddedness consists of the organisational dimension and the community dimension, as illustrated in figure 2.1. Researchers have found that the organisational dimension predicts employee job performance better than the community dimension (Allen, 2006; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2004). In addition, findings indicate that, when job relocation is not a factor, the organisational dimension predicts employee retention better than the community dimension (Allen, 2006; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2004).

Burton, Holtom, Sablynski, Mitchell and Lee (2010) found that the organisational dimension helps to reduce the impact of shocks on organisational citizenship and overall job performance. Shocks represent "a push force" on an individual that initiates intentions to leave the organisation (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b). Thus, in this study the community dimension (off-the-job factors) of embeddedness will be excluded and the focus will be on the organisational dimension of perceived job embeddedness.

On the basis of Mitchell *et al.*'s (2001b) definition, perceived job embeddedness will be viewed as

- the employee's perceived fit with his or her job (person-job fit)
- the employee's perceived fit with the organisation (person-organisation fit)

- the employee's perceived link with his or her job (person-job link)

- the employee's perceived link with his or her current organisation (person-organisation link)

- the employee's perceived cost of leaving his or her current job (person-job sacrifice)

- the employee's perceived cost of leaving his or her current organisation (person-organisation sacrifice)

Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) focus on why people stay as opposed to how they leave. In particular, they draw attention to the reasons people stay through the construct of their job embeddedness. Intention to stay refers to employees' conscious and deliberate willingness to stay with their current organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Employees who feel strongly embedded and committed may define their relationships with their employers as long term, as opposed to employees who have lower levels of embeddedness and commitment to their organisations.

In general terms "intention to leave" is simply referred to as an employee's intention to leave his or her present organisation (Cho, Johanson & Guchait, 2009). Intention to leave is considered interchangeable with the term "turnover"; however, intention to leave is distinct from the definition of "actual turnover" (Yoshimura, 2003). Intention to leave is considered a conscious and deliberate desire to leave an organisation within the near future and is to be considered the last part of a sequence in the withdrawal cognition process (Mobley *et al.*, 1978). Similarly, Vandenberg and Nelson (1999, p. 1315) define "intention to leave" as an "individual's own estimated probability (subjective) that they are permanently leaving the organisation at some point in the near future". The intent to leave the organisation has also been described asthe final step in a series of withdrawal cognitions leading toactual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Withdrawal behaviours, on the other hand, involve employees not being at work when scheduled or needed (absenteeism), arriving late for work or quitting the job permanently (turnover). These withdrawal behaviours may reflect attempts to escape from work situations that employees find unpleasant. March and Simon (1958) suggest that withdrawal occurs over time and includes more types of participation decision than just turnover. In addition, the authors (March & Simon, 1958, p. 93) stated "the motivation to withdraw factor is a general one that holds for both absences and voluntary turnover".

Voluntary turnover incidents are defined by Maertz and Campion (1998, p. 50) as "instances wherein management agrees that the employee had the physical opportunity to continue employement with the company, at the time of termination". Empirical studies done by Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) reflect that people who are embedded in their jobs have lower intent to quit and are less ready to quit than those who are not embedded.
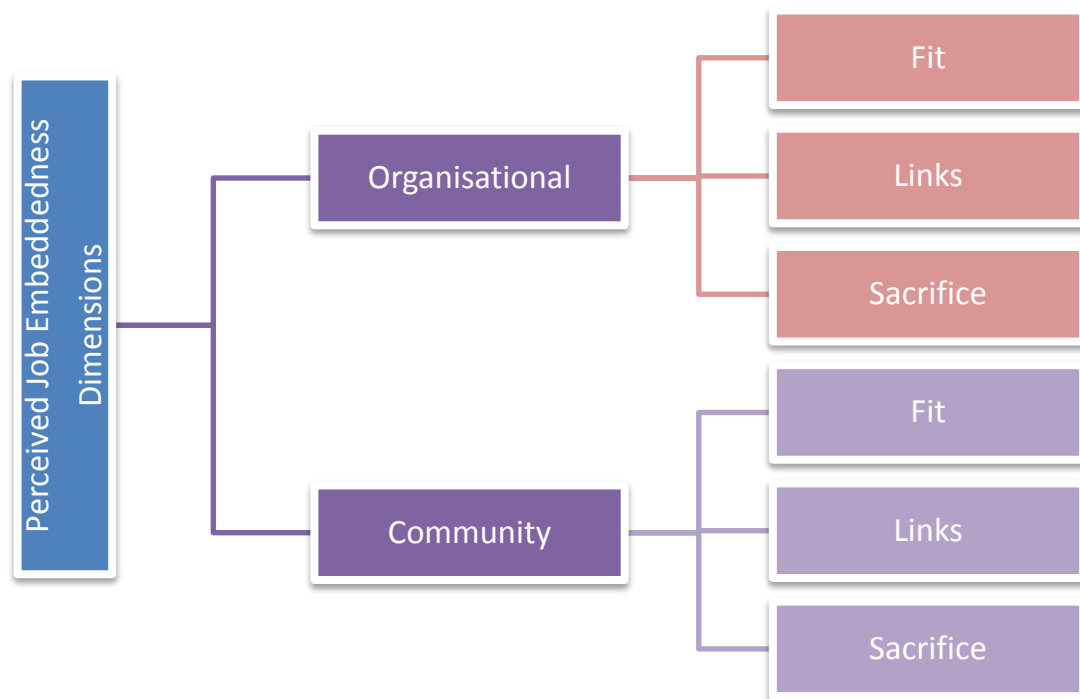
Figure 2.1. Dimensions of perceived job embeddedness.

2.3.2 Unfolding model of voluntary turnover

The unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) explains how and why people leave organisations. The major components of the unfolding model include shocks, scripts, image violations, job satisfaction and job search (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Lee and Mitchell (1994) proposed that turnover decisions are not always the result of accumulated job dissatisfaction and may sometimes occur without much deliberation at all. Moreover, certain events may cause some employees to consider leaving their organisations when the event matches some pre-existing plan for leaving, or violates employees' values or interferes with their goal attainment (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). For example, the employee perceives unfair organisational behaviour where he or she does not receive a certain bonus or promotion. Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) state that job embeddedness may be viewed as a unique contextual factor that relates independently to turnover, beyond other core aspects of

traditional models. Moreover, job embeddedness may prohibit turnover by absorbing shocks (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b). Table 2.2 provides a comparison of the attributes of each of the four possible decision paths. Lee *et al.* (1999) found most people to follow one of the four psychological and behavioural paths when leaving their organisation. Three of the four paths are initiated by shocks.

Table 2.3

Unfolding model of voluntary turnover decision paths (adapted from Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006).

Attribute	Path				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4A**	**4B**
	Following a plan	**Leaving without a plan**	**Leaving for something better**	**Leaving without a plan**	**Leaving for something better**
Initiating Event	Shock	Shock	Shock	Job dissatisfaction	Job dissatisfaction
Script/Plan	Yes	No	No	No	No
Relative job dissatisfaction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Active job search	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Example	Planned to go to attend university. Quit job when enough money saved.	Individual experience unfair discrimination from manager. Decided to quit.	Received an unsolicited job offer that looks better than current situation. Decided to quit.	As a result of increasing job dissatisfaction decides to quit current job without searching for another job.	Accumulated dissatisfaction results in successful job search. Finds a new job then quits.

2.3.2.1 Shocks

Lee and Mitchell (1994) argue that some sort of event, which they call a shock to the system, causes the employee to pause and think about the meaning or implication of the event in relation to his or her job. Secondly, this process may (or may not) lead to the idea that leaving the job is an alternative to consider. If leaving becomes an alternative, there may (or may not) be other job alternatives to consider. Moreover, Lee and Mitchell (1994) suggest the following shock categories: personal events that are external to the job; personal events that are job- or work-role related; and organisational events. Furthermore, shocks can be positive, neutral, or negative events which can be expected or unexpected, that prompt cognitive deliberations about a person's job. In addition, Holtom, Mitchell, Lee and Inderrieden (2005) found in more than 60% of voluntary turnover cases, that they examined across multiple industries, the immediate antecedent to leaving was a shock rather than accumulated job dissatisfaction.

2.3.2.2 Scripts

Lee and Mitchell (1994) argue that individuals with a history of leaving many organisations voluntarily might be more likely to hold pre-existing scripts about when to leave than people with a history of staying with organisations. Pre-existing scripts are preplanned courses of actions (scripted behaviour) (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Holtom and Inderrieden (2005) state that employees may prepare a script detailising a plan of action based on prior experience, observation of the experiences of others or information obtained from relevant reading through social expectations.

2.3.2.3 Images violations

If an employee's values, goals and strategies for goal attainment do not fit with those of the employing organisation or those implied by the shock, an image violation occurs (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2005). Lee and Mitchell (1994, p. 76) state "shocks can be more easily understood as facilitating or hindering goal attainment and the adoption of new goals". In addition, "job alternatives can be readily understood as to whether they fit with existing goals, and these constructs constitute key portions of the unfolding model" (Lee & Mitchell,

1994, p. 76). Job alternatives include a variety of work and non-work options, as not all employees leave their organisations to pursue another job (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2005).

2.3.2.4   Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a component of the unfolding model of voluntary turnover. Job satisfaction can be viewed as "a result of employees' perceptions of how well their jobs provide in those qualities that they perceive as important" (Luthans, 1998, p. 44). Also, job satisfaction is an important antecedent of voluntary turnover (Steel, 2002).

2.3.2.5   Job search

Although job search behaviours may not be intended to result in taking a new job, they are actions employers would prefer to limit. Private employers would prefer not to engage in bidding for current employees, while public employers rarely have that option. In the public sector, employers should be concerned that unexpected job offers could serve as shocks (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).The unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) specifies four different and distinct sequences that lead to employee turnover. Consequently, researchers are directed to think about employee turnover from at least four different angles, instead of testing for a single process (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Thus, there are different turnover decision possibilities that need to be considered when examining employees' decisions to stay or leave their current organisation.

2.3.3   Variables influencing perceived job embeddedness

The critical aspects of job embeddedness are the extent to which people have links to other people or activities; as well as, the extent to which their jobs and communities are similar to or fit with the other aspects in their life spaces and the ease with which links can be broken. In addition, it refers to what they would give up if they left, especially if they had to physically move to other cities or homes (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

2.3.3.1 Age

As employees enter the mid-career stage (or maintenance stage), their major concerns become preserving their self-concept and holding onto career achievements already attained (Gibson, 2003). These concerns make changes in career paths more difficult since these employees may be more embedded to their job and organisation. Kondratuk, Hausdorf, Korabik and Rosin (2004) note that, as employees enter middle age, the forces toward embeddedness become stronger, as employees become both more time-involved with and financially committed to family responsibilities. Thus, late-career stage employees may be less likely to leave their organisations voluntarily. Therefore, age may have an effect on employee's level of perceived job embeddedness. Also, Ng and Feldman (2010) found that the relationship between job embeddedness and innovated-related behaviour is especially strong for employees in the middle and late stages of their careers and weak for employees in the early-career stage. Employees can contribute to innovation in organisations in various ways. For example, an employee can take charge of an idea for improving the workplace, either by voicing the idea to others or by implementing the idea in the organisation.

2.3.3.2 Gender

Gender may influence the level of perceived job embeddedness; for example Schwartz (1989) suggests that women are twice as likely as men to quit their jobs. In a turnover study of managers in organisations, Stroh, Brett and Reilly (1996) found that 26% of women and only 14% of men left their companies over a two-year period. Thus, there may be a significant difference in the level of perceived job embeddedness between male and female employees.

2.3.4 Implications for talent retention

Person-organisation fit, links and sacrifice contribute to job embeddedness but it seems that job embeddedness does not cause fit, links and sacrifice. These elements together exert a force on employees to stay at their current organisation (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Mallol *et al.* (2007) confirm that the job embeddedness model is a reliable predictor of employee retention. Ng and Feldman's (2009) research findings indicate that job embeddedness

contributes to greater core performance, greater creativity, and fewer counterproductive work behaviours. In addition, Ng and Feldman (2009) argue that individuals with high performance behaviour and a high level of job embeddedness may be more likely to stay with the organisation. On the other hand, employees may be more likely to leave if they have a high level of job performance behaviour and experience a low level of job embeddedness.

Lee *et al.* (2004) found a positive relationship between embeddedness and performance. They argue that if an employee is highly linked within an organisation, fits well and will have to sacrifice a great deal if they quit, then the employee's motivation to perform should be high. Moreover, all the constructs of perceived job embeddededness (fit, links and sacrifice) may have an influence on job performance.

Ng and Feldman (2010) found that job embeddedness may increase employees' innovative behaviour, particularly in terms of spreading innovation and implementing it successfully. Gagné and Deci (2005) argue that person-organisational fit likely relates to need satisfaction. When employees' and the organisation's values are aligned, the organisation is more likely to provide circumstances enabling employees to satisfy their basic psychological needs, leading to favourable employee outcomes. In addition, employees whose organisation informs them about career timelines and career stages report higher levels of person-organisation fit (Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Allen (2006) found that that on-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between investiture socialisation tactics and turnover. Allen (2006) argues that embeddedness could help to explain links between socialisation tactics and turnover since certain socialisation tactics may help newcomers to become more embedded. For example, assisting newcomers to develop relationships can reduce uncertainty and may help employees to find structure in their new environment. Socialisation tactics also may enable organisations to actively embed new employees in an organisation (Allen, 2006).

In addition, Allen (2006) found that on-the-job embeddedness is negatively related to turnover. Organisations can influence newcomer retention and actively embed newcomers in the organisation through the nature of their socialisation activities. However, organisations need to consider carefully the social context of socialisation and the nature of the interactions newcomers have with each other and with experienced organisational members.

Embeddedness is a useful way of thinking about how and why new employees make the transition from outsider to participating insider and, thus, become tied to their new organisation (Allen, 2006).

Moreover, the structure of pension and insurance benefits has the strongest effect on embedding employees in their current organisations (Kim & Feldman, 2000). Buchmueller and Valetta (1996) note that that pension and insurance benefits are factors employees consider more during decisions about leaving the organisation, than when choosing an organisation. Thus, pension and insurance benefits have an influence on employees' intention to stay and intention to leave their current organisation.

Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) argue that if organisations design systems to identify potential shocks and have systems in place to address them, they may be able to stem the tide of voluntary leavers; for example, by providing feedback, recognition or career counselling interventions. Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) found that embeddedness shared a unique variance with turnover intention. Organisations should be proactive about increasing job embeddedness among employees, since the establishing or increasing of job embeddedness is likely to increase retention, attendance, citizenship and job performance (Lee *et al.*, 2004; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

2.4 THEORETICAL INTEGRATION OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, RETENTION FACTORS AND PERCEIVED JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

The literature review in the previous sections of this chapter provides a critical overview of prominent research related to the three constructs that are of relevance to this study. The purpose of the literature review was to conceptualise the concepts of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The concepts of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness (figure 2.2 and figure 2.3) seem to be theoretically linked. As shown in figure 2.2, H1 represents the hypothesis that a statistically significant positive relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. As shown in figure 2.2, H2 represents the hypothesis that employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

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As shown in Table 2.3, the construct of sacrifice seems to overlap with normative commitment and perceived job embeddedness. Normative commitment and perceived job embeddedness (sacrifice) represent the potential costs involved when an employee leaves the organisation. The intention to stay or leave the organisation is a core variable that influences all three constructs. Employees tend to stay longer at an organisation if commitment levels are high. The retention factor, career opportunities may increase employees' intention to stay if there are attractive career opportunities within the organisation. Research also indicates that employees in their mid-career stage may be more embedded to their job and organisation which may result in a high intention to stay. Organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness have similar positive implications for talent retention namely: increased job performance, lower voluntary turnover, lower intention to leave the organisation and lower absenteeism.

In conclusion, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) argued that if a person does not have a good fit with their job, then they could find a different job in their current organisation. On the other hand, if a person has a good fit with their job but not with the organisation, the individual will likely search for a similar job with a different organisation. In addition, Lee *et al.*'s (2004) research results suggest that studying employees' reasons for both staying and leaving may enrich knowledge of retention, increasing it beyond that which is permitted by the current focus on leaving. This broader perspective suggests an interesting and potentially fruitful direction for future research.
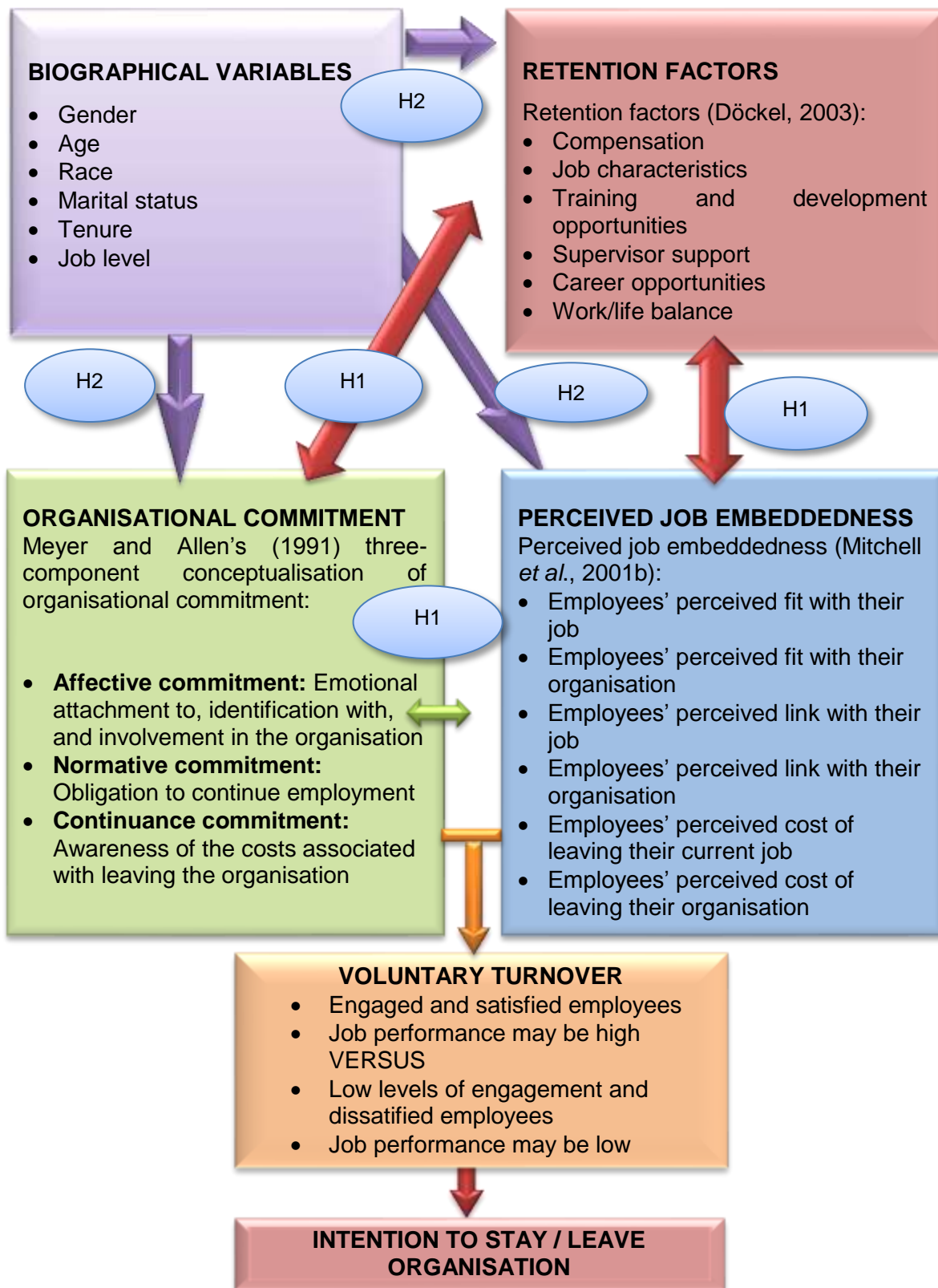
Figure 2.2. Theoretical relationship between biographical variables, organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Table 2.4

A theoretical comparison of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddeddness.

