

**Investigating the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes,
and retention factors of employees in selected 21st century recruitment agencies**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Ester Mujajati, student number 31775276, declare that this dissertation entitled, **“Investigating the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors of employees in selected 21st century recruitment agencies”**, is my own unique and original work, and that all the sources that I have utilized or quoted have been listed and acknowledged in the bibliography. It has not in part or in whole, been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

I further declare that the ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Human Resources Management, University of South Africa.

Ester Mujajati

Date:

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ABSTRACT/SUMMARY
**INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY,
EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES AND RETENTION FACTORS OF EMPLOYEES IN THE
21ST CENTURY WORKPLACE**

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The research focuses on investigating the relationship between individuals' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors within the context of talent retention in the 21st century workplace. A quantitative research approach was followed, and a probability sample of ($N = 337$) of single (42.7%), African (53.4%), female (65.9%), individuals between the ages of 26-40 years (57.4%), who are part time employees (50.7%), mostly at staff level (54.0%) were utilised. Correlational analysis indicated differences between the variables of CAI, EAS and RFMS. Inferential statistics showed a strong relationship between the variables of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Stepwise hierarchical regression analysis showed that age, gender, race, marital status and job level, their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict retention factors. Test for mean differences revealed that males and females differed significantly in terms of their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Recommendations are suggested for use by human resource professionals in terms of retention practices.

KEY TERMS

career adaptability, employability attributes, retention factors, talent retention, 21st century workplace, knowledge economy, globalization, career resilience, career, career agent.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This study focuses on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors within the context of talent retention in the 21st century workplace. The aim of this chapter is to provide the background to and rationale for the study and to formulate the problem statement and research questions. The aims of the research are then stated. The paradigm perspectives that guide the research are discussed and the research design and research method, both of which lend structure to the research process, are also discussed. Finally, the manner in which the chapters will be presented is described. The chapter concludes with a summary.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

The context of this study is employee retention in the 21st century world of work. The research focuses more specifically on the investigation of the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes, and retention factors of employees in the 21st century workplace. The investigation of the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors has become vital in the light of the dynamic nature of present-day careers, and the global scarcity of talent (Chidzikowski, 2011; Deshmukh, 2015; Harry & Coetzee, 2013; Mandhanya, 2016; Were, 2015). The potential relationship will play an essential role in enhancing the retention of a highly knowledgeable workforce within an organisation, by inspiring management with good strategies to retain top talent.

In order to confront the dynamic changing landscape of the 21st century workplace, employees need to be self-reliant, especially in taking responsibility for their careers and their jobs (Baillargeon & Carlstrom, 2013; Celen-Demirtas, Konstam & Tomek, 2015; Clay, 2012; Deshpande, 2012; Ibert and Schmidt, 2014; Potgieter, 2012b; Thrift, 2012). Thrift (2012) emphasises that in today's unpredictable and rapidly changing environment, it is extremely important for employees to be accountable and responsible for their own careers and to thus remain employable. According to Brown & Lent (2013), advancing technologies, limited employment opportunities, lower job security, organisational downsizing, outsourcing, fluctuating markets, changes in opportunity structures and the increased demands of job skills have all contributed to an uncertain work-life for individuals entering the 21st century workplace. Blackford (2013) reiterates that within this fast-paced and unpredictable employment landscape the ability to keep oneself employable is the most important skill needed. The notion of long-term employment is phasing out, and short-term employment contracts and self-employment dominate the innovation century workplace

(Havenga, 2011; Jain & Jain, 2013; Vaiman, 2010; Vargas-Hernandez & Jimenez, 2015). This brings about a huge challenge for employees to have multiple careers and occupations.

Perceived successful organisations of the 21st century are built on a strong foundation, have few boundaries, are flexible, and emphasise broad-based innovation (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Havenga, 2011; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Reis & Baruch (2013) continue by emphasising that these organisations have to place the emphasis on the creation of ideas and on experimentation in order to be competitive and to survive in this innovative and new regime workplace. The dynamic and challenging workplace calls for a highly talented workforce, one that is driven and self-directed by protean and boundary-less careers, in order to remain employable (Adi, 2012; Boyum, 2012; Fatima, 2011; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Maree (2012) reiterates that the modern labour market challenges employees to think critically, to be excellent problem solvers and inspired decision makers, thus being able to adapt to myriads of demands posed on them by different and challenging work contexts, and so to become and remain employable.

Singh (2013) found that the challenges of work in the dynamic and changing landscape have a powerful effect on the retention of top talent, and therefore companies should develop strong and holistic strategies to ensure the retention of high-performing employees. He further indicated that another crucial point to note in order to retain high calibre employees, is developing managers to become retention agents (Choudhary, 2016; Li, Hou & Jia, 2015; Singh, 2013). The *retention of talent* can be defined as identifying the top talent within an organisation, designing strategies and implementing relevant practices to ensure the retention of top performers in order to meet the objectives of the business (Amato, 2015; Chiboiwa, Samuel & Chipunza, 2010; Chikumbi, 2012; Gialuisi, 2012; Harris, 2010; Mankins, Bird & Root, 2013; Muriuki, 2013; Serrat, 2010). According to Singh (2013), the retaining of superior employees and their critical expertise is vital for the development of the organisation's special talent pool, because such individuals who are deemed to have highly marketable skills, are expensive to replace, and are critical to the organisation's survival objectives. It is therefore imperative for human resource practitioners to focus on retaining highly talented and achievement-oriented individuals, and to keep them engaged in their work, for business competitiveness (Born & Kang, 2015; Botha, Bussin & De Swardt, 2011; Ferreira, Coetzee, & Masenge, 2013; Goldsmith & Carter 2010; Mehta, Kurbetti & Dhankhar, 2014; Mrara, 2010; Yafe, 2012).

South Africa is currently facing a critical shortage of skilled labour (Malinga, 2011; Ndzube, 2013; Ngozwana & Rugimbana, 2011). According to Ndzube (2013), the shortage of critical

skills is one of the huge constraints for a stable and sustainable economic growth in the country. The South African economy is faced with a double-edged sword: it has millions of unskilled people who are unemployed, and at the same time there is a severe shortage of skilled people (Kahn & Louw, 2010; Ndzube, 2013). Across all sectors there is a demand for top talent. It is therefore imperative for organisations to assist their employees by providing them with continuous learning opportunities and essential resources to be able to manage their careers (Ababneh, 2013; Bugg, 2015; Dhanalakshmi & BalanagaGurunathan, 2014; Hassan, Razi, Qamar, Jaffir & Suhail, 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Van Rooyen, Du Toit & Botha, 2010).

The changing world of work has resulted in not only the need for employers to implement retention strategies to retain exceptional talent, but employees are also required to approach their careers with flexibility, adaptability and resilience, due to the limited opportunities available (Bailey, 2013; Coetzee, Ferreira & Potgieter, 2015; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfell, 2012; Scullion, Sparrow & Farndale, 2011; Shikari, 2011; Whelan & Carcary, 2014). Included in this dynamic and rapidly changing nature of work are advanced technologies and increased customer demands. It is imperative for organisations to implement flexible work structures to manage these changes effectively (Akila, 2012; Brown & Lent, 2013; Dadie, 2015; Das and Baruah, 2013; Festing & Schafer, 2014; Herbst, 2010; Iles & Zhu, 2012). The result is that an unpredictable and rapidly changing business environment has been created; employees can no longer be guaranteed life-long employment. This has resulted in a shift from careers within restricted organisations to boundary-less and protean careers, comprised of many positions with multiple organisations, and sometimes also of many occupations (Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015; Monroe, 2013; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Stoltz, Wolff, Monroe, Mazahreh & Farris, 2013a; Vaiman, 2010). These dynamic shifts have challenged and empowered employees to be self-reliant, and to take full control and responsibility for the planning and management of their own careers, which involves the management of their employability (Blackford, 2013; Cuyper, Van der Heijden & De Witte, 2011; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Kumudha, 2012; Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Employees are now exclusively responsible for their development, unlike in the past, where both the employee and the employer shared the responsibility.

Career-adaptability can be defined as being ready for, and having the resources, to cope with work traumas, career development tasks, and career changes across the entire life-span (Brown & Lent, 2013; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Duffy, 2010; Eshelman, 2013; Hamtiaux, Houssemand & Vrignaud, 2013; Hou, Leung, Li & Xu, 2012; Nkambule, 2010; Porfeli &

Savickas, 2012; Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja & Schneider, 2012; Scholl & Cascone, 2010; Shahbazi, Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Tien, Wang, Chu & Huang, 2012). According to Savickas (1997), *career-adaptability* is the person's concern, control, curiosity and cooperation that helps the person to cope with changes in society and within the work environment. Savickas (1997), Savickas & Porfeli (2012) continue to define concern as planning, anticipation and awareness for one's future. Control is taking full responsibility for constructing one's career through taking decisive, assertive and conscientious actions. Curiosity is taking initiative learning about the world of work that leads to information seeking behaviours. Curiosity is openness to new experiences, inquisitive exploration, and reflection about the fit between self and the world of work. Confidence is defined as serious engagement in designing one's occupational futures and executing plans in order to actualise their choices (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch & Rossier, 2013; Oncel, 2014; Rottinghaus *et al.*, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Savickas, 1997). Teixeira, Bardagi, Lassance, De Oliveira Magahaes & Duarte (2012) reiterate that the following psychosocial resources namely concern, control, curiosity and cooperation are extremely important for the management of work changes, work stress and development tasks. Research has shown that the four psychosocial resources, which are also referred to as four major dimensions of career adaptability, namely control, concern, cooperation and curiosity are important in life in order to remain employable (Dries, Van Esbroek, Van Vianen, De Cooman & Pepermans, 2012; Duarte, Soares, Fraga, Rafael, Luma, Agostinho & Djalo, 2012; Hirschi, Abessolo & Froidevaux, 2015; Johnston, Broonen, Stauffer, Hamtiaux, Pouyaud, Zecca, Houssemand & Rossier, 2013; MacMahon, Waston & Bimrose, 2012; Pouyaud, Vignoli, Dosnon & Lallemand, 2012; Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori & Dauwalder, 2012; Tak, 2012; Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Vilhjalmsdottir, Kjartansdottir, Smaradottir & Einarsdottir, 2012; Yousefi, Abedi, Baghban, Eatemadi & Abedi, 2011).

According to Blackford (2013), *employability* can be defined as comprising of a set of personal aptitudes, skills and abilities. It refers to the ability to create, or to find and maintain employment, even in a jobless labour market (Baking, Nicdao, Cruz, Quaimbao, Laura & Nuqui, 2015; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Boyum, 2012; Deeley, 2014; Ndzube 2013; Oria, 2012; Wen, Four, Aik, Tiong & Loong, 2011). Ottino (2010) adds that *employability* is the ability to network in order to gain access to the labour market; it includes lifelong learning and the possibility of remaining attractive and marketable in an unpredictable labour market. Highly employable employees are described as those individuals who are willing and flexible to make frequent moves into entirely new jobs, fields or occupations that build on their current skills, and to develop new ones (Ashton, 2013; Blackford, 2013; Coetzee, Oosthuizen & Stoltz, 2015; Galloopeni, 2013; Pillai, Khan, Ibrahim & Raphael, 2012; Potgieter & Coetzee,

2013; Wheeler, 2011). Fugate & Kinicki (2008) developed a dispositional model of employability that enables individuals to adapt and cope with unemployment in a positive way, and that helps them to realise that their employability is self-improved. According to them, *employability* consists of six interrelated dimensions, namely openness to change at work, and career resilience, social and human capital, work identity, career motivation, work and career pro-activity (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). *Career and work pro-activity* refers to the acquisition of information in order to develop coping strategies. *Openness to changes* refers to the opening of new doors to new exciting opportunities. *Career resilience* refers to an attribute of individuals who are flexible and tenacious to a tough future. *Career motivation* refers to a quality in highly motivated individuals who are capable of taking control of their careers in an unpredictable situation. *Career-identity* provides direction for future opportunities and behaviours; and *social and human capital* refers to resources available in respect of social networking (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004). Maree (2012) indicates that career adaptability and employability also play a vital role in affecting the retention of key talent.

The retention of top employees continues to be a vexing problem and the greatest challenge faced by a large number of organisations globally (Anis, Rehman, Rehman, Khan, & Humayoun, 2011; Balciunaitiene, Barvydiene and Petkeviciute, 2013; Chibowa *et al.*, 2010; Ejaz, 2015; Piti, 2010; Singh, 2013; Tymon, Stumpf & Doh, 2010; Vyavahare, & Matkeri, 2011; Yafe, 2012). According to Dockel (2003) *retention* is the ability of an organisation to hold on to its high performers and retention is seen as one of the top five critical business issues. Singh (2013) also defines *retention* as an effort by an organisation to retain its top talent for the development of its strong intellectual talent pool. *Retention* is the ability of an employer to hold on to high performers and star talent that is critical to the organisation's survival objectives (Adi, 2012; Aleibola, 2010; Cowan, 2013; Farooq, 2015; Fatima, 2011; Kennedy & Daim, 2010; Khan, 2011; Muriuki, 2013; Singh & Khanna, 2011).

According to various authors, the following are the most vital factors that need to be taken into consideration when attracting and retaining highly talented employees, namely recognition, competitive compensation package, work satisfaction, training and development, managerial support, career development opportunities, organisational culture, a strong employment brand, and work environment (Bluen, 2013; Detuncq and Schmidt, 2013; Elegbe, 2010; Gupta, 2013; Hinkin & Tracey, 2010; Jansink, 2015; Nagpal, 2010; Perring, 2014; Vaiman, 2010).

It is paramount for organisations to develop and implement a strong cost effective human resource management strategy to minimise the turnover among top performers, since it is costlier to replace superior talent than under performers (Kumar, 2013; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013). Vaiman & Haslberger (2013) continue to say that the retention of high performers and maintaining staff turnover at a lower level are tantamount to the organisation's ultimate success and competitive advantage. The improvement of employee-retention can substantially boost the bottom line of companies (Onyango, 2013; Racz, 2013). *Turnover* can be defined as the unplanned loss of employees who voluntarily leave the organisation. They are those highly productive employees whom the organisation would like to retain (Aslam, Shumaila, Azhar & Sadaqat, 2011; Brown, 2011; Foster, 2015; Gialuisi, 2012; Mrara, 2010; Surji, 2013; Vaiman, 2010; Van Staden & Du Toit, 2010; Yang, 2013). At organisation level, turnover inflicts numerous costs and negative implications, which involve high recruitment and training costs, and the loss of morale and commitment among the remaining employees. (Das & Baruah, 2013; Harris, 2010; Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen and De Pater, 2011; Malinga, 2011; Taylor 2010; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015; Whelan & Carcary, 2014; Yang, 2013). Departing employees often leave a critical skills gap, when they take along their superior knowledge and expertise which was gained through experience. (Boyum, 2012; Das & Baruah, 2013; Fatima, 2011; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Taylor, 2010; Verma, Pandit & Verma, 2015). Vaiman (2010) contends that the loss of valuable scarce skills would result in a corresponding loss in organisation competitiveness.

Research suggests that organisations should focus on helping their employees to develop a set of employability and adaptability attributes. This would reduce the individual's fear of finding another job; he or she would feel valued, and remain with the organisation (Blackford, 2013; Coetzee, 2011; Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Reis & Baruch 2013; Taylor, 2010). Security lies in employability, rather than in employment (Ito & Kawazoe, 2015; Singh & Prakash, 2013). The adaptability of careers is crucial to staying employable; organisations are interested in retaining employable and highly adaptive individuals (Blackford, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013; Hodzic, Ripoll, Lira & Zenasni, 2015; Reis & Baruch 2013; Tak 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013).

The foregoing background leads to the following hypotheses statements:

H1: There is no significant and positive relationship between individuals' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

H2: Individuals' age, gender, race, marital status and job level and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

H3: Individuals from different age, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the aforementioned background, this research study aims to extend the research on talent retention in the 21st century dynamic workplace, by investigating what the relationship between individuals' career adaptability and employability attributes may have on retention factors. The literature has indicated that the theoretical models do not shed light on this relationship. From the theoretical background as discussed above it is evident that an understanding of the variables relating to career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors may influence an individual's retention to the organisation.

This research study aims to contribute to the disciplines of Human Resources Management and Industrial and Organisational Psychology, by providing strong holistic strategies on how to retain superior talent.

A review of the current literature study on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors outlines the following research problems:

- Theoretical models do not clarify the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.
- Human Resource professionals lack knowledge about the theoretical and empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, particularly in the South African context.
- Not much information is available on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, and the implications of utilising them in order to enhance retention to the organisation, hence the need for further investigation.

Research on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in an organisational context could make an essential contribution to the disciplines of Human Resources Management and Industrial and Organisational Psychology especially with regard to the retention of highly talented and exceptional employees.

Ultimately, the empirical results of this study could stimulate further research to facilitate the

possible emergence of a new genre of retention procedures and practices flowing from understanding employees' career adaptability and employability attributes required to improve their retention in an organisation.

1.2.1 Research questions with regard to the literature review

In terms of the literature review, the specific research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: How are talent retention conceptualised in the 21st century world of work?

Research question 2: How are the three constructs: career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors conceptualised and explained by theoretical models in the literature?

Research question 3: Is there a theoretical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes, and retention factors and how can this relationship be explained?

Sub-question 3.1: What is the theoretical relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes?

Sub-question 3.2: What is the theoretical relationship between career adaptability and retention factors?

Sub-question 3.3: What is the theoretical relationship between employability attributes and retention factors?

Sub-question 3.4: Can the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors be explained by means of an integrated model?

Research question 4: Do socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level) influence the theoretical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors?

1.2.2 Research questions with regard to the empirical study

In terms of the empirical study, the specific research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: What is the statistical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of participants employed in South

African Recruitment Advertising Agencies? (This research question relates to research hypothesis 1)

Research question 2: Do individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors? (This research question relates to research hypothesis 2)

Research question 3: Do individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors? (This research question relates to research hypothesis 3)

Research question 4: What are the recommendations that can be formulated for the development of retention strategies and for possible future research in the field of Human Resource Management? (This research question relates to research hypothesis 3)

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Given the research questions as discussed above, the following aims of this study were formulated:

1.3.1 General aims of the research

The general aim of this research is to investigate whether a relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variable).

The secondary aim of this research is to determine the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors and whether people from different ages, genders, races, marital status and job levels differ significantly in relation to these three variables.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

In terms of the literature and the empirical study, the following specific aims were addressed.

1.3.2.1 Literature review

In terms of the literature review the following specific aims were outlined:

Research aim 1: To conceptualise the talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the three constructs career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models in the literature.

Research aim 3: To identify and conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models.

Sub-aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 3.2: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 3.4: To explain the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.3.2.2 Empirical study

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

Research aim 1: Investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of respondents in a recruitment industry. (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 1)

Research aim 2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 2).

Research aim 3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 3).

Research aim 4: To formulate recommendations for further research in the field of Human Resource Management and suggest further research strategies based on the findings of this research (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 3).

1.4 POTENTIAL VALUE ADD

Career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors appear to have a deep influence on an individual's retention to an organisation (Egerova, 2013; Perring, 2014). There is no other integrated theoretical and empirical model explaining the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors constructs that has been well researched.

This research is a starting point in seeking a relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This study will be useful due to the possible relationship found. It may serve as a source of information to Industrial and Organisational Psychologists and Human Resource Professionals in determining the psychological aspects that play a role in the retention of superior talent, and it will enhance career adaptability and employability attributes. The outcome of this study will also assist companies and HR Practitioners to retain exceptionally talented employees.

With the modern labour market moving away from offering stability and security as in the past, employees are being challenged to invest in their career development in order to stay employable. Employees are being challenged to be highly adaptive, especially in taking a flexible and proactive attitude to one's career planning, in order to stay employable (Saniewski, 2011).

Career adaptability has become vitally paramount for employees who are faced with myriads of rapid and unpredictable challenges, in which they have to stay alive and continue surviving (Colakoglu, 2011; Hess, Jepsen & Dries, 2011; Ismail, Adnan, Awang, Rani & Ismail, 2015; Maree, 2012; Rocha & Guimaraes 2012). Research has shown that career adaptability is a vital key of a successful career in this turbulent and unpredictable landscape of the 21st century workplace (Blackford, 2013; Gadassi, Gati & Wagman-Rolnick, 2013;

Caplan, 2011; Lent, 2013; Lyons *et al.*, 2015; Niles, 2011; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Thrift, 2012).

Modern organisations are more dependent on the proactivity, flexibility and adaptability of their top performers, as well as their readiness to continuously acquire, build, develop and extensively cultivate new skills, expertise, knowledge, experience and competencies for the organisation's competitive edge (Gadassi, Gati & Dayan, 2012; Omar & Noordin, 2013; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Shirvani, Iravani, Jeshvaghani, Mirzaei and Selehi, 2012).

This research may make a vital novel and original contribution in terms of the implications on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors to improve retention of talented employees in this modern world of work.

1.4.1 Potential value at a theoretical level

At a theoretical level, this research may be useful because of the potential relationship identified between career adaptability, employability attributes (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variables). If significant relationships are found, then the findings should prove useful in talent retention within the modern world of work. Furthermore, the study results could also contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to the levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in the modern workplace.

1.4.2 Potential value at an empirical level

At an empirical level, the research may contribute to constructing an empirically tested profile that may be utilised to inform talent retention practices. If no relationships are found between the variables, then the usefulness of this research will be limited to the elimination of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as a predictor of talent retention. Researchers could then focus their efforts on other research studies or avenues that could yield significant proof for solving the problem of how to improve talent retention strategies in organisations.

In addition, the study may highlight whether individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly in terms of their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. In light of the current research regarding the adult employees in a recruitment agency, the results may be valuable in the employability of

knowledgeable, valuable and talented employees, by identifying differences in terms of demographical information that address the needs of a diverse group of adults.

1.4.3 Potential value at a practical level

At a practical level, if the industrial and organisational psychologists and human resource practitioners could develop a better understanding of the career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors of an individual that could positively influence the retention of exceptionally talented employees, then the outcomes would be significant enough to justify the continuation of this study. Also if the readers of this research develop a solid understanding of the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors which may positively or negatively influence their own career development, then the outcomes are significant enough to justify the pursuit of this research. Positive outcomes from the proposed study might raise awareness of the fact that individuals differ with regard to their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors and that these constructs could influence a person's career development and the organisations' retention strategies.

Another positive outcome may be that human resource professionals could be more aware of these factors influencing talent retention practices. More especially this information could be utilised in talent retention processes to assist employees realise the importance of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The findings may also be useful to future researchers interested in studying these variables. This is a potential and vital research ground because, there is no existing research which has been conducted on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL

The research model of Pickard (2010) serves as a framework for this study. This model incorporates five vital dimensions of social science research, namely the sociological, ontological, teleological, epistemological and methodological dimensions. This model views research as an essential social process, because of the common humanity that connects researchers and the people who participate in the research (Ahmed, 2008; Jackson & Sorensen 2012; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Poetschke, 2003; Raddon, 2010). Social research is viewed as a joint human activity in which social reality is objectively studied in order to gain a valid and reliable understanding of it (Babbie & Mouton, 2009;

Pickard, 2010; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012). Concepts within models are often based on opinions, values, traditions, cultures, principles, rules and regulations that cannot be destroyed (Ahmed, 2008; De Gialdino, 2011; Raddon, 2010). The model is described as a systems theoretical model with three interrelated subsystems, which also interrelate with the research domain of a specific discipline and in this instance, industrial and organisational psychology and human resource management. The subsystem represents the intellectual climate, the market of intellectual resources and the research process itself.

1.6 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

It is tantamount to position the proposed study within the particular paradigmatic and disciplinary context to which it belongs. This will highlight the specific approach to be followed in the interpretation of the research process within the social sciences. For the purpose of this study, the term paradigm is used in the classical meta-theoretical or philosophical sense to denote an implicit or explicit view of reality (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Morgan, 1980; Pickard, 2010). The paradigm perspective is referred to as the intellectual climate or variety of meta-theoretical values or beliefs and assumptions underlying the theories and models that form the definitive context of this study (Fouche & Delpont, 2002; Mouton, 2001).

A paradigm in the social sciences includes the accepted theories, models, bodies of research and methodologies of a specific perspective (Fouche & Delpont, 2002; Mouton, 2001; Pickard, 2010). Their original theory is mainly philosophical and is neither testable nor meant to be tested. The current research was conducted in the field of human resource management.

1.6.1 The intellectual climate

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

1.6.1.1 The literature review

The literature review is presented from the humanistic-existential and open-systems perspectives, as outlined below.

(a) The humanistic paradigm

Thematically, the humanistic paradigm relates to the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The following assumptions of the humanistic paradigm are made (Cilliers, 2000; Garrison, 2001; Ivey, Ivey & Simek, 2007; Jacobsen, 2007; Mark & Hoffman, 2011; Suri, 2010):

- Individuals are seen as more than the sum of their parts and should be studied as an integrated whole.
- Individuals are principally good and should be seen as dignified beings.
- The nature of humans is positive and individuals participate actively in determining their own behaviour.
- Individuals act in self-awareness, where they have on-going growth whilst realising their own true potential.
- People have the freedom and responsibility to make choices and live purposefully.
- People exist in a human context and form the basis of human identity.

(b) Existential psychology

The primary goal in existential view of psychology is finding meaning in life (Walters, 2008; William, 2009). People create meaning in their lives through the choices and decisions they make in their daily lives (Greenberg, Koole & Pyszczynski, 2004). Greenberg *et al.*, 2004 emphasises that existentialism views people as “human beings in the world”, who continuously and dynamically develop their personalities through their actions. This clearly expresses that human beings in this changing world are not static or stagnant, but are dynamically growing and changing beings (Glassman, 2013; Yang, 2010).

Individuals are faced with challenges in making decisions to either follow the future with its entire unknown or continue with the present/past which is more familiar and “safe” to follow. These meaningful systems can create development opportunities that allow greater or less personal growth. Choosing the future with its entire unknown as opposed to the known path from the past leads to an on-going personal growth and it is deemed the most desirable path. However, future oriented choices and decisions also create uncertainty and arouse anxiety. For example, an individual deciding to take up a new job opportunity will be faced with uncertainty of the unknown, whether the opportunity will bring about growth or failure. This situation puts individuals in the midst of uncertainty, anxiety and guilt on whether to turn down the offer. Existential courage is defined as the willingness to confront the anxiety and uncertainties created when individuals face the unknown and existential courage lies at the

heart of authenticity (Amber, 2010; Greenberg *et al.*, 2004; Lamont, 2012; Shiraev, 2011; Van Deurzen & Hanaway, 2012). Authentic, truthful and honest people are tenacious, courageous and seriously engage with life. They develop, maintain and cherish attitudes, goals and resolutions that are aligned with a sense of personal accountability, responsibility, cherishing, involvement and perseverance. They seek out inspiring, empowering and challenging opportunities and embrace change as a bonus for growth (Amber, 2010; Greenberg *et al.*, 2004; Lamont, 2012). According to Greenberg *et al.*, (2004) authenticity gives tenacious and resilient people the ability to remain committed and maintain a sense of connection when confronted with life's challenging facts. Authentic individuals believe that they have the power and will to exert control over external and internal events, and this enables them to experience stressful and painful events as challenges to grow rather than threats. Authentic people are more confident, have high self-esteem and play an important role in society.

(c) The open systems paradigm

The open systems paradigm views an individual as part of an organisation who interacts with external environment. The following assumptions of the open systems paradigm are made (Ashmos & Huber, 1989; Chau, 1997; Goldin, Scott & Vegnor, 2006)

- The organisation as an open system interacts with the external environment.
- It is a set of interrelated and interdependent parts arranged in a manner that produces a unified whole.
- The open system model is characterised by inputs, throughputs or transformation processes and outputs.
- This open system moves towards growth and expansion.
- An open system engages in the process of production, maintenance and adaptation of its functioning.

Thematically, the empirical study deals with the variables, career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.6.1.2 The empirical research

The empirical research is presented from the post-positivist paradigm instead of the positivist paradigm. The positivist paradigm sees the object of the research as being independent of the researcher, knowledge is gained and verified through direct measurement of the situation and facts are determined by dismantling the phenomenon in order to examine its component parts (Ahmed, 2010; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Jackson & Sorensen, 2012; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Pickard, 2010; Poetschke, 2003; Raddon, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Trochim, 2006). This perspective wants to keep the research free of the values, passion, politics and ideology of the researcher, so as to make sure that the study is free of bias and is totally objective (Ryan, 2009).

According to Ryan (2009) people live out their lives in the context of a worldview, which influences how they think and behave and how they organise their lives, including how they approach research. However, people are not aware that the beliefs they have regarding research are related to this worldview and it is extremely essential for researchers to review and analyse these worldviews (Ryan, 2009).

Ryan (2009, p12-13) outlines that post-positivist research has the following characteristics:

- Research is broad rather than specialised – many different things qualify as research.
- Theory and practice cannot be kept separate. We cannot afford to ignore theory for the sake of “just the facts”.
- The researcher’s motivations for and commitment to research are central and crucial to the enterprise.
- The idea that research is concerned only with correct techniques for collecting and categorising information is now inadequate.
- The post-positivist research utilises quantitative methods.

Utilising the above explanation of the two paradigms, and considering the validity of the study, it was finalised that the post-positivist framework will be utilised for this study.

1.6.2 The market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to the collection of vital beliefs that have direct impact on the epistemic status of scientific statements (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Pickard,

2010). For the purpose of this research the theoretical models; meta-theoretical statements; conceptual descriptions about career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors; central hypothesis as well as the theoretical and methodological assumptions are presented.

1.6.2.1 Meta- theoretical statements

According to Pickard, (2010) at different phases of the scientific research process, it is imperative for the researcher to make certain assumptions justifying specific pre-suppositions, theories, methodological strategies and procedures that have not been tested in that particular research. One essential category of such assumptions is meta-theoretical assumptions underlying the models, paradigms, traditions and scientific theories that form the definitive of the study. Meta-theoretical statements are pre-suppositions, which provide general perspectives for looking at things, based on assumptions (Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Pickard, 2010). Any meta-theoretical statement or worldview may include different schools of thought. These are described as different ways of approaching and studying a shared reality or worldview (Babbie & Mouton, 2009; Pickard, 2010). Meta-theoretical statements are presented on the following:

(a) Human Resource Management

The current research is conducted in the field of Human Resource Management, which is defined as the strategic management of people based on the idea that people are the heart and mind of the organisation's bottom line, its intelligence and emotions; they are the most powerful and irreplaceable assets for any company's competitive edge (Ferreira, Ismail & Swanepoel, 2012; Kreitner & Cassidy, 2011; Monroe, 2013; Price, 2011; Rogers, 2012). For an organisation to gain and maintain its competitive edge, it has to use its people effectively, exploiting their skills, expertise, knowledge and competencies in order to exceed its objectives (Brewster, Carely, Grobler, Holland & Warnich, 2010; Price, 2011).

Human Resource Management is a process of developing, implementing and thorough evaluating of policies and practices attracting, developing, engaging and retaining employees to perform work for the organisation (Ayaru, 2012; Meliou & Maroudas, 2011; Rogers, 2012). Human Resource Management strongly emphasises that people are the most vital and dynamic life-blood of any organisation and that they need to be developed and retained (Das & Baruah, 2013; Kreitner & Cassidy, 2011).

1.6.2.2 Theoretical models

In this research, the theoretical models are based on the following:

The literature review focuses on the career adaptability model (Savickas, 1997), employability model (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) and the retention factors model (Dockel, 2003).

1.6.2.3 Conceptual descriptions

The following conceptual descriptions serve as points of departure for discussion in this study:

(a) Career adaptability

Career adaptability is a set of coping resources and readiness to tackle head-on the current and anticipated vocational developmental tasks, career changes and work traumas across one's entire life span (Brown & Lent, 2013; Chan & Mai, 2015; Ebersohn, 2012; Havenga, 2011; Hou *et al.*, 2012; Maree, 2015; Maree, 2012; Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori & Dauwalder, 2012; Tien, Wang, Chu & Huang, 2012; Zacher, 2014b).

(b) Employability attributes

Employability attributes are a set of eight core employability attributes (career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy) that are essential for increasing the likelihood of creating or securing and maintaining employment opportunities, even in the face of joblessness or in an unstable and unpredictable new world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Blom & Saeki, 2012; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011; Gallopeni, 2013; Messum, Wilkes & Jackson, 2011; Ndzube, 2013; Patel, 2015; Potgieter, 2012b; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). *Employability* is the individual's ability to find and maintain rewarding work and to move self-sufficiently in the labour market to realise one's potential through sustainable employment and stay employable and marketable in this turbulent world of work (Aring, 2015; Calota & Ilie, 2013; Casano, 2015; Pradhan, 2015; Gallopen, 2013; Marks and Huzzard, 2010; Minten, 2010; Potgieter, 2012b).

(c) Retention factors

Retention factors are described as vital factors that instil and encourage organisational commitment and increase the retention of key employees (Dockel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006; Dockel, 2003; Mutambara & Hungwe, 2011; Nderitu, 2015). Retention factors are essential retention tools for attracting, developing and retaining exceptional and high calibre talent, in order to achieve and exceed the goals and objectives of the business (Elegbe, 2010; Mansor & Idris, 2015; Nagpal, 2010; Ngozwana & Rugimbana, 2011; Perring, 2014; Vaiman, 2010).

1.6.2.4 Central hypothesis

This research is determined to prove the following:

A relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This hypothesis further assumes that individuals with different levels of career adaptability and employability attributes will display different levels of retention factors. Also individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status and job levels will display different levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.6.2.5 Theoretical assumptions

Based on the literature review, the following theoretical assumptions are addressed in this research:

- There is a need for basic research that seeks to isolate career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.
- Demographical factors such as age, gender, race, marital status and job level will influence an individual's career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.
- The three constructs career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors are multidimensional and can be differentiated by external factors such as age, gender, race, marital status and job level.
- Knowledge of an individual's career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors will enhance the understanding of the factors that may potentially inform retention practices.

1.6.2.6 Methodological assumptions

Methodological assumptions are those beliefs that concern the nature of social science and scientific research. Methodological beliefs are methodological preferences, assumptions and pre-suppositions outlining what good research should be like. These beliefs are concerned with high-level decisions on research approaches, strategy and research. These beliefs aim to describe, evaluate and justify the use of particular methods and they are also concerned with the choice of methods and the choice of data language to be used. There is a strong link between methodological beliefs and the epistemic status of research findings (Ahmed, 2008; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Pickard, 2010; Poetschke, 2003; Raddon 2010). The following epistemological assumptions are the methodological assumptions that affect the structure and nature of this research:

(a) Sociological dimension

The Sociological dimension explains and outlines in detail the scientific research as a joint activity. Sociological dimension is concerned with the person who does the research, and with the context in which the research topic is conducted. It also considers the researchers within their social, cultural, linguistic and national contexts (Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Jackson & Sorensen, 2012; Pickard, 2010).

(b) Ontological dimension

The Ontological dimension is the science of being or social reality. Its major concern is what constitutes reality and how people can understand their existence in this world. Ontological dimension questions how the world is built and whether there is a world independent of human beings' knowledge. Ontological dimension is more concerned with the reality or the research domain that is being investigated (Ahmed, 2008; De Gialdino, 2011; Jackson & Sorensen, 2012; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Pickard, 2010; Poetschke, 2003; Raddon, 2010). This research utilises quantitative method and the ontological assumption is therefore that, social reality is objective and singular, apart from the researcher (Jackson & Sorensen, 2012).

(c) The Teleological dimension

Teleological dimension is concerned with the purpose of the research. It emphasises that research is intentional and goal directed (Pickard, 2010). Teleological dimension further suggests that research should be systematic and goal directed. This dimension posits that researchers influence their purposes and the goals they set for their research (Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Lund, 2011; Pickard, 2010). The research goal of this study is to measure the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The teleological dimension also looks to furthering the field of Human Resource Management by providing recommendations in terms of talent retention.

(d) The Epistemological dimension

According to Pickard (2010) epistemological dimension is the philosophy and theory of knowledge. Its major concern is the nature of knowledge, especially what constitutes valid and reliable knowledge and how the knowledge was obtained. The purpose of research under this dimension is to provide a valid and reliable understanding of reality (Ahmed, 2008; De Gialdino, 2011; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Oztas, 2010; Poetschke, 2003; Raddon, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Trochim, 2006). This study strives to attain the truth by obtaining valid and reliable results and by utilising a well-structured research design.

(e) The Methodological dimension

The Methodological dimension is more concerned with the research approaches, strategy, procedures, plan of action and research design linking the choice of methods and processes to the desired outcomes. This dimension aims to describe, evaluate and justify the use of particular methods. This dimension believes that the only true methodological decision is that between quantitative and qualitative approaches (Ahmed, 2008; De Gialdino, 2011; Lor, 2011; Lor, 2012; Murphy, 2007; Pickard, 2010; Raddon, 2010; Schliesser, 2013; Trochim, 2006).

This research will utilise quantitative, exploratory research in the form of a literature review on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Mitchell and Jolly (2010), and Bickman and Rog (2013) define *research* as a plan according to which research participants, from whom information is collected, are found. Yin (2014) states that a *research design* is like a logical blueprint that links research questions with the actual implementation of the research. Bickman and Rog (2013) reiterate that the *research design* serves as a central plan of the research that connects the design, data-collection and analysis methods in order to address the whole process of the research.

1.7.1 Exploratory research

According to Shields and Rangarjain (2013), exploratory research is used to conduct preliminary investigations regarding relatively unknown topics. According to them (2013), exploratory research helps, by means of a survey, to make sure that the best research design, data collection methods and selection of the respondents is used. It often uses secondary research, such as reviewing the available literature and data (Henry, 2014; Shields & Rangarjain, 2013; Van der Stoep & Johnston, 2009). The major purposes of exploratory research are to gain new insights, undertake preliminary investigations and to determine priorities for the future research (Henry, 2014).

The method used in this study is exploratory, because it compares various theoretical perspectives on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.7.2 Descriptive research

The major aim of descriptive research is to give an image of a situation as it happens (Bickman & Rog, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Richter, 2011). According to Graziano and Raulin (2010), and Henry (2014), *descriptive research* describes the characteristics of the situation being studied. It is usually the best method for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships; it describes the world as it exists.

In literature review, descriptive research is applicable with reference to the conceptualisation of the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

In the empirical research, descriptive research is applicable with reference to mean, standard deviations and ANOVA, in terms of the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.7.3 Explanatory Research

Explanatory research seeks to investigate cause-and-effect relationships (Drake & Heath, 2011; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Phophalia, 2010; Shields & Rangarjain, 2013; Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005). It is quantitative in nature, and consists of typically tested prior hypotheses by measuring the relationships between variables. Its main purpose is to answer the question on why something occurs (Phophalia, 2010; Shields & Rangarjain, 2013). By making use of explanatory research the researcher can formulate a conclusion between constructs, namely between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Correlation analysis will be used to specify the relationship between these variables. Descriptive statistics will be performed for significant relationships determined by the multiple regressions in order to investigate whether individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly in terms of the constructs measured. ANOVA and independent t-tests will be performed for this purpose. The level of statistical significance will be set at the following point: $p \leq .05$.

1.7.4 Validity

Validity addresses the issue of the credibility of the research, and whether the research design is rigorous enough to provide solid support for desired conclusions and recommendations (Adams, 2014; Bickman & Rog, 2013). It refers to whether or not a questionnaire really measures what it is supposed to measure, and how well an instrument measures what it claims to measure (Cherry, 2014; Drost, 2011). According to Drost (2011), *validity* is concerned with whether the vital parts of research are meaningful. When researchers measure behaviour, they are specifically concerned with whether they are measuring what they intend to measure. Internal validity, external validity, construct validity, content validity and statistical conclusion validity will be utilised in this research design.

The research design needs to be both internally and externally valid. Mitchell and Jolly (2010) defines internal validity as any causal difference in the dependent variable which can be attributed to the independent variables, whereas external validity is defined as the extent to which results of the research study can be generated to other groups. For research to be internally valid, the constructs must be measured in a valid manner and the data which is measured must be accurate and reliable. The analysis should be relevant to the type of data collected, and the final solutions must be adequately supported by the data (Adams, 2014; Mitchell & Jolly, 2010). For the research to be externally valid, the findings must be

applicable to all similar cases. The findings must be valid for similar studies other than the one under review (Adams, 2014; Mitchell & Jolly, 2010; Pickard, 2010; Drost, 2010).

1.7.4.1 Validity with regard to the literature review

In this research study *internal validity* is determined by utilising literature that is relevant to the research study, models, theories, the problem-statement and aims, and by selecting measuring instruments that are applicable to the models and theories in forming the study, and by ensuring that they are presented in a standardised manner. *External validity* is ensured by choosing a representative sample. *Content validity* is ensured by the use of an accurate instrument to assess the content validity of the instrument. *Construct validity* is ensured by the use of a wide variety of research techniques. *Statistical conclusion validity* is ensured by testing the relationship between the three variables being researched in this study. The researcher also ensured that the concepts and constructs were ordered in a logical and systematic manner. Every attempt was made to search for and consult the most recent literature sources, although a number of classical and contemporary mainstream research streams were referred to because of their relevance to the conceptualisation of constructs relevant to this research.

1.7.4.2 Validity with regard to the empirical research

Valid, appropriate and standardised measuring instruments are used in this research to ensure validity of the empirical study. These measuring instruments measure what they are expected to measure, content validity measures a range of meanings within a concept and construct validity measures the theoretical constructs they are supposed to measure (De Vos, Delpont, Fouche & Strydom, 2011).

1.7.5 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency, dependency, or stability of a measuring instrument (Adams, 2014; Cherry, 2014; Drost, 2011). It is the quality of being reliable, dependable or trustworthy of a measuring instrument (Cherry, 2014). Cherry (2014) goes on to say, that a measure is considered reliable and dependable if it repeatedly gives the same result. Reliability in the literature is determined by utilising existing recent literature sources, theories and models that are available to the researchers (Adams, 2014, Cherry, 2014; Drost, 2011). All the literature utilised in this study is very recent, except the classic literature that cannot be replaced.

Reliability in the literature is addressed by using existing literature sources, theories and models that are available to the researchers (Drost 2011). A representative sample and a statistical package (SPSS) were used to analyse the data in order to ensure reliability in the analysis of the results. Research design reliability is ensured by limiting the problematic variables through thorough planning of the research. Literature review reliability is ensured by the availability of the literature to other parties who are interested. Current sources have been used to ensure reliability of the information. The reliability of the empirical study is ensured by utilising a representative sample of the population. The reliability of instruments used in this study has been tested and proved through previous research.

1.7.6 The unit of study

According to Toshkov (2012) there are four major categories of units of analysis namely: social artefacts, organisations, groups and individuals. The individual is the unit of analysis in this study. The main aim of this study is to determine whether a relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes, and retention factors. Since the individual is going to be the unit of analysis, the focus is on the traits, characteristics, orientations and behaviour of the individual (Toshkov, 2012). This research focuses on the constructs career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. At individual level, the individual scores on each of the measuring instruments were taken into consideration. At group level, the overall scores on all the measuring instruments were taken into consideration. At subgroup level, the age, gender, race, marital status and employment status scores were taken into consideration.

In terms of the demographic variables the unit of analysis is sub-groups, while the unit of analysis for the study is the individuals focusing on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.7.7 The variables

The context of the research is talent retention within the modern world of work. The dependent variable is retention factors, and the independent variables are career adaptability and employability attributes. The research focuses on determining whether a statistical significant empirical relationship exists between these variables, and to address whether demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level) differ in terms of these variables. This study's main purpose is to measure two independent variables

(career adaptability and employability attributes) in relation to one dependent variable (retention factors). In this study the criterion data of the Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI) and the criterion data of the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) comprise the independent variables and the criterion data of the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) comprises the dependent variable.

In order to determine the relationship between the independent variables (career adaptability and employability attributes) and the dependent variable (retention factors) data is collected using the measuring instruments indicated above.

This research is more interested in:

- measuring the relationship between career adaptability (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- measuring the relationship between employability attributes (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- measuring the relationship between career adaptability (independent variable) and employability attributes (independent variable)
- measuring the relationship between career adaptability (independent variable) and employability attributes (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)

The figure 1.1 below outlines the detailed relationship between the three variables of the study.

Relationship between the three variables
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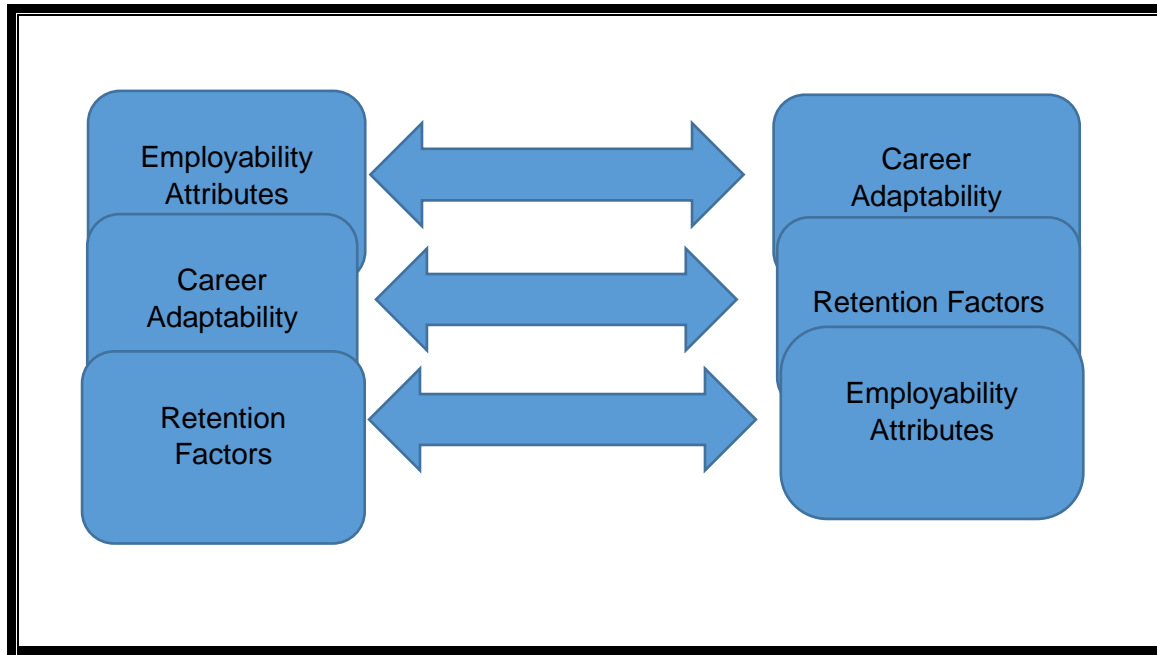


Figure 1.1. The Relationship Between the Three Variables
Measures are in place to ensure a valid and reliable research process.

