JOB SATISFACTION AND WORKPLACE STRESS OF PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF IN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CAPE OF SOUTH AFRICA

By

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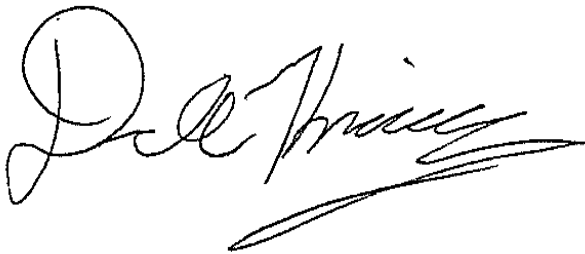
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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

I, Divan de Koning (204025494), hereby declare that the treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to measure and explore the job satisfaction and workplace stress levels of public service staff within the Eastern and Western Cape of South Africa, as well as to establish the extent of the relationship between the areas of job satisfaction and workplace stress.

The measure was predominantly administered to staff that the researcher came into contact with as a result of psychometric assessments that their employer required them to complete. The researcher facilitated the role of a service provider to the public service entities and utilised this opportunity to encourage staff to complete the measure. The measure covered five job satisfaction and seven workplace stress variables. 230 staff members completed the measure of which 170 was deemed to be useable. A quantitative study thereby enabling the investigation into the potential sources of job dissatisfaction and workplace stress was conducted. Eight hypotheses had been formulated in order to facilitate the comparisons and had been informed by prior research.

The quantitative analysis established that both of the sections in the measure (job satisfaction and workplace stress) averaged Cronbach's alphas in excess of .60 for the 12 variables measured, this, therefore, exceeded the minimum benchmark that had been set for the study. As such, the measures were considered to be appropriate measures of their respective constructs. Staff were most satisfied with the hours that they worked and least satisfied with their opportunities for promotion. Staff experienced the least amount of stress related to bullying at work and experienced the most stress related to the intensity with which they were expected to work. A moderate relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction was identified along with strong relationships between the factors of, managerial support and work relationships; managerial support and work activities; and between role and work activities. Moderate support was found for hypothesis six which referred to the relationships between job satisfaction and age.

The study aided in enhancing insight into the causes of workplace stress and job dissatisfaction within public service in South Africa and can serve as a basis for future studies into the public service industry.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
EVP	Employee Value Proposition
HR	Human Resources
HSD	Honest Significant Difference
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
KSD	King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
OCSA	Occupational Care South Africa
POS	Perceived organisational support
QWL	Quality of work life
SA	South Africa
TQM	Total Quality Management
US	United States
WFC	Work-family-conflict
WS	Workplace stress

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research treatise is designed to investigate the job satisfaction and workplace stress in public service in the Eastern and Western Cape of South Africa. According to Boundless (2016) and McFarlin (2017), a lack of satisfaction and high workplace stress can have many negative implications for employers as well as their employees. This is particularly the case if one considers areas such as productivity, performance, absenteeism and labour turnover that is likely to be affected by job satisfaction and workplace stress as well as the impact that it could have on the employer-employee relationship. The study is designed to measure the job dissatisfaction and workplace stress levels within public service in the area as well as the potential causes of job satisfaction and workplace stress, as well as establishing whether a relationship exists between the two areas. Any potential relationships that emerge would be explored as information of this nature could have significant implications for one of the biggest employers in the country. The results of the study could be useful in identifying which areas should be targeted in order to enhance the employees' experience and can go a long way towards establishing win-win scenarios for the employer and employee respectively.

This chapter provides an overview of the background of the research which will include the problem statements and the research objectives of the treatise. Important terms are defined and the research outline is provided. This is followed by the central theoretical statement, the expected limitations and lastly an outline of the remaining chapters of the treatise.

1.2 Background to the research

Absenteeism comes at huge cost to organisations and is felt the world over. Studies conducted by Amble (2006) and Buys, Matthews, and Randall (2010) make reference to the cost of absenteeism in countries such as America, Australia and the UK amounting to billions of dollars annually. In South Africa, we experience similar challenges, with Finweek (2014) making reference to an Occupational Care South Africa (OCSA) and Statistics South Africa report that points out that absenteeism alone is estimated to cost between R12-16 billion in South Africa

annually. What is more alarming, however, is that a substantial percentage of this absenteeism does not appear to be as a result of physical illness. A Finweek (2014) report suggests that more than 60% of absenteeism experienced in South Africa is not due to physical illness which therefore points to a potentially deeper issue. If employees are absent from work for reasons other than illness, what drives it? One potential explanation would be that a lack of job satisfaction and the presence of a stressful work environment might contribute to this 'voluntary' absenteeism.

It stands to reason that if employees are not satisfied with their jobs or experience excessive stress at the workplace, that it is human nature that they would look to reduce/eliminate this 'discomfort'. Some might proactively try to influence their environment positively, whereas others, unfortunately, may engage in negative coping behaviours such as alcohol or drug abuse or by staying away from the stressor which in this instance may be the workplace itself (Boundless, 2016). Considering the potential cost of absenteeism to organisations, it should not come as a surprise that plenty of research has already been conducted on the areas of job satisfaction and workplace stress. It did not take the author long to identify more than 80 studies on related topics, with the following providing a brief snapshot of the authors that have engaged with the area recently, (Stafyla, Kaltsidou, & Spyridis 2013; Yu-Chi & Keng-Yu 2010; Meško Videmšek, Štihec, Meško-Štok, & Karpljuk, 2010; Rubina, Sadaf, & Masood, 2011; Galanakis, Stalikas, Kallia, Karagianni, & Karela, 2009; Mayfield, 2013; Kermani, 2013; Gottlieb, Maitland, & Shera, 2013).

Stafyla et al. (2013) recommend that a study on workplace stress and job satisfaction specifically is warranted. Despite the abundance of research available in the areas of job satisfaction and workplace stress, the author failed to find any study that was geared specifically towards measuring the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction within public service in the South African context. This would suggest that an opportunity exists to add new insight into an important area and that new information could be contributed to the body of research already in place in other parts of the world. What provides further credence for the study is the fact that one of the municipalities decided to absorb the researcher into their structures in order to facilitate the research, as they themselves have already identified the problem they face in terms of their absenteeism and hope to identify the potential causes of this problem.

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By conducting this research, insight can be provided into whether or not staff are satisfied with their jobs, and if not, why not? One would also potentially be able to determine if any stressors are present in their work environment, as well as whether any relationships exist between the workplace stress and job satisfaction variables. By exposing these areas, employers would acquire insight into what their workforce is struggling with at work and could empower them to introduce positive interventions going forward that may have positive implications for areas such as staff absenteeism, productivity and turnover to name just a few.

In the next section, the problem statements relevant to the study are identified.

1.3 <u>Problem statements</u>

The analysis of prior research has suggested that there are currently a few problem areas that the intended study could help to address.

1.3.1 Problem statement one

Although a wealth of research exists, absenteeism still remains a considerable challenge faced by employers, suggesting that further investigation into its potential causes is necessitated. By exploring the primary sources of job dissatisfaction and workplace stress, would provide insight into what some of the drivers of the absenteeism might be.

1.3.2 Problem statement two

The intended study could assist in gaining additional insight into whether or not a relationship exists between job satisfaction and workplace stress, and if so, the extent of that relationship.

In the next section, the research objectives of the study are provided.

1.4 <u>Research objectives</u>

In order to address the problems raised, the following section stipulates the objectives that have been formulated to address these problem statements.

1.4.1 General research objective

The purpose of the research is to measure the job satisfaction and workplace stress levels of public service employees employed in the Eastern and Western Cape provinces of South Africa.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

The following specific objectives have been formulated:

Objective 1: To explore previous research related to workplace stress with particular emphasis on the workplace stress variables of demands, control, managerial support, peer support, workplace relationships, work roles and change.

Objective 2: To explore previous research related to job satisfaction with particular emphasis on-the-job satisfaction variables of general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities and work activities.

Objective 3: To explore past research related to the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction.

Objective 4: To provide insight into the potential stressors and causes of dissatisfaction at the workplace. This by extension could be viewed as potential causes of absenteeism within the public service in South Africa, which could, in turn, initiate further research.

1.4.2 Hypotheses

Apart from the objectives above, the following eight hypotheses have been formulated and are tested within the empirical section of the study:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between control and work roles

H_2: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked

H_3: There is a negative relationship between workplace stress associated with control and job satisfaction associated with work activities

H_4: The job satisfaction levels of women are significantly higher than that of men

H_5: The job satisfaction levels of previously disadvantaged staff is higher than that of white staff members

H_6: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age

H_7: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and experience

H_8: There is a negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction

1.5 <u>The research process</u>

The research process refers to the approach adopted to the research. In other words, what the researcher hopes to accomplish and how he intends to accomplish it. Although the research is intended to be predictive, descriptive and explanatory, emphasis is placed on its exploratory nature. The research pursued is unique and will be compared to existing research to facilitate the determination of any relevant similarities and differences. The intention is that the study will inspire future research and provide guidance in identifying viable focus areas.

The hypotheses that were selected to form part of the study were shaped and inspired by previous research. The questionnaire also provided appropriate information that could be used for effective hypotheses testing. Chapters 2 to 4 (Literature review) provide the theoretical justification for the selected hypotheses and chapter 6 (Findings) tests the hypotheses to determine the results of the empirical study. The existence or lack of correlation between the hypotheses and the empirical data is debated in the discussion chapter (Chapter 7) of the study.

1.5.1 Data collection techniques

Two pre-existing questionnaires were combined to gather the empirical data required for the study. The workplace stress questionnaire was developed in the United Kingdom and is titled, "The Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards work-related stress Indicator Tool." (Edwards, Webster, Van Laar, & Easton, 2008). The questionnaire was selected due to its relatively short length (35 items) and the ease with which it could be completed (Forced selection on a 1-5 scale). This empowered the research participants to complete the questionnaire relatively quickly and easily. The questionnaire measures seven different workplace stressors and previous studies have suggested that it displays good validity and reliability. The seven variables measured are demands, control, managerial support, peer support, workplace relationships, work roles and change.

The second questionnaire is a generic questionnaire (Salisbury, 2013). Despite the lack of reliability and validity data available, it was selected as it was short (18 items) and easy to complete (1-5 scale). It also appeared to have good face validity and could be combined seamlessly with the workplace stress questionnaire. The questionnaire claims to measure five

different job satisfaction variables namely, general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities and work activities.

A cover page asking for biographical data was also included in the instrument as this would provide the researcher with the opportunity to ascertain whether or not any trends existed based on factors such as age, gender, race, experience and municipality that the participants worked for. The combined questionnaire would, therefore, empower the researcher to measure 11 different variables (seven workplace stress and five job satisfaction), a total of 53 items, as well as demographic data. This enabled cross-correlation and the identification of trends. The purpose of the questionnaire was also outlined on the cover page. By measuring these items and variables, comparison to pre-existing theory is made possible as well as facilitating the testing of hypotheses. The combined measure is included as appendix A.

In terms of the collection of the empirical data, the researcher had open access to a number of municipalities and received permission from the human resources department at the George Municipality to incorporate the questionnaire into the skills audit that was taking place with staff at the time. This access provided the researcher with the opportunity to acquire a sample big enough to facilitate statistical analysis from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn.

The researcher regularly conducted psychometric assessments in a variety of municipalities within the Eastern and Western Cape which provided the researcher with the opportunity to administer the questionnaire either before or after the scheduled assessments. The questionnaire was administered completely separately from the psychometric assessments completed by the staff and did not form part of their results. This meant that the researcher could collect the questionnaires straight after administering them, thereby minimising delays. Furthermore, the researcher was present to address any queries that the staff members had.

The statistician consulted on the project suggested that a sample size of at least 150 should be pursued in order to facilitate meaningful statistical analysis; 150 was therefore set as a minimum benchmark for the purpose of the study.

1.5.2 Data analysis

In terms of the evaluation of the questionnaire, a statistician was consulted to determine the Cronbach's alphas, P-scores and Eigenvalues which would indicate the validity of the items, variables and correlations that formed part of the study. This information was utilised to determine whether or not the measures used were appropriate and would enable the findings and discussion chapters of the study.

Statistical analysis facilitated the comparison of items and variables within and across the two sections of the questionnaire to determine whether any meaningful positive or negative relationships are present. An analysis of this nature helped to determine whether or not any trends existed as well as expose any potential causal relationships between the various variables.

Testing of the above-mentioned hypotheses was made possible with the use of inferential and descriptive statistics, most of which are provided in the findings chapter of the study.

1.6 <u>Delineation of terms, constructs and concepts</u>

Due to the variety of research conducted on the areas of workplace stress and job satisfaction in the past, many different definitions and interpretations of the various constructs exist. As such, definitions of the primary constructs that form part of the study are provided in order to manage the risk of misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

1.6.1 Job satisfaction

Diestel, Wegge, and Schmidt (2014) define job satisfaction as, "…a work-related attitude that reflects the extent to which an employee evaluates certain aspects of his or her job…as beneficial to him or her." (p. 355).

Said another way, job dis/satisfaction is the result of the evaluation of whether or not the employee is happy with what they gain or experience on the job. The aspects selected to facilitate this determination, as mentioned previously, are general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities and work activities.

1.6.2 Workplace stress

Burton, Hoobler, and Scheuer (2012) define stress as "…the relationship between a person and his/her environment that is perceived to be unbalanced in terms of one's physical and psychological resources and the demands of the situation…" (p. 3).

For the purpose of the study, workplace stress comprises elements in the workplace that have the potential to contribute to a stressful work environment for employees. As mentioned previously, the potential stressors selected to form part of the study are job demands, control, managerial support, peer support, workplace relationships, work roles and change.

1.6.3 Public service

The Collins Dictionary (2014) defines public service as "…the service responsible for the public administration of the government of a country" (Australian and New Zealand, para. 1). The five municipalities that contributed to the study, therefore fall under the definition provided.

1.7 <u>Potential limitations</u>

A few potential limitations are expected for the study. As such, the researcher needs to anticipate them where possible and attempt to mitigate their influence on the quality of the study. The following have been identified as potential challenges.

One of the first challenges expected was that of the language barrier. South Africa has eleven official languages and, as such, language preference is quite diverse. For the most part, English tends to be the language of choice in diverse settings, and it is therefore expected that the majority of participants would have at least a functional command of the English language. The researcher was also present when the participants completed the survey in order to assist if there was any confusion. Thus, the researcher decided not to translate the questionnaire.

The lack of previous research into this area in South Africa poses a challenge in the sense that drawing comparisons and formulating expectations are not easy. The researcher, therefore, used international research as a guideline and was the primary reason as to why the study was regarded to be exploratory in nature. The lack of verifiable data for the job satisfaction questionnaire meant that its use might be questionable, but the fact that it formed part of an

exploratory study meant that the study could contribute towards determining the questionnaire's relevance for future research.

Another potential challenge was the diversity of the sample. The researcher intended to draw comparisons based on various demographic variables and a diverse sample was required. In this context, diversity in terms of level within the organisation, age, gender, municipality, race and experience was measured. The researcher intends to gain most of his sample from candidates to which he administers psychometric assessments. Thus, the sample was largely dependent on whom the municipalities sent through for assessments. In terms of race and gender, legislation requires employers to have a diverse workforce; the assumption is, therefore, that sufficient representatives would be assessed over the designated time period; this, however, could not be guaranteed. Furthermore, the researcher administered assessments to staff at all levels within the organisation ranging from executives through to graduate trainees. As such, the researcher hoped to obtain diversity in terms of level within the organisation as well as experience and age. The purpose of the assessments also varied from that of recruitment and selection to development. Accordingly, the performance of the staff was likely to vary. The researcher worked for a company that is one of a handful that are accredited to provide psychometric assessments to government bodies country-wide. Therefore the researcher was able to source participants from a variety of municipalities within the Eastern and Western Cape. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to obtain a sufficiently diverse sample. Alternatively, he had sufficient contacts in the industry to source additional candidates should the need arise to counteract the shortfall.

The next concern was that of gaining feedback from stressed staff. One of the reasons for conducting the study was to gain clarity on the absenteeism problem experienced in South Africa. If staff are absent or booked off, then they would not be available to complete the questionnaire and accordingly do not form part of the study. Highly stressed staff might also not have had the time or willingness to complete a questionnaire. The danger was, therefore, that the sample would be skewed towards 'healthy' staff whereas the 'unhealthy' ones were actually those that were sought for the study. There was no easy solution to this problem, as the researcher could not go to the homes of these ill staff members or force stressed staff to complete the survey, assuming that they could be easily identified in the first place. It can, however, be argued that individuals vary in terms of their stress tolerance as well as where they are in their cycle (new to the job, just came back from being booked off, or on the verge of

burnout), so, although 'healthy' staff might have contributed to the study, it did not necessarily mean that they were not experiencing stress; it might just mean that they were coping with the stressors in their environment. It was, therefore, assumed that whatever stressors or dissatisfiers were present in the respondents' work environment would still emerge, even if evidence came from the healthier staff members.

Another potential challenge was that some jobs might be more stressful than others, if one considers, for example, that higher-level positions are more likely to have more inherent stressors than lower-level positions. Jobs on similar levels may also vary in terms of stress. One expects a call-centre operator working on a commission basis to experience more stress than a payroll administrator on a full-time salary, for example. As mentioned previously, however, a diverse sample was pursued in terms of level and variety in position, and it was anticipated that specific occupations would not skew the results significantly, keeping in mind that the overall intention was to evaluate the most common stressors within municipalities as a whole. Evaluating the variance in stressors and job satisfaction based on position might, however, be a study worth conducting in the future.

Another challenge faced by the study was that not all factors are accounted for in the study. The questionnaire measured seven workplace stress variables and five job satisfaction variables. This was by no means an exhaustive list. Therefore, it was very possible or in fact likely that other factors could also influence the stress levels and satisfaction of public service employees. The intended study, however, set out to determine whether the selected variables were relevant and whether statistically significant relationships existed between the identified variables.

Another potential problem was that of honesty in the feedback. If staff were stressed or dissatisfied, they might not want to admit to it, as they might fear consequences in terms of their job security or promotion possibilities. They could view their responses to the questionnaire as a criticism of their employer or as admitting to their shortcomings and might choose to downplay the severity of their responses. Another danger was that disgruntled or stressed staff might have an 'axe to grind' and could exaggerate their responses as a way of harming the reputation of their employer. The researcher made provision for the employees to include their names on the questionnaire which was purely for the purpose of individualised feedback. The researcher stressed that the name was optional and that the employer would only receive the overall results of the research. Participants could, therefore, complete the questionnaire anonymously

should they choose to do so and were encouraged to provide honest feedback. Their managers also would not be present when they completed the questionnaire. Furthermore, the fact that the researcher was an external third party should assist with enhancing the trust that participants might have in the process. Eradicating personal agendas in the feedback was, unfortunately, something that the researcher was not able to control.

1.8 <u>Thesis Overview</u>

In the research to follow, the next section (Chapters 2 to 4) consists of the literature review which focuses on previous research related to workplace stress, job satisfaction and the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. The literature component is followed by the empirical section starting with the methodology (Chapter 5) which outlines the approach to the empirical study. The methodology is followed by the findings section (Chapter 6) where statistics relevant to the study are outlined. Following the findings is the discussion chapter (Chapter 7) where the theory in the literature review is compared to the results in the findings chapter and inferences are made. Finally, a conclusion, limitations and recommendations for future research chapter (Chapter 8) are provided to highlight the main themes of the research treatise as well as to make recommendations for future research.

1.9 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

This chapter explored the theme of the research and included the definition of the key terms including job satisfaction, workplace stress and public service. Previous research that led to the development of the research was also outlined, after which, the problem statements and hypotheses were outlined. The planned approach to the study was discussed, including the data collection techniques that would be applied. Apart from the data collection methodology the analysis (quantitative) of said data was addressed. Finally, the potential limitations inherent in the study was addressed and a summary of the overall research document was provided.

In the chapter to follow, previous research and literature as it relates to the research topic will be explored, with specific emphasis placed on the area of workplace stress.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW,

WORKPLACE STRESS

2.1 <u>Introduction</u>

As Miller, Buckholdt, and Shaw (2008) point out, many different definitions of workplace stress exist, and a unifying definition of workplace stress has yet to emerge. Jex (1998) defines occupational stress as "the relationship between persons' perceptions, needs and abilities and the conditions of their work situations" (p. 3). McGrath (1970, as cited in Bunn, Guthrie, & Smit, 2013) defines it as, "a (perceived) substantial imbalance between demand and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet demand has important (perceived) consequences" (p. 15). For the purposes of this study, workplace stress will be approached from the perspective that any stressors in the workplace have a negative impact on the employee (be it physical or psychological), and by extension, the employer.

Now that the 'what' has been answered, we need to answer the 'why'. Why should workplace stress form part of this study? What is its relevance? Numerous studies have emerged the world over estimating the cost of workplace stress to organisations as well as to the associated countries economy. Medibank Private (2008) estimates an annual cost of $300 billion US dollars annually as a result of absenteeism, reduced productivity and turnover, all of which have strong ties to workplace stress. Amble (2006) suggests that stress costs the UK's Gross National Product about 10% annually. In Australia, the cost of workplace stress is estimated at about $15 billion Australian dollars a year, of which $10 billion is a direct cost to employers (Buys et al., 2010). Before one thinks that this is only a 1st world issue, a Finweek (2014) report made reference to studies conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), that points out that absenteeism alone is estimated to cost between R12-16 billion in South Africa annually. What makes the study even more significant is the perception that "2 out of 3 employees who fail to show up for work are not physically ill" (Finweek, 2014). The falsifying of illness may be an indicator of staff unhappiness and/or an inability to cope. Carr, Kelley, Keaton, and Albrecht (2011) suggest that if anything, "stress is becoming a more prevalent issue in our fast-pace society as extended periods of economic recession occur, international competition increases and technological changes continue to take place. The demands of meeting deadlines and larger workloads are put on individuals to increase productivity" (p. 37). This is supported further by Parmelee (2003) who refers to a study conducted by the National Institute for Occupational

Safety and Health that determined that twice as many US workers consider job stress as a major problem today compared to 10 years ago. It should, therefore, be clear that the cost of stress at work is a challenge experienced by employers the world over, and things are not likely to get easier. Therefore, companies need to find a way to minimise stress to enable considerable financial gains, not to mention the impact that it has on employee health.

On the topic of employee health, what are the health consequences of workplace stress? This is normally broken up into two categories, physical and psychological. Physical ailments associated with workplace stress include but are not limited to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, Menopause, type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, epilepsy, ischaemic heart disease and gastro-oesophageal reflux. Psychological stress can result in depression and burnout among others (Werner, Bagraim, Cunningham, Potgieter, & Viedge, 2016). Bischoff, DeTienne, and Quick (1999) refer to burnout as "…excessive psychological and emotional demands placed on individuals especially those whose jobs involve interpersonal components of assisting other individuals or elevated levels of role or job stress…" (p. 513). Apart from the physical and psychological matters raised, stress can lead to negative coping behaviours such as alcohol abuse and drug abuse. Moore, Sikora, Grunberg, and Greenberg (2007) found a negative association between "high work stress and low alcohol problems" (p. 280).

The above should suggest that there are many potential negative consequences associated with a stressful work environment, and the cost to employers and the economy, therefore, should not come as a big surprise. An additional challenge is the fact that it might not be easy to identify all the stressors at the workplace, a sentiment that is supported by Roizen and Roach (2010, p. 1150): "Perhaps the lack of concrete guidance comes from the diverse and changing nature of stress. Stress is not easy to measure- after all, it is subjective". Even if employers were able to identify the stressors, they may not be easy or even possible to eliminate. Employers do, however, have a responsibility to identify which stressors are present within their work environment and which are within their power to manage, considering the cost of stress as mentioned previously, as well as legislative requirements requiring them to minimise the impact of their work processes on their staff. Employers, therefore, should identify which stressors are present within their environment, and which of those are within their power to influence. Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie, and Alam (2009), Amble (2006) and Medibank Private (2008) (as cited in Buys et al., 2010, p. 26) that identify the potential workplace stressors of:

- Excessive work hours;
- Unreasonable performance demands;

- Health and safety risks;
- Lack of autonomy;
- Poor communication;
- Role ambiguity;
- Job insecurity;
- Workplace conflict; and
- Bullying and harassment.

Apart from the lengthy list provided, employers are faced with the added headache that not all stressors are found in the workplace, but these non-workplace stressors still have an influence on the work environment. For example, Brutus, Javadian, and Joelle (2017) make reference to the mode of transport used by staff in commuting to work and its impact on staff stress levels when they arrive at the workplace. In their study, they found that drivers who experienced stress in their commute to work exhibited higher blood pressure and hormone levels which serve as a catalyst for aggressive workplace behaviour. This exacerbates an already challenging situation.

DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) also refer to role conflict, ineffective, hostile and incompetent bosses, lack of recognition, prejudice based on age, gender, ethnicity or religion, change and an increasingly diverse workforce, among other things, as being further stressors experienced within some organisations. As the above would suggest, there are plenty of potential sources of stress in the workplace today.

The damage that workplace stress does to the employer and employee alike should make it easy to motivate action towards addressing it. Kendall (1986 as cited in Loo, 1992, p. 91) suggests that by reducing stress, health care costs and disability claims can be reduced and even factors such as employee morale and organisational loyalty can be improved, which could facilitate the recruitment process. However, the focus should not only be on a cure but also on prevention. Where possible and viable, employers should strive towards creating a stress-free environment, thereby cultivating a sense of wellbeing within the organisation, which Hartfiel, Havenhand, Khalsa, Clarke, and Krayer (2011) define as, "employees who perceive themselves to be growing, engaged, and productive and who experience positive emotional states such as pleasure, joy, and energy that help buffer against stress and depression" (p. 70). By adopting an approach of prevention rather than cure, employers are empowered to develop processes that facilitate the establishment of stress-free environments, or can contribute to a considerable reduction in stress levels within the work environment. By adopting an approach of this nature,

employers can shift from putting out fires, to preventing the fires from occurring, or put another way, to go from surviving to thriving. Walinga and Rowe (2013) suggest that employers should shift their mind-set away from coping and towards thriving as it facilitates "transformative growth and learning as well as systemic and sustainable solution outcomes" (p. 77). Furthermore, they suggest that if employees find a way to thrive in stressful conditions, they may be able to adjust their perspective of stress from debilitative towards being facilitative. This is significant, as it is unlikely that employers will be able to eliminate all the stress at the workplace, and one could also argue that some stress is needed. Considering that stress is likely to be present at work, if employees can adopt a positive approach to it, then the stressor might actually serve to bring out the best in the employee rather than the other way around, but in order to achieve this, employee perceptions would have to be challenged, and the organisational culture would, in all likelihood, have to be transformed. Another potential benefit associated with the presence of an effective wellness programme is its potential impact on staff retention. Bizcommunity (2014) refers to a study conducted by Optum that showed that "82% of employees working at companies with health and wellness programmes said these initiatives would encourage them to stay in their jobs longer" ("Creating better office spaces," para. 8)

Now that we know what stress is, and why it is an important topic, the next question that arises is, how do I know if my workforce is stressed? Pretrus and Kleiner (2003) suggest that the following may be signs that stress is present within the organisation:

- "Recent increase in the number of stress related workers' compensation claims.
- Employee complaints in which stress was listed as a contributing factor.
- Customer complaints describing the employee as irritable or stressed.
- Recorded incidents of verbal or physical conflict among any employees.
- Recent increases in absenteeism associated with the filing of stress claims.
- Unusually high employee turnover rates that could be related to workplace stress" (p. 70).

Employers experiencing the above, or experiencing an increase in the above, might have a stress problem that would require intervention. It is, therefore, important that employers measure this stress levels regularly in order to determine any emerging trends and to enable proactive intervention. Buys et al. (2010) supports this notion by indicating that, "Where stress does occur, early identification and intervention is important …" (p. 26).

 As stipulated previously, many potential workplace stressors exist, but for the purposes of this study, the researcher concentrates on the stressors measured in the HSE (Health and Safety

Executive) Management Standards Indicator Tool (Edwards et al., 2008). Going forward I focus on the potential workplace stressors of job demands, control, managerial support, peer support, workplace relationships, work roles and change. I also review existing research regarding the variance in stress based on age and gender.

2.2 <u>Workplace Stress and Job Demands</u>

The first potential workplace stressor that I discuss is job demands. The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views demands as, "…issues like workload, work patterns and the work environment…" (Edwards et al., 2008, p. 6)

Panari, Guglielmi, Simbula, and Depolo (2009) indicate that job demands can be broken up into the pace at which work should be performed, the amount of work to be completed as well as how complex the work is. If employees are expected to work at a high pace over a long period of time, stress is likely to occur. If employees have too much work to do, then they are likely to stress about the fact that they may not be able to finish the work at all or to finish it on time. If the work is too complex, then the employee might not complete the work accurately which could contribute to other stressful consequences, or the employee might stress about his/her ability to complete the work as required. De Silva, Samanmali, and De Silva (2017) actually identified time pressure as being the most critical stressor.

Although job demands may serve as a source of stress, Panari et al. (2009) refer to the relationship between job demands and control (the stressor discussed in the next section). They suggest that employees might be more inclined to accept high job demands if they have a degree of control over their environment. An example of this might be flexitime. An employee might be more accepting of and therefore stress less about working 12 hours a day, if they can determine when they have to work the hours in, or have the luxury of working from home. By providing the employees with control, they are therefore empowered to mitigate the potential stress posed by the challenging job demands. Increasing control can also have implications for the health of the employee even when job demands are increased. Schaubroeck and Merritt (1997) found that an increase in the job demands of an employee had an adverse influence on blood pressure when the employee did not believe that they had influence over their work environment. This is supported further by Shain (1999) who points out that high demand and low control contribute to:

- "more than double the rate of heart and cardiovascular problems;
- significantly higher rates of anxiety, depression and demoralization;

- significantly higher levels of alcohol and prescription including over-the-counter drug use; and
- significantly higher susceptibility to a wide range of infectious diseases" (p. 3).

Another potential consequence of excessive job demands is that of cyberloafing according to Koay, Soh, and Chew (2017) that found that cyberloafing became more prevalent with staff who experienced job-related stress. This finding lends credence to the popular Mark Zuckerberg quote, "Treat your employees right, so they won't use your internet to search for a new job" (Quotes Download, 2018, n.p.).

Other than control, another potential stress moderator when it comes to job demands is that of the opportunity to develop and learn, according to Panari et al. (2009). If employees are likely to acquire a new skill that is important to their current job or even a future one, then they might be more open to the challenging demands associated with the task. If employees can see the learning and development opportunities offered by the work, then they are more likely to rationalise the effort needed and view it as a worthy sacrifice. Panari et al. (2009) even go so far as to suggest that the opportunity to develop and learn might lure employees towards certain tasks despite the stress associated with the demands, as it could be viewed as a source of competitive advantage over their fellow colleagues. An employee that does not stand to benefit from engaging in a high demand task is likely to be less resilient to the demands largely due to a lack of justification for the effort required to perform the task. Despite this, Reynolds (1997) suggests that there are limitations to learning and development in terms of its ability to regulate the stress associated with job demands. His study indicates that despite the employees being experienced and highly familiar with the demands of the job, they still experienced high levels of workplace stress as a result of work overload. This suggests that, regardless of whether or not the employee is likely to benefit from the experience in terms of knowledge gained, if too much is expected of the employee, stress is likely to accrue.

Liu, Kwan, Lee, and Hui (2013) and Rabenu, Tziner, and Sharoni (2017) identify another source of workplace stress associated with job demands by referring to the concept of work-family-conflict (WFC). They suggest that excessive job demands are likely to impact upon the employees' personal life. If job demands require employees to work overtime, then it will cut into their time with their families; this, in turn, could create additional stress for them at home. It is therefore likely that the higher the job demands are, the higher the risk is for WFC.

According to Carr et al. (2011), understaffing could be one of the primary contributors to excessive job demands. When one considers volatile markets, increased competition as well as production costs, employers are tempted to minimise their staff complements as the wage bill is the highest expense for companies in many industries. As a result, they end up with too few staff and too much work to do, contributing to exorbitant job demands. Carr et al. (2011) refer to studies that have established a link between increased workload and a reduction in worker satisfaction and an increase in the prevalence of burnout and physical illness. This contributes to a self-perpetuating issue, as efficiency is likely to decrease, and staff turnover is likely to increase. Those left behind are then expected to do even more work along with the added burden of training new staff. They go on to recommend that employers should allocate appropriate time and effort towards rightsizing in order to ensure that the problems listed previously do not occur. They suggest that management should ask themselves the following questions when trying to determine what their ideal staff complement should look like:

"Is the workload evenly distributed among employees?
Can temporary staff be hired during higher workload periods?
What were former employees' reasons for leaving and how can you solve the problems?
Are there jobs that require employees to work late and is it really necessary for them to do so?" (p. 37)

By answering the above questions, employers should have a good idea of what their staffing needs are which should contribute towards acquiring information that can be used in identifying where excessive job demands are present and where the most meaningful improvements can be made in this regard. The importance of managing job demands is further emphasised by a study conducted by Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, and Kerr (2003), wherein nurses indicated that job demands and a reasonable workload are among the most important factors to them when it comes to areas where interventions will have the most beneficial impact on their health. This is similar to the findings of Hani (1996) that workload was the most unpopular feature of work. Hartfiel et al. (2011) identified that an increase in workload leads to a significant increase in anxiety and depression for university employees.

The above clearly illustrates that job demands can, and in many instances, do have a significant impact on the stress levels of employees. Although it is understandable that employers might want to get the most out of their staff, they need to exercise caution to ensure that they do not cross the fine line between challenging demands and excessive demands, and obtaining

answers to the questions as outlined by Carr et al. (2011) can go a long way towards aiding employers in their pursuit of striking the right balance.

2.3 <u>Workplace Stress and Control</u>

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views control as the following, "Control reflects how much say a person has in the way they do their work" (Edwards et al., 2008, p. 6)

As discussed under the previous heading, control can be used effectively in mitigating the stress associated with job demands, and therefore possesses the 'power' to reduce stress. The following authors (Burcharth, Knudsen, and Søndergaard, 2017; Gilbert, Dagenais-Desmarais, & St-Hilaire, 2017; Panari et al., 2009; Sahadev, Purani, & Panda, 2017) also found a variety of benefits associated with high control, including, an increase in the levels of employee motivation, their learning development, wellbeing and that it leads to improvements in innovation and customer service. An added benefit according to Molines, Sanséau, and Adamovic (2017), is that it shows trust in the employee which is likely to result in enhanced organisational citizenship behaviour. The above-mentioned would aide employees to feel more than just "powerless cogs in a machine", as Saari, Melin, Balabanova, and Efendiev (2018, p. 935) puts it. However, what are the consequences of a lack of control and its impact on employee stress levels?

Violanti et al. (2017) found that control-associated stressors such as a lack of autonomy, participation in decision-making and flexibility are among the primary organisational stressors encountered by police officers as these challenges form part of their daily routine. Travnick (1994) identified an extreme example of the potential consequences of a lack of control by indicating that the management style employed as well as high expectations/requirements by the employer could have contributed to workplace shootings. Although this might be an extreme example, studies of this nature indicate the lengths that some employees might be willing to go to in order to establish some level of control and motivates the degree of emphasis that employees are likely to place upon it. Karasek and Theorell (1990, as cited in Panari et al., 2009) support this desire for control by referring to the job demand-control model and states that, "…the most adverse job-related strain reactions are to be expected in jobs characterised by high job demands and low control" (p. 167). They go further to suggest that these strains might result in demotivation as well as disengagement. Kappagoda and Bhatia (2007) indicate that employees that find themselves in high stress and low control work environments are 50% more likely to suffer from heart attacks. Spector (2002) found that the stress associated with a

lack of control can contribute to short-term strains such as headaches as well as upset stomachs. Sahadev et al. (2017) add to the list of consequences by indicating that role ambiguity and conflict are also likely to accrue where a lack of control exists. The above clearly indicates the potential negative consequences of a lack of control and necessitates that employers show due concern for the amount of autonomy that they provide their employees with, even if that autonomy is only a perception.

Spector (2002) makes reference to the concept of perceived control by pointing out that control can be a subjective construct. As a result, employers might be able to exploit it in the sense that, whether or not employees actually have control, the important thing is that they believe that they have control. This belief in control can be used by employees to mitigate the stress in their environment by believing that they can influence it. This is, however, a concept that can be difficult to manage and influence as it is likely to be person-specific, and the perception of control can vary from person to person. It is also important to note that just as employees might perceive that they have control where they do not, they may also perceive that they do not have control when they do. Therefore, if employers decide that they want to empower their staff, they need to ensure that they inform their staff in terms of the extent of the autonomy and control afforded to them if full benefit is to be derived from the exercise. Perceived control can, therefore, be a force for good or bad, depending on how the employer approaches it. Spector (2002) goes further to suggest that the amount of stress experienced by employees is likely to be dependent on the subjective perception they have of their control in the situation. He also suggests that perceived control can assist employees in minimising emotional reactions to job stressors. Lastly, he argues that an employees' perception of control is likely to determine the coping method selected. He is of the opinion that, when employees perceive that they have control, constructive methods are likely to be selected whereas he expects the opposite when a lack of perceived control is present.