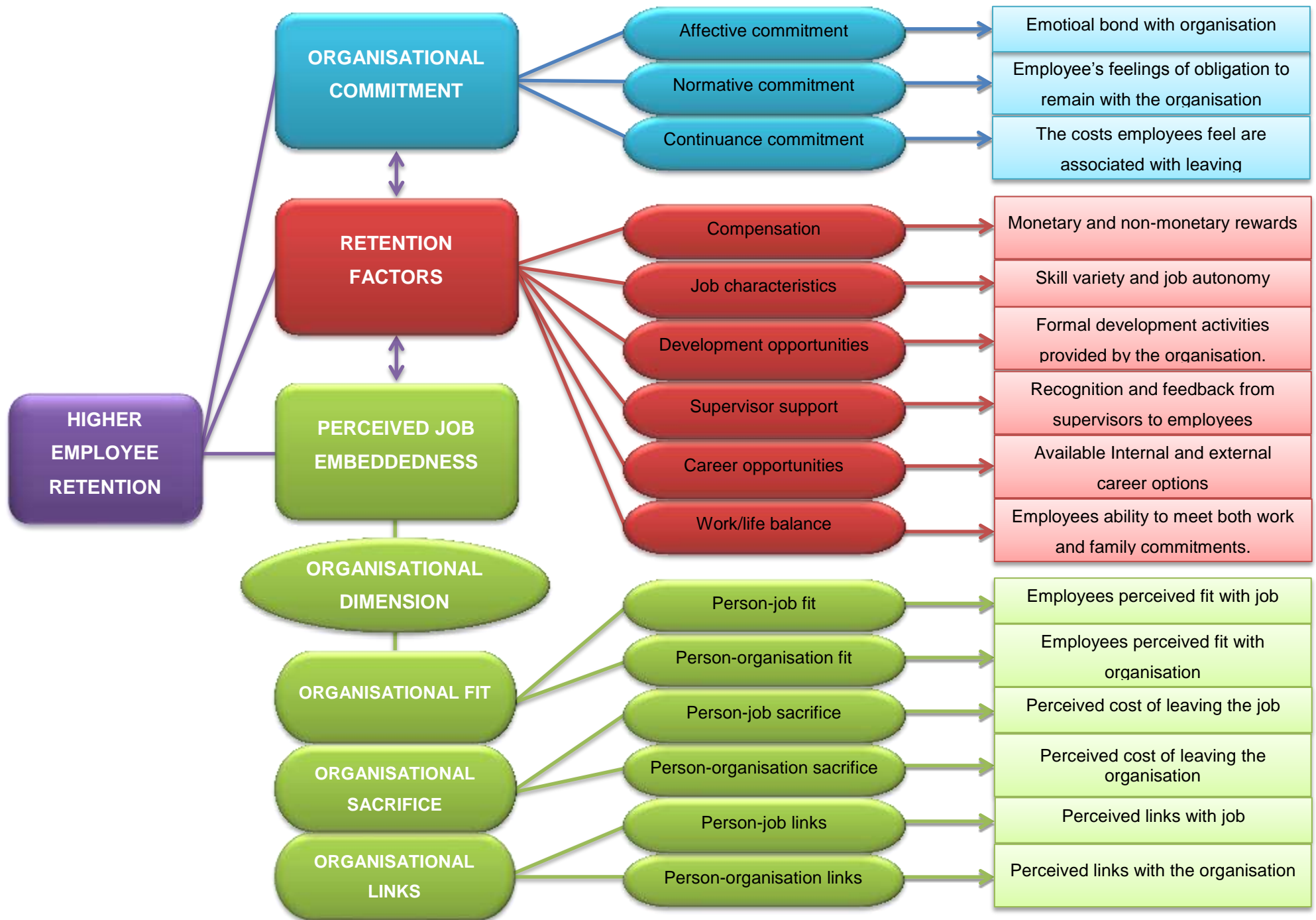|	Organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)	Retention factors (Döckel, 2003)	Perceived job embeddedness (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b)
Conceptualisation	Organisational commitment can be described as a psychological state that attaches the individual to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).	Netswera *et al.* (2005) refer to retention factors as factors that would facilitate the stay or exit of employees and the decision to leave or stay, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities.	Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) suggest job embeddedness is an employee's perception of the match (fit), connection (link) and cost of leaving (sacrifice) the relevant job and organisation.
Core constructs	(1) Affective commitment refers to positive feelings that help employees to form a bond with, and to participate in the organisation. (2) Continuance commitment refers to the degree to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving. (3) Normative commitment refers to employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation.	(1) Compensation refers to monetary and non-monetary rewards. (2) Job characteristics include skill variety and job autonomy. (3) Training and development opportunities refer to formal development activities provided by the organisation. (4) Supervisor support includes recognition by and feedback from supervisors to employees. (5) Career opportunities include the internal and external career options an employee may have. (6) Work/life balance refers to an employee's ability to meet both work and family commitments.	(1) The fit (match) between employees' job and community and their personal life space; (2) Sacrifice, the extent to which people would have to make a sacrifice to break these links. (3) The links employees have to colleaques or activities.
Core variables influencing construct	*Higher job satisfaction / lower job dissatisfaction. *Tend to stay longer at the organisation (tenure) if commitment levels are high. *Employees tend to develop a stronger affective commitment to the organisation if their experiences within the organisation are consistent with their expectations and their basic needs are satisfied.	*Younger employees are significantly more likely to leave their current organisation than older employees. *Older employees with high trust may feel betrayed by injustice, and consequently look for alternative employment opportunities. *A weak economy may make employees unwilling to leave. *Employees intention to stay may increase when there are more career opportunities within the organisation.	*Employees in their mid-career stage may be more embedded in their job and organisation. Thus, making changes in career paths is more difficult. *Gender: women are twice as likely as men to quit their jobs.
Implications for talent retention	*Higher identification, involvement and attachment to the organisation *Increased job performance *Lower voluntary turnover *Higher intention to stay/lower intention to leave *Lower absenteeism	*Increased job performance *Lower voluntary turnover *Higher intention to stay/lower intention to leave *Lower absenteeism	*Increased job performance * Increased innovation *Lower voluntary turnover *Higher intention to stay/lower intention to leave *Lower absenteeism

		Emotioal bond with organisation
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT	Affective commitment	
	Normative commitment	Employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation
	Continuance commitment	The costs employees feel are associated with leaving

		Monetary and non-monetary rewards
RETENTION FACTORS	Compensation	
	Job characteristics	Skill variety and job autonomy
	Development opportunities	Formal development activities provided by the organisation.
	Supervisor support	Recognition and feedback from supervisors to employees
	Career opportunities	Available Internal and external career options
	Work/life balance	Employees ability to meet both work and family commitments.

HIGHER EMPLOYEE RETENTION

PERCEIVED JOB EMBEDDEDNESS

ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSION

		Employees perceived fit with job
ORGANISATIONAL FIT	Person-job fit	
	Person-organisation fit	Employees perceived fit with organisation
ORGANISATIONAL SACRIFICE	Person-job sacrifice	Perceived cost of leaving the job
	Person-organisation sacrifice	Perceived cost of leaving the organisation
ORGANISATIONAL LINKS	Person-job links	Perceived links with job
	Person-organisation links	Perceived links with the organisation

Figure 2.3. Model of the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

2.5   RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses are "statements of expected outcome which can be subsequently tested. Such expressions of outcomes usually refer to expected relationships between variables, though not necessarily causal ones" (Black, 2009, p. 45). Kerlinger and Lee (2000) state "hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relation between two or more variables" (p. 26). Moreover, hypotheses are statements about the relations between variables and carry clear implications for testing the stated relations. It seems that hypothesis statements contain two or more variables that are potentially measurable and may specify if, and how these variables are related.

The literature review informed the hypotheses for the quantitative study, which are as follow:

H01:   No statistically significant positive relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

H1:   There is a significant positive relationship between employees' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

H02:   Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will not differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

H2:   Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

2.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 presented a literature review of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. These constructs were conceptualised by summarising views and definitions obtained from the literature and the main concepts relevant to the three constructs were also identified and briefly explained. The antecedents and consequences of the constructs were identified and the implications for talent retention discussed. Based on an overview of the relevant literature, a model of the relationships between these constructs was proffered.

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

CHAPTER 3
[1]RESEARCH ARTICLE

The relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness

ABSTRACT

Orientation: The global economic crisis and increased competition for human talent between organisations have led to increased emigration and skills shortages. In various countries, concerns about skills shortages and loss of talent in the medical and IT sector have resulted in an increased interest in effective retention strategies.

Research purpose: The objectives of the study were: (1) to determine the relationship between organisational commitment (measured by the Organisational Commitment Scale), retention factors (measured by the Retention Factor Scale) and perceived job embeddedness (measured by the Job Embeddedness Questionnaire), and (2) to determine whether employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Motivation for the study: Research on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness among various biographical groups is important for talent retention in the medical and IT industry.

Research design, approach or method: A quantitative survey was conducted on a purposive sample (N = 206) of medical and IT service staff in the South African client service sector.

Main findings: Correlational and inferential statistical analyses reflected significant relationships between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Significant differences between gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups were also found.

Practical implications in terms of Industrial Organisational Psychology practices: Practitioners need to recognise the way in which retention factors influence job embeddedness and commitment to the organisation when designing talent retention strategies for employees from various biographical groups.

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[1]Please note: The guidelines provided by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology have been used as a very broad and general guideline for the framework of the research article.

Contribution/value-add: These findings contribute valuable insight and knowledge to the field of Career Psychology that can be applied in the retention of employees in the medical and IT industry.

Key words: affective commitment; continuance commitment; normative commitment; retention factors, perceived job embeddedness; talent retention.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section explains the focus and background of the study. General trends found in the literature will be highlighted, and the objectives and potential value-added by the study will be identified.

3.1.1 Key focus of the study

Organisations are increasingly recognising the importance of their knowledge workers and the need to engage and retain human talent (Thorne & Pellant, 2007). Thorne and Pellant (2007) argue that a relatively small number of employees are developing specialist skills and if these employees leave the organisation there is a high risk that a part of the organisation will leave with them. The competition between healthcare organisations has never been more dominant (Bryant-Hampton, Walton, Carroll & Strickler, 2010).

Hill (2011) states that there is a paucity of information on the desire and intention to stay of experienced nurses. Medical employees' expertise and organisational knowledge are invaluable to their patients and colleagues and to the intellectual capital of the organisation (Bryant-Hampton *et al.*, 2010). Similarly, the retention of IT employees is vital to organisations since they often hold implicit knowledge about systems and business processes. Hence, it is expensive for organisations to replace their medical and IT employees since these skills tend to be specialised and hard to replace (Hill, 2011; McKnight, Phillips & Hardgrave, 2009). Moreover, turnover increases the workloads of and demands made on existing staff and, as a result, overburdening and burnout appear, which may further result in additional turnover (Stroth, 2010).

South Africa needs to find solutions to overcome these skills shortages in order to enable a striving for increased economic growth and global competitiveness (Rasool & Botha, 2011). In the multicultural South African work context, it would appear to be beneficial to gain insight into the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness for the purpose of developing effective talent retention strategies.

3.1.2 Background to the study

Firms in developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Great Britain and Canada are recruiting highly skilled South Africans with high levels of education and advanced occupational skills (Van Rooyen, 2000). The official number of emigrants per 1000 of the population is 4.98 (Immigration Statistics, 2011). Rasool and Botha (2011) state that skill shortages are affecting the economic growth of South Africa and limit the level of global participation. This loss of skilled workers is referred to as the "brain drain" (Rasool & Botha, 2011) and may have an adverse effect the direct foreign investment necessary to drive the country forward economically (Rasool & Botha, 2011).

Benson and Brown (2011) state that the differences found between generations in terms of job satisfaction and the willingness to quit have important implications for management. Today's younger employees are much more mobile than previous generations (Thorne & Pellant, 2007). Management therefore needs to understand how work and people interact in order to make predictions about the way employees will respond to these various interactions, since this understanding will help to keep workers more satisfied and prevent them from leaving the organisation (Benson & Brown, 2011).

The nursing workforce is aging at a rapid rate since nurses tend to leave the profession earlier than the usual retirement age (Bleich, Cleary, Davis, Hatcher, Hewlett & Hill, 2009). In contrast, a growing and aging population is creating an upsurge in demand for health services (Hirschkorn, West, Hill, Cleary & Hewlett, 2010). Hirschkorn *et al.* (2010) state that 55% of nurses plan to retire between 2011 and 2020, thus heightening the need for effective retention strategies.

Korunka *et al.* (2008) state that IT employees have a strong tendency to leave their organisations, the reason being that IT employees work in a dynamic environment where a continuous updating of skills is required (Lee, 2000). These employees therefore tend to be highly employable which can further result in intentions to leave. Moreover, the demand from organisations for IT employees is increasing and therefore it is easy to land new jobs (McKnight *et al.*, 2009). In addition, IT employees have a need for challenges and achievements which play a significant role in their turnover intentions (Lee, 2000). However, these employees tend to

suffer from extensive projects and aggressive timelines (Messersmith, 2007) which can result in stress and burnout.

The relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness should therefore be investigated in order to inform talent retention strategies. As a result of South Africa's diverse culture and work environment, possible differences between biographical groups' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness need to be considered when adopting talent retention strategies.

3.1.3 Trends from the research literature

The following section provides a brief outline of the dominant trends in the research literature on the constructs organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

3.1.3.1 Organisational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) describe organisational commitment as an inner condition that connects employees to a certain organisation. Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional approach integrates attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment in order to create three distinct dimensions of organisational commitment, namely, affective, normative and continuance commitment, as indicated in figure 3.1. Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that one can achieve a better understanding of an employee's attachment to the organisation if all three forms of commitment are taken into consideration. Allen and Meyer (1990) view affective, continuance and normative commitment as different psychological components, each of which can be experienced to differing degrees. Meyer and Allen (1991) hypothesise that each component develops as a result of different experiences and has different implications for on-the-job behaviour.

Organisational commitment is generally expected to reduce abandonment behaviours, which include tardiness and turnover. In addition, employees who are committed to their organisation may possibly be more willing to participate in "extra-role" activities, such as being creative or innovative, which frequently guarantee an organisation's competitiveness in the market (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Research by Martin (2008) indicates that affective commitment positively influences normative commitment, and, in turn, that continuance commitment is determined by

normative commitment and affective commitment. Nevertheless, affective commitment makes a stronger impact on the desire and intention to continue working in the organisation than normative commitment.

Research by Ferreira, Basson and Coetzee (2010) indicate that employees who prefer a managerial and freedom/autonomy career tend to feel emotionally attached to their organisation. Similarly, Beck and Wilson (2000) suggest that individuals who are dedicated on an emotional level usually remain with the organisation because they see their individual employment relationship as being in harmony with the goals and values of the organisation for which they are currently working. Ferreira *et al.* (2010) suggest that participants, who perceive themselves as having the skills to plan, implement and manage their career goals in innovative ways, tend to feel emotionally attached to the organisation. Moreover, people who are emotionally well educated are able to form supportive social networks, which increase their sense of belonging to the organisation (Sinclair, 2009).

Manetje and Martins (2009) concluded that respondents who are affectively committed to the organisation are more willing to maintain their relationship with the organisation than those who are normatively and continuance committed. Affectively committed employees may therefore demonstrate feelings of identification with, attachment to and involvement in the organisation. In addition, Martin (2008) argues that when employees trust their organisation, are satisfied with their job and the labour conditions, feel there is flexibility to adapt to changing conditions, feel their opinions are valuable to the organisation and the relevant information is provided, then they will commit affectively to the organisation, will be responsible at work (normative commitment) and will desire to continue working in the same organisation (continuance commitment).

3.1.3.2   Retention factors

Netswera *et al.* (2005) refer to retention factors as factors that would facilitate the stay or exit of employees and the decision to leave or stay, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities. In a literature survey, Döckel (2003) identified six critical factors that need to be considered in the retention of high technology employees. These factors will be relevant to this study and include compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work–life policies.

In the context of the present study, compensation refers to monetary and non-monetary rewards in return for the work delivered by employees. Monetary rewards may include the base salary, incentives and stock options, while non-monetary rewards are the indirect financial rewards employees receive for their labour (Döckel, 2003).

Job characteristics include skill variety and job autonomy since highly specialised knowledge workers prefer jobs where they can use a variety of skills and have challenging assignments and job autonomy. The term "knowledge workers" refers to employees who have critical knowledge of and skills in core products and services (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007). In order to increase satisfaction with the job in terms of job characteristics, Kraimer *et al.* (2011) state that organisations can provide programmes and training opportunities that support employee growth and development. Employees can participate in formal development activities provided by the organisation or informal experiences, such as quality developmental relationships with senior managers (e.g. career mentoring).

Supervisor support includes recognition and feedback from supervisors to employees. Various research studies indicate the importance of recognition and feedback in the retention of valuable employees (Allen *et al.*, 2003).

Career opportunities may include the internal and external career options that an employee may have. Internal career opportunities may be in the employee's current organisation, for example a promotion or being moved to a different position inside the same organisation, while external career opportunities may include obtaining a position at another organisation (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2007).

Parkes and Langford (2008) describe work–life balance as an individual's ability to meet both work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities. Döckel (2003) argues that organisations need to accommodate employees by providing remote access for telecommuting, childcare centres, referral programmes and employee assistance programmes. Organisations may then be perceived as concerned employers, which can positively influence employees' attachment to the organisation and create more positive attitudes towards it (Döckel, 2003).

Kraimer *et al.* (2011) found that perceived career opportunities significantly predict job performance and turnover. When employees perceive many career opportunities in the organisation it may result in higher job performance and lower intention to leave. In addition, Kraimer *et al.* (2011) found that career mentoring support and participation in training relate positively to employees' perceptions that the organisation supports employee development. Development support from the organisation helps to increase turnover if employees perceive fewer career opportunities that match their career goals and interests within the organisation (Kraimer *et al.*, 2011). Thus, training and development programmes may send an important message to employees that the organisation is investing in them and that they are regarded as valuable organisational resources (Kraimer *et al.*, 2011). On the other hand, Maurer and Lippstreu (2008) found that employees with low levels of learning orientation do not respond to development support with greater organisational commitment.

Thorne and Pellant (2007) found that talented people want recognition, to achieve something significant, excitement, variety, stimulation and a feeling of making a difference. Thorne and Pellant (2007, p. 66) describe talent as "a lever, a mechanism and an approach that helps keep the organisation "ready" for the future". Döckel (2003) identified eight retention factors and the following six factors are included in this study: compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work–life balance (see figure 3.1). Benson and Brown (2011) found that the retention factors that were important to all groups were job motivation, career opportunities and supervisor support. These authors suggest that managers need to ensure that all supervisors are well trained and supportive of their workers and that all employees have career opportunities available to them.

3.1.3.3 *Perceived job embeddedness*

Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) suggest that job embeddedness relates to an employee's perception of his or her match (fit) and connection (link) with the relevant job and organisation and the cost of leaving it (sacrifice). The unfolding model of voluntary turnover (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) explains how and why people leave organisations. The major components of the unfolding model include shocks, scripts, image violations, job satisfaction and job search (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Lee and Mitchell (1994) argue that some sort of event, which they call a "shock to the system", causes the employee to pause and think about the meaning or implication of the event in relation to the job. Holtom and Inderrieden (2005) state that employees may prepare a script that details a plan

of action that can be based on prior experience, observation of the experiences of others, and information obtained from relevant reading through social expectations. If an employee's values, goals and strategies for goal attainment do not fit with those of the employing organisation or those implied by the shock, an image violation occurs (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2005). Even though job search behaviours may not be intended to result in taking a new job, they are actions employers would prefer to limit. Private employers would prefer not to engage in bidding for current employees and public employers rarely have that option. In the public sector, employers should be concerned that unexpected job offers could serve as shocks (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).

Perceived job embeddedness represents a broad constellation of influences on employee retention (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b). The critical aspects of job embeddedness are (1) "the extent to which employees' jobs and communities are similar to or fit with the other aspects in their life spaces; (2) the ease with which links can be broken, that is, what employees will be willing to give up if they leave the organisation; (3) the extent to which people have links to other people or activities" (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b, p. 1104). Mitchell *et al.* (2001b, p. 1104) describe job embeddedness as "a net or web in which an individual can become stuck. One who is highly embedded has many links that are close together (not highly differentiated)". Moreover, "the content of the parts may vary considerably, suggesting that one can be enmeshed or embedded in many different ways". It is this overall level of embeddedness, rather than specific elements of embeddedness, that is the central focus in this study (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b, p. 1104).

Lee *et al.* (2004) found that job embeddedness predicts intention to leave, but also predicts in-role performance as well as extra-role performance. Employees can experience disadvantages and certain advantages when leaving their organisation. However, for some employees there may be direct losses related to the benefits that they were receiving as part of the organisation (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). Employees who leave in the early stages of their career can experience positive increases in their salaries compared to those that do not leave the organisation (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). There is still no universal agreement on the factors that explain why some employees leave and others decide to stay (Tanova & Holtom, 2008).

One of the dimensions of embeddedness is fit, which consists of person-job fit and person-organisation fit, as indicated in figure 3.1. Person-job fit involves needs and abilities that are directly linked to job characteristics, as opposed to person-organisation fit which refers to the match between the person and the values and goals of the organisation as a whole (Boon,

Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2011). Thus, possessing the skills needed for a job does not necessarily mean the employee fits with the values and culture of the relevant organisation (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001). Boon *et al.* (2011) found that HR practices directly affect the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisation, as well as the extent to which employees feel their values match those of the organisation, which in turn enhances organisational commitment. Boon *et al.* (2011) also found that negative perceptions of the human resource system affect employees' perceptions of job-fit which are, in turn, related to their intention to leave the organisation.
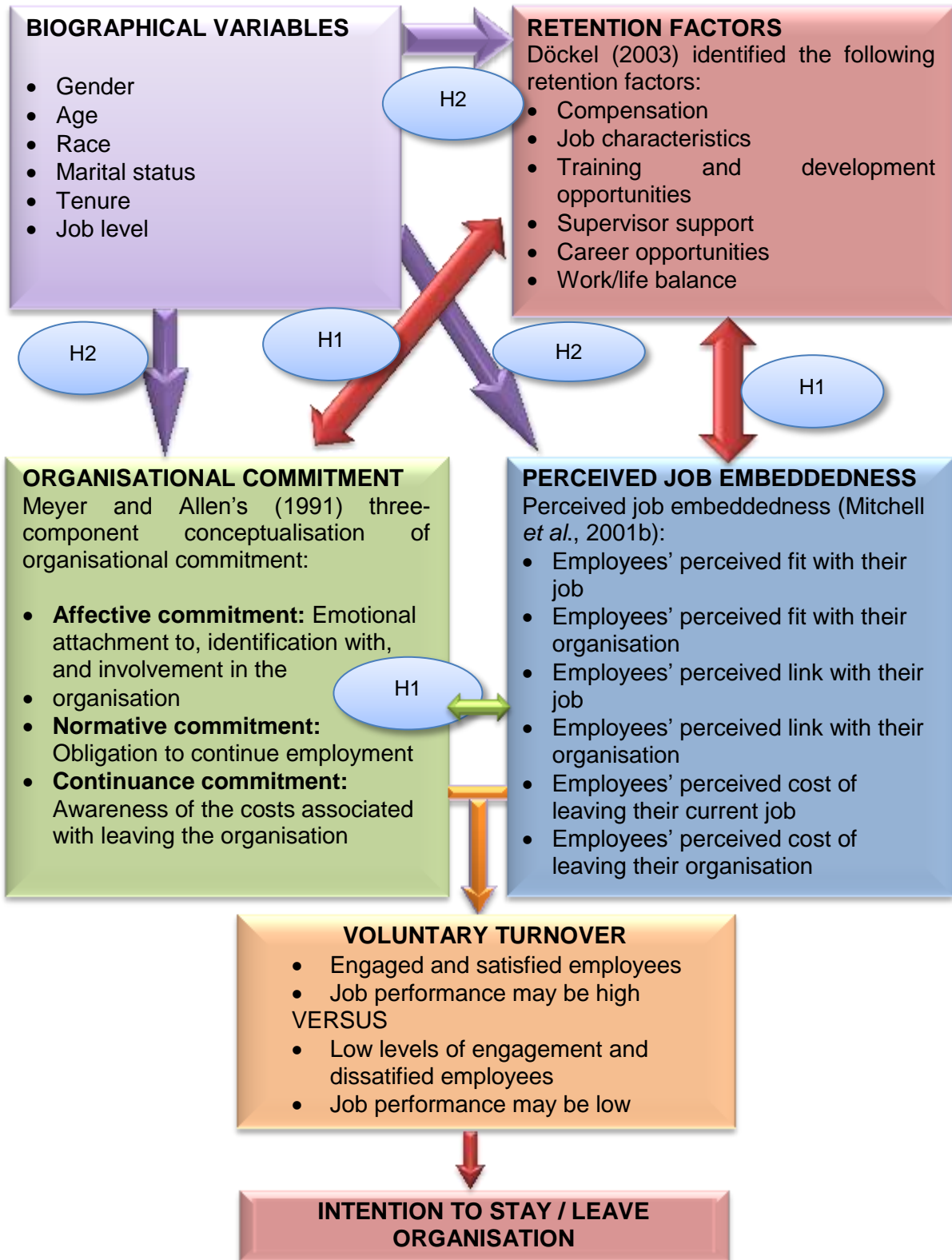
Figure 3.1. Theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Thorne and Pellant (2007) state that real talent development is not about a special few employees, but rather using everyone's strengths, championing diversity and encouraging creativity and innovation; in other words, it is about working to create an environment where the organisation "buzzes" with energy and employees have a sparkle of anticipation when they enter the workplace.