1.7.8 Delimitations

The current study is limited to research dealing with the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. In an attempt to analyse the factors that might influence an individual's career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, the variables used as demographic variables are limited to gender, age, marital status, race and job level.

The focus of this study is limited to research on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. If a positive relationship is found, then the information is vital to future academics and researchers to address other unattended issues relating to these three constructs. The research method chosen is not meant to establish the cause and effect of the relationship, but its main purpose is to thoroughly investigate whether a relationship exists between these three constructs. If such a relationship does exist, it will be of vital use to other researchers and academics in addressing essential issues relating to these three constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted in two phases, namely the literature review and empirical study. Each phase consists of different steps, which are outlined below. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the different phases.

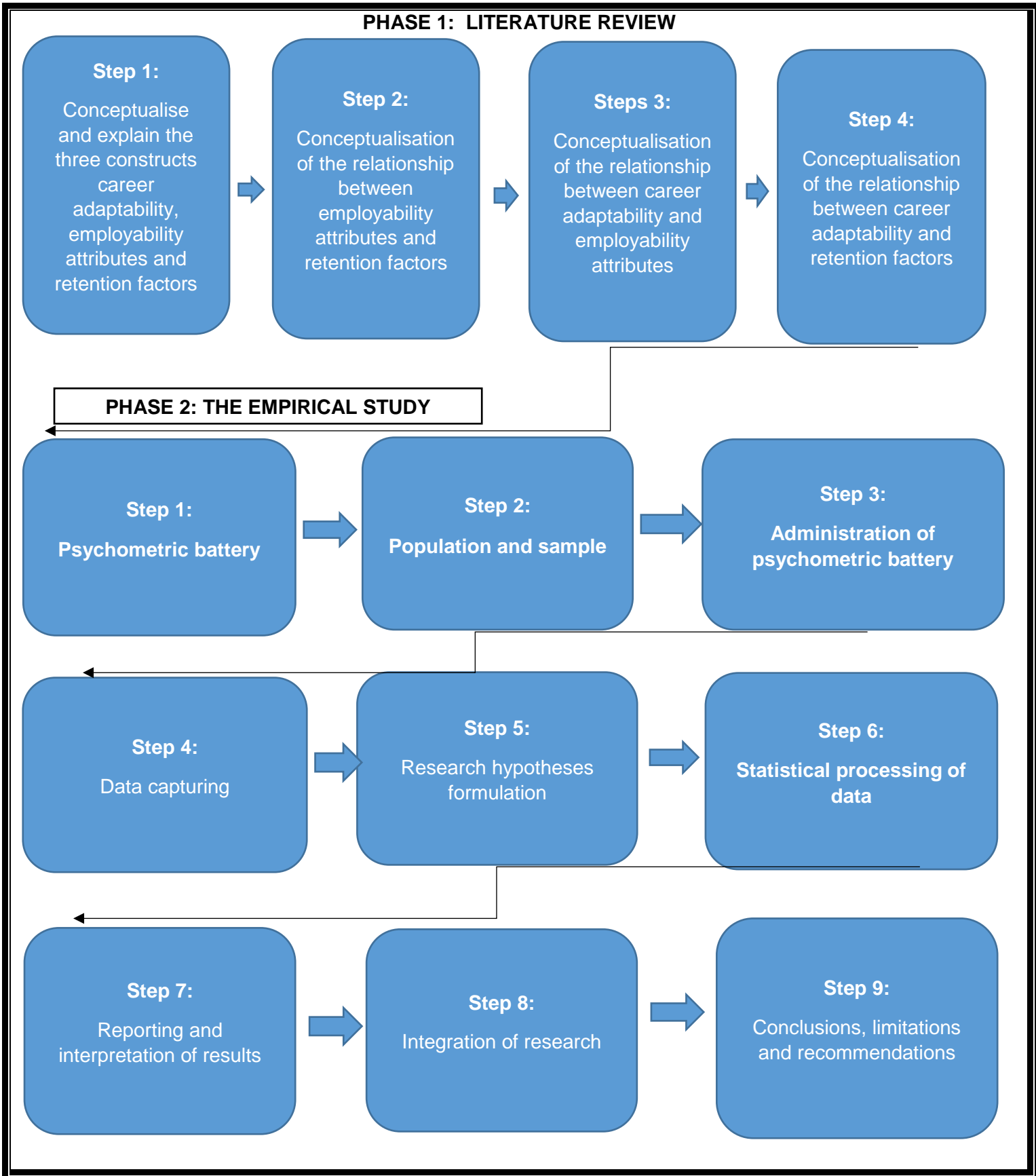


Figure 1.2 Overview of the Research Methodology

1.8.1 Phase 1: The Literature review

The Literature review consists of a review of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

Step 1: addresses research aim 1 of the literature review, namely to conceptualise talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context.

Step 2: addresses research aim 2 of the literature review, namely to conceptualise and explain the three construct career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models.

Step 3: addresses research sub-aim 2.1 of the literature review, namely to conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective.

Step 4: addresses research aim 3 of the literature review, namely to identify and conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical level.

1.8.2 Phase 2: The Empirical study

An Empirical study is conducted in the South African organisation context, and involves the following steps, namely:

Step 1: Determination and description of the sample

The population is identified and the sample determined.

Step 2: Choosing and justifying the psychometric battery

The measuring instruments that measure the dependent variable (retention factors) and the two independent variables (career adaptability and employability attributes) are discussed.

Step 3: *Administration of the psychometric battery*

This step involves a description of the data from the following samples in the following manner:

Step 4: *Capturing of criterion data*

The responses of subjects to each of the items of the five questionnaires are captured on an electronic database, which is then converted to an SPSS data file.

Step 5: *Formulation of research hypotheses*

In order to operationalize the research, research hypotheses are formulated from the central hypothesis to be empirically tested.

Step 6: *Statistical processing of data*

The statistical procedure relevant to this research includes descriptive statistical analysis (means, standard deviations and frequency data); Correlational analysis (Pearson product correlation coefficient) and inferential statistics (step-wise hierarchical regression analysis and testing for significant mean differences).

Step 7: *Reporting and interpretation of the results*

The results are depicted in tables, diagrams and/or graphs and the discussion of the findings is presented in a systematic framework, ensuring that the interpretation of the findings is conveyed in a clear and articulate manner.

Step 8: *Integration of the research findings*

The findings relating to the literature review are integrated with the findings of the empirical research as an integration of the overall findings of the research.

Step 9: *Formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations*

The final step relates to conclusions based on the results and their integration with theory. The limitations of the research are discussed, and recommendations made in terms of

career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as constructs used to inform effective retention practices.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The layout of the chapters will be presented in the following method:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research

Chapter 2: Talent retention in the 21st century world of work

Chapter 3: Career Adaptability and Employability Attributes

Chapter 4: Retention Factors

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

Chapter 6: Research Results

Chapter 7: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background to and rationale for the research, the problem-statement, aim of the research, objectives of the research, paradigm perspectives, theoretical research and its design and methodology, the central hypothesis and the research method of the study were all discussed in this chapter. The rationale for the study is the fact that no known research has been conducted on the relationship dynamics between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in the context of talent retention. The research endeavours to critically evaluate, and, on the basis of sound research methodology, investigate the relationship between the three constructs.

Chapter 2 addresses research aim 1: To conceptualise the talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: TALENT RETENTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY WORLD OF WORK

Keywords: knowledge economy, globalisation, talent retention, career, career agent

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the study by outlining the meta-theoretical framework that forms the boundary of the study.

Individuals entering the new world of work are faced with myriads of challenges, such as a decrease in employment opportunities, reduced job security, advances in technology, globalization, the increasing personal responsibility of keeping up with these changes and with the challenging changes in their fields of specialisation and knowledge, with up-skilling their qualifications, with lifelong learning, downsizing of organisations, economic and political developments, and with sustaining their employability (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Bushi, 2015; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Havenga, 2011; Jain & Jain, 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Potgieter, 2012a; 2012b; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). The new and challenging relationship between the employee and the new world of work has created a critical need to develop career- and retention-interventions that may help the individuals to reflect on their career meta-competencies as a vital key resource in sustaining their adaptability and employability (Aybas, Elmas & Dundar, 2015; Havenga, 2011; Parker, 2012; Yousefi *et al.*, 2011; Zacher, 2014a).

The foregoing challenging trends call for a deep understanding of the world of work in the 21st century, against the traditional careers, which in turn, may strongly shed light on retention-strategies.

2.1 Talent retention as defined in the 21st century

Retention can be defined as the effort taken by an organisation to hold onto and prevent its highly-talented employees from leaving the organisation, especially through rewarding them and providing them with incentives for performing their jobs efficiently and effectively, thus making sure that the work environment is safe and healthy, and for ensuring healthy and harmonious relationships between the employees and their supervisors (Bluen, 2013; Biswal, 2013; Inda, 2016; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a; Woodard, 2013). Mrara (2010) points out that it is paramount for organisations to be aware of the factors that attract and retain the top talent. The most holistic strategy for attracting and retaining highly-talented, intelligent

and exceptional employees is to ensure that the work environment is conducive to their development and empowerment (Darvish, Najafi & Zare, 2012; Don & Perry 2013).

In order to confront the dynamic changing landscape of the 21st century workplace, employees need to be self-reliant, especially in taking responsibility for their careers and their jobs (Baillargeon & Carlstrom, 2013; Clay, 2012; Deshpande, 2012; Douglass & Duffy, 2015; Ibert & Schmidt, 2014; Potgieter, 2012b; Thrift, 2012; Zacher, 2014b). Thrift (2012) emphasises that in today's unpredictable and rapidly changing environment, it is extremely important for employees to be accountable and responsible for their own careers in order to remain employable. According to Brown and Lent (2013), advanced technology, limited employment opportunities, lower job security, organisational downsizing, outsourcing, fluctuating markets, changes in opportunity-structures and the increased demands of job skills have all contributed to an uncertain work-life for individuals entering the 21st century workplace. Blackford (2013) reiterates that within this fast-paced and unpredictable employment landscape the ability to stay employable is the most important skill needed. The notion of long-term employment is phasing out, and short-term employment contracts and self-employment dominate the innovation century workplace (Havenga, 2011; Jain & Jain, 2013; Vaiman, 2010). This brings about a huge challenge for employees to have multiple careers and occupations. It is a challenge for employees to market themselves, and to develop transferable skills, flexibility and adaptability (Bland & Roberts-Pittman, 2013; Willner, Gati & Guan, 2015). Oria (2012) emphasises that in the light of the adverse employment conditions that are currently affecting many countries globally, employability is the key to be successful in such a risky and unpredictable environment. Employability is extremely vital in a world where labour market conditions are evolving rapidly, where they are less predictable, more risky, extremely automated, more globalised, where smart technologies develop rapidly, where the turnover is more frequent, and organisations are restructuring, the need for lifelong learning is increasing, and where the standard of living is becoming higher (Bland & Roberts-Pittman, 2013; Botha, 2015; Calota & Ilie, 2013; Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Negru, Pop & Crocetti, 2015). Individuals who are adaptable in their careers tend to be highly employable, and they are the individuals whom most of the organisations would like to retain (Brown, 2013; Brown, 2016; Hirschi, Herrmann & Keller 2015; Jain & Jain, 2013; Makki *et al.*, 2015).

The organisations of the 21st century which are perceived to be successful are built on strong foundations, have few boundaries, are flexible, and emphasise broad-based innovation (Havenga, 2011; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Reis and Baruch (2013) continued by emphasising that these organisations place the emphasis on the creation of ideas and on

experimentation in order to be competitive and to survive in this innovative and new regime workplace. The dynamic and challenging workplace calls for a highly talented workforce, one that is driven and self-directed by protean and boundary-less careers in order to remain employable (Adi, 2012; Boyum, 2012; Fatima, 2011; Reis & Baruch, 2013; De Vos & Van der Hiejden, 2015). Maree (2012) reiterates that the modern labour market challenges employees to think critically, to be excellent problem-solvers and inspired decision-makers, thus being able to adapt to the myriads of demands posed by the different and challenging work contexts, in order to become and remain employable. Specifically, both the organisations and the employees need to realise that the tension between the work and the family, and the struggle to balance work and one's personal life within one's career need to be dealt with seriously. It is imperative for an organisation to develop and implement flexible work-life policies, practices, equity at the workplace, a balance between work and life, family-friendly practices, policies, and alternative and attractive work patterns, in order to retain exceptional talent (Gray, 2011; Rabbi, Ahad, Kousar & Ali, 2015; Wilkins, Santilli, Ferrari, Nota, Tracey & Soresi, 2015). Many researchers reiterate that in this unpredictable and fast-paced world of work, the inability of individuals to juggle the demands of a job with those of the family is one of the most vital reasons for voluntary resignations from jobs. It is imperative for organisations to give employees room to balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside their workplace. There should be a healthy balance that will assist in attracting, recruiting and retaining valued and talented individuals (Amiani, 2014; Dockel *et al.*, 2006; Hou *et al.*, 2012; MacMahon *et al.*, 2012; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a; Urbanaviciute, Kairys, Pociute & Liniauskaite, 2014; Van Dyk, Coetzee & Takawira, 2013). Balancing work and personal life is becoming extremely vital in attracting and retaining talented employees in a highly competitive labour market. For organisations to survive and to increase their competitive advantage, it is important that they develop and implement a strong and holistic work-life balance that encompasses the diverse needs of the 21st century workforce (Nithya, 2013; Srinivasan, 2011; Shakeel, 2015; Walsh, 2012). A balanced life leads to a healthy employee who is capable of high performance and full commitment to one's job. On the other hand, work-life imbalance is associated with serious health problems, monotony at work, decreased levels of productivity, effectiveness and efficiency, and less commitment at the employee level. It is imperative for organisations to create employee-friendly workplaces to curb absenteeism, and to attract, recruit and retain knowledgeable employees (Babu & Raj, 2013; Gray, 2011; Ohme & Zacher, 2015; Saxena 2012; Srinivasan, 2011; Walsh, 2012).

Guan et al (2014) found that because of the fast-changing and challenging employment patterns, individuals currently play an important role in ensuring employability and in

achieving success in their careers. Proactive career behaviour serves as a crucial antecedent for important career-related outcomes, such as employment-status, an increase in salary, and promotion. Potgieter (2012b) reiterates that in today's challenging world of work, having technical skills and academic knowledge is no longer sufficient to guarantee a person a work. Potgieter goes on to emphasise that the 21st century needs individuals who are responsible for the development of their own careers, for growth and for employability, and who are capable of sustaining it. Employees should be accountable for marketing themselves and for increasing their employability. In the face of shrinking career opportunities and the passing of stable employment, employability is the only and vital option for employees to be able to cope and to survive (Campoamor, 2015; Casano, 2015). In the new world of work there is a critical shift from prioritising full employment to prioritising employability (Blair & Manda, 2016; Nota, Ginevra, Santilli & Soresi, 2014; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Employability empowers an individual to choose his or her destiny in the unpredictable and highly competitive business environment (Botha, 2015; Jain & Jain, 2013; Marks & Huzzard, 2010; Praskova, Creed & Hood, 2015). In the 21st century world of work, new trends are surfacing, where well-defined hierarchical structures in organisations are disappearing, where modern organisations are boundary-less, are functioning with flatter-management, and where there is less job security, challenging individuals to fit into multiple roles or to perform multiple jobs (Belbin, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Nota *et al.*, 2014; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). In this new dynamic world of work, careers are shaped more by the individual and not by the organisation, and it is expected that individuals will make numerous career-changes during their lives (Joao & Coetzee, 2012; Phan, 2010). It is imperative for individuals to take a positive stand and to maintain their employability thus being able to respond to all these changes and to remain flexible and adaptable (Morthati, Kumar & Shekhar, 2014; Nguyen & Lowe, 2010). Continuing development is vital in enhancing one's employability at every stage of one's career, even in retirement; and it's necessary to have an adapting attitude of continuous learning to sustain one's employability (Albo, Dayon & Conicella, 2015; Blackford, 2013; Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Havenga, 2011; Konstam, Cele-Demirtas, Tomek & Sweeney, 2015). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) warns that since employees are becoming increasingly responsible for managing their own careers, it is imperative that they improve their transferable skills throughout their lives. By so doing they will become more flexible and adaptable within the 21st century work environment and remain employable.

In this competitive and ever-changing occupational market, it is imperative for individuals to be adaptable, and to be competent life-long learners. They should develop and demonstrate their employability in order to navigate and survive in this turbulent and rapidly changing

world of work (Beukes, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Hou, Wu & Liu, 2014; Parker, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Trede & McEwen, 2015). It is imperative for the individual who enters the world of work in the 21st century to possess technically scarce skills, academic knowledge, and strong personal attributes in order to be ready for work, to be employable and to sustain his or her employability so as to find employment and stay employable in the face of joblessness (Lim, Lee, Yap & Ling, 2016; Oria, 2012; Patrickson, 2015; Pillai *et al.*, 2012). Blackford (2013) reiterates that it is paramount to develop and enhance one's employability in this global economy to stay competitive. He continues by saying that individuals should be capable of dealing with work-related insecurity and uncertainty, especially by being dynamic, prepared to change, capable of carrying extraordinary responsibilities, by being flexible, and acquiring, possessing and developing the new skills, expertise and knowledge required to remain marketable and employable in this ever-changing employment landscape. The 21st century world of work has experienced a dramatic change in the perception of careers and retention practices within organisations. Traditionally, careers were seen as constant, and life-long, and characterised by high levels of job security and stability, which meant that many organisations didn't have to worry about the retention of employees because they provided job security and job stability (Martins, 2010). Additionally, is the fact that employees mostly took pride in their long tenure with one company, and even retiring in that company (Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Ndzube, 2013). However, due to economic competitiveness, organisations are more interested and keen on employees with a competitive edge, who have extensive and diverse experience, who are risk-takers and are flexible, in order to meet the myriads of demands of the 21st century's unpredictable work environment. It is imperative to enhance one's employability in order to open up opportunities for employment, to be stable in one's chosen career and to allow one to lead and enjoy a successful career even in this chaotic 21st century labour market (Botha, 2015; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Guan, Zhou, Ye, Jiang & Zhou, 2015; Ndzube, 2013).

Singh (2013) found that the challenges of work in the dynamic and changing landscape have a powerful effect on the retention of the top talent, and therefore companies should develop strong and holistic strategies to ensure the retention of high-performing employees. Singh (2013) further indicated that a crucial point to mention in order to retain high calibre employees is developing managers to become retention-agents (Poongavanam, 2015; Sigh, 2013; Were, 2015). The *retention of talent* can be defined as identifying the top talent within an organisation, and designing strategies and implementing relevant practices to ensure the retention of the top performers in order to meet the objectives of the organisation (Chiboiwa *et al.*, 2010; Chikumbi, 2011; Gialuisi, 2012; Harris, 2010; Mankins, Bird & Root, 2013; Muriuki, 2013; Presbitero, Roxas & Chadee, 2015; Serrat, 2010). According to Singh

(2013), the retaining of superior employees and their critical expertise is vital for the development of the organisation's special talent pool, because such individuals are deemed to have highly marketable skills, are expensive to replace, and are critical to the organisation's survival objectives. It is therefore imperative for human resource practitioners to focus on retaining highly talented and achievement-oriented individuals, and to keep them engaged in their work for the sake of business competitiveness (Botha, Bussin & De Swardt, 2011; Ferreira *et al.*, 2013; Goldsmith & Carter 2010; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Mrara, 2010; Sharma, 2015; Yafe, 2012). In this uncertain and contemporary world of work, it is imperative for individuals to thoroughly construct their lives and their careers, and to develop the ability to adapt to, and deal with, the changing and uncertain nature of their careers in order to remain employable and retainable (Ferreira *et al.*, 2013; Kumari, 2016; Tiwari, 2015).

The changing world of work has resulted in not only the need for employers to implement retention-strategies to retain exceptional talent, but employees are required to approach their careers with flexibility, adaptability and resilience, due to the limited opportunities available (Bailey, 2013; Coetzee & Harry, 2015; De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Savickas & Porfell, 2012; Scullion *et al.*, 2011; Whelan & Carcary, 2014; Winterhager & Krucken, 2015). Included in this dynamic and rapidly changing nature of work, are advanced technologies, shifting demographics, globalisation, an aging workforce, and increased customer demands. It is imperative for organisations to implement flexible work structures to manage these changes effectively (Akila, 2012; Brown & Lent, 2013; Das & Baruah, 2013; Festing & Schafer, 2014; Herbst, 2010; Iles & Zhu, 2012; Kabwe, 2011; Yadav & Saxena, 2015). The result would be that an unpredictable and rapidly-changing business environment is created, and that employees can no longer be guaranteed life-long employment. This has resulted in a shift from careers within restricted organisations to boundary-less and protean careers, comprised of many positions with multiple organisations. (Monroe, 2013; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Stoltz *et al.*, 2013a; Vaiman, 2010). These dynamic shifts have challenged and empowered employees to be self-reliant, and to take full control, and the responsibility for the planning and management of their own careers, which involves the management of their employability (Blackford, 2013; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Kgomo & Swarts, 2010; Kumudha, 2012; Maruska & Perry 2013; Qi & Ying, 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Employees are now exclusively responsible for their own development, unlike in the past, where both the employee and the employer shared the responsibility.

Highly employable employees are described as those individuals who are willing and flexible to make frequent moves into entirely new jobs, fields or occupations that build on their

current skills, and to develop new ones (Ashton, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Boyum, 2012; Deeley, 2014; Gallopeni, 2013; Merrill, 2015; Ndzube, 2013; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Wheeler, 2011).

Employable individuals possess work-related skills and interpersonal skills (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011; De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Hinton, 2012; Messum *et al.*, 2011; Ndzube, 2013; Robin, 2015; Wittekind, Raeder & Grote, 2010). Highly employable employees with employability attributes who have lost their jobs are likely to find new jobs more easily than employees who do not have these attributes (Marks & Huzzard, 2010; Minten, 2010; Priddle, Greig & Wiles, 2015; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013). Possessing employability attributes enhances an individual's possibility of gaining employment, and facilitates the movement between jobs (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Boyum, 2012; Pandit *et al.*, 2015; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Van der Heijde & Van der Hiejen, 2006). According to Botha (2015), *employability attributes* are skills that are not limited to gaining employment, but also to enabling individuals to take the initiative for their own learning, to take charge of their careers, and to contribute to the success of the organisation.

Potgieter (2012a) asserts that career meta-competence challenges individuals to be self-directed and to manage their careers, which then increases their employability. According to Potgieter (2012a), individuals with a wide range of psycho-social career meta-capacities show high levels of employability. They are more flexible, open and adaptive, and are able to accommodate career transitions. Career-adaptability has a strong and holistic impact on career- and work-related outcomes, such as success in the workplace, work-engagement, job-satisfaction or job-tenure (Beukes, 2010; Fiori & Bollmann, 2015; Rossier *et al.*, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bordia & Plewa, 2014; Zhang, 2010). Yousefi *et al.* (2011) emphasised that adaptability has become an essential characteristic of workers in the modern world of work. Yousefi *et al.* (2011) continued to say that multiple careers are becoming the norm in today's rapidly-changing workforce, necessitating ongoing career transitions across the lifespan and challenging employers to utilise holistic and strong retention practices in order to retain a highly qualified, educated and knowledgeable workforce.

Ndzube (2013) asserts that it would benefit both the employer and the employee if the employees continue their professional development throughout their lives, even into retirement, in order to enhance their employability. Blackford (2013) is of the opinion that even though older employees are motivated and willing to acquire new skills and knowledge, management often lacks the focus in facilitating their employability, career planning and

success across their working lives. According to Ndzube (2013), an individual's employability is affected by demographical data such as age, gender and race. Age includes the accumulation of skills, competencies, expertise and experience, all aspects that increase the individual's employability (Bertolino, Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2011; Brown & Lent, 2013; Gokuladas, 2010; Gray, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2015; Migunde, Agak & Odiwuor, 2011; Mikhail, 2010; Moshupi, 2013; Soresi, Nota & Ferrai, 2012; Tones, Pillay & Kelly, 2010). This observation supports the notion that employability can be taught effectively through formal education. All organisational development courses should include employability-enhancing material that focuses on tapping, sharpening and improving an employee's employability attributes (Aggarwal, 2016; Brown & Lent, 2013; Pascale & Willen, 2015; Potgieter, 2012a; Rohtak, 2013). In order to reap the rewards of highly employable individuals, organisations should serve as learning environments by encouraging continuous development and supporting individuals on their career paths. Due to the fast-paced labour market of the 21st century, there is a critical need to focus on the factors that influence the internal career, in order for individuals and organisations to be effectively armed to manage their careers (Buyukgoze-Kavas, Duffy & Douglass, 2015; Ndzube, 2013; Tian & Fan, 2014; Tien, Lin, Hsieh & Jin, 2014).

Research has shown that the concept of *career adaptability* is a central component of employability (Beukes, 2010; Blackford, 2013; Guan, Deng, Sun, Wang, Cai, Ye, Fu, Wang, Zhang & Li, 2013; Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic & Nauta, 2010; Maree, 2015; Ottino, 2010; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Individuals who are more adaptable in career decision-making, career-planning and career-exploration are more employable (Beukes, 2010; Bimrose, Brown, Barnes & Hughes, 2011; Bimrose & Hearne, 2012; Bland & Roberts-Pittman, 2013; Brown, Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2012; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Spurk *et al.*, 2015). According to Ottino (2010), proactive adaptability at work is an essential element of employability. Organisations and individuals mutually benefit from attitudes and behaviours such as flexibility and adaptability, as these are both qualities that positively correlate with on-going employability (Duffy, 2010; Guan *et al.*, 2014; Ohme & Zacher, 2015; Ottino, 2010; Pordelan, Abedi, Baghban & Nilforooshan, 2014). Reis and Baruch (2013) emphasise that the adaptability of careers is paramount to staying employable. Individuals with high levels of adaptability can maintain their employability and remain employable (Blackford, 2013; Guichard, 2012; Gunkel, Schlaegel, Langella & Peluchette, 2010; Yang *et al.*, 2015).

Highly adaptable individuals are tenacious, resilient and more than ready to face the career transition and traumas in stressful times and environments (Brown & Lent, 2013; Coetzee &

Harry, 2014; Hamtiaux *et al.*, 2013; Hou *et al.*, 2012; Johnston *et al.*, 2013; Nkambule, 2010; Oncel, 2014; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Rottinghaus *et al.*, 2012; Scholl & Cascone, 2010; Tien *et al.*, 2012; Zacher, 2015). According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), the four major dimensions of career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity and cooperation) help individuals to cope with changes in the society, and in the 21st century work environment. Teixeira *et al.*, (2012) reiterate that the following psycho-social resources, namely concern, control, curiosity and cooperation are extremely important for the management of work changes, the relief of work stress, and development tasks and they are tantamount in enhancing an individual's employability. Research has shown that the four psycho-social resources, which are also referred to as the four major dimensions of career adaptability; namely control, concern, cooperation and curiosity are important aspects in life in order to remain employable (Barto *et al.*, 2015; Dries *et al.*, 2012; Duarte *et al.*, 2012; Johnston, Broonen, Stauffer, Hamtiaux, Pouyaud, Zecca, Houssemand & Rossier, 2013; MacMahon *et al.*, 2012; Pouyaud *et al.*, 2012; Rossier *et al.*, 2012; Tak, 2012; Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Vilhjalmsdottir *et al.*, 2012; Yousefi *et al.*, 2011).

Maree (2012) indicates that employability and career-adaptability play a role in affecting the retention of highly talented employees. Employees' sense of security and stability is often threatened by the modern organisation (Maree, 2012; Shahbazi *et al.*, 2014; Shirvani *et al.*, 2012). Employees no longer feel obligated to remain loyal to the organisation and would easily quit when alternative opportunities come up (Blackford, 2013). Blackford (2013) continues to say that security has shifted from the organisation to the individual. It no longer exists in employment, but in employability. The security of employability is in the accumulation of exceptional knowledge, skills, expertise, a strong reputation and education, that can be essential and handy when new opportunities arise, and by means of which an individual's employability will be increased (Blackford, 2013; Chan & Mai, 2015; Maruska & Perry, 2013). According to Blackford (2013), continued professional development, career development and the training of staff can help an organisation to attract and retain highly-talented employees for their company. Training new employees and providing them with developmental opportunities diminish their desire to leave the organisation (Fatima, 2011; Hassan *et al.*, 2013; Singh, 2013; Khan, 2011; Puad, 2015). Organisations feel accountable to train their employees, since they are aware that continuous development is paramount to retaining exceptional talent in this unpredictable 21st century world of work (Coetzee *et al.*, 2015; Mlilo, Gwandure & Mayekiso, 2013; Poorhosseinzadeh & Subramaniam, 2013; Subramaniam, 2011; Vaiman, 2010). The key talented employees are the ones who essentially assist in the victory of the organisation, and are the cornerstones of any company. It is therefore imperative for companies to do everything in their power to retain

these employees (Khan, 2011; Kumar & Jangir, 2013; Perring, 2014; Sindhwani & Mamgain, 2013; Sita & Pinapati, 2013; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015; Yang, 2013).

The retention of top employees continues to be a vexing problem and the greatest challenge faced by a large number of organisations (Balciunaitiene *et al.*, 2013; Perring, 2014; Piti, 2010; Singh, 2013; Tymon *et al.*, 2010; Venkatesh & Geetha, 2015; Vyavahare, & Matkeri, 2011; Yafe, 2012). According to Dockel (2003), it is critical for organisations to make sure that their highly talented and knowledgeable employees are retained for the organisation to survive and be successful in this rapid and revolutionary world of work. Continuous changes in the global economy have seen the rising levels of work and career-related uncertainty resulting in high labour mobility, and restructuring and transformation in the workplace. It is imperative for organisations to reduce labour mobility, because people are the most essential resources for the organisation's success and competitive edge (Hlanganipai & Mazanai, 2013; Kishore, Kiran & Nair, 2013; Malcolm *et al.*, 2015).

Research suggests that organisations should focus on helping their employees to develop a set of employability and adaptability attributes (Babos *et al.*, 2015; Blackford, 2013; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). Such a strategy would reduce the individual's fear of having to find another job; he or she would feel valued, and remain with the organisation (Asonitou, 2015; Blackford, 2013; Coulson-Thomas, 2012; Reis & Baruch 2013; Taylor, 2010). Security lies in employability, rather than in employment. The adaptability of careers is crucial to staying employable; organisations are interested in retaining employable and highly adaptive individuals in order to remain competitive and successful (Bal *et al.*, 2015; Blackford, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013; Ingwu, 2013; Kishore *et al.* 2013; Reis & Baruch 2013; Tak 2012; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013).

2.1.1 Changes in retention practices

According to Ababneh (2013), change is inevitable and has always existed throughout the ages, but the pace against which it happens in this new world of work is extremely rapid. Currently organisations are bombarded with rapid developments, constant changes and challenges in different areas, such as advanced technology, knowledge, economy, globalisation, downsizing and political developments. These developments have critical implications for the management of individuals at work, and especially for the planning and management of their careers in general and retention practices in organisations (Havenga, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Okech, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to realise that retention and satisfaction of key and top performers and the whole workforce is the

foundation of sustainable and successful organisations (Micik & Ludvik, 2015; Miryala, 2015; Perring, 2014; Vatcharasirisook & Henschke, 2011). Organisations should draft their retention strategies in such a way that they promote the retention of knowledgeable, highly talented superstars who will make sure that the success, effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation is prioritised. It is paramount for organisations to develop and implement a cost effective HRM retention strategy that will attempt to minimise turnover among strong and top performers in order to retain them within the organisation for a long time (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Venkateswaran, 2012). This means that this holistic strategy should induce new employees who are top performers to stay longer while encouraging weaker performers to leave the organisation.

In this competitive and challenging 21st century where talent is scarce and rare, it is important for organisations to train and develop supervisors and managers to become talent agents and talent custodians, because talent is a scarce commodity that needs to be nurtured and retained (Drew, 2015; Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Muriuki, 2013; Piti, 2010). It is critical for all those who are responsible for talent retention within the organisation to realise that key and bright individuals are rare and scarce and should be looked after with sensitivity and special care in order to be able to retain and keep them for longer in the organisation. Das and Baruah (2013) postulate that for organisations to be competitive and successful in this volatile and unpredictable work environment, they need to attract and retain talented and superior employees. Organisations must be fully aware of the factors that motivate employees to stay or leave the organisation, in order to be able to effectively retain highly talented superstars, who will guarantee a competitive advantage to the organisation (Bussin, 2012; Chikumbi, 2012; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Mrara, 2010; Srinivasan, 2011). According to Piti (2010) the vital art of talent retention is for an organisation to find talent, attract, build, mentor and retain them and do whatever it takes to make them remain with the organisation, in order to build a solid talent pool within the organisation. Perring (2014) is of the opinion that for organisations to be able to retain top talent, they need to identify and develop a talent pool internally to enable the organisation to promote from within, develop a culture that stars and emerging stars want to join, reduce turnover and win the battle for talent. Trends for talent retention, talent wars, talent raids, talent shortage and talent metrics challenge the organisations globally to develop and implement strong and holistic talent strategies in order to retain key and top employees to remain competitive and successful now and in the near future (Bezuidenhout, 2013; Giannetti & Metzger, 2015; Gogate & Pandey, 2015; Joao & Coetzee 2012; Marsh, 2011). It is imperative for organisations to attract and retain highly skilled and knowledgeable workers, because their knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies are an essential

competitive weapon to fight these wars for talent and talent is a distinctive source of competitive advantage (Beheshtifar & Ziaadini, 2012; Graen & Grace, 2015; Schroever & Handriks, 2014; Suhasini & Babu, 2013).

Attracting well qualified professionals and retaining highly skilled employees in times of tight labour market has become the most challenging and daunting problem in this 21st century work place (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015; Jakhar, 2015; Mertens, 2010; Terera & Ngirande, 2014; Yiu & Saner, 2014). The critical shortage of talented and skilled individuals, and the growing demand and competition for talent globally has made talent retention a major strategic challenge in organisations (Herbst, 2010; Kamil & Salleh, 2013; Kane, 2015; Kheswa, 2015; Yiu & Saner, 2014). In order to curb this chronic shortage of talented individuals it is imperative for organisations to find, attract and retain superior talent (Bhati & Manimala, 2011; Bugg, 2015; Deshmukh, 2015, Oosthuizen & Nienaber, 2010; Terera & Ngirande, 2014). It is essential for the organisation to develop and implement comprehensive talent retention strategies in order to be able to retain exceptional and high performers who are vital to the survival objectives of the organisation (Bailey, 2013; Barnard, 2013; Born & Kang, 2015; Dadie, 2015; Waseem, 2010). According to Kishore *et al.*, (2014) it is imperative for organisations to go beyond the offer of higher salaries, bonuses, incentives and recognition in order to retain top talent. Organisations must go an extra mile in showing their highly talented employees that they are the greatest assets within an organisation and that without them there is no business. Solid performers and superstars perform exceptionally all the time, they have the right knowledge, skills, behaviours and relationships to achieve the objectives and aims of the business (Ejaz, 2015; Farooq, 2015; Pandey, 2016; Piansoongnern, Anurit & Kuyawattananonta, 2011). Talented, high potential and high ability employees should be treated as the greatest assets within an organisation in order to achieve business results in today's highly competitive environment (Hassan *et al*, 2011; Hsu, 2012; Jansink, 2015; Malik *et al*, 2013; Ricco, 2010; Ward & Jacobsen, 2011). It is becoming harder to find talented and knowledgeable individuals than ever before, especially in these challenging and tough times, and it is even harder to secure and retain these talented employees (Caplan, 2011; Marsh, 2011; Pillay, 2011; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015; Verma *et al.*, 2015). According to Cantrell and Smith (2010), in order to win this battle for talent it is imperative for organisations to build a solid talent mind-set; and specially to start by hiring the best, then by incentivising top performers well, identifying, developing and retaining superstars and investing immensely in them in every way that meets their vital needs.

2.1.2 Careers and retention practices

Changes have occurred and been documented by many researchers in the 21st century world of work. Several researchers ascertained that shrinking career opportunities, decreased job security, and employment for life are the most important and challenging changes in the 21st century world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Calota & Ilie, 2013; Guan *et al.*, 2014; Havenga, 2011; Sivarethinamohan & Aranganathan, 2013; Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015; Wen *et al.*, 2011). Clay (2012) discovered that the market and work expectations were the most essential changes in the new world of work. Several researchers explored the impact of globalisation on the 21st century careers and the new world of work, and found that despite all the advantages that globalisation has brought about, the labour market has become rapid and extremely competitive (Denner, 2013; Kishore *et al.*, 2014; Schroevers & Hendriks, 2014; Ratna & Chawla, 2012; Zhang, 2013). As much as this may be good for business, this change has brought about uncertainty in the careers of many in the 21st century workplace (Chitra, 2013; Daniel, 2010; Denner, 2013; Hanif & Yunfeis, 2013; Ismail *et al.*, 2015; Rao, 2013; Schroevers & Hendriks, 2014; Woodard, 2013). All these changes didn't only bring about uncertainty in the careers of many in this new world of work, but it also brought huge retention challenges to organisations. It is imperative for organisations in these challenging and volatile times to utilise holistic and strong retention practices that will allow them to retain superior talent in such competitive business environments (Kabwe, 2011; Kgomo & Swarts, 2010; Mansor & Idris, 2015; Nderitu, 2015; Sabado, 2012). It is imperative for organisations to offer a comprehensive and competitive compensation and benefits package that will help them to retain top talented employees (Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015; Were, 2015). The package should be attractive, fair, consistent and competitive to be able to retain the best candidate for the job (Amiani, 2014; Larsen, 2013; Miryala, 2015; Muriuki, 2013; Narang, 2013; Saxena, 2013).

Technological advancement, new communication technologies and the evolution from industrial to information societies were identified as vital forces driving the changes in the 21st century world of work (Belbin, 2011; Kabwe, 2011). In such a complex and dynamic economy that demands more sophisticated and genius talent, new expertise and skills at all levels of the organisation and fundamental changes in how organisations respond to the imperatives of these new technologies and globalisation, all of which pose major challenges to the effective management of top talent, are essential (Kgomo & Swarts, 2010; Perring, 2014). Talent retention is critical in today's challenging business environment and it is a huge challenge and call for organisations to design their retention strategies in such a way that they will be able to retain superior talent (Kabwe, 2011; Kgomo & Swarts, 2010;

Maruska & Perry, 2013; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015). In order to be able to retain intelligent and top talented employees, it is important for organisations to recognise, reward, incentivise and appreciate these high calibre employees, in order to motivate them and enhance loyalty and retention (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Gopal & Vij, 2011; Gupta, 2013; Kozic, 2012). Kgomo and Swarts (2010) support the findings of Belbin (2011) and Kabwe (2011) and added international labour mobility, shifting demographics, a reduced product life cycle and an aging workforce to the list of driving forces. In such a challenging, volatile and changing labour market, the significance of talent retention in organisations cannot be over emphasised. The effective management of human resources is a vital determinant of organisational success and survival, while talent is central to the operations of organisations now and in the future (Belbin, 2011; Deshmukh, 2015; Kabwe, 2011; Sundarapandiyan & Babu, 2016). It is imperative for organisations to reduce labour mobility, because employees are the most essential resources for the organisations' success and competitive edge. It is vital for organisations to make sure that their top and talented employees are satisfied, especially ensuring that there is a balance between work and their personal life through job satisfaction and flexible work schedules. Satisfied employees tend to be fully committed to an organisation, and employees who are satisfied and committed are more likely to stay with the organisation (Hlanganipai & Mazanai, 2014; Kishore *et al.*, 2013; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Narang, 2013; Rao, 2013; Shakeel, 2015; Yadav & Saxena, 2015). Several researchers indicated that a more frequent turnover, the restructuring of organisations, reliance upon contracted agreements, the increased need for lifelong learning, downsizing, mergers, restructuring, acquisitions, and economic and political developments were strong factors influencing the changes in the 21st century world of work (Bland & Roberts- Pittman, 2013; Havenga, 2011). These changes challenge organisations to be able to retain marketable employees with transferrable skills, who are flexible for any kind of work conditions, and who are adaptive and employable (Barnes *et al.*, 2015; Bland & Roberts-Pittman, 2015; De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Springer, 2013). It is imperative for an organisation to become an employer of choice; an organisation that is an employer of choice is one where people want to work and stay employed at (Bugg, 2015; Kheswa, 2015; Kucherov & Zamulin, 2016). Being an employer of choice will help organisations to attract and retain high calibre employees (Botha *et al.*, 2011; Jepngetich & Njue, 2013; Lakshmi & Sohail, 2013; Mandhanya & Shah, 2010; Venkatesh & Geetha, 2015; Verma *et al.*, 2015).

Table 2.1

Summary of Key Talent Imperatives Globally

Talent imperative	Literature source
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Planning and analysing the talent gap in the organisation	(Chikumbi, 2012; Yee, 2012)
Acquiring top and superior talent	(Chikumbi, 2012, Yee, 2012)
Developing talent	(Liang, 2013; Pauw, 2011)
Effective management of talent	(Cowan, 2013; Masood, 2011)
Retaining superstars	Chikumbi, 2012; Masood, 2011; Pauw, 2011; Van Dyk, 2011)

The radical and unpredictable changes of the 1980s up until the 21st century in the world of work has challenged people to move away from what was once known as stable careers, and to adopt a more dynamic approach to working (Potgieter, 2012a). Many people have experienced challenging career transitions and moved away from the traditional careers in respect of a new mind-set, a new attitude, and a new way of being and doing things, which is referred to as *boundary-less* and *protean careers* (Aldrich, 2013; Colakoglu, 2011; De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Hess *et al.*, 2011; Potgieter, 2012b; Zhang, 2010). This dynamic movement from the traditional to the new mind-set is also challenging organisations to implement solid retention practices in order to be able to retain talented employees. It is vital for organisations to implement career development opportunities that will encourage superior talent to remain in the organisation for longer and at the same time enhance their loyalty to the company (Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Noorhisham & Idris 2013; Patra & Singh, 2012; Sharma, 2015; Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013). Boundary-less and protean careers follow from the erosion of the idea of employment for life to new employment patterns (Nota & Rossier, 2015). These contemporary careers emphasise the fact that the traditional boundaries are diminishing (Ababneh, 2013; Barto *et al.*, 2015; Brown & Lent, 2013; Hess *et al.*, 2011; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Zacher, 2014b). The abovementioned researchers went on to say that boundary-less and protean careerists are self-directed and driven by intrinsic values; they are flexible, versatile, mobile, open and adaptive in seeking new employment opportunities. Positive coping attitudes, appropriate personalities, behaviour and attributes towards these career transitions would assist the individual to persevere and survive in these turbulent and unstable work and career environments (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Stoltz *et al* 2013a; Wilkins *et al.*, 2015). For organisations to be able to retain such rare and scarce talent, solid and attractive career development programmes, continuous learning opportunities and productivity training must be implemented. These strategies should then attract and retain highly talented and productive employees (Anis, Rehman, Nasir & Safwan, 2011; Balakrishnan, Masthan & Chandra, 2013; Hassan *et al.*, 2014; Farooq & Hanif, 2013; Okech, 2015; Sinha & Sinha, 2012).

In today's career and professional landscape that is characterised by changing career patterns, the erosion of job security and employment for life, and the emphasis on transferable skills, have led to a growing and challenging emphasis being placed on employability as an essential benchmark of success and competitiveness, for both the organisation and the individual (Barnes *et al.*, 2015; Maggiori *et al.*, 2013; Ottino, 2010; Savickas, 1997; Wen *et al.*, 2011). It is imperative for organisations in this competitively driven labour market landscape to be able to retain superior and top talent, since talent retention is a vital engine that drives the organisation towards success, operational and service delivery excellence (Kamau, Gakure & Waititu, 2013; Starkweather, 2012). In order to be able to attract and retain talented people and a high performing workforce, the organisation must make sure that the employees are satisfied in their jobs, especially by ensuring that they have accurate tools to perform their jobs (Abedi, Ahmadi & Asl, 2011; Deery & Jago, 2015; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Lin & Chang, 2013; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013; Wadhwa, Verghese, Kowar & Sharma, Wadhwa 2011). It is important that the focus changes from life-time employment to life-time employability (Ashton, 2013; Boden, 2015; Brown & Lent, 2013). It is clear that security lies in employability rather than in employment (Aring, 2015; Botha, 2015; Calota & Ilie, 2013). Employability is a vital key for the success and competitiveness for both the organisation and the individual. Marks and Huzzard (2010) emphasise that employability empowers the individual to choose his or her destiny in this unpredictable and changing world of work. An organisation with highly employable employees may have the advantage of sustaining its competitive edge in this competitive business environment. It is vital for organisations to be able to motivate and retain these top, talented and highly employable employees through the implementation of holistic and strong retention strategies. According to Blackford (2013), *employability* can be defined as comprising of a set of personal aptitudes, skills and abilities.