Kappagoda and Bhatia (2007) give us insight into how one can go about identifying the extent of the perceived control within the employer's workforce by establishing the following:

- "I have a lot to say about what happens in my job, and
- My job allows me the freedom to decide how I do my job" (p .18)

By obtaining these answers, employers can gauge the amount of control that their employees believe they have over their work environment. This can then assist them in deciding whether or not any changes or interventions might be necessary.

Shuttleworth (2004) is in favour of employers assisting their staff through the use of empowerment to aid in stress reduction. For example, if employees perceive their work environment to be unnecessarily stressful, then they would be afforded the opportunity to "implement less stressful and more effective work practices" (p. 63). By doing so, the employer shifts the responsibility of dealing with stress to the employee, and they will then be forced to develop an understanding of their stress, enabling them to develop proactive solutions that are most effective based on their needs. One could argue that this could be more effective than a generic across-the-board stress intervention. Especially in job environments with inherent stressors, the control afforded to staff could act as a buffer to this. This sentiment is supported by Karasek and Theorell (1990, as cited in Panari et al., 2009) who point out that "…control is considered as a resource for coping with demands that promotes motivation, satisfaction and performance" (p. 168) In other words, the control afforded to staff will empower them to influence their own motivation, satisfaction and performance levels.

Kappagoda and Bhatia (2007) refer to flexible work arrangements as another form of control that is likely to engender a positive response. They are of the opinion that through the use of flexitime and job-sharing, employees gain a greater sense of control which can have a positive impact on job satisfaction and enhanced commitment or engagement.

Despite the strong argument for employee control, it is important to note that not all studies support this perspective. A study conducted by Domingues and Machado (2017) failed to establish a link between stress and bureaucratic workplace characteristics, and they argued that other factors within bureaucracies as opposed to the bureaucracy itself might be to blame. Considering that public service environments are inclined to be bureaucratic in nature, the study should provide useful insight into this debate. Even if one does subscribe to the principal of employee empowerment, Goussinsky (2015) argues that a degree of control is still advisable as too much employee control might empower staff to the extent that they feel that adhering to company values and good conduct becomes an optional activity and therefore employees risk adopting unethical behaviours when confronting challenges at work.

Similar to the demands section, there appears to be a strong argument that control or a lack thereof can have a significant impact on the stress levels of employees. A lack of control can influence other areas negatively including the health of the employee and can contribute to anti-social behaviours. However, empowering staff and providing them with control gives them the opportunity to influence their environment to minimise stress with potential benefits to their motivation and satisfaction levels.

2.4 <u>Workplace Stress and Managerial Support</u>

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views managerial support as a measure of encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the employer (Edwards et al., 2008).

Thus far, the role of job demands and control and their potential impact on workplace stress has been investigated. Management normally fulfils the role of the point of contact between employer and employee. In other words, management is responsible for enforcing the principles as set forth by the employer. As a result, managers determine how much control employees have over their jobs, as well as what demands are associated with the work to be completed. Considering that managers fulfil this conduit role, it can, therefore, be assumed that management can directly influence the stress levels of staff both positively or negatively. Valentine, Fleischman and Godkin (2015) also suggest that managers shape ethical behaviour at the workplace and therefore directly influence the prevalence of behaviours such as bullying at work, especially if one considers bullying to be a learned behaviour as Hidzir, Jaafar, and Jalali (2017) found in their study. I start by addressing the potential stressors that management can influence as well as the impact that it might have on their subordinates.

The first question to ask is whether managerial stress translates into subordinate stress. The answer is yes, according to Rafferty, Restubog, and Jimmieson (2010) and Tepper (2007), who suggest that supervisors working in distressing conditions are likely to engage in abusive supervision. In this context, abusive supervision is referred to as supervision associated with hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours towards subordinates. This could take the form of lying and public ridicule. Negative consequences associated with the abusive supervision are lower job satisfaction and reduced organisational commitment, according to Keashly, Trott, and MacLean (1994) and Tepper (2000). The following authors (Ashforth, 1997; Burton & Hoobler, 2006; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2001; Harris, Kakmar, & Zivnuska, 2007; Innes, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Rafferty et al., 2010) also identify aggressive or deviant behaviour, reduced work performance, psychological distress and reduced self-esteem as potential consequences of deviant behaviour. Burton et al. (2012) found that supervisors who experience time-based workplace stress can contribute to abusive supervision. It, therefore, stands to reason that manager stress is just as important, if not more important, than subordinate stress, as the one is likely to cause the other. Employers, therefore, need to make sure that they provide management with the support that they need if they are going to have any chance at getting the most out of their subordinates (Burton et al., 2012).

In their study at a restaurant, Mathisen, Einarsen, and Mykletun (2011) established that the combination of low supervisor agreeableness and perceived stress could serve as a predictor of bullying behaviour. They define bullying as, "…exposure to unwanted and hostile behaviours…" (p. 638). They go on to hypothesise that they believe that stress is a higher predictor of bullying behaviour than personality. Accordingly, they speculate that the more stress the leader is under, the higher the risk is for bullying behaviour. Manager stress can, therefore, serve as a driving force for bullying behaviours which in turn would contribute to enhanced subordinate stress levels.

Hassell, Archbold, and Stichman (2010) determined that the more stressed subordinates are, the higher their need is for a formal mentoring programme. Udod, Cummings, Care, and Jenkins (2017) argue that it is essential to train managers so that they can enhance their leadership skills in order to extract the full benefit of what mentorship programmes have to offer. It stands to reason that the more stressed employees are, the higher their desire is for support. Management can provide this support in the form of a mentoring programme. A potential problem that could arise is that management could be contributing to the stress experienced by the employee, and as a result, they might be less inclined to pursue supervisor support if management is viewed as the primary source of the stress experienced. Aligned with mentoring, is the concept of development and more specifically, training. Managers that provide staff with training could be viewed as being supportive, as the right training can assist the employee in dealing with the demands of the role. The studies conducted by (Brown, Igoumenou, Mortlock, Gupta, & Das 2017; Kashif, Braganca, Awang, & De Run, 2017; Lockwood, Henderson, & Stansfeld, 2017) argue for the importance of training as it can assist in enhancing staff capabilities which would enable them to cope better with workplace stressors such as customer abuse and change, and may even be effective in reducing burnout. Shuttleworth (2004) suggests that the use of targeted training for managers can facilitate the formation of healthy manager and subordinate relationships. He suggests that training directed towards enhancing active listening skills and empathy can be combined with the development of counselling skills in an attempt to make managers more adept at dealing with the needs of their subordinates. He also suggests that role play can be used to prepare managers for some of the challenges that they are likely to encounter with their subordinates. By being able to communicate effectively with subordinates and by demonstrating sincerity through the use of empathy, managers can facilitate open and healthy two-way communication, equipping both parties with the opportunity to proactively address any potential sources of stress. Apart from the areas outlined by Shuttleworth (2004), Mathisen et al. (2011) suggest that stress management training is also

likely to benefit managers, as it could provide them with insight into the nature of stress as well as the potential consequences associated with it. DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) suggest that management should encourage and facilitate proactive training for their subordinates so that they are equipped to deal with the challenges posed by an ever-changing work environment. They suggest that managers should send subordinates on training to enhance decision-making ability; to improve their orientation towards teamwork; to improve their communication skills; to challenge their perspective of customers and co-workers; and to help them to improve their stress-coping skills among others. By providing employees with training of this nature, they are equipped to not only anticipate but to deal with challenges, minimising the risk of unnecessary stress while easing the burden on management because their subordinates have been empowered to solve their own problems through the skills acquired in the training offered.

Another way in which management can contribute to stress of subordinates is through the pressure they create towards conforming to socially-prescribed perfectionism. Childs and Stoeber (2012) define socially-prescribed perfectionism as "individuals' perceptions that others have perfectionistic expectations of them" (p. 347) and managed to establish a link between socially-prescribed perfectionism and "role stress and inefficacy over time" (p. 347). They also found a link between socially-prescribed perfectionism and exhaustion and cynicism. There was also evidence to suggest that socially-prescribed perfectionism could contribute to stress and burnout. Clearly, considerable negative consequences are associated with socially-prescribed perfectionism, and management can contribute to this by encouraging unrealistic behaviours and performance, placing unnecessary pressure on the employee, which can potentially contribute to increased stress levels.

Stevens, Muller, and Kendall (2006) identify another way in which management contributes to subordinate stress, namely, a lack of trust. They determined that one of the motivations behind staff not participating in company programmes was due to a lack of trust in the motives behind the programmes. The irony of the study conducted was that a lack of trust was a source of stress for the employees, which also then contributed to staff not participating in the stress management programme offered. This would suggest that a lack of trust can not only contribute to stress but even potentially result in staff not making use of opportunities to reduce their stress.

In terms of the effect of leadership on employee stress levels, Stare, Pezdir, and Boštjančič (2013) found that passive-avoidant leadership styles contributed to employees making use of negative coping strategies such as escape and avoidance to deal with the stress that they

experienced. This would suggest that the leadership style adopted by the manager is likely to have an effect on the stress levels of staff, as well as the approach that the subordinates are likely to adopt to handle the stress. The study conducted by Stare et al. (2013) would suggest that managers that engage in passive-avoidant leadership styles are unlikely to come across as approachable, which contributes to subordinates engaging in negative coping methods such as avoidance, rather than communication and confronting the source of the stress. Johnson and Indvik (1996) add to this by identifying authoritarian management styles as contributing towards the formation of toxic work environments. This is apparently made worse by changeable or unpredictable supervision. Apart from enhanced stress, they also suggest that it might lead to authority violence, whereby employees act out against their employer due to perceived injustices. This acting out could take various forms but can include anti-social behaviours that have the potential to do harm to the employee, the employer and his/her co-workers. Stare et al. (2013) suggest that transformational and transactional leadership styles are best suited to minimising employee stress. They determined that employees were more likely to make use of positive coping strategies such as positive reappraisal and seeking social assistance where transformational or transactional leadership was applied. The results of the study would, therefore, suggest that managers that engage in leadership approaches that encourage engagement and input from staff are more likely to contribute to lower subordinate stress levels. This ties in with Brunetto, Teo, Farr-Wharton, Shacklock, and Shriberg (2017) who refer to perceived organisational support and its potential to serve as a source of stress. A lack of support would potentially enhance employee stress levels, whereas a perception of support could have the opposite effect. In the presence of transformational or transactional leadership, staff are more likely to experience support from management which could have positive implications for staff stress levels.

Morrison and Nolan (2007) explored managerial incompetence and refer to lack of support, poor communication and disorganisation as being managerial shortcomings or incompetence that contributes to creating a stressful environment for subordinates. They also found that employees were likely to attribute blame to managerial practices when they experience poor working conditions and stressful work. They go further to indicate that their findings illustrate "…the central role that managers play in the lives of those working under them" (p. 218). They also suggest that employees desire support and assistance from their managers, particularly when times are tough. If managers are incompetent, however, then they would not be able to cater for their subordinates' needs. The feedback that they gained from their respondents also suggested that subordinates have an expectation that management would assist them when

faced with challenges, but found that "management interceded or mediated far less than expected" (Morrison & Nolan, 2007, p. 218). Should management fail to provide the needed support, it is likely to do harm to the relationship and could contribute to unnecessary stress, and staff may engage in negative behaviours.

In this section, I look at how management can contribute towards eliminating or preventing stress for subordinates. A study conducted by Miller et al. (2008) suggests that the more resources employees have at their disposal, the less likely they are to require managerial input and assistance. They identified that employees desire additional help to assist in combatting stress and strain. However, when employees had access to all the needed resources, they seemed to view supervisor support as a hindrance to the achievement of performance goals and skills development (Miller et al., 2008). This would suggest that if managers provide their subordinates with the appropriate resources that can facilitate task achievement, then employees are likely to be less of a burden on them which would be likely to contribute to less stress for both of the parties involved.

Burton et al. (2012) refer to another potential remedy in the form of exercise. Their study supports the notion that even moderate exercise could assist in reducing managerial stress levels, which is likely to result in less abusive behaviour towards their subordinates. This intervention is, therefore, also likely to hold benefits for subordinates who could benefit from exercise as a measure to help mediate their own stress levels, and probably contributes to the reasoning of some employers who have started to make gyms available to their staff.

Collins (2006) refers to another remedy in the form of collaboration between management and their subordinates. He suggests that although management is normally burdened with the responsibility of reducing stress, they will not succeed without the support and buy-in from their subordinates. He, therefore, proposes that collaboration is the solution so that manager and employee can collaboratively identify the stressors present in their work environment and thereby work together to eradicate them. He also goes further to suggest that the collaboration is likely to be less effective where competition or coercion is present. McVicar, Giddings, and Seebohm (2013) support this notion of collaboration and also recommend that, where applicable, unions should also form part of the collaborative process. They go further to recommend that factors pertaining to employment should receive emphasis, as it is the work environment that causes the stress for the employee, as opposed to concentrating too much on treating the symptoms of the stress suffered by the employee.

Carr et al. (2011) suggest that managers should engage in prevention rather than cure when it comes to managing employee stress. They indicate that management can do so by carefully and regularly monitoring the stress levels within the organisation. By doing so, absenteeism, staff turnover and drops in productivity and quality that are associated with stress, can be avoided. Apart from monitoring the stress, they suggest that, if managers are to identify stressors in the work environment, they need to identify the causes of the stress, and from there implement policies and procedures which will assist them in managing as well reducing the stressors identified.

Richardson, Yang, Vandenberg, DeJoy, and Wilson (2007) refer to perceived organisational support (POS) as being a potentially valuable tool at an employers' disposal. George, Reed, Ballard, Colin, and Fielding (1993) point out that POS could be used to help minimise some of the strains that employees experience at work. Considering that employees often turn to their managers when they require support, managers are, therefore, well placed to provide the support, or at least help to cultivate a perception of support. Employees who have a perception of organisational support are likely to be under the impression that the employer values them and cares about their wellbeing, according to Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). This perception of support is then likely to translate into positive attitudes and behaviours. By providing support and looking out for the wellbeing of their subordinates, managers can transform the perception of support into a reality (Richardson et al., 2007).

Pretrus and Kleiner (2003) identify three key areas when it comes to managements' ability to reduce subordinate stress. They refer to the need for management to value the employees and their wellbeing; to be flexible in their approach to dealing with workplace stress problems; and to create and maintain open lines of communication. I have already discussed the role of valuing employees and how caring for the wellbeing of staff can have positive implications for their POS and how it is likely to contribute to lower employee stress levels. In terms of flexibility when dealing with stress, unfortunately, due to the variance associated with people, a one-size-fits-all approach to managing stress is unlikely to be effective. Quite often, unforeseen causes might also arise, and, as a result, management would benefit from adopting a flexible approach so that they are well placed to deal with challenges as they arise, rather than sticking blindly to a preconceived plan. The importance of open two-way communication has been raised previously and is essential for collaboration and joint problem-solving to be possible. Bischoff et al. (1999) place further emphasis on communication by suggesting that managers should be open to the idea of subordinate suggestions as well as tolerant of the feedback received. This sentiment is

supported by Ng and Feldman (2012) who found a positive relationship between voice behaviour and performance outcomes. This would suggest that employees are likely to be more productive in environments where they are afforded the opportunity to raise and discuss their concerns.

Fako, Forcheh, and Linn (2004) refer to previous studies and point out that positive relations between management and subordinates have had a positive impact on employee job satisfaction and stress. The authors go further to emphasise the importance of recognition, and how it can play a powerful role in reducing the stress levels for staff. One of the benefits of recognition is that it can be applied with minimal cost, time and effort but could have a far reaching positive impact on the workforce, and could serve as a valuable asset to management in the management of stress at the workplace. Wager, Fieldman, and Hussey (2003) also stress the importance of recognition and point out that timely feedback can be a very valuable asset to the employer. They also refer to the concepts of trust, respect, consistency and non-partiality. They go on to argue that if managers apply these principles, that it can cater for subordinates need for equitable treatment, and is consistent with Adams' equity theory that emphasises the importance of internal equity at the workplace (Adams, 1963). They are of the opinion that equitable supervisor treatment has positive implications for the anxiety of subordinates, which is likely to translate into benefits such as lowering blood pressure, for example.

This section explored the impact of managerial support or lack thereof on the stress levels of employees. Areas addressed included the impact of manager stress levels, bullying from management, management and employee training, managerial expectations, lack of trust, leadership style, managerial incompetence, management support, manager exercise as well as staff recognition and how it relates to employee stress.

As discussed under the control and demands sections, it is yet again clear that managerial support has the potential to influence employee stress levels either positively or negatively. Employers, therefore, need to be cognisant of the potential impact of managerial support on their bottom line and invest in equipping management with the skills needed to maximise the potential available within the employer-employee relationship.

2.5 <u>Workplace Stress and Peer Support</u>

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views peer support as the encouragement and support that employees receive from their colleagues (Edwards et al., 2008).

In a comprehensive Employee Value Proposition (EVP) study conducted by Coca-Cola (Potgieter, 2013), it was found that people are the primary determinant in employee commitment and can, therefore, have a significant impact on staff retention or turnover. Therefore, the stress or lack thereof experienced during exchanges with colleagues can influence intentions to stay with or leave their current employer. This should not come as a big surprise, as employees can spend more than 40 hours a week with their colleagues. This might be more time than some employees spend with their families. If the relationships are strained, the employee is likely to be stressed, which can then result in higher absenteeism, isolation and an increase in turnover intention among other things.

Related to the above concept, a study conducted by Ronen and Baldwin (2010) found that social rejection at the workplace contributed to an increase in stress and burnout among employees. Their results also suggested that attachment anxiety is likely to contribute to future stress and burnout. In other words, the fears that some employees go through regarding acceptance and abandonment are likely to contribute to enhanced stress and could potentially go as far as burnout. A fear of rejection alone can serve as a stressor for staff, whereas actual rejection is almost guaranteed to cause stress.

The study conducted by Ronen and Baldwin (2010) suggested that the fear of, or the perception of a lack of social support could contribute to enhanced stress which could result in burnout. However, Etzion (1984), and Schulz, Greenley, and Brown, (1995, as cited in Bischoff et al., 1999, p. 514) point out that the presence of social support can have the opposite effect. In other words, social support can be effective in counteracting the stressful situations that can cause burnout. This assertion is supported by the study conducted by Galvin and Smith (2017) that found that peer support could either serve as a source of stress or as a coping mechanism, and, beyond that, Rodrigues, Kaiseler, Queirós, and Basto-Perreira (2017) found that peer support was actually the most popular coping strategy sought in order to cope with workplace stressors. Bischoff et al. (1999) characterise a supportive work environment as one where co-workers "are good listeners and provide solid emotional reinforcement" (p. 514). Fisher (1985) suggests that social support can contribute to a more pleasant and rewarding work environment. As such it can be regarded as either a source of 'good' or 'evil'. The positive side of peer support is substantiated by Leary and MacDonald (2003) who suggest that there is evidence to show that employees who are accepted by others and receive social support are likely to experience less emotional distress. An example of emotional distress according to Semerci and Volery (2017) is parenting stress which they found to have an impact on family to work interference. As a result,

Ronen and Baldwin (2010) are of the opinion that employers should look to cultivate a "positive, accepting and supportive work environment" (p. 399) to facilitate the formation of healthy and constructive workplace relationships. Carr et al. (2011) refer to the use of social support to counteract the threat of stressors at work as the buffering effect. They use the term, because social support can provide a degree of predictability, hope and purpose which can be used as a buffer when faced with threatening or upsetting situations. The authors go further to suggest that something as simple as talking to colleagues assisted them in dealing with their stress.

Griffin (1983, as cited in Bischoff et al., 1999, p. 515) points out that "…co-workers and supervisors are the most significant providers of both negative and positive social information and support" (p. 515) Therefore, the potential of peer support is matched only by the threat that it poses. Employers, therefore, have a responsibility to create a positive organisational culture that facilitates the formation of healthy workplace relationships and encourages employees to interact with one another. This would assist in cultivating the social support needed to deal with the stress that employees encounter on a daily basis rather than to have peers contributing to the problems experienced.

2.6 Workplace Stress and Workplace Relationships

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views relationships as "promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour" (Edwards et al., 2008, p. 6).

This potential stressor is therefore centred around whether or not factors such as harassment, bullying or anger and frustration are present in the workplace. With the two previously-identified stressors (managerial and peer support), it is suggested that relationships with colleagues and superiors hold the potential to either cause or combat stress. If the relationship is an abusive one, it can take various forms such as bullying and harassment as mentioned earlier. Galang and Jones (2016) found that the poorer the relationships between employees the higher the risk is for bullying to occur.

Relationships in this context would include those with the employees' co-workers, as well as their superiors.

Bunn et al. (2013) conducted a study of the drivers of stress in the banking industries of South Africa and Australia, and found that limited information was available regarding mental stress related to workplace discrimination in South Africa, but went on to indicate that the threat of workplace harassment and discriminatory work practices have been identified as drivers of

stress within the industry. They also suggest that the pressure that South African organisations are under to reach diversity targets might contribute to harassment and associated stress at the workplace. Pattie (2006) conducted a study in America with nurses, and determined that minority groups (Latinos, multi-racial and African-American) experienced less co-worker support than their Caucasian colleagues and that this contributed to higher stress levels. The study also found that women in general also experienced higher stress levels as a result of the perception of having less co-worker support. Bowen, Edwards, and Lingard (2013) determined in their study conducted in South Africa that 11 percent of their black sample had recently experienced harassment and 14 percent indicated that they had experienced discrimination due to their ethnicity. They also reported discrimination in terms of payment and job security as a result of their ethnicity. Intolerance of this nature could obviously contribute to employee stress and do harm to employee relationships.

One of the potential contributors to anger and frustration between employees can be poor or bad communication. Carr et al. (2011) point out that bad communication "…is one of the most frequently cited major causes of stress" (p. 36). Bad communication is associated with unclear job responsibilities, lack of feedback or an inability to get hold of the individual you are looking for. All of which can result in anger or friction between employees, which would place unnecessary stress on workplace relationships. Morrison and Nolan (2007) refer to negative relationships as interactions characterised by conflict, concealment, manipulation, disagreement, animosity and disrespect. They go further by pointing out that the workplace is one of few environments where employees are forced into relationships, requiring them to interact, even if they do not want to. Therefore, if a relationship is strained, and the parties are required to interact for work purposes, it is likely to contribute to a stressful environment and might quite possibly result in disengagement and turnover intentions. This is supported by the study conducted by Moerbeek and Need (2003) that indicates an increase in staff turnover as a result of a bad atmosphere at work. Work relationships are likely to be one of the primary contributors to the bad atmosphere that they refer to.

Wager et al. (2003) suggest that social interactions and its impact on stress can vary from the work environment to the non-work environment. They make reference to work stress literature that suggests that social relationships are normally viewed as a moderator between work stress and health-related outcomes, whereas studies conducted in the non-work environment have suggested that social relationships "have greater potential to detract from wellbeing than favourable interactions have to enhancing wellbeing" (p. 468). It is therefore important to note

that poor workplace relationships can do considerable harm, and management needs to provide strong leadership to ensure that there is zero tolerance for elements of negative relationships such as harassment, bullying and any other forms of discrimination because, even though it might not significantly enhance wellbeing, it can, however, make a significant difference in terms of distress prevention.

2.7 <u>Workplace Stress and Work Roles</u>

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views role as determining whether or not employees "understand their job role and whether their employer ensures that they do not have conflicting roles" (Edwards et al., 2008, p. 6).

The two themes that emerge from the definition are those of role conflict as well as role ambiguity. It should not be difficult to see why these factors could contribute to stress. In terms of role conflict, the moment that employees are forced to choose one task over the other, they are likely to experience stress in terms of the decision. Part of the stress experienced would be as a result of the perceived consequences associated with the decision, such as not completing the work on time or disciplinary action. When it comes to role ambiguity, employees can become uncomfortable with the doubts and uncertainties associated with their work environment. Many employees prefer to plan and have some degree of structure in place. When employees are not sure in terms of what they are going to do, when they are going to do it, as well as how it should be done, employees are then not afforded the opportunity to strategise and to plan, which contributes to stress. According to Hu, Hu, and King (2017), role conflict and ambiguity is further exacerbated in roles where staff are exposed to customer abuse. As such, staff who find themselves in customer-centric roles are especially at risk of experiencing work role stress.

Tabassum (2012) refers to the combination of role conflict, control, role ambiguity as well as autonomy, and how it could impact on employee stress levels. I discussed control previously and identified that control can be used to counteract other stressors at the workplace, and it could be argued that the stress associated with role conflict and role ambiguity could be counteracted by providing employees with control or autonomy, thereby empowering them to take action or make changes where necessary. It is important to note that some occupations involve more structure and guidance than others. With rapidly-evolving technology, some occupations are constantly changing and evolving, which can contribute to role ambiguity and role conflict as lines become blurred especially in the presence of a team-based approach which

is becoming the norm in modern organisations. The team-based approach opens itself up to further stressors such as relationship conflict, which Baillien et al. (2016) found to have a direct effect on the prevalence of bullying at work. Control might, therefore, be a tool that employers can utilise to try and combat these stressors. Wiley (1991, as cited in Bischoff et al., 1999) points out that, employees "try to maintain a single identity across a variety of situations" and "could face a conflict between their existing identity and the identity required in a specific situation" (p. 515). He also believes that providing employees with control can counteract this. By doing so, they have more influence over their tasks, which can empower them to influence their own job satisfaction and can assist in reducing fatigue and burnout. Tabassum (2012) found that women and men varied in terms of the stress that they experienced on the job in terms of role ambiguity. This is discussed in more detail in a later section, but what it does suggest, is that role ambiguity may not only vary based on the nature of the job, but also as a result of the nature of the individual. Regarding control and work roles, it has been hypothesised that:

H$_1$: There is a positive relationship between control and work roles

Pretrus and Kleiner (2003) provide recommendations in terms of how the threat posed by role conflict and role ambiguity could be minimised or eliminated. They suggest that employees should be informed in terms of their specific duties or tasks, which could be facilitated through the use of a thorough and up-to-date job description which also indicates the relevant lines of authority. They also suggest that this is particularly important for employees who are required to report to more than one supervisor. They go on to indicate that the relationship should be simplified to avoid confusion, and managers should be trained so that they can appreciate the challenges that "employees face when reporting to more than one supervisor" (p. 73). As the above would suggest, the unintended consequences of a rapidly evolving workplace would be role conflict and ambiguity, and control could serve as a valuable tool in mitigating their significant risk in terms of stress. As identified previously, control also serves as a potential source of stress and, therefore, stress associated with role conflict and ambiguity can be made worse in the absence of control, almost adding 'fuel to the fire' so to speak. The cited literature therefore suggests that, in the presence of control, employers are creating an environment whereby employees are provided with the means to manage and confront their own 'workplace demons' and take a potential source of stress and convert it into a tool that can have the opposite effect, namely that of alleviating stress.

2.8 <u>Workplace Stress and Change</u>

The HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool views change as measuring "how organizational change is managed and communicated at work" (Edwards et al., 2008, p. 6).

Change can contribute to employee stress for varying reasons, one of the primary reasons being the fear of the unknown. Because the outcome of change is not always clear, employees fear what might happen, and are inclined to get caught up in 'what if' scenarios that contribute to elevating employee stress levels. Employees might, therefore, resist change to preserve their current levels of comfort and familiarity as opposed to shifting towards an uncertain future state shrouded by doubts and ambiguity. Employee stress levels are likely to be even higher when change is a mandatory, forced process, rather than voluntary.

Sugarman (2001) refers to reorganisation and organisational development as examples of changes that take place in the workplace. Panari et al. (2009) suggest that the aforementioned together with rapid advances in technology or technostress as Baseman et al. (2018) puts it, requires employees to acquire new competencies. Employees that do not take to the change, risk not acquiring the skills that they need in order to do their job effectively, which, in turn, can also contribute to other forms of stress. Williams (2000) builds on this by indicating that as a result of a trend towards an increase in workload and a decrease in workforce accompanied by rapid change, employee stress is likely to increase. Considering this, it should not come as a surprise that some staff experience stress associated with change.

Inalhan and Finch (2004) refer to place attachment as a potential stressor when it comes to change in the workplace. They suggest that place attachment "…is a significant part of the human condition" (p. 127) and employers should, therefore, practice caution when redesigning or relocating an office. Aspects of the work space that define place attachment should be retained according to the authors as they can provide a kind of familiarity in a time of change. Their argument is, therefore, that if employers are forced to implement change, they should do what they can to control the scope so that the extent of the adjustment is reduced to the minimum possible.

Another change that is taking place in the workplace, particularly in the South African context, is the shift towards diversity. South African companies are required to change in order to represent the demographics of the country. This has obviously required a considerable amount of change. Although the change is required and understandable, it is not free of conflict or stress. Bunn et

al. (2013) point out that socioeconomic status has been linked to work-related stress, and as the demographic of a workplace changes, the risk of friction, conflict and stress may be enhanced. Bowen et al. (2013) also point out that the shift that has taken place since the demise of apartheid in South Africa and more specifically within South African companies has contributed to experiences of harassment and discrimination for non-white staff that are now entering the workplace. This would serve as another example of stress experienced in the workplace as a result of change that would be considered more specific to the South African context.

McVicar et al. (2013) and Teo, Pick, Xerri, and Newton (2016) suggest that employers should engage the relevant stakeholders in the process when embarking on change. By keeping people informed in terms of what is going to happen, how it is going to happen, over what period and why, employees will be aware of the process as well as the purpose behind it and any benefits associated with the change. This makes the change easier to accept, minimising the fear of the unknown, and employees will feel respected and valued as a result of the consultation process. McAnaney and Wynne (2006) also point out the need for involving stakeholders and adopting a holistic approach to change interventions as they believe that in order to effectively manage stress that the intervention has to stretch beyond the individual by involving the organisation at large as well.

Another potentially effective remedy for reducing the stress associated with change in the workplace would be to sell the change. Earlier I referred to the need to consult and involve stakeholders, but employers can take it a step further by selling the change. Carver (1998, as cited in Walinga & Rowe, 2013) points out that "flourishing becomes possible when stressors are defined as a growth opportunity, creating the possibility for new perspectives, new strategies, new skills, and new behaviours" (p. 69). This would suggest, that if the change can be sold as an opportunity to develop and grow, then the employee is more likely to see the value in the proposed or required change. Apart from selling the change, DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) suggest that employers have a responsibility to ensure that the need for change is properly diagnosed, and that it is planned and carried out effectively. By doing so, ideal results for the employer and employees can be realised. They go on to suggest that, too often, companies fail to reach the desired targets through the change interventions implemented. They recommend that employers should first start by confirming whether or not change is in fact required, and if so, a well-thought-out strategy can assist in preventing negative short and long-term consequences for the employer and employees alike.

In conclusion, Williams (2000) points out that "organizations are changing rapidly, particularly in downsizing, re- engineering, and contracting out. With the challenges of change, it is important to focus on the impact on the human side of the organisation and to understand requisite changes and adjustment." (p. 98). By doing so, employers should be cognisant of any challenges that they might face from their employees during the process and can develop strategies to counteract this, and, by so doing, can minimise the amount of stress experienced by staff during the process.

2.9 <u>The relationship between workplace stress and Gender and age</u>

Thus far I have discussed the workplace stressors as measured in the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool (Edwards et al., 2008). I have investigated the nature of the stressors, their potential impact on the workplace and the employee, as well as how employers can try to minimise the threat that they pose to the workplace. In this section, I review past research regarding the differences in stress experienced by employees based on the demographic variables of age and gender.

Gardiner and Tiggemann (1999) determined that women experience more stress than their male counterparts in similar roles. They also found variances in terms of men and women employed in the same jobs in male-dominated industries. Miller et al. (2008) go on to suggest that the stress experienced by employees may be more as a result of individual differences, as opposed to the actual demands and or stressors present in the work environment. Gianakos (2002) found that, based on gender, the coping styles selected by employees varied. He found that men were more inclined to turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism, whereas women were more inclined to work harder and longer.

In light of above-mentioned findings, (Galanakis et al., 2009; Meško Videmšek et al., 2010; Rubina et al., 2011; Yu-Chi & Keng-Yu, 2010) conducted research on gender differences when it comes to workplace stress. There is little consistency between the studies. Varying cultural and work contexts have unsurprisingly led to varying results, with stress levels fluctuating across the genders from study to study. It might, therefore, be challenging to attribute variance in stress purely to gender, as other factors could be at play and, therefore, should not be ignored. Despite the variance in research evidence, Stafyla et al. (2013) determined that men are more inclined to experience stress due to interpersonal conflicts which are associated with less satisfaction and higher risk for turnover.

A study conducted by Pattie (2006) suggests that women were more likely to experience severe depression than men, particularly those that perceive that they have low influence at work and receive limited social support from their supervisors. They also found that job security is most likely to contribute to depression in men. This supports theory introduced previously, that suggests that poor peer and supervisor relationships can contribute to excess stress. Tabassum (2012) found that men are more likely to experience stress than women when it comes to role ambiguity and peer relations.

Regarding gender differences when it comes to coping strategies, Kohler and Munz (2006, as cited in Pattie, 2006) found that men and women do not differ in terms of maladaptive coping. As a result, the study suggested that women are "just as likely to take control of the stressful events and their emotions." (p. 220). Although their approaches might differ, the study did not provide any evidence to suggest that men are better than women at dealing with stress.

According to Bowen et al. (2013), women are more inclined to experience discrimination and harassment than men in the construction industry in South Africa. It can, therefore, be anticipated that women are more likely to be stressed within the industry when compared to their male counterparts. They suggest that "professional associations" and "professional firms" should address this issue on both a macro and micro level respectively (p. 632). It is, however, possible that this finding might be specific to the industry as it tends to be dominated by men and the same might not necessarily apply to the current study.

Although limited evidence was found of the impact of age on stress, Golembiewski and Munzenrider, (1988) and Schulz et al., (1995, as cited in Bischoff et al., 1999) suggest that, "younger employees are more likely to experience burnout and/or fatigue" (p. 526). Tabassum (2012) determined that employees aged between 20-30 experience higher levels of stress than their older colleagues, and also found a negative relationship between age and occupational stress. This would suggest that the older the employee gets, the less they are likely to stress, according to the study. This could be as a result of experience in dealing with stress, as well as familiarity with the stressors in the work environment. If individuals have dealt with certain challenges before, they are better equipped to deal with them the next time around. One might argue that the older employees are, the higher they are likely to be in the hierarchy, and the higher in the hierarchy, the more responsibility they are likely to have, which could have implications for the stress of the employee. Firstly, age does not necessarily translate into status, but even if the older employee is higher on the 'ladder', the additional responsibility could be countered with the additional control that they are likely to gain through a more prestigious

role. As discussed previously, control can play a significant role in reducing stress or mediating other stressors. Therefore, it may be possible that, even though older employees might be exposed to more stressful situations than their younger counterparts, their experience combined with control over their work environment could contribute to the older employee experiencing less stress at work.

Moore et al. (2007, p. 280) suggest that "…the interpretation and experience of work-based stress is different for varied groups in the workplace…" The authors see the value in considering various participant characteristics when measuring stress. The authors go on to refer to previous studies that have found a variance in stress based on gender, race, institutional type, discipline and rank. As such, demographic variables will form part of the empirical study which will be discussed at a later stage. In the next chapter, the field of job satisfaction is investigated.

2.10 Chapter summary

The chapter explored workplace stress and started with definitions of the construct. This was followed by the introduction of the seven workplace stress factors measured in the study. The seven factors include job demands, control, managerial support, peer support, workplace relationships, work roles and change. Each factor was defined and the manner in which it influences employee stress was explored along with previous research pertaining to each of the constructs. The exploration of the seven factors facilitated the introduction of the first hypothesis (H_1) which refers to a positive relationship between control and work roles. The final focus area was that of the relationship between workplace stress with gender and age, where any previous correlations between the concepts was explored.

In the chapter to follow, the concept of job satisfaction is explored with specific emphasis on previous research in the area.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

JOB SATISFACTION

3.1 <u>Introduction</u>

Before I embark on the investigation of the various job satisfaction variables selected for the study, I first need to define job satisfaction and investigate the nature of job satisfaction. Many different definitions of job satisfaction exist and, therefore, not surprisingly, the emphasis can vary. Diestel et al. (2014) attempt to combine various definitions and suggest the following, "individual job satisfaction is a work-related attitude that reflects the extent to which an employee evaluates certain aspects of his or her job – such as co-workers, the supervisor, career opportunities, the organisation, and working conditions – as beneficial to him or her" (p. 355). Totawar and Nambudiri (2014) have also tried to bring various definitions together into one coherent whole. "Job satisfaction is defined as the affective or attitudinal reaction to a job (Spector, 1985) and reflects the on-the-job utility of workers (Artz, 2008) … It refers to an employee's overall sense of wellbeing at work. It is an internal state based on assessing the job and job-related experiences with some degree of favour or disfavour (Locke, 1976)" (p. 104). Bowen and Cattell (2008) decided not to combine definitions, and argue that a universal definition does not exist and refer to job satisfaction as "a multi-dimensional concept" (p. 260).