The following hypotheses will be tested empirically.

H1: A statistically significant positive relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

H2: Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

3.1.4   Research objectives

The objectives of the study were to: (1) determine the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, and (2) to determine whether employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

It is crucial that organisations consider the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in the design of their retention strategies. There seems to be a paucity of research addressing the combination of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness of employees within the medical and IT environment. In addition, there seems to be limited information on how gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ with regard to their retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in the South African context.

3.1.5   The potential value added by the study

The general purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, with a view to inform retention

practices and strategies for employees within the medical and IT environment. The findings may also stimulate future studies to further explore and analyse this information to understand the role of the three constructs better in retaining employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups.

3.1.6   What will follow

A discussion will follow to explain the research design utilised in this study. Thereafter, the research approach and method used will be clarified. The results will be provided, followed by a discussion of the significant findings and interpretation of the findings in the light of previous research. The conclusion will be presented and limitations will be identified. Finally, the recommendations for future research will be suggested.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

The review of the relevant literature presented in Chapter 2 and briefly outlined in the preceding introduction constitutes the foundation for the research design and methodology presented in this section. Survey research has contributed to the methodology of the social science mostly through rigorous sampling procedures, the overall design and implementation of the design, the explicit definition and specification of the research problem, and the analysis and interpretation of the data (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). A research design is "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research" (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006, p. 34). Research designs should provide detailed and extensive information on the sampling, data collection and analysis (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). The research design used in this study will be explained in the following section by making reference to the research approach and method.

3.2.1   Research approach

A quantitative approach was appropriate for this study, since this research approach is systematic and controlled, and the knowledge obtained is not subject to moral evaluation (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). However, the scientific method is subject to issues of morality. Thus, the researchers are held responsible for the methods used in obtaining the data (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Systematic observation implies that the researchers know what type of event will be

observed but not the outcome of the observation (Black, 2009). The use of a quantitative approach adds to the reliability of the study, since a predetermined procedure is followed and can therefore be replicated (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006).

3.2.2 Research method

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

3.2.2.1 Research participants

The sampling method used was dependent on the scarcity of skills as identified by the senior management in the Human Resources division of the company, and the willingness and availability of the participants for this study. An initial purposive sample (N = 843) was drawn from the entire population of 2170 professional and managerial level staff in the company who were invited to participate in the study. The final sample that voluntarily participated in the study yielded a response rate of 24.44% (N = 206).

The final sample (*N* = 206) as shown in Table 3.1 and figure 3.2 was skewed towards females (73%) with 27% males.
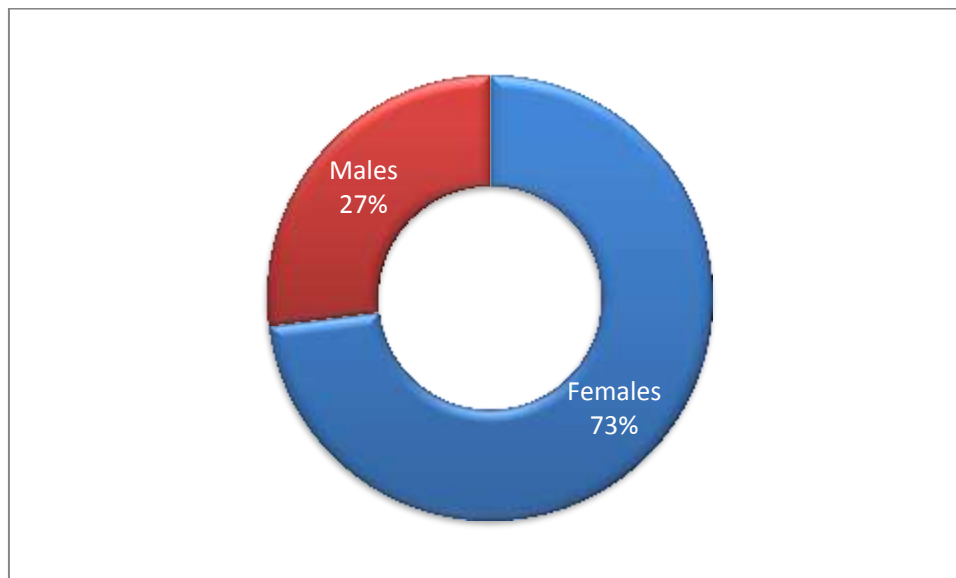
Figure 3.2. Sample distribution by gender (N = 206).

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In terms of race groups, whites represented 53% and blacks 47% (coloured 22%; African 13% and Asian 12%) of the sample, as shown in figure 3.3.
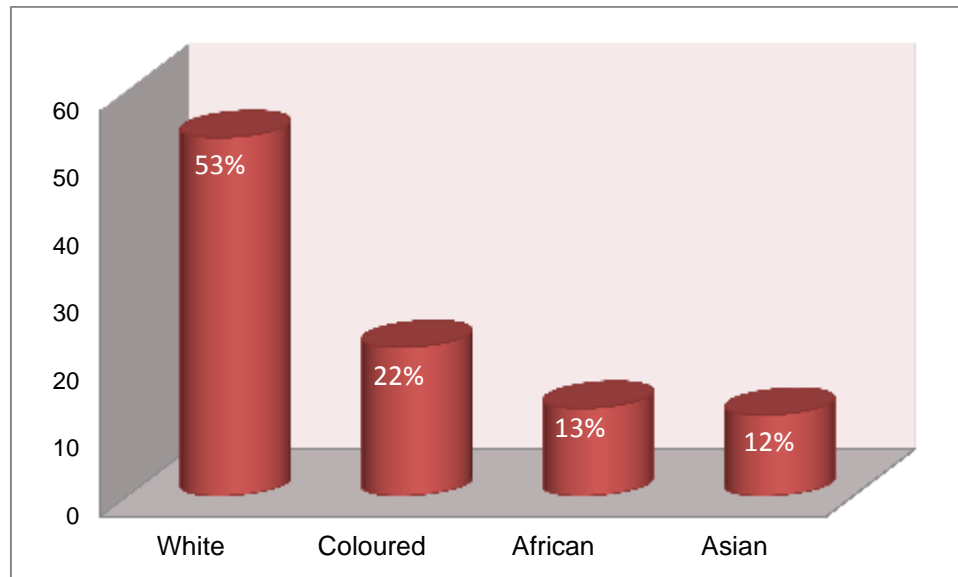
Figure 3.3. Sample distribution by race (N = 206).

Most participants, as shown in figure 3.4, were employed on the operational level (69%) with 15% on management level and 17% on senior management level.
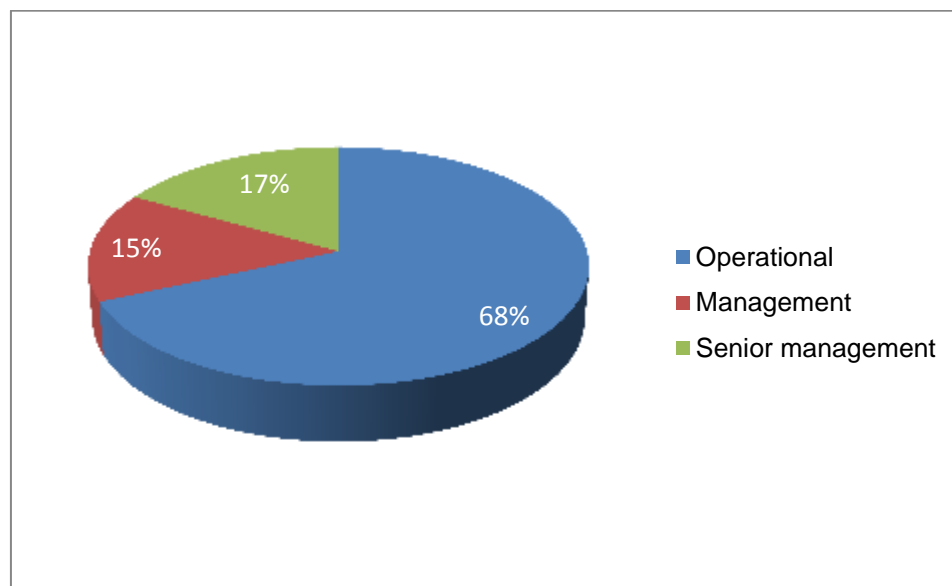
Figure 3.4. Sample distribution by job level (N = 206).

As shown in figure 3.5, in terms of tenure, most of the participants had been in their company's employment for less than five years (45%), between six to 10 years (23%) and between 11 to 15 years (21%). Only 11% had occupied their positions for 15 years or more.
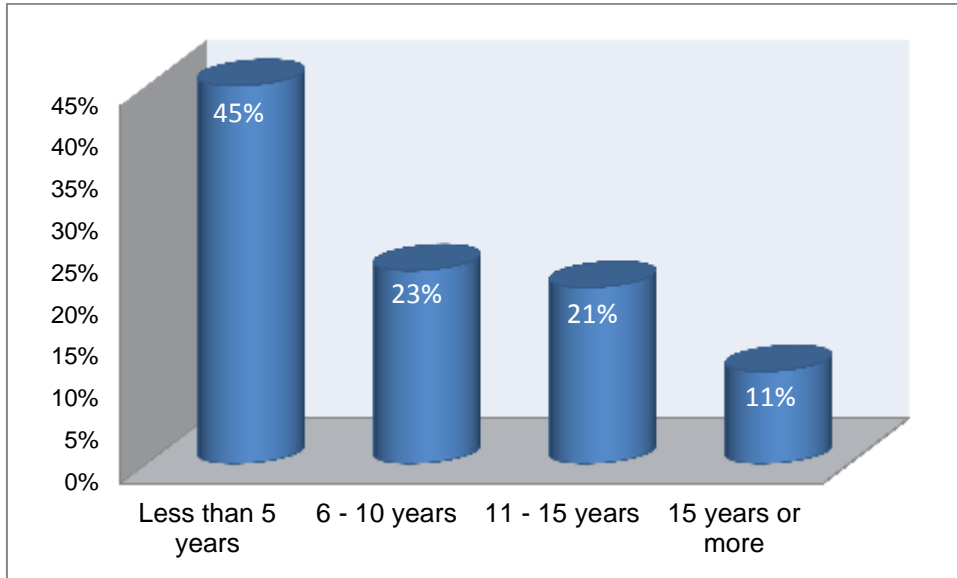
Figure 3.5. Sample distribution by tenure (N = 206).

Figure 3.6 shows that participants' length of employment in their current position was mainly between three and five years (31%), one and two years (25%), less than a year (21%), between six and 10 years (17%) and more than 11 years (4%).
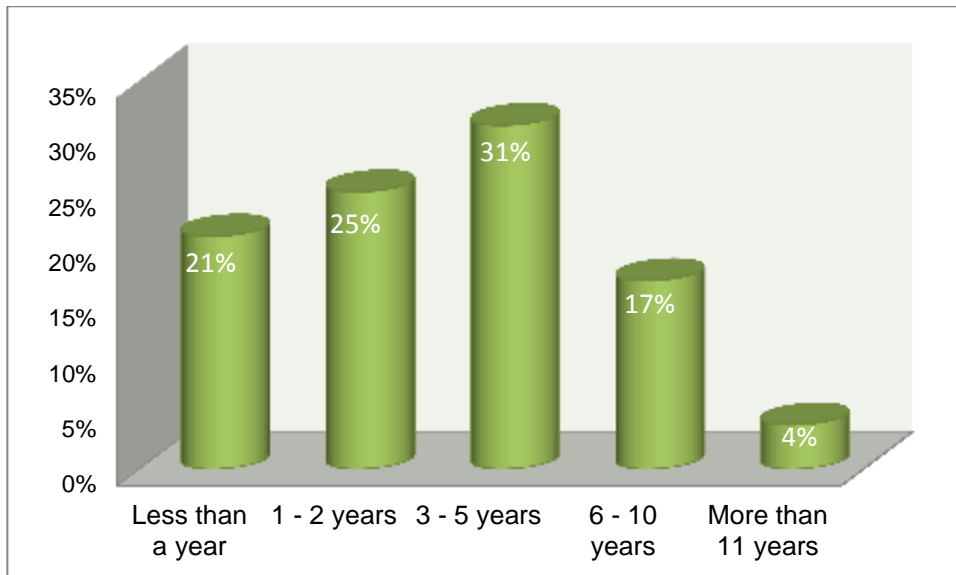
Figure 3.6. Sample distribution by length of employment in their current position (N = 206).

The participants' length of employment in their speciality area, as shown in figure 3.7, was mainly between six and 10 years (27%), three to five years (15%), 11 to 15 years (18%), 16 to 20 years (18%), and more than 21 years (14%). Only 8% of participants had been employed for less than two years in their area of speciality.
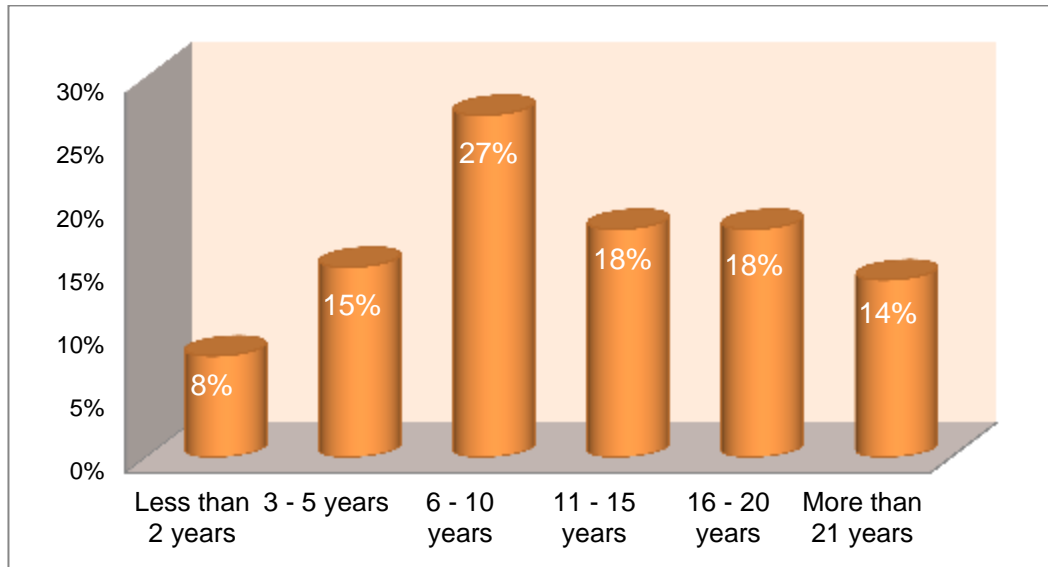
Figure 3.7. Sample distribution by length of employment in their speciality area (N = 206).

As shown in figure 3.8, most of the participants were married (59%), single (24%) or divorced (14%). Only 3% of the participants were widowed and these participants were subsequently not included in any statistical tests comparing the results of the marital groups.
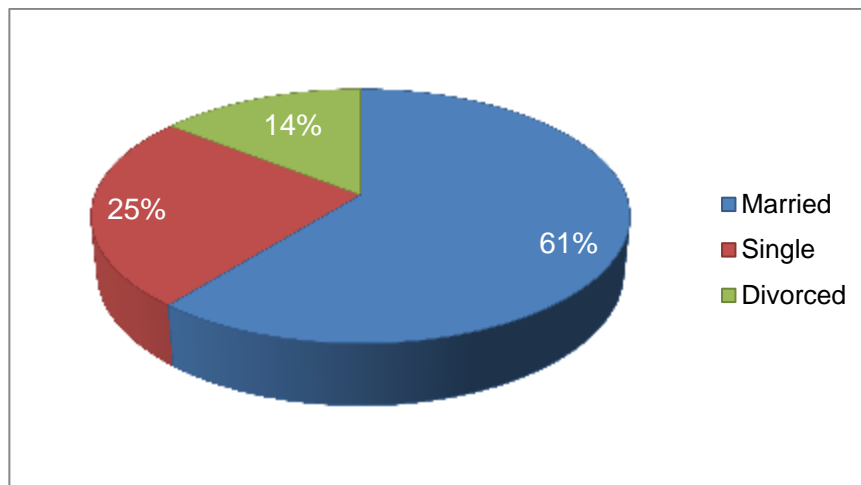
Figure 3.8. Sample distribution by marital status (N = 206).

Participants were mostly aged between 30 and 39 (40%), 40 to 49 years (30%), 50 to 59 years (15%), 17 to 29 years (13%), while only 2% was older than 60 years as shown in figure 3.9. Owing to the small number of participants over the age of 60, this group was clustered with the 50 to 59 year old group as one group during the analysis phase.
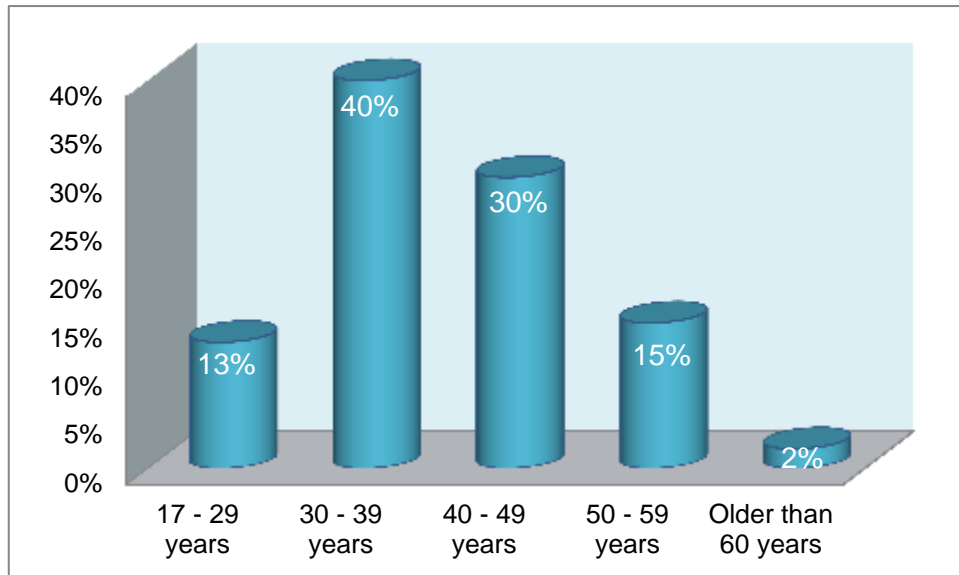
Figure 3.9. Sample distribution by age (N = 206).

The majority of participants have post matric qualifications (77%), mostly in the form of a certificate (12%), diploma (34%), degree (18%) or postgraduate (13%). Only 23% of participants have matric only, as shown in figure 3.10. High qualification levels are generally expected due to the nature of the work done by the participating sample.
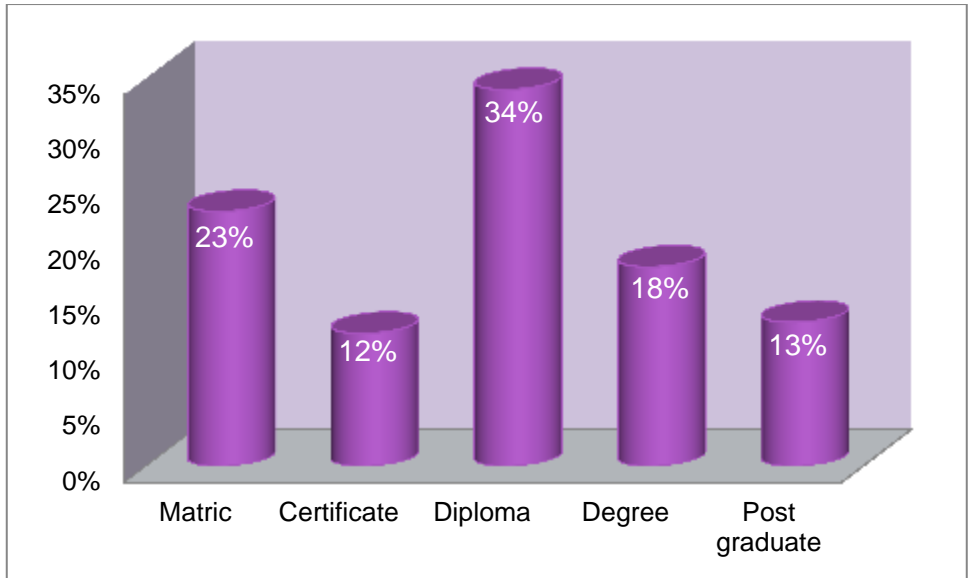
Figure 3.10. Sample distribution by qualification (N = 206).

The majority of participants interacted with 16 or more co-workers on a regular basis (42%), six to 10 co-workers (24%), 11 to 15 (18%) and two to five co-workers (15%) as shown in figure 3.11.
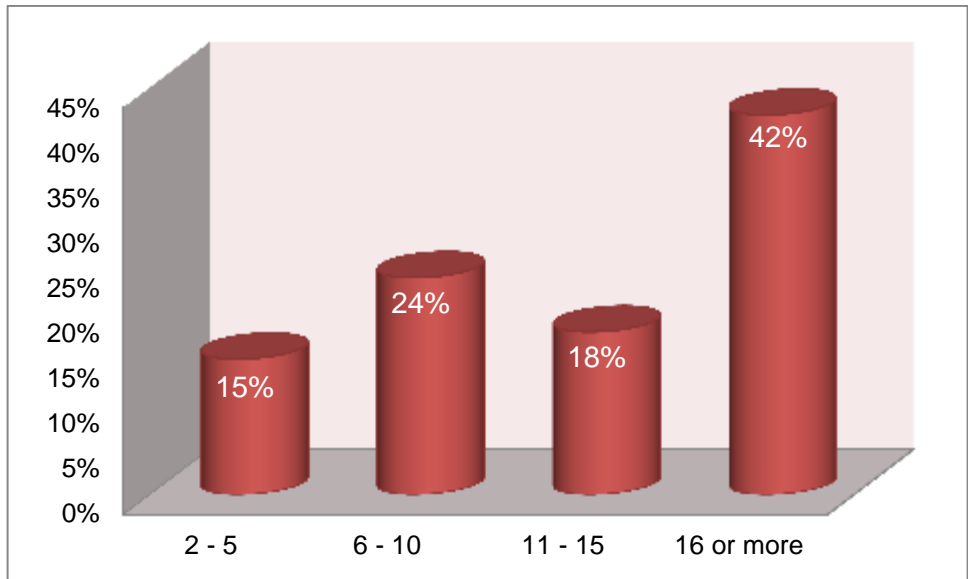
Figure 3.11. Sample distribution by co-worker interaction (N = 206).