In today's turbulent and unpredictable work environment, careers are no longer characterised by stability, vertical progression and job security as it was in the past (Douglass & Duffy, 2015; Hirschi *et al.*, 2015). This is causing a lot of lateral movement across organisations and it increases instability (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). The majority of the workers are concerned about joblessness (Wen *et al.*, 2011). This shows that in the past organisations had rigid hierarchical structures and operated in a stable environment; careers were predictable, secure and linear (Ababneh, 2013; Colakoglu, 2011; Zhang, 2010). In this dynamic 21st century world of work, organisations are changing drastically; traditional boundaries are diminishing, and career patterns are becoming more permeable, unpredictable, unstable and unstructured (Hess *et al.*, 2011; Lyons *et al.*, 2015; Nagpal, 2010; Reis & Baruch, 2013). For organisations to survive, expand, increase their added

value and outperform their rivals in this challenging business environment it is vital for organisations to attract and retain talented and superior employees (Downs, 2012; Kumar, 2016; Venkatesh & Geetha, 2015; Verma *et al.*, 2015). Organisations must provide employees with dynamic growth and development opportunities in order to be able to retain a highly skilled knowledge workforce, so as to gain competitive advantage and secure survival and success in this turbulent business environment (Bugg, 2015; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Horvathova & Durdova, 2011;). When comparing both the traditional and the current careers, it seems that they do not give a true reflection and representation of the reality that is being experienced right now (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015). On the other hand, although a shift from the traditional and conventional modes must have taken place, most organisations are still functioning in a relatively stable environment, and implementing and utilising solid strategies for their management, while keeping a significant share of the traditional system in use intact (Shirvani *et al.*, 2012). Traditionally, careers were constant and life-long and were characterised by employment for life, job security, vertical progression, stability and for being organisationally focused (Ndzube, 2013; Nota & Rossier, 2015). Currently several researchers emphasise that careers are dynamic, boundary-less, protean, fluid and individually-focused (Ashton, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013; Cai, Guan, Li, Shi, Guo, Liu, Li, Han, Jiang, Peng, Fang & Hua, 2015; Duffy, Douglass & Autin, 2015; Hess *et al.*, 2011; Maggiori *et al.*, 2013; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Table 2.2 summarises the differences between traditional and boundaryless careers.

Creating an exciting and dynamic career in a new world of work with decreased job security, advanced technology, globalisation, economic trends, competitive labour markets, shrinking career paths, increased personal responsibility for constant upskilling, employability and lifelong learning are the most key challenges faced by the 21st century workforce (Coetzee *et al.*, 2015; Daniels, 2010; Denner, 2013; Jain & Jain, 2013; Schroevers & Hendriks, 2014). It is imperative for the organisation to provide its employees with growth and development opportunities in order to retain highly talented individuals in this technological and globalised business environment. Ultimately, it is entirely the responsibility of the employees to build their own intellectual capital and transferable skills that will ensure their continued employability (Chopra & Rodrigues, 2016; Mathur, 2016; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015). Individuals are being challenged to be fully responsible for their own careers and to market themselves, thus boosting their employability (Potgieter, 2012a). Employees are fully aware of their uncertain relationships with their employers (Ohme & Zacher, 2015). This uncertain relationship challenges employees to be more proactive and adaptive towards their career transitions, especially by drawing their strengths from their career self-management skills and resilience in order to sustain their employability (Barto *et al.*, 2015; Benzuidenhout,

2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). According to Deeley (2014), individuals' continued employability will depend entirely on their competency to proactively and creatively manage the development of their careers and to adapt to changes presented by the dynamic 21st century world of work. It is a huge challenge for employees to be resilient, to have positive outlooks, attitudes and solid values, and to be ready to learn, unlearn and re-learn throughout their career lives, even in retirement (Arunkumar & Parimala, 2012; Zacher & Griffin, 2015).

Table 2.2 provides an overview of the differences between the traditional and boundaryless career.

Table 2.2

Differences Between the Traditional and Boundaryless Career

	Traditional	Boundaryless	Literature source
Career direction	Linear	Multidirectional and contextualised	(Ababneh, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013; Clay, 2012; Hess <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Zhang, 2010)
Employment contract	Employment for life and job security for hard work	Life time employability, versatility, adaptivity and flexibility	(Aldrich, 2013; Ashton, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013; Ottino, 2010)
Competencies and skills	Organisational specific	Transferable	(Reis & Baruch, 2013; Zhang, 2010)
Boundaries	One or two organisations	Multiple organisations	(Ababneh, 2013; Reis & Baruch, 2013; Brown & Lent, 2013)
Career success	Salary, promotion, status and tenure	Holistically meaningful and challenging work	(Reis & Baruch, 2013; Van Dyk, 2011)
Accountability for career management and development	Organisations	Individual	Beukes, 2010; Ndzube, 2013; Oncel, 2014)
Organisational structures	Hierarchical	Flat	(Hess <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Reis &

			Baruch, 2013)
Training and development	Formal training programmes	Dynamic on-the-job training programmes	(Brown & Lent, 2013; Clay, 2012)
Career timeframe	Long-term	Short-term	(Bezuidenhout, 2011; Brown & Lent, 2013; Clay, 2012; Ndzube, 2013)
Work environment	Calm and stable	Daunting and unpredictable	(Brown & Lent, 2013; Maggiori <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Stoltz <i>et al.</i> , 2013b; Zacher, 2014b)
Career choices and career success	Age related	Life-long learning	(Brown & Lent, 2013; Ndzube, 2013)

The emergence of boundary-less careers, protean and serial careers is becoming the norm, where career transitions across the lifespan are experienced daily (Lyons *et al.*, 2015). This requires greater levels of career adaptability from the individuals (Negru *et al.*, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011; Yousefi *et al.*, 2012). Careers are shaped and maintained more and more by the individual and not by the organisation (Celen-Demirtas *et al.*, 2015; Fiori & Bollman, 2015). Due to the erosion of the concept of employment for life, it is expected that individuals will make numerous career changes during their lives, which is a call and challenge for organisations to use solid and dynamic retention strategies to be able to attract and retain top and superior talent in such career orienteered business environments (Blackford, 2013; Buyukgoze-Kavas *et al.*, 2015; Coetzee & Beukes, 2010; Havenga, 2011; Mlilo *et al.*, 2013). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) warns that since the employees are now entirely accountable for shaping and managing their own careers, it is imperative for them to enhance their skills throughout their lives in order to become more flexible and adaptable within the new paradigm of work. Adaptability and flexibility are vital keys for an individual's career success in the competitive labour market, and thus to be marketable to various employers (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Chan, 2014; Maree, 2015). Blackford (2013) reiterates that the 21st century employee should be dynamic, flexible, adaptable, highly-skilled, and prepared for any change in order to be able to deal with any work-related insecurities, responsibilities and challenges. It is clear that the individuals are entirely responsible and accountable for their own success in the labour market and for their survival within this unpredictable and changing landscape (Spurk *et al.*, 2015). It is imperative for organisations in this chaotic labour market to be able to attract and retain highly intelligent, well-educated and highly skilled professionals, especially by ensuring that the work environment is

excellent, democratic, stimulating and conducive enough to provide employees with freedom to carry out their jobs freely (Dadie, 2015; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Hejase, Hejase, Mikdashi & Bazeih, 2016). It is vital for organisations to create a good, healthy, flexible, supportive, learning and challenging work environment that is conducive for superstars to be nurtured, developed and retained (Davis, 2013; Ejaz, 2015; Gopal & Vij, 2011; Hinkin & Tracey 2010; Masood, 2011; Narang, 2012; Oginne, Ogunlusi & Faseyiku, 2013; Saxen, 2013). According to Ndzube (2013), enhancing one's employability opens up opportunities for employment, it enables individuals to be stable in their careers, and it allows them to lead and enjoy successful careers, even in this chaotic labour market. It is going to be very difficult for organisations to be able to attract and retain these highly career-oriented and employable individuals. The career of the 21st century is one of constant change, and is centralised on the boundary-less and protean careers (Beukes, 2010; Colakoglu, 2011; De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015). This 21st century career is driven and inverted by individuals and not by the organisation. Zhang (2010) goes on to say that in this fluid and non-linear employment context, careerists must have a boundary-less mind-set and protean attitude. Zhang (2010) calls for more personal flexibility and readiness to cope with an ever-changing work environment. Individuals are being challenged to take full responsibility for the shaping, directing and managing of their careers and their employability in order to stay marketable and employable throughout their lifespan (Aldrich, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Zacher, 2015). Boundary-less and protean careers are the best way into the future (Hess *et al.*, 2011; Nota & Rossier, 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013). The protean careerist is self-directed and driven by intrinsic values (Hess *et al.*, 2011; Lyons *et al.*, 2015).

On the other hand, the boundary-less careerist pursues career opportunities that go beyond any single employer (Nota & Rossier, 2015). It is imperative for individuals to grow in flexibility, openness and adaptability in order to progress in their careers (Hirschi & Valero, 2015). Stoltz *et al.* (2013a) emphasise that only individuals with a protean and boundary-less attitude are well-prepared to adjust to this constant transition paradigm. It is only those individuals with the appropriate personalities, behaviour and attributes who will be able to persevere and survive in this turbulent and unstable work and career environment (Ohme & Zacher, 2015). It is imperative for individuals to manage their careers, especially to engage in the continual development of transferable skills, if they want to survive and succeed in this world economy and post-industrial society (Brown & Lent, 2013; Zacher, 2014b). It is very difficult for organisations to be able to attract and retain these boundary-less and protean careerists, and it is imperative for organisations and managers to recognise that retention must be a continuing human resources emphasis and a significant responsibility for all supervisors and managers (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Haider *et al.*, 2015). It is imperative for

organisations to develop strong and holistic strategies to ensure that top performing employees stay with the organisation (Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Sharma, Kaur & Sharma, 2011).

According to Oncel (2014), it is imperative for individuals to construct their own careers in today's global and uncertain economy, in order to remain employable. To achieve this, they must be flexible and proactive, as well as enhance their employability skills and adaptability resources (Pitan, 2016; Yang *et al.*, 2015). Individuals higher up in career adaptability and emotional intelligence are more successful and resilient in career transitions (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). Several researchers emphasise that the individual's ability to adapt to and deal proactively with the changing and uncertain nature of careers in the contemporary world of work, is vital to be successful in his or her career in this contemporary world of work (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Ferreira *et al.*, 2012; Makki *et al.*, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tladinyane, Coetzee & Masenge, 2013). Individuals rely entirely on these capabilities and dispositions to effectively and efficiently influence their career environment and to regulate their behaviour to succeed in a more turbulent work-setting (Ismail *et al.*, 2015). It is vital for organisations to realise that an organisational culture that is open, trusting and fun is essential in the retention of top talent in this global and uncertain economy (Kontoghiorghes, 2015; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b). It is imperative for organisations to create cultures supportive to attracting, developing and retaining highly employable and talented employees (Deshmukh, 2015; Nderitu, 2015). A fearless culture that encourages honest confrontation and open communication will attract and retain top and superior talent (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Hassan, Hassan, Khan & Naseem, 2011; Liang, 2013; Masood, 2011; Monroe, 2013; Nasir & Sabir 2012).

Brown and Lent (2013) emphasise that in today's fast-evolving career context, marked by multiple transitions and increased personal responsibility, it is imperative for individuals to develop transferable competencies in order to be successful in their careers. Career-adaptable individuals are more capable of finding better job opportunities, of successfully facing challenges at work, and of securing employment of high quality. Brown and Lent (2013) went on to say that, career adaptability is one of the key factors enabling meta-competencies in a fast-paced and evolving work context. Maggiori *et al.* (2013) reiterate that career and personal resources, such as regulation skills, adaptability and self-awareness are vital to face the continuous changing work environment and to respond to new challenges and demands. It is important for employees to be flexible and adaptive in order to enhance their employability (Willner *et al.*, 2015). Ashton (2013) went on to say that it is paramount that the focus must change from life-time employment to life-time employability. Individuals

must focus on developing a unique career path that will sustain them in the uncertain labour market (Maree, 2015). Potgieter (2012a) reiterates that individuals have to be involved in career self-management and career development to be in control of their careers and to increase their employability. It is essential for individuals to develop core skills in order to remain employable in these fast-changing employment patterns (Chan & Mai, 2015; Douglass & Duffy, 2015). Individuals play a vital role in ensuring their employability and in achieving success in their careers (Boden, 2015; Burgess & Connell, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to offer hard to beat packages in all areas, in order to win and retain these highly employable and adaptable employees (Nderitu, 2015; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a). Organisations must ensure that retention strategies are solid and always updated to ensure that they will be able to attract and retain top talent at all times (Brewster *et al.*, 2010; Dockel, 2003; Were, 2015).

2.2 RETENTION CHALLENGES FOR ORGANISATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY WORLD OF WORK

According to Mehta *et al.* (2014), South Africa is experiencing a critical global skills crisis, especially in retaining the country's talented and knowledgeable workforce. It is imperative for South Africa to attract and retain its knowledgeable workers in order to be able to compete globally (Botha *et al.*, 2011; Deshmukh, 2015; Ngozwana & Rugimbana, 2011; Scullion *et al.*, 2011). The critical shortage of a skilled workforce is making it extremely difficult for companies to attract and retain competent and skilled employees (Du Plessis, Barkhuizen, Stanz & Schutte, (2015). It is these highly knowledgeable and intelligent employees who are the life-blood of any organisation, and who are the most vital and dynamic resources to sustained organisational competitiveness (Chidyamakono, 2010; Das & Baruah, 2013; Deshpande, 2012; Khan, 2011; Smit *et al.*, 2015). Kishore *et al.* (2014) point out that many organisations globally are facing formidable competition when attempting to attract and retain the highly talented and top performers for the right position and at the right time. It is paramount for organisations to create internal solid talent pools. The internal solid talent pool will provide a reliable and consistent internal source of talent by means of providing extensive training and development in order to win the battle for talent locally and globally (Davis, 2013; Harris, 2010; Iles & Zhu 2012; Sharma, 2015; Schroevers & Hendricks 2014; Sita & Pinapati, 2013; Whelan & Carcary, 2014).

It is imperative for employees to be creative and innovative to be able to fit into the new service and knowledge-based organisations that have grown dramatically in the past decade (Foster, 2015; Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). The 21st century industries have become

extremely smart and knowledgeable, which has made it more imperative for employees to continuously learn, grow and update their knowledge and skills (Nagpal, 2010, Reis & Baruch, 2013; Vaiman, 2010). Ultimately, the organisations need to attract and retain the highly-talented and top performers in order to gain a competitive edge and to remain successful in this knowledgeable economy (Abedi *et al.*, 2011; Dockel *et al.*, 2006; Farooq & Hanif, 2013; Kane, 2015; Van Staden & Du Toit, 2010; Wadhwa *et al.*, 2011).

According to various researchers, the following are the most vital factors that must be taken into consideration when attracting and retaining highly talented employees:

- Recognition
- Competitive compensation packages
- Work satisfaction
- Training and development
- Management support
- Career development opportunities
- Organisational culture
- Strong employment brand
- Conducive work environment

(Bussin, 2012; Chikumbi, 2011; Mrara, 2010; Perring, 2014; Smit *et al.*, 2015; Srinivasan, 2011; Talwar & Bhati, 2015; Whelan & Carcary, 2014).

Research has indicated that while competitive compensation packages were indicated as vital factors that would attract the bright and energetic self-starters to a company, these were not indicated as essential factors for the retention of talented employees (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Bluen, 2013; Botha *et al.*, 2011; Das & Baruah, 2013; Deshpande, 2012; Dreyer, 2011; Ewerlin, 2013; Yafe, 2012; Yee, 2012). The reality is that the best talent is unlikely to be attracted and retained by the allure of monetary rewards, status or other similar inducements (Bussin, 2012; Davis, 2013; Ejaz, 2015; Noorhisham & Idris, 2013; Waseem, 2010; Yafe, 2012). Organisations should offer higher salaries, bonuses and comprehensive incentives that are good and fair for those employees who have indicated that they want to quit the job, because the success of the organisation depends on super stars (Deshmukh, 2015; Harris, 2010; Iles & Zhu, 2012; Were, 2015). According to Bluen (2013), successful chief executive officers understand that highly talented individuals are attracted and retained to high-performance organisations led by executives who have developed a reputation for building such organisations through the development of talented, high-performance teams.

Training and development is vital for the success and survival of any professional individual and is the only way to remain employable and marketable over the span of his/her career (Haider *et al.*, 2015; Were, 2015). According to Mehta *et al.* (2014), organisations must train and develop their employees in the latest technologies and trends in order to retain the competitive edge. Employees remain at organisations that encourage career-development opportunities through continuous learning, and that offer the facilities to utilise their newly-learnt skills (Ahmadi, Ahmadi & Abbaspalangi, 2012; Hong, Hao, Kumar, Ramendran & Kadiresan, 2012; Masood, 2013; Miryala, 2015; Monroe, 2013). Great and successful organisations go the extra mile to excavate and develop internal talent that other organisations overlook (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015). These organisations do not simply rely on their top talent; they extensively train and develop their average and poor performers in order to develop a solid internal talent pool (Monroe, 2013; Were, 2015).

According to Kozic (2012), it is imperative for organisations to individualise recognition for their employees, because recognition is one of the greatest ways to ensure the loyalty of the employee, and a low turnover. Amiani (2014) contends that recognition is a vital non-financial incentive, and it is one of the most powerful and attractive methods of rewarding employees. Employees need to know how well they have achieved their objectives or carried out their work, and that their achievements are appreciated (Miryala, 2015; Smit *et al.*, 2015; Talwar & Bhati, 2015). They have a deep desire to be acknowledged for work done well (Mlinar, 2012).

According to several researchers, managerial or supervisor support is critical for the retention of superior talent (Amiani, 2014; Chendroyaperumal & Bhuvanadevi, 2014; Das & Baruah, 2013; Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015; Hemalatha & Savarimuthu, 2013). The leadership style does affect the retention of superior talent especially in the manner that the manager's support, coaching and feedback, and regular reviews and recognition of performance are highly valued by the employees (Dadie, 2015; Dario, 2014; Dockel, 2003; Fauzi, Ahmad & Gelaidan, 2013; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Narang, 2013; Suikkanen, 2010; Van Dyk, Coetzee & Takawira, 2013). The manager should manage his employees in a way that will encourage them to remain with the organisation, especially by communicating powerfully, openly, honestly, pleasantly and kindly, by tolerance, and in realising that hostility, exploding with anger, harsh words, a lack of listening skills and a lack of kindness will drive away the employees (Chendroyaperumal & Bhuvanadevi, 2014; Nderitu, 2015). It is imperative for those in charge of employees to supervise them effectively.

Career-development opportunities are critical factors that attract and retain knowledgeable workers in an organisation (Ahuja & Chaudhary, 2016; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to offer their employees extensive career opportunities through cross training, promotion and career-progression in order to encourage them to stay with the organisation (Gupta, 2013; Jansink, 2015; Noorhisham & Idris, 2013). Balakrishnan *et al.* (2013) advocate that career-development is vital for the retention of highly talented and productive employees. Organisations need competent employees for maintaining the sustainable competitive advantage, and individuals require career opportunities to develop and grow their competencies (Behera, 2016; Patra & Singh, 2012).

Research suggests that work-life policies and quality of life are essential factors that attract and retain superior talent (Amiani, 2014; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Dadie, 2015; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Narang, 2013). Organisations should give their employees more flexibility to balance their work and their personal lives, especially as regards flexible work scheduling, family-leave policies and child-care assistance (Deery & Jago, 2015; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015). Organisations will gain better performances and higher retention-rates in return (Dockel, 2003; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Liang, 2013; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013; Narang, 2013; Shakeel, 2015).

Individuals' job satisfaction, their job characteristics, job challenges and an environment conducive to work are key retention factors that attract and retain highly intelligent employees (Davis, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2015; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013). It is imperative for organisations to design and change their workplaces and jobs, and their leadership, training and career management in such a way that they may increase and expand the abovementioned retention factors (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2013; Davis, 2013; Dockel, 2003; Liang, 2013; Shakeel, 2015).

According to Piti (2010), organisational culture is a vital retention factor. Organisations with strong organisational culture experiences increase employee retention as well as satisfaction and commitment (Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Liang, 2013; Noorhisham & Idris, 2013; Rao, 2013; Suikkanen, 2010). Organisations must develop a culture of stewardship that promotes life-long learning, career opportunities and training (Deshmukh, 2015; Haider *et al.*, 2015; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b).

Strong employer branding has become critical for organisations in their zest to win the war for talent, because good branding attracts the prospective candidates' attention and creates a desire to apply to work for those organisations (Born & Kang, 2015; Kheswa, 2015;

Mandhanya & Shah, 2010). Suikkanen (2010) reiterates that employer branding aims to promote unique benefits and employment experience to external and internal employment markets in order to make the employer the choice of a desirable place to work. It plays a vital role in retaining the top talent (Lakshmi & Sohail, 2013).

Table 2.3 below provides an overview of the many challenges identified in the literature with regard to the retention of employees globally and locally.

Table 2.3

Summary of Key Retention Challenges Globally and Locally

Retention challenge	Literature source
Strong employer brand/being an employer of choice	(Botha <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Das & Baruah, 2013; Lakshmi & Sohail, 2013; Mandhanya & Shah, 2010; Kheswa, 2015; Suikkanen, 2010)
Competitive and comprehensive remuneration packages and benefits	(Akila, 2012; Bussin, 2012; Poorhosseinzadeh & Subramaniam, 2013)
Organisational culture (that promotes high performance in work, a culture in which mediocrity and poor performance are not tolerated)	(Chikumbi, 2011; Mehta <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Muriuki, 2013)
Work environment/healthy and safe environment	(Hlanganipai & Mazanai, 2014; Fatima, 2011; Mrara, 2010)
Training and development	(Hassan <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Mehta <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Perring, 2014; Piti, 2010)
Job characteristics	(Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Serrat, 2010)
Conflict with managers and colleagues	(Das & Baruah, 2013; Mehta <i>et al.</i> , 2014)
Work-life balance	(Akila, 2012; Das & Baruah, 2013; Fatima, 2011; Mehta <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Mrara, 2010)
Recognition	(Bluen, 2013; Elegbe, 2010; Tymon <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Career-development opportunities	(Akila, 2012; Das & Baruah, 2013; Mehta <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Muriuki, 2013)

It is clear that the identified retention-challenges may point to whether the organisations are committed to their employees, and this will help in the retention of superior talent. It is

imperative for organisations to convince their employees that all the identified retention-factors are motivated and inspired by the good will to retain highly talented employees (Dockel, 2003; Dockel et al., 2006; Osman-Gani & Paik, 2016).

2.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 explored the meta-theoretical context that forms the boundary of the research. Talent retention in the 21st century world of work was discussed. Changes in retention practices, careers and retention practices were also discussed. Retention challenges for organisations in the 21st century world of work were outlined. It is clearly indicated in the literature that the world of work has changed drastically in the 21st century. Due to these changes, careers have also dramatically changed and moved away from the traditional career to the boundary-less career. These career-changes have influenced the skills, expertise and competencies of individuals intending to enter the world of work. It is expected that individuals have transferable skills, employability attributes and career adaptability. It has become clear that tertiary qualifications and technical skills alone are not sufficient for individuals to market themselves, or to secure a good job and to remain employable. These career changes have also impacted on retention practices; this is a huge challenge for organisations to be able to design solid and holistic retention strategies in order to attract and retain these highly careerist and employable individuals and thus remain competitive and successful.

It is imperative for individuals to take full responsibility for their career direction and growth, for improving their skills and for being accountable in managing their careers efficiently and effectively so that they can remain employable and marketable. It is vital for individuals to become involved in activities that will help them develop their careers, such as career counselling, career-development and ongoing training, in order to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. It is vital for organisations to develop and implement strong and holistic retention strategies in order to be able to attract and retain highly talented and superior employees. In this career oriented and unpredictable work environment, it is imperative for organisations to offer hard to beat offers in all areas and in so doing to attract and retain these highly careerist and employable individuals.

The following literature research aim was achieved in this chapter, namely research aim 1: to conceptualise talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context.

Chapter 3 discusses the following literature research aims:

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the two constructs career adaptability and employability attributes in terms of theoretical models in the literature

Research Sub- aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

CHAPTER 3: CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

Keywords: career adaptability; career resilience; employability

Chapter 3 addresses the second, part of the third and fourth literature research aims pertaining to the conceptualisation and explanation of the two constructs of career adaptability and employability attributes in terms of the theoretical models in the literature, and how individuals' biographical characteristics influence the development of these competencies. In this chapter, the constructs of career adaptability and employability attributes and the related theoretical models will be explored. The variables influencing the development of career adaptability and employability attributes and the implications for talent retention will also be discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the theoretical foundations of the constructs of career adaptability and employability attributes, highlighting the contributions and the limitations of the relevance of this research.

3.1 CAREER ADAPTABILITY

The concept of career adaptability will be discussed in detail in the following sections. The concept will be conceptualised and the theoretical models thoroughly explained. The variables influencing its development and impact on talent retention will also be discussed.

3.1.1 Conceptualisation of career adaptability

The concept of *career adaptability* is defined and explained in many different fascinating, dynamic and challenging ways. The concept was originally introduced and defined 30 years ago by Donald Super (1981) in order to conceptualise how adults adjust to the challenges of the dynamic, challenging and changing world of work. It is a vital construct in individuals' career development processes, and has been recommended as an essential key competency in career success (Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Guan *et al.*, 2015; Harry & Coetzee, 2012; Tian & Fan, 2014; Zacher, 2014a). The concept career adaptability was introduced by Savickas (1997) as a substitute for Super's (1955) idea of career maturity. Career adaptability signifies the quality and capability of being able to steer the career decision-making process and the changing world of work. Career adaptability is an adaptive and resiliency resource that enables individuals to adapt and cope with career transitions and traumas in stressful times and environments (Hou *et al.*, 2014; Koen *et al.*, 2010; MacMahon *et al.*, 2012; Nota *et al.*, 2014; Rocha & Guimaraes, 2012; Yang, Guan,

Lai, She & Lockwood, 2015). According to Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005), *career adaptability* is the readiness to cope with the unpredictable tasks of preparing for and participating in work, and also with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes at work and in the working conditions. A number of researchers have indicated that *career adaptability* can be regarded as an individual's profound capability to be able to cope with and solve career problems and challenges, and transform unexpected events into career opportunities. It includes the readiness to deal with unpredictable tasks, roles, and work in ambiguous and doubtful situations (Gadassi *et al.*, 2013; Ibert & Schmidt, 2014; Pouyaudi *et al.*, 2012; Rossier *et al.*, 2012; Shirvani *et al.*, 2012; Stoltz, Wolff & McClelland, 2011; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Zhang, 2010). Barber (2013), Bimrose and Hearne (2012) explain the concept of *career adaptability* as a set of coping responses, attitudes, behaviours, readiness and competencies that individuals activate and use in order to plan, explore and inform themselves, and to decide about their career-related futures. According to researchers, for example, career adaptability denotes an individual's resources, self-regulation strengths and capacities for coping with and solving unfamiliar, complex and ill-defined problems presented by the current and imminent developmental vocational tasks, occupational transitions, events, situations and work trauma (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015; Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Ohme & Zacher, 2015). It includes the self-regulation capacity to choose roles and pursue plans that fit one's talents and interests (Hamtaux *et al.*, 2013). Career adaptability is a vital competency at all stages of an individual's lifespan. (Rocha & Guimaraes, 2012; Hamtaux *et al.*, 2013; Johnston *et al.*, 2013; Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Pordelan *et al.*, 2014; Savickas, 1997, 2002, 2005; Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte & Guichard, 2009; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014; Urbanaviciute *et al.*, 2014; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Gadassi *et al.*, (2012) summarises *career adaptability* to include the following four core process dimensions, namely:

- (1) plan-fullness/career planning – that is, looking forward for one's future;
- (2) exploration – investigating different career options and confidence – which is having a feeling of self-efficacy for successfully executing the activities needed to achieve one's career goal;
- (3) information, informed decision-making – knowing what career to pursue and
- (4) reality-orientation.

Career adaptability is an adaptive and resiliency resource that may enable and assist individuals to adjust to, cope with and fit into the new dynamic and stressful world of work (Gadassi *et al.*, 2013; Guan *et al.*, 2015; Hirschi *et al.*, 2015; Shahbazi *et al.*, 2014).

Several researchers indicated that *career adaptability* includes the individual's strengths, capacities and resiliency to track, face and embrace the changing career landscape and

roles and to efficiently and effectively manage these career trends (Duffy, 2010; Harry & Coetzee, 2012; Yousefi *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, career adaptability can be utilised in terms of finding appropriate re-employment (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015). It may be argued that the four major dimensions of career adaptability, namely (1) concern, (2) control, (3) curiosity and (4) cooperation, refer to an individual's preparation, flexibility and willingness to utilise dynamic job search strategies, which in turn may influence the individual's finding a new job (Duarte *et al.*, 2012; Eshelman, 2013; Hajian, Siadat & Rajaeepour, 2013; Maree & Symington, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to understand the individual's career adaptability because this may influence talent retention in the organisation (Hajian *et al.*, 2013). Career adaptability sharpens and improves employability within and outside the organisation, especially when the individuals have a flexible and proactive attitude towards the planning of their careers (Blackford, 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Taylor, 2010; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013). Career adaptability means being ready, willing and flexible to tackle the unpredictable and unfamiliar, and to manage change (Tolentino *et al.*, 2014). It encompasses the on-going acquisition of new skills, attitudes and expertise, transferring skills from one situation to another, facing complexity appropriately, treating new and dynamic situations as opportunities to grow rather than as obstacles, being aware of oneself, and pondering deeply in respect of one's actions and career (Ashton, 2013; Hamtiaux *et al.*, 2013; Lent, 2013; Niles, 2011; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014). Career adaptability is vital to achieving effectiveness in the dynamic changing world of work, and enabling individuals to adjust to, to deal with, to manage and to cope with an unpredictable and new changing work environment (Hou *et al.*, 2012; Ottino, 2010; Rossier *et al.*, 2012; Zacher, 2014b). Career adaptability is also profoundly reflected in the rapidly changing demands of employers who are constantly seeking for a proactive, adaptive and employable workforce (Guan, Capezio, Restubog, Read, Lajom & Li, 2016; Havenga, 2011; Tak, 2012; Yousefi *et al.*, 2011).

The concept of career adaptability was conceptualised in the section above. A number of theoretical models and theories will now be discussed.

3.1.2 Theoretical models

For the purpose of this study, Savickas' (2005) career construction theory is discussed.

3.1.2.1 Savickas' career adaptability model (Savickas, 1997)

Savickas' (1997) conceptualisation of *career adaptability* is relevant to this research. The construct of career adaptability forms an important part of Savickas' (1997) career adaptability model.

The career construction theory of Savickas (1997) conceptualises human development as being motivated by adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person-environment integration. The theory provides a way of thinking about how individuals choose and use their work. The career construction of Savickas (1997) presents a model for comprehending vocational behaviour across the life cycle of individuals as well as methods and materials that HR Practitioners and career counsellors use to help clients make vocational choices and maintain successful and satisfying work lives. The model seeks to be comprehensive and detailed through adopting the three vocational behaviour perspectives: (1) the differential, (2) the developmental, and (3) the dynamic. From the perspective of individual differences psychology, the theory examines the content of vocational personality types and what different people prefer to do (Savickas, 2005). From the perspective of developmental psychology, the theory examines the process of psychosocial adaptation and how individuals cope with vocational developmental tasks, occupational transitions and work traumas. From the perspective of narrative psychology, the theory examines the dynamics whereby life themes impose meaning on vocational behaviour and why individuals fit work into their lives in distinct ways. These three perspectives enable HR Practitioners and researchers to investigate how individuals make use of career theories by using life themes to integrate the self-organisation of personality and the self-extension of career adaptability into a self-defining whole that animates work, directs occupational choice and shapes vocational adjustments (Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016; Savickas, 2005).

To adapt means to fit in or to join. It includes adaptivity-readiness, adaptability-resources, adapting-responses and adaptation-results, according to Celen-Demirtas, Konstam and Tomek (2015), and Ohme and Zacher (2015). This means that people are more or less prepared to change, they differ in their resources to manage change, they demonstrate more or less change when change is needed, and as a result, they become more or less integrated into life roles over time (Savickas, 1997). The theory provides adaptation as a consequence of adapting that is performing adaptive behaviour that addresses changing conditions (Yang *et al.*, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2011). The theory emphasises that career adapting involves mastering vocational development tasks, coping with occupational transitions, and adjusting to work trauma and contingencies (Savickas & Porfeli, 2011, 2012; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). In the career construction theory, adaptation is the personality trait of flexibility or willingness to change (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). The willingness to meet

career disequilibrium or transition with fitting responses denotes adaptiveness (Savickas, 1997). The career construction theory views adaptation or the willingness to adapt as an increasingly stable and durable trait or basic tendency that is at the core of the individual (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Savickas, 1997). According to the career construction theory, continuous adaptation to the work environment is crucial to the achievement of work and career success (Guan, Yang, Zhou, Tian & Eves, 2016; Ohme & Zacher, 2015).

The career construction theory (Savickas, 2005) stipulates that individuals should approach career choice tasks with the four Cs of career adaptability (concern for their future; control over their careers; curiosity to experiment with possible job interviews and confidence (cooperation) to engage in designing their occupational futures) in order to be able to be successful in this new and challenging business environment. The career construction theory defines the four Cs of career adaptability and organises them into a structural model with three levels (Brown & Lent, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Sverko & Babarovic, 2016). The major dimensions of career concern, career control, career curiosity and career cooperation represent general adaptability resources and strategies that individuals use to manage critical tasks, transitions and traumas as they construct their careers (Nota, Santilli & Soresi, 2016; Zacher, 2016). At the intermediate level, this includes the specific attitudes beliefs and competencies that shape the concrete adapting behaviours used to master developmental tasks, negotiate occupational transitions and resolve traumas (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Attitudes are affective variables or feelings that fuel behaviour, whereas beliefs are conative variables or inclinations that direct behaviour (Brown & Lent, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

It is imperative for individuals to realise that a career is not a lifetime commitment to one organisation, but it is a dynamic and challenging landscape to skill and market oneself extensively, and be able to remain employable across the spectrum (Chan & Mai, 2015; Ohme & Zacher, 2015).

The career construction theory by Savickas (1997) denotes the anticipation of success in solving the complex problems involved in career decision-making and in the choice of an occupation. The theory examines the sense of self-efficacy so that one can successfully execute the behaviours needed to cope with challenges and overcome obstacles in making and implementing choices (Savickas & Porfeli, 2011). Individuals need confidence to act in respect of their interests and aspirations (Maree, 2016; Maree & Symington, 2015).

The career construction theory views a career as a story that an individual tells about his or her journey (Savickas & Porfeli, 2011). The theory explains the personal characteristics of flexibility or willingness to meet career tasks, transitions and trauma with fitting responses (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). Individuals reach the threshold to initiate the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes that guide goal-directed activity, to the point where they no longer assimilate the changes and persevere in routine activities (Brown & Lent, 2013).

According to Savickas (2005), career construction theory responds to the dynamic needs of the 21st century world of work, employees who may feel challenged, broken and confused as they encounter a restructuring of occupations, transformation of the labour force and multicultural imperatives. This essential reshaping of the new world of work makes it very difficult to fully understand careers with only person-environment and vocational development models that emphasise commitment and stability as opposed to flexibility and mobility. In this volatile and unpredictable labour market, the new job market is calling employees to view career not as a lifetime commitment to one employer but as marketing services and skills to a series of employers who need projects completed (Savickas, 2005). Savickas' (2005) theory of career construction profoundly explains the interpretive and interpersonal processes through which individuals impose meaning and direction on their occupational behaviour. The theory is deeply grounded in epistemological constructivism, and it contends that vocational behaviour materialises as an individual actively engages in extracting meaning from his or her experiences, as opposed to discovering pre-existing facts (Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). Three components are associated with career construction theory, namely: life themes, vocational personality and career adaptability. (1) the life theme components of career construction theory which emerged from Super's (as quoted in Savickas, 2005) postulate that in expressing vocational preferences, individuals put into occupational terminology their ideas of the kinds of people they are and want to be (Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). (2) vocational personality consists of an individual's career related abilities, needs, values and interests (Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). It is the "what" of the theory and it focuses on the implementation of vocational self-concepts providing a subjective, private and ideographic perspective on understanding careers (Savickas, 2005). (3) Career adaptability is comprised of four major dimensions namely career planning, career decision making, career exploration and career confidence. These dimensions are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

The career construction theory emphasises that career adaptability should replace career maturity as the critical construct in the developmental perspective on adaptation (Savickas, 1997). According to the theory, adaptability replaces maturity as the cardinal dimension in the career developmental theory (Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). The theory also explains that

adaptability should be conceptualised using developmental dimensions similar to those used to describe career maturity, namely planning, exploring and deciding (Chan, Mai, Kuok & Kong, 2016; Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). The theory presents career resilience as the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and the willingness to take risks (Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Gaddasi *et al.*, 2012). Career resilience is an ability to bounce back, to pick oneself up after a traumatic situation and to start again, to redefine oneself when something has come to an end, or by adjusting when not getting what he/she deserves or wants (Barber, 2013; Barto *et al.*, 2015; Zacher, 2014b). It is a personal attribute that facilitates a high degree of adaptability, and an ability to take advantage of change, self-confidence, openness to new opportunities and contacts, self-reliance, and a belief in one's control over events regardless of adverse circumstances (Barber, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Ebersohn, 2012; Tones *et al.*, 2010).

Figure 3.1 below provides an overview of the four dimensions of career adaptability.

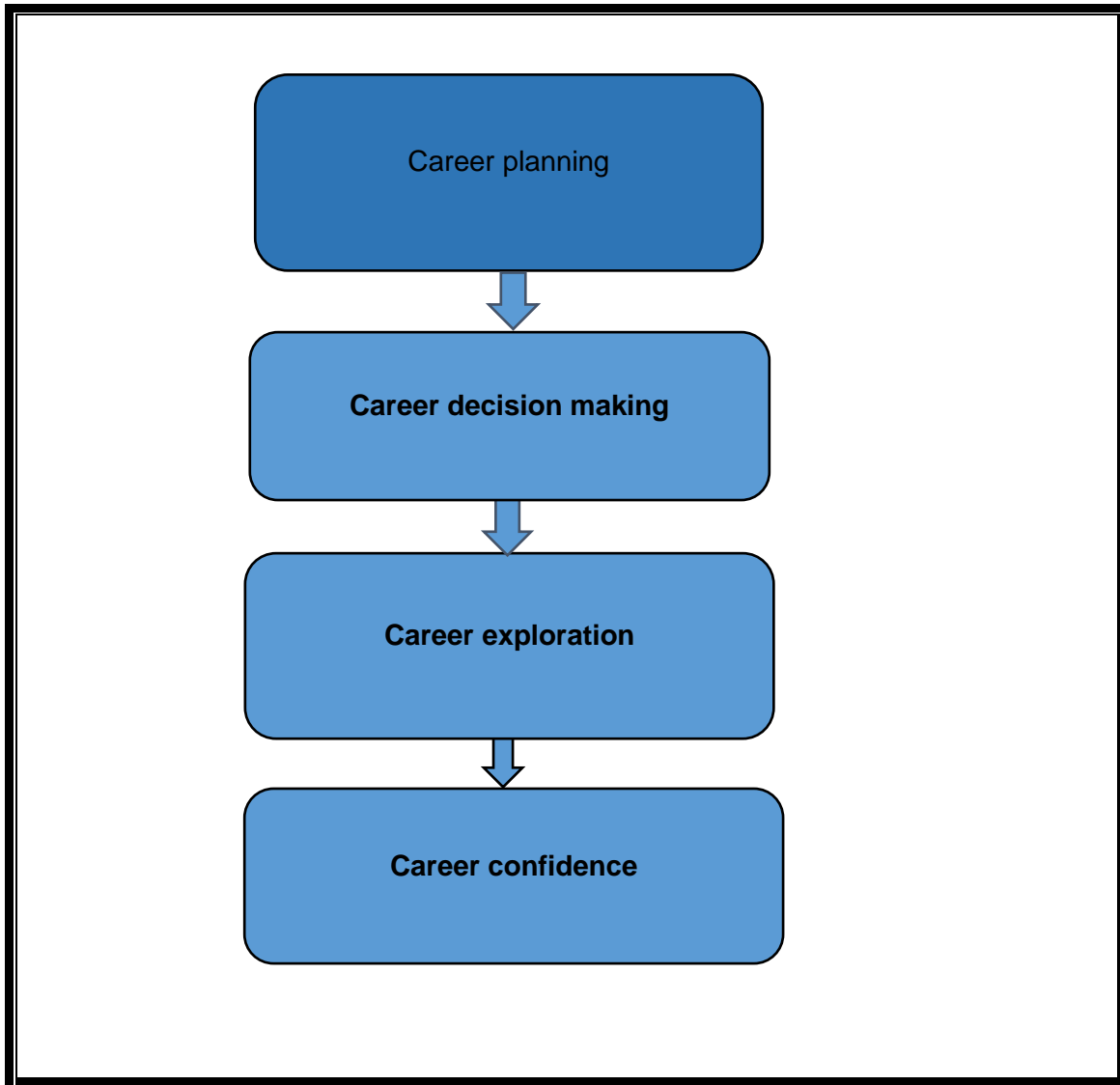


Figure 3.1: Career Adaptability Model by Savickas (1997, p. 249)

a. Career planning

According to Gadassi *et al.* (2012), *career planning* is looking ahead to one's future career. It calls individuals and challenges them to carefully plan their future careers. Plan-fullness is divided into three components: autonomy - an individual's locus of control; time perspective - involves reflecting on past experiences and anticipating the future, and self-esteem - is necessary for individuals to experience autonomy and a positive anticipation of the future (Barto *et al.*, 2015; Eshelman, 2013; Ismail, Ferreira & Coetzee, 2016). These three components of career planning challenge, enlighten and empower individuals to persevere and be successful in their careers (Savickas, 2005; Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer & Heinemann, 2015).

b. Career decision-making

Informed decision-making is when an individual knows what career he or she would like to pursue (Nota & Rossier, 2015; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). It is about having solid information, knowledge and commitment to decision-making strategies (Gadassi *et al.*, 2012). For Beukes (2010), career decision-making demands that career decisions need to be made throughout one's lifespan because a career has a major bearing on the individual's lifestyle. It determines income, job security, friends and acquaintances, the amount of leisure time, and residence (Barto *et al.*, 2015; Hirschi & Valero, 2015). Ultimately, decisiveness is vital for individuals to be able to choose the right career and be successful in their careers.

c. Career exploration

Career exploration has to do with individuals looking around and investigating extensively the various career options to gain knowledge about the kind of job he or she would want to do (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Gadassi *et al.*, 2012; Guan *et al.*, 2015). According to Gadassi *et al.* (2012), *career exploration* describes the extent to which individuals inquire about and understand themselves in terms of their life-career roles, their institutional affiliations, their awareness and the use of their resources.

d. Career confidence/cooperation

Career confidence emphasises the individual's feelings of self-efficacy for successfully executing the activities needed to achieve his or her career goals (Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Hirschi & Valero, 2015; Luke, McIlveen & Perera, 2016). Self-efficacy is vital in the job search journey. It may increase the individual's job search opportunities, and may eventually increase his/her chances of finding employment (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Gadassi *et al.*, 2012).

Table 3.1 below describes the four Cs of career adaptability

Table 3.1

The Four Cs of Career Adaptability

Adaptability dimensions	Attitudes and beliefs	Competence	Coping behaviours	Career problem
Concern	Planfulness	Planning	Aware, involved and preparing	Indifference
Control	Decisive	Decision making	Assertive, disciplined and wilful	Indecision
Curiosity	Inquisitive	Exploring	Experimenting, risk taking and inquiring	Unrealism
Confidence (cooperation)	Efficacious	Problem solving	Persistent, striving and industrious	Inhibition

Originally there are four major dimensions of career adaptability, (concern, control, curiosity, cooperation/confidence). Several researchers postulate that these are the global dimensions of resources that facilitate the realisation of personal goals and values, irrespective of work conditions that may foster or constrain career adaptability (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Hajian *et al.*, 2013; Maggiori *et al.*, 2013; Shirvani, Rezaei & Sedrpoushan, 2012). Each dimension encompasses a set of more specific attitudes, beliefs, competencies and affiliated coping behaviours that reflect adaptability (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015). These dimensions represent general adaptability resources and strategies that individuals use to construct their careers as they cope with developmental tasks, occupational transitions and work trauma (Luke, McIlveen & Perera, 2016; Rottinghaus *et al.*, 2012; Tak, 2012; Teixeira *et al.*, 2012; Van Vianen *et al.*, 2012; Vilhjalmsdottir *et al.*, 2012).

3.1.3 Other theoretical models

3.1.3.1 Super's stages of 'career adaptability'

Super's lifespan, life space theory is of relevance to this research. The theory addresses the complexity of vocational behaviour in manifold settings across diverse groups (Savickas, 1997). Savickas (1997) contends that the theory addresses how individuals construct and negotiate their work lives and specifies predictable tasks and coping behaviour that

individuals encounter as they develop their careers. The theory can match individuals to positions, can help individuals anticipate developmental tasks, form decisional attitudes and competencies and then engage in realistic vocational coping behaviours (Aldrich, 2013; Savickas, 1997). The theory deals with how individuals situate the work role among their other life roles, and then utilise the resulting life structure to fulfil their personal values in their own careers. The pivotal contribution of Super's theory consists of a model of adolescent career maturity or the readiness to make educational and vocational choices and this model addresses the complete lifespan (Savickas, 1997; Super, Savickas & Super, 1996).