What has emerged from the research conducted is that even though it may be as far back as the 1960s and 1970s, Edwin Locke appears to be the forefather of job satisfaction, with his definition forming the base of many studies. He has already influenced two of the definitions provided thus far with Lund (2003) and Droussiotis and Austin (2007) also quoting him directly with quotes such as "a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering (Locke, 1969)" (as cited in Lund, 2003, p. 222) and Locke (1976) "self-reported positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or from job experiences" (as cited in Droussiotis & Austin, 2007, p. 209). It is interesting to note the words 'perceives' and 'appraisal' as they would suggest that it is the employees' impression of their circumstances which dictates whether or not employees are satisfied with their jobs. The implications of this for employers are that they may be able to manage expectations or perceptions of employees in an attempt to shape employee perceptions and appraisals. We also need to ask ourselves, what workplace factors influence employee job satisfaction? Many

different variables have been measured in the past, and although job satisfaction has been measured extensively over the last few decades, just like the definition, there does not seem to be an agreement at this stage on the most important/relevant job satisfaction variables. For the purpose of this study, it was decided that the five variables of general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities and work activities would be the variables measured. Although this is not an exhaustive list, Al-Sada, Al-Esmael, and Faisal (2017) suggest that these variables have a larger impact on job satisfaction than organisational culture and leadership style, for example. These variables were selected as they provide quite a holistic view of the workplace, in terms of the working conditions, the relationship between staff and their co-workers and superiors, the opportunities for them to utilise and expand their knowledge as well as the amount of variety and control present in their work environment. By measuring these variables, variable specific data can be obtained and can assist in forming a general impression of employee satisfaction. Although other relevant variables are available, it was decided to limit the number of variables to keep the length of the questionnaire reasonable.

A concept that is similar to that of job satisfaction is that of job pride, which although similar, should not be confused with one another. Magee (2014) makes this distinction by pointing out that job pride "is likely to reflect wellbeing that flows from doing, while job satisfaction may be more linked to having" (p. 1091). In other words, the author suggests that we take pride in what we do and are satisfied with what we have. It is, therefore, possible to have the one without the other. For example, one can be happy with the fact that one has the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge (job satisfaction), but without acting on this opportunity (aka doing), the employee will not experience job pride. It should, therefore, be clear that the two concepts are related, but not interchangeable.

One may ask, why one should bother with job satisfaction? Why is it important? Chiang, Birtch, and Cai (2013) suggest that job satisfaction is of strategic importance and that employees that are satisfied can contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction as well as the profitability of organisations. Fu and Deshpande (2013) suggest that job satisfaction directly influences organisational commitment and, by extension, job performance. Toker (2011) posits that job satisfaction can be effective in enhancing productivity as well as creativity and commitment and can also assist in reducing the turnover of staff. Droussiotis and Austin (2007) refer to the fact that satisfied employees are likely to have a favourable impact on the time as well as monetary resources of the company. This they justify by referring to the time and money that is likely to be

saved when absenteeism and turnover are lower. Eskildsen, Kristensen, and Antvor (2010) are of the opinion that organisations can and should measure job satisfaction as it can provide meaningful input towards improving the HR and leadership capabilities of organisations. The discussion above clearly outlines the potential benefits of satisfied employees and more than justifies its measurement when one considers the potential benefits to the employer. This is emphasised further when we also factor in the cost or consequences of dissatisfied staff.

Not surprisingly, if absenteeism and turnover are positively influenced by job satisfaction, then it stands to reason that the opposite would accrue from job dissatisfaction. This sentiment is supported by Brown and Mitchell (1993, as cited in Toker, 2011) who indicate that, "Indirect costs associated with job dissatisfaction may include training, recruiting, and learning curve inefficiencies, as well as reduction in the client base." (p. 156). Droussiotis and Austin (2007) also emphasise the potential impact of low job satisfaction on absenteeism and turnover levels. In the presence of low job satisfaction levels, employers can also expect to encounter low levels of employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour which can have an adverse impact on customer service, staff productivity and associated performance.

As mentioned previously, job satisfaction certainly would not be regarded as an area that has been neglected in terms of research. However, Giorgi, Perez, and Arenas (2014) point out that although some similarities might exist across countries, there are also some significant differences when it comes to the job satisfaction variables that receive the most emphasis. According to Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000), some job satisfaction determinants are country-specific which includes job security and salary, whereas others vary from country to country, such as a job that employees find interesting which is not considered to be an important determinant of job satisfaction in every country. This would suggest that area-specific research would be of value, as not all data would be considered to be transferrable. As such, the specific area of public service within the Eastern and Western Cape has been selected as the target population, since sourcing too broadly may bring the relevance of the study into question.

As mentioned previously, there are many dimensions of job satisfaction that could be measured, and one could dedicate a lengthy debate to which variables should receive more emphasis than others. What the above has hopefully indicated is that job satisfaction is something that is important for employers, and the knowledge of employee satisfaction levels can be useful in determining how organisational performance levels can be enhanced. Zeffane and Melhem (2017) found that public service staff exhibit higher job satisfaction levels than their counterparts

within the private sector. This exploration can help to determine whether public sector staff are, in fact, satisfied and what areas of their jobs contribute to the satisfaction that they exhibit, if any. In the sections to follow, I discuss the job satisfaction variables as measured in the empirical component of the study.

3.2 <u>Job Satisfaction and General Working Conditions</u>

The questions in the questionnaire that measure general working conditions, focus on areas such as the hours worked each week, the amount of flexibility in scheduling, the location of the workplace as well as the amount of paid vacation and/or sick leave offered.

The working conditions are something that employees are faced with on a daily basis at work. Therefore, if they are dissatisfied with this element of their work, they are likely to be unhappy on a daily basis. If employees are not happy with the number of hours they work every week, do not have much flexibility in the scheduling of their work, do not like the location where they conduct their work or are not satisfied with their leave options, then this is likely to serve as a constant source of dissatisfaction for the employee, regardless of what their bank account looks like at the end of the month. Saleem and Qamar (2017) found that employee satisfaction with their working conditions was arguably as important if not more so than the pay they received when it came to the retention of staff. This is supported by Humphrey, Nahrgang, and Morgeson (2007) who point out that inferior work conditions have a negative impact on employee satisfaction levels. The opposite can also be true obviously. It is also important that these factors are viewed as independent of one another; in other words, staff can be satisfied with their leave options but dissatisfied with the number of hours that they work each week. The overall average will, therefore, be utilised to determine how satisfied the employee is in this dimension.

Kappagoda and Bhatia (2007) refer to the influence of flexible work hours on employee satisfaction by pointing out that "…flexible work arrangements that allow workers to work non-standard or flexible hours, or share jobs, may give workers a greater sense of control, greater job satisfaction, and more commitment to the employer" (p. 19). I discussed the matter of control previously and how powerful it can be for employee wellness. In giving employees control over the hours they work, they may be more satisfied because they can work their hours in among their other responsibilities. It can also facilitate a work-life balance and thereby minimise the risk of work-life conflict. Even if employees are expected/required to work in excess of 40 hours a week, the fact that employees can decide when they put in the hours could have positive

implications for employee job satisfaction levels. Groot and van den Brink (1999) suggest that control in terms of hours worked has its limitations by pointing out that "Satisfaction with the job content and with working hours decrease with hours actually worked…" (p. 359). This would suggest that the more hours an employee works, the lower the job satisfaction level is likely to be, and therefore, in this instance, control may have limitations. The argument could be that employees who can decide when they put in their 45 hours each week might be less dissatisfied than employees who have no control over when they have to put in their 45 hours; both employees are dissatisfied, but the level of dissatisfaction is likely to vary. Gunlu, Aksarayli, and Perçin (2010) suggest that hours worked is also viewed as an important component in managerial satisfaction levels. Hours worked and flexibility in scheduling can, therefore, be viewed as an important job satisfaction variable at all levels within the organisation. Although based on the above, working conditions are clearly important in terms of employee job satisfaction levels, a study conducted by Yeh (2015) in Asia suggests that the emphasis placed on it can vary from culture to culture. In the collectivist culture prevalent in Asia, working conditions received less emphasis compared to job resources such as earnings, job content, and workplace relations and are likely to have a more significant impact on employee satisfaction than job demands that include factors such as working hours and WFC. Considering that South Africa is regarded as an individualist country, according to Hofstede (2017), it would be interesting to note how similar or dissimilar the results in the study are when compared to the Asian study, as Asian countries are more inclined to be regarded as collectivist nations. This might be a viable option for future research.

The above suggests that general working conditions can certainly influence employee job satisfaction levels either positively or negatively. By measuring employee satisfaction levels in this regard, employers will be able to determine whether or not employees are happy with the hours they are expected to work each week, the amount of flexibility/control they have over their scheduling, the location of their workplace as well as the amount of paid/sick leave made available to them. The encouraging thing about this variable is the fact that these are areas that employers can influence, in other words, it is within their control. It can, therefore, be regarded as an important and arguably essential component that should form part of any job satisfaction survey.

3.3 Job Satisfaction and Pay and Promotional Potential

The questions in the questionnaire that measure pay and promotion potential focus on areas such as salary, opportunities for promotion, benefits, job security and recognition for work accomplished. The EVP study conducted by Coca-Cola indicated that rewards can be very effective in terms of attracting staff to an employer, but are considerably less effective in retaining staff (Potgieter, 2013). This would suggest that once the employee is employed, they may place less emphasis on pay but look more towards aspects such as workplace relationships and opportunity to grow and develop. Herzberg (1987) has also referred to the potential limitations of pay by listing it as a hygiene factor as opposed to a motivator, implying that pay is something that employees are likely to be content with, at best, but not motivated by. This is likely to have implications for employee satisfaction levels as well.

In the previous section, I discussed general working conditions, which included the number of hours worked by employees. Yeh (2015) found that hours worked can have a significant negative impact on job satisfaction especially in the absence of a satisfactory income. They found that when employees are content with their pay, the hours worked by the employee have less of an influence on the job satisfaction of the employee. This would suggest that satisfaction with pay is of more importance to employees than satisfaction with the number of hours worked, according to his findings. Satisfaction with pay may, therefore, be effective in moderating the potential negative effects of dissatisfaction with hours worked. The following hypothesis has therefore been formulated:

H$_2$: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked

Training would fall under the use of skills and abilities section discussed later on in the chapter. In terms of rewards in this regard, employees might be willing to take on more challenging jobs and environments in the presence of what is perceived to be compensatory rewards. A good example of this might be employees who receive danger pay. They work in less than ideal environments but are compensated for this risk. As such, employees are not as dissatisfied as they would normally be, due to the moderating effect of the additional income.

Deci and Ryan (2000) along with Luthans and Stajkovic (2000) suggest that recognition can be a very valuable tool as it can serve as an intrinsic motivator. Employees want to feel that their efforts are noticed and appreciated, and are more likely to flourish in and enjoy a work environment where they feel valued. This sentiment is further supported by Dias, Leite, Ramires, and Bicho (2017) and Savery (1996) who list recognition as one of the most important

factors in employee motivation and satisfaction. Chiang and Birtch (2010, 2011) and Unsworth and Parker (2003, as cited in Chiang et al., 2013, p. 399) place emphasis on the importance of equity in terms of employee rewards. They suggest that the confidence, certainty and self-esteem associated with an equitable reward system can have positive implications for the employees' experience at work. Clark and Oswald (1996) conducted a comprehensive study with 5000 British workers which suggested that the more actual wages exceed expected wages, the more satisfied employees are likely to be. The problem with this is that many employees have high expectations, and therefore it is rare that they earn more than they expect. Some employees might even expect more than they deserve and therefore experience dissatisfaction due to not receiving this. Previous studies therefore also recommend that employers ensure a fair distribution of these rewards. This notion is emphasised by Kifle (2013) who refers to own wages as well as comparison wages as being of importance. The study suggests that individuals regard comparative wages as highly as own wages. In other words, getting paid equitably in comparison to others is likely to be just as important to employees as it is to perceive a fair reward for the work done independently. This finding is consistent with the findings of the equity theory of motivation (Adams, 1963). Adams (1963) also suggests that both own and comparative wages can play an important role in determining overall job satisfaction. It was also indicated that making use of across-the-board pay increases may potentially do harm to employee satisfaction levels, as it could harm satisfaction in terms of comparative wages. If my colleague receives the same increase as I do, when I know that I deserve more, then it can affect my satisfaction negatively. The same could arguably be said for individualised increases if a fair and consistent approach is not adopted. Individual and internal equity in terms of pay is not easy to get right. However, if one considers the potential damage that could be done to the morale and satisfaction of its workforce. employers need to give ths serious consideration.

Another form of reward is that of benefits. Woodbury (1983) points out that benefits can be used as a substitute for wages without necessarily affecting job satisfaction negatively. Some benefit does need to accrue as a result of the sacrifice, however. By substituting wages with benefits, one can, for example, pay less income tax and as a result get more out. The reduced tax burden can, therefore, have positive implications for employee job satisfaction levels. Artz, (2010) postulates that this approach is only effective when the benefit provided is desired by the employee. If the employee is expected to make a financial sacrifice (e.g., no raise or increase) but is offered a housing or car allowance which the employee does not need or desire, then this is likely to have a detrimental impact on the satisfaction of the employee, even if it holds potential financial benefits for them. Employers, therefore, need to be informed of the desired

benefits of their workforce for these benefits to have the desired impact. Furthermore, Artz (2010) suggests that benefits can be too good, to the detriment of job satisfaction. Although this may seem counterintuitive, he refers to the concept of 'job-lock' which refers to the fact that employees might stay in a job or with an employer due to the good benefits because an alternative employer/job does not provide similar options, which forces the employee to stay in the job even if they do not enjoy what they are doing, which has implications for their satisfaction levels. Therefore, even though rewards/ benefits can be regarded as important, it does have its limitations and 'throwing money at the problem' is unlikely to have the desired impact.

Oshagbemi (1997) suggests that an employee's rank within an organisation seems to correlate favourably with job satisfaction. In other words, the higher the employee is within the hierarchy, the more satisfied they are likely to be. This makes sense if one considers that position within an organisation is normally associated with success, performance, prestige, recognition and enhanced income, and as discussed previously, opportunities and reward can have a significant impact on employee job satisfaction levels. This can also be related to Maslow's hierarchy in the sense that the closer staff get to their dream job, the closer they are to self-actualising (Maslow, 1998). The opposite of this would be where a lack of opportunity is present; for example, where limited opportunities for growth are present, and employees suffer from a plateaued career. Authors including, (Applebaum, Ritchie, & Shapiro, 1994; Ference, Stoner, & Warren, 1977; Kavanaugh, Duffy, & Lilly, 2006) support this by indicating that plateauing has a negative impact on employee satisfaction levels.

As discussed previously, pay has its limitations. It was pointed out that pay can be used to moderate the effects of factors such as excessive job demands or long hours. However, it was also mentioned that employees are more likely to be content with pay as opposed to being happy with it. Groot and van den Brink (1999) add to this by referring to past literature that suggests that higher wages would not necessarily increase job satisfaction. They go further to suggest that women are generally more satisfied than men with their jobs and "more highly educated workers appear to be less satisfied with their job" (p. 344). Educational level can influence expectations in terms of success and earnings which could have implications for satisfaction levels. Kavanaugh et al. (2006) support this sentiment by pointing out that in their study, the higher the qualification of the nurses, the higher their salary expectations were, enhancing the risk for dissatisfaction. However, if educated staff do succeed, progress and prosper financially, then the potential negative effects of this expectation can be counteracted.

Going back to the point of women being more satisfied than men, Crossman and Abou-Zaki (2003) point out that women tend to be more satisfied with their pay than men. Conversely, however, men are more inclined to be satisfied with their supervision. One argument for this is that women traditionally have had lower expectations when entering the workplace due to the bias that used to be or is present in terms of gender bias. As the workplace is becoming more diverse and equitable, it is expected that the job satisfaction of women at the workplace may drop due to higher expectations than held previously. A potential reason for men being more satisfied with their supervision than women may be that managerial positions have traditionally been dominated by men which could contribute to a lack of understanding or victimisation of women by their supervisors.

When it comes to age, Kavanaugh et al. (2006) found that "Nurses over 40 years of age were more dissatisfied with salary than nurses under 40" (p. 307). This could be because the nurses might have been in the role for quite a while and almost feel a sense of entitlement for additional income. They also found that nurses over the age of 40 placed more emphasis on matters such as flexible schedules and relationships with colleagues as being more important compared to their younger, less experienced colleagues. As staff become older, it is likely that they would place less emphasis on pay and focus more on the quality of their work environment. Furthermore, they found a negative relationship between age and education with pay, indicating that the older and more educated an employee is, the higher their expectations are, and therefore the higher the risk is for their job satisfaction levels.

As mentioned previously, financial aspects have a role to play in terms of job satisfaction. However, Clark (2001) as well as Helliwell and Huang (2011) point out that non-financial aspects such as job quality are likely to receive more emphasis than the financial aspects. Furthermore, Koustelios (2001) indicates that most employees are likely to be dissatisfied with their pay and their promotion potential. This may be because increases and promotions are scarce resources that are hard to come by and, as a result, employees are left longing for or pursuing them in its absence. Toker (2011) has also emphasised the limitations of pay in satisfying staff. They recommend that more intrinsic work factors should be pursued in the attempt to enhance employee job satisfaction. Bowen and Cattell (2008) also downplay the role of pay in employee satisfaction and place more emphasis on "…confirmatory feelings about career choice…" (p. 265) as having a more significant impact on employee job satisfaction. Despite the argument for the limitations of pay, it cannot be disregarded as a potential source of satisfaction, as Hussain and Soroya (2017) found that staff with higher salary packages

exhibited higher job satisfaction levels, although higher salaries tend to be accompanied by other satisfiers such as recognition and control which makes it difficult to isolate the pay as the root cause of the satisfaction experienced by the staff.

From the above, it can be deduced that although pay has its role to play in terms of job satisfaction (particularly when it comes to moderating the effects of other areas) it does have its limitations. Career progression can positively influence employee satisfaction levels if appropriate advancement opportunities are provided and if the employee is not going through a career plateau. Furthermore, promotion can be viewed as a form of recognition, and the literature has suggested that recognition can be a powerful source of motivation and satisfaction. It was also identified that benefits can be effective in counteracting dissatisfaction with pay if the employee desires the benefits on offer. Pay and promotion potential are areas that employees could easily become dissatisfied with if no action is taken. Once again, these are areas that employers can influence, and motivates the importance of measuring this dimension of job satisfaction.

3.4 <u>Job Satisfaction and Work Relationships</u>

The questions in the questionnaire that refer to work relationships evaluate the employees' satisfaction with their relationship with their peers, supervisors and subordinates, where applicable.

The EVP study conducted by Coca-Cola determined that the people we work with which includes, the three categories measured in the questionnaire as outlined previously have the most significant impact on an employees' commitment (Potgieter, 2013). In other words, an employees' commitment to its employer and their willingness to stay is likely to be determined by the quality of the employees' relationships at work. Their study suggests that our relationships with the people we work with are arguably more important than opportunities for advancement, the actual work people do, the prestige of the employer and the rewards that the staff receive, when it comes to staff retention (Potgieter, 2013). This notion is supported by Cronley and Kim (2017) who found a significant link between organisational culture, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Therefore, their study would imply that when it comes to employee satisfaction, the first and most important area to be addressed might be that of relationships at work when it comes to staff retention. Why then does compensation or pay receive so much emphasis if it is not as important? One argument could be that pay receives emphasis partly as a result of relationships. For example, 'I want to earn more because I work

harder than my colleague, Jim, that works with me, and I know that I work harder than him'. Or, 'I should earn more because my boss earns double what I do even though I work just as hard as he does'. Or, 'I should earn more because the guy across the street who does the same job as me earns more at his company'. In all three of the examples provided, there is a people component that influences the demand for pay; people are at the heart of the issue and the equity that surrounds it. Another reason why pay might receive so much attention is that it is easy to measure, identify and to compare. It is easier for employees or employers to identify inconsistencies when comparing numbers and figures, as opposed to comparing the quality of relationships. Regardless of the reason for this phenomenon, what is important to take away from this, is that as pointed out in the previous section, pay has its limitations in terms of its contribution to employee happiness and that workplace relationships may hold more potential for employee satisfaction. This should come as both good and bad news for employers, as improving relationships might not be easy, but if done properly can be relatively inexpensive and hold long-term benefits. However, it is not easy to identify what needs to be done and how it needs to done and desired changes would not take place overnight either, and would probably require training investment. Although addressing relationships might be a more intensive and deliberate process, it is likely to be more effective than throwing money at the problem. Employees will become used to a raise and find a way to spend it almost as soon as they receive it, whereas the employee is still left to deal with the poor relationship that he/she has with his/her supervisor, for example. Conversely, employees might be willing to work for less and remain with employers in the absence of higher wages where they are satisfied with the quality of their workplace relationships. This might sound absurd to some; however, if one considers that employees spend on average 40 or more hours a week with their colleagues, the quality of these relationships is likely to have a significant impact on the satisfaction of the employee at work and can even spill over into their personal lives. As mentioned in the section on stress, colleagues can potentially serve as a shield against workplace stressors or provide the source of stress and dissatisfaction. Workplace relationships, therefore, have great potential for both 'good' and 'evil', and employers need to do what they can to prevent the latter.

Bischoff et al. (1999) point out the importance of a supportive work environment, and how this can be facilitated through communication. They suggest that effective communication between employees and their supervisors can be effective in maintaining job satisfaction, as well as in reducing stress reactions. Yalabik, Rayton, and Rapti (2017) suggest that employee satisfaction with workplace communication is likely to benefit employee work absorption. Origo and Pagani (2008) support this by indicating that, "The greatest positive impact on both facets of job

satisfaction is produced by employee involvement, and the positive effect is more pronounced when considering satisfaction relative to intrinsic aspects" (p. 549). Chiang et al. (2013) also makes reference to the need for employee involvement in stating: "Exchange theory argues that when employees are provided with appropriate resources and support, they are more likely to develop an implicit obligation to reciprocate with desirable behaviours and attitudes" (p. 400). It is, however, important to note that the 'implicit obligation' that arises from a supportive environment might contribute to an unplanned source of dissatisfaction in the form of peer pressure. With the use of teams being common in the workplace of today, apart from job demands there is the added concern of peer pressure that is emphasised within a team environment. Karanika-Murray, Michaelides, and Wood (2017) found that, in the presence of high relatedness among staff, employees experienced job dissatisfaction due to the peer pressure exerted upon them. Therefore, relatedness at the workplace does not only hold positives for the satisfaction of employees.

The above would suggest that, by treating employees with respect and by encouraging and valuing their input, not only is job satisfaction likely, but other benefits such as employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour might also accrue. Grandey, Cordeiro, and Michael (2007) point out that a supportive work environment can also be effective in counteracting the threats posed by high job demands and low job control. Fu and Deshpande (2013) also suggest that other benefits beyond job satisfaction are likely by indicating that organisational demand and job performance are also likely to improve. Cheng, Mauno, and Lee (2013) also found that social support can serve as an effective buffer where job security is under threat. Hagemeister and Volmer (2017) do suggest however that employee conflict is not guaranteed to result in dissatisfaction, but that the emotional intelligence of the parties involved will determine how much of an impact if any, the conflict will have on the job satisfaction of the employee.

As the above would suggest, there are certainly benefits that are associated with a collaborative work environment that values input and encourages engagement from staff. Management, however, needs to set the tone in this regard in order to create a space wherein this level of participation is encouraged. Decker and Quaquebeke (2014) refer to respectful leadership and point out that it can contribute to employees finding it easier to relate to their leaders, and that employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, and their commitment to their teams and organisations can be enhanced as well. Ronen and Mikulincer (2012) established a link between the quality of the relationship between leaders and their subordinates and the

employees' job satisfaction level. Van Quaquebeke, Zenker, and Eckloff (2009) in a study on work values, determined that "Working for a supervisor who treats me with respect" (p. 9) was ranked as the second most important work value among all of the values measured. Another likely benefit of respectful leadership is that of less intention to leave according to the authors. This is consistent with the findings from Drescher (2017) that found that managers that delegate authority tend to be more likeable and has positive implications for the job satisfaction of employees. Tam and Zeng (2014) once again make reference to the role and importance of consultation, by pointing out that according to their study, "the description of a manager that resembled a consultative type is by far the most preferred type among the employees" (p. 363). Goni-Legaz and Ollo-lópez (2017) found that involving employees in decision-making could even aid job satisfaction for staff on temporary contracts. Ren and Chadee (2017) raise yet another desirable managerial trait: that of ethics and ethical behaviour. They found that ethical leader behaviour had positive implications for subordinate satisfaction levels.

The evidence certainly suggests that employees are likely to respond positively to environments where they are encouraged to participate and where they feel valued. As such, managers need to involve their subordinates in processes, even where they believe that they know best as this is more likely to result in employee buy-in and acceptance. Another benefit of a supportive work environment, according to Giorgi et al. (2014), is that it can provide employees with the support needed when they are experiencing bullying at work. Coetzee and van Dyk (2018) as well as Djurkovic, McCormack, and Casimir (2008) found that employees were more likely to leave organisations when on the receiving end of bullying in the absence of organisational support. Those that received support were less likely to leave. In other words, the support provided by supervisors and colleagues can potentially serve as a valuable buffer against most other sources of dissatisfaction at work. Cullen, Edwards, Casper, and Gue (2013) also suggest that POS can be very valuable for employees when the employer is going through tough times and can help to create a perception among employees that they will be rewarded when they perform to the desired standard. This does, however, place some pressure on the employer as they will have to 'walk the talk' as well, as it probably would not take employees long to discover that the illusion of support is only that. A level of reciprocity is therefore required for a supportive and collaborative work environment to take effect. Odom, Boxx, and Dunn (1990) indicate that a bureaucratic organisational culture is likely to be the most detrimental to employee satisfaction and that cultures associated with mentoring, loyalty and tradition as well as innovation, entrepreneurship and flexibility are likely to be the most beneficial for employee satisfaction. Which lends more support to the notion of managers collaborating with and providing support

for their subordinates. Han, Kim, and Kang (2017) suggest that managers high in emotional intelligence are better placed to effectively facilitate a supportive role and should have a meaningful impact on employee satisfaction levels as well as on service performance.

Thus far the focus of the thesis has been directed more towards the subordinate when it comes to relationships at the workplace. We should not lose sight of supervisor satisfaction, however, as their dissatisfaction is likely to have a domino effect that can have implications for subordinate satisfaction. Sutherland (2013) suggests that managers also long for relationships at work, by indicating that managers working with subordinates are likely to be more satisfied than self-employed managers working on their own. This is interesting, as autonomy and independence is normally sought after, but apparently not at the expense of work relationships, and is also consistent with the hierarchy of needs that states that as human beings we have social needs (Maslow, 1998). In contrast to the former statement, Sutherland (2013) also found that managers were, on average, less satisfied than their subordinates with less responsibility. So, although managers might long for relationships at work, this can come at a price if the relationships are not healthy. One also needs to consider the additional pressures and stressors that managers are faced with that can influence job satisfaction negatively, even in the presence of good pay and healthy relationships. Apart from actually desiring workplace relationships, Droussiotis and Austin (2007) suggest that the more subordinates a manager has, the happier he is likely to be. Apparently, the 'less is more' principle does not apply in this case. They argue that this is because of the competitive business environment that modern organisations are faced with, resulting in the adoption of a lean approach to staffing which provides a manager with limited resources with which to try and get a lot done. This shortage of human resources can therefore, not surprisingly, have a significant impact on the satisfaction levels of the manager. By having more resources at their disposal, the workload can be shared more evenly among the workforce contributing to less stress and fewer hours worked for the manager. The less stress and pressure managers are under, the more satisfied they are likely to be, which is likely to hold benefits for their relationships with their subordinates as they would have more time available to invest in the fostering of healthy workplace relationships.

Chiang et al. (2013) make reference to the detrimental impact that a lack of control, social support and poor workplace relationships can have on employee satisfaction levels. Employers could potentially mitigate these risks by investing in the establishment of a supportive and collaborative organisational culture which facilitates the formation of a perception of support within their workforce, which can then empower employees to deal with the workplace stressors

and challenges that they encounter on a daily basis. In the next section, the job satisfaction variable of use of skills and abilities is explored.

3.5 <u>Use of Skills and Abilities</u>

When it comes to the use of skills and abilities, the questionnaire refers to the opportunity to utilise one's skills and talents, the opportunity to acquire new skills as well as any support that may be provided by the employer in terms of additional training and education.

Employees possess varying skills and talents. Within the field of industrial psychology, we subscribe to the perspective that every employee has his/her own unique set of strengths and development areas. The intention of employers should be to draw on the individual strengths of employees for communal benefit, as well as to enhance or develop their weaknesses to minimise their impact. Employees that possess a skill or strength that they do not have the opportunity to utilise is likely to influence their job satisfaction negatively. The same could be argued if employees have a weakness that is holding their performance or career progression back, and the employer does not provide them with the opportunity to improve in that particular area. The concept of person-job fit is also important in this context, as alignment between the skill set of the employee and the requirements of the job, will determine what combination of skills and weaknesses will be relevant in that particular environment. If the employee requires a particular skill, does the employer provide the required support in order to assist in bridging the gap? The inclusion of this variable in the study would suggest that providing employees with the opportunities to draw on their talents as well as cultivating an environment in which they can develop new ones is significant in terms of employee satisfaction. The following authors, (Arunachalam & Palanichamy, 2017; Gil & Mataveli, 2017; Ocen, Francis, & Angundaru, 2017) argue that training plays a major role in employee job satisfaction. This is supported by the Coca-Cola EVP study (Potgieter, 2013), that indicates that opportunities are regarded as one of the most important factors in attracting and retaining staff, and training and providing staff with opportunities to draw on their skills would fall under this paradigm.

When it comes to training, Bandura (1977) points out that targeted training directed at the demands of the workplace can be effective in enhancing the self-efficacy of employees. Employees will then be equipped to deal with challenging job demands rather than feel overwhelmed by it. According to Mayer, Ehrhart, and Schneider (2009), the employees would then experience reduced negative influences within their work environment which would have positive implications for their job satisfaction levels. Warech and Tracey (2004) suggest that, by

upgrading the problem-solving ability of employees, they are also better equipped to deal with the challenges that their work environment is likely to provide. By providing employees with training, employers can, therefore, assist their employees in acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities that they require for their job today as well as in the future. By providing employees with the opportunity to acquire these skills, their performance is likely to benefit which should have a positive impact on the satisfaction of the employee. Training can also assist with task identity, which according to Mayfield (2013, p. 58), "is closely related to job satisfaction".

One of the challenges of providing employees with training, however, is the fact that it does not only enhance the skills of employees, it also enhances their expectations in terms of earnings and progression within the company. If these expectations are not met, then it is likely that employee satisfaction will be affected negatively. Groot and van den Brink (1999) support this by indicating that "more highly educated workers are less satisfied with their job than less educated workers" (p. 344). Employers, therefore, have a responsibility to draw on and reward employees for acquiring these new skills or risk losing them to competitors that provide them with the opportunity to apply this new knowledge. In environments like South Africa where we have a high unemployment rate, employers might find themselves in a situation where they have staff that have the potential to work at a higher level without the opportunity to do so, both internally or externally. This occurs more as a result of a lack of opportunity, as opposed to a lack of potential. This can, therefore, lead to an environment where, even if employers do the right thing by developing their staff, which should be a source of satisfaction, they unintentionally contribute to job dissatisfaction due to their inability to cater for the enhanced expectations associated with training.

Based on the above, employees want their employers to assist them in acquiring the skills that they need in order to perform on the job; they also want to be provided with the opportunity to enhance their skills in order to make them more promotable; and they desire appropriate person-job fit which provides employees with the opportunity to apply the skills and talents that they possess. Should employers succeed in cultivating a work environment of this nature, they are likely to breed an environment geared towards high employee job satisfaction levels.

3.6 Job Satisfaction and Work Activities

The questionnaire measures work activities by addressing the areas of variety in one's work, the amount of independence an employee has in their work, as well as whether or not the employee has the opportunity to change or alter their work environment and responsibilities.

Monotony at work can contribute to employee boredom, errors, accidents and dissatisfaction. Initiatives such as job enlargement, job enrichment and job rotation have emerged in part to help counteract the threats posed by a one-dimensional or monotonous work environment. The importance of variety is also supported by Bowen and Cattell (2008) that indicate that, "…feelings of personal satisfaction in doing the work, undertaking challenging and creative work, doing varied and non-repetitive work, and being allowed to show initiative with a low degree of supervision" (p. 267) have strong links with job satisfaction. The employee desire for autonomy is supported in the study by Rodríguez, Landeghem, Lasio, and Buyens (2017) that found a positive correlation between perceived job autonomy and job satisfaction. Apart from combatting the effects of boredom, other benefits can also be expected, as the additional responsibility and exposure can help the employee to acquire new skills, making them more employable while offering the employer more flexibility within the workforce to counteract threats to production such as staff turnover and absenteeism. When it comes to independence or autonomy, people, in general, do not like to be treated like children and prefer to be involved in processes and decisions that affect them. The concept of control has already been discussed at length, and providing employees with autonomy meets the need that employees have for influence, control and expression. In the absence of independence, employees might become frustrated and either disengage or engage in undesirable behaviours such as requesting transfers or seeking alternative employment. Similar to the concept of variety is the concept of periodic change. After a while, it is plausible that employees might get frustrated with too much repetition. In these circumstances, the question becomes whether or not employees have the freedom and opportunity to alter their environment to counteract the boredom. In some instances, the employer/manager is not the only potential stumbling block to changes in the status quo. The nature of the job might also provide inherent limitations to the amount of variety and self-expression available within that environment. These limitations can understandably have implications for the satisfaction of the employee. It is also important to note that not all employees crave autonomy and variety, and it is also something that can evolve over time for each employee. Some employees may prefer structure, consistency and routine, and might be uncomfortable in a role that requires them to apply their own mind and set their own parameters. If one considers new employees straight out of college who have limited or no work experience, they are more likely to need and want guidance and a degree of consistency to acquire the skills needed, initially. Once they have acquired the knowledge, skills and confidence to do a job adequately or well, they may then feel ready and comfortable enough to apply their own mind to their environment, and then desire more variety and autonomy. It is also

important to note that when an employee gains autonomy, more often than not they also gain additional responsibility or accountability. The satisfaction with additional control and variety may, therefore, be tempered slightly as a result of the stress associated with extra responsibility. It can be argued, though, that the satisfaction with enhanced autonomy is likely to have a more significant impact on job satisfaction than the stress caused by additional responsibility, assuming that the responsibility is appropriate to the level of the position.

Ashforth (1989) as well as Hespe and Wall (1976) suggest that employees want to feel a sense of value and influence over their work environment as it is likely to enhance their job satisfaction as well as combat workload challenges such as burnout. Droussiotis and Austin (2007) also believe in the value of autonomy by pointing out that type A personality types (those with an internal locus of control) generally express higher levels of job satisfaction and tend to perform better than type Bs. Savery and Luks (2001) determined that high job satisfaction and less workplace stress was found with employees that had control over their workplace decisions.

Based on the above, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H₃: There is a negative relationship between workplace stress associated with control and job satisfaction associated with work activities.

In other words, if employees are not stressed about the amount of control that they have over their work environment, then their job satisfaction should be high.

Regarding variety in one's work, Koustelios (2001) indicates that supervision and the nature of the job have a significant impact on the satisfaction of employees. I discussed the role of supervision in the work relationships section earlier, but the nature of the job is also of relevance. If an employee dislikes the work that he does, then the support provided by the supervisor will have a limited impact if the job itself is not altered.

The aforementioned would suggest that employee demands for autonomy, control and variety can vary from employee to employee, and therefore places more pressure on management to engage with their staff in order to identify their needs, so that appropriate levels of influence, guidance and freedom are provided in order to help their subordinates flourish at the workplace.

3.7 Demographic Details and Job Satisfaction

Thus far I have investigated some of the variables that contribute to employee job satisfaction or the lack thereof. I also briefly touched on how job satisfaction can vary from person to person.

This is significant from an employers' perspective, as there might not be 'a one-size-fits-all' approach to maximising employee satisfaction. Employees' desires and needs can vary, and employers need to be sensitive to this. This section is dedicated to investigating whether any trends have emerged as a result of studies that have been conducted in the past, when it comes to individual differences and job satisfaction. The first area of investigation are the trends regarding gender differences and their impact on job satisfaction, if any.