In figure 3.12 it can be seen that most participants had highly dependent co-workers: 30% had between two and five colleagues, 23% had one or none, 20% had 16 or more, 12 % had six to 10 colleagues and 7% had 11 to 15 colleagues.
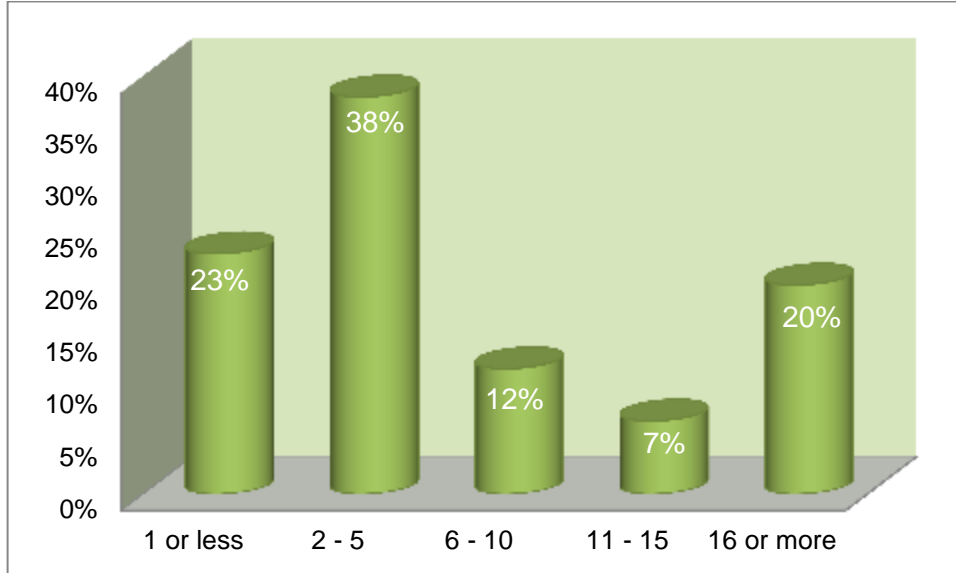
Figure. 3.12. Sample distribution by participants with highly dependent co-workers (N = 206).

Finally, figure 3.13 indicates that 53% of participants were involved in one or no work team, 36% in two to five work teams and 10% in more than six work teams.
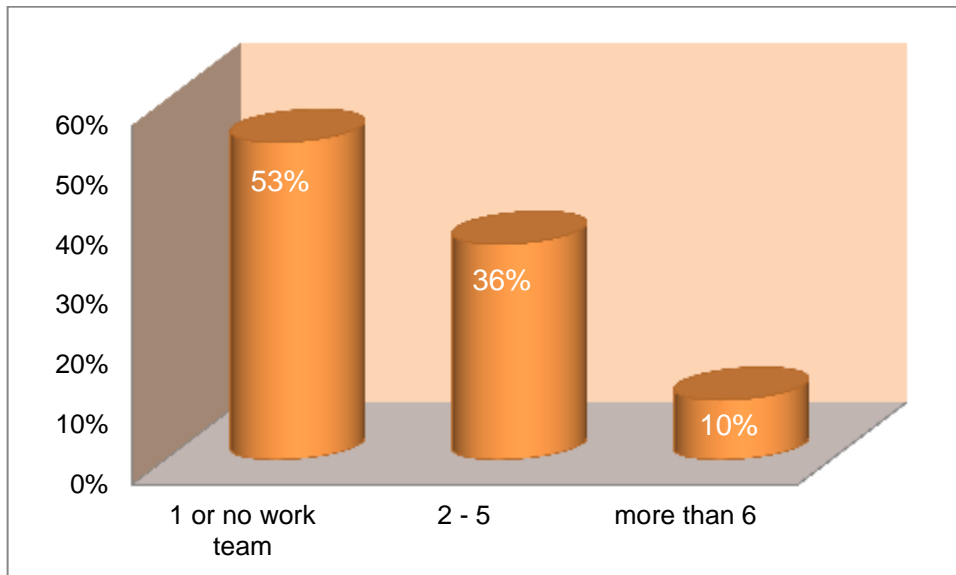
Figure 3.13. Sample distribution by team involvement (N = 206).

Table 3.1

Biographical distribution of sample.

Item	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	56	27
	Female	150	73
Race	White	109	53
	Coloured	46	22
	African	27	13
	Asian	24	12
Job level	Senior management level	34	17
	Management level	30	15
	Operational level	141	69
Tenure	Less than 5 years	93	45
	6 – 10 years	47	23
	11 – 15 years	44	21
	More than 15 years	22	11
Length of employment in current position	Less than a year	44	21
	1 – 2 years	52	25
	3 – 5 years	63	31
	6 – 10 years	36	17
	11+ years	11	4
Length of employment in speciality area	Less than a year	6	3
	1 – 2 years	10	5
	3 – 5 years	31	15
	6 – 10 years	56	27
	11 – 15 years	37	18
	16 – 20 years	37	18
	21+ years	29	14
Marital status	Single	49	24
	Married	118	59
	Divorced	28	14
	Widowed	6	3

Item	Category	Frequency	%
Age	17 – 29 years	26	13
	30 – 39 years	82	40
	40 – 49 years	62	30
	50 – 59 years	31	15
	60+ years	5	2
Qualification	Matric	47	23
	Certificate	25	12
	Diploma	71	34
	Degree	37	18
	Post graduate	26	13
Number of co-workers interacting with regularly	0 – 1 co-worker	2	1
	2 – 5 co-workers	30	15
	6 – 10 co-workers	50	24
	11 – 15 co-workers	36	18
	16+ co-workers	87	42
Number of co-workers highly dependent on respondent	0 – 1 co-worker	48	23
	2 – 5 co-workers	78	38
	6 – 10 co-workers	25	12
	11 – 15 co-workers	15	7
	16+ co-workers	40	20
Number of work teams the respondent is involved with	0 – 1 work team	109	53
	2 – 5 work teams	75	36
	6+ work teams	22	10

3.2.2.2. Measuring instruments

A biographical questionnaire was used to obtain data on gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level group variables. The instruments used were the Organisational

Commitment Questionnaire (OCS) (Meyer & Allen, 1997), the Retention Factor Scale (RFS) (Döckel, 2003) and the Job Embeddedness Scale (JES) (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

a) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCS)

The OCS (Meyer & Allen, 1997) is a multi-factorial measure for assessing individuals affective (8 items), continuance (7 items) and normative commitment (7 items) on a 6-point Likert type scale.

The internal consistency of the three subscales of the OCS has been estimated using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Accordingly, Meyer *et al.* (1993) report acceptable coefficients for affective commitment (0.82), continuance commitment (0.74) and normative commitment (0.83). The median reliabilities for the affective, continuance and normative scales are 0.85, 0.79 and 0.73 respectively. With a few exceptions, the reliability estimates exceed 0.70 (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Temporal stability is obtained through test-retest reliability and it was found that commitment scored lower when measured early in an employee's career (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The test-retest scores ranged from 0.38 for affective commitment to 0.44 for continuance commitment. When these scores were correlated with commitment six months later reliability estimates for affective, continuance and normative commitment increased to 0.60 (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), the reliability coefficients indicate that it can be expected that an employee's commitment can change over a period of time and then stabilise with tenure.

The OCS (Meyer & Allen, 1997) was used in this study because of its high degree of reliability and validity, and the fact that it is affordable and easy to administer. In addition, the three dimensions and the contents pertaining to the affective, normative and continuance commitment scales are applicable to this study.

b) Retention Factor Scale (RFS)

The RFS developed by Döckel (2003) was used to measure the participants' satisfaction on a 6-point Likert-type scale with regard to the following retention factors: compensation (13 items), job characteristics (4 items), training and development opportunities (6 items), supervisor

support (6 items), career opportunities (6 items), work/life balance (4 items) and commitment to the organisation (3 items). A factor analysis on the RFS conducted by Döckel (2003) confirmed the construct validity of the questionnaire. In terms of internal consistency reliability, Döckel, Basson and Coetzee (2006) report the following Cronbach's Alpha coefficients: compensation (0.90), job characteristics (0.41), training and development opportunities (0.83), supervisor support (0.90), career opportunities (0.76), work/life balance (0.87) and commitment to the organisation (0.89). In terms of the present study, acceptable (medium to high) internal consistency reliabilities were also obtained: compensation (0.95), job characteristics (0.67), training and development opportunities (0.88), supervisor support (0.83), career opportunities (0.73), work/life balance (0.88), and commitment to the organisation (0.89).

c) Job Embeddedness Scale (JES)

Perceived job embeddedness was measured using the JES which was developed by Mitchell *et al.*, (2001b). The JES (Mitchell, *et al.*, 2001b) measures three causal, not effect, indicators of the dimensions for embeddedness: fit (7 items), and sacrifice (10 items) on a 6-point Likert type scale. Links (6 items) were measured by means of categories.

The overall internal consistency reliability coefficient for the JES is 0.89. It is important to emphasise that embeddedness was conceptualised specifically as reflecting the totality of forces that constrain people from leaving their current employment. Hence, this scale captures those factors that embed and keep an employee in her or his present position (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b).

The JES (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) comprises two dimensions, namely organisational and community dimensions. In the present study the examination will be limited to the organisational dimension. Researchers have found that the organisational dimension better predicts employee performance than does the community dimension (Allen, 2006; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2001).

The JES (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b) was used in this study because of its high degree of reliability and validity and because it is affordable and easy to administer. In addition, the three dimensions and the contents pertaining to the fit, links and sacrifice scales are applicable to this study.

3.2.2.3 Research procedure

In terms of ethics, clearance to conduct the research was obtained from both the higher education research institution and the participating organisation. The purposively selected individuals were requested to voluntarily participate in the research by completing the questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to participants via the company's internal mail system together with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study. The letter emphasised the confidentiality of the research project and the fact that all information would be used for research purposes only. All questionnaires were answered anonymously and written informed consent was obtained from all participants. The participants were also informed that they could voluntarily remove themselves from the study at any stage. In addition, the researcher was available to answer any questions and respond to any concerns. Completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher via the external mail system. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained.

Owing to the potentially sensitive nature of the study (as participants reported on their attitudes and feelings toward their organisations), the data collection method used seemed appropriate, as the participants could complete the questionnaire anonymously. It was assumed that this could assist in obtaining honest answers from the participants, as they did not have to include their name and contact details, although informed consent had to be provided in order to complete the questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were kept secure and the raw data were captured and converted to an SPSS dataset.

3.2.2.4 Statistical analyses

The Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 17, 2008) was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics, correlational and inferential statistics were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments. Field (2005) lists four assumptions that need to be met for the use of parametric statistics: normality, homogeneity of variance, interval data and independence. These assumptions were considered before making the decision to use parametric statistics. The Kolmogorov-Smirov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for the OCS, RFS and JES were not significant (p>0.05) and it was therefore concluded that the samples are normally distributed. In terms of

homogeneity of variance, the Levene's test for equal variances indicated that all the variables showed homogeneity of variance.

The assumptions of interval data and independence require an assessment by the researcher and in this study the researcher concluded that the assumptions were adequately met and parametric statistics were computed.Descriptive statistics consisted of calculating the means in order to identify the central tendency of the scores, and the standard deviations were then calculated in order to identify the dispersion of scores (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Pearson product-moment correlations were determined to assess the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. In order to counter the probability of a type I error, it was decided to set the significance value at a 95% confidence interval level ($p \leq 0.05$). For the purposes of this study, r values larger than 0.30 (medium effect) (Cohen, 1992) were regarded as practically significant.

Standard multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify the RFS variables that predicted or provided the best explanation for the percentage of the total variance in the scores of the dependent variables (the OCS and JES variables). The F-test was used to test whether there was a significant regression between the independent and the dependent variables. Since a number of independent (RFS) variables had to be considered, the value of the adjusted R^2 was used to interpret the results. For the purposes of this study, R^2 values larger than 0.13 (medium effect) were regarded as practically significant (Cohen, 1992).

T-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to test for significant mean differences between the various biographical groups regarding the variables. T-tests were used to assess significant differences between the means of the gender groups' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness scores. ANOVAs were used to assess significant differences between the means of age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness scores.

3.3   RESULTS

This section reviews the descriptive and inferential statistics of significant value for each scale applied.

3.3.1   Descriptive statistics

Table 3.2 summarises the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the subscales of the measuring instruments. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the measuring instruments.

Each of the subscales on the OCS reflected adequately high Cronbach Alpha values and had high internal reliability (0.70 – 0.86). On the RFS all the Cronbach Alpha values were satisfactory. Most were high (0.73 – 0.95) with the exception of Job characteristics which had an acceptable value of (0.67). On the JES all the Cronbach Alpha values were high (0.74 – 0.91).

Table 3.2

Descriptive statistics: means, standard deviations and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (N = 206).

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha coefficients
OCS Affective commitment	1.25	6.00	3.97	0.90	0.76
Normative commitment	1.43	6.00	3.78	1.01	0.70
Continuance commitment	1.00	6.00	3.69	1.2	0.84
Total commitment	1.77	6.00	3.82	0.79	0.86
RFS Compensation	1.00	6.00	3.53	1.18	0.95
Job characteristics	1.00	6.00	4.53	1.06	0.67
Training and development opportunities	1.00	6.00	3.47	1.30	0.88
Supervisor support	1.00	6.00	4.23	1.17	0.83
Career opportunities	1.00	6.00	3.59	1.00	0.73
Work/life balance	1.00	6.00	3.95	1.41	0.88
Commitment to organisation	1.00	6.00	4.38	1.43	0.89

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha coefficients
Total retention factors	1.71	5.86	3.83	0.79	0.93
JES Perceptions of organisation fit	2.29	6.00	4.71	0.88	0.83
Perceptions of person-job fit	2.5	6.00	4.75	0.84	
Perceptions of person-organisation fit	1	6	4.46	1.43	0.79
Perceptions of organisation sacrifice	1.10	6.00	3.70	1.02	0.87
Perceptions of person-job sacrifice	1.00	6.00	3.61	1.07	0.86
Perceptions of person-organisation sacrifice	1.00	6.00	3.90	1.18	0.74
Total perceived job embeddedness	1.76	6.00	4.12	0.88	0.91

3.3.1.1 Descriptive statistics: organisational commitment (OCS)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Table 3.2 shows that the total OCS mean average score was (M = 3.82; SD = 0.79). The highest mean score obtained was on the affective commitment (M = 3.97; SD = 0.90), and the normative commitment subscales (M = 3.78; SD = 1.01). The lowest mean score was obtained on the continuance commitment subscale (M = 3.69; SD = 1.12).

3.3.1.2 Descriptive statistics: retention factors (RFS)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Table 3.2 shows that the total mean score of the RFS was (M = 3.83; SD = 0.79). The highest mean score obtained was on the commitment to organisation (M = 4.38; SD = 1.43), and the job characteristics subscales (M = 4.53; SD = 1.06). The lowest mean score was obtained on the training and development subscale (M = 3.47; SD = 1.30).

3.3.1.3 Descriptive statistics: perceived job embeddedness (JES)

In terms of means and standard deviations, Table 3.2 shows that the mean average score of the JES was (M = 4.12; SD = 0.88). The highest mean score obtained was on the perceptions of person-job fit sub scale (M= 4.75; SD = 0.84), and the perceptions of organisation fit subscales *(M = 4.71; SD = 0.88)*. The lowest mean score was obtained on the person-job sacrifice subscale (M = 3.61; SD = 1.07).

3.3.2 Correlational statistics

3.3.2.1 Correlation analysis between organisational commitment (OCS) and retention factors (RFS).

As illustrated in Table 3.3, affective commitment and continuance commitment correlated significantly and positively with the retention factor variables, with the exception of work/life balance. The correlations vary from r = 0.22 (p ≤ 0.001; small practical effect size) to r = 61 (p ≤ 0.000; large practical effect size). The strongest significant correlations (r ≥ 0.50, p ≤ 0.000; large practical effect size) were observed between continuance commitment and commitment to

the organisation, retention factor variables ($r = 0.61$; $p \leq 0.000$), and between affective commitment and the commitment to organisation retention factor ($r = 59$; $p \leq 0.000$) variables.

Affective commitment had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with compensation ($r = 0.45$; $p \leq 0.000$); job characteristics ($r = 0.36$; $p \leq 0.000$); training and development opportunities ($r = 0.41$; $p \leq 0.000$); supervisor support ($r = 0.31$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($r = 0.45$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables. Normative commitment had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the commitment to organisation ($r = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variable. Continuance commitment had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with compensation ($r = 0.36$; $p \leq 0.000$), training and development opportunities ($r = 0.40$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($r = 0.46$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables.

Significant correlations of small practical effect size ($r \leq 0.29$) were observed between normative commitment and compensation ($r = 0.24$; $p \leq 0.000$), continuance commitment and job characteristics ($r = 0.19$; $p \leq 0.006$) and continuance commitment and supervisor support ($r = 0.22$; $p \leq 0.001$).

Table 3.3

Correlation analysis between organisational commitment (OCS) and retention factors (RFMS).

RFMS		Affective Commitment (OCS)	Normative Commitment (OCS)	Continuance Commitment (OCS)	Total Commitment (OCS)
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	0.45++	0.24+	0.36++	0.44++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Job characteristics	Pearson Correlation	0.36++	0.03	0.19+	0.25+
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.595	0.01**	0.000***
Training and development opportunities	Pearson Correlation	0.41++	0.12	0.40++	0.40++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.065	0.000***	0.000***
Supervisor support	Pearson Correlation	0.31++	-0.00	0.22+	0.22+
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.927	0.001***	0.001***
Career opportunities	Pearson Correlation	0.45++	0.13	0.46++	0.45++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.05*	0.000***	0.000***
Work/life policies (balance)	Pearson Correlation	0.07	-0.00	0.04	0.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.286	0.906	0.532	0.502
Commitment to organisation	Pearson Correlation	0.59+++	0.34++	0.61+++	0.65+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Total Retention	Pearson Correlation	0.60+++	0.21+	0.50+++	0.55+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.002**	0.000***	0.000***

*** $p \le 0.001$; ** $p \le 0.01$; * $p \le 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \ge 0.50$ (large practical effect size)   ++ $r \ge 0.30 \le 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \le 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

3.3.2.2 Correlation analysis between organisational commitment (OCS) and perceived job embeddedness (JES).

Table 3.4 illustrates that the organisational commitment variables correlated significantly and positively with the perceived job embeddedness variables. The only weak significant correlation existed between normative commitment and perceptions of organisation fit ($r = 0.15$; $p \leq 0.03$), the correlations vary from $r = 0.31$ ($p \leq 0.000$; medium practical effect size) to $r = 62$ ($p \leq 0.000$; large practical effect size). Affective commitment correlated significantly and the strongest ($r \geq 0.50$, $p \leq 0.000$; large practical effect size) with the person-job fit ($r = 0.51$; $p \leq 0.000$), person-organisation fit ($r = 0.60$; $p \leq 0.000$); person-job sacrifice ($r = 61$; $p \leq 0.000$) and person-organisation sacrifice ($r = 0.50$; $p \leq 0.000$) embeddedness variables. Continuance commitment had strong significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, $p \leq 0.000$; large practical effect size) with the person-job sacrifice ($r = 0.60$; $p \leq 0.000$) and person-organisation sacrifice ($r = 0.53$; $p \leq 0.000$) embeddedness variables.

Normative commitment had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the person-job sacrifice ($r = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.000$) and person-organisation sacrifice ($r = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.000$) embeddedness variables. Continuance commitment had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the person-organisation fit ($r = 0.45$; $p \leq 0.000$) and person-job fit ($r = 0.40$; $p \leq 0.000$) variables.

Table 3.4

Correlation analysis between organisational commitment (OCS) and perceived job embeddedness (JES).

JES		Affective Commitment (OCS)	Normative Commitment (OCS)	Continuance Commitment (OCS)	Total Commitment (OCS)
Total of organisation fit perceptions	Pearson Correlation	0.61+++	0.15+	0.47++	0.52+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.031	0.000***	0.000***
Person-job fit	Pearson Correlation	0.51+++	0.11	0.40++	0.43++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.092	0.000***	0.000***
Person-organisation fit	Pearson Correlation	0.60+++	0.14	0.45++	0.51
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.032	0.000***	0.000***
Total of organisation sacrifice perceptions	Pearson Correlation	0.62+++	0.37++	0.62+++	0.68+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Person-job sacrifice	Pearson Correlation	0.61+++	0.34++	0.60+++	0.66+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Person-organisation sacrifice	Pearson Correlation	0.50+++	0.34++	0.53+++	0.58+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Total Embeddedness	Pearson Correlation	0.68+++	0.31++	0.62+++	0.68+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size)   ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

3.3.2.3 Correlation analysis between retention factors (RFS) and perceived job embeddedness (JES).

Table 3.5 illustrates that the retention factor variables correlated significantly and positively with the perceived job embeddedness variables. With the exception of work/life balance which had only one significant correlation with the person-organisation sacrifice embeddedness variable.

The correlations vary from $r = 0.16$ ($p \leq 0.000$; small practical effect size) to $r = 76$ ($p \leq 0.000$; large practical effect size). Person-job fit had the strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) with the job characteristics ($r = 0.55$; $p \leq 0.000$) and commitment to organisation ($r = 0.55$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables. Person-organisation fit had the strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) with the commitment to organisation ($r = 53$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables. Person-job sacrifice had the strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) with the compensation ($r = 0.73$; $p \leq 0.000$); training and development ($r = 0.55$; $p \leq 0.000$), career opportunities ($r = 0.62$; $p \leq 0.000$) and commitment to organisation ($r = 0.62$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention variables. Person-organisation sacrifice had the strongest significant correlations ($r \geq 0.50$, large practical effect size) with the compensation ($r = 0.64$; $p \leq 0.000$) and commitment to organisation ($r = 0.53$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention variables.

Person-job fit had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the compensation ($r = 0.36$; $p \leq 0.000$); training and development opportunities ($r = 0.44$; $p \leq 0.000$); supervisor support ($r = 0.44$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($r = 0.47$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables. Person-organisation fit had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the compensation ($r = 0.41$; $p \leq 0.000$); job characteristics ($r = 0.38$; $p \leq 0.000$); training and development opportunities ($r = 0.46$; $p \leq 0.000$); supervisor support ($r = 0.40$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($r = 0.45$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables. Person-job sacrifice had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the job characteristics ($r = 0.39$; $p \leq 0.000$) and supervisor support ($r = 0.41$; $p \leq 0.000$) variables. Person-organisation sacrifice had strong significant correlations of medium practical effect size ($r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$) with the training and development opportunities ($r = 0.45$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($r = 0.43$; $p \leq 0.000$) variables.