Super's theory of career adaptability presents *career adaptability* as a vital component during all stages of the individual's lifespan, namely childhood, adolescence and adulthood, which translates to growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement and developmental stages (Brown *et al.*, 2012; Lent & Brown, 2013; Nkambule, 2010). It is important to note that no ages are associated with Super's stages of career adaptability (Aldrich, 2013; Super *et al.*, 1996). Super modified his framework to include learning and decision-making as potential integrative variables of his theory as they deal with how things are done (Savickas, 1997). The emphasis Super placed on adaptability, on learning and decision-making as key variables of his original theory provides support for additional research into how to facilitate career adaptability (Aldrich, 2013; Savickas, 1997). The theory emphasises that adaptability whether in adolescents, or in adults, involves plan-full attitudes, self and environmental exploration, and informed decision-making (Savickas, 1997). According to Savickas (1997), counsellors could help individuals to continually look ahead throughout the life course, to anticipate choices and transitions, explore possibilities and choose directions that improve and develop themselves. When evaluating individual readiness to adapt, counsellors and researchers could assess the processes of adaptability and their developmental course in terms of plan-full, exploration of the situation, knowledge about self and situation and decisional skills (Savickas, 1997). The theory contends that future orientation and planning attitudes, which sustain career choice readiness and adaptability, are vital in preparing for success and satisfaction in all life roles (Savickas, 1997). Savickas (1997) concludes that planfulness, as the core dimension of adaptability, may facilitate exploration and decision making, and combined, these three elements may characterise the critical developmental dimensions of career adaptability.

Table 3.2 below describes Super's stages of career adaptability.

Table 3.2

Super's Stages of Career Adaptability from Super et al.'s Life-Span Model (1996, p 249)

Super's stages	Super's Career Development Tasks
Growth (4-13)	Being aware of the future. Developing competencies, expertise and skills in order to increase the control over one's life
Exploration (14-24)	Crystallisation, specification, implementation and career choices
Establishment (25-44)	Stabilising, consolidating and advancement in one's career
Maintenance (45-65)	Upholding, updating and innovating
Disengagement (over 65)	Decelerating, planning for retirement, and retiring

3.1.4 Variables influencing the development of career adaptability

The influence of age, gender, marital status, job level and other variables on an individual's career adaptability will be discussed in this section.

3.1.4.1 Age

Research postulated that age was found to be a determinant of career goals and work-related formal training, learning and development behaviours (Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Zacher and Griffin (2015) continue to emphasise that young adults in the early phase of their career development have a strong determination to establish both their career identity and socially supportive connections. Although older employees continue to learn and develop, their investment in such activities may be lower than younger employees. According to Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), individuals in the 25 and younger group seem to have greater confidence and determination in their ability to achieve their career goals and develop meaningful social networks than individuals in the 56 and older age. Individuals in the establishment stage of their careers (26-45 age groups) appear to have a uniquely stronger preference for job opportunities that are challenging and will allow them to utilise their talents and creativity abilities (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010). Younger employees are more likely than older employees to be fully engaged in career development and advancement (Tones *et al.*, 2010). Age is expected to influence individual engagement as well as perceptions of formal training, training and development opportunities, constraints at work, especially mature

employees who intend to retire soon (Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Due to age, it may become very difficult to be flexible or to have the willingness and adaptation to change in this dynamic changing world of work (Zacher & Griffin, 2015).

According to Bertolino *et al.* (2011), motivational structures of older and younger employees may differ because of the changes across the lifespan in terms of their career adapt abilities, career success, career resilience and career development opportunities. Older employees are more focused on maintaining their jobs while younger employees are more focused on growth in their goal orientations (Zacher & Griffin, 2015). According to Tones *et al.* (2010), younger employees are more likely to persist in optimising performance, while older adults persist in minimising career development. Research indicated that increased age comes with the deterioration in speedy processing of information, work capability, decreased work-motivation and a feeling of inadequateness in their knowledge, skills, expertise and capabilities (Ndzube, 2013; Rossier *et al.*, 2012; Tones *et al.*, 2010).

3.1.4.2 Gender

Research by Mikhail (2010) and Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) indicated that women are more venturesome and experimental with new career opportunities than their male counterparts. Women generally have strong and high levels of self-efficacy, self-esteem and confidence that drive them to get into new, exciting and challenging careers (Brown & Lent, 2013; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Mikhail, 2010). According to Migunde *et al.* (2011), women seem to have profound strength and stamina to advance in their careers especially in traditionally male-dominated and mathematics-based careers. Women stress the importance of permanent, steady and stable employment. Various authors have reported that women are more emotionally self-aware than their male counterparts and tend to seek advice for their career growth (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Migunde *et al.*, 2011; Mikhail, 2010; Moshupi, 2013; Nkambule, 2010). The results of Coetzee and Harry's (2015) research stipulate that gender significantly predicts career adaptability and that the women had significantly higher levels of career adaptability than men (Coetzee & Harry, 2015).

3.1.4.3 Marital status

There is a negative relationship between career adaptability and marital status. Married individuals seem to battle with their career adaptation, because marriage comes with multiple life roles (Gray, 2011). Married individuals might experience problems with balancing their career demands and their marriage demands (Moshupi, 2013; Nkambule,

2010; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Contrasting results were found regarding single and divorced individuals. Single and divorced (separated) individuals show stronger career adaptability than married individuals, because they are not particularly affected by multiple life roles in their employment careers (Gray, 2011; Walsh, 2012). According to Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), separated or divorced individuals seem to have a significantly strong need for managerial roles in which they can exercise control and authority over others. These findings suggest that women managers are less likely to be married or to have children due to the role overload often caused by the need to balance multiple life roles (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010).

Many successful career women in the United States are single in order to focus on their careers (Gray, 2011). Ultimately, marital status was found to negatively affect the career adaptability of women, because of the need to balance multiple life roles (Reis & Baruch, 2013). Research showed an adverse relationship between a woman's level of career achievement and her marital status (Reis & Baruch, 2013). It seems there is less career achievement if a woman is married because of the need to balance multiple life roles (Gray, 2011; Moshupi, 2013; Walsh, 2012). Women who married later in life, or who are single or separated tended to have more career achievement (Walsh, 2012).

3.1.4.4 Job level

There is a positive significant relationship between job level and career adaptability (Moshupi, 2013). Individuals in senior management level positions are challenged to grow into better leaders (Moshupi; 2013; Walsh, 2012). Gray (2011) contends that climbing up the corporate ladder challenges individuals to adapt, develop their careers and continue to enjoy promotion. Job level may lead individuals to career success (Gray, 2011). Job level might affect individuals' career adaptability differently.

3.1.5 Other variables influencing the development of career adaptability

3.1.5.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a vital determinant of adaptability and is a critical personality factor that influences one's career adaptability and success (Brown & Lent, 2013). Brown and Lent (2013) went on to postulate that self-efficacy is a person's belief that he or she can master a complex and new task demand. Ndzube (2013) found evidence that adaptive self-efficacy is positively related to adaptive performers. Brown and Lent (2013) examined a person's

beliefs associated with one's ability to learn and adapt in a 21st century high-tech organisational environment. Brown and Lent (2013) went on to encourage employees who do not believe that they can manage new task demands, to assess their expertise, knowledge, skills and abilities.

3.1.5.2 *Self-esteem*

An individual's self-esteem is critical to one's career adaptability and career success (Ismail *et al.*, 2016; Ababneh, 2013; Ndzube, 2013). Self-esteem may significantly affect an individual's ability to obtain and maintain employment. If an individual has a low self-esteem, this might affect his or her performance in interviews because of lack of self-confidence and the ability to market oneself (Ababneh, 2013).

3.1.6 **Summary of career adaptability**

This section explored the conceptualisation of the construct of career adaptability by means of a comparative examination of the basic literature and research on this construct. Career adaptability was discussed in detail and it is clear from the literature that career adaptability is a vital competency at all stages of an individual's lifespan, namely: childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Konstam *et al.*, 2015). Savickas' (1997) model of career adaptability and Super's stages of career adaptability were also discussed in detail. The variables influencing the development of career adaptability (age, gender, marital status and job level) were also explained in detail. The section concluded with a discussion of other variables influencing the development of career adaptability (self-efficacy and self-esteem).

3.2 **EMPLOYABILITY ATTRIBUTES**

3.2.1 **Conceptualisation of employability attributes**

Historically the concept of employability has been studied for more than a century. It was first introduced by Beveridge in 1909 (Gallop, 2013; Wen *et al.*, 2011). The concept *employability* was perceived as the new form of psychological contract between employers and employees, which emphasises mutual obligation and responsibility in developing human capital needs (Pascale & Willen, 2015; Sin, Tavares & Amaral, 2016; Wen *et al.*, 2011). Prior to the 1950s individuals were categorised as either employable or not (Ottino, 2010). This was later replaced by a socio-medical model of employability in the 1950s, employability concept was then introduced in the labour market domain and later the

concept broadened to encompass an inter-dimensional concept incorporating the labour market situation, knowledge and organisational policies (Galopen, 2013; Merchant, 2016; Ottino, 2010). Employability has become a central key feature of working life globally and has become established as the first pillar in global employment and facilitating employee access to the labour market, as well as remaining attractive and marketable in this volatile and unpredictable world of work (Bal, Kooij & Rousseau, 2015; Barnes, Green & De Hoyos, 2015; Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Marks & Huzzard, 2010). The long and dynamic history of employability research indicates that employability has been conceptualised and defined globally in different ways (Baciu, Dinca, Lazar & Sandvin, 2016; Chambel, Sobral, Espada & Curren, 2015).

Several researchers defined *employability* as a psychosocial construct and a meta-characteristic where individuals with specific skills, expertise, technical skills, knowledge, understanding, individual attributes and characteristics are best able to identify and realise job opportunities and adapt to the ever changing and challenging organisational and career environment (Asonitou, 2015; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Botha, 2015; Newberry-Jones, 2015; Taylor, 2010; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013). *Employability* is a set of competencies, skills and expertise that enables an individual to secure sustained employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if the need arises even in the face of joblessness (Botha, 2015; Chillias, Marks & Galloway, 2015; De Fruyt, Wille & John, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Ndzube, 2010; Ottino, 2010). Individuals with high levels of employability are capable of sustaining their employment and realising, understanding and utilising professional opportunities that will increase and enhance high employability and enhance their job market mobility (Botha, 2015; Patel, 2015; Vargas-Hernandez & Jimenez, 2015). Higher employability increases the chance of obtaining and sustaining employment and of moving self-sufficiently within the labour market (Bezuidenhout, 2011; De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). Over the centuries, research has been able to establish that the most important skill that individuals need to possess is the ability to remain employable (Blackford, 2013; Cottrell, 2015; Ito, 2014; Mansour & Dean, 2016). Highly employable individuals have the willingness, openness, flexibility, adaptability, proactivity, tenacity and resiliency to increase and acquire new critical knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to remain employable and to maintain and enhance their attractiveness and marketability in the volatile and dynamic labour market (Blackford, 2013; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Botha, 2015; Praskova *et al.*, 2015; Taylor, 2010). According to Blackford (2013), continuing professional development, career development and management educational development, self-empowerment and effective networking is essential to enhance and maintain employability at every stage of an individual's life, even in retirement. Employability differs between

individuals; it is determined by an individual's characteristics and behaviour (Cui, 2015; Ottino, 2010; Tanaka, 2016).

Over the years, employability has emerged globally as a pattern of personality attributes, generic skills, competencies and work-related skills that help individuals respond to the employment even in the midst of unemployment (Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Ito, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Minten 2010; Potgieter, 2014; Wittekind, Raeder & Grote, 2010). These attributes of employability entail diverse competencies, transferable skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that empowers and enlightens individuals to recognise and grab employment opportunities and to remain employed even in the midst of difficulties and a challenging economy (Ibarraran, Ripani, Taboada, Villa & Garcia, 2014; Lane, 2016; Vanhercke, Cuyper, Peeters & De Witte, 2014). Employable individuals have a sense of self-directedness, an inner sense of stability and personal agenda in retaining a job, based on the set of attributes and competencies in an uncertain and unpredictable employment context (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011; Reid, 2016). Highly employable employees have the courage and stamina to take control and of realising their present and future career potential (Babos, Lubyova & Studena, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Taylor, 2016). The individual's attributes such as adaptability, commitment, tenacity, reliability, flexibility, multitasking and resiliency play a vital role in obtaining and maintaining a good job (Galopen, 2013; Rahmat, Ayub & Buntat, 2016). Highly employable individuals with core employable skills will easily secure employment and be able to move up the corporate ladder in their career (Botha, 2015; Ismail & Mohammed, 2015; Siddiqui & Siddiqui, 2016). Employees require both hard and soft skills in order to be employable and productive in the new world of work (Botha, 2015; Dickson, Binns & Divan, 2015).

According to Botha (2015), employability has both subjective and objective qualities. Perceived or subjective employability encompasses the individual's perception of his or her employability, qualifications related to a specific position, willingness to develop a diversity of competencies, labour market know-how and individual self-promotion (Kirves, Kinnunen, Cuyper & Makikangas, 2014; Vanhercke *et al.*, 2014; Wen *et al.*, 2011; Wittekind *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, Wittekind *et al.* (2010) are of the opinion that objective or actual employability entails the professional profile of an employee that includes the level of qualifications and relative position in the labour market. Vanhercke *et al.* (2014) view *career identity* and *adaptability* as key aspects of an individuals' self-perceived employability. Individuals with high actual or objective employability will possess higher self-efficacy and confidence, thus resulting in higher perceived employability (Coetzee & Beukes, 2010;

Croucher, Ramakrishnan, Rizov & Benzinger, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Praskova, Creed & Hood, 2015).

Research by Cuyper, Van der Heijden and De Witte (2011) indicated that employability is linked to enhanced performance for both individuals and the organisation. Highly employable employees may be high performers and employability may enable the organisation to achieve outstanding performance and sustained competitiveness (Beukes, 2010; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Wen *et al.*, 2011). Cuyper *et al.* (2011) indicated that *employability* is a critical requirement for enabling both sustained competitive advantage at the organisation level and career success at the individual level. Top performers and talented employees are highly employable (Boden, 2015; Peeters, 2016; Wittekind *et al.*, 2010). According to Coetzee & Schreuder (2011), *employability* is the new key benchmark of career success. From the point of view of an organization, *employability* moves from offering secure employment to providing opportunities for development, and it is a farewell to traditional organisational commitment for multiple commitments in the individual's perspective (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Gokuladas, 2010; Ottino, 2010; Shikari, 2011). Higher employability has also been positively associated with strong career identity, flexibility, adaptability and career resilience, all of which empower individuals to handle career challenges and to be successful in this turbulent and volatile world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Froehlick, Beausaert & Seger, 2015; Ottino, 2010). Ultimately, the construct of employability cuts across diverse disciplines and encompasses three levels, namely individuals, organisations and industries and it has a profound and unique effect on both organisations and employees (Becker & Becker, 2016; Botha, 2015; Kirves *et al.*, 2014; Pradhan, 2015). Table 3.3 below provides an overview of the employability skills and competencies identified in the literature as discussed in this section.

Table 3.3

Employability Skills and Competencies

Skills and competencies	Definition	Literature source
Communication	Open and honesty communication with employees	Blackford, 2013; Botha, 2015; Messum <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Ndzube, 2013; Parker, 2012
Academic qualifications	Relevant qualification for the job	Chillas <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Messum <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Scott, Sinclair, Short & Bruce, 2014
Speaking and listening	Being able to speak up	Beukes, 2010; Dickson <i>et al.</i> ,

	about one's concern and also being able to listen carefully	2015; Hinton, 2012; Marks & Huzzard 2010; Vanhercke <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Literacy and IT proficiency	The ability to utilise computers	Barnes <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Beukes, 2010; Lim, 2010; Ndzube, 2013
Interpersonal	The ability to relate with colleagues	Barnes <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Galloopen, 2013; Jackson, 2014; Potgieter, 2014
Teamwork	The ability to work in a team with good team spirit	Ismail & Mohammed, 2015; Parker, 2012; Pillai <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Scott <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Problems-solving, thinking and analytical skills	The ability to solve problems, have profound thinking and be able to analyse situations	Barnes <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Beukes, 2010; Ndzube, 2013; Wheeler, 2011
Understanding of business and customer service	Proven wide understanding of the business and having customer orientation skills	Bezuidenhout, 2011; Blackford, 2013; Beukes, 2010; Hinton, 2012; Pradhan, 2015
Organising and planning	Being able to organise and plan for different events	Beukes, 2010; Marks & Huzzard 2010; Newberry-Jones, 2015; Ndzube, 2013
Career self-management and self-motivated	Accountable for managing one's career and making sure that one remains motivated from within	Beukes, 2010; Blom & Saeki, 2012; Hinton, 2012; Vanhercke <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Good oral and written language skills	Being able to communicate using the corporate language and being able to write the language	Beukes, 2010; Pillai <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Scott <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Wittekind <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Using numbers effectively	Ability to utilise numbers	Beukes, 2010; Botha, 2015;

	effectively	Wittekind <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Leadership, passion, drive, commitment and attitude	Individuals should have skills to lead others, be passionate about one's job, have the right attitude for the job and be fully committed to the job	Botha, 2015; Messum <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Knowledge of the industry	Having solid knowledge of the industry in general	Messum <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Ottino, 2010; Wittekind <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Willingness and flexibility to adapt and learn	Preparedness to learn and adapt	Blackford, 2013; Deeley, 2014; Gallopen; 2013; Ottino, 2010; Shikari, 2011
Neat and appropriate appearance	Dress professionally	Lim, 2010; Scott <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Negotiation	Being able to negotiate and make final decisions	Lim, 2010; Pillai <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Promptness	Sharp and fast	Lim, 2010; Parker, 2012; Pillai <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Good attitude towards work	Liking and appreciating one's work	Parker, 2012; Pillai <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Scott <i>et al.</i> , 2014
Integrity	The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles	Blom & Saeki, 2012; Wen <i>et al.</i> , 2011
Multitasking	Being able to do multi-projects or tasks at once	Beukes, 2010
Self-discipline	The ability to do the job even when it is difficult and unpleasant	Marks & Huzzard, 2010; Minten, 2010
Empathy	The ability to understand another person's feelings and experiences	Blom & Saeki, 2012; Marks & Huzzard, 2010; Minten, 2010
Mentoring and teaching	The ability to advise and	Blackford, 2013; Deeley, 2014;

	help somebody with less experience over a period of time	Marks & Huzzard, 2010
Voluntary work	Doing the job without being paid for it	Blackford, 2013; Deeley, 2014; Marks & Huzzard, 2010
Decision-making	The ability to make good decisions	Marks & Huzzard, 2010; Wheeler, 2011

3.2.2 Theoretical models

Bezuidenhout's (2010), in collaboration with Coetzee (2010), employability attributes framework model will be discussed in detail in this section.

3.2.2.1 *Bezuidenhout's (2010) employability attributes framework*

Bezuidenhout (2010), in collaboration with Coetzee (2010), developed an employability attributes framework specifically for students in the South African higher education context. The employability attributes framework Figure 3.2 describes a set of eight core employability attributes that are important for increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Van der Klink, Buttman, Burdorf, Schaufeli, Zijlstra, Abma, Brouwer & Jan Van der Wilt, 2016). Research by Bezuidenhout (2011) indicates that career self-management, career resilience and cultural competence are vital personality attributes that influence people's ability to sustain their employability. These three attributes and the career-related core dispositional self-evaluation that is self-efficacy, sociability, proactivity, emotional literacy and entrepreneurial orientation seem to promote proactive adaptability in changing environments and to increase a person's suitability for employment and the likelihood of achieving career success (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Bezuidenhout (2011) went on to reiterate that career self-management seems to act as the motivational drive for improving one's employability by being involved in activities to update one's marketable skills for setting personal career goals and for building strong professional networks for achieving these goals and aspirations.

Figure 3.2 below illustrates the eight core career-related employability attributes identified by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2011).

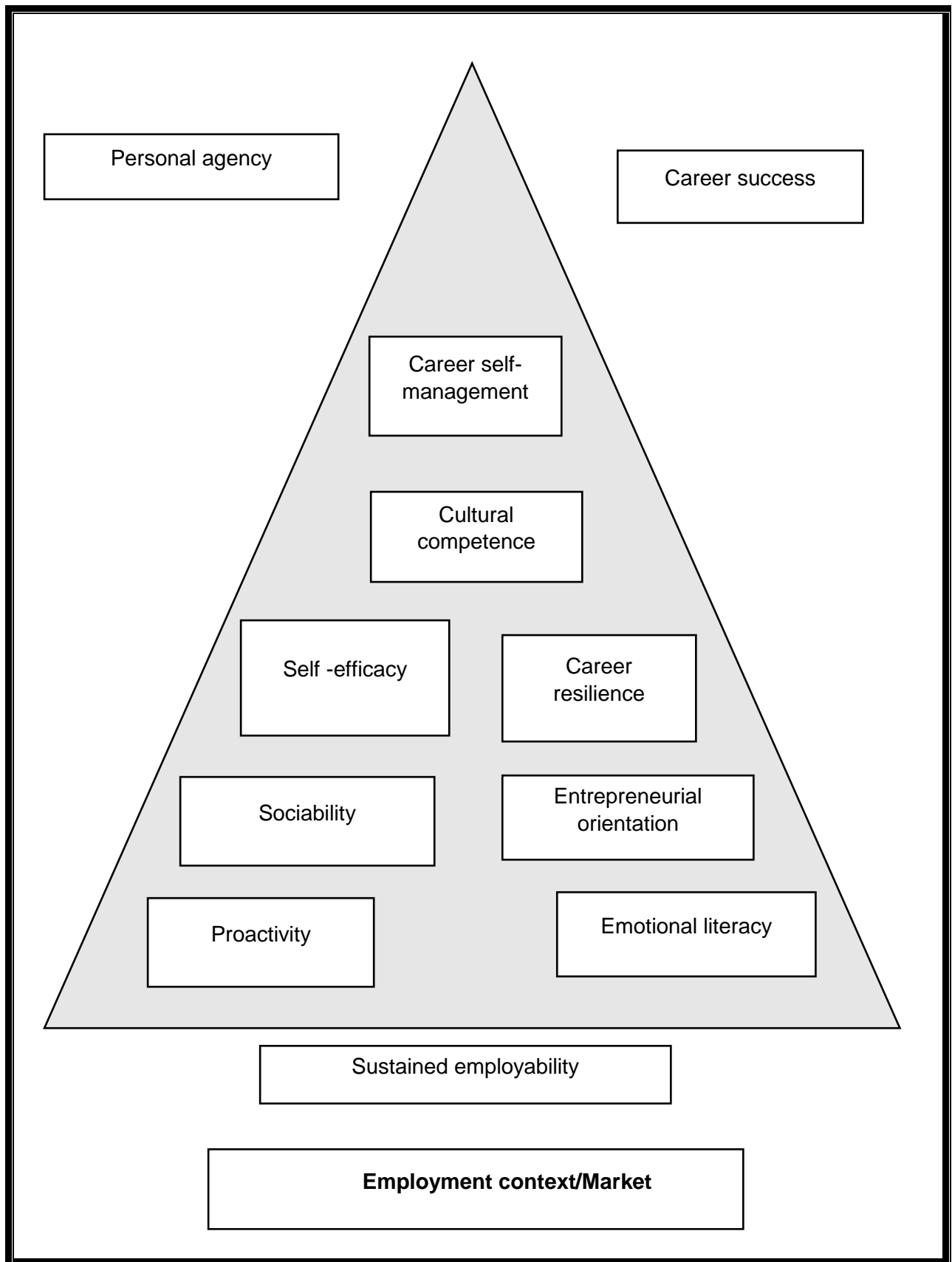


Figure 3.2 The Employability Attributes Framework by Coetzee (2011, p. 18)

a. Career self-management

Career self-management is a drive to proactively manage one's career by regularly collecting career related information to enhance knowledge of the self and external environment, including the world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Bezuidenhout (2011) goes on to say that career self-management involves the ability to reflect on one's career aspirations and develop clarity about what one wants to achieve in one's career, but also to recognise the skills and expertise one needs to succeed in one's career goals and objectives. Career self-management implies that one has the confidence and perseverance to engage continuously in development activities whilst pursuing one's career goals (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Career self-management is a critical skill of ensuring sustained employability by adopting a lifelong learning attitude and proactively taking control of career planning and managing activities (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) career self-management is constructed from traits such as self-reflection and deep pondering on career goals, identifying the competencies required to achieve these goals and implementing appropriate actions in order to achieve career goals. Self-confidence, persistence and ongoing, relevant learning activities will facilitate the achievement of career goals that are also vital for ensuring career success (Coetzee, 2010).

b. Cultural competencies

According to Bezuidenhout (2011) cultural competency involves knowing the customs of other cultures, understanding their values and beliefs, having the confidence to communicate interculturally, finding it easy to do so and enjoying it, as well as being able to maintain relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

c. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy includes the ability to function independently of others, to be able to make one's own decisions, to have confidence to accomplish one's goals through one's own effort, to persist with challenges and to enjoy the discovering of original solutions (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Autonomy, self-management, goal-directed behaviour, perseverance, the proactive pursuit of learning opportunities and finding innovative resolutions to all problems comprise the construct of self-efficacy (Coetzee, 2011). High levels of employability positively influence the self-efficacy beliefs of individuals (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011; Van der Heijde,

2016). Self-efficacy also refers to the estimate that people make of their ability to cope, perform and thrive (Bezuidenhout, 2010).

d. Career resilience

According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2011) career resilience refers to being able to adapt to changing circumstance by welcoming job and organisational changes, to look forward to working with new and different people, to have self-confidence and to be willing to take risks. Career resilience facilitates a high degree of adaptability, flexibility, self-confidence and competence, regardless of adverse career circumstances (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Self-confidence, welcoming feedback on both strong and weak points, personal agility and persistence in pursuing career goals are the traits that construct the attributes of career resilience (Coetzee, 2010). Career resilience is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, even when the circumstances are discouraging or disruptive. Career resilience is concerned with tolerating uncertainty and developing flexible aspirations as well as optimism, self-esteem and self-reliance (Wen *et al.*, 2011). Wen *et al.* (2011) goes on to reiterate that career resilience is analogous to the concepts of hardiness, self-efficacy, career maturity and flexibility. Career resilience reflects a life characterised by perseverance, adaptation, taking action, resolving problems as they arise and adopting a positive and confident approach to life (Wen *et al.*, 2011).

e. Sociability

Sociability refers to the inclination to establish and maintain social networks and make the most of formal and informal career and social networks in order to advance career prospects (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Coetzee, 2011). A social employee will be self-confident and sufficiently socially agile to adapt non-verbal actions to various social milieus (Coetzee, 2010). According to Bezuidenhout (2011), sociability also involves actively seeking feedback from others to progress in one's career, having self-confidence and being willing to take risks.

f. Entrepreneurial orientations

Entrepreneurial orientation refers to being curious about, and continuously venturing into, new business opportunities, and having the wish to explore and become involved in such business ventures, being receptive to novel ideas, positively embracing changes in the work context, easily accommodating ambiguity and taking personal responsibility for career

accomplishments and disappointments (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Coetzee, 2011). Entrepreneurial orientation also refers to a person's preference for innovation and creativity, a tendency to take risks, a need for achievement, tolerance for uncertainty as well as a preference for autonomy when exploiting opportunities in the working environment and when creating something valuable (Bell, 2016; Bezuidenhout, 2010). Entrepreneurial individuals perceive risks as possibilities, are innovative and inventive, are able to tolerate uncertainty and prefer to act independently when promoting their career (Coetzee, 2011; Misra & Mishra, 2016).

g. Proactivity

Proactivity is being fully responsible and accountable for one's decisions, for setting challenging targets for oneself and identifying opportunities before other people do, improving one's knowledge and skills in order to ensure career progression, being able to adapt to changing situations and being able to persevere in the midst of difficult career circumstances (Bezuidenhout, 2011, 2010). Proactivity describes the ability of individuals to adopt an agentic, active role in their employment careers (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). Proactive individuals will adapt to circumstances, they will be aware of future demands as they relate to their careers and they will strive to advance their careers and circumstances (Coetzee, 2011). Coetzee (2011) continues to reiterate that proactivity comprises the qualities of self-directedness, future orientation, goal-directedness and future-directed personal and career development.

h. Emotional literacy

Emotional literacy describes the ability to be aware of, adapt, understand and manage individual emotions as well as the emotions of others (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Coetzee, 2010). Emotional literacy comprises the ability to comprehend and manage personal emotions and temperaments, correctly identify the emotions of others, cheer up someone who is sad and defuse emotionally volatile situations (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Coetzee, 2011).

3.2.3 Other theoretical models

3.2.3.1 The employability model of Fugate (2006)

Fugate and Kinicki (2008)'s dispositional approach to employability which is a refinement and extension of Fugate's earlier work (Fugate, 2006; Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004) is

relevant to this study. Fugate and Kinicki's (2008) model builds on the theoretical foundation of Fugate *et al.* (2004; 2006). Fugate *et al.* (2004) made use of a dispositional approach to employability. They defined *employability* as a multidimensional constellation of the individual's reactive and proactive personal characteristics that predispose employees to pro-actively adapt to their challenging work and dynamic career environments. Fugate (2006) contends that employability is a disposition that fosters individual characteristics, which promote adaptive behaviours, positive employment outcomes, proactive and adaptive qualities that organisations seek and promote within the dynamic and challenging world of work. Both Fugate (2006) and Fugate and Kinicki (2008) assert that it is vital to conceptualise employability as a disposition because of the high level of unpredictability and uncertainty inherent in this volatile world of work which requires employees to adapt in a proactive way. According to Fugate and Kinicki (2008), individuals with high dispositional employability engage seriously in their jobs and dynamic careers, they create and realise opportunities in order to meet the demands of this challenging and volatile world of work.

According to Fugate *et al.* (2004), employability consists of three dimensions, namely career identity, personal adaptability and social and human capital. In order to present a detailed, dynamic, active and adaptable nature of employability, Fugate (2006) developed a dispositional model of employability that comprises openness to changes at work, work and career resilience, work and career pro-activity, career motivation, social and human capital and career identity. These dispositions are of relevance to the study as they provide insight into the construct of employability.

Figure 3.3 below illustrates the employability model of Fugate (2006).

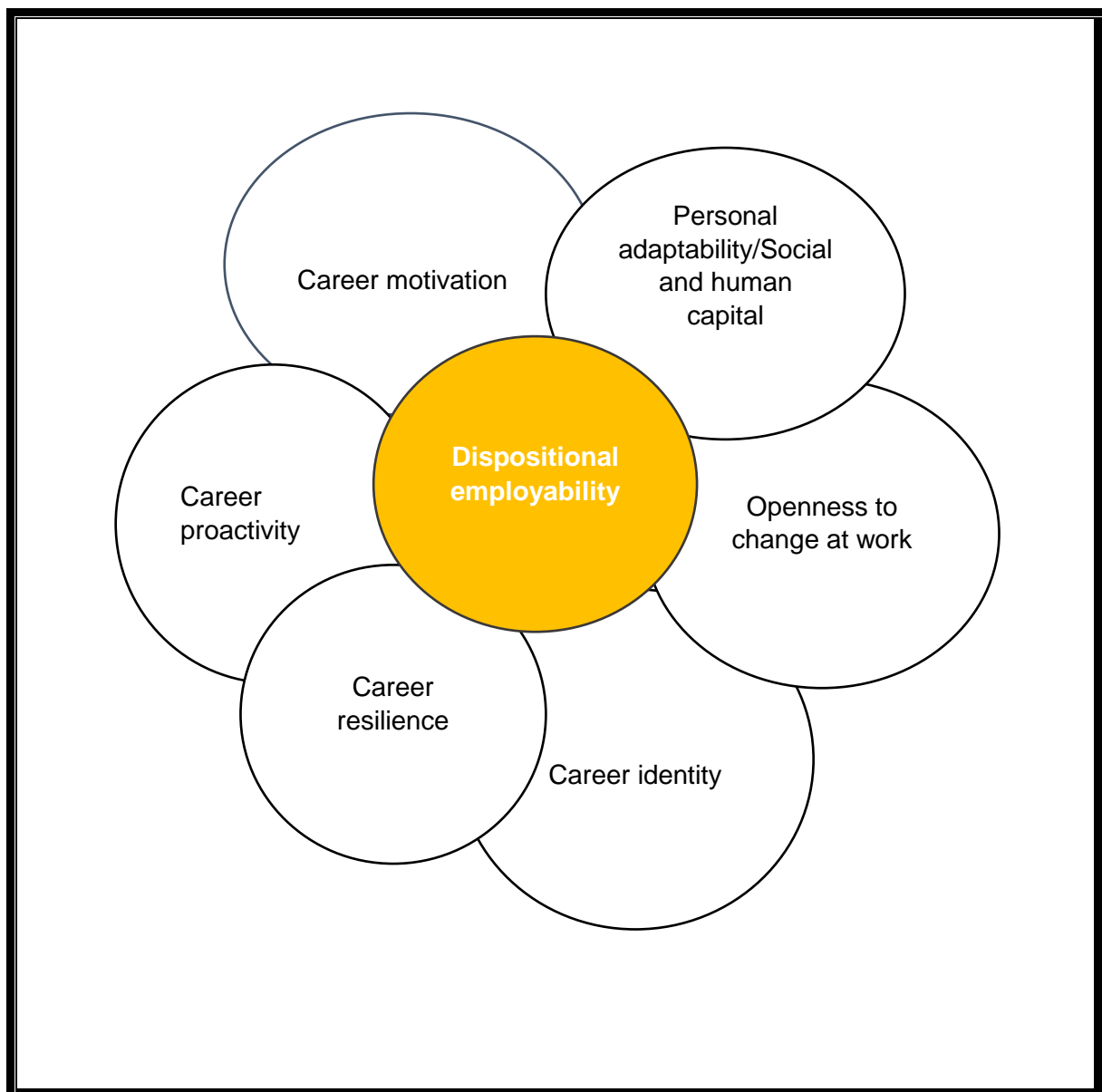


Figure 3.3: Dispositional Model of Employability by Fugate (2006, p. 3)

a. Openness to change at work

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) assert that openness to change at work supports flexibility in uncertain and challenging situations, and facilitates continuous learning. It opens doors to new opportunities, and by being open one is able to identify and realise career opportunities. Individuals who are open to change are most likely to be flexible and adaptable when they encounter unfamiliar environments thus openness fosters favourable individual attitudes towards changing circumstances in the workplace (Beukes, 2010; Vanhercke *et al.*, 2014). Open individuals are likely to perceive change as a challenge rather than a threat and be

receptive to new challenging processes and technologies (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Ultimately individuals who are open to change and new challenging experiences are adaptable to challenging and dynamic work and are ultimately highly employable (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

b. Work and career resilience

According to Fugate and Kinicki (2008), individuals with work and career resilience possess the following attributes, namely they look forward to working with diverse and new people, they have self-confidence, and self-esteem, self-reliance, positive self-evaluation, willingness to take risks, optimism for their career opportunities and work, and a feeling of strong control over the destiny of their careers. Career resilient individuals tend to have a high degree of adaptability, career maturity, self-efficacy and flexibility in terms of their work and careers regardless of adverse circumstances (Benson *et al.*, 2014; Vanhercke *et al.*, 2014). Career resilient individuals live a life characterised by tolerating uncertainty, persevering, adapting, taking action, resolving problems as they arise, and adopting a positive and confident approach to life (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Wen *et al.* 2011). Work and career resilience is a key aspect of individuals' dispositional employability (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

c. Work and career proactivity

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) contend that individuals with high levels of dispositional employability often proactively seek and acquire information related to their personal job and career interests. According to Fugate and Kinicki (2008), work and career proactivity is also similar to proactive coping, and helps with the identification and realisation of occupational opportunities.

d. Career motivation

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) indicate that highly motivated individuals tend to make specific career plans and strategies in order to be able to cope in periods of boredom and frustration, and continue persevering in the midst of difficulties and challenges. Highly motivated individuals are inclined to take control of their careers and set career-related goals by pursuing continuous learning, training and formal education so as to stay employable (Fugate, 2006; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

e. Social and human capital

Fugate (2006) postulates that social and human capital is an essential element of employability. Fugate (2006) went on to suggest that social human capital encompasses the individual's personal and professional experiences that can enhance the individual's career interests. Human capital refers to the personal variables that may affect the individual's career advancement, such as age, education, work experience, training, skills and knowledge, and these variables also determine employability (Fugate, 2006; Rewri, Madden & McClinchy, 2016; Wen *et al.*, 2011).

f. Career identity

Career identity or work identity provides the direction for future opportunities and behaviour, while at the same time organising past experience (Benson *et al.*, 2014; Fugate, 2006; Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Wen *et al.*, 2011). *Work identity* implies how people define themselves in a particular work context (Vanhercke *et al.*, 2014). Fugate and Kinicki (2008) go on to say that *career identity* assembles the past, current and future career experiences and aspirations into an understandable whole. It also acts as the cognitive compass that integrates the other dimensions of employability. According to Wen *et al.* (2011), *work identity* resembles constructs like role identity, occupational identity and organisation identity, in that they all refer to how people define themselves in a particular work context. In other words, individuals who define themselves as employable tend to exhibit attitudes and behaviours that are consistent with the perception that they are employable, which also influence their personal career goals and ambitions (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; Wen *et al.*, 2011). Individuals who have a clear work identity are most likely to be confident in their capabilities and are motivated (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Career identity strongly supports dispositional employability (Fugate *et al.*, 2004).

3.2.3.2 *The Competence based employability model by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006)*

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) define *employability* as the capability of being employed in a job. According to them (2006), employability at the employee level is advantageous for both present and future performance on the job as well as career outcomes, implying a process of adaptation and learning. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) postulate that besides adaptive behaviour, employability may encompass personal aspects such as personality, attitudes, motivation and ability.

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) offer a competence-based approach to employability, derived from an expansion of the resource-based view of organisations. According to the resource-based view of organisations, competencies are essential resources that allow organisations to achieve a sustained competitive edge. Competencies are integral for both organisational and individual career success (Becker & Becker, 2016; Froehlick *et al.*, 2015; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). The dimensions of Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) model apply to both job-related matters and to broader career development. They consist of occupational expertise and four competencies that are more general namely, anticipation and optimisation, personal flexibility, corporate sense and balance. Anticipation and optimisation, and personal flexibility are the two flexibility dimensions. The first one is a more proactive and creative variant whereas the second one is more passive and adaptive (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). Corporate sense represents the increased importance of social competence, and balance represents the capacity to unify the diverse employability elements or aspects. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) state that both employees and employers exhibit orientations towards the development of human capital. The dimensions represent individual competences that form the basis of behaviour that is related to both employer and employee outcomes. Figure 3.4 below summarises the dimensions of the model.

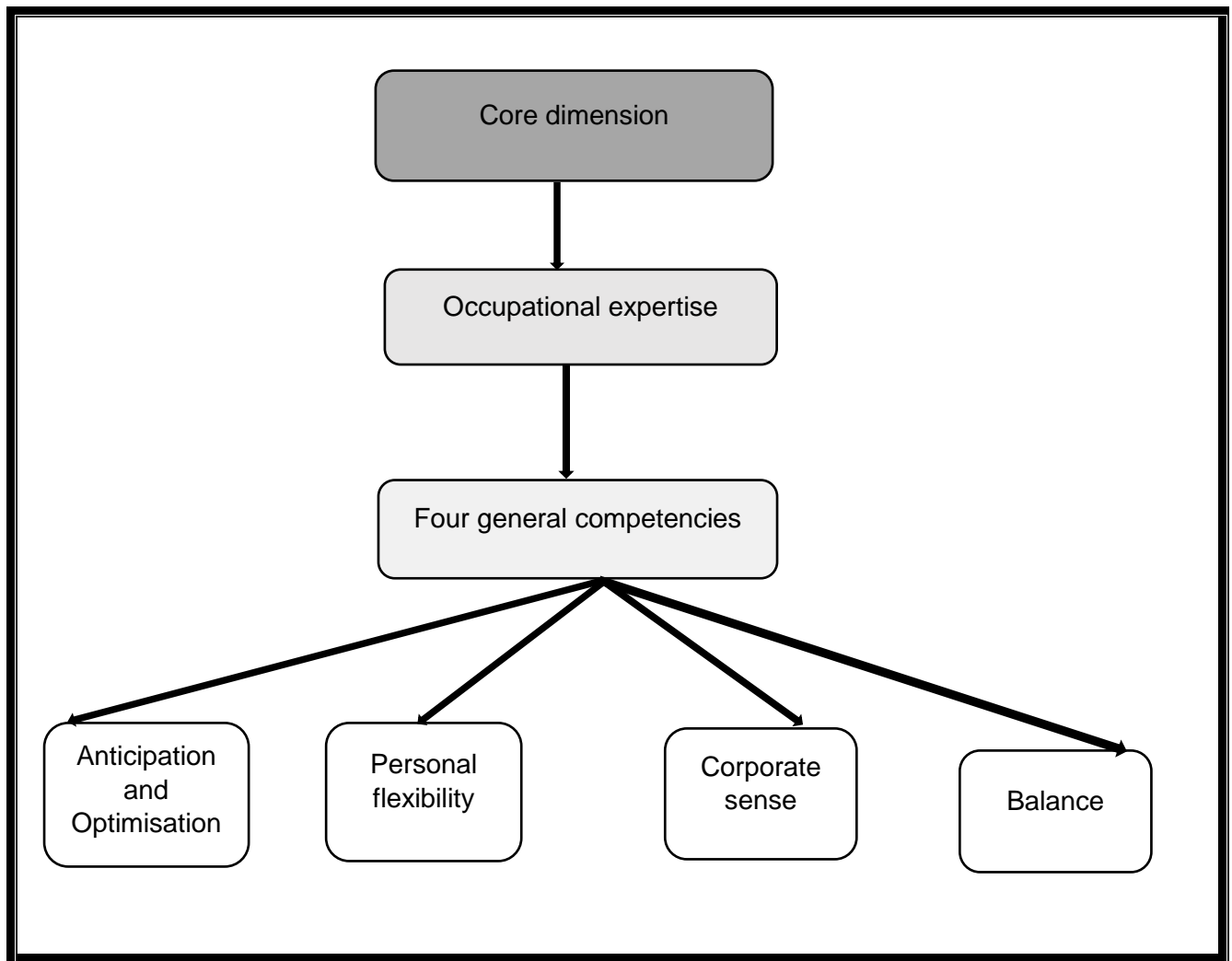


Figure 3.4: Competence-Based Employability Model (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006, p. 453)

a. Occupational expertise

Occupational expertise refers to a high degree of knowledge, skills and experiences particular to a specific professional domain, as well as being regarded as high performers and first-rate professionals (Thang, 2016; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). According to Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006), occupational expertise is critical for all employees and prospective employees in order to find and retain a good job for which they are suitably qualified. The second and third dimensions of employability encompass adapting to changes and developments, both on a job content level as well as on other levels, such as the career requirements as a whole that are relevant in the light of performance outcomes (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden, Gorgievski & De Lange, 2015). Future changes that might be influential to the work context

of employees are mass unemployment and restructuring in organisations. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) propose two different types of adaptation: the first being a self-initiating proactive variant, that is anticipation and optimisation, and the second one a passive reactive variant, that is personal flexibility. Both of these adaptation dimension variants coexist and are functional for the professional worker in enhancing his or her employability (Mishra, Kumar & Gupta, 2016; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015).

b. Anticipation and optimisation

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) postulate that anticipation and optimisation refer to the preparation for future changes in a personal and creative way, for prospective work changes being used to achieve successful job and career results. This dimension relates to proactive personality, creative and active adaptability and self-initiative in obtaining labour market information to create a bright future for one-self in this challenging and dynamic world of work (Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). Van der Heijde and Heijden (2006) state that it is imperative for employees to continuously develop themselves in order to remain highly marketable. Continuous professional development and lifelong learning is essential in order to anticipate and adapt to future occupational and career challenges and changes and to enhance employability (Van der Heijde, 2016; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) contend that the anticipation and optimisation of future career management and development will lead to more positive career outcomes for the employee and career management will be optimised when fine-tuning is reached between personal preferences and market development.

c. Personal flexibility

Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) indicate that *personal flexibility* refers to the ability to be able to adapt easily to changes in the environment, whether in the labour market or between jobs or organisations, and to persevere effortlessly and recover easily from disappointments. According to them (2006), flexible individuals welcome change and challenging situations and know how to take advantage of them in order to further their career development and gain greater benefits from various experiences. Van der Heijden *et al.* (2015) emphasise that because of changes within the environment such as mergers and restructuring in organisations, greater variation in working time and the workplace becomes apparent. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) suggest that organisations profit from flexible employees and the hiring of temporary employees provides an organisation with the security of knowing that it will not lose a lot on personnel costs during such times.

d. Corporate sense

According to Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006), the dimension of corporate sense refers to the expertise and skills accumulated from the participation and performance in diverse work groups like the department within an organisation, working teams, occupational community voluntary projects and other networks. The number of possible groupings that employees belong to has increased significantly over the last years (Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). In this dynamic new world of work stimulating and challenging innovation is needed to work in groups and for teams to survive, and innovation can be stimulated by means of group of interaction (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) emphasise that corporate sense is rooted in social networks, social skills, and emotional intelligence and it strongly relates to sharing responsibilities, knowledge, experiences, feelings, credits, dreams, failures and goals.

c. Balance

According to Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006), the balance dimension refers to the opposite interests of employers and employees as well as the opposition of these interests. The 21st century world of work working life is characterised by diverse and competing demands that are mostly caused by organisational or employee demands, which are very difficult to balance (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). *Employability* refers to highly self-reliant and self-managing employees (Oostrom, Pennings & Bal, 2016; Pandit, Preethi, Vijaylakshmi & Wallack, 2015). In this dynamic new world of work organisations there is a demand for highly committed and flexible employees (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). Enhancing and increasing employees' competencies and skills throughout their lifespan, and making adjustments to their workplaces and tasks will offer these employees significant potential within the unpredictable labour market (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

3.2.3.3 *The self-regulatory model of employability (Beukes, 2010)*

The self-regulatory model of employability (Beukes, 2010) depicts employees as active agents in the development and sustainment of their own employability through a reiterative series of development stages. This model provides an essential guideline to the steps involved in the process of ensuring continued employment throughout one's career, even in the midst of difficulties and challenges (Beukes, 2010; Otterbach & Sousa-Poza, 2016; Unni, 2016). According to Beukes (2010), the self-regulatory model facilitates the active

development of employability and this is a unique advantage of the model. Beukes (2010) asserts that employability is the application and ongoing development of a number of supportive competencies and attributes through a series of reiterative developmental stages, which enhance an individual's opportunities for getting and sustaining a good job. Beukes (2010) contends that these skills, expertise, knowledge, attitudes and personal attributes should be channelled correctly and in such a way that individuals are able to sustain suitable employment opportunities.