Based on studies conducted by (Bowen & Cattell, 2008; Donohue & Heywood, 2004; Droussiotis & Austin, 2007; Groot & van den Brink, 1999; Magee, 2014; Linz & Semykina, 2013) there is a significant difference in the job satisfaction levels between men and women. With the majority indicating that women are more inclined than men to be satisfied with their jobs. So, case closed? Well not quite, as studies conducted by (Anari, 2012; Eskildsen, Kristensen, & Westlund, 2004; Toker, 2011) among others, indicate that there is not a significant difference between the job satisfaction levels between men and women. So, what could be the reason for this? Firstly, in the search for a job satisfaction questionnaire for this study, a myriad of options emerged. Thus, one reason could be the lack of consistency in approaches, as well as the methodologies utilised. This could contribute to a situation where two researchers could assess the same sample and get varying results if the measures used are not consistent with one another. Adding to the likelihood of variance is the fact that the samples are not the same, studies are conducted in varying industries, countries and cultures with varying sample sizes also contributing to the maze of information available at the moment. With different instruments, industries, countries and cultures at play, the variance, therefore, should not come as a big surprise. It would be logical to assume that the job satisfaction of women in a fairly egalitarian western country is likely to vary from women in a conservative 'traditional' country. One of the arguments that has been raised among the studies that indicate a significant difference in the satisfaction levels between men and women is the fact that women traditionally have had fewer opportunities in a male-dominated work place, and have had to contend with the 'glass ceiling' for many years. As a result of this, women are more inclined to have lower expectations than men in the workplace and are, therefore, arguably easier to please. With the workplace shifting towards equality, it is expected that women's satisfaction levels will drop as their expectations grow. This inconsistency in job satisfaction results based on gender is echoed by Crossman and Abou-Zaki (2003) that indicate that "The results suggest the existence of relationships between demographic characteristics and job satisfaction, but the evidence tends to be mixed, with positive and negative relationships sometimes identified for the interactions between same variables." (p. 369). The following studies serve as examples of researchers that managed to

find a significant difference based on gender, (Bilgic, 1998; Chiu, 1998; Clark, 1997; Dalton & Marcis, 1987; Sloan & Williams, 2000; Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000; Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989), whereas Brief and Aldag (1975) as well as Brief and Oliver (1976) failed to determine a significant difference between the genders. Another relevant consideration would be that of age, in the study conducted by Magee (2014) women in their midlife and older age groups had lower job satisfaction than their male counterparts, and it was argued that it was due to limited career progression and lower pensions than their male counterparts at a similar age that contributed to the lower satisfaction levels. This study is only likely to contribute to the confusion already in place, however, while it might not necessarily provide any significant input to the global debate on gender and job satisfaction, it can provide insight into the perceptions held by the employees employed within the industry within South Africa, as well as within the public-service industry. Despite the lack of clarity on the matter, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H_4: The job satisfaction levels of women are significantly higher than that of men

The previous section made reference to the role of education and its potential impact on job satisfaction levels. The argument put forward was that the more qualified an individual is, the higher their expectations are likely to be in terms of position and earnings. Due to the limited availability of prestigious positions within an organisation, one can expect to have a fair number of staff employed at levels lower than their potential or qualifications. If left unattended for too long, this can then contribute to dissatisfaction among these employees. This argument is supported by Groot and van den Brink (1999) who in their study of the available literature on the topic found, that "…more highly educated workers appear to be less satisfied with their job" (p. 344) They also found that higher pay would not necessarily result in higher satisfaction, providing further support for a focus on intrinsic sources of motivation. This is echoed by the study conducted by Eskildsen et al. (2004) that also found that higher education levels may lead to lower job satisfaction. Interestingly, they also found that managers were inclined to be more satisfied than the rest of the workforce. What should be taken away from this, is that employees desire opportunities to grow and develop, and employers need to cater for this need by providing staff with the requisite training to facilitate these vertical movements, but by providing employees with the opportunity to up-skill themselves, they also need to be provided with the opportunity to apply these newly-acquired skills, or else the initial gains made in terms of employee satisfaction are likely to be squandered.

Similar to the discussion on gender and job satisfaction, no clear pattern has emerged between race and job satisfaction, with a level of inconsistency being prevalent. Friday, Moss, and Friday (2004), for example, did not manage to find any significant variance between black and white workers in their study, whereas Bowen and Cattell (2008) did find a significant difference in their study. Hsiao (2017) determined in his study that indigenous staff exhibited higher job satisfaction levels than their non-indigenous colleagues. A further differentiation based on race was found in the study conducted by Viano and Hunter (2017) which found that subordinates with superiors with a different race of their own reported less job satisfaction than their colleagues that had superiors from the same race. Variance can be expected in countries where racial oppression still exists. In a country like South Africa where racial inequality existed for a long time, it will be interesting to evaluate what shift if any, has taken place over the last 20 plus years of democracy, with the demographic of public service having changed significantly over this time period. Race has therefore formed part of the demographic criteria of the research conducted. Under the gender section, the argument was made that women might be more satisfied than men due to lower expectations. Similarly, with the introduction of employment equity, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and affirmative action in South Africa, this could hold implications for the expectations of white workers in South Africa, as their options are more limited than they used to be, especially in the case of white men. The opposite can be assumed in the case of previously disadvantaged demographic groups. Accordingly, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H5: The job satisfaction levels of previously disadvantaged staff is higher than that of white staff members

Another variable worth considering in terms of job satisfaction is that of age. In a study conducted by Oshagbemi (1997), age was positively correlated with job satisfaction in the academic field. In other words, the older the academics were, the higher their job satisfaction was. It could be expected within this environment as it is likely that the older an academic is, the more knowledge and experience they have and the higher their qualification is likely to be. In many institutions, the level of education automatically dictates the pay level of the staff member. This provides a clear line of sight for employees in terms of effort and reward. So, the combination of high qualifications, combined with equitable pay, knowledge, experience and associated respect is then an ideal environment for employee job satisfaction. Despite this seemingly logical argument, Nigam (2013) found no significant difference based on age in his study within Delhi University, and argued that although the job satisfaction levels remained

relatively consistent over time, the contributions to the job satisfaction changed. At earlier stages staff were satisfied with their salary but unsatisfied with their job security. At older ages staff was happier with salary and level of decision-making, but unhappy with development opportunities and associated boredom. Traymbak and Kumar (2018) established a link between job satisfaction and autonomy for older staff. They argued that older staff have a desire for more control over their job and that if they have autonomy that they are likely to be more satisfied than their younger colleagues that might not be ready for more responsibility yet. Sarwara, Mirza, Ehsan, Khan, and Hanif (2013) found a gradual decline in job satisfaction with age until a tipping point was reached, after which a gradual improvement was found. The job satisfaction would bottom out in most cases during the employees' thirties and in many cases the employees resigned to find employment better suited to their qualifications and experience and once the desired employment was secured, a gradual improvement in satisfaction was experienced. This is consistent with Artz (2013) that indicated that a lot of staff experience status incongruence which is when the employees' title is not a reflection of their accumulated qualifications and experience, which then contributes to a decline in job satisfaction and an increase in turnover intention, this feeling is accentuated where the employee works under a supervisor that is relatively young. This is in direct contrast to the study conducted by Hosie, Jayashree, Tchantchane and Lee (2013) that found that young staff was less satisfied than their older colleagues due to older staff being content with their career progression and accomplishments when compared to younger staff that have ambitions that have yet to be fulfilled. Sharma (2017) also identified the ambition and progression expectation amongst younger staff and as such found that younger staff were more willing to work longer hours than there already more established older colleagues and as such working hours did not influence the staff satisfaction levels as much for the younger employees.

In many industries, qualifications and experience do not necessarily translate into equitable rewards and respect and recognition. Many employees also suffer from career plateaus, all of which is likely to influence job satisfaction negatively. So yet again, variance can be anticipated when it comes to age and job satisfaction levels. The results from this study should be interesting as many employees have many years of experience with the attractive benefits provided being an effective retention tool. In the public service, there are also many employees employed on a contractual basis, so a degree of variance can be expected. The finding from the studies conducted by Oshagbemi (1997) as well as Hosie et al. (2013) has formed the basis for H_6 and H_7, which read as follows:

H$_6$: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age

H$_7$: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and experience

3.8 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

In the chapter, job satisfaction was introduced and defined, this was followed by the definition, explanation and exploration of previous research related to the five job satisfaction factors measured in the study. These factors included general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities, as well as work activities. The chapter also explored previous research related to variances in job satisfaction based on demographic details including gender, education, race, age and experience. Furthermore, six hypotheses related to job satisfaction was introduced as outlined below:

H$_2$: There is a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked

H$_3$: There is a negative relationship between workplace stress associated with control and job satisfaction associated with work activities.

H$_4$: The job satisfaction levels of women are significantly higher than that of men

H$_5$: The job satisfaction levels of previously disadvantaged staff is higher than that of white staff members

H$_6$: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age

H$_7$: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and experience

In the chapter to follow, the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction is explored.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

WORKPLACE STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION

4.1 Workplace Stress and Job Satisfaction

In the previous chapters, I identified that workplace stress and job satisfaction are quite closely linked to one another, with a causal relationship having emerged in some of the studies referred to thus far. This chapter, takes a closer look at the nature of the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction.

As mentioned, based on the previous two chapters, it seems likely that a relationship exists between workplace stress and job satisfaction, but what is evident in previous studies based on this relationship? Burton et al. (2012) suggest that job satisfaction can be adversely affected by factors such as job demands, job control, low social support and poor relationships among others. All of these factors fall under the stressors discussed in chapter 2. Therefore, it can be argued that job satisfaction is likely to be influenced by the amount of stress the employee experiences in the areas listed while noting that the variables identified do not consist of an exhaustive list and that other workplace stressors are likely to exist and may also influence job satisfaction.

McCraty, Atkinson, and Tomasino (2003) argue for the likelihood of a workplace stress and job satisfaction relationship, by indicating that they have found that workplace stress interventions have had a positive impact on employee health and job satisfaction levels. This is supported by Burke (1988, as cited in Fairbrother & Warn, 2003, p. 8) along with the following authors, (Leong, Furnham, Cary, & Cooper, 1996; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992) who suggest that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and workplace stress.

Upon analysis of the literature, Fairbrother and Warn (2003) suggest that, although a relationship is present there appears to be a level of inconsistency across the studies. "The same workplace factors are not consistently related to stress in all work places, and the relationship between stress and job satisfaction can differ depending on the group being investigated…" (p. 8).

It is, therefore, possible that a causal relationship might be found between workplace stress and job satisfaction in this study. However, the relationships might vary from other studies due to the

specific nature of the sample. Due to the likelihood of the relationship, the following hypothesis has been posed:

H₈: There is a negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction

In other words, if workplace stress is high, then job satisfaction will be low and vice versa.

In chapter 2, I discussed workplace relationships as a stressor at work. I made reference to the fact that considering that employees could end up spending more than 40 hours a week with their colleagues, it can serve as a significant stressor. The question is then, can this influence employee job satisfaction? The answer is yes, according to Morrison and Nolan (2007), because "If someone is experiencing animosity or obstruction in the workplace, they are likely to be less satisfied with their job than someone not having to deal with interpersonal negativity" (p. 206). This is supported by O'Neil and Davis (2011) who found that tension between staff contributes to lower satisfaction as well as higher turnover. The EVP study conducted by Coca-Cola (Potgieter, 2013) also suggests that people in the workplace are the primary contributors to employee commitment and intentions to stay. In other words, if relationships at work serve as a source of stress, it is likely to decrease the satisfaction of employees which could result in disengagement or intentions to leave.

Various authors have established a link between burnout, which could be viewed as excessive stress, and job satisfaction. Carr et al. (2011) indicate that the demands of the job, "can result in diminishing worker satisfaction, burnout and physical illness" (p. 37) This is supported by both Ali and Ali (2014) as well as Tsigilis, Koustelios, and Togia (2004) who found a negative relationship between job satisfaction and burnout, implying that higher burnout levels are likely to be associated with lower job satisfaction levels. Studies by (Borg & Riding, 1991; Jamal & Badawi, 1995; Kutcher, Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, & Masco, 2010), refer to a link between stress and burnout and job satisfaction. This should not come as a surprise. If we accept that stress influences job satisfaction levels, then it stands to reason that excessive stress in the form of burnout would also.

In chapter 2, I emphasised the importance of control for employees and how it can assist in reducing stress, or can contribute to excessive stress. I also indicated how a lack of control has contributed to poor employee health and workplace violence in the past. I also made reference to Kappagoda and Bhatia (2007) who emphasise the importance of employee control in the form of initiatives such as job sharing and flexitime as it holds potential benefits for both the employer and the employee. By giving employees more control over their work environment,

they are empowered to influence factors that contribute to stress, thereby providing the employee with the opportunity to reduce their own stress which is then likely to have positive implications for their job satisfaction levels.

In chapter 2, I referred to Bischoff et al. (1999) who pointed out that control can be used to mitigate the stress associated with role conflict, which is then likely to influence job satisfaction and the threat of burnout positively. Rogers, Clow, and Kash (1994) build on this by suggesting that, "…as role conflict increases, role clarity and job tension increase and job satisfaction decreases…" (p. 15). They go on to suggest, that the high stress and low satisfaction associated with role conflict is also likely to contribute to an increase in turnover intentions. The above would suggest that control, role conflict and job satisfaction are all linked, which can then influence turnover as well. Role conflict can contribute to excessive stress in the absence of control, which is likely to influence job satisfaction negatively, which in turn can result in labour turnover.

Under the workplace relationships heading in chapter two, bullying was identified as one of the sources of stress that some employees encounter on the job. Bullying is measured in item 21 in the workplace stress questionnaire. Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, and Cooper (2011) define bullying as, "being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach," and "being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm" (p. 32). Giorgi et al. (2014) suggest that prolonged bullying could result in physical and psychological stress. Interestingly, they found that job satisfaction decreases in the presence of bullying but only up to a point. They actually found that in the presence of intense exposure to bullying that job satisfaction tends to be high. They argue that this may be due to people becoming familiar with, and used to bullying, and may then accept it as part of the organisational culture. They also suggest that some employees might be willing to be more accepting of bullying if it can benefit their career development and/or job stability. Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, and Harvey (2007) posit that bullying can also be an effective managerial tool in the sense that managers can use coercive power (which they view as a source of bullying) to get uncooperative subordinates to participate, however this approach might not guarantee the desired results, as Rai and Agarwal (2018) established a link between bullying, lower job satisfaction and associated intentions to quit their jobs. The above would, therefore, suggest that perception can play an important role in determining whether or not an employee experiences stress and job dissatisfaction associated with bullying. The authors also indicate that variance in perceptions could be found based on factors such as job position and gender.

As discussed previously, variance was found when it comes to stress and satisfaction related to demographic factors. Fako et al. (2004) refer to tenure, and how it can potentially influence job satisfaction and workplace stress. Several studies (Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986; Norbeck, 1985a, 1985b; Schultz, 1993; Weisman, Alexander, & Chase, 1980) (as cited in Fako et al., 2004, p. 109) have suggested a link between tenure and lower stress and higher job satisfaction levels. Interestingly though, they found a positive relationship between tenure and burnout, meaning that the longer the employee was employed, the higher the risk of burnout. This could be due to the taxing nature of the nursing industry that is likely to wear down employees over time, and thereby contribute to higher risk of burnout. Yet again, however, inconsistency has been found in the literature, with the following authors (Blegen, 1993; Decker, 1985; Lucas, Atwood, and Hagaman, 1993) failing to establish any significant links. Fako et al. (2004) did, however, determine that a lack of recognition and support from supervisors, and workplace stressors discussed previously, are important in determining employee satisfaction and stress.

Bowen and Cattell (2008) conducted a study with quantity surveyors in South Africa and found that 13% of their sample experienced racial harassment, 6% experienced harassment based on gender and 4% reported sexual harassment. When it came to discrimination, race (35%), gender (12%), education (7%) and religious affiliation (4%) were the sources of discrimination that emerged. Interestingly, they were not able to establish a link between job satisfaction and harassment, but the same cannot be said for job satisfaction and discrimination. They found that racial and religious discrimination were linked to lower levels of job satisfaction, particularly in the case of racial discrimination. These forms of discrimination violate the Constitution of South Africa, and therefore should serve as an area of concern. With questions such as, 'I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour', 'There is friction or anger between colleagues', 'I am subject to bullying at work', 'I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues' (Edwards et al., 2008), the instrument selected can provide valuable insight into discrimination and harassment when combined with the demographic variables.

Although studies on job satisfaction and workplace stress have been conducted within South Africa in various industries, as the section above would suggest, the researcher has not been able to find a study within the South African context or elsewhere for that matter that has combined the instruments used in this study. As such, the study should provide valuable insight into the viability of the instruments selected, as well as hopefully provide additional insight into

the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction within the public service in South Africa.

4.2 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

The chapter investigated the previous research related to the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction and lead to the formation of H_8 which proposes that a negative relationship exists between workplace stress and job satisfaction. Further exploration into this relationship included the relationship between workplace relationships and work demands/burnout as a source of stress and its associated impact on job satisfaction levels. Although tenure appears to have positive implications for workplace stress and job satisfaction levels it also has a higher correlation with employee burnout. Previous research found that by reducing stress related to control and role conflict had a positive impact on job satisfaction levels.

Varying perspectives on the link between stress associated with bullying and its influence on job satisfaction was introduced and a general consensus could not be reached regarding the extent of the relationship between bullying and job satisfaction. A study conducted by Bowen and Cattell (2008) failed to establish a link between harassment and job satisfaction, however they did find a relationship between discrimination related to religion and race and associated job satisfaction levels, whereas Rai and Agarwal (2018) did manage to establish a link between bullying, intentions to quit and employee job satisfaction levels.

Now that the previous research related to the topic has been explored, in the next chapter, the methodology adopted to obtain the empirical data used in the study is discussed.

CHAPTER 5:

RESEARCH DESIGN / METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to determine the job satisfaction and workplace stress levels within municipalities in South Africa. Furthermore, potential relationships between the job satisfaction and workplace stress factors are explored. In order to obtain this information, empirical research was needed, and this chapter provides insight into how the research was approached. The data collected for the empirical study took place over a five-month period from June 2014 to October 2014.

The research type and technique, the measuring instrument used, the sampling method, data collection and analysis methods, reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations are the areas that are explored in more detail.

5.2 Research Type and Technique

Initially, a qualitative literature study was conducted which assisted in the formulation of the empirical objectives of the study, as well as providing the theoretical underpinnings and justification for the empirical focus areas. A quantitative approach was adopted for the empirical portion of the study and questionnaires were used to obtain the information needed to conduct the quantitative analysis. A structured, fixed-choice questionnaire was used and was explained by and handed out by the researcher to the entire sample that formed part of the study. The vast majority of the sample completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher and was collected immediately after completion thereof. No preference was shown in terms of participants in the study, with the only requirement being that the participants need to be municipal employees. This enabled the attainment of a diverse sample in terms of age, race, gender and status which was the intention of the researcher.

The integrated questionnaire that consisted of a job satisfaction and workplace stress section was a customised questionnaire that incorporated two separate questionnaires into one. Based on the literature study conducted, these two questionnaires had never been combined previously, and as a result, the study could be viewed as exploratory in nature. The nature of

the measuring instrument utilised to obtain the empirical data is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Once the data was obtained, statistical analysis was conducted with the assistance of a statistician to determine any significant data and relationships that might have emerged from the data provided by the sample. The statistical data also facilitated hypotheses testing and provided the input required to engage in the discussion section of the study. To follow is the section on the measuring instrument, where the nature of the instrument is elaborated on.

5.3 <u>Measuring Instrument</u>

The instrument used in the study was the combination of two separate questionnaires that to the researcher's knowledge have never been combined before. These sections are preceded in the questionnaire by a demographic section which was used in order to facilitate the identification of any significant fluctuations in workplace stress and job satisfaction based on factors such as race, municipality, gender, age and experience.

The demographic section included the name of the participant (optional), the gender, race, age, current employer, job title and the number of years that they had been employed in their current position. These areas were included in the demographic section as this would provide many bases for comparison between the various variables measured in the questionnaire.

The job satisfaction section of the questionnaire was a generic questionnaire sourced from the internet and is included in the document as Appendix A. The questionnaire consists of 18 items that measured five different variables. The variables measured were general working conditions, pay and promotion potential, work relationships, use of skills and abilities and work activities. The questionnaire was selected as it was short and easy to complete. The questionnaire required that the participant provide a ranking from between one to five depending on whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the item in question. No validity or reliability data were found for the questionnaire, meaning that its inclusion in the research was exploratory in nature. The questionnaire did have good face validity, which according to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011) answers the question, "does the measurement technique look as if it measures the variable that it claims to measure?" (p. 173).

The workplace stress section of the questionnaire was also sourced from the internet, and is called the UK Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards work-related stress

Indicator Tool (Appendix A). The questionnaire consists of 35 items which measured seven different variables. The variables measured was stress related to demands, control, managerial support, peer support, relationships, role and change. This questionnaire was selected as it was easy to complete (it only required the participant to tick the appropriate box); it measured a variety of variables; and it had demonstrated good validity and reliability in past studies. Past studies on the questionnaire such as the one conducted by Edwards et al. (2008), determined 'good internal reliabilities' and found 'strong evidence that the scale was reliable and consistent.'

The customised questionnaire, therefore, measured 12 different variables, five job satisfaction and seven workplace stress. By doing so, research into overall job satisfaction and workplace stress could be enabled as well as comparisons within and across the variables. Through the use of the demographic details, any other significant fluctuations may be identified.

Potential criticisms of the questionnaire are that the reliability and validity of the job satisfaction section are unknown. As a result, the relevance and value of the data obtained would only be determined after the study had been conducted. Regarding the workplace stress section, to the researchers' knowledge, the questionnaire had never been utilised in South Africa, therefore, although the statistics looked promising in the United Kingdom, it is not guaranteed to be as effective in the South African context. A significant concern would be that many of the participants in the research would not have English as a first language. The researcher also had not been able to find previous research where these two questionnaires had been combined. There was, therefore, no basis to draw on in terms of how effectively cross-correlations between the two questionnaires could be conducted. The questionnaire was also only circulated in English and misinterpretation of some of the questions was, therefore, a distinct possibility, which could compromise the validity of the data obtained. However, the research was viewed as exploratory in nature, and the intention was to potentially help shape future research into these areas in the South African context. If promising results were to be obtained, translation of the measures for future studies might be justifiable.

5.4 Sampling Method

In this section, light is shed on the population targeted in the study, as well as the methods used to obtain responses from the target population.

5.4.1 Target population

Three areas fall under the target population namely the elements, extent and sampling units of the target population (Paddey, 2011). In terms of the elements, these were municipal employees working within South Africa. The extent was, therefore, South Africa and more specifically municipalities within the Eastern and Western Cape. The sampling units were the municipalities within the Eastern and Western Cape that formed part of the study, and these included the George Municipality, Buffalo City Municipality, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, Alfred Nzo Municipality and the King Sabata Dalindyebo or KSD Municipality. A sample was drawn from this population as the number of the entire population of civil servants in these municipalities to all intents and purposes indeterminate. The researcher had to rely on acquiring a sample from staff that he physically met in his capacity as a consultant providing services to the various municipalities that formed part of the sample obtained. In my capacity as a consultant, I would provide services such as psychometric assessment and feedback, as well as conducting a skills audit within the various municipalities. On these occasions, I would request staff to complete the questionnaire within the departments that I came into contact with. This process was conducted independently from the purpose of the psychometric assessment and in no way contributed to the overall outcome. These municipalities were selected as I would engage with these municipalities fairly frequently in my role as a consultant. Furthermore, by using more than one municipality as a site for data collection, I had the opportunity to boost the sample size, and allow for the comparison of results across various municipalities to identify whether any trends or significant differences were present.

5.4.2 Control categories for the population

In terms of the control categories, the sample had to consist of municipal employees employed within South Africa. Initially, preference was shown for municipalities within the Eastern Cape but was expanded to include the Western Cape in order to accommodate the George Municipality. No preference was given in terms of race, gender, age or other related criteria regarding the sample, as a diverse sample was an objective of the research.

5.4.3 Sampling frame

The sampling frame refers to the accessible portion of the target population (Horn, 2009). As pointed out previously, I relied on face-to-face contact to draw on a sample. I did not have access to the entire population, as this level of access would have required a very

comprehensive application and vetting process. Therefore, I obtained consent from the participants who were informed of the voluntary and independent nature of the survey. In the case of the George Municipality, I obtained permission from the human resources department to include the questionnaire at the end of the skills audit that was taking place within the municipality at the time. As a result of this approach, the number in the sampling frame was considerably fewer than the population within the various municipalities.

5.4.4 Sampling technique

The sample was generated through the use of non-probability convenience sampling (Horn, 2009). This meant that no preference was given to candidates based on their demographics. The only requirement was that the respondent needed to be employed by a municipality within either the Eastern or Western Cape of South Africa. The sample obtained was therefore as a result of participants that the researcher came into direct contact with and that were willing to complete the survey.

5.5 Data Collection

Hard copies of the questionnaire were handed out to municipal staff who I came into contact with during my employment as a consultant. The questionnaire was designed by editing the UK Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards work-related stress Indicator Tool by including the generic job satisfaction questionnaire and the cover page consisting of the disclaimer and the demographic section. The questionnaire is provided as Appendix A. Where possible, I issued the questionnaire before or after psychometric assessments that I administered on behalf of the employer. The purpose of the questionnaire was communicated verbally to the potential participants and was accompanied by a further explanation on the cover sheet of the questionnaire. This approach afforded me the opportunity to make face-to-face contact with participants and provided me with the platform to provide clarity regarding the questionnaire and its purpose. In most cases, I could collect the questionnaires on the same day that they were issued. Psychometric assessments were conducted with staff ranging from interns to executive level management, as the purpose of the psychometric assessments varied considerably. This provided a very diverse sample.

Once the questionnaires were collected they were inspected to ensure that the required data was provided, the questionnaires that were completed accurately were numbered and manually captured in a spreadsheet. In total, 231 questionnaires were received after which 170 were

deemed useable after inspection. The questionnaires were collected over a five-month period from June 2014 to October 2014. Although I had the opportunity to enhance the size of the sample, due to time pressures and the feedback from the statistician suggesting that a sample of 150 would be sufficient for statistical analysis, it was decided to commence with the next phase of the process.

5.6 <u>Data Analysis</u>

In terms of data analysis, a statistician from the statistics department at NMMU conducted the analysis. The statistician requested that I should populate a spreadsheet containing the relevant data in a format that would enable the statistical analysis. The statistician made use of Microsoft Excel and Statistica to generate the data appropriate to the study and its objectives. The results comprised of descriptive and inferential statistics which is covered in more detail in the sections to follow.

5.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics groups the data from the research in order to facilitate statistical comparisons and interpretation (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2008).

To this end, tables outlining the distribution of the population that contributed to the study were utilised to indicate the nature of the sample. Frequency tables and pie charts indicate the percentages in terms of gender, race, experience, municipality and age.

Frequency tables to assist in the interpretation of the items contained in the questionnaire were also used. Data regarding the means, modes and standard deviations of the 53 items measured in the questionnaire were reflected in descriptive frequency tables.

Cronbach's Alpha tables were used to group the various items together based on the factors that they were expected to measure and provided input in terms of how accurately those items measured the factors that have been set. Due to the experimental nature of the study, a minimum Cronbach's Alpha of 0.60 was advised by the statistician to ensure reliability.

Lastly, a combined job satisfaction and workplace stress factor table was utilised to indicate the means and standard deviations of the twelve factors that had been deemed appropriate after the Cronbach's Alpha scores met the desired criteria.

5.6.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics use the results (descriptive statistics) and allow for tests to determine the significance of the data, if any (Aron et al., 2008). Identifying relationships and conducting hypotheses testing was made possible through inferential statistical analysis.

A job satisfaction correlation table was used to determine any relationships that might exist between the various job satisfaction items measured in the questionnaire. P-scores helped to determine the likelihood of a relationship between the items. The same table was used to measure the relationships between the workplace stress items measured in the questionnaire.

A correlation table was used to measure the relationships both within the job satisfaction and workplace stress factors as well as across the job satisfaction and workplace stress factors. Studying relationships of this nature can help to expose any potential significant relationships that could help to enhance the understanding within the field or serve to initiate future research.

Analysis of variance and Tukey tests have been utilised to identify where any significant variance based on demographic detail exists regarding the various factors measured in the study. By doing so, one can determine whether or not the sample varies significantly based on demographic details such as age, gender and experience.

5.7 <u>Reliability and Validity of the Study</u>

In terms of the reliability and validity of the literature study (Chapters 2 to 4), most of the literature came from peer-reviewed journals. Its use is therefore deemed relevant and appropriate for inclusion in the study. Although limited due to availability, where possible, local studies were included. When appropriate, the most recent research was used to ensure that the most up-to-date data available formed part of the study.

For the empirical study (Chapter 6), a previously verified instrument was used for the workplace stress portion of the study. It has been used more than once, and apart from its good face validity, in two separate studies, it has averaged a Cronbach's Alpha score above 0.80 for the seven workplace stress factors that it measures (Edwards et al., 2008). The job satisfaction section of the questionnaire is as yet unproven and its validity and reliability are, therefore, unknown. The questionnaire does, however, appear to have good face validity, but due to the shortage of verifiable data, the study is regarded to be exploratory in nature. With the assistance

of an experienced statistician, the data obtained from the empirical study were collated and analysed, facilitating accurate and defensible interpretation.

The interpretation of results in the discussion chapter (Chapter 7) is based on sound statistical analysis and, therefore, informed quality analysis and inferences when combined with the reliable theoretical data obtained in the literature review, as outlined previously.

5.8 Ethical Considerations

One of the most important considerations in terms of ethics is obtaining consent from the participants. As they make the empirical component possible, their contribution is essential. I gained approval either from the appropriate manager to conduct the research or directly from the participant, and the questionnaire submitted to the employees was explained to them and contained a covering letter that explained its purpose. Nobody, therefore, participated in the study without knowing its purpose as well as how it would be processed.

Participants in the research were only required to provide their names if they wanted individual feedback. Employers that desired feedback would receive overall averages as opposed to individual results. Participation in the study was voluntary.

Regarding the literature review and throughout the study, appropriate referencing was used to ensure that plagiarism was avoided. Although the questionnaire measured stress and satisfaction, the confidential manner in which the information was handled prevented the staff members from suffering any consequence.

By involving an experienced statistician in the development and interpretation of statistical data, it was ensured that findings were a fair and accurate representation of the feedback obtained.

The actions taken as outlined above ensured that the study is conducted in an ethical manner which should hold up to any scrutiny or investigation.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted in the study. The approach to compiling the literature review and empirical component has been made clear, as well as how the results would be interpreted and communicated. Measures taken to ensure the credibility of the data used were addressed as well as any potential ethical concerns considered to be relevant to the study. In the next chapter, the findings of the empirical component of the study are outlined.

CHAPTER 6:

FINDINGS

6.1 <u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter, the findings of the empirical study are presented. The first section covers the demographic data of the sample. The second section focuses on the job satisfaction data. The third section covers the data relevant to workplace stress. In the final section, the relationship between the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors is investigated. Where appropriate, the hypotheses are introduced and tested. This chapter therefore facilitates hypotheses testing, comparisons with previous research and could also lead to the emergence of other unanticipated findings and, by extension, assist in inspiring future research topics.

6.2 <u>Characteristics of the Sample</u>

The tables and graphs in this section aid in outlining the nature of the sample that contributed to the study. The tables and graphs indicate which municipalities, genders, races and ages contributed as well as the percentage of their contribution. The first focus area is that of municipalities.
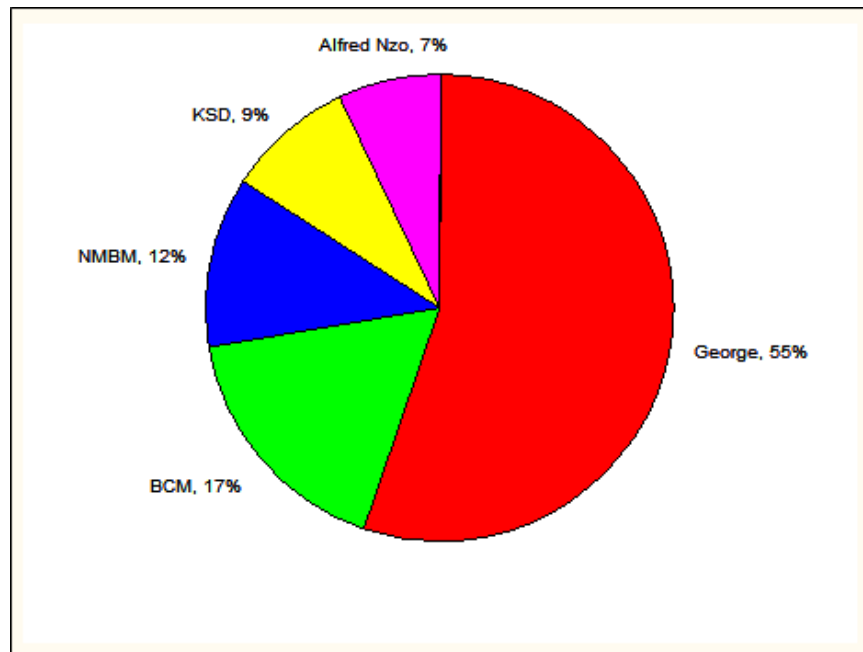
Figure 1. Percentage breakdown of municipalities that contributed to the sample (N=170)

As Figure 1 indicates, the majority of the sample (55%) came from the George Municipality, followed by Buffalo City Municipality (17%), Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (12%), King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality (9%) and lastly Alfred Nzo Municipality at 7%. Of the 230 questionnaires received, 60 were discarded because they had missing data, resulting in a useable sample of 170. The George Municipality is in the Western Cape, with the other four municipalities representing the Eastern Cape. Although the George Municipality sample is considerably larger than the rest, when the other four are combined, they make up 45% of the sample. There is, therefore, a good balance between the Eastern and Western Cape. The primary reason for the majority of the sample coming from the George Municipality was because a skills audit was taking place within the municipality in which the researcher participated, which then provided him with exposure to substantial numbers.
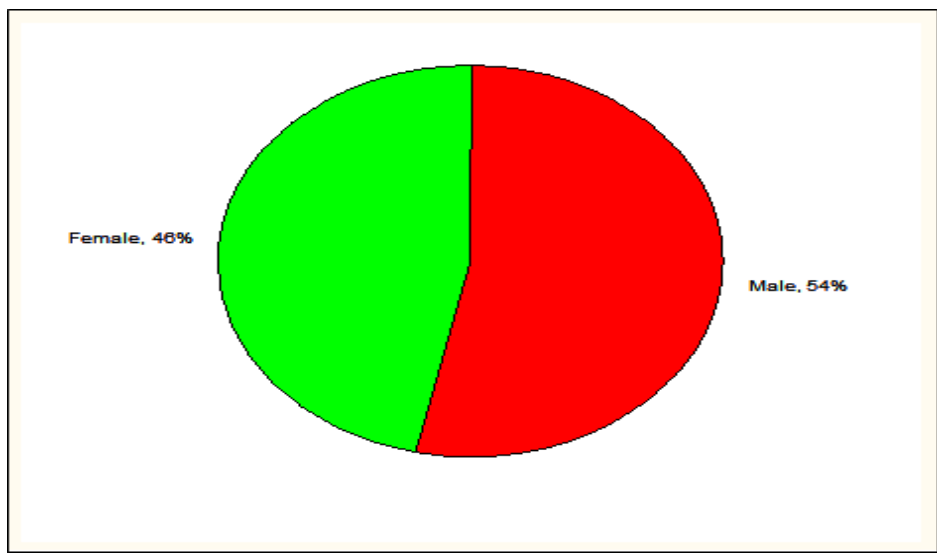
Figure 2: Gender breakdown of the sample (N=170)

Figure 2 indicates that the sample comprised of 54% male and 46% female participants. Despite the fact that availability sampling was utilised a good balance was achieved between the genders. Put another way, 91 men and 79 women contributed to the study and provided completed questionnaires that were deemed useable for the purpose of statistical analysis and comparison. The similarity in numbers made it easier to conduct comparisons between the genders based on the various variables identified for the study. These comparisons are done in section 6.6.