Person-organisation sacrifice had weak significant correlations of small practical effect size ($r \leq$ 0.29) with the job characteristics ($r = 0.21$; $p \leq 0.000$), supervisor support ($r = 0.29$; $p \leq 0.000$) and work/life balance ($r = 0.16$; $p \leq 0.020$) variables.

Table 3.5

Correlation analysis between retention factors (RFMS) and perceived embeddedness (JES).

RFMS		Total perceptions of organisation fit (JES)	Person-job fit (JES)	Person-organisation fit (JES)	Total perceptions of organisation sacrifice (JES)	Person-job sacrifice (JES)	Person-organisation sacrifice (JES)	Total embeddedness (JES)
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	0.42++	0.36++	0.41+++	0.76+++	0.73+++	0.64+++	0.69+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Job characteristics	Pearson Correlation	0.44++	0.55+++	0.38++	0.36++	0.39++	0.21+	0.43++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.002**	0.000***
Training and development opportunities	Pearson Correlation	0.49++	0.44++	0.46++	0.56+++	0.55+++	0.45++	0.58+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
	N	206	206	206	207	207	207	207
Supervisor support	Pearson Correlation	0.43++	0.44++	0.40++	0.40++	0.41++	0.29+	0.45++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***

RFMS		Total perceptions of organisation fit (JES)	Person-job fit (JES)	Person-organisation fit (JES)	Total perceptions of organisation sacrifice (JES)	Person-job sacrifice (JES)	Person-organisation sacrifice (JES)	Total embeddedness (JES)
Career opportunities	Pearson Correlation	0.48++	0.47++	0.45++	0.61+++	0.62+++	0.43++	0.61+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Work/life policies (balance)	Pearson Correlation	0.11	0.02	0.13+	0.09	0.05	0.16+	0.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.096	0.735	0.055	0.174	0.451	0.020*	0.106
Commitment to organisation	Pearson Correlation	0.57+++	0.55+++	0.53+++	0.64+++	0.62+++	0.53+++	0.67+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***
Total Retention	Pearson Correlation	0.64+++	0.60+++	0.61+++	0.83+++	0.82+++	0.67+++	0.83+++
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size)   ++ $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

3.3.2.4 Correlational analysis of organisational commitment (OCS), retention factors (RFS) and
perceived job embeddedness (JES): the links dimension.

The number of links (JES) with an organisation was measured through ordinal categorical variables. It was thus possible to create a mean score similar to the other job embeddedness subscales. It was decided to compute a sum or total across all of the categorical variables to create a new ordinal variable. As each of the categories in an ordinal variable indicates progressiveness, a total score across all variables will result in a new variable where a higher score indicates more links than a lower score. This new computed variable is not a scale or a ratio variable as the distances between the scores have no meaning, for example, a 2 is not one less than a 3. However it does indicate some degree of order: higher scores indicate more links.

In Table 3.6, significant correlations were observed between the JES links dimension of perceived job embeddedness and affective commitment ($p \leq 0.009$), job characteristics ($p \leq 0.000$) and work/life balance ($p \leq 0.000$). The JES links dimension of perceived job embeddedness had strong significant correlations of small practical effect size with affective commitment ($r = 0.18$; $p \leq 0.009$) and job characteristics ($r = 0.24$; $p \leq 0.000$). Finally, a strong negative correlation was observed between work/life balance ($r = -0.27$; $p \leq 0.000$) and the links sub scale of perceived job embeddedness.

Table 3.6

Correlational analysis of organisational commitment (OCS), retention factors (RFS) and
perceived job embeddedness: the (JES) links dimension.

		JES Links
Affective commitment	Spearman Correlation	0.18+
(OCS)	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009**
Job characteristics	Spearman Correlation	0.24+
(RFS)	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***
Work/life balance	Spearman Correlation	-0.27+
(JES)	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000***

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$ (two-tailed)

+ $r \leq 0.29$ (small practical effect size).

3.3.3 Inferential statistics: Multiple regression analyses

A stepwise multiple regression was conducted using the organisational commitment (OCS) variables as the dependent variables and retention factor (RFS) variables as the independent variables. Table 3.6 presents the significant results. The collinearity statistics (variance inflation factor (VIF) and the Tolerance score) are also reflected in the table. Variance inflation factors (VIF) and tolerances for individual variables are used to assess multi-collinearity. Although there is no formal VIF value for determining presence of multi-collinearity, some authors have suggested that VIF values exceeding ≥ 4.0 might be regarded as indicators of multi-collinearity. In weaker models values above 2.5 may indicate multi-collinearity. Tolerance values of less than 0.1 should be investigated further for possible multi-collinearity (Black, 2009). In the current study all tolerance values are above 0.1, and all VIF values are below the cut off >2.5. It was therefore assumed that multi-collinearity was not a concern and the Beta values could be interpreted with greater confidence.

3.3.3.1 Multiple regression analyses: retention factors (independent variables) and organisation commitment (dependent variables).

Table 3.7 indicates that the regression model explains a large ($R^2 \geq 0.40$) practical effect percentage of the variance in the dependent variable (Cohen, 1992). A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 44\%$) of the variance in total organisational commitment is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation ($\beta = 0.56$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($\beta = 0.17$; $p \leq 0.004$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in total organisational commitment. The beta-weights indicate that the commitment to organisation retention variable contributed the most in explaining the variance in the total organisational commitment variable.

A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 40\%$) of the variance in affective commitment is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation ($\beta = 0.43$; $p \leq 0.000$), career opportunities ($\beta = 0.20$; $p \leq 0.001$) and job characteristics ($\beta = 0.17$; $p \leq 0.003$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in affective commitment. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to organisation retention variable contributes the most in explaining the variance in the affective commitment variable.

A percentage of small practical effect (R^2 = 13%) of the variance in normative commitment is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation (β = 0.39; $p \leq 0.000$) and supervisor support (β = -0.15; $p \leq 0.029$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in normative commitment. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to the organisation retention variable contributed the most in explaining the variance in the continuance commitment variable.

A percentage of large practical effect (R^2 = 41%) of the variance in continuance commitment is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation (β = 0.39; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities (β = 0.25; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in continuance commitment. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to organisation and career opportunities retention variables contributed the most in explaining the continuance commitment variable.

Table 3.7

Multiple regression analyses: retention factors(independent variables) and organisation commitment (dependent variables) (N=206).

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	Adjusted	R	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.Error	β				R square		Tolerance	VIF
Total organisational commitment (Constant)	1.93	0.16		11.65	0.000***	82.31***	0.44+++	0.67		
Commitment to organisation	0.31	0.03	0.56	9.50	0.000***				0.76	1.31
Career opportunities	0.13	0.04	0.17	2.90	0.004**				0.76	1.31
Affective commitment (Constant)	1.49	0.25		5.94	0.000***	45.9***	0.40+++	0.63		
Commitment to organisation	0.26	0.04	0.43	6.69	0.000***				0.70	1.41
Career opportunities	0.18	0.05	0.20	3.28	0.001**				0.76	1.31
Job characteristics	0.14	0.04	0.17	2.96	0.003**				0.88	1.12

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	Adjusted	R	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.Error	β				R square		Tolerance	VIF
Normative commitment (Constant)	3.10	0.27		11.29	0.000***	15.9***	0.13+	0.36		
Commitment to organisation	0.28	0.05	0.39	5.64	0.000***				0.86	1.16
Supervisor support	-0.13	0.06	-0.15	-2.19	0.029*				0.86	1.16
Continuance commitment (Constant)	1.03	0.24		4.29	0.000***	71.9***	0.41+++	0.64		
Commitment to organisation	0.39	0.04	0.50	8.14	0.000***				0.76	1.31
Career opportunities	0.25	0.06	0.23	3.73	0.000***				0.76	1.31

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

+$R^2 \leq 0.12$ (small practical effect size); ++ $R^2 \geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect size); +++ $R^2 \geq 0.26$ (large practical effect size)

3.3.3.2 Multiple regression analyses: other retention factors (independent variables) and commitment to organisation retention factor (dependent variable).

Table 3.8 indicates that the regression model explains a large ($R^2 \geq 0.32$) practical effect percentage of variance in the dependent variable (Cohen, 1992). A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 32\%$) of the variance in the commitment to organisation retention factor is explained by the regression model. The career opportunities ($\beta = 0.32$; $p \leq 0.000$), job characteristics ($\beta = 0.25$; $p \leq 0.000$), work/life balance ($\beta = 0.16$; $p \leq 0.008$) and training and development opportunities ($\beta = 0.16$; $p \leq 0.027$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in the commitment to organisation retention factor. The beta-weights indicate that career opportunities and job characteristics contributed the most in explaining the variance in the commitment to organisation retention factor variable.

Table 3.8

Multiple regression analyses: other retention factors (independent variables) and commitment to organisation retention factor (dependent variables) (N=206).

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	Adjusted R square	R	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.Error	β						Tolerance	VIF
Commitment to organisation retention factor (Constant)	-1.41	0.50		-0.28	0.000***	25.8***	0.32+++	0.58		
Career opportunities	0.46	0.10	0.32	4.59	0.000***				0.64	1.54
Job characteristics	0.34	0.08	0.25	4.30	0.000***				0.91	1.09
Work/life balance	0.16	0.06	0.16	2.69	0.008**				0.93	1.07
Training and development opportunities	0.17	0.08	0.16	2.22	0.027*				0.63	1.58

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

+$R^2 \leq 0.12$ (small practical effect size); ++ $R^2 \geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect size); +++ $R^2 \geq 0.26$ (large practical effect size)

3.3.3.3 Multiple regression analyses: retention factors (independent variables) and perceived job embeddedness (dependent variables).

Table 3.9 indicates that the regression models explain a large ($R^2 \geq 0.26$) practical effect percentage of variance in the dependent variable (Cohen, 1992). A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 63\%$) of the variance in total perceived job embeddedness is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation ($\beta = 0.38$; $p \leq 0.000$), training and development opportunities ($\beta = 0.24$; $p \leq 0.000$), job characteristics ($\beta = 0.20$; $p \leq 0.000$) and career opportunities ($\beta = 0.23$; $p \leq 0.000$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in perceived job embeddedness. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to organisation contributed the most in explaining the variance in the perceived job embeddedness variables.

A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 47\%$) of the variance in organisational fit embeddedness is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation ($\beta = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.000$), training and development opportunities ($\beta = 0.24$; $p \leq 0.000$), job characteristics ($\beta = 0.23$; $p \leq 0.000$) and supervisor support ($\beta = 0.12$; $p \leq 0.035$) retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in organisational fit. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to organisation contributed the most in explaining the variance in the organisational fit embeddedness variables.

A percentage of large practical effect ($R^2 = 56\%$) of the variance in organisational sacrifice embeddedness is explained by the regression model. The commitment to organisation ($\beta = 0.37$; $p \leq 0.000$), career opportunities ($\beta = 0.26$; $p \leq 0.000$), training and development opportunities ($\beta = 0.22$; $p \leq 0.000$) and job characteristics ($\beta = 0.13$; $p \leq 0.005$) of the retention factor variables contributed significantly to the variance in organisational sacrifice. The beta-weights indicate that commitment to organisation and career opportunities contributed the most in explaining the variance in the organisational sacrifice embeddedness variables.

Table 3.9

Multiple regression analyses: retention factors (independent variables) and perceived job embeddedness (dependent variables) (N=206).

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	Adjusted	R	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.Error	β				R square		Tolerance	VIF
Total perceived job embeddedness (Constant)	1.01	0.19		5.18	0.000***	86.1***	0.63+++	0.79		
Commitment to organisation	0.23	0.03	0.38	7.49	0.000***				0.68	1.46
Training and development opportunities	0.16	0.03	0.24	4.50	0.000***				0.62	1.58
Job characteristics	0.16	0.03	0.20	4.44	0.000***				0.88	1.12
Career opportunities	0.20	0.04	0.23	4.18	0.000***				0.58	1.70

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	t	p	F	Adjusted	R	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.Error	β				R square		Tolerance	VIF
Organisational fit (Constant)	1.92	0.23		8.32	0.000***	45.1***	0.47+++	0.69		
Commitment to organisation	0.21	0.03	0.34	5.68	0.000***				0.73	1.36
Training and development opportunities	0.16	0.04	0.24	4.10	0.000***				0.73	1.35
Job characteristics	0.19	0.04	0.23	4.26	0.000***				0.83	1.19
Supervisor support	0.09	0.04	0.12	2.12	0.035*				0.73	1.35
Organisational sacrifice	0.38	0.24		1.57	0.000***	67.5***	0.56+++	0.75		
Commitment to organisation	0.26	0.04	0.37	6.72	0.000***				0.68	1.46
Career opportunities	0.26	0.06	0.26	4.34	0.000***				0.58	1.70
Training and development opportunities	0.17	0.04	0.22	3.84	0.000***				0.62	1.58
Job characteristics	0.13	0.04	0.13	0.13	0.005**				0.88	1.12

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$;   + $R^2 \leq 0.12$ (small practical effect size) ; ++ $R^2 \geq 0.13 \leq 0.25$ (medium practical effect size); +++ $R^2 \geq 0.26$ (large practical effect size)

3.3.4 Integration: relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness

As illustrated in figures 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16, the results indicated a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Strong positive relationships are reflected in figures 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 with a **purple** line, a medium positive relationship in **pink**, a weak positive relationship in **orange** and a weak negative relationship in **red**. As illustrated in figure 3.14, significant positive correlations existed between the organisational commitment and retention factor variables, with the exception of the work/life balance retention factor that reflected no significant relationship with the organisational commitment variables.

Strong positive correlations were observed between affective commitment and the commitment to organisation retention factor. Another strong positive correlation was also observed between continuance commitment and the commitment to organisation retention factor. Moderate positive correlations were found between affective commitment and compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support and career opportunities. Normative commitment was found to correlate moderately and positively with the commitment to organisation retention factor. Continuance commitment indicated moderate and positive correlations with compensation, training and development opportunities and career opportunities. Finally, a weak significant correlation was found between normative commitment and compensation. Weak significant correlations were also indicated between continuance commitment and, job characteristics and supervisor support retention factor dimensions.
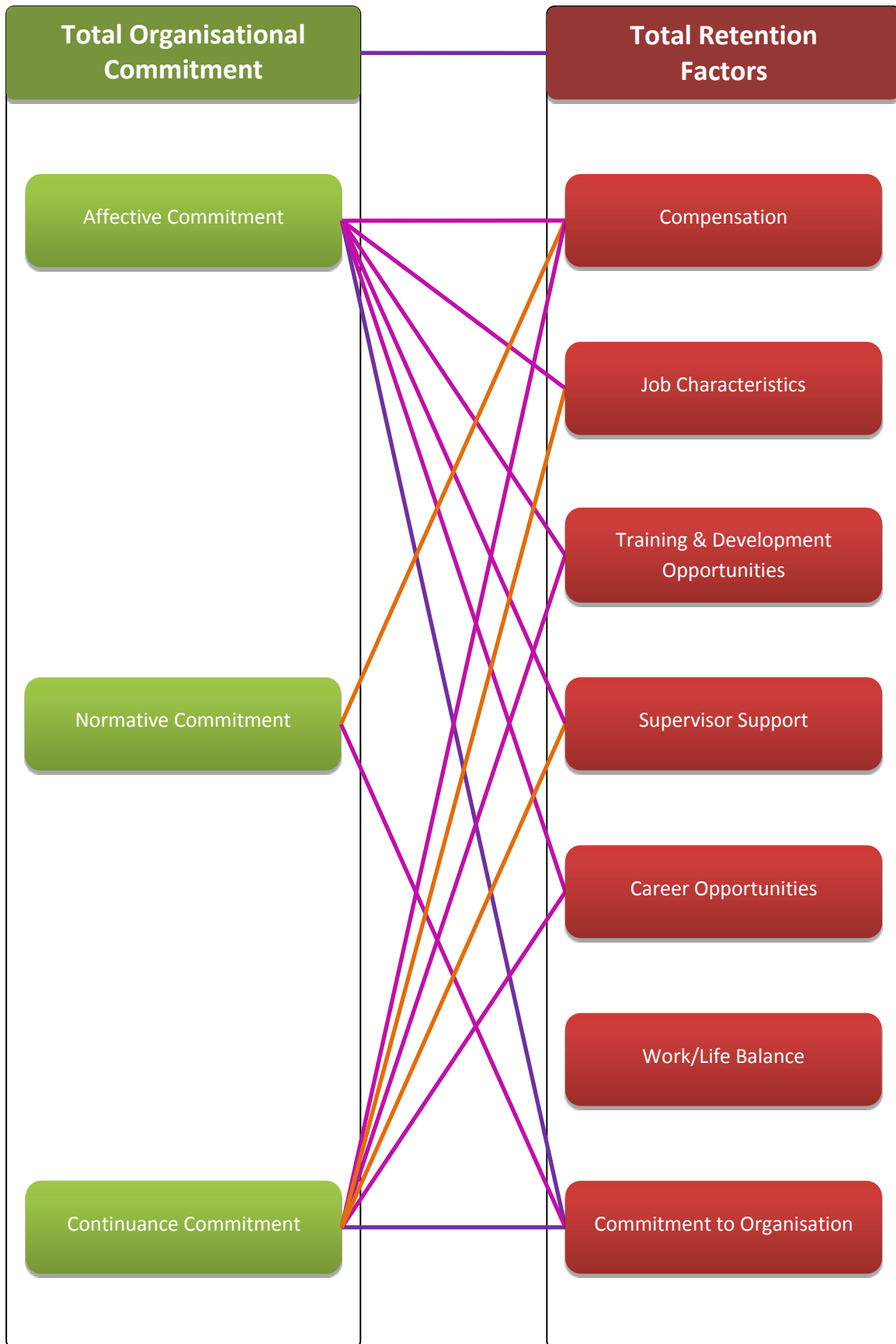
Figure 3.14. Empirical relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors.

As illustrated in figure 3.15, significant positive correlations existed between the organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness dimensions. Strong positive correlations were found between affective commitment and person-job fit, person-organisation-fit, person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice embeddedness dimensions. Continuance commitment was found to correlate strong and positively with the person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice embeddedness variables. Normative commitment was found to correlate moderately and positively with the person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice embeddedness variables. Continuance commitment indicated moderate and positive correlations with the person-job fit and person-organisation fit embeddedness variables. Finally, a weak significant correlation was found between the normative commitment and total organisation fit embeddedness variables.
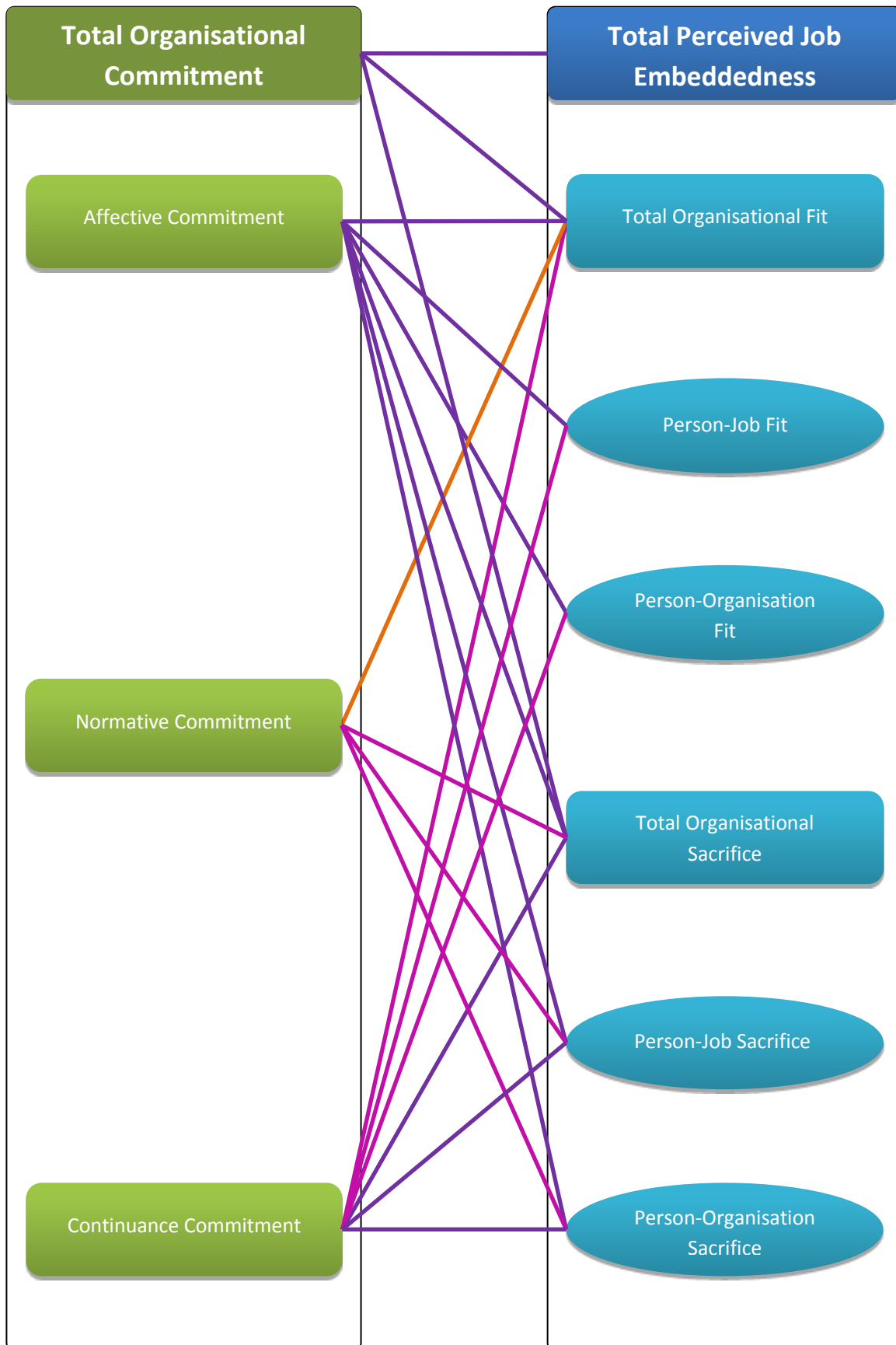
Figure 3.15. Empirical relationship between organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness.

As illustrated in figure 3.16, significant positive correlations existed between the retention factors and perceived job embeddedness variables, with the exception of the work/life balance which did not have a significant relationship with perceived job embeddedness.

Strong positive correlations were found between compensation and person-organisation fit, person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice. Training and development opportunities were found to correlate strongly and positively with person-job sacrifice. A strong positive correlation was also found between career opportunities and person-job sacrifice. Strong positive correlations were also found between the commitment to organisation and person-job fit, person-organisation fit, person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice variables.