According to Beukes (2010), the series of reiterative stages enable individuals to effectively channel their employability competencies towards obtaining and sustaining employment within the competitive and unpredictable new and dynamic world of work. These reiterative stages encompass the following five sets of developmental tasks, namely audit and alignment, career goal clarity, formal and informal learning, self-presentation, and competency trade-off (Beukes, 2010). Beukes (2010) asserts that each of these developmental stages includes a set of competencies, such as basic skills (audit and alignment), goal driven behaviour (career goal clarity), creative learning skills (formal and informal learning), communications skills (self-presentation) and business acumen (competency trade-off). This is illustrated in figure 3.5 by indicating that the effective channelling of the supportive competencies can assist individuals to achieve certain outcomes, resulting in such individuals' selecting and securing occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful and this will be to their own benefit, the benefit of the workforce, the community and the economy.

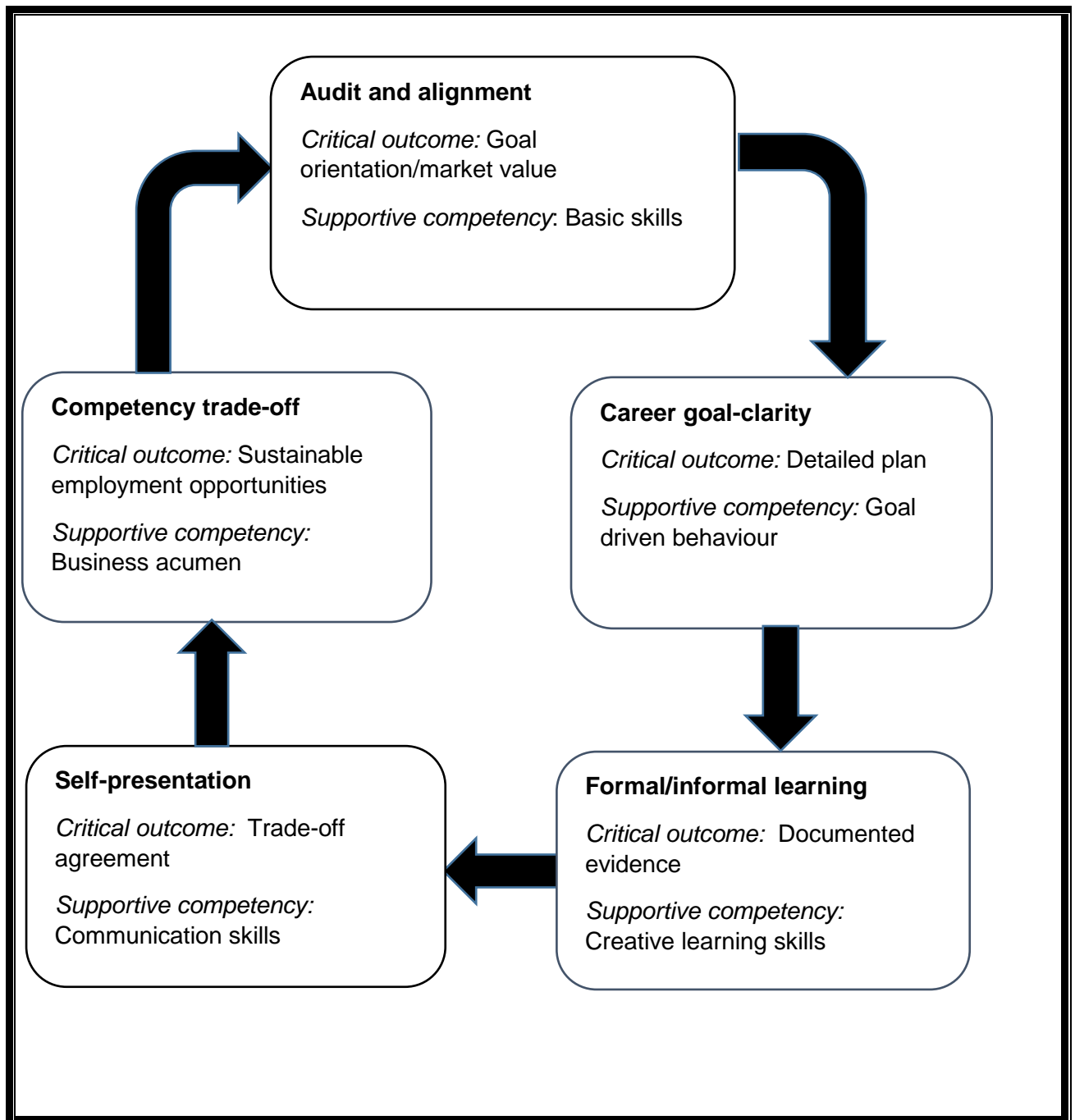


Figure 3.5 The Self-Regulatory Model of Employability by Beukes (2010, p. 54)

a. Audit and alignment

The audit and alignment stage is a process where individuals conduct an audit on their competencies in relation to the labour demands and employment opportunities. There are two vital outcomes for this stage, namely the individuals' insight into their market value and goal orientation (Beukes, 2010). Beukes (2010) continued by saying that it is essential that individuals should thoroughly understand their competencies and at the same time find out

where these competencies are in demand. The audit and alignment stage is strongly supported by basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, computer skills, planning, organisation and problem-solving, to overcome barriers to successful alignment (Beukes, 2010).

b. Career goal-clarity

Beukes (2010) postulates that the career goal-clarity stage is a process of setting specific career goals in order to achieve the main alignment. Goals can guide and direct achievement behaviour and at the same time the goal-setting process is a vital step in self-regulatory employability (Beukes, 2010). Beukes (2010) asserts that goal-driven behaviour is the supporting competency of the career goal-clarity.

c. Formal and informal learning

Beukes (2010) contends that the formal and informal learning stage encompasses lifelong learning and it is essential for individuals to effectively and efficiently achieve their developed goals and purposes. Lifelong learning is critical in this dynamic new world of work in order for individuals to achieve their desired goals, objectives and purposes (Beukes, 2010). It is imperative to implement creative learning, which includes utilising relevant available resources to learn new competencies, also to apply commitment to learning new things in order to develop and advance and to improve the ability to adapt and find new ways of overcoming learning challenges (Beukes, 2010).

d. Self-presentation

The self-presentation stage involves the process where individuals need to negotiate a trade-off agreement between their competencies and the organisations' compensation packages (Beukes, 2010). In this self-presentation process, it is vital for individuals to brand themselves in such a way that they become unique and marketable in this unpredictable and volatile labour market (Beukes, 2010).

e. Competency trade-off

According to Beukes (2010), the competency trade-off stage involves the actual trade-off between the individuals' competencies and the organisations' compensation packages. Beukes (2010) is of the opinion that when the need arises individuals can revert to stage one

in order to re-conduct (a self-audit) and realign themselves based on their newly acquired competencies.

According to Beukes (2010), through auditing and aligning their competencies individuals have the opportunity to develop and achieve their goal orientation and understand that their market value is based on their competencies and market demands. Once individuals have achieved understanding as to what their purposes and market values are, they can move towards the stage of setting more specific and time bound goals (Beukes, 2010). Combined, these specific and time bound goals can lead to detail and effective strategic plans for an individual's self and career development. The individual may then select to embark on formal and informal learning, or move straight to the self-presentation stage if the individuals believe and can prove that they have the necessary competencies for the positions they are applying for (Beukes, 2010). Beukes (2010) asserts that during the self-presentation stage the individual needs to negotiate a trade-off agreement where both parties mutually benefit. Beukes (2010) emphasises that once this agreement has formally taken place, the actual trade-off begins. When necessary or when the need arises, individuals can revert to stage one in order to re-conduct a self-audit and realign themselves based on their newly acquired competencies (Beukes, 2010).

3.2.4 Variables influencing the development of employability

3.2.4.1 Age

According to Tisch (2015), there is a positive relationship between age and employability. Many older employees find themselves in the same situation as new employment entrants, because of dynamic and unpredictable changes in the labour market environment, which will have brought about retrenchments and job changes for individual employees (Tisch, 2015). According to Bal, Kooij & Rousseau (2015), there seems to be a negative relationship between age and employability. This is because older employees tend to be seen as less likely to seek new challenges, less flexible, having less need for variation in their work, and displaying less desire to learn new skills (Bal *et al.*, 2015). These commonly held stereotypes have obvious negative effects on the employability of older employees when seeking new job opportunities (Bal *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, one researcher pointed out the perception that graduates or new employment entrants may be discriminated against when applying for new positions because of their young age and lack of practical experience (Tisch, 2015). Burgess and Connell (2015) are of the opinion that individual productivity decreases with age, and therefore older employees become less attractive to employers.

These authors argue that employees' productivity decreases with age, while their wages tend to increase (Burgess & Connell, 2015).

3.2.4.2 Gender

Han and Rojewski (2015) postulate that gender was found to have a significant effect on employability, especially that after graduation, males were more likely to find employment than females. Han and Rojewski (2015) concluded that males are more employable than females. Research has shown that women are less employable than men are; in other words, women tend to have a lower employability than men (Han & Rojewski, 2015; Mikhail, 2010; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Many organisations discriminate against women because of gender stereotypes and family responsibilities. In addition, organisations tend to perceive women as less committed to their careers and the organisations (Han & Rojewski, 2015; Mikhail, 2010; Reis & Baruch, 2013). Women may particularly be less willing and flexible to accept jobs that will affect their family responsibilities such as child-care issues. This may be perceived as being less committed to organisational goals and more committed to personal goals. This in turn may mean denial of opportunities that would support career development and employability (Han & Rojewski, 2015; Mikhail, 2010, Reis & Baruch, 2013).

3.2.5 Other Variables influencing the development of employability

3.2.5.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a vital determinant of employability and is a critical personality factor that influences one's ability to remain employable (Brown & Lent, 2013). Brown and Lent (2013) went on to postulate that self-efficacy is a person's belief that he or she can master a complex and new task demand. Ndzube (2013) found evidence that adaptive self-efficacy is positively related to adaptive performers. Brown and Lent (2013) examined a person's beliefs associated with one's ability to learn and adapt in a 21st century high-tech organisational environment. Brown and Lent (2013) went on to encourage employees who do not believe that they can manage new task demands, to possibly assess their expertise, knowledge, skills and abilities, so as to remain employable.

3.2.5.2 Self-esteem

An individual's self-esteem is critical to his/her ability to remain employable (Ababneh, 2013; Ndzube, 2013). Self-esteem may significantly affect an individual's ability to obtain and

maintain employment. Especially if an individual has a low self-esteem as this might affect his or her performance in interviews because of lack of self-confidence and the ability to market oneself (Ababneh, 2013).

3.2.6 Summary of employability attributes

This section focused on the conceptualisation of employability skills, competencies and attributes. It is well documented in the literature that employability is a very wide topic and can be studied from various perspectives. Four different theoretical models have been discussed in detail in this section. Bezuidenhout (2010) in collaboration with Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes model is paramount to this study as it relates to employability attributes. This theory was analysed and discussed in more detail. Other theoretical models like Fugate's (2006) dispositional approach to employability, Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden's (2006) competence-based approach to employability and Beukes' (2010) self-regulatory model of employability were discussed in detail. The aspect of generic skills and expertise were also discussed and identified as being important to employability. The section concluded with a discussion of the variables that influence the development of employability (age, gender, self-efficacy and self-esteem).

3.3 IMPLICATION FOR TALENT RETENTION

According to Chitra (2013), many organisations and managers are seriously concerned about retaining their highly talented employees. Retaining talented employees is the greatest challenge faced by many organisations; and this could worsen in the future because skilled and knowledgeable employees are becoming scarcer (Bhengu & Bussin, 2012; Singh, 2013). Gopi and Samuel (2013) are of the opinion that organisations that do not strategically retain their superior talent will be left with their average and non-performing employees, which will affect their productivity and competitive edge. According to Maruska and Perry (2013) such rare talents, that organisations would like to retain are resilient, adaptable and employable. Such individuals take a more proactive and flexible approach to managing their careers and employability (Bezuidenhout, 2011). Highly adaptable, resilient and employable individuals are highly sought after by many organisations.

In today's challenging and competitive business environment it is vital for organisations that want to survive, expand and outperform their rivals and increase their added value, to attract, cultivate and maintain highly talented and exceptional employees (Chendroyaperumal & Bhuvanadevi, 2014; Horvathova & Durdova, 2011; Jepngetich & Njue,

2013; Zhang, 2013). Such retainable individuals are those employees who are capable of constructing their careers, who are proactive and flexible, as well as developing their employability skills and adaptability resources (Oncel, 2014). Today's business environment has become very competitive and volatile thus making skilled employees the major differentiating factor for most organisations (Goud, 2014; Mckenna, 2013; Yang, 2013). Jain and Jain (2013) challenge organisations to place the emphasis on developing career competencies including career-oriented attitudes so as to improve the employability of existing employees and to enhance their being retainable in the organisation. According to Schroeffer and Hendricks (2014), the retention of highly skilled and knowledgeable employees has become extremely difficult because every organisation is competing fiercely to attract and retain this group of talented individuals, who are employable which is the key to being flexible and able to adapt to changes (Elegbe, 2010; Ndzube, 2013). In addition, this situation is exacerbated by highly skilled and highly professional South Africans who are leaving the country for better employment opportunities overseas (Elegbe, 2010). Organisations should implement the best career development and career opportunities in order to help their employees to be highly employable and be able to advance and gain promotion to higher levels (Wen *et al.*, 2011). It is hypothesised that individuals who are highly adaptable, flexible and proactive, are highly employable and these individuals are sought-after by many organisations (Senior *et al.*, 2014).

Talent-retention is contracting and holding tightly to critical, key talented and top performers who are pivotal to the success, efficiency, effectiveness and victory of the organisation from leaving the organisation and retaining them for longer (Amiani, 2014; Boyum, 2012; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Kumar & Jangir, 2013). Cuyper *et al.* (2011) stated that employability is an essential requirement for enabling both sustained competitive advantage at the organisational level, and career success and positive employment outcomes at the individual level. Talent-retention is a critical issue in the development of organisational competitiveness, growth, expansion and survival (Downs, 2012; Handley 2012). It is essential for organisations to do whatever it takes, to make sure that their solid, competent and effective employees remain with the organisation in order to build a solid talent pool within the organisation (Hlanganipai & Mazanai 2014; Perring, 2014; Sindhwani & Mangain, 2013). These are individuals who have strong career identity or work identity who are normally highly employable, proactive, flexible and adaptive in order to be marketable to various employers in this new world of work (Beukes, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011; Ndzube, 2013). It is paramount for individuals to be proactive when planning and managing their careers in the modern world of work to ensure that they will be employable and adaptable to the constantly changing world of work (Beukes, 2010). It is imperative for organisations to

understand and grasp profoundly the factors that motivate employees to stay or leave the organisation, to be able to effectively retain its competent and high calibre employees, who will guarantee a competitive advantage to the organisation (Bussin, 2012). According to Luke *et al.* (2016), highly talented employees are highly employable. Masood (2013) asserts that the main purpose of retention is to make sure that top performers do not leave the organisation because this might have an impact on the productivity and profitability of the organisation and this will eventually affect the competitiveness and effectiveness of the organisation. Marks and Huzzard (2010) postulate that employability is the pillar that facilitates employees to access the labour market as well as remain marketable and retainable in this volatile and unpredictable new world of work. For Bezuidenhout (2011) employability is the capacity and willingness to be and to remain attractive in the labour market, by anticipating changes in tasks and work environment and reacting to these changes in a proactive way. For managers and HR Practitioners retention practices and procedures have become the most daunting and challenging assignment in this competitive and volatile labour market (Bluen, 2013). The concept of career adaptability is central to employability, and on the other hand, the organisations are more interested in retaining employable and adaptive individuals (Luke *et al.*, 2016; Ottino, 2010).

Perring (2014) contends that most employees leave their organisations because of hiring practices, management styles, a lack of appreciation, the lack of recognition, the lack of flexible work practices, the lack of comprehensive and competitive compensation packages, an unhealthy work environment and the lack of growth opportunities and promotion. It is essential for organisations to help their employees to develop their employability that will enable them to identify and realise career opportunities and career developments to advance and gain promotion to higher career levels, in order to be able to retain their highly performing employees (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011; Jackson, 2014; Otterbach & Sousa-Poza, 2016). Perring (2014) goes on to say that the factors driving long-term retention are recognition, career opportunities, development, supportive leadership, culture, values and brand. Learning and a healthy working environment are strong retention strategies, since employees will feel recognised for their strengths, and creating possibilities for employees to develop their expertise, skills and qualities will help enhance their employability (Perring, 2014; Shikari, 2011). Individuals who possess a wide range of psychological career resources are generally better able to adapt to changing career circumstances and tend to demonstrate higher levels of employability, and these are individuals that organisation would like to retain (Ibarraran *et al.*, 2014; Osman-Gani & Paik, 2016). Ottino (2010) postulates that highly employable individuals are able to balance behaviour and impact with task and delivery, they are less likely to be psychologically harmed by job loss and frequent career

change, as they are largely more adaptable and these are the employees that organisations would like to retain. Goud (2014) advises organisations to go beyond monetary incentives, include interesting and challenging work, job security, adequate and relevant training and development opportunities, to enhance its employability in order to retain high calibre individuals. It is imperative for organisations to incentivise their highly qualified and talented employees with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to retain them on a long-term basis (Inda, 2016; Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Surywanshi & Maharshi, 2013). It is essential for organisations to make sure that their employees understand these retention factors, thus eliminating wrong perceptions. Kibui and Kanyiri (2014) postulate that even if the organisation makes sure that all these retention factors are taken into consideration and are in place in order to retain its superior employees, it remains the employee's final choice whether to leave the organisation or not, especially because of poor supervisory support. Ultimately, it is essential for organisations to do whatever it takes to curb employee attrition (Amian, 2014). This is because employee attrition costs the organisation a lot, namely conveyance costs, training new employees, trainer's cost, reduced productivity, loss of customers output and disruption to business operations, loss of cohesion within the teams and loss of tacit knowledge (Amian, 2014; Cowan, 2013; Hong *et al.*, 2012; Whelan & Carcary, 2014). Agyeman & Ponniah (2014) are of the opinion that attrition of employees may reduce quality of work, damage employees' morale and affect the organisation's bottom line, reputation and image of the organisation. Ultimately highly employable employees tend to change or adapt proactively which then relates to performance and these are the employees that organisations would like to retain (Fugate *et al.*, 2004).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The main aim of chapter 3 was to conceptualise the constructs of career adaptability and employability attributes. Furthermore, the researcher sought to provide an overview of the literature pertaining to the theoretical models that predominantly influence the notion of career adaptability and employability attributes. The variables influencing the development of career adaptability and employability attributes have been discussed in detail. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the implications of talent retention on career adaptability and employability attributes.

The following aims were discussed in detail in chapter 3:

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the two constructs career adaptability and employability attributes in terms of theoretical models in the literature

Research Sub- aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective

Part of research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

Chapter 4 deals with retention factors - which is part of research aim 2 - in order to address the third constructs and to establish how individuals' biographical characteristics (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) influence the development of retention factors.

Chapter 4 will also deal with part of research aims 3 and 4, whereby concluding the aims of the literature review.

This will conclude the aims of the literature review.

CHAPTER 4: RETENTION FACTORS

Keywords: talent retention: retention factors

Chapter 4 addresses part of the second, third and fourth aims pertaining to the conceptualisation and explanation of the factors of the retention construct in terms of the theoretical models in the literature, and how the demographical characteristics influence the development of competencies in this respect.

In this chapter, the researcher will identify and conceptualise the relationship between the attributes of employability and the retention factors in terms of exploratory theoretical models, and will conceptualise the effect of socio-demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The construct 'retention factors' and the related theoretical models will be explored. The variables influencing the development of the retention factors and the implications for talent retention will also be discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the theoretical foundations of the construct 'retention factors', highlighting the contributions and limitations of the relevance of this research. The theoretical integration also will be discussed.

4.1 RETENTION FACTORS

The concept 'retention factors' will be discussed in detail in the following sections. The concept will be conceptualised and the theoretical models will be explained thoroughly. The variables influencing the development of retention factors and the impact on talent retention will also be discussed.

4.1.1 The conceptualisation of 'retention factors'

According to several researchers, as indicated below, the success, effectiveness and survival of organisations are determined by the retention of highly talented, dedicated and exceptional individuals (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2015; Vaiman & Haslberger, 2013; Zhang, Ahammad, Tarba, Cooper, Glaiser & Wang, 2015). The competency, efficacy, profitability and sustainability of any organisation in the 21st century world of work depend on attracting and retaining key and valuable employees (Das & Baruah, 2013; Malcolm, Jones, Pickernell & Packham, 2015; Yang, 2013; Yee, 2012). Highly professional, talented and educated

employees are the most vital and dynamic irreplaceable resources that deliver great products and services, provide their customers and colleagues with immense satisfaction, increase product sales, and make organisations great and effective (Graen & Grace, 2015; Lin & Cheng, 2013; Kwenin, Muathe & Nzulwa, 2013). It is essential for organisations to make hard-to-beat offers, especially in respect of strong employee recognition and dynamic employee rewards, in order to win and retain highly talented and competent employees in the competitive business environment (Dockel, 2003; Gupta, 2013; Mohammed, 2015). Haider, Rasli, Akhtar, Yusoff, Malik, Aamir, Arif, Naveed and Tariq (2015) postulate that it is vital for organisations to offer a comprehensive and competitive compensation package with solid and dynamic benefits in order to attract and retain superior talent. It is these talented individuals who will drive the organisation to be successful, competitive, effective, profitable and sustainable and who will ensure survival in this volatile and challenging world of work.

Organisations are relying on exceptional and extraordinary forms of human capital as sources of differentiation (Guma, 2011; Jakhar, 2015; Smit, Stanz & Bussin, 2015). In the new global and dynamic world of work, having highly competent and intelligent employees has become the key differentiator for performance management and for leveraging the competitive advantage for most organisations (Bhati & Manimala, 2011; Hecker, 2015; Mckenna, 2013; Micik & Ludvik, 2015; Yang, 2013). Goud (2014) asserts that in today's competitive business environment highly skilled and talented employees have become the major differentiating factors in most organisations. In order for organisations to be able to retain rare talents who are resilient, adaptive, intellectual, agile and versatile, it is important that organisations create good and healthy working environments and work/life policies that will attract and retain bright and productive individuals. Narang (2013) contends that a democratic and stimulating work environment is crucial to retaining highly talented individuals. Organisations' work policies and procedures must be flexible enough to provide the employees with the freedom to carry out their work to the best of their ability, so that they may enjoy a balance between their lives at work and their private lives (Deery & Jago, 2015; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Oginni *et al.*, 2013).

In order to confront the changing landscape of the 21st century, organisations need to motivate, develop and mentor employees with high potential to build a healthy talent pipeline in order to engage fiercely in the war for talent and to devise effective tactics to compete in this dynamic world of work (Giannetti & Metzger, 2015; Hess, Jepsen & Dries, 2011; Zhang, 2013). The war for talent is now truly global because of the shortage of skilled and talented individuals, and no organisation is safe from local or foreign talent poaching; there is no fixed or easy way to prevent poaching (Bluen, 2013; Drew, 2015; Venkatesh & Geetha, 2015).

The best holistic strategy to curb poaching is for organisations to make sure that they are employers of choice, so that they will be able to attract, retain and deploy the top talent needed to meet and exceed the strategic objectives (Kheswa, 2015; Lakshmi & Sohail, 2013; Subramaniam, 2011). This acute scarcity of talent is mostly caused by talented and skilled individuals emigrating in search of better opportunities elsewhere. It is vital for organisations to create an organisational culture that superior talent and emerging stars would want to join, a culture that nurtures and cares for its top performers (Dockel, 2003; Majeed, 2013; Mohan & Muthuswamy, 2015). Organisations need to create a culture of stewardship that extensively invests its time and resources in developing the talent within the organisations (Kontoghiorghes, 2015; Monroe, 2013). Talent is the most crucial resource for an organisation. Talent is the most important weapon to fight the war for talent that is raging globally and that is going to be around for decades (Das & Baruah, 2013; Kane, 2015; Okech, 2015; Pinto & Dhulla, 2012; Whelan & Carcary, 2014). According to Kibui and Kanyiri (2014), the chronic shortage of talented and skilled employees adversely affects the creation of a deep and strong pool of skills. The ability of an organisation to build a strong pool of talent is central to its success in the 21st century. A solid pool of talent should be developed through training and development. An organisation should implement continuous learning and career development opportunities in order to attract and retain scarce talent, and to curb and ease the chronic shortage of superior and competent employees (Chen, 2014; Larsen, 2013; Mlinar, 2013; Windsor, Russomanno, Bargogliotti, Best, Franceschetti, Haddock & Ivey, 2015).

The attrition of employees, especially key employees and high performers, can be disruptive and costly (Amiani, 2014; Palwasha, Raziq & Khan, 2015; Yang, 2013). A turnover of key employees causes a loss of knowledge, productivity, customers, a damaged morale and the image of the organisation, a destabilised business, together with the incurring costs associated with the separation and hiring and training which are bound to affect the organisation's overall commitment (Davis, 2013; Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015; Miryala, 2015; Phonsanam, 2010; Ragupathi, 2013). It is important for organisations to implement strong and holistic retention strategies to prevent the loss of knowledge because of the economic downturn, workforce layoffs, and the demographics, which see many managers retiring (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015; Farooq & Hanif, 2013; Whelan & Carcary, 2014). It is imperative for organisations to make sure that their top performers enjoy their jobs, and especially that they are satisfied with their jobs, to retain them (Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2015). Departing employees leave with what they know and with the critical knowledge of who they know (Hanif & Yunfeis, 2013; Kay, 2015; Mohan & Muthuswamy, 2015).

Organisations should transform their managers, by offering them training and development that will help them to grow into great retention leaders. One of the main reasons why employees leave their organisations is bad management. Organisations should make managers accountable for the turnover in their divisions, especially making sure that when an employee resigns in their division they will be the one responsible for replacing that employee (Graen & Grace, 2015; Yiu & Saner, 2014).

Retention factors are factors that facilitate the retention or departure of employees, and decisions to leave or remain with an organisation depends on the employee's priorities (Okech, 2015; Ratna & Chawla, 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Regardless of which theoretical model is considered, there are situations where voluntary employee turnover may be unavoidable and beyond the control of the management (Mohan & Muthuswamy, 2015; Van Dyk, 2011). Organisations are being challenged to do whatever it takes to ensure that all the retention factors are implemented fairly throughout the organisation in order to attract and retain superior talent and to prevent the top talented employees from leaving the organisation (Dastagir, 2012; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015). Retention is critical in organisations, because it ensures organisational sustainability in a dynamic and unpredictable business environment (Bethke-Langenegger, 2012; Gogate & Pandey, 2015; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015). Talented individuals are scarce. Top performers are highly productive and always outperform others. Talent is the last resort for the competitive edge (Herbert, 2016; Kumudha, 2012; Mohammed, 2015).

It is imperative for organisations to be fully aware of the factors that motivate their employees to stay or to leave the organisations, to be able to effectively retain the talented and knowledgeable employees, who will guarantee a competitive advantage to the organisation (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Jakhar, 2015).

In this section, the concept of retention factors was conceptualised.

Dockel's (2003) theoretical model and other theoretical models are discussed below.

4.1.2 Theoretical models

4.1.2.1 Dockel's retention factors model (2003)

Dockel's (2003) conceptualisation of retention factors is of relevance to this research. The construct of retention factors forms an important part of Dockel's (2003) retention factors

model. Dockel (2003) identified six top retention factors, namely compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies.

For the purpose of this study four other retention factors are added to Dockel's (2003) six retention factors, namely a good working environment, employee recognition or reward systems, organisational culture and employer branding. Table 4.1 outlines Dockel's (2003) six top retention factors.

Table 4.1

Dockel's (2003) Six Top Retention Factors

Retention factor	Literature source
A competitive compensation package	(Dockel, 2003; Gupta, 2013; Palwasha <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Schroevers & Hendriks, 2014)
Job characteristics (a variety of skills, job autonomy, job satisfaction)	(Deery & Jago, 2015; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Dockel, 2003; Liang, 2013)
Training and development opportunities	(Botha, 2015; Dockel, 2003; Haider <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Graen & Grace, 2015; Okech, 2015; Palwasha <i>et al.</i> , 2015)
Supervisor support	(Dockel, 2003; Du Plessis <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Magnusson & Silfverberg (2013)
Career development opportunities	(Dockel, 2003; Kibui & Kanyiri, 2014; Narang, 2013; Noorhisham & Idris, 2013)
Work/life policies	(Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Deery & Jago, 2015; Dockel, 2003; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Jepngetich & Njue, 2013)

a. A comprehensive and competitive compensation package

According to Dockel (2003), a competitive compensation package comprises of financial rewards (basic salary, bonus, cash recognition, incentives, flexible pay, stock options, and hot skills premiums) and a benefits package (time off, pension, allowances, and medical aid). Money is still the primary incentive used to attract highly professional and talented individuals (Dockel, 2003; Haider *et al.*, 2015; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013). However, some researchers are of the opinion that money is not the long-term strategy for hiring and

retaining highly skilled and exceptionally talented individuals (Kozic, 2012; Miryala, 2015; Nagpal, 2010). According to Gupta (2011), organisations should do research on the compensation averages of the particular position nationally and regionally. Then the organisation should pay its employees appropriately and fairly, using market-related averages. It is imperative for organisations to pay their employees adequate compensation, which matches or exceeds the market standards in order to be able to retain the top talent (Deshmukh, 2015; Srinivasan, 2011; Suikkanen, 2010). Many researchers support the view that a competitive, fair and consistent pay system is one of the most popular and highly effective retention strategies that any organisation can utilise in order to counteract poaching from competitors (Hemalatha & Savarimuthu, 2013; Jepngetich & Njue, 2013; Nderitu, 2015). Hassan *et al.* (2011) indicate that employees have to be paid reasonably, fair and well. Employees must be treated with respect; indicate to them that the organisation cares about them as persons, not merely as employees, reward them for outstanding performance. Schroevers and Hendriks (2014) postulate that for an organisation to attract and retain the talented and brightest employees to their organisation it has to provide the top performers and the competent employees with attractive salary and reward packages, higher than for the average performers. Comprehensive compensation is one of the primary motivations for employees to stay in an organisation (Deshmukh, 2015; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2010; Sindhvani & Mamgain, 2013).

Guma (2011) points out that compensation has always been at the heart of any employment relationship, and it is a vital and powerful tool for shaping and determining behaviour aimed at attaining the strategic objectives of an organisation. Compensation satisfaction plays an important role in employee retention. Employers have to ensure that benefits such as a pension fund, life and health insurance, retirement plans, as well as allowances that include company cars or subsidized transportation are implemented (Hong *et al.*, 2012; Larsen, 2013; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012; Were, 2015). Compensation satisfaction, whatever its dimensions, is a key element in retention policies because it helps to strengthen the employees' link with the organisation and helps to retain the top employees for a long time (Amiani, 2014; Anis *et al.*, 2011; Bhattacharyya, 2015). Miryala (2015) asserts that offering an attractive and competitive benefits package with components such as life insurance, disability insurance and flexible hours motivates employees' performance and guarantees that they remain committed and loyal to the organisation. Elegbe (2010) is of the opinion that the remuneration of the organisation may be comparatively low, but it is vital to have an attractive basket of benefits that is unique to the organisation. Examples of this are fully furnished houses, an employee housing loan scheme, health care systems to its employees and their dependents, primary and nursery schools, technical high school, recreation

facilities, family welfare. Such attractive benefits will attract and retain highly talented and competent employees, in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the business (Elegbe, 2010; Ahuja & Chaudhary, 2016). Several researchers emphasise that stable benefits are the most essential strategy to use in making top employees join and stay with an organisation (Haider *et al.*, 2015; Masood, 2011; Muriuki, 2013).

A comprehensive and competitive compensation and benefits package is one of the most important retention factors in reducing employee turnover, improving the employees' morale, and achieving the targets within the organisation (Ejaz, 2015; Narang, 2013). Competitive and attractive compensation and benefits packages are vital and critical to building and retaining the superior talent in an organisation (Fatima, 2011; Nderitu, 2015). It is essential that the benefits have a lasting impression on the employee. It will continue to substantiate the employees' perception that they are valued. This will result in job satisfaction (Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Patra & Singh, 2012; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015). Fauzi *et al.* (2013) postulate that a comprehensive and competitive compensation package, supported by an attractive benefits package is the most powerful tool to attract, retain and motivate high performers to maintain the organisation's goals. Fair compensation does not guarantee employee commitment and loyalty. Organisations should offer competitive rewards and compensation systems that motivate the employees to be highly productive and bring about better job satisfaction (Noorhisham & Idris, 2013; Saxena, 2013; Were, 2015). If an organisation's compensation policies are below market level and it pays poor salaries, the organisation will suffer from workforce shortages and will have problems retaining its top employees (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Farooq & Hanif, 2013; Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013).

b. Job characteristics

Highly talented and knowledgeable employees would like to do interesting and challenging work that utilises their skills and talents (Dockel, 2003; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Repetitive, narrow work experience with little individual discretion repels exceptionally skilled and talented employees (Dockel, 2003; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013). According to Jepngetich and Njue (2013), giving challenging jobs to employees is one of the most effective retention strategies. Jepngetich and Njue (2013) continued to say that jobs should be designed to maximise a variety of skills, the significance of tasks, autonomy and control. Talented employees are motivated and stimulated by challenging work that matches their abilities and skills, which means they are more involved in and more satisfied with their jobs, and consequently more committed and loyal to the organisation (Jepngetich & Njue, 2013).

Job characteristics refer to the aspects of the job, such as varied work, opportunities to solve challenging problems and to work with the best people, freedom, flexibility, and the ability to pursue interesting assignments (Shakeel, 2015; Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013). Job characteristics such as variety and autonomy are well-established retention strategies, and are known to encourage employees to stay with the organisation for a long time (Deery & Jago, 2015; Dockel, 2003). For Das and Baruah (2013), job satisfaction is a pleasurable and positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of the individual's job or his or her job experience. According to Davis (2013), job satisfaction has been linked to the intention to quit, meaning that employees who are committed to their jobs are less likely to quit. Job satisfaction is a combination of psychological, physical and environment circumstances that cause an individual to claim that he or she is satisfied with his or her job (Anis *et al.*, 2011; Benard, 2012).

Job autonomy relates to increased feelings of personal responsibility. *Job autonomy* is defined as the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, flexibility and discretion to the individual to schedule the work and to determine the procedures and rules on how to do the work (Jansinki, 2015; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Talented employees possess a solid degree of autonomy in the application of their knowledge and abilities (Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Horvathova, 2011). When the degree of their job autonomy is high, employees will view the outcomes of their work in terms of their own efforts, initiatives, decisions and abilities, rather than in respect of the rules, procedures or instructions from their supervisors (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). According to Davis (2013), loyal, committed and talented employees enjoy the autonomy they receive in respect of their jobs because it fulfils what they are looking for, especially empowerment. Successful organisations invest resources toward empowering their talented and skilled employees to take responsibility for their work and their decision-making (Deery & Jago, 2015). The degree of freedom, flexibility and independence enjoyed by employees and their participation in planning and organising their work all have an influence on talent retention (Jansinki, 2015).

According to Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012), *skill variety* is defined as the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, involving the use of the number of different skills and talents of the person. Talented and skilled employees are bound to leave the organisation if their skills are underutilised (Jepngetich & Njue, 2013). Shakeel (2015) reported that in many organisations, competent and intelligent employees had the necessary skills and training, yet they were not fully utilised. It is imperative for organisations to address the personal needs of their talented employees to enhance

retention (Dockel, 2003). Organisations should see to it that their highly professional and superior employees are kept satisfied by giving them the chance to be creative, to master different skills, and to become involved in interesting projects (Deery & Jago, 2015).

c. Training and development opportunities

Training and development is one of the top strategies to utilise in attracting and retaining top performers (Were, 2015). Current skills sets are proving not sufficient enough to meet the rapidly changing and fast-paced world of work. It is vital for organisations to keep skills fresh and to remain updated with new technologies and new systems through training and development (Dockel, 2003; Ejaz, 2015). Training and development widens and sharpens an individual's compatibility with opportunities for advancement contingent upon his or her ability to competently tackle new levels of responsibility and challenges. This is a critical investment in human capital (Bernard, 2012; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015). According to Hinkin and Tracey (2010), training and development pertains to ongoing development opportunities and clear career paths that are essential motivators for promoting retention and professional growth. Sinha and Sinha (2012) postulate that learning and development is crucial for the retention of talented employees. An organisation has to establish a supportive learning and working climate. For Farooq and Hanif (2013), training and development opportunities should be presented especially to those employees who can give back the true return to the organisation and give the best output on this investment. Training and development increases the abilities of employees. Training and development use specific techniques and skills to advance an employee and also provide assistance to correct the deficiencies in the employee performance, and the function of development is to give the skills and abilities to employees which will be beneficial for the organisation in future (Haider *et al.*, 2015; Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013).

Continuous learning and development is paramount to attracting and retaining an educated and competent workforce (Kibui & Kanyiri, 2014; Sindhvani & Mamgain, 2013). Training is a key retention factor for employees of any age (Gopi & Samuel, 2013). Employee training provides opportunities for advancement, which can lead the employees to believe that they are valued by the organisation. It may also affect the psychological state of the employees, as it can be viewed as an enthusiasm by the organisation to improve the employees' skills and abilities, which in turn may increase their attachment to the organisation (Bugg, 2015; Sharma, 2015). Kozic (2012) contends that learning organisations are constantly challenging their employees to learn and grow in ways that promote their high-level contributions and personal capabilities. Managers can promote learning by exposing their

employees to challenging tasks and job-related development activities, and they can coach them along the way (Kozic, 2012; Umamaheswari & Krishnan, 2015). Gopal and Vij (2011) support Kozic (2012) in saying that it is vital for organisations to provide their employees with continuous learning opportunities on and off the work field through management development and distance learning programmes. Detuncq and Schmidt (2013) postulate that learning and development places the emphasis on the professional development required by individuals to successfully do their jobs, such as training in technical or job-related skills and related competencies. Hong *et al.* (2012) emphasise that *training* is the systematic acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees to adequately perform an assigned job or task in order to boost their performance in the work environment. Fauzi *et al.* (2013) assert that training and development increase an employee's skills, develop the expertise in individuals for the purpose of improving performance, advance current skills of employees to current deficits and improves relevant skills and abilities and increases employees' satisfaction with their existing jobs and workplace. Training should impact on new knowledge and skills if the training is relevant, meet employee and organisational needs, and be efficiently and effectively designed and delivered (Behera, 2016; Okech, 2015). According to Malcom *et al.* (2015), if the results of training reflected in improvements in relevant knowledge and the acquisition of relevant skills, then employee job performance should improve, provided that the skills learned in training transfer to the job. The more knowledge an employee acquires, the more he or she will perform and meet the global challenges of the market place (Das & Baruah, 2013). Improvement in performance, such as productivity, quality and services are the training outcomes, if the job is strategically aligned with the organisation's needs (Hemalatha & Savarimuthu, 2013). Talwar and Bhatia (2015) indicate that formal education and training is highly instrumental in improving national production capacity, in particular saying that an educated population is a productive population. It is imperative for organisations to provide productivity-related training, in order to help their employees to perform at their highest level.

Amiani (2014) contends that training and development is an attempt to improve the employee's commitment on the currently held job or one related to it. Bernard (2012) touted training and development as vital and significant employee retention and a powerful tool. Hassan *et al.* (2013) indicate that training has a direct effect on employee retention. Suikkanen (2010) postulates that one way of coping in the competitive market is by ensuring that the employees possess the necessary skills by implementing training and development interventions. Two benefits of training are that training increases employability, raising the voluntary turnover; and training enhances commitment; thus, and most importantly, job-specific training increases retention (Choudhary, 2016; Shakeel, 2015). When employees

are being trained, they feel that the organisation is interested in them and wants to develop their careers. Individuals tend to stay with an organisation for a long time when they experience personal and professional growth (Jansink, 2015). Muriuki (2013) asserts that an organisation that supports its employees in achieving their personal growth through capacity building will increase their satisfaction, which also promotes their morale to stay with the organisation.

Development and advancement opportunities of employees not only reduce the turnover rate absenteeism but also increase employee commitment and satisfaction, which help to reduce the turnover and to increase retention (Anis *et al.*, 2011; Mandhanya, 2016; Miryala, 2015). Development opportunities encourage employees to adjust to difficulties on the job and enhance their chances of remaining in their current jobs (Jansink, 2015; Osman-Gani & Paik, 2016). According to Were (2015), advancement opportunities are likely to enhance the retention as people will stay in their present positions if they feel they are rewarded for the work well-done. In order to keep attrition low, the managers have to provide their employees with sufficient training in order to attain the necessary knowledge and skills to perform better. The result may be that older workers in the organisation are at the same expertise level as their younger counterparts (Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015). Well-trained employees in essence stay loyal and are more committed to their employers (Ejaz, 2015).

d. Supervisory support

Several researchers have recognised the role of supervisory support in the empowerment of employees (Dockel, 2003; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Yadav & Saxena, 2015). Mehta *et al.* (2014) point out that great leadership attributes have a positive correlation with the employees' intention to stay with an organisation. Mehta *et al.* (2014) continued to say that a cooperative, supportive and effective leadership style have been outlined as a powerful retention tool. Management's leadership style is one of the key factors for retaining talented and superior employees (Jakhar, 2015). The behavioural strategy of the leader is vital for employee retention because the leader is the head and image of the organisation. The effectiveness, efficiency and health of the organisation depend entirely on the leader (Chendroyaperumal & Bhuvanadevi, 2014). Genuine and positive supervisory support is critical in the retaining of top performers; on the other hand, negative supervisory support will repel employees (Anis *et al.*, 2011; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b). The lack of support, particularly from supervisors, decreases the workers' ability to cope with stressful jobs and increases the likelihood that they may want to leave (Jakhar, 2015).

A supportive, cooperative and effective leadership style is important for retaining talented individuals, because people do not leave organisations; they leave managers (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015; Lee *et al.*, 2010). Pauw (2011) is of the opinion that organisations should transform their managers into great retention leaders because people are an organisation's most valuable asset. A positive relationship between the employees and their immediate supervisors acts as a motivating factor for the employees. The supervisor's traits and valuable suggestions play an incredibly important role in their job satisfaction. This will promote the employees' satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation, and may lead to employees staying within the organisation for long (Gupta, 2013; Smit *et al.*, 2015). With profound support, employees are less likely to leave the organisation but will feel more engaged by having a good relationship and open communication with their supervisors (Narang, 2013; Patra & Singh, 2013). Social support of both colleagues and supervisors in the workplace has proven to be of great importance in the retention of superior talented employees (Dadie, 2015; Magnusson & Silfverberg, 2013). Dadie (2015) continues to explain that dissatisfaction with his or her immediate manager can directly affect the retention of an employee. Employees prefer managers who know and understand them, who treat them fairly, and are people they can trust, and who are respectful, courteous and friendly (Masood, 2011; Nderitu, 2015). Managers must build trust, esteem and high performance in order to retain their best and competent employees (Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Were, 2015). Suikkanen (2010) states that one of the main reasons why employees leave is because of poor supervision which can come in form of failing to respond to grievances, acting autocratically, abusing their positions or using favouritism, displaying hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours, or excluding physical contact. A leader should never explode with anger towards his or her employees; a leader should communicate with fairness, justice and tolerance in order to retain the top employees. A leader who never listens to his/her employees and who always uses hostile and harsh words or who demonstrates a lack of kindness will cause employees to quit quickly (Were, 2015).

Recognition from a supervisor relates to affective commitment as it makes the employees feel important, and in turn, helps to retain highly professional and intelligent employees (Almutairi & Zainal, 2013; Dockel, 2003; Shakeel, 2015). Amiani (2014) emphasises that most voluntary resignations result from dissatisfaction with supervisors. Amian (2014) continues to point out that managers need to treat people with respect. This means recognising them as individuals with different needs and wants, rewarding their achievements, helping them to develop, and treating them with consideration as human beings. Fatima (2011) is of the opinion that supervisor support is vital to the retention of highly talented individuals. Supervisors are the image or the face of the organisation; they

have a big influence on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the employees with their jobs (Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b). Employees look for trustworthy managers who recognise them and appreciate them, and who behave fairly and justly towards them (Yadav & Saxena, 2015). Recognition is very important, and has a positive and strong impact on the retention of exceptional and superior talent (Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013).