Figure 3 provides the breakdown of the sample based on race. The largest contributor being blacks at 45% (n=77), coloureds at 35% (n=60), whites at 16% (n=28) and lastly other races

contributed 3% (n=5) of the sample. Due to the small contribution of 3% for the others category, it did not form part of the factor analysis. Variances based on race are explored in detail in section 6.6.
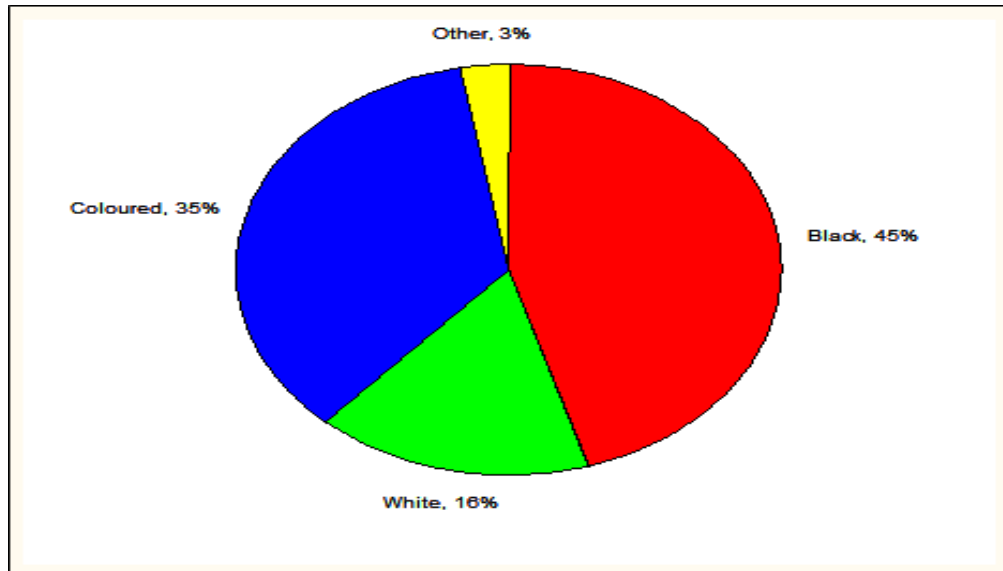
Figure 3: Breakdown of ethnic groups that contributed to the sample (N=170)

Figure 4 represents the age distribution of the sample. The largest percentage of the sample fell between 18-30 years of age and made up 39% (n=67) of the sample. They were followed by 31-40 years at 28% (n=47), 41-50 years at 25% (n=43), 51-60 years at 7% and 61+ at 1% of the sample respectively. It does not come as a surprise that the majority of the sample is made up of the younger categories, as quite a few of the participants in the research were on learnerships, suggesting that they are still in the early stages of their careers. The last two categories (61+ and 51-60) were combined for the purposes of the factor analysis, due to the paucity of numbers. All the age categories as outlined in the questionnaire, therefore, formed part of the sample. Variance based on age is explored in detail in section 6.6.
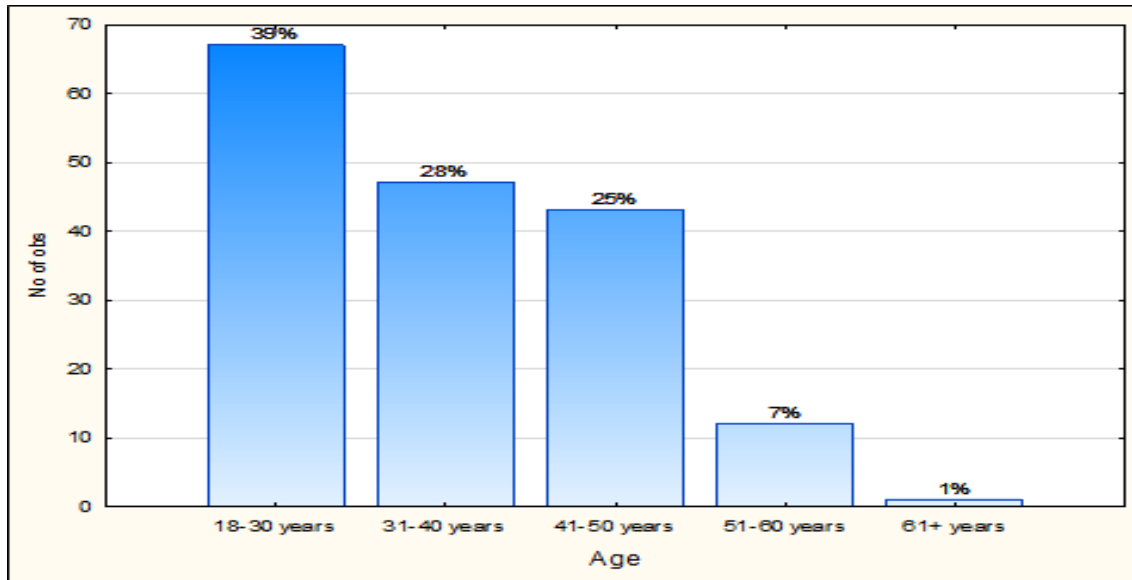
Figure 4: Age distribution of the sample (N=170)

This section has outlined the nature of the sample and has demonstrated a good 'spread' across the various areas outlined. Although convenience sampling was utilised, sufficient variety is represented in the sample obtained. In the next section, statistical data relevant to the job satisfaction findings are presented and explained where appropriate.

6.3 Job Satisfaction Findings

In this section, the job satisfaction portion of the questionnaire is analysed in detail. Firstly, the 18 job satisfaction items are investigated to identify where any significant data emerges. This is followed by a comparison of the job satisfaction factors of pay (JS1) and hours worked (JS5). This is done in order to facilitate the testing of H_2. Then the Cronbach's alphas for the five different job satisfaction factors are outlined to determine whether the questionnaire accurately measures the proposed factors. This is followed by investigating the averages of the job satisfaction factors as this helps to identify which factors the staff were most and least satisfied with. Lastly, H_4 to H_7 are tested as they pertain to job satisfaction and gender, race, age and experience.

Table 1 represents a frequency distribution table which outlines the range of the responses from the sample related to the job satisfaction items contained in the questionnaire. The average (Mean), as well as the standard deviation for each individual item is included as it provides an

indication as to whether the respondents were generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the item as well as identifying the consistency in their responses. Each item is discussed individually.

Table 1

Job satisfaction item analysis

Item No.	Valid N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
JS1	170	1,8	1,8	5,3	63,5	27,6	4,14	0,74
JS2	170	2,9	10,0	18,8	54,7	13,5	3,66	0,94
JS3	170	4,7	5,9	18,8	43,5	27,1	3,82	1,05
JS4	170	5,9	10,0	16,5	48,2	19,4	3,65	1,08
JS5	170	15,3	18,8	28,8	29,4	7,6	2,95	1,19
JS6	170	24,1	34,1	24,7	13,5	3,5	2,38	1,10
JS7	170	22,4	14,7	14,7	32,9	15,3	3,04	1,41
JS8	170	18,8	15,9	24,7	34,7	5,9	2,93	1,22
JS9	170	16,5	24,7	31,8	21,8	5,3	2,75	1,13
JS10	170	1,8	3,5	14,1	54,7	25,9	3,99	0,84
JS11	170	2,9	4,1	22,4	47,1	23,5	3,84	0,93
JS12	136	3,7	5,1	19,1	53,7	18,4	3,78	0,93
JS13	170	11,8	11,8	27,1	39,4	10,0	3,24	1,15
JS14	170	12,4	22,9	23,5	27,6	13,5	3,07	1,24
JS15	170	18,2	23,5	28,2	21,2	8,8	2,79	1,22
JS16	170	3,5	12,4	31,8	40,6	11,8	3,45	0,97
JS17	170	4,1	5,9	32,4	45,9	11,8	3,55	0,92
JS18	170	8,8	15,3	34,7	38,2	2,9	3,11	1,00

Item 1 refers to the employees' satisfaction with the number of hours they work each week. Most staff were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the number of hours worked each week with those responses making up 91.1%. A mean of 4.14 out of 5 is also the highest of the 18 job satisfaction items measured. The standard deviation of 0.74 is also the lowest of the 18 items. This item, therefore, demonstrated the most consistency in the responses provided by the staff compared to the other 17 job satisfaction items. The mean is highest for this factor of all the job satisfaction items measured. As such, the staff were most satisfied with this item. Only 3.6% of the staff indicated that they were not satisfied with the number of hours worked.

Item 2, which measures the staff satisfaction with the amount of flexibility that they have in their scheduling, had an average of 3.67 out of 5 with satisfied being the most popular answer with 54.7% of the responses. The majority of the staff were satisfied with the amount of flexibility they had in their work, with only 12.9% that were not satisfied with the amount of flexibility in their scheduling.

Item 3 measures the staff satisfaction with the location of their workplace. The average of all the responses is 3.82 out of 5, with satisfied being the preferred response at 43.5%. These results indicate that the majority of the staff is satisfied with the location of their workplace. The standard deviation is average at 1.05 when compared to the other items measured. Only 10.6% of the staff indicated that they were not satisfied with the location of their workplace.

Item 4 measures the satisfaction of the staff with the amount of paid vacation time and sick leave that they receive from their employers. The item has a mean of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 1.05. Therefore, the majority of the staff is satisfied with their jobs with an average amount of variance. The majority of the staff (48.2%) indicated that they were satisfied with this item while 15.9% of the staff indicated that they were not happy with the amount of leave provided. This is quite interesting, as in general municipalities are inclined to exceed the minimum benefits as set out in the basic conditions of employment act.

Item 5 which measures the staff satisfaction with their salary, has an average of 2.95, with a standard deviation of 1.19, which is the highest of the deviations listed thus far. The most popular response was satisfied at 29.4%. The responses to this item are more dispersed with 34.1% of the staff indicating that they are not satisfied with the pay that they receive.

Item 6 measures the staff satisfaction with their opportunities for promotion. The average for this item is at 2.38, which is the lowest of all the 18 items measured within the job satisfaction questionnaire. It is also the only item with an average below 2.5, indicating that it is the only factor where the majority of the staff were dissatisfied. The most selected response was 'not satisfied' which was selected by 34.1% of the staff. In total 58.2% of the staff indicated that they were not satisfied with their promotion opportunities.

Item 7 refers to the staff satisfaction with their benefits which includes health and life insurance. The average for the item was 3.04 out of 5 with 32.9% of the staff indicating that they were satisfied with the benefits that they received. This item has the highest standard deviation among the 18 items measured at 1.41. Therefore, the most inconsistency in responses was present within this item. In this regard, 37.1% of the staff were dissatisfied with the benefits that they receive. A possible reason for this variance could be as a result of the discrepancy in benefits received by permanent staff compared to their colleagues employed under contracts.

Item 8 measures how satisfied the staff' are with their job security. The average of the responses was 2.93 out of 5, which is neutral. Because the standard deviation was higher than

the majority at 1.22, there is a fair amount of variance in the responses: 34.7% of the staff indicated that they were satisfied with their job security, while 34.7% indicated that they were less than satisfied. With the state being one of the largest employers in the country and due to it also being a unionised environment, job security is probably higher than in most industries. The variance found could be due to contract workers that are uncertain about their future prospects.

Item nine refers to how satisfied staff is with the amount of recognition they receive for the work that they do. The average for the group was 2.75 out of 5 which is the second lowest for the 18 items. This is, therefore, one of the areas where staff are least satisfied. The most common response was 'somewhat satisfied' with 31.8% of the responses with 41.2% of the staff indicating that they were not satisfied with the amount of recognition that they received from their employer. Only 5.3% indicated that they were extremely satisfied indicating that the majority of staff feel that more could be done in terms of recognition at the workplace.

Item 10 measures how satisfied employees are with their relationships with their co-workers. The average for the item is 3.99, which is the second highest average. Therefore, the majority of the staff is satisfied with their relationship with their co-workers. The item also has the second lowest standard deviation, which indicates not only that the majority of the staff are satisfied with their relationships, there is also little variation in the responses. Regarding item 10, 80.6% of the staff are either satisfied or extremely satisfied. Only 5.3% of the staff indicated that they were not satisfied with their relationships at work. As dissatisfaction has been known to be one of the driving forces behind staff turnover, it would, therefore, be expected that staff turnover would be minimal.

Item 11 measured the staff satisfaction with their relationship with their supervisors. The result of this item is quite similar to the previous one. This item has an average of 3.84 out of 5, which is the third highest of the 18 job satisfaction items. The standard deviation is slightly higher at 0.93. Of the sample, 70.6% are either satisfied or very satisfied with their relationship with their supervisor. Only 7% of the sample indicated that they were not satisfied with their relationship with their supervisor. This would indicate healthy employee/employer relations for the most part.

Item 12 measured the staff satisfaction with their relationship with their subordinates. The average for this item is lower than the previous two at 3.78 out of 5 with the same standard deviation as the previous item at 0.93. The lower average indicates that, of all the relationships that the staff has in the workplace, their relationship with their subordinates is the one that they are least satisfied with. It is important to note that these findings are based on a sample size of

136, as not all of the staff have subordinates that report to them. Of the supervisors, 8.8% were dissatisfied with their relationship with their subordinates, meaning that more than 90% of the respondents were satisfied with this item.

Item 13 measured the staff's satisfaction with their opportunities to utilise their skills and talents. The average for this item is 3.24 out of 5. The standard deviation is high at 1.15. Of the staff, 39.4% indicated that they are satisfied with their opportunities to apply their skills and talents at work. Of the staff, 23.6% indicated that they were dissatisfied with the number of opportunities that they have to utilise their skills and talents. Variance in this item is to be expected as staff' at varying levels within an organisation are likely to vary in terms of how challenging they find their role to be.

Item 14 measures how satisfied the staff are with the opportunities they have to acquire new skills. The average is moderate at 3.07 out of 5. This item also has the second highest standard deviation at 1.24. Of the sample, 35.3% indicated that they are either 'not satisfied' or 'not satisfied at all' with the opportunities that their employer provided them to acquire new skills. Part of the reason for this could be due to the graduate trainees who did not have formal programmes in place, which deprived them of the opportunity to obtain certain desired skills.

Item 15 measures the staff's satisfaction with the amount of support they receive for additional training and education. The average for this item is the third lowest at 2.79 out of 5; this is, therefore, one of the areas that the staff were least satisfied with. The standard deviation is the third highest at 1.22 indicating a fair degree of variance in the responses. Of the sample, 41.7% indicated that they were either 'not satisfied' or 'not satisfied at all' with the amount of support they received when it comes to opportunities for training or additional studies. Once again, the variance in opportunities available to contract and permanent staff may have played a role in the deviation found.

Item 16 measured the staff's satisfaction with the variety of job responsibilities that they have at work. The average for this item, based on the feedback from the staff is 3.45 out of 5. When combined with a standard deviation below 1, the responses from the staff are therefore neutral. Of the staff, 15.9% indicated that they were not satisfied with the amount of variety in their work.

Item 17 measures how satisfied the staff are with the amount of independence they have within their work roles. The average for this item is 3.55 out of 5. The standard deviation is the third lowest at 0.92; there was, therefore, minimal variation in the responses provided. This is

supported further by the fact that 45.9% of the staff indicated that they were 'satisfied' with this item. Only 10% of the staff indicated that they were dissatisfied with the amount of autonomy they have within their work environment.

Item 18 measures whether or not the staff' is satisfied with the amount of opportunity they have for periodic changes in their duties. The average for this item is neutral at 3.11 out of 5. The vast majority of the staff (72.9%) were either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'satisfied' with this item. Of the staff, 24.1% indicated that they were not satisfied with the opportunities they have for change in their duties. Considering that 34.1% of the respondents were not satisfied with their promotion opportunities in item 6 it is, therefore, not surprising that a degree of dissatisfaction regarding lack of change exists.

Hypothesis two (H$_2$) refers to the relationship between the first and fifth items (JS1 & JS5) on the job satisfaction questionnaire, and will now be investigated in more detail.

Hypothesis two (H$_2$) reads as follows: **There is a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked.**

This hypothesis indicates that the satisfaction levels of staff regarding these items are likely to be very similar. With mean scores of 4.14 (JS1) and 2.95 (JS5) combined with the results included in Table 2, there is too much variance present to support the hypothesis as posed in H$_2$ and thus it is rejected.

Table 2

JS1 and JS5 factor comparison

JS1	JS5			Row
	Not at all / Not satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied / Extremely satisfied	Totals
Not at all / Not satisfied	1	4	1	6
Column %	1.72%	8.16%	1.59%	
Row %	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%	
Somewhat satisfied	5	2	2	9
Column %	8.62%	4.08%	3.17%	
Row %	55.56%	22.22%	22.22%	
Satisfied / Extremely satisfied	52	43	60	155
Column %	89.66%	87.76%	95.24%	
Row %	33.55%	27.74%	38.71%	
Totals	58	49	63	170
Chi-square	6.26	df=4	p=.18024	(Not statistically significant)

Data that emerged during the job satisfaction item analysis as well as the implications of the rejection of H_2 are elaborated on in the discussion chapter of the study. The 18 job satisfaction items are grouped into five factors. The analysis of the five job satisfaction factors is now explored in more detail.

Table 3 indicates the Cronbach's alphas for the General Working Conditions job satisfaction factor, which includes items 1 to 4. The Cronbach alpha provides an indication as to how strong the correlation is between the item and the factor that it is intended to measure. The alpha scores indicate that item 4 should be removed in order to obtain the highest possible alpha score of 0.64 for the factor. As a result, item 4 which refers to the staff's satisfaction with the amount of paid vacation or sick leave that they receive, has therefore been omitted from the general working conditions factor for the sake of validity and factor comparisons. At 0.64, it is also the lowest alpha of the five job satisfaction factors that form part of the study. It is, however, in excess of 0.60 which was the benchmark set for the questionnaire.

Table 3

General working conditions alphas

General Working Conditions	Cronbach's alpha:	0.57
Item no.	Item-total correlation	Alpha if deleted
JS1	0,42	0,48
JS2	0,44	0,44
JS3	0,43	0,44
JS4	0,20	0,64

Table 4 illustrates the Cronbach's alphas and item correlations for the pay and promotion potential factor, which is represented by items 5 to 9 in the questionnaire. The alpha for the factor is at 0.66 which makes it the second lowest of the five factors measured. This factor, which measures satisfaction with salary, opportunities for promotion, benefits, job security and recognition for work accomplished was left as is, due to the alpha being above 0.60.

Table 4

Pay and promotion potential alphas

Pay and Promotion Potential	Cronbach's alpha:	0.66
Item No.	Item-total correlation	Alpha if deleted
JS5	0,47	0,58
JS6	0,46	0,59
JS7	0,38	0,63
JS8	0,50	0,57
JS9	0,27	0,67

Table 5 represents the alphas for the work relationships factor. The score is at 0.67 which is above the minimum requirement of 0.60. The factor measures the staff's satisfaction with their relationship with their co-workers, supervisors and subordinates, where applicable. Items 10-12 measure this particular variable. Item JS10 is the item most relevant to the factor measured, however, all three items were retained for the purpose of the study.

Table 5

Work relationships alphas

Work Relationships	Cronbach's alpha:	0.67
Item No.	Item-total correlation	Alpha if deleted
JS10	0,61	0,40
JS11	0,39	0,68
JS12	0,45	0,61

Table 6 indicates that the alpha for the fourth job satisfaction factor namely, use of skills and abilities, has an alpha of 0.84. This is the second highest alpha for the five job satisfaction factors measured. An alpha of 0.84 would indicate that the items referring to the opportunities the respondents had to utilise their skills and talents as well as the opportunity to acquire new skills along with education and training opportunities, accurately measure the intended factor. Therefore, all of the items were retained under this variable.

Table 6

Use of skills and abilities alphas

Use of Skills and Abilities	Cronbach's alpha	0.84
Item No.	Item-total correlation	Alpha if deleted
JS13	0,66	0,81
JS14	0,80	0,67
JS15	0,64	0,83

Table 7 refers to the last of the job satisfaction factors namely, work activities. This factor has the highest Cronbach's alpha score at 0.85 and comprises of items 16-18 in the questionnaire. The items refer to the variety of job responsibilities, the degree of independence associated with their work roles and adequate opportunity for periodic changes in their work duties respectively. The alpha score indicates that this factor is the most accurate of the five job satisfaction items measured in the study and as such, all the items under this variable were retained.

Table 7

Work activities alphas

Work Activities	Cronbach's alpha:	0.85
Item No.	Item-total correlation	Alpha if deleted
JS16	0,75	0,76
JS17	0,71	0,80
JS18	0,70	0,81

Apart from the slight adjustment to the first factor, whereby item 4 was removed for factor comparison purposes, the results have indicated that the factors can remain as is, and forms part of the factor comparisons that form part of this chapter.

Table 8

Job satisfaction factor averages

Factor	Very Low (1.00-1,79)	Low (1.80-2.59)	Average (2.60-3.40)	High (3.41-4.20)	Very High (4.21-5.00)
JS 1	0,6	4,7	20,6	43,5	30,6
JS 2	10,6	20,6	51,8	14,1	2,9
JS 3	0	4,7	18,2	48,2	28,8
JS 4	14,1	17,1	33,5	21,8	13,5
JS 5	4,7	8,2	35,3	40,6	11,2

Table 8 indicates the spread of the responses related to the five job satisfaction factors. As the table indicates, the staff were most satisfied with factor 3 (work relationships) with 77% of the staff falling within the high or very high categories, followed closely by factor one (general working conditions) at 74.1%. The staff were least satisfied with factor two (pay and promotion potential) and factor four (use of skills and abilities), where 31.2% of the staff either fell within the low or very low category.

For the purpose of hypotheses testing, the job satisfaction mean was determined by averaging out across the five job satisfaction factors, with each factor receiving an equal weighting. The average across the five factors measured was therefore regarded as representative of the overall job satisfaction of the staff, for the purposes of this study, and in order to facilitate comparisons and by extension hypotheses testing. To follow, H_4 to H_7 are tested as they relate to the job satisfaction of the staff.

Hypothesis four (H_4) reads as follows: **The job satisfaction levels of women are significantly higher than that of men.**

In Table 9, we can see that according to the data gathered, the opposite is in fact true. With the job satisfaction for the male staff being slightly higher (Mean=3.39) than that of the female staff (Mean=3.27), a difference of 0.12. Although the mean is higher for men, it is only slightly and is not regarded to be statistically significant. The results, therefore, indicate that the hypothesis is rejected as a significant variance between the genders was not found.

Table 9

Job satisfaction and gender comparison

Variable	Mean Male	Mean Female	t-value	p	Valid N Male	Valid N Female
Job Satisfaction	3.39	3.27	1.4290	0.1549	91	79

H_5 reads as follows: **The job satisfaction levels of previously disadvantaged staff are higher than that of white staff members.**

Table 10 indicates that the opposite is true, with the previously disadvantaged groups (black 3.27, coloured 3.35) scoring lower on job satisfaction than the white group with a mean of 3.46. This, therefore, indicates the opposite of the hypothesis as posed in H_5. The difference between the groups is statistically insignificant, which indicates little variance from the staff based on the race demographic. As a result, the evidence does not support the hypothesis, and cannot be accepted.

Table 10

Job Satisfaction and race comparison

Ethnic group	Means	N	Std. Dev.
Black	3.27	77	0.58
White	3.46	28	0.59
Coloured	3.35	60	0.51
All Groups	**3.33**	**165**	**0.56**

H_6 reads as follows: **There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age.**

The hypothesis, therefore, proposes that job satisfaction is likely to improve the older the employee gets. In Table 11, it is clear that job satisfaction does improve with age within the sample, with the lowest mean being 3.27 for the 18-30 age group and the highest mean being 3.55 for the 51+ age group. Although this provides support H_6, the variance between the groups is not large enough to indicate a statistically significant variance. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. However further investigation and research may be warranted.

Table 11

Job Satisfaction and age comparison

Age group	Means	N	Std. Dev.
18-30 years	3.27	67	0.59
31-40 years	3.31	47	0.50
41-50 years	3.39	43	0.61
51+ years	3.55	13	0.59
All Groups	3.33	170	0.57

The final hypothesis tested in this section is was H_7, which reads as follows: **There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and experience.**

Similar to the previous hypothesis, it proposes that job satisfaction is likely to be higher, the more experienced the employee becomes. In Table 12, it is evident that this hypothesis is not supported as quite a bit of inconsistency is present in the results. The most satisfied group in the sample was those with between one to three years of experience (3.40), with those that have between three to five years of experience scoring the lowest (3.11), this was also the group with the lowest amount of staff (N=13). The results would, therefore, indicate that H_7 is rejected.

Table 12

Job satisfaction and experience comparison

Experience in role	Means	N	Std.Dev.
< 1 year	3.32	57	0.59
1-3 years	3.40	43	0.53
3-5 years	3.11	13	0.78
5-10 years	3.39	43	0.56
10+ years	3.23	14	0.46
All Groups	**3.33**	**170**	**0.57**

In this section, the job satisfaction data relevant to the study has been provided with the most significant data outlined. H_2, H_4 and H_7 have been tested and are discussed further in the next chapter (Discussion). In the next section, the results relevant to the workplace stress items and factors are provided.

6.4 <u>Workplace Stress Findings</u>

In this section, the workplace stress section of the questionnaire is analysed in detail. Initially, the 35 workplace stress items are investigated, this is followed by tables measuring the Cronbach's alphas for the seven workplace stress factors to determine how accurately the questionnaire measures these factors. These results are then compared to two previous studies to determine how consistent these findings are with prior research. Lastly, the overall averages of the seven workplace stress factors are outlined based on the feedback of the employees.

6.4.1 Workplace stress item analysis

Table 13 represents a frequency distribution table which outlines the range of the responses from the sample related to the workplace stress items contained in the questionnaire. The average and the standard deviation for each individual item are also contained in the table. Each item is discussed individually.

Table 13

Workplace stress item analysis

Item	Valid N	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
WS1	170	1,8	3,5	18,2	37,6	38,8	4,08	0,93
WS2	170	15,9	10,6	29,4	28,8	15,3	3,17	1,27
WS3	170	4,7	11,8	40,6	27,1	15,9	3,38	1,04
WS4	170	,6	1,2	10,6	33,5	54,1	4,39	0,77
WS5	170	5,3	10,0	24,1	19,4	41,2	3,81	1,23
WS6	170	2,4	9,4	25,3	28,8	34,1	3,83	1,08
WS7	170	5,3	9,4	31,8	29,4	24,1	3,58	1,11
WS8	170	8,2	14,7	27,1	30,6	19,4	3,38	1,19
WS9	170	24,7	28,8	37,1	7,6	1,8	2,33	0,99
WS10	170	9,4	12,4	39,4	29,4	9,4	3,17	1,07
WS11	170	2,9	4,7	14,1	28,2	50,0	4,18	1,03
WS12	170	3,5	10,0	38,2	21,8	26,5	3,58	1,09
WS13	170	5,3	5,9	15,9	34,1	38,8	3,95	1,12
WS14	170	10,6	10,6	31,8	25,9	21,2	3,36	1,23
WS15	170	10,0	8,8	37,1	33,5	10,6	3,26	1,09
WS16	170	3,5	9,4	35,3	23,5	28,2	3,64	1,10
WS17	170	2,4	5,3	14,7	40,6	37,1	4,05	0,97
WS18	170	4,7	10,0	30,0	17,1	38,2	3,74	1,20
WS19	170	32,9	17,6	31,2	11,8	6,5	2,41	1,24
WS20	170	11,2	27,6	50,0	7,6	3,5	2,65	0,91
WS21	170	2,4	4,1	10,0	15,3	68,2	4,43	0,99
WS22	170	2,9	7,6	35,3	27,1	27,1	3,68	1,05
WS23	170	7,6	12,4	32,9	21,8	25,3	3,45	1,21
WS24	170	3,5	4,1	23,5	50,6	18,2	3,76	0,92
WS25	170	2,9	12,9	28,2	50,0	5,9	3,43	0,90
WS26	170	11,2	24,1	27,6	32,4	4,7	2,95	1,10
WS27	170	4,1	4,7	25,9	52,4	12,9	3,65	0,91
WS28	170	12,9	25,9	30,6	26,5	4,1	2,83	1,09
WS29	170	5,3	8,8	27,6	44,7	13,5	3,52	1,01
WS30	170	10,0	25,3	22,9	36,5	5,3	3,02	1,11
WS31	170	1,8	4,1	21,8	64,7	7,6	3,72	0,74
WS32	170	3,5	22,9	31,2	37,6	4,7	3,17	0,95
WS33	170	8,2	17,6	37,6	32,9	3,5	3,06	0,99
WS34	170	5,9	18,8	44,1	26,5	4,7	3,05	0,94
WS35	170	4,7	10,6	24,7	47,1	12,9	3,53	1,00

The first item in the workplace stress questionnaire refers to whether or not the staff is clear in terms of what is expected of them at work. The average for the item was high, at 4.08 out of 5, with a standard deviation below 1. These results indicate that the majority of the staff are not experiencing stress related to this item. Of the staff, 76.4% indicated that they were either often

or always clear in terms of the expectations at work. Only 5.3% of the staff indicated that this served as a source of stress for them.

Item 2 refers to whether or not the respondents had the luxury to determine when they could take a break. The average was neutral at 3.17, which is accompanied by the highest standard deviation for the 35 items, at 1.27. Of the sample, 29.4% indicated that they could occasionally determine when they could take a break at work, while 26.5% of the staff indicated that this was a source of stress for them.

Item 3 refers to role conflict by asking whether or not there were different groups at work that demanded different things that were hard to combine. The average for the item was 3.38 with a standard deviation slightly above 1 at 1.04. Most staff indicated 'sometimes' for this item at 40.6%, with 16.5% of the sample regarding this to be a source of stress for them in the workplace.

Item 4 referred to whether or not the respondents were aware of how to get their job done. The average for the item was the second highest of the workplace stress items at 4.39, with the second lowest standard deviation at 0.77. This indicates that this item is one of the smallest sources of stress for the staff with only 0.6% indicating that they did not know how to go about getting the job done. The low standard deviation also indicates that the responses were quite consistent which is supported by the fact that 54.1% of the staff indicated 'Always' as their selection.

Item 5 referred to whether or not the respondents were subject to personal harassment at work in the form of unkind words or behaviour. The average for the item was 3.81 out of 5, with the third highest standard deviation at 1.23; this indicates a fair degree of variance. The most popular response was 'never' at 41.2%. Of the sample, 15.3% indicated that harassment was a source of stress for them at work.

Item 6 referred to whether or not the staff' have unachievable deadlines at work. The average for the item was 3.83 with a standard deviation of 1.08. Of the staff, 34.1% indicated that they 'never' have unachievable deadlines and thereby do not experience stress as a result of work pressures. Only 11.8% of the sample indicated that they experience stress related to deadlines at work.

Item 7 referred to whether or not the staff received support from their colleagues when their work gets difficult. The average for the item is 3.58 with a standard deviation above 1 at 1.11. Of

the staff, 53.5% indicated that they received support from their colleagues either 'often' or 'always'. The most popular response was 'sometimes' at 31.8%, with 14.7% of the staff indicating that lack of colleague support was a source of stress for them.

Item 8 referred to whether or not the staff received supportive feedback for the work that they do. The average for the item was 3.38 out of 5, with a high standard deviation at 1.19. Of the staff, 50.5% indicated that they received support 'often' or 'always', with 22.9% of the staff indicating that a lack of supportive feedback for the work they have done was a source of stress for them.

Item 9 referred to how intensively the staff' is expected to work. This item had the lowest average of the 35 workplace stress items at 2.33 out of 5. This indicates that of all the 35 items measured under workplace stress this item was the primary contributor to workplace stress. The standard deviation was low at just below 1 at 0.99, with 53.5% of the staff indicating either 'often' or 'always' for this item.

Item 10 measured whether or not the staff had a say in their own work speed. The average for the item was neutral at 3.17 out of 5, with a standard deviation at 1.07. The most popular response was 'sometimes' with 39.4% of the responses, with 21.8% of the sample indicating that they experience stress regarding this item.

Item 11 measured how clear the respondents were in terms of what their duties and responsibilities are at work. The average response for the item was the 3rd highest at 4.18 out of 5, indicating that the majority of the staff did not experience stress in this regard. The standard deviation is at 1.03, with the most popular response being 'always' with 50%. Only 7.6% of the staff indicated that they experience stress related to role ambiguity.

Item 12 refers to whether or not the staff ever need to neglect some tasks because they have too much to do. The average for the item is 3.58 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.09. The most popular response was 'sometimes' at 38.2%. Only 2.9% of the staff indicated 'always' to this item. This is somewhat surprising as discussions with the HR department at the George Municipality indicated that the municipality was severely understaffed.

Item 13 refers to whether or not the respondent is clear about the goals and objectives of their department. The average for the item is 3.95 out of 5, with the standard deviation high at 1.12. Of the staff, the majority at 72.9% indicated that they were either often, or always aware of the objectives of their department.

Item 14 referred to whether or not the respondents believed that there was any friction or conflict between colleagues. The average for this item was 3.36 out of 5 and had the third highest standard deviation at 1.23. Of the staff, 31.8% indicated 'sometimes' to this question, with 21.2% indicating either often or never.

Item 15 referred to whether or not the respondents believed that they have a choice in deciding on how to do their work. The average for the item is 3.26 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.09. Of the staff, 37.1% indicate 'sometimes' as their preferred response, with 18.8% of the staff indicating that they experience stress related to the amount of control they have over their work environment.

Item 16 referred to whether or not the staff felt that they are unable to take sufficient breaks. The average for the item was 3.64 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.10. Of the staff, 35.3% indicated 'sometimes' for this item. Only 12.9% of the staff indicated that they experienced stress regarding this item.

Item 17 refers to whether or not the respondent understands how their work fits into the overall aim of the organisation. The average is high at 4.05 out of 5, with a standard deviation below 1 at 0.97. Of the staff, 77.7% indicated either 'often' or 'always' on this item. Only 7.7% of staff indicated that they experience stress related to this item.

Item 18 refers to whether or not the respondent feels pressured to work long hours. The average for the item is 3.74 out of 5 with a high standard deviation at 1.20. Of the staff, 38.2% selected 'never' as their preferred response. With 14.7% of the staff indicating that they experience stress related to the number of hours that they are expected to work.

Item 19 refers to whether or not the staff' have a choice in deciding what they do at work. This item has the second lowest average at 2.41 out of 5 and has the second highest standard deviation at 1.24 of all the 35 workplace stress items. The most popular response was 'never' at 32.9%, with 50.5% of staff indicating that they experience stress related to this item.

Item 20 refers to whether or not the respondent feels that they are required to work very fast. The average for this item is the third lowest at 2.65 out of 5, with a standard deviation below 1 at 0.91. Of the staff, 50% selected 'sometimes' as their preferred response. More than a third of staff at 38.8% indicated that they experience stress related to the pace at which they are expected to work.

Item 21 refers to whether or not the staff' believe that they are subject to bullying at work. This item has the highest average of the 35 workplace stress items measured at 4.43 out of 5. The standard deviation is 0.99, with 68.2% of the staff selecting 'never'. Of the staff, 16.5% indicated that they either are experiencing, or have experienced, bullying at work.

Item 22 refers to whether or not the respondent believes that they are subject to unrealistic time pressures. The average for the item is 3.68 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.05. Of the staff, 35.3% indicated that they experience unrealistic time pressures 'sometimes' but not all the time.

Item 23 refers to whether or not the staff felt that they could rely on their line manager to help them out with a work problem. The average for the item is 3.45 out of 5, with quite a high standard deviation at 1.21. The most popular response was 'sometimes' which was selected by 32.9% of the staff and 20% of the staff indicated that they experience stress related to the amount of support that they receive from their manager at work.

Item 24 refers to whether or not the staff get the help and support that they need from their colleagues. The average for the item is 3.76 out of 5, with a low standard deviation of 0.92, with 50.6% of the staff selecting 'agree' as their preferred response. Only 7.6% of staff indicated that they experienced stress related to the support that they received from their colleagues.

Item 25 refers to whether or not the staff have some say over the way they work. The average for the item is 3.43 out of 5, and has the third lowest standard deviation for the 35 workplace stress items, at 0.90. This would indicate that the responses from the participants were consistent, which is supported by the fact that 50% of the staff selected 'agree' as their preferred response.

Item 26 refers to whether or not the staff' have sufficient opportunities to question their managers about change at their workplace. The average for the item is lower than the average at 2.95 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.10. Only 4.7% of the staff indicated that they 'strongly agree' with the fact that they can question their managers regarding change in the workplace, whereas 35.6% of the sample indicated that this serves as a source of stress for them.

Item 27 refers to whether or not the staff' believe that they receive the respect that they deserve from their colleagues. The average for the item is 3.65 out of 5, with a standard deviation below

1 at 0.91. Of the staff, 52.4% indicated 'agree' for this item. Only 8.8% of staff regarded this to be a source of stress for them.

Item 28 refers to whether or not the staff' feel that they are always consulted about change at work. The average for the item is quite low at 2.83, with a standard deviation at 1.09. Of the staff, 30.6% selected a 'neutral' response to this item with 38.8% of staff indicating that this served as a source of stress for them.

Item 29 refers to whether or not the staff' feel like they can talk to their line manager about something that has upset or annoyed them about work. The average for the item is 3.52 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.01. The most popular response was 'agree' at 44.7%. Only 14.1% of staff indicated that they experience stress in this regard.

Item 30 refers to how flexible the staff working time is. The average for the item is neutral at 3.02 out of 5, with a standard deviation above 1 at 1.11. Of the staff, 36.5% indicated that they 'agree' that their working time can be flexible. More than a third of the staff at 35.3% indicated that they experience stress when it comes to the amount of flexibility in the work time.

Item 31 refers to how willing the staff' colleagues are to listen to their work-related problems. The average for the item is 3.72 with the lowest standard deviation of the 35 workplace stress items at 0.74. This low standard deviation indicates that this item had the most consistent responses from the participants. This is supported by the fact that 64.7% of the staff selected 'agree' as their response. This would suggest a supportive work environment.