Moderate positive correlations were found between compensation and person-job fit embeddedness. Job characteristics were found to correlate moderately and positively with the person-organisation fit and person-job sacrifice variables. Training and development opportunities had moderate and positive correlations with the person-job fit, person-organisation fit and person-organisation sacrifice variables. Supervisor support was found to correlate moderately and positively with the person-job fit, person-organisation fit and person-job sacrifice variables. Career opportunities indicated moderate and positive correlations with the person-job fit, person-organisation fit and person-organisation sacrifice variables. Finally, weak significant correlations were found between job characteristics and person-organisation sacrifice. Weak significant correlations were found between supervisor support and person-organisation sacrifice.
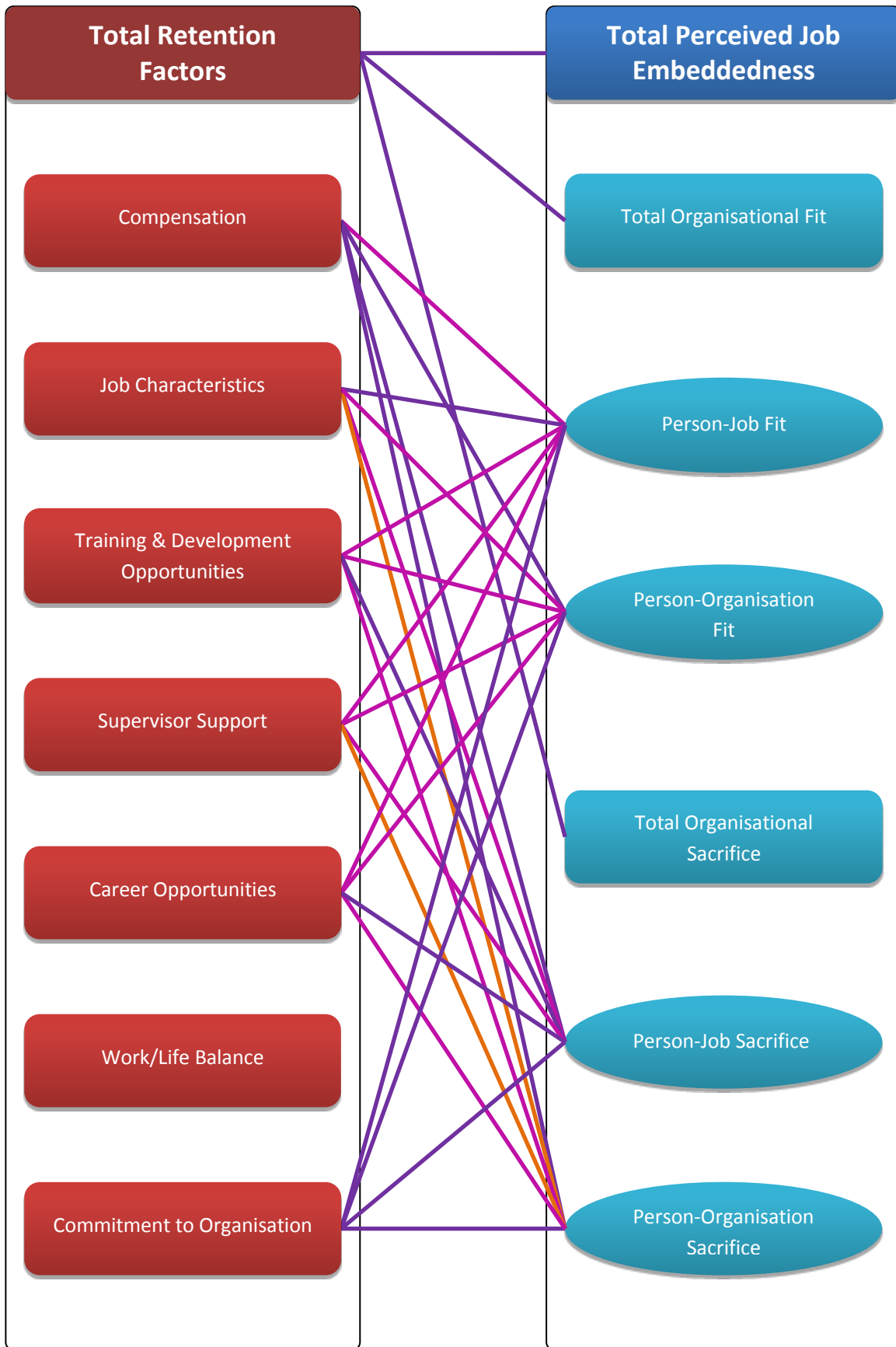
Figure 3.16. Empirical relationship between retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

As illustrated in figure 3.17, retention factors (independent variables) predicted organisational commitment (dependent variables). Total organisational commitment was predicted by the commitment to organisation retention factor and career opportunities (large practical effect size). Affective commitment was predicted by commitment to organisation retention factor, career opportunities and job characteristics (large practical effect size). Normative commitment was predicted by commitment to the organisation and supervisor support (with a small practical effect size). Continuance commitment was predicted by the commitment to organisation retention factor and career opportunities (large practical effect size).
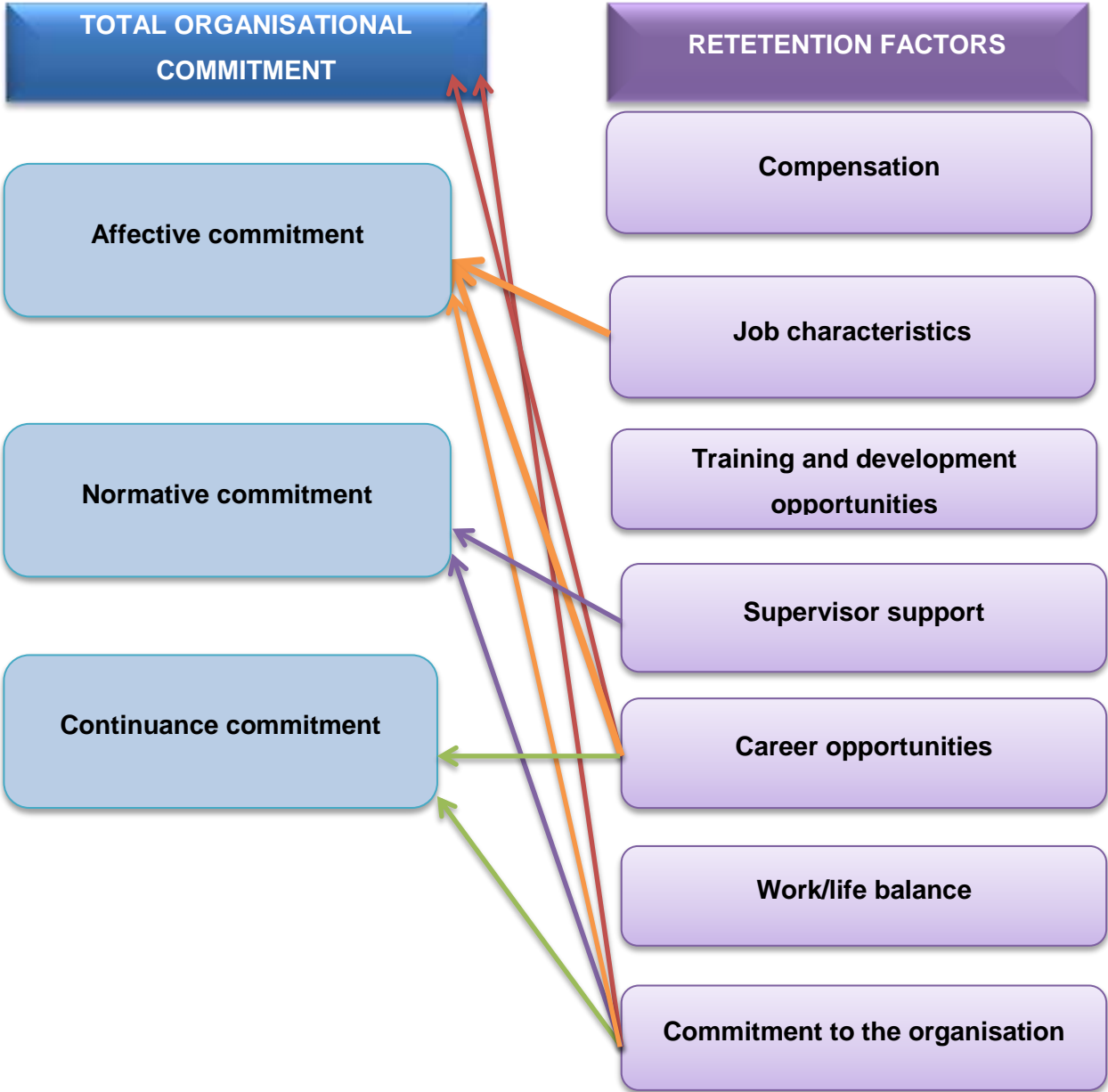
Figure 3.17. Summary of retention factors (independent variables) that predicted organisational commitment (dependent variables).

As illustrated in figure 3.18, other retention factors (independent variables) predicted the commitment to organisation retention factor (dependent variable). Commitment to the organisation retention factor was predicted by career opportunities, job characteristics, work/life balance and training and development opportunities (large practical effect size).
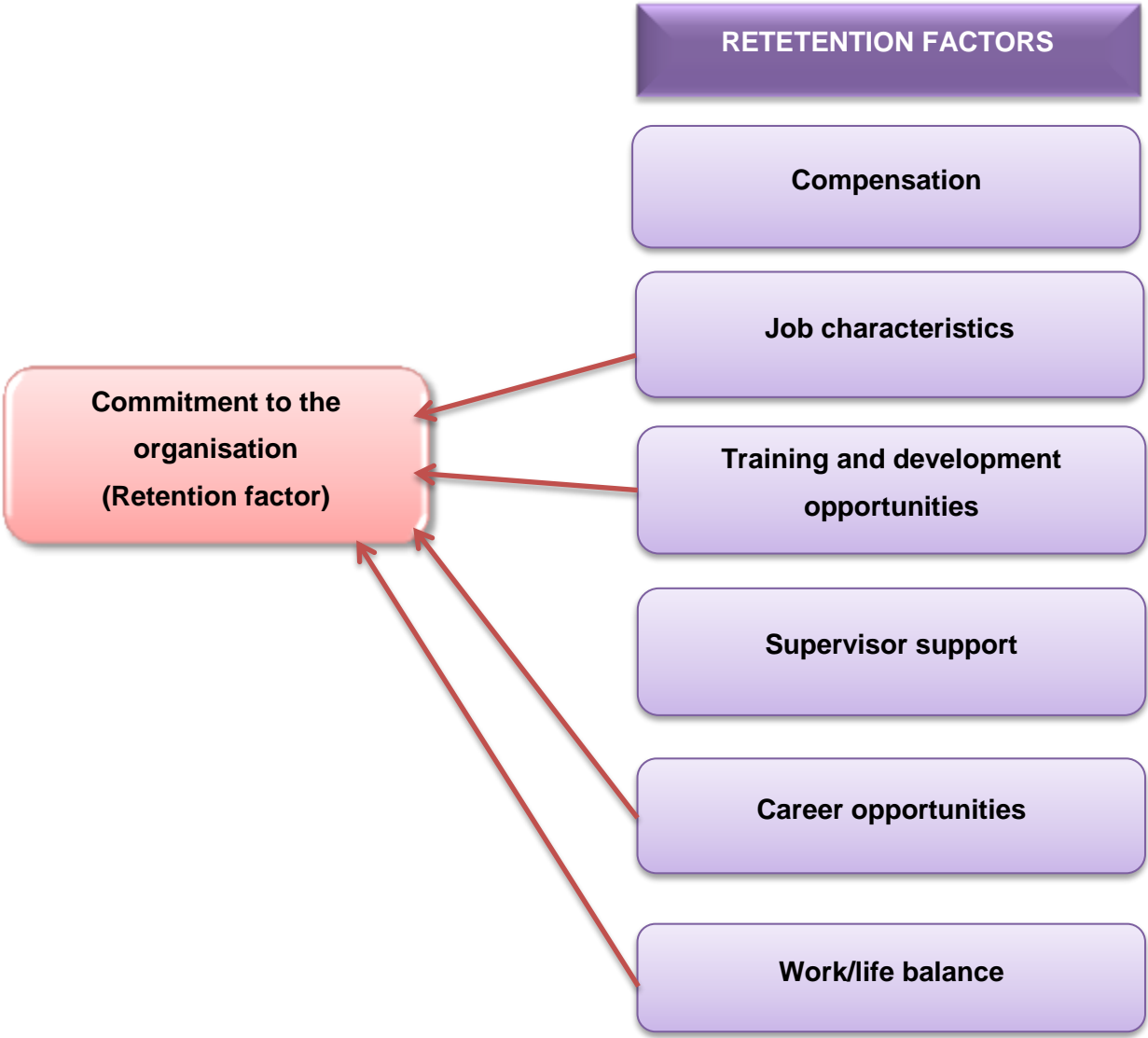
Figure 3.18. Summary of retention factors (independent variables) that predicted commitment to the organisation retention factor (dependent variable).

As illustrated in figure 3.19, retention factors (independent variables) predicted perceived job embeddedness (dependent variables). Total perceived job embeddedness was predicted by commitment to the organisation retention factor, training and development opportunities, job characteristics and career opportunities (large practical effect size). Organisational fit was predicted by commitment to the organisation retention factor, training and development opportunities, job characteristics and supervisor support (large practical effect size).

Organisational sacrifice was predicted by commitment to the organisation retention factor, career opportunities, training and development opportunities and job characteristics (large practical effect size).
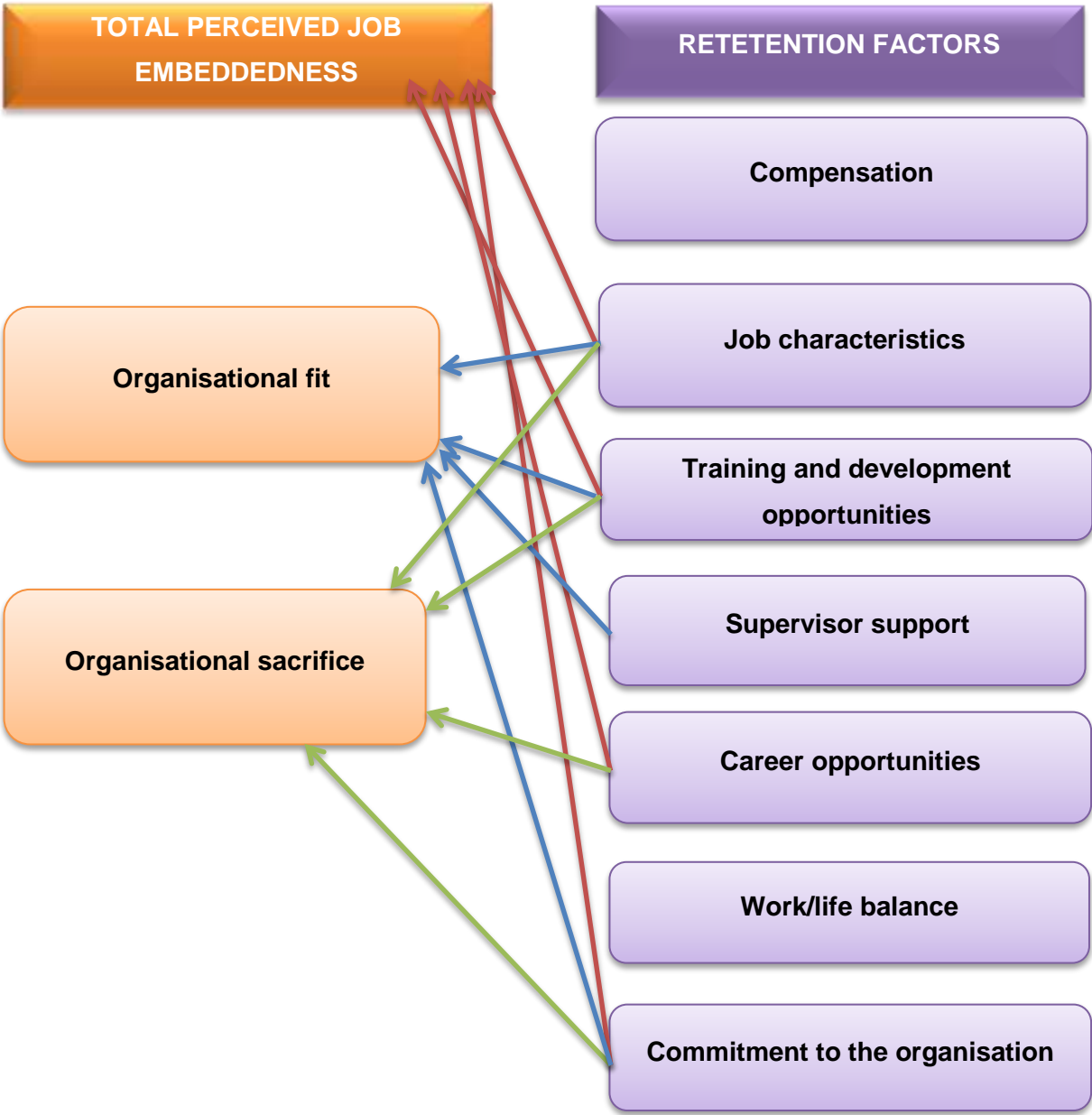
Figure 3.19.   Summary of retention factors (independent variables) that predicted perceived job embeddedness (dependent variables).

3.3.5   Inferential statistics: tests for significant mean differences

Differences between gender was tested by means of the independent samples t-test. In terms of the means and standard deviations, significant differences were identified within and between the gender groups at the levels of $p \leq 0.01$ and $p \leq 0.05$.

Table 3.10 shows that significant differences existed between males and females. Females appear to score significantly lower than men in terms of affective commitment (*M* = 3.90 versus *M* = 4.18), career opportunities (*M* = 3.48 versus *M* = 3.91), person-organisation fit (*M* = 4.68 versus *M* = 4.97) and total perceived job embeddedness (*M* = 4.04 versus *M* = 4.34) at the *p* ≤ 0.05 confidence limit. However, the differences were small in magnitude (d ≤ 0.3; η^2 ≤ 39%).

Table 3.10

Significant differences between gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Affective commitment (OCS)	Male	56	4.18	0.83	0.04*	0.27	0.24
	Female	150	3.90+	0.91			
Career opportunities (RFS)	Male	56	3.91	1.00	0.00**	0.38	0.39
	Female	150	3.48+	0.98			
Person-organisation fit (RFS)	Male	56	4.97	0.84	0.02*	0.31	0.00
	Female	150	4.68+	0.88			
Total perceived job embeddedness (JES)	Male	56	4.34	0.83	0.03*	0.30	0.26
	Female	150	4.04+	0.88			

*** *p* ≤ 0.001; ** *p* ≤ 0.01; * *p* ≤ 0.05; Lower mean+

3.3.5.2 Age

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between age groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results in Table 3.11 indicate that the younger participants (17 – 29 years) scored significantly lower than their older counterparts on job characteristics. The difference between the groups are moderate in magnitude (d = 0.65; η^2 = 45%).

Table 3.11

Significant differences between age groups.

Variable	Age group	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Job characteristics (RFS)	17-29 years	56	3.96+	1.21	3.04	4	0.03*	0.65	0.45
	30-39 years	150	4.76	0.94					
	40-49 years	56	4.57	1.08					
	50+ years	150	4.51	1.12					

*** $p \le 0.001$; ** $p \le 0.01$; * $p \le 0.05$; Lower mean+

3.3.5.3 Race groups

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between ethnic groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results in Table 3.12 indicate significant differences between the race groups with regards to compensation ($p \le 0.003$), job characteristics ($p \le 0.039$) and work/life balance ($p \le 0.000$). White respondents ($M = 3.81$) scored significantly higher on the compensation retention factor variable. Asian respondents ($M = 4.78$) scored significantly higher on the job characteristics retention factor variable. Finally, African respondents ($M = 4.61$) scored significantly higher on work/life balance retention factor variable. The observed differences were moderate in magnitude (d $\ge$ 0.51 $\le$ 0.63; $\eta^2 \ge$ 39% $\le$ 96%).

Table 3.12

Significant differences between race groups.

Variable	Ethnic groups	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Compensation (RFS)	White	109	3.81+	1.16	4.86	202	0.00**	0.63	0.76
	African	27	3.08	1.13					
	Coloured	46	3.35	1.17					
	Asian	24	3.13	1.12					
Job characteristics (RFS)	White	109	4.66	1.07	2.84	202	0.03*	0.51	0.39
	African	27	4.23	1.16					
	Coloured	46	4.24	1.08					
	Asian	24	4.78+	0.74					
Work/life balance (RFS)	White	109	3.58	1.45	6.60	202	0.000***	0.63	0.96
	African	27	4.61+	1.16					
	Coloured	46	4.39	1.07					
	Asian	24	4.11	1.54					

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$;Higher mean+

3.3.5.4 Marital status

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between marital status groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The widowed category for marital status was excluded from the analysis since the base size ($N = 6$) was so small. The results in Table 3.13 indicate significant differences between the marital groups with regards to affective commitment ($p \leq 0.05$), compensation ($p \leq 0.05$), job characteristics ($p \leq 0.01$), person-job fit ($p \leq 0.05$) and person-job sacrifice ($p \leq 0.05$). Married respondents scored significantly higher than on affective commitment ($M = 4.11$), compensation ($M = 3.72$), job characteristics ($M = 4.68$) and person-job sacrifice ($M = 3.77$). On the other hand, single

respondents scored significantly higher on person-job fit ($M = 4.57$). Divorced respondents scored significantly lower on affective commitment than the married group. The differences were small to moderate in magnitude (d ≥ 0.37 - ≤ 0.61; η^2 ≥ 3% ≤ 37%).

Table 3.13

Significant differences between marital status groups.

Variable	Marital status	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Affective commitment (OCS)	Single	49	3.75	0.76	4.02	202	0.05*	0.47	0.37
	Married	122	4.11+	0.92					
	Divorced	28	3.72	0.90					
Compensation (RFS)	Single	49	3.28	1.18	3.33	202	0.05*	0.37	0.030
	Married	122	3.72+	1.14					
	Divorced	28	3.27	1.25					
Job characteristics (RFS)	Single	49	4.40	1.08	4.91	202	0.01**	0.61	0.047
	Married	122	4.68+	0.99					
	Divorced	28	4.04	1.11					
Person-job fit (JES)	Single	49	4.57+	0.79	3.14	202	0.05*	0.50	0.01
	Married	122	4.54	0.87					
	Divorced	28	3.82	1.02					
Person-job sacrifice (JES)	Single	49	3.42	0.98	3.27	202	0.05*		0.02
	Married	122	3.77+	1.04					
	Divorced	28	3.30	0.97					

*** $p ≤ 0.001$; ** $p ≤ 0.01$; * $p ≤ 0.05$; Higher mean+

3.3.5.5 Tenure

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between tenure groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results in Table 3.14 indicate significant differences between the tenure groups with regards to affective commitment ($p \leq$ 0.01), normative commitment ($p \leq$ 0.01), total commitment ($p \leq$ 0.01), compensation ($p \leq$ 0.05), job characteristics ($p \leq$ 0.05), commitment to organisation ($p \leq$ 0.01), person-organisation fit ($p \leq$ 0.05) and total perceived job embeddedness ($p \leq$ 0.05).