Supervisor feedback is important in the retention of educated and talented employees (Jakhar, 2015). According to Gupta (2013), in order for individuals to feel empowered, they have to understand the goals or division of their work and how their own work contributes to the organisational goals. It is important for supervisors to set clear performance expectations and to communicate these expectations to their employees (Larsen, 2013). Kozic (2012) added that communication is an important tool in helping an organisation to build committed employees and customers. Several researchers proposed communication techniques, such as across-the-board guidelines, listening, coaching and information sharing, in order to build a committed workforce (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015; Masibigiri & Nienaber, 2011; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Regular feedback on performance increases employees' intrinsic motivation (Dockel, 2003; Fauzi *et al.*, 2013). Feedback to employees is crucial, and has a positive and strong impact on the retention of exceptional and superior talent (Smit *et al.*, 2015). Supervisors should be well-rounded and shaped in communication and relationships with their employees in order to retain superior talent (Dadie, 2015).

According to Das and Baruah (2013), supervision by the immediate manager increases the level of job satisfaction in an organisation. The management's leadership style can affect organisational commitment and job satisfaction positively; and job satisfaction can affect organisational commitment and work performance positively (Das & Baruah, 2013; Nderitu, 2015).

e. Career opportunities

Career development entails a series of activities or an on-going lifelong process of development (Appireddi & Hariharan, 2016; Kibui & Kanyiri, 2014). It is a planned effort of achieving a balance between the individual's career needs and the organisation's workforce requirements (Ahuja & Chaudhary, 2016; Narang, 2013).

Organisations should provide its employees with the possibility of courses that will help them in their careers and their career movements (Schroevers & Hendriks, 2014). According to Mlinar (2013), organisations have to develop a desirable career path that will make

employees see a bright future in the organisation. Noorhisham and Idris (2013) contend that the purpose of career development is to create potential growth in the employees, and in helping the organisation in managing the many aspects in the requirements of the workforce. Career development opportunities were found to be the supporting reasons why talented individuals joined an organisation and their reason for staying with the organisation (Talwar & Bhatia, 2015). Mehta *et al.* (2014) postulate that career development opportunities cause employees to stay in the organisation for longer, and at the same time enhance their loyalty to the organisation.

Guma (2011) states that career development opportunities, is one of the strongest strategies used to attract and retain the best employees in the organisation. Career development is an ongoing process whereby an individual progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterised by a relatively unique set of issues, themes or tasks (Buhera, 2016; Fatima, 2011). Tiwari (2015) asserts that career and growth opportunities help individuals to keep pace with skills and knowledge. Skills development opportunities and career progression are major factors to attract and retain high calibre individuals (Fatima, 2011; Tiwari, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to provide their employees with learning and development opportunities, namely a supportive learning and working climate for the retention of talented employees (Edwards, 2016; Gopi & Samuel, 2013). Employees should be provided with guidance, empowerment and a choice of job tasks, development opportunities, challenging work, career advancement and career opportunities in order for the organisation to be able to attract and retain highly talented employees (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Yadav & Saxena, 2015).

According to Gopi and Samuel (2013), career development includes internal and external options that the employees may have. *Internal options* include promotions or movements to different positions within the same organisation (Gopi & Samuel, 2013; Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013). Internal careers of highly talented employees focus on career aspirations, values, perceptions and effective reactions to job experiences which can have important implications for their satisfaction, commitment and retention within the organisation (Dockel, 2003). External careers of talented and competent employees focus on the sequence of jobs and positions (Shakeel, 2015). Organisations need talented employees in order to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Individuals require career opportunities to develop and grow their competencies (Patra & Singh, 2012). Investing in employees sends a strong message that organisations value them and this will help the organisation in the retention of superior talent (Dockel, 2003).

f. Work/Life policies

Work/life balance is described as the ability of employees to create a balance between their personal lives and their work schedules, taking care to create as minimal as possible conflict between the multiple roles they have to fulfil in terms of their personal and work lives (Van Dyk *et al.*, 2013). Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) describe work-life balance as the individual's ability to meet both his or her work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities.

For Coetzee and Pauw (2013) work/life policies should include flexible work schedules, family-leave policies and child-care assistance. Flexible work includes flexi-time, working at home, part-time working, compressed working weeks, annualised hours, job-splitting, job-sharing and term-time-only working or special-leave schemes that provide the employees with the freedom to respond to a domestic crisis, or to take a career-break without jeopardising their employment status (Amiani, 2014). Employees tend to feel emotionally attached to an organisation due to the work/life benefits available to them (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). People want to know and feel that they are cared about in order for them to commit to an organisation (Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015). Liang (2013) postulates that organisations should give their employees more flexibility to balance their work and their lives, whereby they will gain better performances and higher retention rates in return. Work/life balance is assisting employees to find a life rhythm that allows them to combine their work with other responsibilities, activities or aspirations (Yadav & Saxena, 2015). Job flexibility is vital for retaining employees of all ages. Research shows that flexibility empowers individuals to facilitate a healthier balance between their work and their personal obligations - something that appeals to all ages (Gopi & Samuel, 2013). Flexible working hours in order to suit domestic responsibilities increases retention (Suikkanen, 2010). Amiani (2014) points out that the inability to juggle the demands of a job with those of the family is one of the more significant reasons for voluntary resignations from jobs. The main aim of the organisation should be to help employees to balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work. This should be a healthy balance (Deery & Jago, 2015). Deery and Jago (2015) goes on to emphasise that organisations could use family-friendly (work-life balance) policies to help recruit, attract and retain valuable employees.

Jepngetich and Njue (2013) are of the opinion that stress can be minimised by a balance between an employee's work and personal life, which then contributes towards employee retention. Miryala (2015) contends that many employees seek a job where they can

establish a balance between their work and their personal lives. In addition, Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2015) state that the focus of work-life balance is on the notion of a flexible and stress-free work environment by making provision for childcare facilities and access to families in order to attract and retain highly talented employees. A good work-life policy is one of the top and most solid tools to attract and retain the best employees, and to give their organisations a competitive edge (Hemalatha & Savarimuthu, 2013). It is imperative for organisations to implement effective work-life policy programmes in order to help the employees cope with stress at the workplace and to protect and take care of the health and wellbeing of employees (Dadie, 2015). Rao (2013) postulates that an effective work-life strategy has to do with the employees' needs and priorities, taking into consideration how they can be met in ways that are consistent with the needs of the business. It enhances the quality of the relationship between the employees and their total work environment (Shakeel, 2015). For the new generation of corporate professionals their family lives or their extra-professional interests are at least as important as, or even more important than, their work (Srinivasan, 2011). Srinivasan (2011) continues by emphasising that organisations, which want to retain their exceptional talent, have to create an environment that provides all the help possible for its employees to arrive at this balance. Many talented women executives leave their jobs when they find that they cannot do justice to their maternal and other family responsibilities if they continue in their jobs (Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Srinivasan, 2011). To fully harness the potential of womanpower in the workplace, organisations have to create a woman-friendly workplace (Yadav & Saxena, 2015).

According to Mehta *et al.* (2014), providing emotional support and a work-life balance for their employees helps organisations in lowering the turnover. A work-life balance has a direct relation in employees' decisions to stay at or to leave the organisation (Deery & Jago, 2015). It is vital for organisations to have norms on working hours, role models at the workplace, flexible working hours and arrangements, effective talent acquisition and training practices that will help the organisation to retain superior talent (Mehta *et al.*, 2014). Work-life balance initiatives, telecommuting, flexi time, employers reoffering flexi time and telecommuting provide their employees with a significantly better work life balance, improved satisfaction and motivation leading to higher performance and increased retention (Miryala, 2015).

4.1.3 Other theoretical models

4.1.3.1 Fatima's model of employee retention

Figure 4.1 outlines ten employee retention factors discussed by Fatima (2011).

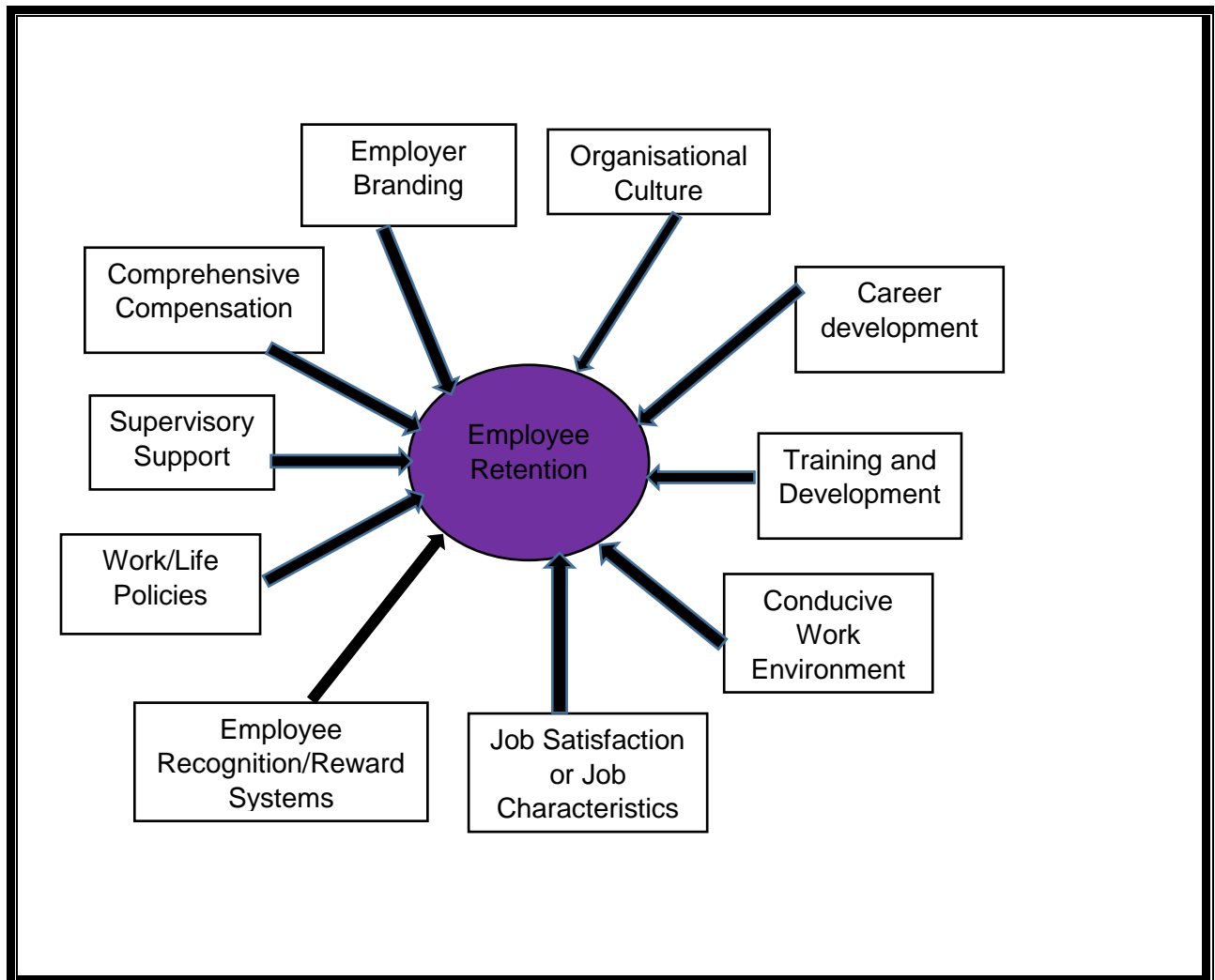


Figure 4.1 The Employee Retention Factors Model by Fatima (2011, p. 28)

Dockel's (2003) top six retention factors, included in this model (competitive compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies) are discussed in detail in Dockel's (2003) model of retention factors above. The following four retention factors of Fatima (2011) that have not been discussed in Dockel's (2003) model of retention factors are discussed below.

a. Employee recognition and reward systems

Gupta (2013) asserts that recognising and rewarding an employee's performance reinforces positive behaviour and encourages additional positive behaviour to achieve the objectives of the organisation, and this in turn may help the organisation to retain its competent

employees. Yadav and Saxena (2015) emphasised that if employees are acknowledged and appreciated, they will be more likely repeat their behaviour in the future, and even make more of an effort than before. Kozic (2012) indicates that the recognition of the work done by the employees is one of the best ways to ensure the loyalty of the employees, a low turnover, and retention. Several researchers have indicated that recognition from their bosses, their team members; their co-workers and customers enhance the employees' commitment, loyalty and retention (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2013; Choudhary, 2016; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a). Muriuki (2013) contends that employees need to experience a sense of appreciation; this makes them feel valued and trusted, and will increase their job satisfaction, and eventually their staying with the organisation. The recognition and the rewarding of the employees are some of the most vital factors for attracting and retaining talented employees.

Recognition is one of the several types of non-financial incentives that an organisation can utilise to attract and retain superior talent (Mandanya, 2016; Miryala, 2015). It is one of the most powerful methods of luring talented employees to stay longer with the organisation (Amiani, 2014). Employees need to know how well they have achieved their objectives or carried out their work and that their achievements are appreciated (Inda, 2016; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015). Mlinar (2012) is of the opinion that employees should be rewarded either with money or gifts, such as a loyalty bonus, employee recreation gifts (movie tickets, gift vouchers, engraved gifts, perks, parental care work life program, free meals, festive gifts, reimbursement of tuition fees for higher education and life-style choices). According to Gopal and Vij (2011), it is highly motivating for employees' talents to be recognised and rewarded accordingly. It is vital for organisations to provide their employees with challenging and empowering projects in order to implement promotions and incentives based on their performances to attract and retain talented employees (Ahuja & Chaudhary, 2016; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013).

b. Employer branding

According to Lakshmi and Sohail (2013), employer branding means capturing the essence of an organisation and letting it be felt by the employees in a manner that engages them. Lakshmi and Sohail (2013) continue to point out that employer branding conveys the employee value proposition offered by the organisation that is the sum of an organisation's culture, artefacts, rituals, systems, functions and attitude. In this challenging red job market, it is vital for organisations to build and retain a talent pool. It seems that the talent is there, but finding the right kinds who fit culturally with the organisation and the job roles and responsibilities is becoming increasingly difficult (Born & Kang, 2015; Kucherov & Zamulin,

2016). *Employer branding* is defined as a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees and related stakeholders about a particular organisation (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010). Employer branding has become a top priority with organisations, in their quest to win the war for talent, especially to attract and retain scarce talented individuals by being an employer of choice (Kucherov & Zamulin, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2015). Verma *et al.* (2015) continues to emphasise that good branding attracts prospective candidates' attention and creates a desire to apply for jobs at that organisation. Good branding builds an employee value proposition that matches both what the employees want and what is expected of them in return. Employer branding is a relatively new approach (first used in the early 1990s) towards recruiting and retaining the best possible human talent within a recruiting environment that is becoming increasingly competitive (Sokro, 2012). Employer branding is a set of attributes and qualities often intangible. It aims to promote unique benefits and unique employment experience to external and internal employment markets in order to make the employer distinctive in attracting and retaining people who will thrive best in its culture (Venkatesh & Geetha, 2015). Venkatesh and Geetha (2015) went on to postulate that employer branding could be used to help organisations to compete effectively in the labour market and to drive employee loyalty through effective recruitment, engagement and retention practices.

According to Jepngetich and Njue (2013), the overall strategy should be to become an employer of choice in the attraction and retention of talent. An organisation that is an employer of choice is one where people want to work and stay (Kheswa, 2015). Kheswa (2015) went on to say that, organisations with employer of choice status are able to compete effectively for talent because they are able to meet their needs and the needs of the organisation simultaneously. Horvathova and Durdova (2011) assert that the organisation should do its best to be an attractive employer and to be a place where people like to work, an excellent workplace and an excellent place for work performance. Guma (2011) contends that employees want to work for the best employers. Organisations should strive to be the best employers because good employer branding translates directly into lower turnover (Bugg, 2015). Becoming an employer of choice often involves the issue of acquiring the best talent for the organisation, motivating employees to improve their performance, keeping them satisfied and loyal, developing employees so that they can grow and contribute skills and ultimately retaining those employees (Guma, 2011; Verma *et al.*, 2015). Suikkanen (2010) postulates that employer branding is a retention-management technique. Being an employer of choice plays a critical role in retaining superior and exceptional talent.

Piti (2010) emphasises that it is vital for an organisation to create an employment brand or image in the market place that will naturally attract highly talented candidates who have a high level of fit with the organisation. Brand image is a competitive advantage and an organisation's brand is what uniquely differentiates its products and services from others (Born & Kang, 2015; Piti, 2010). Botha *et al.* (2011) assert that a strong employer brand acts as enticement for talent in the current market place. Employer branding encompasses an organisation's values, systems, policies and behaviours towards the aim of attracting, motivating and retaining its current and potential employees (Botha *et al.*, 2011). Employees bring value to organisations. Employees are increasingly becoming key in developing sustainable service brand differentiation (Suikkanen, 2010).

c. Organisational culture

According to Masood (2011), *organisational culture* includes the rigidity or flexibility of rules and regulations, the style of managing day-to-day affairs, the chances for mingling, sports and club activities. *Organisational culture* includes the basic assumptions and values learned by the members of the organisation, passed on to newcomers, and are visible by the ways in which people behave at the workplace (Kontoghiorghes, 2015; Suikkanen, 2010). Organisations with strong organisational culture experience increased employee retention in addition to increased satisfaction and commitment (Deshmukh, 2015).

Hassan *et al.* (2011) are of the opinion that an organisational culture that is open, trusting and fun is vital in the retention of top talent. It is important that organisations create a fearless culture that encourages honest, confrontational and open communication in order to attract and retain talented employees (Haider *et al.*, 2015; Nasir & Sabir, 2012; Ricco, 2010). According to Coetzee and Pauw (2013), it is essential that organisations create a culture of attracting, developing and retaining top employees. Davis (2013) indicates that a strong and positive organisational culture encourages and inspires employees to remain with the organisation. This is the kind of culture that binds employees to the organisation and to their jobs (Nderitu, 2015). Noorhisham and Idris (2013) mention that a positive organisational culture improves financial results and engagement; it sustains superior performance and competitive advantages. Organisations must cultivate a culture of talent stewardship that naturally identifies and grows talent that is waiting to be utilised (Monroe, 2013). Organisations that develop a culture of talent stewardship invest their time in getting to know the talent within the organisation, they take a non-traditional approach with their higher performance teams, they look broadly, look deeply, look externally, and get out of their comfort zones to identify the untapped talent (Jakhar, 2015; Monroe, 2013). It is paramount

for organisations to build a culture, which can promote a competitive advantage, and thereby retain their top talented employees (Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b).

d. Conducive work environment

According to Bernard (2012), *working conditions* refer to a work environment that promotes the efficient performance of their tasks by the employees. This refers to aspects such as the physical working conditions, the availability of office space, tools and equipment that make the execution of their jobs easier, the hours of work, internal customer support services from the administration department, the nature and tenure of their employment contract, safety in the workplace and the required support from their supervisors.

A good, democratic and stimulating work environment is critical to retain highly talented individuals (Oginni *et al.*, 2013). The policies and rules of organisations have to be flexible in order to provide their employees with the freedom to carry out their tasks to their liking, as long as the task is achieved (Deshmukh, 2015). A poor working environment may cause discomfort to employees who may end up being attracted to other organisations with better working conditions (Masood, 2011). Guma (2011) purports that working in a caring and supportive environment is often considered very important. Davis (2013) asserts that it is imperative for organisations to create a good and healthy working environment to sustain a committed and loyal workforce. He (2013) continued by emphasising that a good, healthy and conducive work environment can be created with the use of strategic retention strategies. This may improve and solidify employees' motivation and decrease voluntary turnover. Mrara (2010) contends that an environment conducive to working and positive working conditions is an important motivator for the retention of employees of high calibre, and who are the most experienced and skilled. Organisations need to develop a supportive, learning and challenging work environment to retain superior employees, a work environment with a conducive climate where employees can learn, are nurtured and developed and consequently perform and shine in their jobs (Fatima, 2011; Piti, 2010). Balakrishnan *et al.* (2013) assert that the work environment is considered one of the most important factors in employee retention. Employees strive to work and stay in those organisations that provide a good and positive work environment. The working conditions in an organisation play a role in employees' decisions whether to stay with or leave an organisation. The focus is on heavy lifts, noise, exposure to toxic substances and sufficient light (Patra & Singh, 2012). Patra and Singh (2012) went on to say that it has been identified that light is a possible determinant of job performance. Noise sometimes creates a snag in office environments and is harmful to employees' corporal and psychological welfare,

inspiration and at times productivity. In order to retain employees of all ages the design of the workplace should create an environment that supports employees with poor eyesight, provides tools which need less potency and apt positions for the aging body (Patra & Singh, 2012). A conducive environment is an important factor for employees to be successful in their career. If the work environment is noisy, condensed, not hygienic, stressful and there is no fun in the work environment employees will use this as an excuse for not performing (Fauzi *et al.*, 2013).

According to Suikkanen (2010), if the environment is not enriching and rewarding, ensuring employees can easily feel affinity for those around them, then resignation is probable. In practical terms employees working in modern, well-furnished offices tend to be more positive about their jobs (Suikkanen, 2010). Mehta *et al.* (2014) indicate that facilities like washrooms and restrooms are vital in the retention of potential talent. It is vital for organisations to provide an excellent environment, facilities, freedom of movement, a pleasant, friendly and prosperous atmosphere in order to attract and retain highly talented and competent employees (Narang, 2013).

4.1.4 Variables influencing the development of retention factors

4.1.4.1 Age

According to Agyeman and Ponniah (2014), most organisations tend to retain their most experienced employees, because tenure within the organisation may influence employee retention. Lee *et al.* (2010) found that age is a significant predictor of retention or turnover, especially with the rapid changes in the market environment that have resulted in frequent layoffs and job changes for individual employees. Lee *et al.* (2010) goes on to emphasise that years of work experience is a strong predictor of retention. Lee *et al.* (2010) hypothesise that as people grow they have more opportunity to learn about emotions, increase emotional vocabulary, and experience more and more varied life situations. Perhaps they accumulate more feedback and integrate this into greater self-awareness and this will strongly influence employers to retain such individuals. Pauw (2011) postulates that there is a clear association between age and retention.

4.1.4.2 Gender

Akila (2012) found that gender and retention are strongly related. Akila (2012) went on to say women are less retainable than their men counterparts because of gender stereotypes

and family responsibilities. Gender may influence the level of perceived job embeddedness. Akila (2012) suggests that women are twice as likely as men to quit their jobs. On the other hand, some organisations might prefer to retain women because of their high and stable emotional intelligence. Van Dyk (2011) postulates that gender generally has an effect on employees' retention within organisations. Van Dyk (2011) went on to say that generally, gender has an effect on employees' subjective experience of work. Van Dyk (2011) found that women assign a significantly higher rating to intrinsic values and may value the following intrinsic values higher than men do: challenging job, development opportunities, quality of feedback and autonomy. Women who are professionally trained and qualified reflect a preference for a spiral career pattern. Brown and Lent (2013) also found that retention varies by gender. Brown and Lent (2013) found that women did score significantly higher than men on empathy, interpersonal relationships and social responsibility, while men scored higher than women on self-actualisation, assertiveness, stress tolerance, impulse control, and adaptability. Based on these findings females might be better at managing their emotions and the emotions of others, as compared to males.

4.1.4.3 Marital status

Gray (2011) indicated that marital status and the family play different roles for women and men in affecting retention. Marital status affects the retention of women in scarce-skills occupations like IT, the fact that women are mostly responsible for family issues; this makes women IT employees less likely to remain in the labour force (Gray, 2011). Gray (2011) went on to say that the retention of women is significantly related to whether they are married or not, while the retention of men is not significantly related to whether they are married or not. Many talented women executives leave their jobs when they find that they cannot do justice to their maternal and other family responsibilities if they continue in their jobs (Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Srinivasan, 2011). Ultimately, marital status has a negative relationship to retention.

4.1.5 Other variables influencing the development of retention factors

4.1.5.1 Scarce skills

According to Van Dyk (2011), the aging workforce and scarce skills affect retention. The shortage of skills is one of the biggest constraints to achieving aggressive growth plans in organisations. South Africa is experiencing a general skills crisis, especially pertaining to the retention of its top talent or knowledgeable workers (Van Dyk, 2011). This brain drain leads

to depletion or loss of intellectual and technical personnel, with a negative outcome that impacts South Africa's ability to compete effectively in a global market (Elegbe, 2010; Van Dyk, 2011). It is imperative that South Africa or organisations retain its knowledgeable workers in order to promote its competitiveness (Elegbe, 2010). This situation is also exacerbated by the aging workforce globally.

4.1.5.2 Career success and career mobility

Career success reflects forward movement, verifiable attainments in areas such as work performance, pay raise, position and promotions, the individual's career goals and aspirations, added responsibility, level of decision-making (Ndzube, 2013; Ohme & Zacher, 2015). Career mobility and career success affect retention; especially those employees who are successful in their careers are always on the move. Career success is measured by intrinsic factors such as emotions, attitudes towards the job, and organisation which may be seen in the incumbent's job satisfaction, organisational satisfaction and relations with colleagues in general (Boyum, 2012).

4.1.5.3 Economic conditions

Economic conditions affect retention. Especially now that the current economy is not creating enough jobs for the many unemployed people; this might help the organisations to retain their top performers because they can't find good opportunities that easily (Van Dyk, 2011).

4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR TALENT RETENTION

According to Dockel (2003), for organisations to be economically competitive and to be able to compete on the global market, it is important that they implement the continuous learning and development of their employees to attract and retain those employees who are highly skilled. It is essential for organisations to provide their employees with the opportunity to develop and to learn in order to become effective and efficient, to enhance their employability and remain employable and to have the chance of being retained with their current organisation (Botha, 2015; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Were, 2015). The opportunities to learn and enhance new skills and expertise will boost their careers with the result that they will be retained by their current organisations (Miryala, 2015; Shakeel, 2015). Continuous learning and development will improve the employees' commitment to their current jobs and their attachment to their organisations (Amiani, 2014; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). These are

the employees with resilience, flexibility, adaptivity and positive outlook who have stood the test of time, and supported their organisations in the re-building and growing process (Shikari, 2011). This would consequently help organisations to attract and retain talented and highly skilled employees. According to Haider *et al.* (2015), training and development would improve the retention of superior talent and highly competent employees within an organisation. These training and development opportunities should emphasise developing career competencies including career oriented attitudes and values to improve employability of the existing employees (Jain & Jain, 2013; Osman-Gani & Paik, 2016).

A number of researchers have examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover and concluded that a strong negative relationship exists between the two, emphasising that when employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, there is high turnover and they are likely to quit their jobs (Davis, 2013; Dhamodharan & Elayaraja, 2013; Jansink, 2015). Those employees who were committed to their organisations and who were satisfied with their jobs were less likely to quit (Davis, 2013). It is important for organisations to make sure that jobs are designed to maximise skill variety, the significance of the tasks, autonomy, challenging assignments and are controlled to motivate and stimulate highly talented employees to remain with the organisation (Jepngetich & Njue, 2013; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Career planning is vital to employee retention; it is essential for organisations to assist their employees to plan their careers in order to promote employee retention (Akila, 2012). It is imperative for employees to adopt a more proactive stance towards their careers by drawing on their career self-management skills and career resilience to sustain their employability and to remain marketable and retainable (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Individuals' continued employability will depend on their competency to proactively and creatively manage their career development and adapt to change in this new world of work, in order to remain retainable (Ambrosius, 2016; Blackford, 2013). According to Oncel (2014), individuals must construct their own careers; to do so they are encouraged to be flexible, resilient, adaptive and proactive as well as develop employability skills and adaptability resources, to remain attractive and retainable. Ultimately, it is those employees who are proactive, flexible, adaptive and highly employable, who are mostly retained in organisations.

Research by several researchers acknowledged the following retention factors as powerful strategies in improving employee retention:

- a. comprehensive and competitive compensation,
- b. recognition and rewarding of work performed well,
- c. the provision of challenging work, promotions,

- d. good and healthy work environment,
- e. meaningful relationships with colleagues and supervisors,
- f. healthy balance between the employees' professional and personal life,
- g. open communication between supervisors and employees (Behera, 2016; Gupta, 2013; Larsen, 2013; Liang, 2013; Pearson, 2012; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015).

Together, these retention factors are powerful weapons for the retention of highly talented and intelligent employees. They are very strong retention strategies and, when implemented correctly, the organisation will be able to attract and retain superior employees and maintain its competitive advantage (Herbert, 2016; Martins, 2010; Smit *et al.*, 2015). The retention of employees is influenced by their job embeddedness and commitment to the organisation (Konstam *et al.*, 2015). These retention factors may help employees to enhance their loyalty, trust, commitment, identification and connection to the organisation; this will have a strong influence on employee retention (Ambrosius, 2016; Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015). Deshmukh (2015) and Verma *et al.* (2015) established that employee branding, leadership style, recognition and rewards, career development opportunities, continuous training and development, good and healthy working conditions and a balance between the employees' professional and personal life have a strong and positive impact on the retention of talented employees. The retention factors that were identified are extremely important in the attraction and retention of highly professional, committed, proactive, flexible, resilient, adaptive and employable employees (Dadie, 2015; Hejase *et al.*, 2016; Maruska & Perry, 2013).

It is imperative for organisations to realise that all retention factors are critical in reducing employee turnover, in improving the employees' morale, and in achieving the targets within the organisation (Das & Baruah, 2013; Rabbi *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, it is important for organisations to make sure that all the retention factors are given the same level of importance in order to be able to meet the needs of talented employees, to attract and retain them in the organisation (Appireddi & Hariharan, 2016; Graen & Grace, 2015). It is critical for the organisation to be able to retain individuals who possess a wide range of psychological career resources, who are generally better able to adapt to changing career circumstances and who tend to demonstrate higher levels of employability (Potgieter, 2014; Sin *et al.*, 2016). Research by Mehta *et al.* (2014) indicated that there is a strong and positive relationship between retention factors and the organisation's productivity, financial stature and competitive edge, because organisations that implement these retention factors are capable of attracting and retaining highly knowledgeable, smart, qualified, highly-skilled and productive employees. Ultimately highly adaptive and employable individuals can

identify and realise career opportunities, advance and gain promotion to higher career levels, and this can enhance their being retainable in organisations (Jain & Jain, 2013; Van der Heijde, 2016; Wen *et al.*, 2011). Cuyper *et al.* (2011) stated that employability is a critical requirement for enabling both sustained competitive advantage at the organisation level, and career success and positive employment outcomes at the individual level. It is hypothesised that individuals who are highly adaptable, flexible and proactive, are highly employable and these are the individuals that organisations would like to retain (Oncel, 2014; Senior *et al.*, 2014; Taylor, 2016). Highly talented employees are highly adaptive and highly employable and are highly marketable and retainable (Aggarwal, 2016).

4.3 THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

In chapters 3 and 4 the researcher explained the comprehensive literature review of the two independent variables, namely career adaptability and employability attributes, and the one dependent variable (retention factors) that are of relevance to this research study. The explanation was done in attempt to answer the first, second and third research questions, namely how the literature conceptualises and explains the three constructs by means of theoretical models in the literature, how the relationship between the three constructs can be explained, and whether the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level) can influence the theoretical relationship between the three constructs. The theoretical integration attempted to explore whether a theoretical relationship exists between the three constructs (career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors). It is evident from the literature that a theoretical relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors (Oncel, 2014).

Konstam *et al.* (2015) found that adults with high levels of the 4Cs (concern, control, curiosity and cooperation) of career adaptability are highly employable, and they have a good chance of being retained in organisations. Potgieter (2014) explained that individuals who possess a wide range of psychological career resources are generally better able to adapt to changing career circumstances, and tend to demonstrate higher levels of employability. It is further suggested that individuals who become involved in continuous training and development enhance their employability, and are highly marketable and retainable (Ibarraran, Ripani, Taboada, Villa and Garcia, 2014; Lane, 2016). Training and development therefore relates positively to employability and retention. Senior, Reddy and Senior (2014) found that employability is the key motivator for undergraduates' training opportunities that allow the students to develop authentic and transferable skills that would

benefit their entry into the job market. Shikari (2011) found that another key parameter that enhances employability is the ability to learn, unlearn and re-learn.

Fugate and Kinicki (2008) furthermore argued that highly employable employees tend to change or adapt proactively, which then relates to performance. Jain and Jain (2013) place the emphasis on developing career competencies, including career-oriented attitudes, to improve the employability of graduates as well as the existing employees, to enhance their being retainable in organisations. Cuyper *et al.* (2011) stated that employability is a critical requirement for enabling both sustained competitive advantage at the organisation level, and career success and positive employment outcomes at the individual level. Employees appear to be adopting a more proactive stance towards their careers by drawing on their career self-management skills and career resilience to sustain their employability (Benzuidenhout, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). According to Blackford (2013), career planning is a life-long learning process, which involves personal development, the ability to make informed career decisions, be self-managed and ultimately ensure employability. Eventually they are the individuals whom the organisations would like to retain. Wen *et al.* (2011) argued that employability is an important driving force for individuals' career development, especially in terms of rising up in a predefined hierarchy or on the corporate ladder. Active adaptability is vital for realising career opportunities, and by that definition employability entails the ability to advance and gain promotion to higher career levels (Wen *et al.* (2011). There is a strong and solid relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors (Blackford, 2013; Chopra & Rodriques, 2016; Savickas, 2011; Wen *et al.*, 2011).

The theoretical integration aims to answer the research aims 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4:

Research aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 3.2: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 3.4: To explain the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

Currently organisations are faced with one of the most expensive and disruptive problems of employee attrition. It is difficult to recruit and retain talented employees in such a volatile

business environment. Retention remains vital in organisations (Cascio, 2016; Dadie, 2015). Retaining employees who are committed and loyal to the organisation is a top priority in many organisations (Edwards, 2016; Graen & Grace, 2015), especially in a dynamic and volatile business environment where there are economic crises and unemployment. Committing highly talented and top performers to the organisation is becoming a huge challenge. It is imperative for organisations to make sure that they are capable of retaining their key and competent employees in order to stay competitive in the future (Kumari & Bala, 2016; Rabbi *et al.*, 2015).

Figure 4.2 below provides a conceptual overview of the three constructs, and how they relate to each other on a theoretical level. It is hypothesised that individuals who are highly adaptable, flexible and proactive, are highly employable, and these are the individuals who are sought after by organisations (Oncel, 2014; Senior *et al.*, 2014).

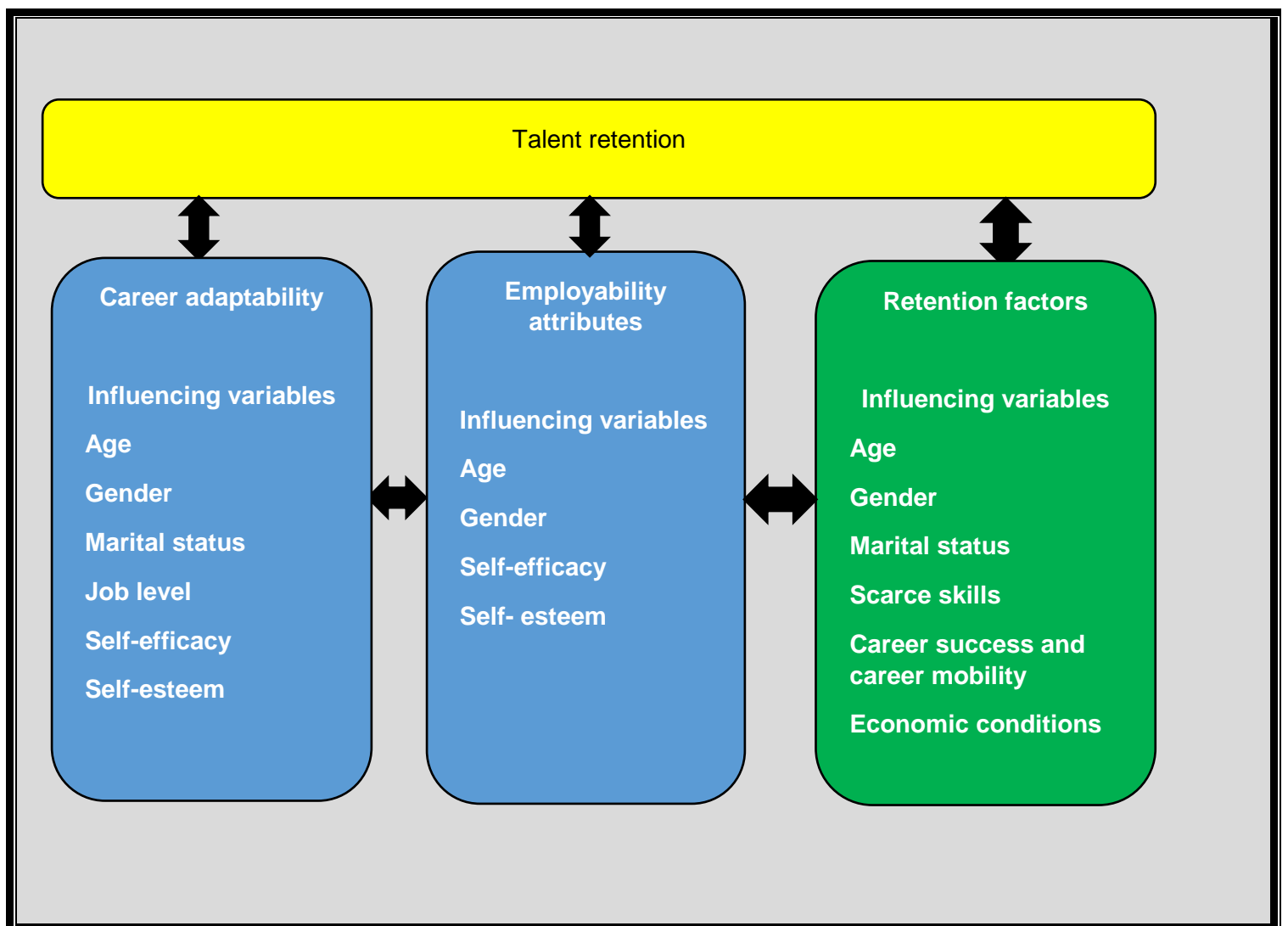


Figure 4.2: Hypothesised Relationship Between Career Adaptability, Employability Attributes and Retention Factors.

Figure 4.3 below provides a diagrammatic illustration of the proposed integrated theoretical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

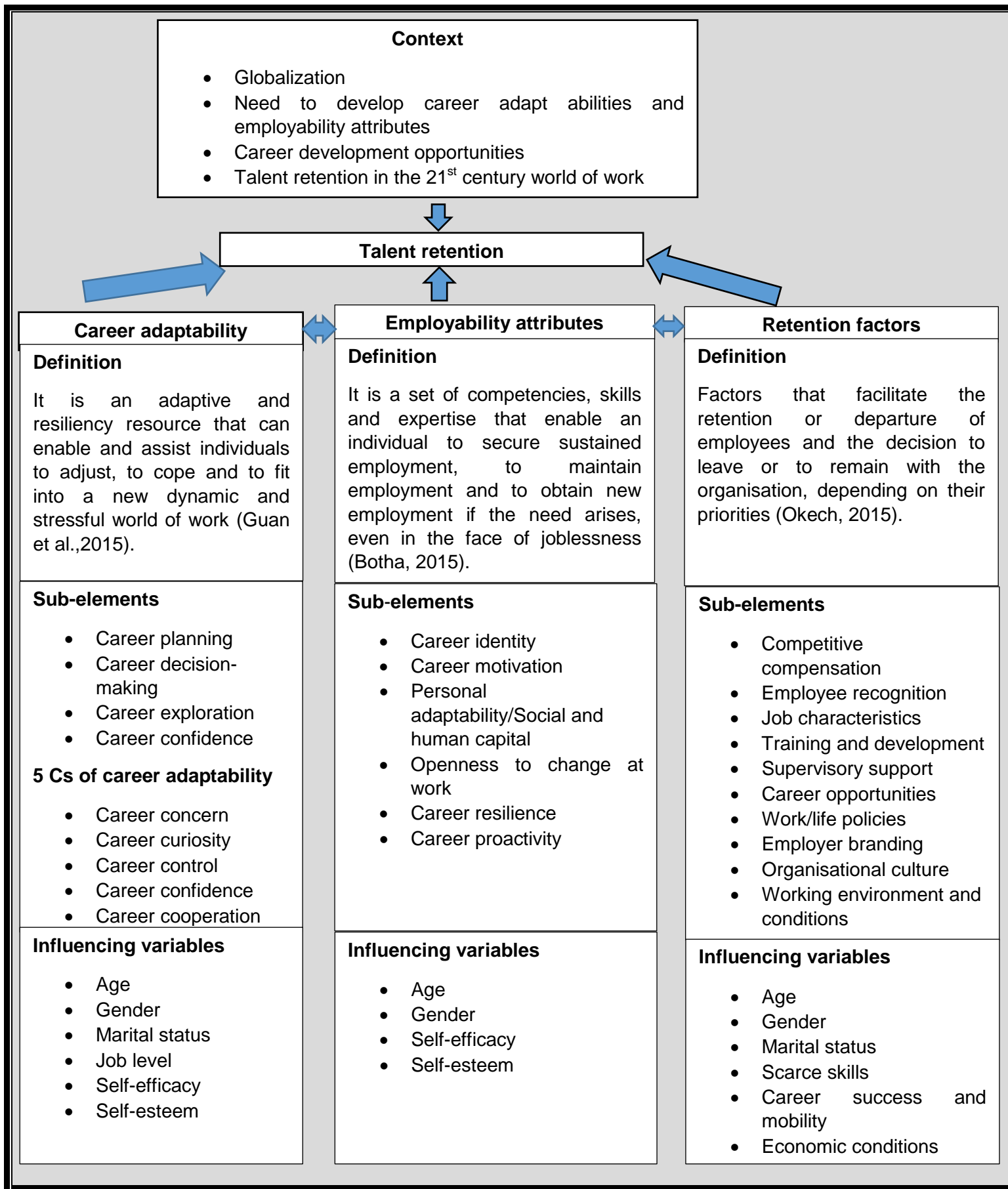


Figure 4.3: Integrated Overview of the Hypothesised Relationship between Career Adaptability, Employability Attributes and Retention Factors.

It is important to explore the relationship between the sub-elements of each of the three relevant constructs: career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This might provide career counsellors and HR practitioners meaningful guidance in terms of the relationship between the various constructs, and therefore provide an indication of the necessary interventions to facilitate the enhancement of career adaptabilities and employability attributes for the retention of highly talented employees. Based on the literature review, the hypothesised relationships are illustrated in Figure 4.3. Table 4.2 displays the integrated hypothesised relationships between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, in terms of four behavioural dimensions: cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal behavioural attributes. The theoretical relationship can be used by career counsellors and HR practitioners in order to assist individuals to develop their less developed career adapt-abilities and enhance their employability attributes in order to enhance the retention of superior employees as a desired outcome.

Table 4.2

Psychological Profile Illustrating Career Adaptability, Employability Attributes and Retention Factors

Psychological behavioural dimensions	Career adaptability	Employability attributes	Retention factors
Cognitive	Concern Control	Career self-management Self-efficacy	Training and development Supervisory support Career opportunities
Affective	Cooperation (Confidence)	Emotional literacy	Employee recognition and reward systems
Conative	Curiosity	Career resilience Entrepreneurial orientation Proactivity	Work/life policies Work environment and conditions Employer branding

Interpersonal	Cooperation	Cultural competence Sociability	Organisational culture
Implications for talent retention	Career adaptability has a positive effect on talent retention	Employability attributes have a positive effect on talent retention	Retention factors have a positive effect on talent retention

As shown in Table 4.2, the theoretical psychological career profile is described in terms of the psychological behavioural dimensions namely: cognitive, affective, conative and interpersonal personal levels.

On a **cognitive level**, individuals' career concerns and career control (Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Sverko & Babarovic, 2016), career self-management (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011) and self-efficacy (Brown & Lent, 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Van der Heijde, 2016) might influence their ability to create employment opportunities, sustain their employability and remain retainable. Furthermore, individuals' training and development (Choundary, 2016; Ejaz, 2016; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Were, 2015) and career opportunities (Ahuja & Chaunday, 2016; Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Talwar & Bhatia, 2015) might influence their ability to create employment opportunities, sustain their employability and remain retainable. Career development support practices, human resources practices and career counselling should focus on creating work/life policies and conducive work environments that promote career success, continuous learning, promotions and enhance self-efficacy as well as self-esteem. Individuals should also be assisted with critical and transferrable skills in order to be able to cope with challenges in the new world of work. It is imperative for organisations to assist employees to deal with the demands of work/life policies, in order to balance work and family challenges. Individuals should also be assisted within these interventions to enhance their self-efficacy and engage in managing their careers. Such interventions might help individuals to develop their career adapt-abilities, enhance their employability attributes and remain retainable in the new and challenging world of work.