Item 32 refers to how clear the staff' are in terms of how changes at work will work out in practice. The average for the item is neutral at 3.17 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 0.95. Of the staff, 37.6% indicated that they 'agree' with the item with 26.4% of the staff experiencing stress when it came to this item.

Item 33 refers to whether or not the respondent feels supported through emotionally-demanding work. The average for the item is neutral at 3.06 out of 5. The standard deviation is at 0.99 with 'neutral' being the most popular response at 37.6% of the responses. More than a quarter, at 25.8% of the staff indicated that they experience stress associated with a lack of emotional support provided at work.

Item 34 refers to whether or not the respondent views relationships at work as being strained. The average for the item is neutral at 3.05 out of 5, with a low standard deviation at 0.94. The

most popular response was 'neutral' which was selected by 44.1% of the participants. Of the staff, 24.7% indicated that they experience stress associated with relationships at the work place.

Item 35 refers to whether the staff' line manager encourages them at work. The average for the item is 3.53 out of 5, with a standard deviation of 1.00. Of the staff, 47.1% indicated 'agree' as their preferred response with 15.3% of the staff experiencing stress regarding this item.

Now that the various workplace stress items have been explored, the alphas for the workplace stress factors can be investigated in more detail.

6.4.2 Workplace stress factor analysis

This section explores the seven workplace stress factors that form part of the study, and includes the Cronbach's alphas, alpha comparisons as well as the overall averages for the various factors.

Table 14 indicates that the alpha for WS 1, namely, demands, is at 0.80. WS 1 consists of items 2, 6, 9, 12, 16, 18 and 20. An alpha of 0.80 indicates that the combination of these items is a valid and accurate measure of the factor. Demands are also related to factor 3 (Managerial support) as having the second highest alpha for the seven workplace stress factors. Item 6 is the most accurate measure of demands at the workplace.

Table 14

Demands alphas

DEMANDS (WS 1)		
Cronbach's alpha:	**0.80**	
Item No.	**Item-Total Correlation**	**Alpha if deleted**
WS3	0,44	0,78
WS6	0,63	0,75
WS9	0,44	0,78
WS12	0,48	0,78
WS16	0,48	0,78
WS18	0,50	0,78
WS20	0,47	0,78
WS22	0,61	0,76

Table 15 indicates that the alpha for the WS2 namely, control, was slightly lower than WS1 at 0.76. WS2 consisted of six items including items 2, 10, 15, 19, 25 and 30. The alpha score would indicate that the items combined are a fair and accurate measure of the factor. WS10 was the most accurate measure of control at the workplace.

Table 15

Control alphas

CONTROL (WS 2)		
Cronbach's alpha:	0.76	
Item No.	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
WS2	0,53	0,72
WS10	0,64	0,69
WS15	0,57	0,71
WS19	0,60	0,70
WS25	0,38	0,76
WS30	0,32	0,77

Table 16 indicates the alpha for the WS3, namely, managerial support, at 0.80. This is tied with WS1 as being the second highest alpha of the seven workplace stress factors measured. The combination of items 8, 23, 29, 33 and 35 are therefore viewed as valid measures of the managerial support factor. The statistics indicate that WS35 was the most accurate measure of managerial support at the workplace.

Table 16

Managerial support alphas

MANAGERIAL SUPPPORT (WS 3)		
Cronbach's alpha:	0.80	
Item No.	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
WS8	0,58	0,76
WS23	0,47	0,80
WS29	0,58	0,76
WS33	0,59	0,76
WS35	0,71	0,72

Table 17 indicates that the alpha for WS4, namely, peer support, is the same as WS2 at 0.76. WS4 consists of four items including items 7, 24, 27 and 31. The alpha score indicates that the

items combined are a fair and accurate measure of the factor. WS24 was the most accurate measure of peer support at the workplace.

Table 17

Peer support alphas

PEER SUPPORT (WS 4)		
Cronbach's alpha:	**0.76**	
Item No.	**Item-total correlation**	**Alpha if deleted**
WS7	0,47	0,76
WS24	0,68	0,63
WS27	0,50	0,72
WS31	0,62	0,68

Table 18 indicates that the alpha for WS 5, namely, relationships, was the second lowest for the workplace stress factors at 0.68. WS5 consisted of four items including items 5, 14, 21 and 34. Although the alpha was lower than desired, it still exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.60 as set out for the study. As such it was retained as one of the workplace stress factors. The statistics indicate that WS14 and 21 were the items that measured relationships at work most accurately.

Table 18

Relationships alphas

RELATIONSHIPS (WS 5)		
Cronbach's alpha:	**0.68**	
Item No.	**Item-total correlation**	**Alpha if deleted**
WS5	0,46	0,62
WS14	0,50	0,58
WS21	0,53	0,58
WS34	0,38	0,66

Table 19 indicates the alpha for WS6, namely, role, at 0.84. This was the highest alpha of the seven workplace stress factors measured. The combination of items 1, 4, 11, 13 and 17 were therefore viewed as valid measures of the managerial support factor. Furthermore, the alpha score would indicate that of all the workplace stress factors that form part of the study, role was

the factor that was measured the most accurately. The statistics indicate that WS11 and 17 were the items that most accurately measured the stress associated with work roles.

Table 19

Role alphas

ROLE (WS 6)		
Cronbach's alpha:	0.84	
Item No.	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
WS1	0,69	0,79
WS4	0,40	0,86
WS11	0,74	0,78
WS13	0,66	0,80
WS17	0,73	0,78

Table 20 indicates that the alpha for WS7, namely, change, was the lowest for the workplace stress factors at 0.65. WS7 consisted of three items including items 26, 28 and 32. Although the alpha was lower than desired, it still exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.60 as set out for the study. As such it was retained as one of the factors. The statistics indicate that item WS32 was the most accurate measure of stress related to change in the workplace.

Table 20

Change alphas

CHANGE (WS 7)		
Cronbach's alpha:	0.65	
Item No.	Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if deleted
WS26	0,41	0,63
WS28	0,46	0,55
WS32	0,52	0,49

Table 21 is a comparison of the alphas for the seven workplace stress factors across three separate studies including this one. As the table indicates, the current study had the lowest alphas for all the factors except for factor 6. The largest gap between the scores was with factor 7, where the alpha was 0.15 and 0.18 lower than found in previous studies respectively. Potential reasons for this variance are discussed further in the discussion section of the study.

Table 21

Alpha comparison table

Factor	de Koning (2018)	Cousins et al. (2004)	Edwards et al. (2008)
WS 1	0.80	0.89	0.87
WS 2	0.76	0.78	0.82
WS 3	0.80	0.87	0.88
WS 4	0.76	0.81	0.82
WS 5	0.68	0.78	0.78
WS 6	0.84	0.83	0.83
WS 7	0.65	0.83	0.80

Table 22 indicates the spread of the responses related to the seven workplace stress factors. As the table indicates, the staff were most satisfied with/or experienced the least amount of stress regarding factor 6 (Role) with 82.4% of the staff falling within the high or very high categories, followed by factor 4 (Peer Support) at 73.5%. The staff were least satisfied with/or experienced the most stress with factor 7 (Change) and factor 2 (Control), where 28.8% and 27.6% of the staff either fell within the low or very low category, in other words, they were experiencing stress regarding that particular factor. In the next section, the results relevant to the relationship between the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors are provided.

Table 22

Workplace stress factor averages

Factor	Very Low (1.00-1,79)	Low (1.80-2.59)	Average (2.60-3.40)	High (3.41-4.20)	Very High (4.21-5.00)
WS 1	1,8	11,2	42,4	31,8	12,9
WS 2	4,1	23,5	40,0	25,9	6,5
WS 3	4,1	10,6	38,2	35,3	11,8
WS 4	2,9	4,7	18,8	48,2	25,3
WS 5	1,8	10,6	18,2	35,9	33,5
WS 6	1,2	1,2	15,3	36,5	45,9
WS 7	8,8	20,0	44,1	23,5	3,5

This section explored the seven workplace stress factors and provided additional insight into the primary causes of workplace stress for the employees in the sample. In the next section, the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace stress is investigated.

6.5 Job satisfaction and workplace stress relationship findings

In this section, the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace stress is explored, which facilitates the testing of hypothesis eight. This is followed by cross-correlation factor analysis to

identify the nature of the relationships between the 12 factors (five job satisfaction and seven workplace stress) measured in the study which also facilitates the testing of hypotheses one and three, which looks at the relationship between the workplace stress factors of control and work roles and the relationship between the workplace stress factor of control with the job satisfaction factor of work activities respectively. An analysis of the variance based on race, age, gender, municipality and experience as it relates to the twelve factors also falls under this section. To conclude, a chapter summary is provided.

6.5.1 The relationship between job satisfaction and work stress

The same approach adopted to determine the overall job satisfaction of the sample was utilised in determining the overall workplace stress of the sample. Overall workplace stress was determined by averaging out across the seven workplace stress variables measured within the questionnaire. This was done to facilitate the comparison conducted in hypothesis 8 (H_8). The hypothesis reads as follows: **There is a negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction.**

What the hypothesis is suggesting is that where workplace stress is high, job satisfaction is low, and vice versa. In Table 23 one can see that there is a moderate relationship between the two factors as measured in the questionnaire, with a Pearson correlation of .476. This indicates that this relationship does therefore exist and supports the hypothesis. It should be noted, however, that it is a moderate and not a strong one, suggesting that further research may be warranted to further explore the extent of this relationship.

Table 23

Job Satisfaction and workplace stress correlation

		Factor JS	Factor WS
Factor_JS	**Pearson Correlation**	1	
	N	170	
Factor_WS	**Pearson Correlation**	.476[**]	1
	N	170	170

6.5.2 Factor cross-correlation factor analysis

In this section, statistics relevant to the cross-correlations between the various factors that form part of the study are presented. This includes correlations within and across the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors.

Table 24

Factor cross-correlations

		Factor_JS1	Factor_JS2	Factor_JS3	Factor_JS4	Factor_JS5	Factor_WS1	Factor_WS2	Factor_WS3	Factor_WS4	Factor_WS5	Factor_WS6	Factor_WS7
Factor_JS1	Pearson Correlation	1											
	Sig. (2-tailed)												
	N	170											
Factor_JS2	Pearson Correlation	.280**	1										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000											
	N	170	170										
Factor_JS3	Pearson Correlation	.405**	.216**	1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,005										
	N	170	170	170									
Factor_JS4	Pearson Correlation	.281**	.409**	.411**	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000									
	N	170	170	170	170								
Factor_JS5	Pearson Correlation	.361**	.316**	.488**	.572**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000								
	N	170	170	170	170	170							
Factor_WS1	Pearson Correlation	.223**	-.182*	,022	-,024	-,149	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004	,017	,780	,755	,053							
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170						
Factor_WS2	Pearson Correlation	.200**	,092	.180*	,114	.227**	,099	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,009	,233	,019	,137	,003	,200						
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170					
Factor_WS3	Pearson Correlation	.311**	.286**	.501**	.459**	.555**	,022	.323**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,777	,000					
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170				
Factor_WS4	Pearson Correlation	.194*	,047	.480**	.253**	.203**	.239**	.153*	.514**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,011	,544	,000	,001	,008	,002	,047	,000				
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170			
Factor_WS5	Pearson Correlation	.206**	,021	.338**	.312**	.185*	.300**	,107	.300**	.507**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	,786	,000	,000	,016	,000	,163	,000	,000			
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170		
Factor_WS6	Pearson Correlation	.278**	.241**	.407**	.308**	.575**	-.168*	.247**	.511**	,097	,090	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,002	,000	,000	,000	,029	,001	,000	,210	,246		
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	
Factor_WS7	Pearson Correlation	.236**	.166*	.356**	.409**	.469**	-,011	.257**	.642**	.408**	.340**	.378**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,031	,000	,000	,000	,891	,001	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170

Table 24 presents the relationships between the various factors measured within the study. The scores in the table refer to the correlation coefficients and can be interpreted as follows. A score below 0.30 is viewed as a weak correlation. A score between 0.30 and 0.49 is viewed as a moderate correlation, with a score of 0.50 or above viewed as a strong correlation. Only the moderate, strong and negative correlations were identified, and any relationships that are not referred to were, therefore, those with weak correlations.

In the analysis of the five job satisfaction factors, six moderate relationships are identified and are represented in Table 25.

Table 25

Job satisfaction factor moderate relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
JS1 + JS3	General Working Conditions	Work Relationships	0.405
JS3 + JS 4	Work Relationships	Use of Skills & Abilities	0.411
JS5 + JS1	Work Activities	General Working Conditions	0.361
JS5 + JS2	Work Activities	Pay & Promotion Potential	0.316
JS5 + JS3	Work Activities	Work Relationships	0.488
JS2+ JS4	Pay & Promotion Potential	Use of Skills & Abilities	0.409

This would indicate that a moderate positive relationship exists between the job satisfaction factors as outlined in Table 25. The responses on these factors were therefore similar to the others. In other words, if a respondent in the study was satisfied with his/her general working conditions, then it is likely that the respondent would also be satisfied with his/her work relationships as well, based on the study conducted.

A strong positive relationship was identified between JS4 and JS5. This indicates that there was a strong degree of similarity (a score of 0.572) in the responses from the staff when it came to the job satisfaction factors of "use of skills and abilities" and "Work Activities".

In the analysis of the seven workplace stress factors as indicated in Table 24, four moderate relationships were identified as represented in Table 26.

Table 26

Workplace stress factors moderate relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
WS2 + WS3	Control	Managerial Support	0.323
WS4 + WS7	Peer Support	Change	0.408
WS5 + WS7	Relationships	Change	0.340
WS6 + WS7	Role	Change	0.378

This indicates that there exists a moderate positive relationship between the workplace stress factors as outlined in Table 26. As a result, one would expect the responses on these factors to be similar from the staff.

Four strong relationships are identified within the seven workplace stress variables and are represented in Table 27.

Table 27

Workplace stress factors strong relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
WS3 + WS4	Managerial Support	Peer Support	0.514
WS4 + WS5	Peer Support	Relationships	0.507
WS3 + WS6	Managerial Support	Role	0.511
WS3 + WS7	Managerial Support	Change	0.642

Table 27 indicates that a high degree of similarity was present in the responses from the sample regarding the workplace stress factors as outlined in the table. These strong relationships are discussed in the discussion section of the report.

A negative relationship was found between the workplace stress factors of "Demands" and "Role" (WS1 + WS6), with a score of -0.168. This indicates that an inverse relationship was found between these factors. In other words, a high score on one of the factors was more likely to be followed by a low score on the other factor.

It can be noted that a strong or moderate relationship did not emerge between the workplace stress factors of Control (WS2) and Work Roles (WS6). This is significant as it means that the H_1 is not supported. H_1 states the following: **There is a positive relationship between control and work roles.**

The relationship found within the study was a very weak one with a Pearson correlation of 0.247. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

In the cross-factor analysis of the seven workplace-stress and five job-satisfaction factors as indicated in Table 18, 10 moderate relationships are identified and represented in Table 28.

Table 28

Workplace stress and job satisfaction factors, moderate relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
JS1 + WS3	General Working Conditions	Managerial Support	0.311
JS4 + WS3	Use of Skills & Abilities	Managerial Support	0.459
JS3 + WS4	Work Relationships	Peer Support	0.480
JS3 + WS5	Work Relationships	Relationships	0.338
JS3 + WS6	Work Relationships	Role	0.407
JS3 + WS7	Work Relationships	Change	0.356
JS4 + WS5	Use of Skills & Abilities	Relationships	0.312
JS4 + WS6	Use of Skills & Abilities	Role	0.308
JS4 + WS7	Use of Skills & Abilities	Change	0.409
JS5 + WS7	Work Activities	Change	0.469

The moderate relationships identified in Table 28 indicates that a positive relationship exists between the factors measured but is not so strong that one can say with confidence that it is statistically significant. The existence of a positive relationship may, however, warrant future research. This is particularly the case regarding the relationships between use of skills and abilities and managerial support, work activities and change and work relationships and peer support respectively.

Table 29 identifies three strong relationships between the job satisfaction and workplace stress factors along with their associated scores.

Table 29

Workplace stress and job satisfaction factors, strong relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
WS3 + JS3	Managerial Support	Work Relationships	0.501
WS3 + JS5	Managerial Support	Work Activities	0.555
WS6 + JS5	Role	Work Activities	0.575

The strong relationships as outlined in Table 29 do not talk to any of the hypotheses set in this study. These positive relationships were therefore unanticipated and could warrant future investigation and analysis.

The statistical analysis identified two negative relationships between the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors. These relationships were between Demands (WS1) and Pay and Promotion Potential (JS2) with a score of -0.182 as well as between Demands (WS1) and Work Activities (JS5) at -0.149. Although the scores were not very high, they would indicate that, for the most part, an inverse relationship was present between these factors.

Although a relationship was found to be present between the job satisfaction variable of work activities and the workplace stress variable of control it was a very weak one with a Pearson correlation of 0.227. This is significant as it relates to H_3: **There is a negative relationship between workplace stress associated with control and job satisfaction associated with work activities.**

Due to the weak correlation found in the study, H_3 is rejected based on the results obtained from the employees.

In this section, H_8 failed to be rejected and H_1 was rejected. A strong relationship was identified between the job satisfaction factors of, use of skills and abilities and work activities. Strong relationships were found between the workplace stress factors of,

- Managerial support and peer support;
- Peer support and relationships;
- Managerial support and role; and
- Managerial support and change.

Strong relationships were also found between the following workplace stress and job satisfaction factors:

- Managerial support and work relationships;
- Managerial support and work activities; and between
- Role and work activities.

In the next section, variances based on demographic factors across the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors are explored.

6.6 <u>Analysis of Variance based on Demographic Factors</u>

In this section, the demographic factors measured in the questionnaire as it relates to the 12 factors measured in the study (five job satisfaction and seven workplace stress) are explored to identify any significant variances. The first demographic variable investigated is that of race, this will be followed by the areas of gender, age, municipality and experience.

6.6.1 Analysis of variance based on race

Table 30, indicates which of the twelve factors measured has statistically significant variance based on race. This is determined by a p-score that is below 0.05. These factors are identified by the shaded factors in the table.

Table 30

Analysis of Variance based on race

Factor/Variable	F	p
JS1	0,48	0,6220
JS2	10,46	0,0001
JS3	2,98	0,0535
JS4	4,83	0,0092
JS5	0,98	0,3771
WS1	13,10	0,0000
WS2	2,09	0,1268
WS3	1,49	0,2292
WS4	22,98	0,0000
WS5	11,46	0,0000
WS6	4,66	0,0107
WS7	2,78	0,0649
Shaded sections indicate statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$)		

As Table 30 indicates, there are six factors with statistically significant variances based on race, namely; JS2, JS4, WS1, WS4, WS5 and WS6. Each factor is analysed individually to determine which race groups differ significantly from the others.

Table 31

Identification of race variance based on the JS2 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Pay and Promotion Potential			
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**
	M=2.5455	M=3.2214	M=2.9500
Black {1}		0.89 (L)	0.55 (M)
White {2}	0,0001		
Coloured {3}	0,0040	0,2400	

Table 31 indicates that the races of white and coloured varied significantly from that of the black staff in the study, due to having a p-score below that of 0.05. Table 32 indicates that the average scores for the white and coloured staff were significantly higher than that of the black sample.

Table 32

Mean scores for JS2 based on race

Ethnic Group	Pay and Promotion Potential		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
Black	2,55	77	0,76
White	3,22	28	0,75
Coloured	2,95	60	0,69
All groups	**2,81**	**165**	**0,78**

The next factor that was found to deviate significantly based on race was that of JS4 (use of skills and abilities). Table 33 indicates that the feedback from the coloured staff differed significantly from that of the black staff in the sample, with a p-score of 0.0072.

Table 33

Identification of race variance based on the JS4 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Use of Skills and Abilities			
	{1}	{2}	{3}
	M=3.2294	M=3.1548	M=2.7000
Black {1}			0.51 (M)
White {2}	0,9411		
Coloured {3}	0,0072	0,1251	

In Table 34, it can be seen that the mean score for the coloured staff was 0.32 lower than the overall average of the sample and 0.53 less than the black staff. This indicates that in general, the coloured staff were significantly less satisfied than the black staff regarding their opportunities to utilise their skills and abilities in the workplace.

Table 34

Mean scores for JS4 based on race

Ethnic Group	Use of Skills and Abilities		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
Black	3,23	77	1,12
White	3,15	28	0,86
Coloured	2,70	60	0,94
All groups	3,02	165	1,04

The next factor that has a significant variance based on race is that of WS1 (Demands). Table 35 indicates that both the white and coloured staff varied significantly in terms of their responses when compared to the black sample, with p-scores of 0.0012 and 0.0000 respectively.

Table 35

Identification of race variance based on the WS1 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Demands			
	{1}	{2}	{3}
	M=3.6039	M=3.1116	M=3.0938
Black {1}		0.87 (L)	0.79 (M)
White {2}	0,0012		
Coloured {3}	0,0000	0,9916	

In Table 36, it is clear that the average scores for the white and coloured staff are considerably lower than that of the black sample. This would indicate that the white and coloured staff in the study, in general, were more stressed than their black counterparts when it came to the demands of their jobs. Potential reasons for this variance form part of the discussion section of the study.

Table 36

Mean scores for WS1 based on race

Ethnic group	Demands		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
Black	3,60	77	0,57
White	3,11	28	0,55
Coloured	3,09	60	0,73
All Groups	3,33	165	0,68

The next factor that indicated significant variance based on race was that of WS4 (Peer Support). In Table 37 it can be seen that the white and coloured samples varied significantly from the black sample, and the coloured sample varied significantly from the white sample.

Table 37

Identification of race variance based on the WS4 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Peer Support			
	{1}	{2}	{3}
	M=4.0032	M=3.1518	M=3.5417
Black {1}		1.49 (L)	0.81 (L)
White {2}	0,0000		0.56 (M)
Coloured {3}	0,0001	0,0141	

Table 38 indicates that the means for the white and coloured staff is considerably less than that of the black sample. The means for the white and coloured staff also varied with the mean for the white sample being 0.39 lower than that of the coloured sample. The table indicates that the white sample was more stressed than the other groups when it came to the amount of peer support that they experienced at the workplace.

Table 38

Mean scores for WS4 based on race

Ethnic Group	Peer Support		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
Black	4,00	77	0,48
White	3,15	28	0,78
Coloured	3,54	60	0,66
All groups	3,69	165	0,68

The variance within the WS5 (Relationships) factor within the race demographic is provided in Table 39. The table indicates that the white and coloured samples varied significantly from that of the black sample, with p-scores of 0.0006 and 0.0001 respectively.

Table 39

Identification of race variance based on the WS5 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Relationships			
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**
	M=3.9545	M=3.3482	M=3.4333
Black {1}		0.86 (L)	0.71 (M)
White {2}	0,0006		
Coloured {3}	0,0001	0,8694	

It is indicated in Table 40 that the mean for the coloured group is 0.52 lower than that of the black sample, with the gap being even larger between the black and the white group with a difference of 0.60. The results, therefore, indicate that the white and coloured staff' on average were more stressed than their black counterparts when it came to their relationships in the workplace.

Table 40

Mean scores for WS5 based on race

Ethnic Group	Relationships		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
Black	3,95	77	0,68
White	3,35	28	0,77
Coloured	3,43	60	0,79
All groups	**3,66**	**165**	**0,78**

The final factor that indicated variation in terms of race was that of role (WS6). In Table 41 we see that with a p-score of 0.0066 that the coloured sample varies significantly from that of the black sample.

Table 41

Identification of race variance based on the WS6 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Role			
	{1}	{2}	{3}
	M=3.9688	M=4.1071	M=4.3567
Black {1}			0.51 (M)
White {2}	0,6732		
Coloured {3}	0,0066	0,3031	

In Table 42 we see that the average response for the coloured group was considerably higher than that of the black sample at 4.35 out of 5. This is 0.39 higher than the black sample. This would indicate that in general, the coloured staff were less stressed when it came to their roles in the workplace.

Table 42

Mean scores for WS6 based on race

Ethnic Group	Role		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
Black	3,97	77	0,87
White	4,11	28	0,58
Coloured	4,36	60	0,61
All groups	4,13	165	0,76

In the next section, any variance in terms of gender across the twelve variables is explored.

6.6.2 Analysis of variance based on gender

Table 43

Gender variance analysis

T-tests; Grouping: Gender	Mean	Mean	t-value	df	p	Valid N	Valid N	Std.Dev.	Std.Dev.	Cohen's d	Practical
	Male	Female				Male	Female	Male	Female		signif.
Factor_JS1	3,89	3,86	0,28	168	0,7819	91	79	0,66	0,75		
Factor_JS2	2,89	2,72	1,45	168	0,1487	91	79	0,77	0,80		
Factor_JS3	3,90	3,83	0,72	168	0,4755	91	79	0,63	0,75		
Factor_JS4	3,11	2,95	0,97	168	0,3323	91	79	1,03	1,07		
Factor_JS5	3,47	3,26	1,63	168	0,1046	91	79	0,76	0,93		
Factor_WS1	3,34	3,37	-0,33	168	0,7384	91	79	0,63	0,74		
Factor_WS2	3,14	3,01	1,13	168	0,2613	91	79	0,67	0,84		
Factor_WS3	3,48	3,28	1,62	168	0,1063	91	79	0,69	0,92		
Factor_WS4	3,70	3,66	0,34	168	0,7358	91	79	0,67	0,75		
Factor_WS5	3,76	3,55	1,77	168	0,0785	91	79	0,71	0,86		
Factor_WS6	4,21	4,04	1,45	168	0,1498	91	79	0,66	0,85		
Factor_WS7	3,14	2,81	2,68	168	0,0082	91	79	0,69	0,89	0,41	Small

In Table 43, it can be seen that WS7 (Change) is the only variable where a statistically significant variance was found based on gender. The average response for men in the sample, related to the stress related to change at the workplace was 3.14 as opposed to 2.81 for women. This is a difference of 0.33, indicating that the female sample, in general, experienced more stress than the men regarding the workplace stress variable of change.

In the next section, any variance in terms of age across the twelve variables is explored.

6.6.3 Analysis of variance based on age

Table 44

Analysis of variance based on age

Variable	F	p
Factor_JS1	0,63	0,5964
Factor_JS2	4,26	0,0063
Factor_JS3	0,81	0,4911
Factor_JS4	1,08	0,3583
Factor_JS5	0,72	0,5393
Factor_WS1	6,55	0,0003
Factor_WS2	1,74	0,1608
Factor_WS3	1,82	0,1461
Factor_WS4	5,72	0,0010
Factor_WS5	6,35	0,0004
Factor_WS6	2,47	0,0635
Factor_WS7	1,60	0,1906

In Table 44 the variables with p-scores below 0.05 indicates statistically significant variance within those variables. These variables include JS2, WS1, WS4 and WS5 and are explored in more detail, to determine the causes of these variances.

Table 45

Identification of age variance based on the JS2 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_JS2				
	{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}
	M=2.5851	M=2.8383	M=2.9953	M=3.2615
18-30 years {1}			0.50 (M)	0.86 (L)
31-40 years {2}	0,3076			
41-50 years {3}	0,0321	0,7678		
51+ years {4}	0,0194	0,2946	0,6934	

Table 45 indicates that those within the sample between the ages of 18-30, varied significantly from those in the sample that were over the age of 40 when it comes to the JS 2 (Pay and Promotion Potential) variable.

It can be seen in Table 46 that the job satisfaction of the 18-30 age group is significantly lower than that of the 41-50 and 51 and older age groups, with a margin of 0.41 and 0.67 respectively. It can also be seen in Table 46 that job satisfaction with pay and promotion potential increased with age, as the average for each age group increased gradually.

Table 46

Mean scores for JS2 based on age

Age	Factor_JS2		
	Means	**N**	**Std. Dev.**
18-30 years	2,59	67	0,79
31-40 years	2,84	47	0,65
41-50 years	3,00	43	0,86
51+ years	3,26	13	0,75
All groups	**2,81**	**170**	**0,79**

In Table 47 it can be seen that the 18-30 age group varied significantly from the other age categories (31-40, 41-50 and 51+) when it came to the workplace stress variable of job demands. This variance is investigated further in Table 48.

Table 47

Identification of age variance based on the WS 1 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS1				
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**	**{4}**
	M=3.6175	**M=3.2181**	**M=3.1860**	**M=3.0096**
18-30 years {1}		0.62 (M)	0.69 (M)	1.06 (L)
31-40 years {2}	0,0067			
41-50 years {3}	0,0037	0,9955		
51+ years {4}	0,0108	0,7347	0,8260	

The mean scores in Table 48 indicate that the 18-30 age bracket in the sample was significantly less stressed than the older age groups when it came to stress associated with their job demands. The average for the 18-30 age group was 0.40 higher than the 31-40 group, 0.45 higher than the 41-50 group and 0.61 higher than the 51+ age group. It can also be observed that the stress levels increased as age increased in the sample measured.

Table 48

Mean scores for WS1 based on age

Age	Factor_WS1		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
18-30 years	3,62	67	0,59
31-40 years	3,22	47	0,72
41-50 years	3,19	43	0,69
51+ years	3,01	13	0,51
All Groups	3,35	170	0,68

In Table 49 it can be seen that once again the 18-30 group varied significantly from the other age categories in the sample. The details of the variances are depicted in Table 50 and are discussed further.

Table 49

Identification of age variance based on the WS 4 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS4				
Age	{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}
	M=3.9366	M=3.5479	M=3.5233	M=3.3269
18-30 years {1}		0.60 (M)	0.61 (M)	0.94 (L)
31-40 years {2}	0,0140			
41-50 years {3}	0,0099	0,9982		
51+ years {4}	0,0161	0,7268	0,7976	

It is indicated in Table 50 that the 18-30 age group sample was on average, less stressed than the other age groups when it came to the "use of skills and abilities" workplace stress variable. Similar to the previous variables, once again, the stress levels increased along with the age categories. The average for the 18-30 age category was 0.39 higher than the 31-40 group, 0.42 higher than the 41-50 group and 0.61 higher than the 51+ group. Potential reasons for this variance form part of the discussion section of the study.

Table 50

Mean scores for WS4 based on age

Age	Factor_WS4		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
18-30 years	3,94	67	0,63
31-40 years	3,55	47	0,67
41-50 years	3,52	43	0,74
51+ years	3,33	13	0,73
All groups	3,68	170	0,71

In Table 51, we see that the 18-30 age group in the sample varied significantly from the 31-40 age group when it came to the WS5 (Work Relationships) workplace stress variable. This variance is explored further in Table 52.

Table 51

Identification of age variance based on the WS5 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS5			
	{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}
	M=3.9366	M=3.3138	M=3.6337	M=3.6346
18-30 years {1}		0.80 (L)		
31-40 years {2}	0,0001			
41-50 years {3}	0,1669	0,1829		
51+ years {4}	0,5480	0,5248	1,0000	

In Table 52, it can be seen that the average for the 18-30 sample is considerably higher than the 31-40 age group, with a variance of 0.63. This indicates that on average the 18-30 age group was significantly less stressed when it came to the workplace relationships variable. No other significant variances were found among the age categories based on the workplace relationships variable. Potential reasons for this variance forms part of the discussion section of the study.

Table 52

Mean scores for WS5 based on age

Age	Factor_WS5		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
18-30 years	3,94	67	0,71
31-40 years	3,31	47	0,86
41-50 years	3,63	43	0,76
51+ years	3,63	13	0,49
All groups	3,66	170	0,79

6.6.4 Analysis of variance based on municipalities

The variables in Table 53 represent the p-scores for municipalities. P-scores below 0.05 indicates statistically significant variance within those variables. Because a considerable imbalance was present in the sample sizes for the various municipalities, it was decided that the variables would not be explored further as this would potentially contribute to a false representation of the municipalities measured. Of the 19 statistically significant variances identified, 18 were related to either the largest or the smallest samples namely George (n=94) or Alfred Nzo municipalities (n=12) which motivated the decision not to explore these variances further.

Table 53

Variance based on municipalities

Analysis of Variance based on municipalities		
	F	p
Factor_JS1	1,62	0,1721
Factor_JS2	4,39	0,0021
Factor_JS3	2,63	0,0364
Factor_JS4	6,43	0,0001
Factor_JS5	3,31	0,0122
Factor_WS1	5,74	0,0002
Factor_WS2	1,40	0,2348
Factor_WS3	4,71	0,0013
Factor_WS4	8,66	0,0000
Factor_WS5	6,79	0,0000
Factor_WS6	3,88	0,0049
Factor_WS7	4,89	0,0009

6.6.5 Analysis of variance based on experience

In Table 54, it is indicated that statistically significant variance based on job experience was found with factors WS1 as well as the factors from WS3 through to WS7. These variables are explored in more detail, to determine the causes of these variances. No significant variance was found within the job satisfaction variables, based on work experience.

Table 54

Variance based on experience

Analysis of Variance based on experience		
	F	p
Factor_JS1	1,49	0,2085
Factor_JS2	1,23	0,2990
Factor_JS3	0,68	0,6058
Factor_JS4	2,41	0,0511
Factor_JS5	0,85	0,4934
Factor_WS1	3,38	0,0109
Factor_WS2	0,51	0,7316
Factor_WS3	2,91	0,0234
Factor_WS4	6,68	0,0001
Factor_WS5	4,83	0,0010
Factor_WS6	3,20	0,0146
Factor_WS7	4,13	0,0033

In Table 55, it can be seen that staff with less than one year's experience varied significantly from staff with 5-10 years of experience. This was the only significant variance found within the WS1 factor when it came to the experience of the staff. This variance is explored further in Table 56.

Table 55

Identification of experience variance based on the WS1 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS1					
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**	**{4}**	**{5}**
	M=3.5636	**M=3.3924**	**M=3.3173**	**M=3.0901**	**M=3.1964**
< 1 year {1}				0.69 (M)	
1-3 years {2}	0,7033				
3-5 years {3}	0,7451	0,9965			
5-10 years {4}	0,0037	0,2122	0,8146		
10+ years {5}	0,3392	0,8719	0,9897	0,9852	

Table 56 indicates that the mean for the <1 group is 0.47 higher than the mean for the 5-10 years group. This would indicate that the stress levels of the 5-10 years group were significantly higher than that of the staff with less than a year's worth of experience.

Table 56

Mean scores for WS1 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS1		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
< 1 year	3,56	57	0,76
1-3 years	3,39	43	0,57
3-5 years	3,32	13	0,62
5-10 years	3,09	43	0,56
10+ years	3,20	14	0,80
All Groups	**3,35**	**170**	**0,68**

Table 57 indicates that the <1 group varied significantly from the 3-5 years group. The 1-3 years group also varied significantly from the 3-5 years group according to the statistics depicted in Table 57. These relationships are investigated further in Table 58.

Table 57

Identification of experience variance based on the WS 3 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS3					
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**	**{4}**	**{5}**
	M=3.4561	**M=3.5674**	**M=2.7846**	**M=3.3814**	**M=3.1429**
< 1 year {1}			0.78 (M)		
1-3 years {2}	0,9568		1.09 (L)		
3-5 years {3}	0,0444	0,0148			
5-10 years {4}	0,9901	0,8097	0,1176		
10+ years {5}	0,6712	0,4033	0,7632	0,8630	

In Table 58, it can be seen that the average for the 3-5 years group was 0.68 and 0.79 lower than the <1 and 1-3 years groups respectively. This indicates that on average, the 3-5 years staff were significantly more stressed than the staff with less than three years of experience.

Table 58

Mean scores for WS3 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS3		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
< 1 year	3,46	57	0,82
1-3 years	3,57	43	0,60
3-5 years	2,78	13	1,02
5-10 years	3,38	43	0,77
10+ years	3,14	14	0,98
All Groups	**3,39**	**170**	**0,81**

Table 59 indicates that the <1 year portion of the sample varies significantly from the 3-5 and 5-10 year staff. It was also found that the 1-3 years group varied significantly from the 1-3 years group. These differences are explored further in Table 60.

Table 59

Identification of experience variance based on the WS4 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS4					
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**	**{4}**	**{5}**
	M=3.9167	**M=3.8140**	**M=3.0192**	**M=3.4826**	**M=3.5000**
< 1 year {1}			1.18 (L)	0.64 (M)	
1-3 years {2}	0,9403		1.25 (L)		
3-5 years {3}	0,0001	0,0015			
5-10 years {4}	0,0106	0,1398	0,1774		
10+ years {5}	0,2178	0,5379	0,3276	1,0000	

The average for the <1 group is 0.9 higher than the 3-5 year group and 0.44 higher than the 5-10 years group as depicted in Table 60. This indicates that on average the staff with less than a years' experience were significantly less stressed than the staff with between 3 to 10 years of experience. The average for the 1-3 years group was 0.79 higher than the 3-5 years group, indicating that on average the 3-5 years group was considerably more stressed than the 1-3 years staff.