Respondents working for the organisation for fifteen years or longer scored significantly higher on affective commitment ($M = 4.36$), normative commitment ($M = 4.20$), total organisational commitment ($M = 4.17$), compensation ($M = 4.14$), person-organisation fit ($M = 5.02$) and total perceived job embeddedness ($M = 4.43$). Finally, respondents working for the organisation between eleven and fifteen years scored significantly higher on job characteristics ($M = 4.93$) and commitment to organisation ($M = 5.01$), retention factor variables. The differences were small to moderate in magnitude (d $\geq 0.32 \leq 0.70$; $\eta^2 \geq 1\% \leq$ 7%).

Table 3.14

Significant differences between tenure groups.

Variable	Tenure	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Affective commitment (OCS)	Less than 5yrs	93	3.76	0.92	4.67	204	0.01**	0.65	0.06
	6-10yrs	47	3.97	0.82					
	11-15yrs	44	4.25	0.84					
	15+yrs	22	4.36+	0.84					
Normative commitment (OCS)	Less than 5yrs	93	3.62	1.06	3.74	204	0.01**	0.58	0.05
	6-10yrs	47	3.65	0.91					
	11-15yrs	44	4.08	0.93					
	15+yrs	22	4.20+	0.97					
Total organisational commitment (OCS)	Less than 5yrs	93	3.67	0.86	4.43	204	0.01**	0.32	0.06
	6-10yrs	47	3.75	0.64					
	11-15yrs	44	4.07	0.66					
	15+yrs	22	4.17+	0.84					
Compensation (RFS)	Less than 5yrs	93	3.34	1.19	2.85	202	0.05*	0.70	0.04
	6-10yrs	47	3.55	1.08					
	11-15yrs	44	3.60	1.24					
	15+yrs	22	4.14+	1.09					

Variable	Tenure	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Job characteristics (RFS)	Less than 5yrs	93	4.32	1.12	3.44	204	0.05*	0.26	0.04
	6-10yrs	47	4.50	0.95					
	11-15yrs	44	4.93+	0.91					
	15+yrs	22	4.60	1.17					
Commitment to organisation (RFS)	Less than 5yrs	93	4.14	1.58	5.28	204	0.01**	0.61	0.07
	6-10yrs	47	4.09	1.36					
	11-15yrs	44	5.01+	0.94					
	15+yrs	22	4.80	1.26					
Person-organisation fit (JES)	Less than 5yrs	93	4.65	0.90	2.91	204	0.05*	0.42	0.01
	6-10yrs	47	4.61	0.82					
	11-15yrs	44	5.00	0.80					
	15+yrs	22	5.02+	0.95					
Total perceived job embeddedness (JES)	Less than 5yrs	93	3.98	0.89	3.02	204	0.05*	0.48	0.04
	6-10yrs	47	4.05	0.80					
	11-15yrs	44	4.36	0.83					
	15+yrs	22	4.43+	0.96					

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; Higher mean+

3.3.5.6 Job level

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between the tenure groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Job level is perhaps the demographic variable that reflects the most differences between the groups. The results in Table 3.15 indicate significant differences between the job level groups with regards to

compensation ($p \leq 0.01$), job characteristics ($p \leq 0.000$), supervisor support ($p \leq 0.05$), work/life balance ($p \leq 0.000$), total organisation fit ($p \leq 0.05$), total organisation sacrifice ($p \leq 0.01$), person-job sacrifice ($p \leq 0.01$) and total perceived job embeddedness ($p \leq 0.01$). The continuance commitment score ($p \leq 0.05$) is significantly different between job levels. Although the other commitment dimensions are not significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence levels, the values are just above this cut-off and would be significant at the $p \leq 0.01$ confidence levels, a slightly less strict cut-off score. The results in Table 3.15 indicate significant differences in job level groups just above the cut off score at the $p \leq 0.01$ confidence level, with regards to affective commitment ($p \leq 0.10$), normative commitment ($p \leq 0.10$), total organisational commitment ($p \leq 0.10$), person-job fit ($p \leq 0.10$) and person-organisation fit ($p \leq 0.10$).

Respondents on the senior management level scored significantly higher on continuance commitment ($M = 3.95$), compensation ($M = 4.14$), job characteristics ($M = 5.15$), supervisor support ($M = 4.58$), organisation fit ($M = 5.05$), organisation sacrifice ($M = 4.14$), person-job sacrifice ($M = 4.14$) and total perceived job embeddedness ($M = 4.51$). Finally, respondents on the operational level scored significantly higher on work/life balance ($M = 4.32$). The magnitude of the differences was small ($\eta^2 \geq 1\% \leq 16\%$).

Table 3.15

Significant differences between job level groups.

Variable	Job level	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Affective commitment (OCS)	Senior Management	34	4.29+	0.72	2.56	202	0.10	0.02
	Management level	30	3.94	0.81				
	Operational level	141	3.90	0.93				
Normative commitment (OCS)	Senior Management	34	3.83	0.84	2.69	202	0.10	0.02
	Management level	30	3.39	1.15				
	Operational level	141	3.86+	1.01				

Variable	Job level	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Continuance commitment (OCS)	Senior Management	34	3.95+	1.03	3.03	202	0.05*	0.02
	Management level	30	3.28	1.03				
	Operational level	141	3.71	1.13				
Total organisational commitment (OCS)	Senior Management	34	4.03+	0.59	2.95	202	0.05*	0.02
	Management level	30	3.56	0.75				
	Operational level	141	3.83	0.83				
Compensation (RFS)	Senior Management	34	4.14+	1.23	6.60	202	0.01**	0.06
	Management level	30	3.68	1.25				
	Operational level	141	3.35	1.12				
Job characteristics (RFS)	Senior Management	34	5.15+	0.66	15.5	202	0.000***	0.13
	Management level	30	5.06	0.90				
	Operational level	141	4.26	1.08				
Supervisor support (RFS)	Senior Management	34	4.58+	0.97	3.12	202	0.05*	0.03
	Management level	30	4.46	1.29				
	Operational level	141	4.09	1.17				
Work/life balance (RFS)	Senior Management	34	2.81	1.38	20.2	202	0.000***	0.16
	Management level	30	3.56	1.29				
	Operational level	141	4.32+	1.27				

Variable	Job level	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Organisation fit (JES)	Senior Management	34	5.05+	0.75	3.18	202	0.05*	0.03
	Management level	30	4.72	0.69				
	Operational level	141	4.63	0.93				
Person-job fit (JES)	Senior Management	34	4.94	0.75	2.70	202	0.10	0.02
	Management level	30	4.57	0.69				
	Operational level	141	4.32	0.93				
Person-organisation fit (JES)	Senior Management	34	5.07+	0.75	2.90	202	0.10	0.02
	Management level	30	4.75	0.69				
	Operational level	141	4.68	0.93				
Organisation sacrifice (JES)	Senior Management	34	4.14+	0.94	4.29	202	0.01*	0.04
	Management level	30	3.77	1.03				
	Operational level	141	3.59	0.99				
Person-job sacrifice (JES)	Senior Management	34	4.14+	0.94	5.92	202	0.01**	0.06
	Management level	30	3.72	1.03				
	Operational level	141	3.47	0.99				
Total perceived job embeddedness (JES)	Senior Management	34	4.51+	0.78	4.59	202	0.01**	0.04
	Management level	30	4.16	0.83				
	Operational level	141	4.02	0.88				

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; Higher mean+

3.3.5.7 Length in current position

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between length in current position groups were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results in Table 3.16 indicate significant difference of length between the current position groups with regards to career opportunities ($p \leq 0.05$). Respondents working for less than a year in their current position scored significantly higher on career opportunities ($M = 3.98$). The magnitude of the differences was small ($\eta^2 = 1\%$).

Table 3.16

Significant differences between length of employment in current position.

Variable	Length of employment in current position	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Career opportunities (RFS)	Less than a year	44	3.92+	0.83	3.12	201	0.05*	0.01
	1-2 years	52	3.71	0.97				
	3-5 years	63	3.53	1.08				
	6-10 years	36	3.31	0.93				
	+11 years	11	3.03	1.19				

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; Higher mean+

3.3.5.8 The number of work groups' respondents involved with at work

The differences in mean scores on the measurement scales between the number of work groups that respondents are involved with at work were tested by means of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results in Table 3.17 indicate significant differences between the number of work groups with regards to organisation fit ($p \leq 0.05$), person-job fit ($p \leq 0.05$) and total perceived job embeddedness ($p \leq 0.05$).

Respondents who are involved with two to five work groups scored significantly higher on organisation fit ($M = 4.92$), person-job fit ($M = 4.96$), and total perceived job embeddedness ($M = 4.32$). The magnitude of the differences was small ($\eta^2 = 3\%$).

Table 3.17

Significant differences between the number of work groups that respondents are involved with at work.

Variable (JES)	Number of work groups	N	Mean	SD	F	df	Sig. level (2-tailed)	Partial Eta Squared η^2
Organisation fit	0-1	108	4.58	0.91	3.54	203	0.05*	0.03
	2-5	75	4.92+	0.76				
	6+	22	4.66	1.00				
Person-job fit	0-1	108	4.63	1.54	3.43	203	0.05*	0.03
	2-5	75	4.96+	1.10				
	6+	22	4.70	1.79				
Total perceived job embeddedness	0-1	109	4.01	0.88	3.11	203	0.05*	0.03
	2-5	75	4.32+	0.75				
	6+	22	4.04	1.15				

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$; Higher mean+

An overview is provided in Table 3.18 of the source of significant differences within the biographical groups on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Table 3.18

Summary overview of the source of significant differences within the biographical groups on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Biographical group	Organisational commitment Significant differences		Retention factors Significant differences		Perceived job embeddedness Significant differences	
Gender Females Males	Low* High*	Affective	Low* High*	Career opportunities	Low* High*	Person-organisation fit & total perceived job embeddedness
Age group 17-29 years 30-39 years 30-49 years 50+years	None None None None		Low* High* High* High*	Job characteristics	None None None None	
Race White African Coloured Asian	None None None None		High* High* Low* High*	Compensation Work/life balance Job characteristics	None None None None	
Marital status Single Married Divorced	Low* High* Low*	Affective	Low* High* Low*	Compensation & job characteristics	High* High* Low*	Person-job fit Person-job sacrifice
Tenure Less than 5yrs 6-10 years 11-15 years 15+ years	Low* Low* Low* High*	Affective, normative & total OC	Low* Low* High* High*	Job characteristics & commitment to organisation compensation	Low* Low* Low* High*	Person-organisation fit & total perceived job embeddedness
Job Level Senior management Management Operational	High* Low* High*	Affective, continuance & total OC Normative	High* Low* High*	Compensation job characteristics & supervisor support Work/life balance	High* Low* Low*	Organisation fit, sacrifice & total perceived job embeddedness

*p ≤ 0.05 (two tailed)

3.3.6   Decisions regarding the research hypotheses

The following decisions with regards to the hypotheses were made, based on the results: the $p \leq 0.05$ (5% level) confidence level was used as a criterion for accepting the hypotheses or rejecting the null hypotheses. As indicated in Table 3.17, the null hypotheses (H01: No

statistically significant positive relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness; and H02: Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will not differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness) are rejected in instances where the criterion cut-off (significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence level) was not met and the alternative hypotheses are accepted where the cut-off has been met. Overall, the results provide support for the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Overall, the results provide support for the hypothesis that gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will differ significantly regarding their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Table 3.19

Overview of decisions regarding the research hypotheses.

	Hypotheses	**Decision**
H1	There is a significant positive relationship between employees' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.	Accepted
H01	No statistically significant positive relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness	Rejected
H2	Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.	Accepted
H02	Employees from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will not differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness	Rejected

3.4   DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to explore the relationship between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The secondary objective was to determine whether individuals from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ with regard to their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

3.4.1   The biographical profile of the sample

The sampling method (purposive) used was dependent on the scarcity of skills as identified by the senior management in the Human Resources division of the company, and the willingness and availability of the participants for this study. The sample consisted of mostly White and female participants between the ages of 30 and 39 years old who were employed full time. The majority of participants were married and well qualified, possessing an undergraduate degree or higher level qualification. The higher qualification level of the sample makes sense when interpreted in the light of the fact that the sample consisted of medical and IT professionals. The majority of the sample indicated tenure of five years or less, which should perhaps be interpreted in the view of the younger age and higher qualification level of the sample. Individuals completing a degree after their secondary education may possibly enter the workforce only upon completion of their degree, or change jobs after completing their degree. Most of the participants worked at operational level.

Respondents worked mainly between three and five years in their current position. The majority of the participants' length of employment in the area of speciality was between 6 and ten years. Participants were mainly interacting with sixteen or more co-workers on a regular basis. The number of respondents with highly dependent co-workers was mainly between two and five colleagues. Finally, the majority of the participants were mainly involved in one or no work team.

3.4.2   The relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness

The results suggested that the participants who perceived that they had career mobility opportunities seemed to be more satisfied and committed to their jobs as opposed to the other participants. These employees might experience the need to stay with their current organisation due to the possible perceived costs involved in leaving the organisation.

Likewise, the results suggest that participants experiencing high levels of job satisfaction might be more committed to the organisation as opposed to the other participants. The findings of this study support those of Hay (2002) who reported that 22% of employees planning to leave the organisation were dissatisfied with advancement opportunities. This dissatisfaction was found to be an important factor in the emotional wellbeing of employees. Hausknecht, Rodda and Howard (2009) found that advancement opportunities as a retention factor doubled among supervisors (14%), increased again for managers (19%), and was highest for salaried/professional workers (30%), reaching a value that was more than four times as large as that reported by the hourly participants.

Overall, the results suggest that the participants' organisational commitment significantly related to their perceived job embeddedness. Strong positive relationships existed between the organisational commitment variables and the retention factor variables. With one exception, work/life balance (retention factor) did not reflect a relationship with the organisational commitment variables. Strong positive relationships existed between all the retention factors and the perceived job embeddedness variables. With one exception, work/life balance (retention factor) did not reflect a relationship with the perceived job embeddedness variables. Parkes and Langford (2008) found that highly engaged employees will sometimes sacrifice work/life balance to achieve organisational goals, especially if the organisation provides a supportive environment.

3.4.3 Significant differences between biographical variables

The present study explored broad trends regarding differences between various gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups in terms of their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. In terms of differences between the biographical groups, the results showed these differences to be practically small to moderate in magnitude. The differences in the gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups will be discussed in the following section.

3.4.3.1 Gender

The female participants displayed a lower level of affective commitment, person-organisation fit and total perceived job embeddedness. The females also displayed a lower preference for career opportunities. These findings suggest that the female participants experienced a lower level of emotional attachment to their organisation because they perceived a lower fit with the organisation and experienced lower levels of job embeddedness as opposed to their

male counterparts. Contrary to this study's findings, research by Coetzee *et al.* (2007) indicated no significant differences between organisational commitment and gender. In congruence, Metcalfe and Dick (2002) found males and females had equal levels of organisational commitment. Contrary to the findings of Döckel *et al.* (2006), the participants' satisfaction with their work/life balance did not relate significantly to their organisational commitment. This is an interesting finding when considering that the majority of the sample was represented by females and married participants. The higher levels of affective commitment and satisfaction with perceived career opportunities indicated by the male participants could be attributed to the notion that most workplaces do not recognise the need of females for career advancement and an emotionally supportive work environment (Martins & Coetzee, 2007). Nabi (2001) also found that females have a greater need for an emotionally supportive work environment as a source of career satisfaction. Research findings by Kidd and Smewing (2001) suggest a positive linear relationship between supervisor support and commitment for females in particular.

3.4.3.2 Age

Most of the research participants fell into the 30 to 39 year age group. The younger respondents aged between 17 to 29 years were significantly less satisfied with their job characteristics than the older age groups. This finding suggests that younger employees need more challenging work or variety in their jobs. Research by Coetzee and Schreuder (2008) suggests that individuals in their early adulthood life phase tend to prefer work situations in which they can be free of organisational constraints and restrictions, and also free to develop their professional competence, as far as possible. These individuals also tend to be active learners who require ongoing training and further development opportunities through on-the-job experiences that enable them to refine their talents and skills. Congruent with this study, Spector (2008) found that as individuals gets older they become more satisfied with their jobs, which may be as result of them having less interest in task variety as opposed to younger workers who find jobs with task variety unsatisfying.

3.4.3.3 Race

In terms of race groups, the African and coloured participants seemed to be the least satisfied with their compensation and the nature of their job and work tasks. These findings are in agreement with research by Martins and Coetzee (2007) and Martins and Roodt (2008), who found black employees to be more dissatisfied with their compensation. Research indicates compensation as a significant factor in talent retention (Döckel *et al.*,

2006; João, 2010; Lumley, 2009). Research findings by Keaveny and Inderrieden (2000) further suggest that when a job is more interesting, has greater job security, better benefits and opportunities for advancement than elsewhere in the industry, employees tend to be more satisfied with a given level of compensation. These findings are particularly important with regards to the current South African legislation (affirmative action and employment equity), where organisations compete against each other to attract, develop and retain black employees and women with scarce skills. The white participants seemed to be the least satisfied with their work/life balance. In agreement with this study, Coetzee *et al.* (2007) found whites to value work/life balance significantly more than their black counterparts. No significant differences were observed between the organisational commitment (Coetzee *et al.* 2007; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Lumley, 2009) or perceived job embeddedness levels of the various race groups.

3.4.3.4   Marital status

The married participants indicated significantly higher satisfaction levels on affective commitment, compensation, job characteristics and person-job sacrifice. This finding suggests that the married participants experienced higher levels of emotional attachment to the organisation. In addition, it appears that the married participants might have perceived that there was much to give up when leaving their current job and they enjoyed a variety of tasks or challenging work. Abelson (1987) found that individuals who are older, are married and have more tenure are more likely to stay than leave their organisation. In contrast, the single participants experienced significantly higher levels of person-job fit. This finding suggests that single participants experienced high levels of fit with their current job. However, the divorced participants experienced significantly lower levels of affective commitment and indicated lower satisfaction levels with compensation and job characteristics as opposed to the married participants. This finding suggests that the divorced participants experienced lower levels of emotional attachment to their organisation. In addition, the divorced participants indicated that they were not as satisfied with their compensation and job characteristics as were the single and married participants.

3.4.3.5   Tenure

The participants working for the organisation for less than five years experienced a significantly lower level of satisfaction on affective commitment than the other groups. This finding suggests that the longer individuals work for their organisation the more emotionally attached they might become to it. In terms of normative commitment it appears that the

longer the employee has worked for the organisation, the higher the level of normative commitment and total organisational commitment. This finding suggests that the longer the participants stayed at the organisation the more obliged they felt to stay at the organisation which in turn increased their overall commitment to the organisation.

The participants who had worked for the organisation longer than 15 years seemed significantly more satisfied with their compensation, person-organisation fit and total perceived job embeddedness, and indicated a higher level of commitment to the organisation. The findings suggests that the longer individuals work for the organisation, the higher their level of perceived fit with the organisation, the more embedded they seemed to become and the happier they seemed to feel about their compensation. The reason for this may be that individuals' compensation may increase over time when staying at the same organisation as a result of annual increases. Hom, Tsui, Wu, Lee, Zhang, Fu and Li (2009) state that individuals who feel strongly embedded may define their relationships with employers as longer term, while individuals who perceive their psychological contracts as relational may become more embedded in their organisations over time. Middle and late career workers are more concerned with job security and career stability than with career exploration; therefore high levels of embeddedness may be particularly satisfying for older employees (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Finally, the participants who had worked for the organisation for between 11 and 15 years indicated higher levels of satisfaction on their job characteristics than the other participants. This finding suggests that the longer individuals work for the organisation the more challenging the work and the more a variety of tasks may become part of their job description. This may be due to job promotions which can be achieved through years of service at the same organisation.

Similarly, Zacher and Frese's (2009) research findings indicate that the more decision possibilities workers have on the job, the more optimistically they perceived their future work opportunities. Job characteristics (complexity and control) moderate the relationship between age and remaining opportunities; accordingly, with increasing age, employees working in jobs high in complexity and control perceive more remaining opportunities than do their counterparts working in more restricted jobs. Zacher and Frese (2009) argue that it may be that jobs high in complexity and control allow older workers more compensation possibilities. Meyer and Allen (1997) also suggest that it can be expected that an employee's commitment can change over a period of time and then stabilise with tenure. These findings also seem to support research by Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), who found older employees to be

affectively and normatively more committed to their organisations than their younger counterparts. Being in the maintenance stage of their careers, these participants might have come to appreciate their continued membership in their respective organisations.

3.4.3.6 Job level

The participants on the senior management level had significantly higher satisfaction levels on continuance commitment, compensation, job characteristics, supervisor support, organisation fit, organisation sacrifice, person-job sacrifice and total perceived job embeddedness as opposed to other job level groups. The findings suggest that these participants experienced a higher level of fit with their organisation. In addition, the senior management participants seemed to experience a variety of challenging work. Individuals who hold jobs at higher levels in an organisation and have higher levels of education typically hold jobs that are more complex and that demand more innovation-related behaviour (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Organisations generally offer higher salaries and more benefits to senior job levels, which may be the reason why the senior management level participants seemed highly satisfied with their compensation. Furthermore, the senior management level participants seemed to perceive that they would have a lot to give up if they were to leave their job (person-job sacrifice) and organisation (organisation sacrifice). In agreement with these results, Holtom *et al.* (2006) state that the higher individuals perceive the cost of leaving their job and organisation, the more embedded the individual will be in terms of the job and the organisation.

The participants on the operational level reported higher satisfaction levels regarding their work–life balance. The finding seems to suggest that operational level individuals experience a greater balance in their work and personal lives as opposed to other job levels. It appears that operational level individuals may experience less overtime and fewer work demands and, thus less work stress. Consequently, it can make it easier to balance one's work and personal life.

The management level participants appeared to have slightly lower satisfaction levels overall on commitment, but they differ significantly from senior management with regard to their continuance commitment levels. These findings suggest that management level individuals may perceive that there are few costs involved when leaving the organisation as opposed to senior management level individuals. The senior management participants seemed significantly more satisfied with their compensation than the operational level employees.