On an **affective level**, individuals' career confidence (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Nota *et al.*, 2016; Zacher, 2016), utilisation of their emotional literacy (Bezuidenhout, 2010; Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Coetzee, 2010), being recognised and rewarded for high performance (Choudhary, 2016; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a; Yadav & Saxena, 2015) and positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues (Dockel, 2003; Jakhar, 2015; Yadav &

Saxena, 2015) may influence their ability to realise their personal career goals irrespective of work conditions, to sustain their employability and remain highly retainable. Career development support and counselling should help individuals to gain profound personal insight. This could enable individuals to improve on their personal self-esteem, to be able to manage their own emotions and to be able to use their emotions appropriately within the new world of work. Having a high personal self-esteem and ability to manage and utilise their emotions could prove vital to individuals in understanding and managing their careers, sustaining their employability and being highly retainable.

On a **conative level**, individuals' curiosity (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015; Hirschi & Valero 2015; Wilkins *et al.*, 2015), career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity (Bell, 2016; Bezuidenhout 2010, 2011), work/life balance, conducive work conditions and employer branding (Amiani, 2014; Deshmukh, 2015; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015; Miryala, 2015; Verma *et al.*, 2015) may influence their ability to adapt to career and organisational changes, to be ready to take and accept risks and challenging career development opportunities in order to improve themselves and their work environment, thereby enhancing their employability and facilitating their retention in organisations. These attributes may assist individuals to obtain and sustain employment and this may enhance their employability to be highly retainable. Career development support practices and career counselling may possibly help individuals to deepen their confidence in order to take risks, persevere in the face of difficult career circumstances and in the midst of changing and challenging situations within the 21st century world of work.

On an **interpersonal level**, individuals' cooperation (MacMahon *et al.*, 2012; Nota *et al.*, 2014; Tian & Fan, 2014), cultural competence (Bezuidenhout, 2011), sociability (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Bezuidenhout, 2011) and organisational culture (Deshmukh, 2015; Haider *et al.*, 2015; Kontoghiorghes, 2015) may influence their ability to interact and network with others. Effective interaction and networking may assist individuals in getting relevant information and feedback that can advance their careers, find new job opportunities, enhance their employability and remain retainable. Career development support practices and career counselling may assist individuals to identify and understand the emotions of others, in order to respond speedily to new opportunities, as well as to communicate and connect with people from different cultures.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 conceptualised the construct retention factors by means of a comparative examination of the literature and research on this construct. The variables influencing the development of retention factors were discussed in detail. The chapter concluded with the implications that retention factors have on talent retention and theoretical integration.

Herewith the literature research aims 2, 3 and 4 were achieved:

Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the construct of retention factors in terms of theoretical models in the literature.

Research aim 3: To identify and conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models.

Research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

Chapter 5 discusses the empirical investigation with the specific aim of assessing the statistical strategies that can be utilised to investigate the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the empirical investigation undertaken in the study with the specific aim of describing the statistical strategies that were employed to investigate the relationship dynamics between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Firstly, an overview of the study population and sample is presented. The measuring instruments will be discussed and the choice of each justified, followed by a description of the data gathering and processing. The research hypotheses will be stated, and the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

The empirical research phase entailed the following nine steps, as outlined below:

- Step 1: determination and description of the sample
- Step 2: choosing and justifying the psychometric battery
- Step 3: administration of the psychometric battery
- Step 4: capturing of criterion data
- Step 5: formulation of research hypotheses
- Step 6: statistical processing of data
- Step 7: reporting and interpretation of the results
- Step 8: integration of the research findings
- Step 9: formulation of conclusions, limitations and recommendations

Steps 1 to 6 are addressed in this chapter and steps 7 to 9 are discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

5.1 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

According to Tustin *et al.* (2005), population is defined as a total group of people or entities from whom information is required and this cluster of people forms part of the research and about which the researcher would like to identify certain characteristics. A sample is defined as a subset of a population or universe and is drawn from a population (Henry, 2014; Tustin *et al.*, 2005). According to Henry (2014), a good and reliable sample should have properties that make it representative of the entire population. A probability sample was chosen to achieve the objective of this study. Probability sampling is a plan in which everyone in the population has a chance of being included in the sample. The probability sampling implies that the chances of selecting specific members of the population for the sample are known (Henry, 2014; Tustin *et al.*, 2005).

The population consisted of adults who were employed as full-time or permanent and part-time or temporary employees at two South African advertising recruitment organisations.

5.1.1 Composition of age groups in the sample

This section provides information on the age distribution of the sample.

Table 5.1
Age Distribution of Sample

		AGE			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	25 years and Younger	41	12.2	12.2	12.2
	26 to 40 years	195	57.9	57.9	70.03
	41 to 55 years	72	21.4	21.4	91.39
	56 and older	29	8.6	8.6	100
	Total	337	100.1	100.1	

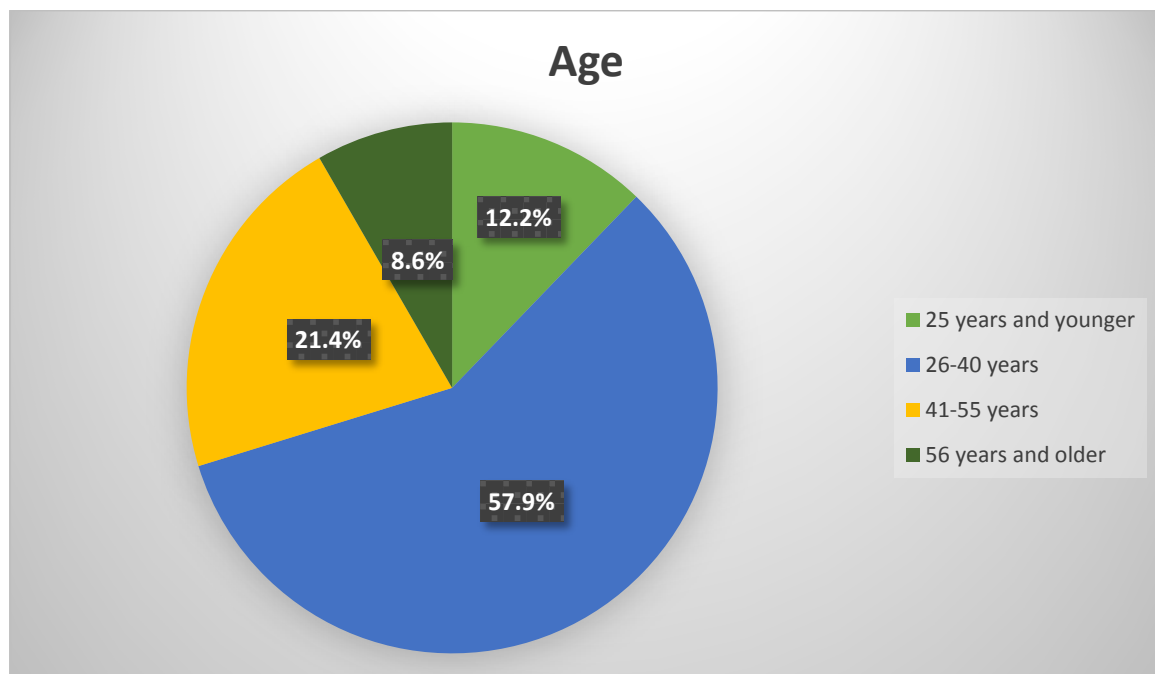


Figure 5.1 Sample Distribution by Age (n = 337)

Although the ages of the participants were measured in categories, ranging from 25 to 56 years and older, the frequencies seemed to be concentrated around the 26 and 40 age

group (57.9%). Table 5.1 and figure 5.1 indicate the age distribution of the participants in the sample. Participants aged 25 years and younger comprised of 12.2%; those between the ages of 26 and 40 years 57.9%; those between the ages of 41 and 55 years 21.4% and those who were 56 and older 8.6% of the total sample ($n = 337$).

The age groups are represented in Table 5.1 according to Super's (1957) career life stages. Participants younger than 25 are at the exploration stage, those between the ages of 26 and 40 are at the establishment stage, those between the ages of 41 and 55 are in the maintenance stage and those 56 years and older are in their late career stage.

5.1.2 Composition of gender groups in the sample

The gender distribution of the participants is indicated in this section.

Table 5.2
Gender Distribution of Sample

GENDER					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Females	115	65.9	65.9	65.9
	Males	222	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Total	337	100.0	100.0	

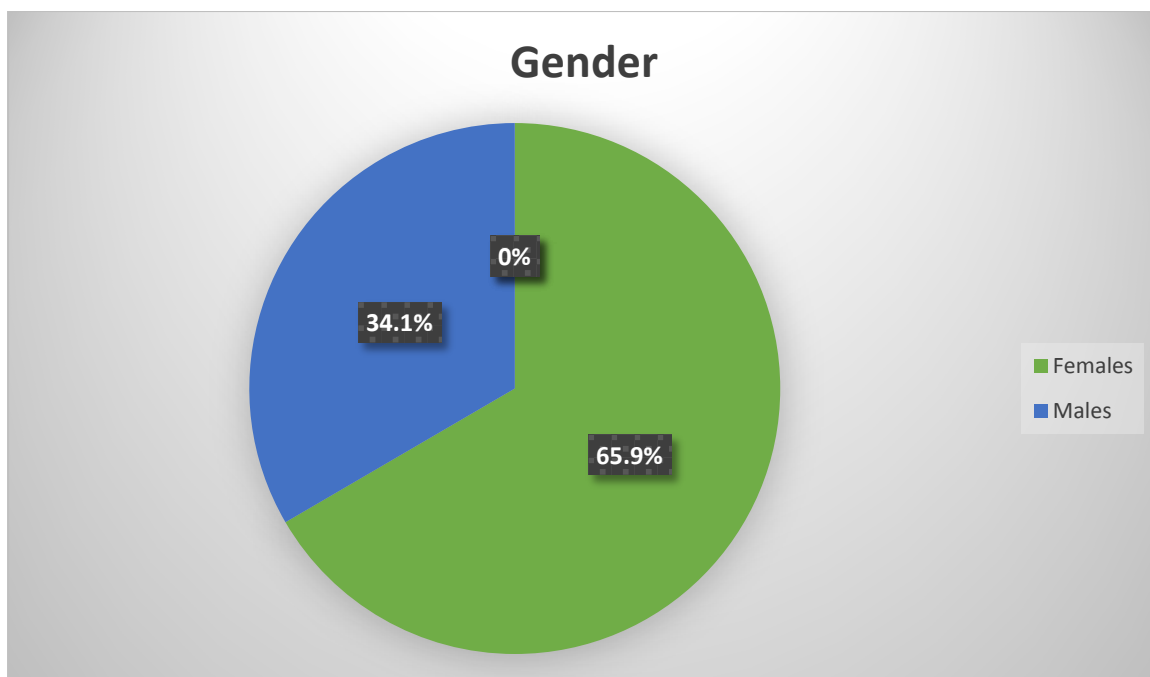


Figure 5.2: Sample Distribution by Gender ($n = 337$)

Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 illustrate the gender distribution of participants within the sample. Females comprised of 65.9% of the sample and males comprised of 34.1% of the sample of participants ($n = 337$).

5.1.3 Composition of race groups in the sample

This section provides the race distribution of the sample.

Table 5.3

Race Distribution of Sample

		RACE			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	African	180	53.4	53.4	53.4
	Coloured	48	14.2	14.2	67.7
	Indian	28	8.3	8.3	76.0
	White	75	22.3	22.3	98.2
	Other	6	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	337	100.0	100.0	

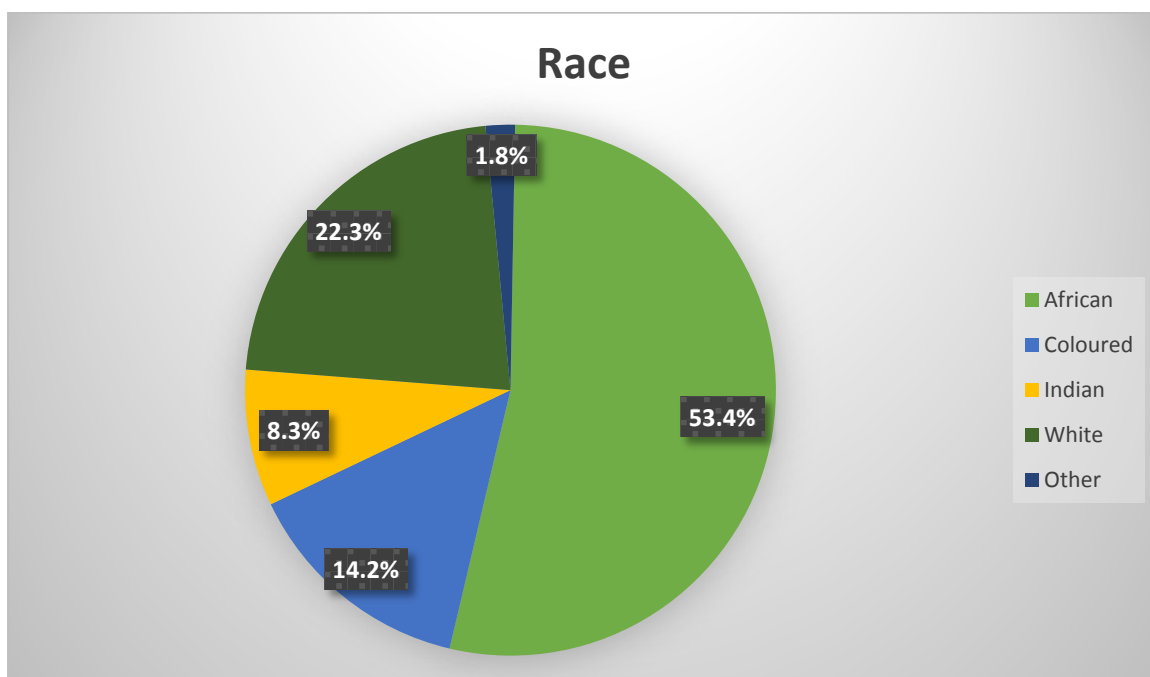


Figure 5.3 Sample Distribution by Race ($n = 337$)

Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3 illustrate the race distribution of the sample ($n = 337$). The sample consisted of predominantly black participants (76.9%), comprising of Africans (53.4%), Coloureds (14.2%) and Indians (8.3%). The white participants comprised (22.3%) and others (1.8%) ($n = 337$).

5.1.4 Composition of marital status in the sample

In this section the marital status of the sample is discussed.

Table 5.4

Marital Status Distribution of the Sample

MARITAL STATUS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Single	144	42.7	42.7	42.7
	Married	137	41.0	41.0	83.4
	Widowed	17	5.0	5.0	88.4

	Separated/Divorced	39	11.6	11.6	100.0
	Total	337	100.0	100.00	

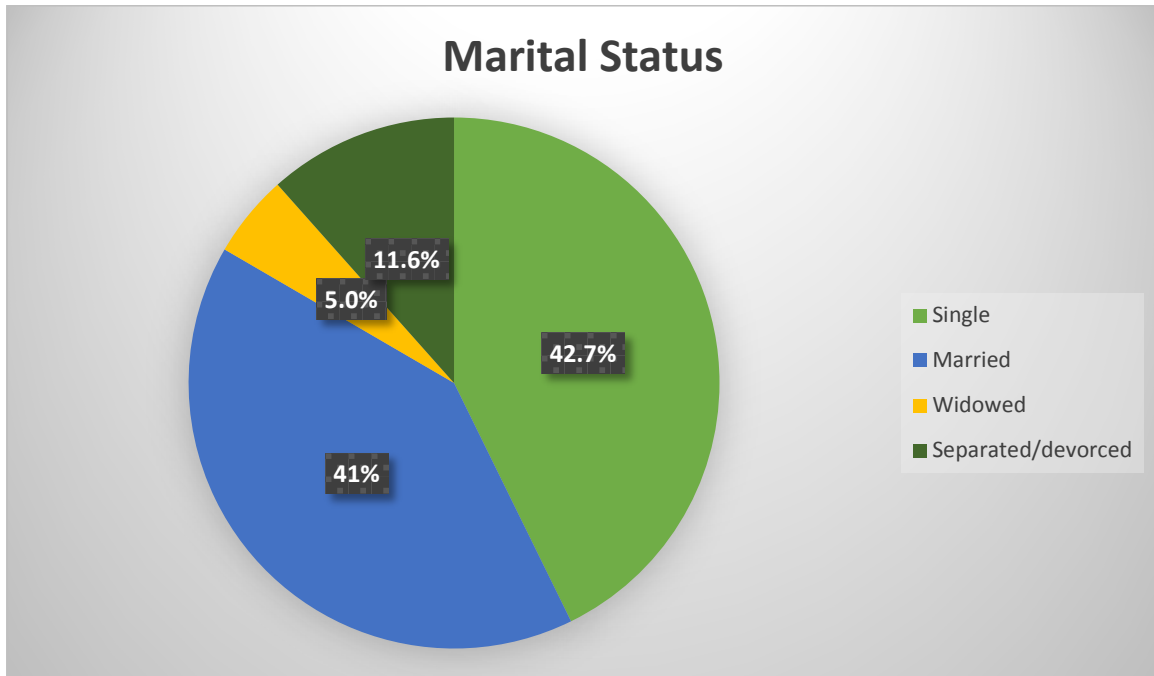


Figure 5.4 Sample Distribution by Marital Status (n = 337)

Table 5.4 and Figure 5.4 illustrate the marital status distribution of the participants in the sample. The majority of participants were either single (42.7%) or married (40.7%). Only 11.6% were separated or divorced and 5.0% were widowed.

5.1.5 Composition of the employment status of the sample

The employment status of the sample is provided in this section.

Table 5.5

Frequency Distribution: Employment Status Profile of the Sample

EMPLOYMENT STATUS					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	School/Graduate	4	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Part-time	171	50.7	50.7	51.9
	Full-time	162	48.1	48.1	100.0

	Total	337	100.0	100.0	
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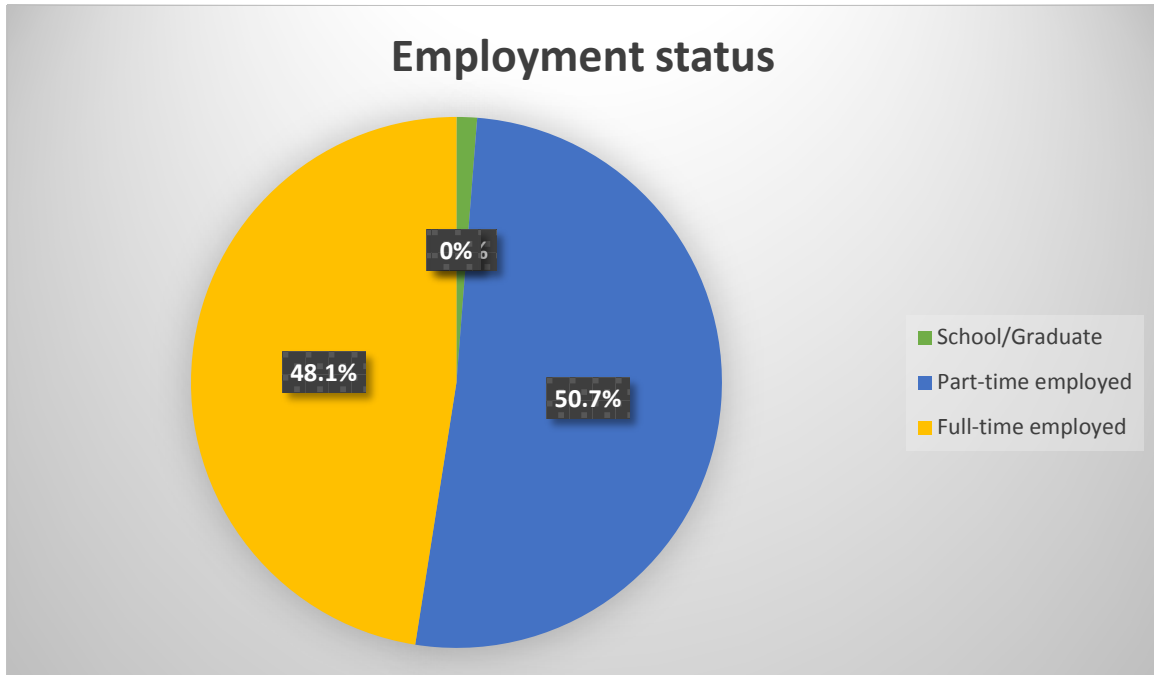


Figure 5.5 Sample Distribution by Employment Status (n = 337)

Table 5.5 and figure 5.5 illustrate the employment status distribution of the sample. The sample consisted of participants who were employed on part time bases 50.7%, full time 48.1%; 50.7% and 1.2% were school/graduates.

5.1.6 Composition of the job level of the sample

The job level of the sample is discussed in this section.

Table 5.6 Job Level Distribution of the Sample

JOB LEVEL					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Executive level	16	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Senior management level	15	4.5	4.5	95.3
	Middle management level	28	8.3	8.3	90.8
	Supervisory level	96	28.5	28.5	82.5

	Staff	182	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Total	337	100.1	100.1	

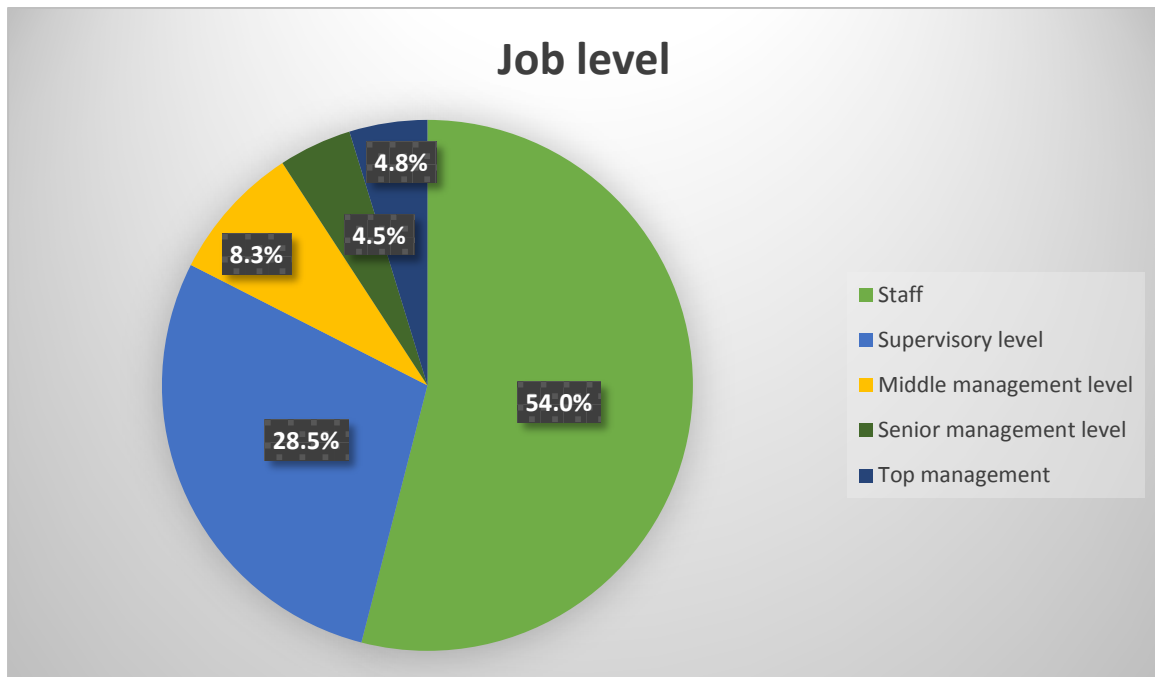


Figure 5.6 Sample Distribution by Job Level (n = 337)

Table 5.6 and figure 5.6 illustrate the job level distribution in the sample. The distribution of the sample shows that 54.0% were employed at staff level, 28.5% at first-level supervision level, 8.3% were employed at middle management level, 4.8% were working on executive level/top management level, 4.5% were employed at senior management level,

5.1.7 Summary

In summary, the biographical profile obtained from the sample shows that the main sample characteristics that need to be considered in the interpretation of the empirical results are the following: the majority of the sample was single (42.7%), African (53.4%) females (65.9%) between the ages of 26-40 (57.9%) part-time employed (50.7%) at staff level (54.0%). Table 5.8 provides a summary for the frequency distribution of the biographical profile of the sample.

Table 5.7

Summary of Frequency Distribution: Biographical Profile of the Sample

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent

Age	25 & younger	41	12.2	12.2	12.2
	26-40	195	57.9	57.9	70.0
	41-55	72	21.4	21.4	91.4
	56 & older	29	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	337	100.1	100.0	
Gender	Males	115	34.1	34.1	34.1
	Females	222	65.9	65.9	100.0
	Total	337	100.0	100.0	
Race	African	180	53.4	53.4	53.4
	Coloured	48	14.2	14.2	67.7
	Indian	28	8.3	8.3	76.0
	White	75	22.3	22.3	98.2
	Other	6	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	337	100.0	100.0	
Marital Status	Single	144	42.7	42.7	42.7
	Married	137	40.7	40.7	83.4
	Widowed	17	5.0	5.0	88.4
	Separated/Divorced	39	11.6	11.6	100.0
	Total	377	100.0	100.0	
Employment Status	School/Graduate	4	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Part-time	171	50.7	50.7	51.9
	Full-time	165	48.1	48.1	100.0
	Total	337	100.0	100.0	
Job Level	Staff	182	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Supervisory	96	28.5	28.5	82.5
	Middle management	28	8.3	8.3	90.8
	Senior management	15	4.5	4.5	95.3
	Executive	16	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	337	100.1	100.0	

5.2 CHOOSING AND JUSTIFYING THE PSYCHOMETRIC BATTERY

The selection of the measuring instruments for the purposes of this study was identified by the literature study. The following measuring instruments were used:

- A biographical questionnaire to determine data regarding age, gender, race, marital status, job level and employment status.
- The Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI), developed by Savickas, (1997) to measure the career adaptability construct
- The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS), developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, (2010) to measure the construct of employability attributes
- The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) developed by Dockel, (2003) to measure the construct of retention factors

5.2.1 The biographical questionnaire

A biographical questionnaire was used to obtain the personal information of the sample, namely: age, gender, race, marital status, job level and employment status.

5.2.2 The Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI)

The following discussion will focus on the development, rationale, scale description, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and motivation for choosing and using the CAI.

5.2.2.1 Development of the CAI

The Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI), developed by Savickas (1997), was used to measure each respondent's career adaptation.

5.2.2.2 Rationale of the CAI

The Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI) developed by Savickas, (1997) was used to measure career adaptability by assessing four major dimensions of an individual's career adaptability, namely: concern, control, curiosity and cooperation (confidence) as psychosocial resources for managing occupational changes, developmental tasks and work traumas.

5.2.2.3 Description of the scales of the CAI

The questionnaire consists of four major scales, each with six items that measure concern, control, curiosity and cooperation (confidence) as psychosocial resources for the management of occupational changes, developmental tasks and work trauma. It is a self-rated, multi-factorial measure, which consists of 44 items that are divided equally into the four subscales of concern, control, curiosity and cooperation (confidence), with six items each. Each item in the questionnaire corresponds to a particular ability, where participants need to rate the given statements according to how strongly they have developed each ability from 1 (not strong) to 5 (strongest).

5.2.2.4 Administration of the CAI

The CAI is a self-rated questionnaire, which can be administered individually or in groups and takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete, even though there is no time limit. The instructions are indicated on the questionnaire. Respondents are required to rate each item on a five-point Likert-type scale. The higher the number, the truer that item is to the respondent. Respondents are expected to rate their responses as 1 – not strong, 2 – somewhat strong, 3 – strong, 4 – very strong and 5 – strongest. No supervision is needed since the questionnaire is self-explanatory.

5.2.2.5 Interpretation of the CAI

Each facet subscale is measured separately and reflects the respondents' preferences and feelings on the various items that relate to that specific facet. As a result, analysis can be carried out as to which facets are perceived to be true for the respondents and which are not. Subscales with the highest mean scores within each of the five scale components are regarded as the respondents' dominant career adaptability facets.

5.2.2.6 Validity and reliability of the CAI

Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the data for the CAI fit the theoretical model very well. Research has proven that Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) – South Africa, CAAS – International and CAI perform similarly in terms of psychometric characteristics and factor structure (Ferreira, Coetzee and Masenge, 2013; Maree, 2012; Porfeli and Savickas, 2012; Savickas and Porfeli, 2011; Savickas, 1997). Savickas (1997) furthermore conducted coefficients of regression analysis, linear regression, correlation coefficient matrix and

Cronbach data alpha coefficient for the total sample involved in the initial test-retest reliability research.

5.2.2.7 Motivation for using the CAI

The CAI was chosen for this research because of its appropriateness to the study. It is an easy and quick instrument to administer. Its validity and reliability has been proven and it is free of any cultural biases.

5.2.3 The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS)

The following section will focus on the development, rationale, scale description, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and motivation for using EAS.

5.2.3.1 Development of the EAS

The EAS (Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, 2010) is a questionnaire developed for the South African context. This scale, which is intended to measure an individual's employability attributes, has proven to be of great value in measuring the employability attributes of individuals.

5.2.3.2 Rationale of the EAS

The Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) developed by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee, (2010) is designed to assess the construct employability attributes in adults in a valid and reliable manner. It has been successfully used by HR practitioners, Counsellors and Psychologists to assess and identify individuals' employability attributes.

5.2.3.3 Description of the EAS

The EAS by Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010), developed for the South African context, is used to measure each respondent's employability. The EAS is a self-rated, multi-factorial measure that consists of 56 items, which comprise the following eight subscales: career self-management, cultural competence, and internal locus of control, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity, and emotional literacy. The EAS uses a six point Likert-type scale to measure the respondents' responses to each of the items. Research studies support the reliability and validity of the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha

coefficients obtained for each scale were as follows: 0.88 for career self-management, 0.89 for cultural competence, 0.83 for internal locus of control, 0.75 for career resilience, 0.79 for sociability, .80 for entrepreneurial orientation, .89 for proactivity and .83 for emotional literacy.

5.2.3.4 Administration of the EAS

The questionnaire can be administered to individuals and groups and usually takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The instructions and questions are indicated on the questionnaire. The respondents complete the 56 items by checking each item according to a Likert scale from 1-6, where 1 represents never true, 2 – occasionally true, 3 – more occasionally true, 4 – often true, 5 – more often true and 6 – always true. Even though the questionnaire can be completed manually or by means of a software programme, the questionnaire was completed electronically for the purpose of this research.

5.2.3.5 Interpretation of the EAS

The scale measures the 56 items separately and reflects the perceptions and the feelings of the respondents in these items. From these results an analysis can be carried out as to which items are perceived to be true for the respondent and which are not. This is an important diagnostic technique to determine the level of the respondent's employability attributes. The higher the score, the more positive the level of employability attributes.

5.2.3.6 Validity and reliability of the EAS

Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) found evidence of the validity of the EAS. Content validity was built into the questionnaire by developing a construct definition of employability attributes and by including items intended to cover all the areas of the construct. Bezuidenhout and Coetzee (2010) and Potgieter (2012a) found acceptable internal consistency for the factor analysis conducted on the EAS.

5.2.3.7 Motivation for using the EAS

The EAS was chosen because of its appropriateness to this research, because it is an easy and quick questionnaire to administer, is both valid and reliable, and is free of cultural biases. The instrument can also be used as a developmental tool and a measurement for

an individual's growth progress. The instrument can offer great insights into an individual's employability attributes (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010).

5.2.4 The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

The following section will focus on the development, rationale, description, administration, interpretation, validity, reliability and motivation for using RFMS.

5.2.4.1 Development of the RFMS

The Retention Factor Measurement Scale, development by Dockel (2003), was used to measure each respondent's retention.

5.2.4.2 Rationale of the RFMS

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

5.2.4.3 Description of the scales of the RFMS

The RFMS is a questionnaire that consists of 38 items measuring compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, managerial support, career opportunities and work policies. The RFMS makes use of a six point Likert-type scale to measure the respondents' responses to each of the items.

5.2.4.4 Administration of the RFMS

The questionnaire can be administered to groups or individuals and it normally takes roughly 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questions. The instructions are given on the questionnaire and the response sheet. The respondents complete 38 items by checking each item according to a scale from 1-6, where 1 represents strongly dissatisfied, 2 – moderately dissatisfied, 3 – slightly dissatisfied, 4 – slightly satisfied, 5 – moderately satisfied and 6 – strongly satisfied.

5.2.4.5 Interpretation of the RFMS

Each subscale of the six items is measured separately and reflects the perceptions and feelings of the respondents in these dimensions. As a result, an analysis can be carried out as to which dimensions are perceived to be true for the respondent and which are not true. This is an essential diagnostic technique to determine the level of the respondent's retention factors. The higher the score, the more positive the level of retention factors.

5.2.4.6 Validity and reliability of the RFMS

Dockel (2003) found evidence of the validity and reliability of the RFMS. Content validity was built into the instrument by developing a construct definition of retention factors and by including items aimed to cover all the areas of the construct. Dockel (2003) found clear acceptable internal consistency for the factor analysis conducted on the RFMS.

Dockel (2003) furthermore conducted coefficients of regression analysis, linear regression, correlation coefficient matrix and Cronbach alpha coefficient for the total sample involved in the initial test-retest reliability study.

5.2.4.7 Motivation for using the RFMS

The RFMS was chosen for its appropriateness to the current research. It is an easy and quick instrument to administer and its validity and reliability has been proven and it is free of any cultural biases. The instrument can also be used for developmental interventions within an organisation and can be used to measure the growth progress of individuals.

5.2.5 Limitations of the psychometric battery

Measuring instruments chosen for this research (CAI (Savickas, 1997), EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) and RFMS (Dockel, 2003) are self-report assessment instruments. Self-reporting instruments have a number of disadvantages. Self-reports focus on individuals' verbalisations of their feelings towards themselves or others. Individuals might be unwilling or even unable to reveal aspects or feelings about themselves. The self-perceptions will only be accurate if the individual is willing to express him or herself honestly and truthfully (Batram, 1996; Besold, 2014). Another disadvantage of self-reports is the possibility of participants faking and a counterfeit response set (this is when the participants rate themselves positively, the set to respond 'true' no matter what the content of the inventory

item may be, and the set to respond deviantly) (Merrel, 2003; Ventevoked, De Vries, Scholte, Shinwari, Nassery, Van den Brink & Olf, 2007). When using self-reporting instruments, the results may be biased because of the tendency of test-takers to be dishonest and by their inability to respond to certain constructs. In addition, the ipsative nature of the instruments may potentially limit the nature of the methods used to determine their validity and compare them with other instruments (Baron, 1996; Flanagan, Ortiz & Alfonso, 2013).

In conclusion, the three instruments (CAI, EAS and RFMS) were selected after an extensive review of several instruments designed to measure career adaptabilities, employability attributes and retention factors. A decisive factor in the selection of these instruments was the ability to use statistical correlation analysis to determine the degree of relationship between multiple variables used in this study. However, the limitations of the three instruments should be considered during the interpretation of the results stemming from the research findings.

5.3 DATA COLLECTION

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011), questionnaires, checklists, indexes and scales form the categories of the different data-gathering methods in a quantitative research approach. The following data procedure was followed:

- In terms of ethics, permission for the research was obtained from the institution's research ethics committee. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire which explained that by completing and returning the questionnaire, the respondent agreed to allow the researcher to utilise the results for the purposes of research only.
- The respondents were also informed of the aim of the study, the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses and were given instructions for completing the questionnaire on the cover letter that was attached to the questionnaire.
- A biographical questionnaire was included that asked the respondents for their age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level.
- The CAI, EAS and RFMS were sent electronically to all the respondents in the sample.
- The respondents completed the questionnaires in their own time and returned it to the researcher.

5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011) and Hagan (2014) ethics is defined as a set of moral principles which refer to the quality of research procedures with regard to the adherence to professional, legal and social obligations to the research participants. The procedures followed in this study adhere to all the ethical requirements necessary to ensure ethical accountability.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Human Resources Management at the University of South Africa.

To ensure that the researcher fulfilled the ethical requirements, the following ethical principles were adhered to:

- The research was conducted within the recognised parameters.
- Approval was obtained from the participating organisations.
- Both classical and recent resources were used to analyse and describe the concepts.
- Experts in the field research were consulted to ensure a scientific research process.
- All the sources used were quoted and explicitly referenced.
- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Participants were informed that the results of the research will be available from the researcher upon request.
- Information and feedback obtained from the participants was totally confidential.
- All participants remained anonymous.
- Original data would be kept by the researcher for a period of five years.
- The research process and findings were documented in the form of a thesis to provide opportunities for obtaining accurate information.

5.5 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

According to Witte (2015) hypotheses is a short statement that predicts something. It describes in real terms what the researcher anticipates or predicts will happen in the research study.

In the literature review chapters, the central research hypothesis was formulated to determine the relationship dynamics between career adaptability and employability attributes

(independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variables). Table 5.9 below displays the research hypotheses that were formulated with a view of achieving the empirical objectives of the study and to meet the criteria for the formulation of hypotheses.

Table 5.9
Research Hypotheses

Empirical research aims	Research hypothesis	Statistical Procedure
<p>Research aim 1 Investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of 337 respondents in an advertising recruitment industry.</p>	<p>H1: Individuals' age, gender, race, marital status and job level and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.</p>	<p>Correlational analysis</p>
<p>Research aim 2 To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status, job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.</p>	<p>H2: Individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.</p>	<p>Stepwise hierarchical regression analysis</p>
<p>Research aim 3 To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.</p>	<p>H3: Individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors</p>	<p>Test for significant mean differences</p>
<p>Research aim 4 Formulate recommendations for further research in the field of Human Resource Management and suggest further research</p>		

strategies based on this research's findings.		
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5.6 STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF THE DATA

A quantitative study can be regarded as an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory that is composed of variables, measured with numbers with the aim of quantifying the extent of variation in a phenomenon, and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory are true (Hagan, 2014; Witte, 2015). The objective of quantitative research is to establish, confirm or validate relationships from the sample data available and to develop generalisations to the larger population (Niehaus, 2015; Wan, Hua & Xin, 2012).

A probability sample cannot be expected to yield sample values (parameters) of the population. For this purpose, statistical methods need to be developed that will make it possible to determine the confidence with which such inferences can be drawn. The two most commonly used methods of statistical inferences are (1) estimation using confidence intervals and (2) null hypothesis testing. The present study made use of null hypothesis testing in order to verify the formulated hypotheses.

The statistical analyses covered in this chapter are illustrated in Figure 5.7

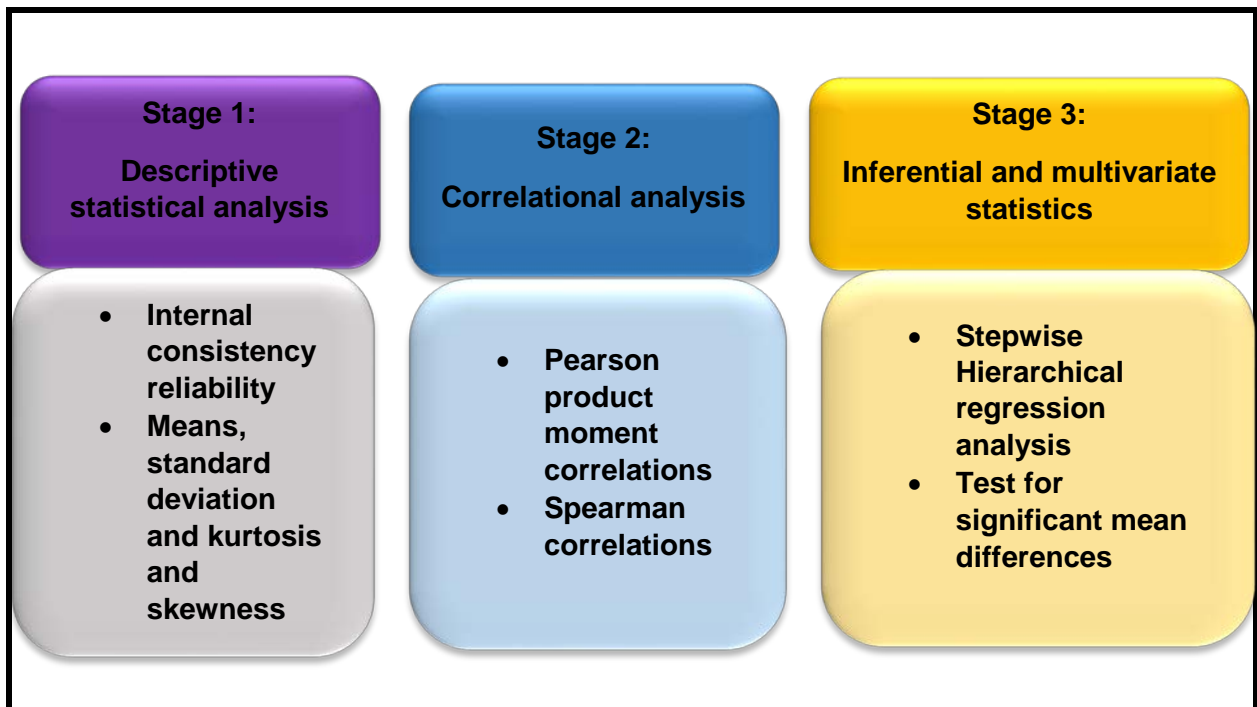


Figure 5.7. Statistical Analysis Process

5.6.1 Stage 1: Descriptive statistical analysis

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were determined for the CAI, EAS and RFMS to determine the reliability of these instruments for the purpose of this study. The categorical or frequency data (means and standard deviations) as measured by the CAI, EAS and RFMS were determined for the total sample in order to apply the relevant statistical procedures.

5.6.2 Stage 2: Correlational analysis

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables of CAI, EAS and RFMS. In those instances, where the distribution of scores was skewed, Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$.

Tustin *et al.* (2005) criticises the sole use of statistical significance testing and recommends that effect sizes be established to determine the importance of a statistically significant relationship. Small and unimportant effects may result in statistical significance simply because large numbers of respondents were used in the study, and significantly large and important effects can be overlooked simply because the sample size was too small (Hawkins, 2014).

The effect size is the magnitude of a relationship between two variables that is objective and usually standardised (Blaikie, 2003; Hawkins, 2014). A relationship between an independent and a dependent variable in an observational study can be characterised in terms of the strength of the relationship or its effect size (Tustin *et al.* 2005).

Significance level refers only to the odds that a difference or influence exists in the whole population from which the sample is drawn, and does not tell us about the importance of an effect, whereas the effect size is the magnitude of that influence (Blaikie, 2003; Hawkins, 2014). A practical effect size of $r \geq .30$ (medium effect) (Blaikie, 2003; Hawkins, 2014; Wan *et al.*, 2012) was considered for the correlation analyses to be able to interpret the practical significance of the findings.

5.6.3 Stage 3: Inferential and multivariate statistical analysis

Inferential statistics were used to further examine the relationship between the variables career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Inferential statistics are concerned with inferences about the data and were applied as follows:

- (1) Step-wise Hierarchical regression analysis
- (2) Test for significant mean differences.

5.6.3.1 Step-wise Hierarchical regression analysis

Stepwise regression is a statistical technique that includes regression models in which the choice of predictive variables is carried out by an automatic procedure. The backward elimination procedure was applied which involves starting with all the variables and testing them one by one for statistical significance, deleting any that were not significant (Meyer, 2013; Smilauer, 2014; Wan *et al.*, 2012).

5.6.3.2 Test for significant mean differences

In order to determine whether there were any significant differences between the mean scores of males and females, a t-test (for parameter data) and a Mann-Whitney U test (for non-parameter data) were conducted to be able to identify significant differences between gender groups with the intention of determining whether these groups differ in terms of their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$.

5.6.4 Level of significance

The level of significance expresses statistical significance in terms of specific probability (Clow, 2014; Mckillup, 2010). In practice, a general level of significance as $p \leq .05$ is chosen to test the hypothesis, which therefore provides a 95% confidence level in the results as the standard when applied in the research context. The most commonly used significance levels are $p \leq .05$ and $p \leq .01$ (Tustin *et al.*, 2005). For the purpose of this study, the $p \leq .05$ level of significance was used.

In the human sciences, researchers are concerned about missing a significant result or making a type II error, as they are concerned about falsely concluding a significant result. A type II error occurs when we believe that there is a genuine effect in our population when in actual fact there is not one (Mckillup, 2010; Witte, 2015); in other words, when the researcher falsely accepts a null hypothesis when it is false (Tustin *et al.*, 2005).

As the total number of statistical tests to be performed on a sample increases, the probability of a type I error also increases. A type I error occurs when we believe that there is no effect in the population when in actual fact there is (Mckillup, 2010; Witte, 2015); in other words, when the researcher falsely rejects a null hypothesis when it is in fact true (Tustin *et al.*, 2005). However, deciding on the significant level is never easy and the final choice is largely arbitrary (Tustin *et al.*, 2005). Various levels of significance have been identified. Table 5.10 indicates the different levels of statistical significance.

Table 5.10

Different Levels of Statistical Significance (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2002)

Probability	Level	Significance
<i>P</i>	.10	Less significant
<i>P</i>	.01 to .05	Significant
<i>P</i>	.001 to .01	Very significant
<i>P</i>	.001	Extremely significant

When a test of significance reveals a p-value lower than the chosen significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected and the results are referred to as statistically significant (Mckillup, 2010; Tustin *et al.*, 2005; Witte, 2015).

5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the empirical investigation. The population and determination and the description of the sample, the measuring instruments, the data collection process, administration of the measuring instrument and data analysis processes were discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with the formulation of the research hypotheses and the statistical processing of data relating to the study.

Chapter 6 addresses the following aims of the research:

Research aim 1: Investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of respondents in a recruitment advertising industry.

Research aim 2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status, and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

Research aim 3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH RESULTS

In this chapter, the statistical results pertaining to the following research aims are reported:

Research aim 1: Investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of respondents in an advertising recruitment industry.