Table 60

Mean scores for WS4 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS4		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
< 1 year	3,92	57	0,68
1-3 years	3,81	43	0,45
3-5 years	3,02	13	1,05
5-10 years	3,48	43	0,67
10+ years	3,50	14	0,66
All Groups	**3,68**	**170**	**0,71**

Regarding the WS5 factor, it can be seen in Table 61 that the <1 group varied significantly from the 3-5 and 5-10 years groups. With the same found between the 1-3 years group when compared to the 3-5 and 5-10 years groups. These variances are investigated further in Table 61.

Table 61

Identification of experience variance based on the WS 5 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS5					
	{1}	**{2}**	**{3}**	**{4}**	**{5}**
	M=3.8421	**M=3.8721**	**M=3.0769**	**M=3.4070**	**M=3.6429**
< 1 year {1}	■		0.89 (L)	0.55 (M)	
1-3 years {2}	0,9997	■	1.13 (L)	0.69 (M)	
3-5 years {3}	0,0086	0,0077	■		
5-10 years {4}	0,0349	0,0345	0,6390	■	
10+ years {5}	0,9024	0,8610	0,2920	0,8480	■

In Table 62, it can be seen that the average for the <1 group was 0.76 higher than the 3-5 year group and 0.43 higher than the 5-10 year group. This indicates that, in general, the <1 group was significantly less stressed than the staff that fell within the 3-10 years' experience level when it comes to the WS5 variable. The 1-3 years group was also found to vary significantly from the 3-5 as well as the 5-10 groups with a variance of 0.79 and 0.46 respectively. This indicates that in general the staff that had less than three years' experience were significantly less stressed than the staff that had 3-10 years of experience.

Table 62

Mean scores for WS5 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS5		
	Means	**N**	**Std.Dev.**
< 1 year	3,84	57	0,81
1-3 years	3,87	43	0,57
3-5 years	3,08	13	1,04
5-10 years	3,41	43	0,76
10+ years	3,64	14	0,66
All Groups	**3,66**	**170**	**0,79**

Table 63 indicates that the only significant variance within the WS6 factor based on experience was between the <1-year group and the 5-10 years group. This variance is explored further in Table 64.

Table 63

Identification of experience variance based on the WS6 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS6					
	{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}	{5}
	M=3.8842	M=4.2698	M=3.9231	M=4.2930	M=4.4000
< 1 year {1}				0.53 (M)	
1-3 years {2}	0,0740				
3-5 years {3}	0,9998	0,5751			
5-10 years {4}	0,0489	0,9999	0,5103		
10+ years {5}	0,1331	0,9791	0,4503	0,9900	

In Table 64, one can see that the average for the <1 group was 0.41 lower than the 5-10 years group. This indicates that the <1 year group was significantly more stressed than the 5-10 years group when it came to the WS6 variable.

Table 64

Mean scores for WS6 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS6		
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
< 1 year	3,88	57	0,90
1-3 years	4,27	43	0,57
3-5 years	3,92	13	0,93
5-10 years	4,29	43	0,57
10+ years	4,40	14	0,72
All Groups	4,13	170	0,76

Table 65 indicates that both the <1 and 1-3 years group varied significantly from the 3-5 years group when it came to the WS7 variable. This variance is explored further in Table 66.

Table 65

Identification of experience variance based on the WS7 factor

Tukey HSD test; Variable: Factor_WS7					
	{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}	{5}
	M=3.0936	M=3.2481	M=2.4359	M=2.8527	M=2.6429
< 1 year {1}			0.80 (L)		
1-3 years {2}	0,8623		1.03 (L)		
3-5 years {3}	0,0464	0,0085			
5-10 years {4}	0,5395	0,1265	0,4368		
10+ years {5}	0,2933	0,0836	0,9583	0,9051	

In Table 66, one can see that the average for the <1 group was 0.65 higher than the 3-5 years group, whereas the 1-3 years group was 0.81 higher than the 3-5 year group. This indicates that the 3-5 years group was on average significantly more stressed than the staff with less than three years of experience.

Table 66

Mean scores for WS7 based on experience

Experience in role	Factor_WS7	Factor_WS7	Factor_WS7
	Means	N	Std.Dev.
< 1 year	3,09	57	0,82
1-3 years	3,25	43	0,78
3-5 years	2,44	13	0,84
5-10 years	2,85	43	0,68
10+ years	2,64	14	0,82
All Groups	2,98	170	0,80

In this section, variances based on demographic factors that included race, gender, age and experience were outlined. It was determined that significant variance was present based on race when it came to the six factors of:

- Pay and promotion potential;
- Use of skills and abilities;
- Demands;
- Peer support;
- Relationships; and
- Change.

Regarding experience, variance was identified when it came to the six factors of:

- Demands;
- Managerial support;
- Peer support;
- Relationships;
- Role; and
- Change.

In terms of age, variance emerged from the following four factors,

- Pay and promotion potential;
- Job demands;
- Use of skills and abilities; and
- Work relationships.

Lastly, in terms of gender, the largest variance found between the two genders was based on the workplace stress factor of change. Potential reasons for the variances are discussed in the next chapter (Discussion). Variances based on the various municipalities that contributed to the study were ignored due to insufficient representation for some of the municipalities. To follow, is the final section of the chapter which serves as a summary of the main themes that emerged from the study.

6.7 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

In section 6.2 (Characteristics of the sample), the nature of the sample was outlined. It was determined that a well-balanced and representative sample had been sourced. There was almost a 50-50 split regarding gender, and all the races, age and experience groups that had been identified for the study were present.

In section 6.3 (Job satisfaction findings), it was determined that the staff were most satisfied with the first job satisfaction item, namely, hours worked. They were least satisfied with the sixth job satisfaction item namely, opportunities for promotion. All JS factors had alphas above 0.60 except for JS1 (General Working Conditions). Item 4 was removed after which the alpha for JS1 rose to 0.64. Staff were most satisfied with the JS3 factor namely, work relationships and were least satisfied with JS2 factor, namely, pay and promotion potential. H_2, H_4, H_5 and H_7 were not

supported with H_6 the only hypothesis in the section that was consistent with the hypotheses stated. The relationship found for H_6 was not, however, a very strong one and further research is suggested.

In section 6.4 (Workplace stress findings), the staff experienced the least amount of stress when it came to WS21 namely, "I am subject to bullying at work". The most stress was associated with WS9, namely, "I have to work very intensively". The alphas for the seven workplace stress factors were all above the minimum benchmark of 0.60 with the scores ranging from 0.65 to 0.84. The sample was least stressed by factor 6 (Role) and experienced the most stress regarding factor 7 (change).

In section 6.5 (The Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Work Stress), strong relationships were found between the WS factors of managerial support and peer support, peer support and relationship, managerial support and role as well as between managerial support and change. Strong relationships were found between the factors of managerial support (WS) and work relationships (JS), managerial support (WS) and work activities (JS) as well as between role (WS) and work activities (JS). H_1 and H_3 were rejected and moderate support was found for H_8. Further research into hypothesis 8 is therefore suggested.

In section 6.6, variance was found based on race regarding the JS factors of JS2 and JS4 as well as the WS factors of WS1, WS4 and WS6. Variance was found based on gender in WS7 (change). Variance based on age was present within JS2 and WS1, 4 and 5 respectively. Variance based on experience was found within WS factors 1, and WS3 to WS7.

This chapter has aided in assessing the validity of the questionnaire used for the study and has provided insight into the job satisfaction and workplace stress levels of the staff members. In the next chapter (Discussion), some of the implications of the findings in this chapter are discussed.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 <u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter, the relationships that emerged from the analysis conducted in the findings chapter are explored further and discussed. This discussion includes the job satisfaction and workplace stress items and factors as well as a comparison to previous studies, the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction, the demographic factors as well as the hypotheses where appropriate.

7.2 <u>Job Satisfaction</u>

The analysis of job satisfaction in the study comprised of 18 items that fed into five different factors. In this section, the areas of interest that emerged in the findings chapter are explored and the results of the relevant hypotheses tests are discussed.

7.2.1 Job satisfaction items

Among the 18 job satisfaction items measured in the study. It emerged that the staff were most satisfied with items 11 (relationship with your supervisor), 10 (relationship with your co-workers) and 1 (hours worked each week), with item 1 having the highest satisfaction rating of the three. These results suggest that for the most part, the relationships at the workplace are quite healthy and constructive. This is quite significant if one considers the EVP of Coca-Cola (Potgieter, 2013) which suggests that people are the primary factor determining the engagement and retention of staff. It could, therefore, be expected that turnover of staff might be low within the municipalities measured. The staff was most satisfied with the number of hours they work. Yeh (2015) indicates that hours worked can have a significant negative impact on job satisfaction and the extent of the satisfaction in this regard could, therefore, be a significant reason as to why the overall satisfaction levels of the sample were high. A reason for this level of satisfaction could be that most staff were office workers who work a maximum of 45 hours a week Monday to Friday, with very little overtime if any. The lack of late nights and early mornings when compared to the private sector is possibly the primary contributor to the satisfaction of the public service workers. Most also have a degree of flexibility in terms of what time they start and finish their days, as well as when they can take their lunch. The consistency in terms of hours worked per week might also serve as a retention tool as staff can rely on the hours worked and can, therefore, adopt efficient routines. This could have implications for the stress levels of staff as

those that experience more fluctuation in their weekly hours are more likely to encounter stress as a result of the disruption to their routines and the potential impact on their personal lives. This consistency in hours and flexibility for the majority of the staff could, therefore, have positive implications for the overall stress experienced by the staff members.

The three items that the staff were least satisfied with was item 15 (support for additional training and education), 9 (recognition for work accomplished) and 6 (opportunities for promotion), with item 6 being the one that staff' were the least satisfied with.

Oshagbemi (1997) indicates that an employee's rank within an organisation seems to correlate favourably with job satisfaction. If employees are therefore not at the level that they desire, or if they have been stuck at the same level for an extended period, then job dissatisfaction would be the likely consequence. This assertion has been supported by (Applebaum et al., 1994; Ference et al., 1977; Kavanaugh et al., 2006) who suggest that a career plateau is linked to lower job satisfaction. In South Africa, public service positions tend to be sought after due to their relative job security, competitive salaries, better than average benefits and lower accountability when compared to most of the private sector. As such, turnover tends to be low within public service, especially at the higher levels where the salaries and benefits are at their best. Although normally, a lack of turnover would be regarded as a positive for organisations, in this instance, it poses a problem as it serves as a barrier to those staff members who find themselves lower on the ladder and who are eager to develop and grow. Instead, they could potentially experience a plateau which could have contributed to the low rating found in the study. Another potential contributor to the dissatisfaction could be the fact that a fair percentage of the staff are contract staff. Many municipalities have what they call unemployed graduate trainees whom they employ for a fixed time period. The intention is to help predominantly previously-disadvantaged graduates to gain experience to make them more employable in the job market. A small percentage of these graduates tend to get absorbed into the organisation permanently, and as such, rarely is their desire for a 'promotion' to permanent employment met. This pressure from the bottom up might mean that staff in supervisory positions feel under pressure from promising and normally younger subordinates that desire their positions and may even at times make them look bad. As such, they may refrain from engaging in regular recognition of their subordinates which could be a contributor to the low satisfaction in item 9. Furthermore, staff in public service tend not to receive recognition in the form of pay. Performance appraisals are not necessarily a standard practice within some municipalities and staff tend not to have a performance component built into their pay structures and rather receive guaranteed 13th

cheques. Normally permanent staff would receive a 13th cheque independent of their performance, and unions would negotiate periodically for wage increases that steer clear of a performance dimension. Therefore, it would seem that in public service, for the most part, recognition in the form of pay has taken a back seat to a desire for consistency in the form of guaranteed pay. It comes as a surprise that some staff are dissatisfied with the amount of support that they receive for additional training and education. Unemployed graduate trainees are, in effect, employed in a type of traineeship, and many, if not most, municipalities have a body in place that is responsible for ensuring that training and development takes place. Staff are normally informed in terms of what the available budget is for training over that financial time period, and the only requirements are that the training selected is within the budget and that the training is relevant to the employees' area of work. One would therefore not anticipate dissatisfaction where a system like this exists. It is, however, possible that staff might not be satisfied with the amount available for training, or maybe the systems in place for training are not administered properly or fairly. It should also be noted however that the average for the item was at 2.79 out of 5. So, even though it was the third lowest in terms of the 18 items measured, it was still above 2.5, suggesting that the majority of the staff were satisfied with this item. Essentially what this means is that there were 15 other items with which the staff were more satisfied. It is, however, worth noting that recognition, promotion and development opportunities ranked the lowest. There does seem to be a desire among staff to grow and contribute more, which should be a positive sign for the municipalities that actually provide them with a potential opportunity going forward. An inconsistency that emerged, however, was that staff indicated that their relationship with their supervisors is one of the areas that they are most satisfied with, yet the recognition that they receive is one of the areas that they are least satisfied with. This appears to be strange as the supervisor is the person who would normally be expected to provide an employee with recognition at the workplace. It is, however, possible that the staff viewed promotion as a form of recognition which the employee could, therefore, regard separately from their relationship with their supervisor.

The highest deviation among the job satisfaction items was present in item 7. This item refers to how satisfied the staff member is with the benefits that they receive. The most likely cause of the deviation as alluded to previously is the fact that there was a split in the sample consisting of permanent and contract staff. Permanent staff receive good benefits such as medical aid, pension, transport and a housing allowance as opposed to the contract staff who receive the minimum in terms of leave (1.25 days per month) and do not qualify for benefits such as

medical aid and pension. This inequality in benefits experienced by the contributors to the study is quite possibly the main cause of the variance in responses experienced.

The item with the lowest deviation was that of item 1 which refers to the staff's satisfaction with the hours they work each week. It has already been discussed that the number of hours worked by municipal staff tends to be quite consistent and is unlikely to fluctuate between contract and permanent staff. It is therefore not surprising that this item is the most consistent in terms of responses. To follow, the job satisfaction factors are explored.

7.2.2 Job satisfaction factors

Based on the analysis of the five job satisfaction factors, only one strong relationship was identified. The relationship was between factors 4 (use of skills and abilities) and 5 (Work activities). This is not surprising as the two factors are quite closely aligned. Having the opportunity to utilise your skills and what you actually do on the job are two similar constructs. Therefore, if employees are satisfied with the fact that they have the opportunity to utilise their skills, then it stands to reason that they would also be satisfied with the activities that they are engaged with at work, and vice versa. Considering this, it is therefore not surprising that a strong relationship exists between these constructs.

The factor that the staff was most satisfied with was that of factor 3, work relationships. This is not surprising, as two of the three items that make up factor three, namely items 10 and 11 were some of the items that the staff were most satisfied with. This suggests that the staff are, for the most part, satisfied with the relationships that they have with their colleagues, superiors and where applicable their subordinates. Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000) posit that the link between job satisfaction and relations with management is well-established. The manager-subordinate relationship is further emphasised by Blau (1964), Eisenberger et al. (1997, as cited in Chiang et al., 2013, p. 400) by referring to exchange theory that argues that the presence of resources and support is likely to contribute to positive workplace behaviours and attitudes. This finding is therefore quite similar to that of Van Quaquebeke et al. (2009) that working for a supervisor who treats employees with respect is the second most important work value.

One could speculate as to why staff are so satisfied with these relationships, but no clear cause has emerged. The profile of the staff is quite diverse with little consistency in terms of age, gender or race. Many departments are quite social and interactive which could facilitate the formation of healthy relationships at work. The lack of turnover might also contribute to the fact

that some of the staff have been working together for a long time, allowing staff to develop trust and respect over time.

The factor that the staff were least satisfied with was that of pay and promotion potential (Factor 2). This was expected as two of the items that form part of this factor were in the bottom three items in terms of the satisfaction levels of the staff. Herzberg (1987) and Koustelios (2001) suggest that it is unlikely that staff would ever be satisfied with pay, and the lack of turnover within municipalities accentuates this. Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2000) indicate that some determinants of job satisfaction apply to specific countries as opposed to all, with pay being applicable to some but not all. Based on the findings of this study it would, therefore, appear that South Africa would fall under the 'some countries' category that they refer to. The results of the study conflict with the findings from Yeh (2015), who found a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked. This sample, however, is most satisfied with the hours worked and least satisfied with their pay and promotion potential. As inflation goes up, so does the expectation for pay and a large percentage of the staff only receive mandatory benefits without the luxury of optional benefits such as medical aid and pension.

In the next section, the hypotheses tested that relate to job satisfaction are discussed.

7.2.3 Hypotheses related to job satisfaction

In this section, H_2, H_4, H_5, H_6 and H_7 are discussed as they pertain to job satisfaction. The results as outlined in the findings chapter are expanded upon and potential reasons are explored.

H_2 reads as follows: "There is a positive relationship between satisfaction with pay and hours worked". This hypothesis was drawn from the study conducted by Yeh (2015) that suggested that a relationship existed between pay and working hours. This, however, was not supported by the results of this study. A variance of 1.19 (4.14 vs 2.95) was found between the two areas suggesting that the two areas were not very closely aligned. The findings from Yeh (2015) would suggest that if employees are satisfied with their pay, then they are likely to be happy with their hours worked and that if they are not happy with their pay that they are likely to be unhappy with the hours they work. The results from this study, however, found that the staff were fairly dissatisfied with their pay yet satisfied with the hours that they work. This is probably because many of the contributors to the study do not qualify for overtime, which prevents them from boosting their income to preferred levels while, at the same time, keeping their hours to a minimum, which, in turn, can contribute to satisfaction with the number of hours that they work.

Yet again, the lack of a total package for contract staff could have contributed to widening the gap between these two areas, as contract staff receive less reward for the hours that they put in compared to permanent staff.

H_4 states that "The job satisfaction levels of women are significantly higher than that of men". This hypothesis was derived from the studies conducted by (Bowen & Cattell, 2008; Donohue & Heywood, 2004; Droussiotis & Austin, 2007; Groot & van den Brink, 1999; Linz & Semykina, 2013; Magee, 2014), who found a significant difference in the job satisfaction levels of men and women in their studies. Because there was an almost 50/50 split in the sample based on gender, it provided an ideal opportunity to draw this comparison. The results, however, did not support the hypothesis with the average across the genders being very similar at 3.39 for men and 3.27 for women. Although the averages are very similar, if anything, the results suggest the opposite of the set hypothesis and are, therefore, more consistent with the studies conducted by (Anari, 2012; Eskildsen et al., 2004; Toker, 2011) that found that a significant difference was not present among the genders when it comes to job satisfaction. One argument could be that the push for equality in South Africa has contributed towards enhanced opportunities for women in the workplace and their satisfaction levels are, therefore, 'equal' or similar to those of men. It is also possible that the average of women is less than men because, even though there is a desire to enhance the status of women in the workplace in South Africa, progress in this regard is slow, so even though improvements are taking place, it has not reached the desired heights yet. As such, men still receive the 'rub of the green' for the most part and the expected results were not found. It might, however, be interesting to monitor these satisfaction levels over time to see in what direction the levels are moving for the genders.

H_5 states that "The job satisfaction levels of previously disadvantaged staff are higher than that of white staff members". This hypothesis was formed on the basis of the findings of the study conducted by Bowen and Cattell (2008) that found a significant difference in job satisfaction based on race. The assumption was that the introduction of democracy in South Africa which forces the transformation of the demographic of the workplace in the form of legislation would have implications for the different races based in South Africa. It was therefore expected that the satisfaction of previously disadvantaged staff would be enhanced and that the satisfaction levels of white staff members would decline. This hypothesis was not supported by the study. Instead, the results were more consistent with the study conducted by Friday et al. (2004) where no significant variance was found. In fact, the study indicated that white staff are currently slightly more satisfied than previously-disadvantaged staff. These results would be more

meaningful in the presence of existing research so that comparisons could be drawn. Unfortunately, in isolation, there is a limit in terms of how meaningful the results may or may not be. Without the luxury of comparison, the researcher cannot deduce whether or not job satisfaction levels are on the rise or declining which is the unfortunate consequence of exploratory research. Hopefully, future research will be conducted and be compared to the existing results in order to determine what trends or shifts are taking place if any.

H_6 states that "There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and age". The hypothesis was inspired by the study conducted by Oshagbemi (1997) which suggested that job satisfaction improves with age, the assumption being that with age come experience, knowledge, confidence and performance, which would have positive implications for the job satisfaction of employees. The results did support this theory in the sense that each age category was more satisfied than the next, the older they got. However, the gaps were not large enough to be regarded as significant, and, as such, the hypothesis cannot be supported outright. It does, however, lend credence to the theory and may be worth pursuing further, ideally with larger sample sizes. It is important to note that age does not necessarily equal experience. South Africa is in quite a unique situation in the sense that the workplace underwent an overhaul, where previously-disadvantaged staff were almost 'forced' into positions in an attempt to fast-track transformation in the country. As such, some staff that had been employed for many years in lower-level positions were thrust into more senior roles for which they were not quite ready. Accordingly, some staff who were at an advanced age were promoted to higher levels in the organisation almost overnight but lacked the experience required to perform at that level. Those staff members' job satisfaction levels are likely to suffer as a result of their sub-par performance. This might be a contributor to why the gaps between the age groups in terms of the average satisfaction are not larger.

H_7 states that, "There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and experience". The assumption is, therefore, that the more experienced employees are in their roles, the more competent they are likely to be at their job and the better their performance is likely to be, which should have positive implications for their associated job satisfaction. The results of the study did not support this theory, however, with some inconsistency across the various experience categories. Caution should be taken in interpreting these results, however, as the two categories that had the lowest job satisfaction averages also had the smallest sample sizes at n=13 and n=14 respectively. As such, it is possible that the lack of substantial representation in the sample may have contributed to the results obtained. It would, for example, seem illogical

that the group with the lowest job satisfaction would be the group with three to five years of experience, yet the most satisfied group is the one with one to three years of experience. One could potentially motivate as to why the most experienced group (10+ years) would have low job satisfaction as it would mean that the employee had been in the role for a very long time and might be experiencing a career plateau. The small sample size, however, means that one cannot draw this conclusion with any confidence. A larger sample with a better distribution across the experience levels would be required before any meaningful conclusions could be drawn.

In this section, the main data that emerged from the findings chapter as it pertains to job satisfaction was highlighted and discussed, including the job satisfaction items, factors and hypotheses. In the next section, the findings from the workplace stress section are discussed in more detail.

7.3 <u>Workplace Stress</u>

The analysis of job satisfaction in the study comprised of 35 items that fed into seven different factors. In this section, I explore the areas of interest that emerged in the findings chapter as well as expand on the results of H_1.

7.3.1 Workplace stress items

Among the 35 workplace stress items measured in the study, it emerged that the staff experienced the least amount of stress when it came to items 21 (I am subject to bullying at work), 4 (I know how to go about getting my job done), and 11 (I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are), with item 21 being the item where the least amount of stress is experienced. Morrison and Nolan (2007) pointed out that the work place is a fairly unique environment where 'strangers' may be forced to interact with each other. In this forced environment, negative relationships can be formed which would then be likely to contribute to workplace stress and possibly turnover intentions.

The results would suggest that the employees experience quite a supportive and harmonious work environment which is mostly free from bullying. This is supported by the fact that the staff were very satisfied with their relationships with their colleagues and supervisors which Giorgi et al. (2014) as well as Valentine et al. (2015) pointed out can be effective in limiting bullying at work, which is therefore consistent with the bullying finding in this study. The results related to items 4 and 11 would suggest that the employer has been effective in communicating its

expectations to employees and that the employees have confidence in terms of how to perform their jobs to the required standard. Supportive relationships, effective communication and competence would normally form part of most experts' recipe for success. Unfortunately, these results are reported in the absence of performance figures, as comparisons between performance and self-perception of competence might make for interesting reading. The municipalities that participated in the study have job descriptions for the majority of their positions. Therefore, it is not surprising that staff are comfortable in terms of what their jobs entail. One also needs to consider that some people might not be comfortable admitting that they do not know how to get their job done, especially if they believe that there might be a possibility that their manager could see the results. Ego/dishonesty or fear of consequence might therefore also be behind the responses related to item 4. As suggested previously, the accuracy or relevance of these findings would only really be given life in the presence of individualised performance figures. As mentioned, it was re-emphasised that the relationships at the workplace are healthy and could, therefore, be viewed as potentially being one of the primary contributors to the high levels of staff retention.

The three items where staff experienced the most amount of stress was with items 9 (I have to work very intensely), 19 (I have a choice in deciding what I do at work) and 20 (I have to work very fast), with item 9 being the item where the most amount of stress was found. Reynolds (1997) points out that there are limitations on the buffering effect of knowledge and experience when it comes to workload. If the workload is excessive, then according to them, it is likely that workplace stress will accrue.

Items 9 and 20 are very similar, lending support to its relevance as a legitimate stressor experienced by the majority of the staff members. This does not come as a surprise as a majority of the contributors (55%) to the study came from the George Municipality where they were at approximately 50% of staff capacity at the time. This would suggest that some staff members might be expected to do the work of two staff members and seems to have been reflected in the stress experienced by the staff members. In terms of item 19, this would suggest a lack of autonomy for staff members. In other words, they do not believe that they have much control over what they do or how they do it. Recent literature suggests that employees desire autonomy at work and it would appear that the majority of the staff are not afforded this luxury. When one considers that the staff were relatively dissatisfied with their opportunities for development, promotion and recognition received as discussed in the previous section, then it does start to paint a picture. This does cause one to wonder how much support and

encouragement staff received from their supervisors in the context of what the staff seemed to be dissatisfied with and stressed about. The confusion comes in when one considers that the staff's relationship with their supervisors is one of the areas that they are apparently most satisfied with. This does point towards a potential inconsistency in the results; perhaps, as pointed out regarding the matter related to item 4, the results have been influenced by the fear that their supervisors might gain access to these results, and accordingly, staff rate their relationship with their supervisor higher than might be warranted. This assertion can, however, not be proven within the current study, but there certainly does appear to be an underlying 'force' that has contributed to an inconsistency in the results found.

The highest deviation among the workplace stress items was present in item 2 (I can decide when to take a break). The contributors to the study varied in terms of department and title, ranging from technical to administrative roles. The variation in terms of the sample is probably the primary contributor to the inconsistency found in the results. In an administrative role, for example, lunch tends to be at an agreed time, and staff have the luxury of taking breaks when they feel the need to. However, in a project or team-based environment, you might only have the luxury of taking a break when the project has progressed to a certain point, or when the majority of the group decide to do so. There is also quite a split in terms of trainees and managers present in the sample. Managers tend to have more autonomy in their roles and, accordingly, tend to have the luxury of taking breaks when they want to and for as long as they want to without being held accountable for it, whereas trainees tend not to have the same luxury. This could then potentially explain the deviation present in the sample.

The item with the lowest standard deviation was that of item 31 (My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems). This once again supports previous findings that suggest that the relationships between colleagues at the workplace are supportive and harmonious. The job satisfaction results suggested that staff was satisfied with their workplace relationships, the workplace stress findings suggested that workplace relationships are not a source of stress for them and the consistency in item 31 with an average of 3.72 out of 5 suggests that most of the sample feels that they receive support from their colleagues. This, therefore, places yet further emphasis on the idea that the majority of the relationships at the workplaces measured are healthy ones.

7.3.2 Workplace stress factors

In the study, the alphas for the seven workplace stress factors measured all exceeded the minimum benchmark of 0.60 that was set. With the lowest alpha being for factor 7 (change) with an alpha of 0.67. When one compares these findings with the two previous studies (see Table 21 in the findings chapter) conducted with the measure, the alphas are lower for all the factors with the exception of factor 6 (Role). Reasons for the lower alphas could be due to the relatively small sample size as well as the fact that the previous studies had been conducted in first world countries where English was more likely to be the first language of the majority of the respondents in those countries, providing them with a potential comprehension advantage over the respondents that formed part of this study. Although factor 6 received a higher alpha, it was only by 0.01 and therefore did not warrant further investigation.

As mentioned previously, factor 6 (role) was the only factor with an alpha higher than two of the previous studies conducted with the measure. It was also the factor with the highest average across the seven factors measured in this study, indicating that this is the factor where the majority of the staff experienced the least amount of stress. Factor 6 includes items 4 and 11 which were identified earlier as being two of the three items on which the staff experienced the least amount of stress. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that factor 6 is the one where staff experienced the least amount of stress. The items that measure factor 6 all refer to an understanding of the job, in terms of what it consists of, what the expectations are, how to do the job, as well as how it fits into the bigger picture of their department and organisation. This would all point to effective communication and alignment within the organisations. It, therefore, comes as a surprise that the George Municipality, the majority sample contributor to the study, was in the process of undergoing an organisational restructuring during the time that the surveys were being completed. The restructuring might, however, have been due to a desire to economise the resources available to them; due to the shortage of human resources, they probably felt that by combining departments and services they could share services and staff in an attempt to enhance the overall output of their staff which would then, in turn, hopefully result in enhanced service delivery. The results also would not have affected the survey results as the restructuring would only have been in the planning stage when the surveys were completed. A possible lack of stress experienced in this regard could be a result of the amount of control the employees perceive that they have in their work environment. Bischoff et al. (1999) refer to the potential of control to empower staff to influence their tasks and minimise the risks of fatigue and burnout.

The workplace stress factor with the lowest average (cause of the most stress) was that of factor 7 (change). A journey into studies into personality would reveal that some personalities are resistant to change and, as such, it should not come as a surprise that a percentage of the staff experience stress related to change. It should also be noted that only three items are used to measure the factor, which is less than the other six factors. This finding is however consistent with Williams (2000) who suggested that the trend within rapidly changing environments is towards fewer staff and higher workloads and that such an environment is more likely to contribute to employee stress. Although communication has seemingly emerged as a strength thus far within the sample, the results within this factor paint a different picture with all three items that make up the factor referring in some way to communication. Item 26 refers to whether or not staff have the luxury of questioning their managers when it comes to change in the workplace; item 28 refers to whether or not they are consulted when it comes to change at work; and, lastly, item 32 which refers to whether or not it is made clear to staff as to how the change will influence/improve their work environment. All three of these items point to a lack of communication and collaboration between staff and their superiors, despite the fact that they indicated that their relationship with their superiors is one of the areas that they are most satisfied with. It is, therefore, possible that the staff do not associate some or all of the changes that they experience with their immediate supervisors. There might be some legitimacy to the theory, as quite often decisions that precipitate change take place at the executive level, which is above the heads of most staff members' immediate supervisors. A hiring freeze, job requirements or annual increases, for example, are matters that employees might not hold their immediate supervisor responsible for. Large bureaucratic organisations with many levels of management, therefore, limit the amount of influence that a manager can have and staff might not then hold their immediate supervisor responsible for the change and lack of communication, as they do not believe that they had much input into or influence over the changes being implemented. This is, however, purely speculative and not based on hard evidence. Nevertheless, it could explain the anomaly found in the results.

7.3.3 Workplace Stress Alpha comparison

As indicated in the previous chapter, the alpha results are discussed in this chapter. The findings indicated that all the factors measured in the study with the exception of the seventh factor (Change) had lower alphas than the previous studies from Cousins et al. (2004) and Edwards et al. (2008). A potential reason for the lower alphas could be due to the sample sizes as well as the language barrier. The questionnaire was developed in the United Kingdom where

English is the first language, along with more comprehensive sample sizes. The majority of the respondents in the current study would not have had English as a first language; this combined with a fairly modest sample size could potentially be at the root of the lower alpha scores obtained. It is, however, interesting that the change factor had a better alpha than the previous studies and conflicts with the theory put forward. It is also the factor with the least number of items and, as such, would be the factor most susceptible to variation. A reason for this finding could be that a smaller sample size may skew results more easily. In other words, results could be exaggerated either positively or negatively should a degree of uniformity exist within the particular sample. It would appear that this uniformity was more prevalent within the change factor than with the other six. One would have to conduct a more robust study to establish the extent of the similarity between English and South African cultures when it comes to the factor of change.

7.3.4 Hypothesis related to workplace stress

Only one of the eight hypotheses was dedicated specifically to the workplace stress factors, and it reads as follows: **H_1: There is a positive relationship between control and work roles**

What the above hypothesis suggests is that control and work roles go hand-in-hand. In other words, if one is satisfied with one's control in their work environment then one is also likely to be satisfied with one's work role by extension and vice versa. This relationship at face value would appear to be a logical one. People may vary in terms of how much control they might want in their work environment and desired control is thus likely to be person-specific. In other words, should employees have the control that they desire in their environment regardless of what that level might be, then they are unlikely to experience stress in their work role. Although control might not be the only factor that influences stress levels within a work role, it is argued that it might be one of the primary contributors, especially considering the amount of emphasis autonomy and independence receives these days. Tabassum (2012) echoes this sentiment by referring to the potential influence of role conflict, control, role ambiguity and autonomy on employee stress levels. Despite this seemingly logical argument, the present study suggests that this relationship is not as logical or obvious as it might seem, as a low Pearson correlation of 0.247 indicates. Although the relationship is positive, it is not to the extent that one could label it as a strong or even moderate relationship. This does come as a surprise, but no obvious reason for this is apparent. Tabassum (2012) does, however, suggest that stress levels among the genders are likely to vary and could influence the results to some extent. The responses from the employees in this study would suggest that the genders are not to blame though, as

the medians for the genders are quite similar when it comes to control at 3.14 for men and 3.01 for female respondents respectively. One cannot ignore the potential impact of person-job fit, however. One could argue that control could be rendered irrelevant if the employee is not a good fit for their role. No amount of control will provide a substitute for a lack of skill, knowledge or interest within an employees' work role. It could serve as a buffer but would be insufficient in instances where the employee does not enjoy the overall nature of the role. Therefore, even in cases where the employee has desirable control they could still experience stress related to the work role that they find themselves in. The results could, therefore, suggest that some of the staff suffer from poor person-job fit which would potentially account for the lower than expected correlation between the two factors of control and work role. Future research into person-job fit would, therefore, be required to validate the theory.

In this section, the items and factors that caused the least and most amount of stress were discussed, along with a factor alpha comparison between this study and two previous ones, which was followed by a discussion of H_1. In the next section, results from the relationship between the areas of workplace stress and job satisfaction are discussed.

7.4 The Relationship Between Workplace Stress and Job Satisfaction

In this section, the results regarding the relationship between the two areas covered in the study are discussed, starting with the cross-factor comparisons which are followed by the hypotheses that draw on the two areas.

7.4.1 Discussion of workplace stress and job satisfaction cross-factor comparison

In the findings chapter, it was identified that strong relationships existed between the following workplace stress and job satisfaction factors:

Table 67

Workplace stress and job satisfaction strong relationships

Code	Factor 1	Factor 2	Score
WS3 + JS3	Managerial Support	Work Relationships	0.501
WS3 + JS5	Managerial Support	Work Activities	0.555
WS6 + JS5	Role	Work Activities	0.575

Each relationship is discussed individually. In terms of managerial support and work relationships, the weakest of the strong relationships, the results suggest that a lack of stress associated with support from management, in other words, good support from managers is positively associated with satisfaction in terms of relationships at work. I have previously made

reference to Burton et al. (2012) who refer to past research which has suggested that job satisfaction can be adversely affected by factors such as job demands, job control, low social support and poor relationships among others. This seems logical, as a relatively stress-free relationship with one's supervisor is likely to have positive implications for one's work relationships, which the strong correlation supports. The anomaly in the results has already been addressed in the sense that there seems to be a disconnect between relationships and some areas related to management, such as recognition, communication and change. Potential reasons for this have been explored previously, but this anomaly appears to be ever-present in the research results. Relationships with supervisors fall under work relationships and a positive correlation, therefore, should not come as a surprise.

The next strong relationship that emerged was between managerial support and work activities. These results suggest that when staff experience little stress when it comes to managerial support, they are likely to experience satisfaction when it comes to work activities. Morrison and Nolan (2007) pointed out that, "If someone is experiencing animosity or obstruction in the workplace, they are likely to be less satisfied with their job than someone not having to deal with interpersonal negativity" (p. 206). Employees would require managerial support if they are to be empowered to do a variety of tasks at work as well as take control of their environment. By empowering staff and by providing them with variety and opportunity, they are supporting and showing confidence in their staff, which then provides the employee with the opportunity to influence their work activities, in terms of what to do, when to do it, and, how to do it. Having this degree of influence would then have positive implications for one's satisfaction with work activities, which was made possible as a result of the managerial support that they received. The opposite would obviously also be true. If managers do not empower their staff, then staff have little influence over their work environment, causing stress in terms of the managerial support received and dissatisfaction in terms of their work activities.

The strongest relationship was found between the workplace stressor of role and the job dis/satisfier of work activities. As discussed previously, Carr et al. (2011) referred to studies that identified that the demands of the job, "can result in diminishing worker satisfaction, burnout and physical illness" (p. 37). Role refers to the employees' understanding of their job, how to do it, what to do and how it contributes to the organisation. In the absence of role ambiguity, employees have the confidence to complete their jobs to the appropriate standard, which is likely to have positive implications for their job satisfaction. Where stress is present in terms of role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction is likely in terms of work activities. Doubt in terms of what to

do, how to do it and why it is important will in all likelihood result in dissatisfaction which would be a direct result of the role ambiguity experienced. The existence of this strong relationship is, therefore, to be expected.