This finding may be to the result of smaller salaries for lower level employees as opposed to senior level individuals. However, the senior management participants differed from operational level employees, although they did not differ from management level employees with regards to compensation. The operational level participants appeared significantly less satisfied than the management and senior management level participants with regards to their job characteristics. This finding may be a result of more variety and challenging work demands on senior job levels as opposed to operational job level work demands. In common with this study, other research studies have shown that both job and workplace characteristics influence turnover (McKnight *et al.*, 2009). McKnight *et al.* (2009) state that managers should make sure that IT jobs have skill variety since employees enjoy jobs with meaning and variation, and also jobs where feedback is provided.

In terms of both supervisor support and work/life balance, there appears to be a linear relationship between job level and satisfaction. This suggests that the higher the job level, the higher the satisfaction level. Senior management appeared most satisfied with these variables, management level less so and operational level employees the least satisfied. In agreement with these results, Frone, Yardley and Markel (1997) found that support from supervisors and co-workers appear to reduce work/life balance conflict primarily by reducing work distress and work overload.

The operational level participants experienced significantly lower satisfaction levels on organisational fit (although not on any one of the sub dimensions). This finding suggests that the operational level participants experienced lower levels of fit with their job or organisation. These participants also experienced low levels of satisfaction on organisational sacrifice and person-job sacrifice. This finding suggests that operational level participants might have experienced that they have less to give up when leaving their job and organisation as opposed to more senior job level individuals. Shaw, Delery, Jenkins and Gupta (1998) found that the more an employee gives up when leaving the organisation, the more difficult it is to sever employment with the organisation. Non-portable benefits like stock options or defined benefit pensions may involve sacrifices when leaving the organisation (Mallol *et al.*, 2007).

3.4.4 Conclusions: implications for practice

Overall it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Groups differing in gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level differ significantly in

their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

The findings of the study contribute valuable new knowledge regarding the relationships found between the core variables, and focus attention on the practical implications of retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in retaining satisfied and committed employees. The conclusions drawn from the results will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

The conclusions derived from the findings indicate that practitioners can benefit from understanding the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in order to inform talent retention practices. In the following chapter practical recommendations are made on the basis of the argument that satisfied and committed employees display increased job performance, remain attached to their organisation, and are more embedded in their job and organisation. Hence, detailed recommendations for talent retention practices will be provided in Chapter 4.

3.4.5   Limitations of the study

Only the core limitations will be discussed in the following section. Meanwhile, a comprehensive overview of all of the limitations identified will be provided in Chapter 4.

The sample did not represent the South African population in gender, age, race, marital status, tenure or job level groups, thereby reducing the power of this study and the potential to generalise the results to the diverse South African population. A random sampling method, as opposed to the purposive sampling method applied here, may have rendered more generalisable results.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of this study show potential for the analysis of the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, as well as differences between biographical groups' experiences of these constructs. This study may be utilised as a basis for understanding these relationships and differences in order to inform the formulation of effective retention strategies.

3.4.6   Recommendations for future research

Only the core recommendations will be focused on in this section, as the recommendations will be elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 4.

Owing to the limited scope of the study it is strongly recommended that further studies be undertaken in order to address this limitation. In addition, it is recommended that the environmental dimension of job embeddedness be included to add depth to the study, and provide a more holistic view of job embeddedness with regards to retention factors and organisational commitment.

3.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, core aspects of the literature and empirical study were discussed, the results of the study were interpreted by analysing the findings, conclusions were drawn, recommendations were presented and the limitations of the study were highlighted. Chapter 4 presents a more comprehensive discussion of the conclusions drawn, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for practical application of the findings.

CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from this research study. Chapter 4 also highlights the limitations of the literature review and the empirical results of the study, and presents recommendations for the practical application of the findings and for future research studies.

4.1   CONCLUSIONS

The following section focuses on the formulation of conclusions based on the literature review and the empirical study.

4.1.1   Conclusions regarding the literature review

There were three main aims of the literature review: Firstly, it was intended to critically explore the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Secondly, it attempted to determine whether individuals from different gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly with regard to their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Thirdly, it endeavoured to determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices. These general aims were accomplished by addressing and realising the specific aims of the study.

4.1.1.1 The first aim: Conceptualise organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness from the literature and determine the theoretical relationship between these variables.

Based on the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, the following conclusions may be drawn:

From the literature review it is concluded that, despite available research on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, additional refinement of the conceptualisation of these concepts is required, especially for employee retention purposes.

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For the purposes of this study, Allen and Meyer's (1991) multidimensional approach to organisational commitment was utilised. From the literature review it may be concluded that organisational commitment is conceptualised according to several approaches (normative, affective, continuance, attitudinal, behavioural, multi-dimensional, and motivational). The conclusion is drawn that organisational commitment is an inner condition that connects employees to a certain organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen's (1991) multidimensional approach integrates attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment to create three distinct dimensions, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment. The antecedents of the three components differ.

Retention factors can be viewed as factors that would facilitate the stay or exit of employees and the decision to leave or stay, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities (Netswera *et al.*, 2005). Döckel (2003) identified eight retention factors, six of which were used in this study, namely compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life balance. It is concluded that there is currently no single framework that guides research and practice regarding employee retention (Cardy & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

Perceived job embeddedness can be viewed as an employee's perception of the match (fit), connection (link) and cost of leaving (sacrifice) the relevant job and organisation (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001b). Mitchell *et al.*'s (2001b) unfolding model explains how and why people leave organisations. Accordingly, turnover decisions are not always the result of accumulated job dissatisfaction and may sometimes occur without much deliberation (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Moreover, certain events may cause some employees to consider leaving their organisations when the event matches some pre-existing plan for leaving, or violates employees' values or interferes with their goal attainment (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Research done by Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) found that people who are embedded in their jobs have lower intent to quit and are less ready to quit than those who are not embedded. It may be concluded that person-organisation fit, links and sacrifice contribute to job embeddedness and that job embeddedness does not cause fit, links and sacrifice. These elements together exert a force on employees to stay at their current organisation (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Research has focused on each of the concepts of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness separately or in relation to other variables; however, there appears to be a paucity of research in the South African medical and IT

services environment. From the literature review it can be concluded that that there appears to be a relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Hence, employee commitment can be influenced by retention factors such as compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work–life balance (Döckel, 2003; João, 2010; Lumley, 2009). Human resource practices may also affect the extent to which employees feel their values match those of the organisation, which, in turn, enhances organisational commitment. In addition, negative perceptions of the human resource system may affect employees' perceptions of their job-fit (job embeddedness) which is, in turn, related to their intention to leave the organisation (Boon *et al.*, 2011).

4.1.1.2   The second aim: To determine theoretically (based on a review of the literature) the role of gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups on organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

From the literature review it can be concluded that biographical variables (gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups) are the antecedents of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

This research found that the most consistent theoretical relationship existed between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness levels in relation to the various gender and age groups.

When determining the relationship that exists between the biographical variables of race, marital status, tenure and job levels and organisational commitment, retention factors (intention to stay) and perceived job embeddedness, the literature findings were inconsistent.

When determining the relationship that exists between retention factors (intention to stay) and the various race, marital status and tenure groups, there appeared to be a lack of research literature. This was also the case when determining the relationship that exists between perceived job embeddedness and the various race, marital status, tenure and job level groups.

4.1.1.3 Third aim: To determine the implications of the theoretical relationship for employee retention practices.

The literature review elaborated on the way voluntary turnover and retention strategies were influenced by the relationship that exists between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Thus, it was found that individuals who are attached to their organisations and embedded in their jobs may experience less anxiety, stress, job dissatisfaction and intention to leave their organisation. Both organisational and employee perspectives should be taken into account when developing and delivering a 21st century talent management strategy.

An understanding of the relationship that exists between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness can be useful for planning organisational interventions such as career development and talent retention strategies. The study found that there is a relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors, as well as between perceived job embeddedness and retention factors, which suggests that organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness may be important in the development of talent retention strategies.

4.1.2 Conclusions regarding the empirical study

There were three main aims relating to the empirical study of this research: Firstly, to investigate the empirical relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness as manifested in a sample of participants employed in the medical and IT services context in South Africa. The second aim was to determine whether gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. And the third aim was to formulate recommendations for the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, particularly with regard to retention practices and further research.

Based on the empirical findings, the null hypothesis H01 was rejected because of the evidence of a statistically significant positive relationship between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Similarly, the null hypothesis H02 was rejected on the basis of statistically significant differences between the

levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness of groups differing in gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job levels.

4.1.2.1 The first aim: To investigate the empirical relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness as manifested in a sample of participants employed in the medical and IT services context in South Africa.

As depicted in figure 4.1, the following conclusions were drawn:

a) *Employees' organisational commitment relates significantly positively to their intention to stay (retention factors) at the organisation.*

- Based on the findings it can be concluded that the participants who perceived more career opportunities within their organisation tended to experience greater overall commitment to their organisation. Perceived career opportunities significantly predict turnover and job performance (Kraimer *et al.*, 2011). Individuals who perceive many career opportunities within the organisation may experience lower intention to leave and higher job performance.

- It was concluded that participants who were satisfied with career opportunities and who had high levels of job satisfaction (variety of work and challenging work) might be emotionally (affectively) more committed to their organisation. João (2010) found that employees who felt positive about the possibility of career advancement opportunities within the organisation, and those who experienced intrinsic job satisfaction, seemed more likely to feel emotionally attached to the organisation. Consequently, these factors may increase professionally qualified employees' intention to stay.

- It was also concluded that the participants who were satisfied with the perceived career opportunities within the organisation experienced higher continuance commitment. These participants might therefore experience a higher intention to stay due to the perceived costs involved when leaving the organisation. Continuance commitment may develop as employees recognise that they have accumulated investments (Becker, 1960) which may be lost if they leave their current organisation.

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b) *Employees' commitment to the organisation (retention factor) relates significantly positively to their intention to stay (retention factors) at the organisation.*

- Based on the findings it can be concluded that the participants who had high levels of job satisfaction (variety of work and challenging work) and who were satisfied with their work/life balance, career opportunities and development opportunities experienced a higher intention to stay at their organisation. This finding is contrary to the research done by Döckel (2003) who found that training and development opportunities and career opportunities have no direct impact on the development of organisational commitment in the high technology industry.

c) *Employees' perceived job embeddedness relates significantly positively to their intention to stay (retention factors) at the organisation.*

- Based on the findings it can be concluded that the participants who were satisfied with the training and development opportunities had higher levels of job satisfaction (variety of work and challenging work), and those who were satisfied with the career opportunities within their organisation tended to experience greater overall job embeddedness. It was therefore concluded that participants who experienced these factors had a lower intention to leave their organisation.

- It was also concluded that the participants with a higher perception of training and development opportunities, job satisfaction (variety of work and challenging work) and supervisor support experienced a greater organisational fit. The participants might therefore experience a higher intention to stay when they perceive a fit with the organisation and their own values and expectations. Döckel (2003) argues that supervisor support let employees feel important and responsible in that they can use their innovation and skill to the advantage of the organisation. Döckel (2003) also mentions that this is a major intrinsic motivation for employees.

- Finally, it was concluded that the participants who were satisfied with career opportunities, training and development opportunities and who had high levels of job satisfaction tended to experience greater organisational sacrifice. The participants might therefore experience higher job embeddedness and intention to stay when they perceive there are costs involved when leaving the organisation (organisational sacrifice).

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4.1.2.2 The second aim: To determine whether gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

a) Men and women tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the male participants were more satisfied with the availability of career opportunities and experienced higher emotional (affective) commitment, person-organisation fit and overall job embeddedness to the organisation than their female counterparts.

b) Employees from different age groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of intention to stay (retention factors).

- It was concluded that the participants between the ages of 17 to 29 years were more satisfied with the characteristics of their jobs. Thus, the younger participants seemed to prefer more challenging work and a variety of work.

c) Employees from different race groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of intention to stay (retention factors).

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the white participants were more satisfied with their compensation than the other race groups.

- It was concluded that the Asian participants were more satisfied with challenging work and a variety of work (job characteristics) than the other race groups.

- From the results it was also concluded that the African participants tended to place more importance on work/life balance than the other race groups.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the married participants were emotionally (affective) more committed to the organisation than the other marital status groups.

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d) *Employees from different marital status groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.*

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the married participants were emotionally (affectively) more committed to the organisation than the other marital status groups.

- It was also concluded that the married participants were more satisfied with challenging work and variety of work (job characteristics).

- From the results it was concluded that the single participants were more satisfied with their perceived person-job fit.

- Finally, it was concluded that the married participants were more satisfied with their perceived person-job sacrifice than the other marital status groups.

e) *Employees from different tenure groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.*

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the participants working at the organisation for more than 15 years tended to be emotionally (affective) more attached to the organisation, and feel more obligated to stay at the organisation (normative), and were overall as a result, more committed to the organisation. It therefore seems that participants with greater tenure experienced greater commitment to the organisation (total, affective and normative). The relationship between tenure and age seems likely to be interconnected in that older individuals may have been working for longer and may therefore have had more opportunity for longer tenure than an employee just entering the workforce.

- It was also concluded that the participants working at the organisation for more than 15 years tended to place more value on compensation.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the participants working at the organisation for between 11 and 15 years tended to prefer more challenging work and a variety of work (job characteristics).

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- Finally, it was concluded that the participants working for longer than 15 years at the organisation tended to experience greater person-organisation fit and overall job embeddedness.

f) Employees from different job level groups tend to differ significantly regarding their levels organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that the senior management level participants tended to be emotionally (affective) more attached to the organisation, more aware of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (continuance) and were overall more committed to the organisation.

- It was concluded that the operational level participants tended to feel more obligated to stay at the organisation; thus, they were more normatively committed to the organisation. It was also concluded that operational level participants tended to place more value on work/life balance.

- Based on the findings it was concluded that senior management level participants were more satisfied with their compensation and supervisor support.

- It was also concluded that senior management level participants were more satisfied with challenging work and a variety of work (job characteristics).

- Finally, it was concluded that the senior management level participants were more satisfied with their perceived organisational fit, person-job fit, person-organisation fit, person-job sacrifice and person-organisation sacrifice than other staff levels and, overall, experienced more job embeddedness.

4.1.3   Conclusions regarding the central hypothesis

Regarding the central hypothesis, it can be concluded that individuals' intention to stay or leave (retention factors) relate significantly and positively to their organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness. Furthermore, groups differing in gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The empirical study yielded statistically significant evidence to support the central hypothesis.

4.1.4 Conclusions regarding contributions to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology

The findings of the literature review and the empirical study contributed unique new knowledge to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, with particular focus on informing employee retention practices. The literature review provided new insight into the conceptualisation of the constructs of relevance to the study (organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness), the possible relationships between these constructs and the differences between biographical groups regarding these constructs.

The conclusions drawn from the literature review indicate that practitioners should consider the theoretical models of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness when working within the field of Career Psychology. In addition, the theoretical relationship between these variables and the differences between biographical groups need to be taken into account, as the findings have provided new insight into the value of these variables in retention practices, as well as retention in the medical and information technology field. Previous research has yielded inconsistent results regarding differences between biographical groups in terms of the variables of relevance to this study. The findings of this study, however, provide some evidence to add to the existing findings that support the existence of these differences.

Practitioners utilising the instruments included in this study need to ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments prior to using them. In this study, the reliability of the instruments was analysed and this information was added to that already available on the instruments in the South African context. The conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the instruments utilised generally displayed acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability.

The results of the empirical study provided new information on the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, and how this may be related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Furthermore, the result highlighted the possibility of an employee's organisational commitment and perceived job embeddedness explaining their intention to stay or leave (retention factors). Conclusions drawn from the empirical study indicate that there is a relationship between the constructs of relevance to this study, and that the organisational commitment, retention factors and

perceived job embeddedness experienced by an employee influence his or her intention to stay (voluntary turnover) at the organisation. Organisations should therefore focus on encouraging a committed and embedded workforce by formulating strategies that focus on employee job satisfaction.

The study highlights the possibility of differences between biographical groups' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, and this finding is of particular relevance in the multicultural South African context.

4.2   LIMITATIONS

Several limitations in terms of the literature review and empirical study have been identified. The limitations of this study will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.1   Limitations of the literature review

Limitations regarding the literature review include a lack of research in the South African context and abroad on the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. Although there is a broad research base on organisational commitment and retention factors, few studies have focused specifically on the relationship of these constructs with perceived job embeddedness.

An all-encompassing view of the factors influencing talent retention could not be provided, as only three variables were considered (organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness). Accordingly, several additional factors may need to be considered in developing retention strategies.

4.2.2   Limitations of the empirical study

Some limitations regarding the empirical study have been identified in previous chapters. What follows is a summary of the limitations that apply specifically to the empirical study. The limitations detected include, for example, the exclusion of various other environmental and individual factors, as only three work-related dimensions were measured in order to inform talent retention practices.

The results of the study represented a small sample in a particular organisation. The present study was also limited to a predominantly white and female sample employed in a South African medical and information technology services company. Caution should therefore be exercised when generalising the findings to the general population and other occupational, race, gender and industry contexts.

The sampling method used was unavoidable; if a random sampling method had been used rather than a purposive method, the results rendered might have been more generalisable. Given the exploratory nature of the research design, this study can yield no statements about causation, since the associations between the variables were interpreted rather than established. Consequently, these findings need to be replicated with broader samples across various occupational, age, race and gender groups, and economic sectors before final conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of this study nevertheless hold prospects for the analysis of the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness, as well as the differences between biographical groups' experiences of these constructs. This study may be used as a basis for understanding the relationships between the variables measured and the differences between biographical groups in order to inform the formulation of retention strategies.

4.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are made regarding talent retention within organisations and for future studies.

4.3.1   Practitioners working in the field of talent retention

The results and conclusions of this study show that it is necessary to consider organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness in order to understand turnover intentions. Practical recommendations are to follow in view of the argument that committed and job embedded employees display increased productivity and remains attached to the organisation as shown in figure 4.1. The relationships observed between the

three constructs of relevance to this study may provide insight into the development of retention strategies in the following manner:

- Organisations should consider offering employees supervisor recognition and feedback, since these can give employees the perception that their contributions are valued and that the organisation cares about their wellbeing (Allen *et al.*, 2003). This may consequently lead to greater job embeddedness (greater organisational fit) and a higher intention to stay at the organisation.
- Ensuring career mobility opportunities within the organisation may be an important consideration when formulating retention strategies, because employees may accordingly experience the organisation as a supportive entity that is willing to invest in them. It is therefore suggested that the provision of career opportunities could be used to increase overall organisational commitment (total, affective and continuance) and overall job embeddedness which may lead to a higher intention to stay.

- Organisations should explore the extent to which provision is made for growth and development opportunities. Factors such as the provision of training opportunities and opportunities for internal promotion could be considered in order to create the perception that the organisation values the development of their employees. It is therefore suggested that training and development opportunities could be used to increase overall job embeddedness and organisational commitment, which may lead to a higher intention to stay.

- Career development interventions should be individualised to take biographical factors into consideration.

- Employees who prefer to move between organisations may remain committed to and embedded in the organisation if satisfaction is experienced within their work environment, if they perceive a fit with their job and organisation and if they experience satisfaction with their supervisor, feedback, recognition, compensation, advancement and development opportunities.

- Advancement opportunities may include factors such as internal promotions in order to create the perception that the organisation values intra-organisational career mobility.

Medical and Information technology Industry (n = 206)

Findings indicated a relationship between the three constructs

Predicts
Relates to

Retention factors
Netswera *et al.* (2005) refer to retention factors as factors that would facilitate the stay or exit of employees and the decision to leave or stay, depending on the perceived direction of an individual's priorities.

Organisational commitment
Organisational commitment can be described as a psychological state that attaches the individual to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Perceived job embeddedness
Mitchell *et al.* (2001b) suggest that job embeddedness is an employee's perception of the match (fit), connection (link) and cost of leaving (sacrifice) the relevant job and organisational job embeddedness.

Employee retention practices: enhancing organisational commitment
1. Provide career opportunities within the organisation
2. Provide challenging work and a variety of work
3. Provide flexible working hours and facilities for childcare and so on. (help employees to balance their work and family life)
4. Offer coaching as an intervention method

Employee retention practices: enhancing perceived job embeddedness
1. Provide growth and development opportunities
2. Provide challenging work and a variety of work
3. Provide career opportunities within the organisation
4. Provide supervisor support through regular feedback
5. Foster a strong recognition and reward system

Intention to stay or leave (retention factors)
1. Higher identification, involvement and attachment to the organisation
2. Increased job performance
3. Lower voluntary turnover
4. Higher intention to stay / lower intention to leave
5. Lower absenteeism
6. More satisfied and engaged employees

Figure 4.1. Overview and summary of core conclusions and recommendations of employee retention practices.

4.3.2 Future research

In the light of the conclusions and limitations of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

There is a need for further research on the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness within the South African context. It is recommended that future studies address the limitations identified in this study. This study was limited to a small sample of predominantly female, married employees; it is therefore recommended that future studies include a larger, more representative sample. The sample included in this study consisted of medical and information technology professionals as it was believed that these individuals may experience some form of career mobility owing to the skills shortage in the industry. It is therefore recommended that the study be undertaken with a larger, randomised sample from various industries, including professional and non-professional industries.

Valuable insight may be obtained through the inclusion of the analysis of additional variables, such as organisational culture, career anchors and career orientations, which were not measured in this study.

4.4 INTEGRATION OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The results suggest that relationships exist between these three variables, and that such relationships may provide insight to inform talent retention practices.

The literature review suggests that there is a relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. The skills shortages experienced in the medical and information technology industries resulting from the global economic crisis and the changing nature of work in the 21st century have increased opportunities for career mobility and have required organisations to turn their focus toward informed retention strategies. Globalisation and increased competition have brought with them the ability of individuals to move between organisations more easily than ever before. Training and development opportunities, career opportunities within organisations,

supervisor support, challenging work and a variety of work have all been indicated as important when considering the retention of employees. In addition, differences between biographical groups in terms of their attitudes to the organisation have to be considered.

The empirical study provided statistically significant support for the central hypothesis. The findings therefore suggest that a relationship exists between individuals' organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness. In addition, groups differing in gender, age, race, marital status, tenure and job level were shown to differ significantly in their levels of organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

In conclusion, the findings of the study revealed that insight into the relationship between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness may have practical significance in that the knowledge of this relationship may inform talent retention. As the demographics change and talented recruits leave, organisations need to make a more concentrated effort to retain their valuable employees. In the multicultural South African context it is crucial to consider the differences between biographical groups regarding the variables of relevance to this study.

4.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conclusions drawn from this study and the possible limitations of the study, by focusing on both the literature review and the empirical study. Recommendations were made and practical suggestions for talent retention and recommendations for future research were offered. Finally, an integration of the study was presented by highlighting the support of the findings for the relationship dynamics between organisational commitment, retention factors and perceived job embeddedness.

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