It is important to note that although other relationships (moderate, weak and negative) were not discussed, it does not necessarily mean that the information would not be relevant and useful in other contexts. It is for this reason that all the relationships were depicted in the findings chapter to potentially initiate future discussions and studies. In this chapter, however, the data central to the research theme received the focus.

In the next section, the hypotheses related to the relationship between the workplace stress and job satisfaction factors are addressed.

7.4.2 Hypotheses based on the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction

H_3 states that, "there is a negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction." This would imply that if job satisfaction is high, that workplace stress would be low and vice versa. The hypothesis was inspired by the previous work of (Ashforth, 1989; Bischoff et al., 1999; Droussiotis & Austin, 2007; Hespe & Wall, 1976; Savery & Luks, 2001), all of which have suggested that the relationship as outlined in H_3 exists in one form or another.

The results of the study found a moderate relationship between these areas. These results, therefore, do not support the theory outright and therefore has not been supported to the extent expected. One of the potential factors that may have prevented it from being a strong relationship is the fact that not all stress is necessarily bad. Stress can help to cultivate a sense of urgency and help generate the energy needed to take on challenging tasks. When we work hard and complete a task, the sense of accomplishment that we feel can contribute to job satisfaction despite the presence of stressors in the environment. In fact, the tougher the circumstances, the higher the satisfaction could be if we manage to complete the task in a challenging environment. Although it might sound logical that low stress would contribute to high satisfaction, the results of this study suggest that this might not always be the case, and one also needs to consider that workplace stress is not the only area that will have an influence on job satisfaction.

H_8 states that, "There is a negative relationship between workplace stress associated with control and job satisfaction associated with work activities". This hypothesis, therefore, suggests

that if staff are stressed about the lack of control they have over their work environment, they are likely to be dissatisfied with their work activities and vice versa. The hypothesis was inspired by the works of (Burton et al., 2012; Fairbrother & Warn, 2003; McCraty et al., 2003) all of which suggests that a relationship of this nature is likely. The result of this study does not fully support this theory, as only a weak correlation was found. This indicates that for the staff members who contributed to the study, stress associated with control does not necessarily result in dissatisfaction regarding their work activities. Possible reasons for this could be that a fair percentage of the sample are interns who tend to be young and inexperienced, and in many cases, this job is their first. As such, they require and desire more guidance, assistance and structure. In their case, therefore, a lack of control is not necessarily regarded as a source of stress, but rather more of a comfort that can contribute to job satisfaction. Another considerable portion of the sample is that of management that tends to have experience to draw on, and would thus be more inclined to desire more influence and control over their work environment. The challenge is that within the bureaucratic structures of municipalities, managers tend not to have as much control over their environment as they would encounter within other organisational structures. It is, therefore, possible that management experience a degree of stress and that interns do not when it comes to the dimension of control at work. Another factor to consider is that if one enjoys what they do on a day-to-day basis, then the amount of control they have becomes less relevant. It is, however, rare that someone would enjoy their entire work environment without having to exercise some form of control, as part of the satisfaction that many extract from their environment is deciding what to do, when, and how, which is at the heart of what control is all about.

In this section, I explored the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. It was established in the findings chapter that three strong relationships were found, namely, WS3 and JS3, WS3 and JS5 as well as WS6 and JS5. All three of these relationships were discussed individually in this section. Furthermore, two hypotheses (H_3 and H_8) were discussed to further explore the validity of the theories. In the next section, the demographic factors are explored in more detail.

7.5 <u>Demographic Factor Analysis</u>

In this section, significant information that emerged from the findings chapter is discussed as it pertains to the demographic factors measured in the study. It is important to note that the municipal analysis was disregarded as a result of the imbalance in the representation of the five

municipalities that contributed to the study. To follow, the factors of age, race, experience and gender are explored.

7.5.1 Age

In chapter 3 previous research demonstrated a variance in findings, with Oshagbemi (1997) as well as Hosie et al. (2013) finding that job satisfaction improved with age, whereas Nigam (2013) found no significant difference in job satisfaction levels. In this study, a significant variance was found within four factors namely, JS2, WS1, WS4 and WS5. Each factor is discussed individually.

JS2 refers to the staff's satisfaction with their pay and promotion potential. The results indicate that the group between the ages of 18-30 were significantly less satisfied than the groups over the age of 40. This finding conflicts with that of Kavanaugh et al. (2006) that nurses over the age of 40 were more dissatisfied with their pay. One of the most likely causes of this might be that older staff tend to be in higher positions, and higher positions involve higher pay and better benefits. As mentioned previously, there is a split in the sample consisting of managers and graduate trainees: management with competitive benefits and salaries, and trainees with a subsistence wage and without optional benefits. Most of the interns would have been below the age of 30 and most of the managers would have been above the age of 40, especially in the case of senior management where the benefits and salaries are at their best. This split in the sample in terms of level in the hierarchy and the associated pay is therefore reflected in the satisfaction experienced by the staff and could explain why the outcome varies from that of the Kavanaugh et al. (2006) which was based on only one occupation. It may also be worth noting that, the more experience an employee has, the more employable they tend to become and the more proficient they are inclined to be at their job. If this is combined with managerial experience, then their promotion potential is arguably at an optimum level, as they have a proven track record. Whereas, trainees tend to find themselves in a situation where they have 'book smarts' without the 'street smarts' and find themselves in a situation where they still need to prove their potential. This combined with the fact that they are on fixed-term contracts means that their prospects for promotion are considerably fewer compared to the permanent management team.

The results related to the first workplace stress factor (WS1) indicate that the staff that fall within the 18-30 age bracket are significantly less stressed than the staff members over the age of 30. WS1 refers to the demands of the job. If we link this finding with the previous factor discussed, it

does seem that there exists a degree of consistency. It was suggested previously that the older staff are for the most part higher up in the hierarchy. The higher the job is in the hierarchy, the higher the responsibility is likely to be, along with higher consequences for errors made. This high level of responsibility and consequence for error is therefore likely to contribute to the stress levels of the staff member, and seems to be reflected in the research results. When one compares this to the nature of a trainee's work, they are there to learn and therefore are rarely afforded responsibility to do work beyond their immediate work environment, and the onus tends to be on the manager to identify any potential errors that the trainee might have made, which is likely to contribute to the stress experienced by the manager/supervisor. This divide between the age levels in terms of stress experienced based on job demands is therefore not surprising.

The next significant variance was found within factor WS4 (use of skills and abilities). The results indicated that the 18-30 age group was significantly less stressed than the staff members over the age of 30. One potential reason for this could be due to the competency levels of the staff members. The more work experience one acquires, the more knowledge and skill one is likely to develop. When staff find themselves within a career plateau, they feel that they are not being tested or developed anymore, and their desire to grow and apply their ample experience is not met. This is likely to have implications for the stress levels experienced by these staff members. A career plateau is more likely to occur after the age of 30 and may, therefore, have contributed to the results found. Another factor worth considering is that in the case of most graduate trainees, their job within the municipality is their first and is, at least initially, quite daunting and challenging. New recruits (with less than a year's experience) are therefore still in the process of developing their skills and are thus less likely to experience stress associated with the use of their skills and abilities, as these are still in the process of being developed.

Regarding the workplace relationships (WS5) variable, it was found that the 18-30 age group was significantly less stressed than the 31-40 age group. This finding might seem counterintuitive as one would expect that the longer staff have been with an organisation, the longer and stronger their relationships are likely to be. The results would, however, suggest the opposite. No obvious reason for this finding emerges, but one could argue that if a poor organisational culture is present, that it might have a greater impact on staff that have been there for an extended period. There is not, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that an organisational culture problem exists and as such does not lend much credibility to the theory. It is also important to note that although a significant variance existed between the two groups,

both groups experienced minimal stress when it came to the workplace stress variable. Thus, the variance found between the two groups is less exaggerated.

In the next section, I explore the demographic factor of race.

7.5.2 Race

Regarding previous research related to race, Friday et al. (2004) found no significant variance based on race, whereas studies conducted by (Bowen & Cattell, 2008; Hsiao, 2017; Viano & Hunter, 2017) did manage to establish significant variances. Within this study, a significant variance was found within six factors namely, JS2, JS4, WS1, WS4, WS5 and WS6. Each factor is discussed individually.

The second job satisfaction variable refers to satisfaction regarding the pay and promotion potential of the employees. Bowen and Cattell (2008) identified that a perception of racial discrimination existed in South Africa and that this was likely to negatively influence the job satisfaction of the affected groups. The results of this study indicate that white and coloured staff members were more satisfied with this variable than the African staff. This finding is consistent with that of Bowen et al. (2013) which suggested that a percentage of African staff in South Africa had experienced discrimination based on their ethnicity. It is unlikely that this variance is related to the positions that the various groups find themselves in within the various municipalities, as due to the transformation of the workplace as a result of a shift to a democratic South Africa, the presence of previously disadvantaged staff within higher level positions is a lot more prevalent than it used to be. The variance found between the race groups is, therefore, more likely to be as a result of varying expectations.

When democracy was introduced into South Africa, it was accompanied by legislation such as employment equity, affirmative action and BBBEE. This shift quite rightly would have altered the expectations of the African community within South Africa, a demographic within South Africa that traditionally was limited to more modest or lower-level positions, almost overnight gained access to more high-profile opportunities. One would, therefore, expect that this newly-gained access would quite understandably have implications for the expectations of the previously suppressed groups. The reversal in fortunes between previously advantaged and previously disadvantaged staff would therefore be expected to have almost a type of cause-and-effect impact on the expectations of the various groups, with the white group probably having lower expectations going forward as a result of the reverse discrimination inherent in the employment equity legislation that was introduced in the newly democratic South Africa. As such, it would be

expected that the white group would lower their pay and especially their promotion expectations within the public sector and that African groups would raise theirs. Accordingly, one would expect white staff to be satisfied with less and African staff to be expecting more.

This does not, however, explain the variance found between African and coloured staff, as both parties stand to benefit in a democratic South Africa where legislation exists to enhance their prospects. One possible reason for this is that only a small percentage of Africans may be benefitting from legislation such as BBBEE, as pointed out by Jeffery (2015, para. 4), "…BEE benefits approximately 15% of the black population, with 'a small group of beneficiaries having their way at the cost of the many'". The remaining 85% have very little prospect of ever gaining BBBEE ownership deals, management posts, preferential tenders, or new small businesses to run, she said." Therefore, the dissatisfaction that the African sample might have been experiencing could be because they have the highest expectations in terms of pay and promotion but experience a minimal return on those expectations. The variance between the coloured and African respondents could, therefore, serve as a viable future research topic to try and underpin this variance, especially considering that many surveys categorise blacks, coloureds, Asians and Indians under the same "African" category.

The fourth job satisfaction variable (JS4) refers to the employees' opportunities to utilise their skills and abilities in the workplace. The findings indicate that the coloured staff were significantly less satisfied with this variable than their African colleagues. Similar to the previous finding, it is possible that the expectations of the groups might be at the root of the variance. This variance might be a result of a variance in skills and abilities between the two groups. As ability tests did not facilitate the study, the theory will remain a theory until facilitated with future research.

Within the first workplace stress variable (WS1) which relates to job demands, it was found that white and coloured staff experienced more stress compared to their African colleagues. This finding is consistent with the study by Pattie (2006) that found that minority groups experienced more workplace stress than their majority counterparts. However, in order to draw meaningful conclusions from this finding, more in-depth data would be required in terms of the levels within the organisation. For example, if on average the African staff had lower-level positions than their colleagues, then one could attribute the difference found to the varying demands of the job. Another possibility is that the African staff experience less stress regardless of the inherent stress in the position. There is, however, insufficient evidence to support any of these assertions and as such claims of this nature are not supported. Additional research where detailed job

title/level is collected would help to determine what the root cause of the variance might be. A study into whether or not a significant variance exists based on race when it comes to job demands holds the potential to provide a valuable contribution to the field.

Regarding the fourth workplace stress variable, it was found that a significant variance existed between the coloured and white staff compared to their African colleagues. This indicates that African staff experienced more perceived peer support at the workplace. This finding is yet again consistent with that of the Pattie (2006) study. One potential reason for this might be that the majority of staff within public service are African. This might make it easier for them to relate to one another due sharing a similar culture. The concept of Ubuntu which is a well-known concept within the African community which refers to a sense of togetherness and has a 'we' mindsight as opposed to an 'I' mindsight (Thompsell, 2015), which is associated more with the westernised (white) community (Hofstede, 2017). This could contribute to the variance experienced by the various race groups within the municipality. Another possibility is that the majority of the white staff that work within public service might have been employed before democracy and due to transformation might have lost many of their former colleagues which may have contributed to a lack of perceived peer support. This is, however, all just conjecture and a more focused study into the matter would be required in order to facilitate any meaningful conclusions.

The fifth workplace stress variable (WS5) indicates that the white and coloured staff experienced more stress than their African colleagues when it came to the concept of workplace relationships. This is consistent with the previous variable which related to peer support and therefore provides further support for the previous finding. This is consistent with the study by Pattie (2006) which found that minority groups experienced less co-worker support than their majority colleagues. As suggested with the previous variable, the fact that the African staff are within the majority means that they stand to benefit from that "supply" of cultural familiarity facilitating the formation of supportive workplace relationships, whereas the workplace transformation would have necessitated that white staff form new relationships which could serve as a source of stress.

The final variable where a significant variance was found based on race, was within the workplace stress variable of role at the workplace (WS6). It was found that coloured staff were significantly less stressed than their African colleagues when it came to their role in the workplace. No obvious reason for this variance emerges with the sample sizes being fairly similar at n=77 (African) and n=60 (Coloured). One could argue that these sample sizes are

insufficient to generalise this variance across the races, and other factors not measured in this study could also be at play. As such, further exploration into this variance might yield further insight into the validity of this finding.

In the next section, the demographic factor of experience is explored.

7.5.3 Experience

Within the experience dimension, a significant variance was found within six factors, namely, WS1 and factors WS3 through to WS7. Each factor is discussed individually.

The first variable that indicated a significant variance was the workplace stress variable of demands (WS 1). The results indicated that the staff with five to ten years' worth of experience, experienced more stress related to their job demands than their colleagues with less than a years' experience. This finding conflicts with the studies outlined by Fako et al. (2004), which suggested that more experience translates into lower stress and higher satisfaction levels. A potential reason for this variance could be that staff with more experience are more likely to be competent at their jobs and are therefore better placed to shoulder more responsibility, such as taking a new staff member under their wing. In this instance, therefore, experience and competence which is normally regarded as a positive, can have negative consequences, as competent staff may become prime targets for extra responsibility or for enhanced job demands or expectations. It is arguably counterproductive to overload a new staff member with too much responsibility in the beginning, as there is a lot to absorb when one starts a new position. It is more likely that employers would gradually increase the amount of responsibility the more experienced and competent their staff members become, or said another way, when the employee has demonstrated the potential to take on more responsibility. In most cases, this is likely to take time, and, therefore, the results of the study do not come as a surprise. These results suggest that added experience equals added demands which lead to heightened stress levels. Furthermore, the George Municipality which was the primary contributor to the study, was severely understaffed which meant that, in many instances, staff had to take on the responsibilities of more than one role. One is more likely to allocate extra responsibility to staff that have a proven track record and experience, as opposed to new staff members that still need to be integrated into their environment.

The findings indicated that a significant variance was present within WS3. It was found that staff with three to five years of experience experienced more stress than staff with less than three years of experience when it came to managerial support. Yet again this finding is not consistent

with the studies outlined by Fako et al. (2004). A possible reason for this finding is that new or inexperienced staff are more likely to need or desire managerial support, and are thus more likely to receive managerial support. Staff with three or more years of experience should, for the most part, be quite familiar with their role, and the organisation and should arguably require and receive less managerial support, or the manager assumes that they do not require support any longer. Staff with an excess of more than five years of experience should be competent at their job and are potentially looking towards managerial positions themselves, so, they might be less likely to desire or need managerial support.

Based on the findings it was found that staff with less than a year of experience, experienced less stress than staff with three to ten years' worth of experience when it comes to the workplace stress variable of peer support (WS 4). This once again conflicts with those outlined by Fako et al. (2004). A potential reason for this might be that the majority of staff that had less than a years' worth of experience were part of the unemployed graduate trainee programme which forms part of the annual intake. These staff members go through induction together, and, in some instances, studied together as well. They also join up periodically over the course of the year to reconnect and check in. As such, they are inclined to experience more support from their peers as they are more likely to turn to one another for support and assistance. Staff that have been with the organisation for a few years are more likely to want to compete with their colleagues for future positions or promotions and their peers might thus develop more into rivals than a support network.

The findings chapter suggested that a significant variance was present within the relationships of WS 5. The findings indicated that the employees with less than a year of experience were less stressed regarding relationships when compared to their colleagues with three to ten years of experience. The reason that seems most likely would be due to the time available for relationships to 'sour'. The longer one is employed, the more one engages with their colleagues, and the more risk or opportunity there is for conflict. Misunderstandings, egos, personality clashes, workplace politics and favouritism for the most part take a while to unfold and to take effect. As a new recruit, it could be argued that the focus is placed on becoming competent at one's job and getting along with everyone. Gradually this focus might shift, and workplace relationships might receive more emphasis as time passes.

It was determined in the findings chapter that there was a significant difference within the workplace stress factor of role (WS 6). The variance was found between the staff with less than a year of experience and those with between five to ten years of experience, with those with

less than a year of experience experiencing significantly more stress than their counterparts. This would support the studies by Motowidlo et al. (1986), Norbeck (1985a, 1985b, as cited in Fako et al., 2004, p. 109), Schultz (1993) and Weisman et al. (1980). This finding does seem logical as one is inclined to become more comfortable and familiar with one's role as time passes. For inexperienced staff, a new role can be quite overwhelming, especially if a thorough induction programme is not provided. As staff become more familiar and competent in their role, the less stress they are likely to experience assuming that they are a decent fit for their role. A new employee needs to discover a role from scratch, and the errors and doubt that goes along with a new role are therefore likely to result in enhanced stress levels.

The last significant difference identified within the experience demographic variable was within the workplace stress factor of change (WS 7). A significant difference was found between those with less than three years of experience when compared to those with three to five years of experience, with the three- to five- year group being significantly more stressed than their less-experienced counterparts. The two age categories border on each other and as such this finding may be somewhat surprising and yet again varies from the studies cited in this regard (Motowidlo et al., 1986; Norbeck 1985a, 1985b, as cited in Fako et al., 2004, p. 109; Schultz, 1993; Weisman et al., 1980). One might be more inclined to expect a variance on the opposite sides of the experience scale (e.g., 1< versus 10+ years). A reason for this finding may be that those with less than three years of experience are still in the "change mould". In other words, they have "recently" started their role and are in the process of adapting to the role and its requirements, and any additional change during this time is experienced as part of this process of adaptation. In contrast, the three- to five-year cohort have, by now, ideally settled into the role and are starting to build on the base that they put in place over the previous three years. Change at this stage is therefore potentially regarded as an inconvenience, as the employee has probably only recently entered into a "comfort zone" in their role, and continuity is desirable. Although this may explain the findings, one cannot ignore the imbalance in the sample sizes. The three- to five-year group consisted of a sample of n=13 whereas those with less than three years of experience made up the largest percentage of the sample (1<=57, 3-5=43). This imbalance could certainly play a significant role in the findings. As such, a more focused study into this area would be required to lend legitimacy to the current finding.

In the next section, I explore the demographic factor of gender.

7.5.4 Gender

In chapter 3 variance based on gender was explored and general consensus could not be reached regarding the extent if any of the variance of job satisfaction amongst the sexes. The studies of (Bowen & Cattell, 2008; Donohue & Heywood, 2004; Droussiotis & Austin, 2007; Groot & van den Brink, 1999; Magee, 2014; Linz & Semykina, 2013) found a significant difference, whereas (Anari, 2012; Eskildsen, Kristensen, & Westlund, 2004; Toker, 2011) failed to do so. In this study the only significant variance identified based on gender was found within the workplace stress factor of change (WS7). The results indicated that the female staff were more stressed than men when it came to change. In the literature review, reference was made to studies by (Crossman & Abou-Zaki, 2003; Groot & van den Brink (1999); Tabassum, 2012) all of which identified significant variances based on gender when it came to the areas of workplace stress and job satisfaction. None of the aforementioned studies made reference to the area of change, however. This study, therefore, varies significantly from their findings.

Two of the three items that measure the change factor refer to how much the manager involves them in the change process as well as how much consultation takes place. This might point to a degree of sexism whereby male managers might not consult with or involve their female subordinates in changes that take place at the workplace, suggesting that the gender equality pursued at the workplace in South Africa might not have come to full fruition as of yet. When one looks at the bigger picture, however, out of the 12 factors measured in the study a significant variance was only found within one of them. Although the difference was statistically significant, it was only a difference of 0.33. This would suggest that the experiences of the two genders when it comes to job satisfaction and workplace stress is very similar, which bodes well for the equality experienced by both men and women at work.

7.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter (Discussion) the results of the findings chapter were expanded upon. This involved the:

- Job satisfaction items, factors and hypotheses;
- Workplace stress items, factors and hypothesis;
- Relationships between job satisfaction and workplace stress and relevant hypotheses; and
- The demographic analysis with emphasis placed on age, race, experience and gender.

To follow, in the final chapter, the study in its entirety is outlined along with its potential future implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters the theory relevant to the study, the method utilised to obtain and generate the results of the study, the results and its implications have been discussed. In this the final chapter of the study, we explore the limitations of the study as well as potential future research areas. This chapter will therefore conclude the research treatise.

8.2 Limitations of the Study

In this section, the limitations of the study are explored whereby shortfalls and challenges are exposed which can facilitate future studies.

The first limitation is that of the size of the sample. Although the minimum benchmark of 150 was exceeded, a larger sample would certainly have been preferable. The larger the sample, the more confidence one has in the results and the more relevance it would have to the larger population. This is especially the case when one considers the extent of the available sample in this instance. Although relationships had been tested and formed part of the discussion of this study, it was limited in its scope and therefore cannot confidently be generalised to the group at large. Ideally, the sample could have been larger and less diverse in terms of positions. This would have made it easier to explore variances based on factors such as race, gender, age and experience where the position in the organisation, be it middle management or senior management was constant within the sample. The fact that position/employment status varied, rendered comparisons based on age, gender and race less meaningful. The researcher was not able to report variances within the findings based on race, age and gender with confidence due to the degree of fluctuation within the sample in terms of size and positions held within the organisation. Considering that these two factors are likely to impact upon the results, it is a shortcoming that should be factored into similar research efforts moving forward. One could even take the simplification of the sample further by focusing on one particular race, gender and position to first verify the validity of the measurement criteria before expanding it to other groups which would then facilitate meaningful comparisons should the methodology then be regarded as viable.

As highlighted in chapter 1 under the expected limitations, the study did not cover an exhaustive list of variables. This limitation means that it is possible that the primary causes of job satisfaction or workplace stress were not measured in the study and could have contributed to a 'false negative' due to the relevant variables not receiving emphasis. This is, however, a common challenge inherent in research; what the study can achieve, however, is to establish whether the variables that do form part of the study do, in fact, impact upon the stress or satisfaction levels of the employees.

As mentioned in chapter 1, language might have influenced the results of the study. In a country like South Africa where we have 11 official languages, for many of the participants in the study, English might not have been the language of choice or the first language of the respondent. As translating the questionnaire into ten other languages was not considered to be practical and due to English being the business language of South Africa, distributing the measure only in English was considered to be appropriate. It cannot, however, be ignored that misinterpretation of the questions was possible, and although I made myself available to address any queries, the possibility exists that the staff assumed that they understood the questions or were too embarrassed to ask. This is a potential shortfall that is assumed and cannot be proven within the study.

The impact of the role on the stress levels of staff could influence demographic comparisons. In order to facilitate meaningful comparison based on factors such as race, gender and age a degree of uniformity when it comes to role would have been preferable. For example, ideally the position or level within the organisation should be similar as it would facilitate 'like for like' comparisons. Conducting a comparison based on the stress levels of an African senior manager with that of a white intern would possibly contribute to unbalanced findings based on race that do not necessarily offer a fair reflection of the reality. As such, to lend more credence to these types of comparisons of this nature, it is recommended that the approach should be altered going forward.

8.3 Future use of the UK Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards work-related stress Indicator Tool

The results of the study were consistent with that of Edwards et al. (2008) in finding that the measure demonstrates strong validity with the majority of the seven factors measured averaging a Cronbach's alpha score in excess of .70. This indicates that the measure is sound and can be considered to be a viable measure that can be used in the measurement of workplace stress in

the South African context going forward. Only two factors obtained Cronbach's alphas below .70 namely, factor five (Relationships) and seven (Change) with Cronbach's alphas of .68 and .65 respectively. As depicted in the findings chapter, these scores are lower than that of the scores obtained in the previous studies cited. This variance could potentially be due to the South African context or the sample size or both. A more comprehensive study with a larger sample would provide more of an indication as to the extent of the variance if any and would then provide a stronger indication as to whether any amendments to the questionnaire would be necessary.

Apart from its validity, the questionnaire is quick and easy to complete and measures seven different variables providing the researcher with the opportunity to extract a lot of value from its use. The questionnaire can also easily be combined with other measures as was demonstrated in the study. If the measure is to be improved further, it is recommended that the measure should be translated so that the researcher can extract maximum value within the South African context.

8.4 <u>Combining of the two measures moving forward</u>

In terms of combining the two measures moving forward, certain pros and cons should be factored into the decision. As far as the pros are concerned, both measures are short in length and easy to complete, thus reducing the risk of unnecessary errors while optimising the turnover time. In most instances, the researcher was able to reclaim the questionnaire on the same day that it was distributed to the participant. As indicated in the previous section, it was found that by making a small adjustment, all the factors measured across the two measures produced Cronbach's alphas in excess of .60, which provides support for its use as a relevant measure in the South African context. Despite these advantages, further enhancements of the questionnaire could also be explored. One potential alteration could be to standardise the rating method across the measures. The job satisfaction questionnaire makes use of rating the items on a score of one to five whereas the workplace stress measure also has a five-point rating scale but includes labelled blocks. It would be quite easy to adjust the job satisfaction measure so that it aligns more with the workplace stress measure which would give more of a uniform look to it as well as assist in minimising errors and time spent completing the questionnaire.

As far as the cons are concerned, one would be the lack of previous research using these two measures in the South African context. To the researchers' knowledge, these two measures have never been combined in a study before and as such compelling evidence is not currently

available. Although the results from the current study are promising, more studies and studies consisting of larger sample sizes would be recommended in order to establish whether or not the combination of these measures or even their use in isolation for that matter is warranted. Another con is that the measures are not available in other African languages. It is preferable that research participants should have access to a questionnaire in their preferred language in an attempt to optimise research results. As such, a lack of alternate versions of the measure can be regarded as a challenge to its use in the South African context. Another con would be that of the variance in the results related to the validity of the measures. The Cronbach's alpha scores indicate that the two measures varied quite significantly, with the workplace stress questionnaire emerging as being the more reliable. It is, therefore, suggested that the job satisfaction measure should either be adjusted/improved going forward or substituted altogether if one is to try and optimise the research output and quality.

Although the various variables measured in the questionnaire met the minimum requirements of the study, its validity was not as consistent as that of the workplace stress measure with Cronbach's alpha scores ranging from .57 (lowest) to .85 (highest) across the five variables. As pointed out in the findings chapter, by removing item four from the measure, the Cronbach's alpha for the general working conditions factor rises up to .64. By making the aforementioned adjustment, all the factors exceeded the minimum Cronbach's alpha requirement of .60 that had been set for the study. Although the factors of, use of skills and abilities and work activities demonstrated high Cronbach's alpha scores (in excess of .80) the variance between .57 and .85 is large, and this variance should ideally be reduced. As mentioned, removing item four from the measure is already expected to lead to an immediate improvement, however, ideally, Cronbach's alpha scores closer to the .80 levels and beyond should be pursued for all the factors. Therefore, in order for the measure to be considered as a measure for future use in South Africa, a more comprehensive study with a larger sample would be recommended in order to provide more clarity on its usability going forward and should assist in pinpointing where exactly the shortfalls are.

8.5 <u>Recommendations</u>

This study explored the causal relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. A moderate relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction was identified along with strong relationships between the factors of, managerial support and work relationships; managerial support and work activities; and between role and work activities. This lends

credence to the relationship and the study thereof and is consistent with previous research on the relationship. As work environments can vary, so too can the stressors within those environments and it could, therefore, be regarded to be a useful and meaningful exercise to continue to explore this relationship going forward. Although 12 variables had been explored in the study, it is very possible that other job satisfaction and workplace stress variables would have been relevant and as such, the study would not be regarded as exhaustive and more scope exists for an enhanced study in the future.

Another consideration for future studies would be to incorporate absenteeism data into the study. By conducting the study within companies or industries where absenteeism is high and by involving staff that are absent often, the researcher can endeavour to establish the impact, if any, that job satisfaction and workplace stress has on the absenteeism of staff. The challenge with a study of this nature, however, would be to gain access to the absenteeism data as well as to encourage absent staff to participate in a study of this nature.

As mentioned under the limitations, it is recommended that uniformity in the roles of the respondents should be pursued, unless one can gain a sample size big enough to facilitate comparisons across various roles. By doing so, it can be established whether some roles are more stressful than others as well as what the most common stressors are within a particular role. Both of these comparisons did not form part of the study and should be considered in future studies as information of this nature could add considerable value and insight.

This study found that the item that staff were most satisfied with was the amount of hours that they were expected to work every week, however, staff was least satisfied with their opportunities for promotion. This was the item that had the most significant impact on staff dissatisfaction and as such should receive the primary emphasis in terms of enhancing staff satisfaction levels. Satisfaction with opportunities for promotion was however the only item of the five that served as a source of dissatisfaction for the majority of staff, and as such staff would in general terms be considered to be satisfied with their jobs.

Work relationships was the factor that staff were most satisfied with, suggesting that the majority of staff experienced their workplace relationships as a source of satisfaction. Although the majority of staff indicated that they were least satisfied with their opportunities to utilise their skills and abilities, it was the job satisfaction factor that received the lowest satisfaction score

and would be regarded as the variable where the greatest improvement in terms of overall job satisfaction could be made.

Lastly in terms of job satisfaction, H_6 was supported by the finding that a positive relationship existed between job satisfaction and age, thereby suggesting that age played a role in influencing job satisfaction levels.

In terms of stress, the two items where the highest levels of stress was experienced was with the intensity with which staff were expected to work (most stress) and deciding what they do at work. This would suggest that staff workload and autonomy (lack thereof) served as the primary sources of stress for many of the staff members. This would facilitate the argument to potentially redesign some of the jobs at the municipality to ensure appropriate quantity and variety within the jobs whilst also providing for a degree of employee independence.

In terms of workplace stress factors, staff experienced the most amount of stress related to the change factor. Although it was the primary stress factor contributor, stress related to change was only experienced by less than a third of the respondents. Proactive communication could potentially aid the staff that suffer from change related stress.

H_8 was supported, which referred to a 'negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction.' This was largely due to the strong relationships between the factors of managerial support (WS) and work relationships (JS) and work activities (JS), as well as between role (WS) and work activities (JS). The finding indicates that in general, where satisfaction was high, stress was low and vice versa.

In terms of race variance in the sample, it was noted that in none of the workplace stress categories did the black sample experience significantly more stress than their coloured and white colleagues. This while the white and coloured staff experienced significantly more stress than their black colleagues when it came to matters such as, work demands, peer support and relationships. As such, in general the black sample experienced less workplace stress than their colleagues. Further exploration of this finding is recommended.

The only significant variance between the sexes was found within the stressor of change. On average, the women in the sample experienced more stress than men when it came to change at the workplace. Previous literature is inconclusive in this regard, and further exploration may be warranted.

It was found that the staff aged between 18-30 were the least satisfied with their jobs when compared to their older colleagues. This was also found with satisfaction related to pay and promotion potential. In terms of stress, the staff between 18-30 experienced significantly less stress when it came to the categories of job demands, use of skills and abilities and workplace relationships. Thorough career planning and the utilisation of a talent pipeline could assist the younger staff in enhancing their job satisfaction levels.

This study has achieved the desired objective of exploring the job satisfaction and workplace stress levels of public service staff within the Eastern and Western Cape of South Africa, as well as investigating the extent of the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. The questionnaires used also emerged as being viable measures that can be used within the South African context going forward although further improvements are recommended. Although the study answered some questions, it also lead to the generation of new questions and as such further exploration into this area is recommended. Ideally, moving forward a more comprehensive study with a larger sample should be conducted by building on the current study and using the results as a basis of comparison.

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Appendix A: Combined questionnaire

Work Dynamics workplace stress & Job Satisfaction survey

The information provided below is for research purposes. The information obtained will be utilised by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality for the purpose of needs identification and can contribute to the design of future programmes. The feedback provided will not reflect on your record and cannot and will not be used against you in any capacity. The information will also form part of a Masters Industrial Psychology treatise and the same level of discretion will be applied. Participation in the survey is voluntary and should you desire feedback on the information provided, please ensure that you include your name in the participant information section below.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION						
TITLE:	MR	☐	MRS	☐	MISS	☐
NAME (OPTIONAL):						
ETHNIC GROUP/RACE (eg. Black, White, Coloured, Indian, Asian):						
GENDER:	FEMALE	☐	MALE	☐		
AGE:						
CURRENT EMPLOYER:						
JOB TITLE/ CURRENT POSITION:						
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION?						
TODAY'S DATE:						

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

RATING YOUR JOB SATISFACTION

1	2	3	4	5
Not satisfied at all	Not satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely satisfied

Using the scale shown above, rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of your job.

GENERAL WORKING CONDITIONS
_____ Hours worked each week
_____ Flexibility in scheduling
_____ Location of work
_____ Amount of paid vacation time/sick leave offered

PAY AND PROMOTION POTENTIAL
_____ Salary
_____ Opportunities for Promotion
_____ Benefits (Health insurance, life insurance, etc.)
_____ Job Security
_____ Recognition for work accomplished

WORK RELATIONSHIPS
_____ Relationships with your co-workers
_____ Relationship(s) with your supervisor(s)
_____ Relationships with your subordinates (if applicable)

USE OF SKILLS AND ABILITIES
_____ Opportunity to utilize your skills and talents
_____ Opportunity to learn new skills
_____ Support for additional training and education

WORK ACTIVITIES
_____ Variety of job responsibilities
_____ Degree of independence associated with your work roles
_____ Adequate opportunity for periodic changes in duties

Workplace stress questionnaire Instructions: It is recognised that working conditions affect worker well-being. Your responses to the questions below will help us determine our working conditions now, and enable us to monitor future improvements. In order for us to compare the current situation with past or future situations, it is important that your responses reflect your work in the last six months.

		Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I am clear what is expected of me at work	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can decide when to take a break	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
3	Different groups at work demand things from me that are hard to combine	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
4	I know how to go about getting my job done	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
5	I am subject to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviour	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
6	I have unachievable deadlines	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
7	If work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
8	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
9	I have to work very intensively	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
10	I have a say in my own work speed	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
11	I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
12	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
13	I am clear about the goals and objectives for my department	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
14	There is friction or anger between colleagues	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
15	I have a choice in deciding how I do my work	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
16	I am unable to take sufficient breaks	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
17	I understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
18	I am pressured to work long hours	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
19	I have a choice in deciding what I do at work	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5

		Never 5	Seldom 4	Sometimes 3	Often 2	Always 1
20	I have to work very fast					

		Never 5	Seldom 4	Sometimes 3	Often 2	Always 1
21	I am subject to bullying at work					

		Never ☐5	Seldom ☐4	Sometimes ☐3	Often ☐2	Always ☐1
22	I have unrealistic time pressures					

		Never ☐1	Seldom ☐2	Sometimes ☐3	Often ☐4	Always ☐5
23	I can rely on my line manager to help me out with a work problem					

		Strongly disagree ☐1	Disagree ☐2	Neutral ☐3	Agree ☐4	Strongly agree ☐5
24	I get help and support I need from colleagues					

		Strongly disagree ☐1	Disagree ☐2	Neutral ☐3	Agree ☐4	Strongly agree ☐5
25	I have some say over the way I work					

		Strongly disagree ☐1	Disagree ☐2	Neutral ☐3	Agree ☐4	Strongly agree ☐5
26	I have sufficient opportunities to question managers about change at work					

		Strongly disagree ☐1	Disagree ☐2	Neutral ☐3	Agree ☐4	Strongly agree ☐5
27	I receive the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues					

		Strongly disagree ☐1	Disagree ☐2	Neutral ☐3	Agree ☐4	Strongly agree ☐5
28	Staff are always consulted about change at work					

		Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
29	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work					
30	My working time can be flexible	1	2	3	4	5
31	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems	1	2	3	4	5
32	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	1	2	3	4	5
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	1	2	3	4	5
34	Relationships at work are strained	5	4	3	2	1
35	My line manager encourages me at work	1	2	3	4	5