Research aim 2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status, job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

Research aim 3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The descriptive statistics, correlational statistics and inferential statistics are discussed, followed by a discussion and synthesis of the results. The chapter will conclude with a brief summary and a review of Chapter 6.

6.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in this study. Descriptive statistics provide self-explanatory summaries about the descriptive characteristics of the sample and are calculated normally to provide detailed information about a population of interest (Hinton, 2014; Niehaus, 2015; Witte, 2015). Descriptive statistics are generally utilised to address the specific research undertaken by a study, they can also be used to help in discovering essential, yet often hidden, patterns in the data that may shed further light on the problems that need to be resolved through the study (Hawkins, 2014; Grigsby, 2015). In this section the internal consistency reliability of the three measurement instruments is assessed, followed by a discussion of the means (M), standard deviations (SD), skewness and kurtosis that were computed for each scale.

6.1.1 Reporting of internal consistency reliability

Internal consistency reliability is a measure of how well the items on the test measure the same construct or idea. It is typically a measure based on the correlations between different

items on the same test (or the same subscale on a larger test). It measures whether several items that propose to measure the same general construct produce similar scores. Internal consistency is a measure that focuses on how well a test addresses different constructs and delivers reliable scores (Hogan, 2015). The reliability analysis focused on assessing the internal consistency reliability of the three measurement instruments, namely the Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI), the Employability Attributes Scale (EAS) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three instruments are reported in the following sections.

6.1.1.1 Reporting on scale reliability: Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI)

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilised in this study to ascertain the reliability of the instruments. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating perfect consistency (Newton & Stuart, 2014). Therefore, the higher the alpha coefficient, the more reliable the item or test. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70 is considered a desirable reliability coefficient, although it may decrease to .60 in exploratory research (Newton & Stuart, 2014). In the case of individual testing, however, reliabilities as low as .30 are acceptable when instruments are used to gather group data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

Table 6.1 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the four subscales of the CAI (Savickas, 1997). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .84 (high) to .82 (high) for the total sample ($n = 337$). The total CAI scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .93 (high), which can be considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 6.1
Internal Consistency Reliability: CAI

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Concern	.82	11
Control	.83	11
Curiosity	.83	11
Cooperation	.84	11
Overall scale	.93	44

6.1.1.2 Reporting of scale reliability: Employability Attributes Scale (EAS)

Table 6.2 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the eight subscales of the EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .87 (high) to .85 (high) for the total sample ($n = 337$). The total EAS scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96 (high), which can be considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 6.2

Internal Consistency Reliability: EAS

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Career self-management	.86	11
Cultural competence	.84	5
Self-efficacy	.74	6
Career resilience	.70	6
Sociability	.74	7
Entrepreneurial orientation	.75	7
Proactivity	.83	7
Emotional literacy	.81	7
Overall scale	.96	56

6.1.1.3 Reporting of scale reliability: Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

Table 6.3 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the six subscales of the RFMS (Döckel *et al.* 2006). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .96 (high) to .78 (high) for the total sample ($n = 337$). The total RFMS obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .95 (high), which can be considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 6.3

Internal Consistency Reliability: RFMS

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Compensation	.96	13
Job characteristics	.80	4
T&D opportunities	.90	6

Supervisor support	.89	6
Career opportunities	.78	6
Work/Life balance	.80	4
Overall scale	.95	38

6.1.2 Reporting of means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis

After the internal consistency reliability of the three scales had been identified, a descriptive analysis was conducted to investigate the distribution of the scores. The means (M), standard deviations (SD), skewness and kurtosis were computed for each scale. After a brief explanation, these are reported below.

The mean is an approximate measure of central location for metric data (interval and ratio data) only. Mean makes full use of all the data available in that its calculation and is based on all the individual data values (Bandyopadhyay, 2016; Hagan, 2014; Hawkins, 2014; Witte, 2015). According to Hagan (2014), standard deviation is defined as an estimation of the average variability (spread) of a set of data. Skewness is a measure of the symmetry of a frequency distribution, where symmetrical distributions have a skew of 0 (Bacon, 2012; Sall, Lehman, Stephens & Creighton, 2012). A positive skew value indicates that the tail on the right side of the distribution is longer than that on the left side and that most of the values are clustered to the left of the mean (Bainham, 2013; Rees, 2015;). In contrast, a negative skew value indicates that the tail on the left side of the distribution is longer than that on the right side and that most of the values are clustered to the right of the mean (Rees, 2015). A reference of large divergence from normality is an absolute skew value greater than 2 (Bainhma, 2013; Rees, 2015). According to Rees (2015) skewness values must fall between -1 and 1 to be considered acceptable to prove a normal distribution.

Kurtosis is a measures of whether the data are heavy-tailed or light-tailed relative to a normal distribution. That is, data sets with high **kurtosis** tend to have heavy tails, or outliers, data sets with low **kurtosis** tend to have light tails, or the lack of outliers (Bainham, 2013). Kurtosis is a statistical measure used to describe the distribution, or skewness, of observed data around the mean. It can be presented in a chart with fat tails and a low, even distribution, as well as be presented in a chart with skinny tails and a distribution concentrated toward the mean (Sall *et al.*, 2012). The original kurtosis value is sometimes called **kurtosis (proper)**, and a normal distribution is referred to as a mesokurtic distribution or bell-shaped distribution (Bacon, 2012; Rees, 2015). A general trend that is followed when

utilising statistical packages like SPSS is to calculate the 'excess' kurtosis by subtracting 3 from the kurtosis (proper), where the excess kurtosis should be 0 for a normal distribution (Sall *et al.*, 2012). A distribution with positive kurtosis has many scores in the tails, is pointy and is known as a leptokurtic distribution (Bacon, 2012; Sall *et al.*, 2012; Rees, 2015). In contrast, a distribution with negative kurtosis is relatively thin in the tails, tends to be flatter than normal and is known as a platykurtic distribution (Bacon, 2012; Sall *et al.*, 2012; Rees, 2015). Sall *et al.* (2012) proposed a reference of substantial departure from normality as an absolute kurtosis (proper) value > 7. According to Bacon (2012), the further a value is from 0, the more likely it is that the data are not normally distributed. Sall *et al.* (2012) suggest that kurtosis values between -2 and 2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution. Rees (2015) indicates that kurtosis values between -3 and 3 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal distribution.

6.1.2.1 Career Adaptability Inventory (CAI)

Table 6.4 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the four subscales of the CAI, as well as of the overall scale. The means of the four subscales ranged between 3.35 and 4.28. As shown in Table 6.4, the highest mean score was $M = 4.28$ ($SD = .47$) for the subscale *control*, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale *curiosity* ($M = 3.35$; $SD = .53$). The skewness values show that all the scores for the subscales were negatively skewed (bounded to the right). Skewness for the four subscales ranged between -.55 and -1.15., thereby falling within the -1 and 1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Sall *et al.*, 2012). Kurtosis values showed that all the subscales had a leptokurtic distribution (positive, left). The kurtosis values ranged between .35 and 1.82, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Rees, 2015).

Table 6.4

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: CAI

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Concern	4.05	.53	-1.09	1.82
Control	4.28	.47	-.98	1.23
Curiosity	3.35	.53	-.55	.34
Cooperation	4.22	.49	-.85	1.26
Overall CAI scale	3.97	.42	-1.15	1.81

6.1.2.2 Employability Attributes Scale (EAS)

Table 6.5 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the eight subscales of the EAS, as well as of the overall scale. The means for the eight subscales ranged between 3.86 and 4.79. As shown in Table 6.5, the highest mean score was $M = 4.79$ ($SD = .75$) for the subscale *proactivity*, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale *cultural competence* ($M = 3.86$; $SD = .76$). The skewness values show that all the scores for the subscales were negatively skewed (bounded to the right). Skewness for the eight subscales ranged between $-.89$ and $-.17$, thereby falling within the -1 and 1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Sall *et al.*, 2012). Kurtosis values showed that all the subscales had a leptokurtic distribution (positive, left). The kurtosis values ranged between $-.10$ and $.21$, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Bainham, 2013).

Table 6.5

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: EAS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career self-management	4.62	.76	-.58	-.70
Cultural competence	3.86	.76	.37	.21
Self-efficacy	4.64	.69	-.89	.20
Career resilience	4.53	.67	-.41	-.56
Sociability	4.02	.69	.09	-.30
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.48	.70	-.62	-.10
Proactivity	4.79	.75	-.59	-.25
Emotional literacy	3.97	.68	-.17	-.34
Overall EAS scale	4.39	.61	-.56	-.60

6.1.2.3 Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

Table 6.6 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the six subscales of the RFMS. The means for the six subscales ranged between 2.89 and 3.76. As shown in Table 6.6, the highest mean score was $M = 3.76$ ($SD = .87$) for the subscale *Job characteristic*, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale *Compensation* ($M = 3.12$; $SD = 1.02$). The skewness values show that the scores were positively skewed (bounded to the left). Skewness for the six subscales ranged from $-.21$ to $-.31$, thereby falling

within the -1 and 1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Sall *et al.*, 2012). The kurtosis values ranged from -.48 and -.60, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Rees, 2015).

Table 6.6

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: RFMS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Compensation	3.12	1.02	.04	-.65
Job characteristics	3.76	.87	-.58	-.02
T&D opportunities	3.67	.96	-.60	-.02
Supervisor support	3.71	.96	-.37	-.50
Career opportunities	2.89	.79	.02	-.56
Work/Life balance	3.53	.92	-.31	-.60
Overall RFMS scale	3.37	.73	-.21	-.48

In summary relating to the CAI scale, control reported the highest mean ($M = 4.28$) and curiosity reported the lowest mean ($M = 3.35$). In terms of the EAS scale, proactivity reported the highest mean ($M = 4.79$) and cultural competence reported the lowest mean ($M = 3.89$). Finally, in terms of the RFMS, job characteristics reported the highest mean ($M = 3.79$) and career opportunities reported the lowest mean ($M = 2.89$).

6.2 CORRELATIONS

In order to investigate the relationship between the variables in this study, the descriptive statistics had to be transformed into explanatory (correlational) statistics to determine whether the results provided adequate evidence in support of research hypothesis Ha1: There is a statistical significant positive relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r) is used to calculate the direction of and strength between variables (Hawkins, 2014). For the purpose of this study, a cut-off point of $r \geq .30$ (small effect) at $p \leq .05$ was used to determine the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

6.2.1 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between CAI and EAS

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the CAI and the EAS variables. As shown in Table 6.7, a number of significant relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 6.7

Bivariate Correlations between CAI and EAS

Variables	Overall CAI	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Cooperation	Overall EAS	Career self-management	Cultural competence	Self-efficacy	Career Resilience	Sociability	Entrepreneurial orientation	Proactivity	Emotional literacy
Overall CAI	-													
Concern	.89**	-												
Control	.85**	.69**	-											
Curiosity	.76**	.69**	.41**	-										
Cooperation	.84**	.62**	.75**	.43**	-									
Overall EAS	.81**	.66**	.73**	.53**	.80**	-								
Career self-management	.76**	.69**	.66**	.52**	.72**	.89**	-							
Cultural competence-	.52**	.40**	.47**	.33**	.54**	.72**	.50**	-						
Self-efficacy	.74**	.60**	.74**	.41**	.72**	.87**	.79**	.54**	-					
Career resilience	.73**	.61**	.63**	.48**	.72**	.89**	.78**	.54**	.71**	-				
Sociability	.64**	.50**	.55**	.45**	.63**	.82**	.62**	.72**	.62**	.71**	-			
Entrepreneurial orientation	.74**	.60**	.69**	.49**	.70**	.88**	.76**	.54**	.78**	.78**	.61**	-		
Proactivity	.73**	.60**	.72**	.37**	.76**	.91**	.80**	.61**	.81**	.83**	.70**	.80**	-	
Emotional literacy	.59**	.42**	.48**	.48**	.60**	.79**	.56**	.61**	.60**	.67**	.65**	.69**	.63**	-

Notes: N = 337; *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$. $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (medium practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical effect size)

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Career self-management showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .69$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .66$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .52$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .72$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .76$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Cultural competence showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .54$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .40$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .47$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .33$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .52$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Self-efficacy showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .60$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .74$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .41$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .72$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

- Overall EAS scale ($r = .74$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Career resilience showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .61$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .63$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .48$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .72$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .73$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Sociability showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .50$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .55$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .45$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .63$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .64$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Entrepreneurial orientation showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .60$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .69$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .49$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

- Cooperation ($r = .70$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .74$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Proactivity showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .60$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .72$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .37$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .76$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .73$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships are found between the CAI and EAS. Emotional literacy showed extremely significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .42$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Control ($r = .48$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Curiosity ($r = .48$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cooperation ($r = .60$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall EAS scale ($r = .59$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Regarding the relationship between the CAI and EAS variables, Table 6.7 shows that the associations were all significant and positive, ranging between $.33 \leq r \leq .76$ (medium to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 6.7) showed a small to large practical effect (highest value being .76), and this is well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .90$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010)

6.2.2 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between the CAI and RFMS

This section will report on the bivariate correlations between the CAI and the RFMS variables. As shown in Table 6.8, a number of significantly positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 6.8

Bivariate Correlations between CAI and RFMS

Variables	Overall CAI	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Cooperation	Overall RFMS	Compensation	Job characteristics	TD opportunities	Supervision	Career Opportunities	Work life balance
Overall CAI	-											
Concern	.89**	-										
Control	.85**	.69**	-									
Curiosity	.76**	.69**	.41**	-								
Cooperation	.84**	.62**	.75**	.43**	-							
Overall RFMS	.40**	.29**	.38**	.21**	.47**	-						
Compensation	.24*8	.14**	.23**	.14**	.30**	.86**	-					
Job characteristics	.32**	.26**	.34**	.12*	.37**	.73**	.52**	-				
TD opportunities	.44**	.36**	.46**	.20**	.48**	.82**	.57**	.68**	-			
Supervision	.32**	.26**	.28**	.17**	.36**	.70**	.37**	.52**	.56**	-		
Career opportunities	.30**	.22**	.22**	.23**	.35**	.70**	.51**	.31**	.55**	.43**	-	
Work life balance	.30**	.21**	.31**	.15**	.35**	.54**	.27**	.45**	.40**	.43**	.38**	-

Notes: N = 337; *** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05. r ≤ .30 (small practical effect size), r ≥ .30 ≤ .49 (medium practical effect size), r ≥ .50 (large practical effect size)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. Compensation showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .14$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .23$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Curiosity ($r = .14$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .30$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .86$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. Job characteristics showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .26$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .34$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Curiosity ($r = .12$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .37$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .73$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. TD opportunities showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .36$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .46$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Curiosity ($r = .20$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .48$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .82$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. Supervision showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .26$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .28$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Curiosity ($r = .17$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .36$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .70$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. Career opportunities showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .22$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .22$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

- Curiosity ($r = .23$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .70$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Several significant relationships were found between the CAI and RFMS. Work life balance showed significant positive relationships with all the CAI variables.

- Concern ($r = .21$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Control ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Curiosity ($r = .15$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Cooperation ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)
- Overall RFMS ($r = .54$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$)

Regarding the relationship between the CAI and the RFMS variables, Table 6.8 shows that the associations were significant and positive, ranging from $.12 \leq r \leq .75$ (medium to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 6.8) showed a small to medium practical effect, and this was well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .90$) to be present (Hinton, 2014).

6.2.3 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between the EAS and RFMS

This section will report on the bivariate correlations between the EAS and the RFMS variables. As shown in Table 6.9, all EAS variables displayed significant positive relationships with the RFMS variables.

Table 6.9

Bivariate Correlations between EAS and RFMS

Variables	Overall EAS	Career self-management	Cultural competence	Self-efficacy	Career resilience	Sociability	Entrepreneurial orientation	Proactivity	Emotional literacy	Overall RFMS	Compensation	Job characteristic	T&D opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work/Life balance
Overall EAS	-															
Career self-management	.89**	-														
Cultural competence	.72**	.50**	-													
Self-efficacy	.87**	.79**	.54**	-												
Career resilience	.89**	.78**	.54**	.71**	-											
Sociability	.82**	.62**	.72**	.62**	.71**	-										
Entrepreneurial orientation	.88**	.76**	.54**	.78**	.78**	.61**	-									
Proactivity	.91**	.80**	.61**	.81**	.83**	.70**	.80**	-								
Emotional literacy	.79**	.56**	.61**	.60**	.67**	.65**	.69**	.63**	-							
Overall RFMS	.51**	.44**	.39**	.47**	.42**	.42**	.51**	.45**	.38**	-						
Compensation	.34**	.24**	.31**	.27**	.25**	.35**	.37**	.28**	.29**	.86**	-					
Job characteristics	.40**	.39**	.26**	.47**	.31**	.31**	.35**	.36**	.22**	.73**	.52**	-				
T&D opportunities	.51**	.47**	.31**	.54**	.43**	.35**	.49**	.50**	.32**	.82**	.57**	.68**	-			
Supervisor support	.40**	.42**	.25**	.38**	.36**	.24**	.39**	.38**	.26**	.70**	.37**	.52**	.56**	-		
Career opportunities	.36**	.28**	.31**	.28**	.29**	.31**	.37**	.28**	.35**	.70**	.51**	.31**	.55**	.43**	-	
Work/Life balance	.43**	.41**	.29**	.40**	.40**	.35**	.38**	.37**	.30**	.54**	.27**	.45**	.40**	.43**	.38**	-

Notes: N = 337; *** p ≤ .001; ** p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05. r ≤ .30 (small practical effect size), r ≥ .30 ≤ .49 (medium practical effect size), r ≥ .50 (large practical effect size)

Significant relationships were found between all the EAS and RFMS variables. All subscales of the EAS showed a significant positive relationship with all the RFMA variables.

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. Compensation showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .24$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .27$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .25$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .37$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .28$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .29$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. Job characteristics showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .39$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .26$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .47$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .36$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .22$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. T & D opportunities showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .47$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .54$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .43$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .49$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .50$; large practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .32$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. Supervision support showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .42$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .25$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .38$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .36$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .24$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .39$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .38$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .26$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. Career opportunities showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .28$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .28$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .29$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .31$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .37$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .28$; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Several significant relationships were found between EAS and RFMS. Work life balance showed significant positive relationships with all the EAS variables:

- Career self-management ($r = .41$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Cultural competence ($r = .29$; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Self-efficacy ($r = .40$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Career resilience ($r = .40$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Sociability ($r = .35$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Entrepreneurial orientation ($r = .38$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Proactivity ($r = .37$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Emotional literacy ($r = .30$; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Regarding the relationship between the EAS and the RFMS variables, Table 6.9 shows that all the associations between the EAS and RFMS variables were significant and positive, ranging between $.30 \leq r \leq .62$ (medium to large practical effect, $p \leq .001$). It was anticipated

that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 6.9) showed a medium to large practical effect, with the highest value being .83, which is well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .90$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

The results of the bivariate correlation analyses provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha1 (there is a significant relationship between an adult's career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors).

6.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS

In this section, the stepwise hierarchical regression analysis and tests for mean differences are reported.

6.3.1 Stepwise hierarchical regression analysis

This section is relevant to research aim 2, namely to assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors. (Ha2).

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted using the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level); the CAI variables (concern, control, curiosity and cooperation and the EAS variables (career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy) as the independent variables, and RFMS (compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life balance) as the dependent variables. Stepwise regression is a statistical technique that includes regression models in which the choice of predictive variables is carried out by an automatic procedure. The backward elimination procedure was applied which involved starting with all the variables and testing them one by one for statistical significance, deleting any that were not significant. Table 6.10 summarises the results.

The results showed that the regression model was significant ($F = 116.93$; $p = .000$; $R^2 = .71$; $\Delta R^2 = .04$; $\Delta F = 49.69$; $\Delta Fp = .00$). The adjusted R^2 value of .71 indicated that the model predicted approximately 71% (large practical effect) of the variance in the dependent variable (retention factors). Table 6.10 shows that only race, gender, age, marital status, employment status and career adaptability acted as significant predictors of retention

factors. Career adaptability contributed the most towards explaining the variance in retention factors ($\beta = .71$; $p \leq .000$), followed by race ($\beta = -.08$; $p \leq .000$) and the age ($\beta = .05$; $p \leq .000$). The collinearity statistics indicated that the tolerance values were all close to 1 and the variance inflation factor (VIF) is less than 2.5 (implying little or no multi-collinearity concerns).

Table 6.10

Results of the Stepwise Regression Analysis: Demographic Variables and CAI as Independent Variables and Retention Factors as Dependent Variable

Model variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B.	Std. Error				Beta	Tolerance
(Constant)	-.48	.24		-1.99	.05*		
Cultural group	-.11	.05	-.08	-2.44	.01**	.88	1.14
Gender	.04	.04	.03	1.14	.26	.97	1.03
Age	.06	.04	.05	1.51	.13	.86	1.13
Marital status	.01	.04	.01	.36	.71	Section 6.4.4.1.91	1.10
Employment status	.04	.17	.01	.24	.81	.98	1.02
Career adaptability	1.04	.05	.71	21.49	.00***	.80	1.26
Retention factors	.02	.03	.24	7.05	.00***	.76	1.32

Notes: N = 337. *** $p \leq .001$ – statistically significant. ** $p \leq .01$ – statistically significant. * $p \leq .05$ – statistically significant.

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha2: Individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

In conclusion, the results revealed that employability attributes and retention factors significantly and positively predicted career adaptability. Furthermore, the results showed

that race was the only demographic variable that predicted career adaptability. Thus Ha2 can be partially accepted.

6.3.2 Tests for significant mean differences

This section is relevant to research aim 3, namely to empirically investigate whether differences exist in career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level).

One-way ANOVA and independent t-tests were conducted to test for significant mean difference regarding the variables of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Table 6.11 displays the results for the ANOVA and t-tests relating to age.

Table 6.11
ANOVA Scores for Age (N = 337)

Variable	≤25	26-40	41-55	≥56	F	Df	Sig
	years Mean (SD)	years Mean (SD)	years Mean (SD)	years Mean (SD)			
Control	4.16 (.44)	4.21 (.47)	4.40 (.44)	4.59 (.36)	8.68	336	.000***
Concern	4.13 (.43)	4.10 (.51)	3.96 (.56)	4.00 (.63)	1.29	336	.28
Curiosity	3.58 (.42)	3.41 (.49)	3.14 (.60)	3.11 (.45)	10.10	336	.000***
Cooperation	4.23 (.52)	4.16 (.50)	4.29 (.44)	4.51 (.37)	4.86	336	.003***
Total career adaptability	4.02 (.37)	3.96 (.42)	3.95 (.44)	4.05 (.41)	.66	336	.58
Career self-management	4.74 (.65)	4.63 (.75)	4.43 (.85)	4.82 (.69)	2.50	336	.06
Cultural competence	3.93 (.71)	3.73 (.70)	3.99 (.84)	4.37 (.73)	7.60	336	.000***
Self-efficacy	4.58 (.62)	4.58 (.69)	4.63 (.69)	5.16 (.51)	6.33	336	.000***
Career resilience	4.56 (.63)	4.53 (.70)	4.43 (.72)	4.71 (.60)	1.20	336	.31
Sociability	4.01	3.97	4.03	4.35	2.56	336	.06

	(.64)	(.67)	(.77)	(.66)			
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.41	4.45	4.45	4.87	3.30	336	.02
Proactivity	(.62)	(.74)	(.63)	(.65)			
	4.70	4.73	4.84	5.20	3.61	336	.01*
	(.68)	(.75)	(.81)	(.68)			
Emotional literacy	4.01	3.95	3.87	4.27	2.52	336	.06
	(.61)	(.70)	(.66)	(.66)			
Total employability attributes	4.40	4.36	4.35	4.73	3.37	336	.02
	(.53)	(.61)	(.65)	(.55)			
Compensation	2.86	2.97	3.54	3.41	7.47	336	.000***
	(.92)	(1.05)	(.94)	(.82)			
Job characteristics	3.67	3.68	3.96	3.96	2.45	336	.06
	(.87)	(.88)	(.89)	(.68)			
T&D opportunities	3.79	3.52	3.85	4.10	4.90	336	.002***
	(.85)	(.96)	(.99)	(.83)			
Supervisor support	3.72	3.70	3.75	3.67	.07	336	.97
	(.98)	(.91)	(1.03)	(1.14)			
Career opportunities	3.11	2.80	3.00	2.94	2.48	336	.06
	(.68)	(.81)	(.78)	(.69)			
Work/Life balance	3.61	3.67	3.50	3.98	1.52	336	.21
	(1.13)	(1.04)	(1.04)	(.89)			
Total retention factors	3.33	3.28	3.58	3.59	4.10	336	.01*
	(.68)	(.73)	(.72)	(.66)			

The results of the ANOVA (Table 6.11) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between different age groups in control ($F = 8.68, p \leq .001$), curiosity ($F = 10.10, p \leq .001$), cooperation ($F = 4.86, p \leq .01$), compensation ($F = 7.47, p \leq .001$), training and development opportunities ($F = 4.90, p \leq .01$) and overall retention factors ($F = 4.10, p \leq .01$). Statistical significant differences between age groups were thus observed only between two of the retention factors, namely compensation and training and development opportunities.

Table 6.12 displays the results for the t-tests relating to gender.

Table 6.12

Independent t-test Scores for Gender (N = 337)

Variable	Male Mean	Female Mean (SD)	F	T	Df	Sig
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	(SD)					
Control	4.30 (.41)	4.27 (.49)	1.05	.56	335	.31
Concern	4.05 (.47)	4.05 (.55)	.97	.03	335	.32
Curiosity	3.40 (.49)	3.33 (.55)	2.14	1.27	335	.15
Cooperation	4.27 (.44)	4.20 (.51)	.83	1.15	335	.36
Total career adaptability	4.00 (.36)	3.96 (.44)	1.80	.91	335	.18
Career self-management	4.62 (.76)	4.61 (.77)	.25	.09	335	.62
Cultural competence	3.90 (.71)	3.85 (.78)	.68	.53	335	.41
Self-efficacy	4.70 (.61)	4.62 (.72)	3.78	.99	335	.05*
Career resilience	4.52 (.64)	4.53 (.69)	.76	-.08	335	.38
Sociability	4.00 (.61)	4.04 (.73)	3.65	-.51	335	.05*
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.54 (.61)	4.46 (.75)	6.58	1.00	335	.01**
Proactivity	4.83 (.69)	4.76 (.79)	3.49	.77	335	.06
Emotional literacy	4.00 (.63)	3.96 (.71)	2.95	.47	335	.09
Total employability attributes	4.41 (.56)	4.38 (.63)	3.01	.45	335	.08
Compensation	3.20 (.93)	3.10 (1.07)	2.15	1.06	335	.14
Job characteristics	3.89 (.77)	3.69 (.92)	5.45	1.97	335	.02
T&D opportunities	3.76 (.86)	3.63 (1.01)	3.61	1.20	335	.05*
Supervisor support	3.83 (.85)	3.64 (1.01)	3.11	1.69	335	.08
Career opportunities	2.86 (.72)	2.9 (.82)	2.59	-.56	335	.11
Work/Life balance	3.68 (.98)	3.64	1.93	.31	335	.17

		(1.08)				
Total retention factors	3.44 (.65)	3.34	2.70	1.29	335	.10
		(.76)				

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 6.12) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in terms of self-efficacy ($F = 3.78, t(335) = .99, p \leq .05$), sociability ($F = 3.65, t(335) = -.51, p \leq .05$), entrepreneurial orientation ($F = 6.58, t(335) = 1.00, p \leq .01$) and training and development opportunities ($F = 3.61, t(335) = 1.20, p \leq .05$). No other statistically significant differences between males and females and the remaining variables were found.

Table 6.13 displays the results for the t-tests relating to race.

Table 6.13

Independent t-test Scores for Race (N = 337)

Variable	A/C/I Mean (SD)	White Mean (SD)	F	T	Df	Sig
Control	4.29 (.46)	4.24 (.49)	.80	.79	329	.37
Concern	4.09 (.52)	3.92 (.53)	.00	2.44	329	1.00
Curiosity	3.39 (.51)	3.21 (.57)	5.36	2.66	329	.02*
Cooperation	4.24 (.48)	4.16 (.51)	.03	1.33	329	.87
Total career adaptability	4.00 (.41)	3.96 (.44)	2.16	2.22	329	.14
Career self-management	4.68 (.75)	4.44 (.79)	1.40	2.40	329	.24
Cultural competence	3.91 (.75)	3.74 (.77)	.08	1.71	329	.78
Self-efficacy	4.66 (.68)	4.60 (.73)	1.48	.59	329	.22
Career resilience	4.58 (.65)	4.37 (.72)	4.09	2.43	329	.04*
Sociability	4.05 (.69)	3.93 (.69)	.27	1.36	329	.60

Entrepreneurial orientation	4.51 (.71)	4.39 (.70)	.00	1.35	329	.98
Proactivity	4.81 (.76)	4.72 (.76)	.13	.86	329	.72
Emotional literacy	4.02 (.70)	3.81 (.60)	2.99	2.41	329	.08
Total employability attributes	4.43 (.61)	4.27 (.62)	1.08	1.99	329	.30
Compensation	3.00 (1.02)	3.47 (.89)	4.87	-3.56	329	.03*
Job characteristics	3.71 (.91)	3.96 (.71)	4.42	-2.20	329	.04*
T&D opportunities	3.58 (.95)	3.97 (.92)	1.11	-3.14	329	.29
Supervisor support	3.69 (.97)	3.78 (.94)	1.96	-.70	329	.16
Career opportunities	2.84 (.80)	3.04 (.72)	4.79	-1.91	329	.03*
Work/Life balance	3.62 (1.07)	3.78 (.94)	2.46	-1.17	329	.12
Total retention factors	3.30 (.74)	3.60 (.63)	8.05	-3.25	329	.001**

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 6.13) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between race groups in curiosity ($F = 5.36$, $t(329) = .266$, $p \leq .02$), career resilience ($F = 4.09$, $t(329) = 2.43$, $p \leq .04$), compensation ($F = 4.87$, $t(329) = -3.56$, $p \leq .03$) and career opportunities ($F = 4.79$, $t(329) = -1.91$, $p \leq .03$). No other statistically significant differences between males and females and the remaining variables were found.

Table 6.14 displays the results for the t-tests relating to marital status.

Table 6.14

Independent t-test Scores for Marital status (N = 337)

Variable	Single Mean (SD)	Married Mean (SD)	F	T	Df	Sig
Control	4.26 (.45)	4.31 (.49)	1.15	-1.05	335	.29

Concern	4.07 (.52)	4.02 (.54)	.04	.78	335	.85
Curiosity	3.40 (.54)	3.29 (.50)	.14	1.86	335	.71
Cooperation	4.20 (.47)	4.26 (.51)	.21	-1.06	335	.65
Total career adaptability	3.98 (.41)	3.97 (.44)	.48	.22	335	.49
Career self-management	4.62 (.78)	4.61 (.74)	.85	.15	335	.36
Cultural competence	3.85 (.79)	3.88 (.70)	2.87	-.37	335	.09
Self-efficacy	4.60 (.69)	4.70 (.67)	1.03	-1.23	335	.31
Career resilience	4.50 (.68)	4.56 (.66)	.45	-.81	335	.50
Sociability	4.04 (.68)	3.99 (.70)	.17	.50	335	.68
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.43 (.69)	4.56 (.72)	.24	-1.61	335	.63
Proactivity	4.76 (.73)	4.83 (.79)	.50	-.87	335	.48
Emotional literacy	3.96 (.70)	3.98 (.66)	.97	-.17	335	.33
Total employability attributes	4.38 (.62)	4.41 (.60)	.000	-.57	335	.99
Compensation	3.02 (1.03)	3.27 (.99)	.48	-2.20	335	.49
Job characteristics	3.69 (.93)	3.87 (.78)	5.22	-1.84	335	.02*
T&D opportunities	3.60 (.99)	3.78 (.91)	1.30	-1.65	335	.26
Supervisor support	3.60 (1.00)	3.87 (.88)	2.75	-2.50	335	.10
Career opportunities	2.85 (.82)	2.95 (.74)	4.03	-1.07	335	.05*
Work/Life balance	3.60 (1.08)	3.73 (.98)	1.85	-1.19	335	.18
Total retention factors	3.23 (.76)	3.49 (.66)	5.60	-2.48	335	.01*

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 6.12) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between single and married individuals in terms of job characteristics ($F = 5.22$, $t(335) = -1.84$, $p \leq .02$) and career opportunities ($F = 4.03$, $t(335) = -1.07$, $p \leq .05$). No other statistically significant differences between married and single individuals and the remaining variables were found.

Table 6.15 displays the results for the t-tests relating to employment status.

Table 6.15

Independent t-test Scores for Employment Status (N = 337)

Variable	Part-time employed Mean (SD)	Full-time employed Mean (SD)	F	t	Df	Sig
Control	3.98 (.42)	4.28 (.47)	.28	-1.30	335	.60
Concern	3.84 (.58)	4.05 (.53)	.00	-.79	335	.97
Curiosity	3.52 (.23)	3.35 (.53)	2.24	.66	335	.14
Cooperation	3.98 (.36)	4.23 (.50)	.38	-1.01	335	.54
Total career adaptability	3.83 (.33)	3.98 (.42)	.47	-.70	335	.50
Career self-management	4.32 (.89)	4.62 (.76)	.03	-.78	335	.86
Cultural competence	3.60 (.75)	3.87 (.76)	.21	-.70	335	.65
Self-efficacy	4.54 (.50)	4.64 (.69)	.80	-.29	335	.37
Career resilience	4.42 (.22)	4.53 (.67)	4.80	-.33	335	.03*
Sociability	3.68 (.32)	4.03 (.69)	2.18	-1.00	335	.14
Entrepreneurial orientation	4.46 (.18)	4.48 (.71)	4.85	-.05	335	.03*
Proactivity	4.71 (.35)	4.79 (.76)	3.73	-.19	335	.05*

Emotional literacy	3.82 (.07)	3.97 (.68)	6.59	-.43	335	.01
Total employability attributes	4.21 (.38)	4.39 (.61)	2.07	-.58	335	.15
Compensation	3.15 (1.58)	3.12 (1.02)	1.50	.07	335	.22
Job characteristics	3.88 (.83)	3.76 (.88)	.24	.27	335	.62
T&D opportunities	3.96 (.46)	3.67 (.96)	1.82	.60	335	.18
Supervisor support	4.08 (.50)	3.71 (.97)	1.78	.78	335	.18
Career opportunities	3.88 (.85)	2.88 (.78)	.02	2.53	335	.88
Work/Life balance	4.00 (.61)	3.65 (1.05)	1.59	.67	335	.21
Total retention factors	3.68 (.76)	3.37 (.73)	.01	.86	335	.93

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 6.12) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between part-time and full-time employed individuals in terms of career resilience ($F = 4.80$, $t(335) = -.33$, $p \leq .03$), entrepreneurial orientation ($F = 4.85$, $t(335) = -.5$, $p \leq .03$) and emotional literacy ($F = 6.59$, $t(335) = -.43$, $p \leq .01$). No other statistically significant differences between part-time and full-time employed individuals and the remaining variables were found.

The results of the ANOVA and independent t-tests provided supportive evidence for the research hypothesis Ha3 (Individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors).

6.4 SYNTHESIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

In this section the biographical profile of the sample is discussed, including the results in terms of the tested research hypotheses.

6.4.1 Biographical profile of sample

Participants in the sample were predominantly African part-time employed females in the age group (26-40 years) and were mainly single.

6.4.2 Sample profile: career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors

In this section, the interpretation of the means will be discussed. Table 6.16 shows the highest and lowest means of the three measuring instruments.

Table 6.16

Summary of Means of Measuring Instruments

	CAI	EAS	RFMS
Highest mean	Control (4.28)	Proactivity (4.79)	Job characteristics (3.76)
Lowest mean	Curiosity (3.35)	Cultural competence (3.86)	Career opportunities (2.89)

Overall, the results relating to CAI indicated a relatively high level of control on the part of the participants, which means that the participants had a good overall perception of control over their careers (Chan & Mai, 2015).

Regarding career adaptability, the high mean value for control suggests that the individuals recognised control as the most important variable embedded in their career paths. These participants in this study are very concerned about being responsible and accountable for the development of their career actions, life trajectories, work experience and taking control of their career direction (Duffy *et al.*, 2015). The sample consists of a diverse group of full-time and part-time employed participants within Super's stages of career adaptability (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement). High reliability coefficients were obtained for the concern subscale and the findings therefore can be interpreted with confidence.

The low mean value for curiosity shows that the individuals were less excited to explore their environment and possible future selves and opportunities through information-seeking and risk-taking, gaining new knowledge and competencies as well as thinking about how they

may influence various work roles and environments. The standard deviation of curiosity and concern is the highest when compared to the other variables, which indicates that some respondents were very curious and concerned about their future careers, whereas others were only slightly, if at all, curious and concerned about exploring other vocational opportunities. It should also be understood that the mean value for curiosity is not significantly lower than the others, which once again confirms the standard deviation in that some participants regard curiosity and concern as important while others consider other variables to be more important than curiosity and concern. All the respondents were employed and in different stages of career adaptability, which explains why many of them were more concerned about their growth and exploration (these were the ones who might have been more curious), while others may even have been concerned about their career establishment, maintenance and disengagement (might have been less curious).

The low mean scores obtained for the curiosity variable suggest that the participants did not respond defensively to the career adaptability items and the scores on the various scales can be interpreted with confidence.

With regard to employability attributes, the high mean score obtained for proactivity suggests that individuals were able to be proactive and to take initiative in order to achieve their goals, accomplish tasks or meet deadlines, while at the same time setting realistic goals, developing plans and taking action to achieve their goals, accomplish tasks and meeting deadlines, which are all key elements of proactivity. The sample in this study was taken from two organisations in the recruitment advertising industry, where employees are expected to be target driven and meet deadlines, accomplish their tasks, plan well (be proactive) in terms of achieving their goals (despatching work of high quality in time and making profit). The high mean value for proactivity supports the fact that these individuals do indeed possess this skill. High reliability coefficients were obtained for the proactivity subscale and the findings can therefore be interpreted with confidence.

The low mean score obtained for cultural competence suggests that individuals had little knowledge of customs of other cultures; lacked confidence and ability to communicate well inter-culturally, had little understanding of values and beliefs of other cultures and could not easily initiate and maintain relationships with people from different cultures, as well as enjoying working with people from different cultures. Generally, it is not easy to understand and grasp different cultures and customs, which thus supports the low mean score value. High reliability coefficients were obtained for the cultural competence subscale and the findings can therefore be interpreted with confidence. The high standard deviation obtained

for career self-management and cultural competence indicates that the data points are distant from the mean. This implies that some respondents received high scores in career self-management and cultural competence while others received extremely low scores.

With regard to retention factors, the high mean score obtained for job characteristics suggests that individuals were able to utilise a number of complex and high level skills to perform their jobs and enjoy their jobs. It also signifies that individuals had a chance to use their personal initiative and judgement in carrying out their jobs. The high mean score also suggests that individuals had considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how they performed their work. The high mean value for job characteristics supports the fact that individuals do indeed possess this skill. High reliability coefficients were obtained for the job characteristics subscale and the findings can therefore be interpreted with confidence.

The low mean score obtained for career opportunities suggests that individuals were more or less prepared to change and less willing to meet career disequilibrium or transition with fitting responses, denotes adaptiveness. This also suggests that individuals were not confident enough in designing their careers. High reliability coefficients were obtained for the career opportunities subscale and the findings can therefore be interpreted with confidence. The high standard deviation obtained for training and development and supervisor support indicates that the data points are distant from the mean. This implies that some respondents received high scores in training and development and supervisor support while others received extremely low scores.

6.4.3 Research aim 1

The results provide supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha1: There is a significant and positive relationship between the career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

6.4.3.1 Interpretation of correlations between CAI and EAS

According to the results (Table 6.7), participants with high career adaptability displayed a high level of employability attributes. These findings suggest that participants with higher concern, control, curiosity and cooperation are also likely to have a higher level of career self-management, cultural competence, self-esteem, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. These findings also suggest

that individuals who are adaptable in career decision-making, career-planning and career-exploration are more employable.

The career curiosity revealed a significant negative relationship with all the employability attributes, suggesting that the more curious a participant is in his/her ability to demonstrate employability attributes, the less likely such an individual would respond defensively when reporting his/her career adaptability.

These findings are in line with the findings of Ashton (2013), Blackford (2013), Brown and Lent (2013), Ndzube (2013), Ottino, (2010), and Yang *et al.*, (2015), Zacher (2015), who also found that, individuals with high levels of adaptability could maintain their employability and remain employable. Highly adaptable individuals are tenacious, resilient and more ready to face the career transition and traumas in stressful times and environments. Individuals with higher career adaptability are able to demonstrate employability attributes and are more employable as opposed to individuals with low career adaptability.

6.4.3.2 Interpretation of correlations between CAI and RFMS

According to the results (Table 6.8), participants with high career adaptability display a high level of retention factors. These findings suggest that the higher an individual's concern, control, curiosity and cooperation, the more likely that such an individual will have a high level of retention factors.

All the RFMS variables correlated the highest with the CAI cooperation variable. In this study control and cooperation variables are the only variables that had a significant relationship with training and development opportunities. This finding can be attributed to the fact that training and development opportunities widens and sharpens an individual's compatibility with opportunities for advancement contingent upon his or her ability to competently tackle new levels of responsibility and challenges (Palwasha *et al.*, 2015). The CAI control and cooperation variables describe employees' beliefs that they can take full responsibility and accountability for constructing their own career and the willingness to engage in mutual aid actions regarding career tasks and taking guidance from others (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Guan *et al.*, 2015; Nota *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, if an individual's belief in himself/herself is high, the individual's belief in his/her career (career control and career cooperation) is also likely to be high.

These findings are in line with the findings of Bal *et al.* (2015), Cai *et al.* (2015), Docket (2003) Öncel (2014) and Tolentino *et al.* (2014), who found that career adaptability is positively related to retention factors.

No significant relationship was found between any of the retention factors and curiosity and concern, indicating that individuals understand the importance of exploring possible future selves and opportunities, but given the transitions they are faced with, including South Africa's unemployment issues as well as the context of the volatile labour market they find themselves in, much of their efforts and time go into other priorities, for example acquiring the skills necessary to obtain employment and remain employed. This could be the reason why individuals respond defensively regarding their retention factors.

6.4.3.3 Interpretation of correlations between EAS and RFMS

According to the results (Table 6.9), participants with a high level of employability attributes display high retention factors. These findings suggest that the higher an individual's employability attributes, the more likely such an individual will be concerned with receiving a competitive, fair and attractive benefits package, doing an interesting and challenging job, being involved in training and development opportunities, getting genuine and positive supervisory support and career opportunities, and creating a balance between their personal lives and their work.

The following RFMS variables (job characteristics, training and development opportunities and work/life balance) displayed positive significant relationships with the following EAS variables (self-efficacy, career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity) respectively. These findings are in line with Botha (2015), Cai *et al.* (2015), Patel (2015), Vargas-Hernandez and Jimenez (2015), who found that employability attributes are crucial requirements for individuals to maintain and enhance attractiveness and marketability in the volatile and dynamic labour market (being retainable).

No significant relationship was found between all employability attributes and compensation, supervisor support and career opportunities indicating that individuals have no control over their compensation package. The lack of genuine and positive supervisory support and the lack of career opportunities might have caused this non-significant relationship. This could be the reason why individuals respond defensively regarding their retention factors.

6.4.4 Research aim 2

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

6.4.4.1 Interpretation of stepwise hierarchical regression analysis (demographic variables, employability attributes and retention factors as independent variables) and career adaptability (as dependent variable).

The study revealed (Table 6.10) that race acted as positive and significant predictors of career adaptability.

Race predicted change in overall career adaptability. The results revealed that race was found to be a determinant of career goals and work-related formal training and development behaviours – race significantly and positively predicted individuals' career adaptability.

The results revealed that race significantly and positively predicted individuals' career adaptability.

No positive and significant relationship was found between age, gender, marital status, job level and career adaptability.

In light of these findings, it appears reasonable to assume that those participants who possess these individual differences (race) are likely to adapt to changing career circumstances, become proactive in managing their careers, and update themselves with the relevant skills, knowledge and capabilities for career construction in the 21st century world of work. Consequently, this may lead to enhanced retention within organisations.

6.4.5 Research aim 3

The results provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and employment status differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

6.4.5.1 Interpretation of test for mean differences

The study revealed that curiosity and control were the only two variables that differed significantly between different age groups. The results of this study indicate that curiosity was higher for younger age groups than older age groups and control was higher for older age groups. Concern was lower in the (41-55 years) age group, whilst in the (25 and younger; 26-40 and 56 and older) age groups it was almost equivalent. Statistical significant differences were also found between compensation and cultural competence. The result of this study indicates that cultural competence was higher for older age group than for younger age groups, whereas compensation was higher for (41-55 years) age group.

These findings are supported by Zacher and Griffin (2015), as well as Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), who found that curiosity and control differ significantly in different age groups.

The study revealed that entrepreneurial orientation and job characteristics were the only two variables that differed significantly between males and females. The results of this study indicate that, both entrepreneurial orientation and job characteristics were higher for males than for females.

These findings are supported by Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), Migunde *et al.* (2011), Mikhail, (2010), Moshupi (2013), Nkambule (2010) and Coetzee and Harry (2015), who found that gender predicts career adaptability and that females display higher levels of career adaptability than males.

With regard to job characteristics, the females reported a lower level than males, indicating that males responded more defensively to the job characteristics items than females.

The study revealed that curiosity, compensation and career opportunities were the only three variables that differed significantly between different race groups. The results of this study indicate that, curiosity was higher for Africans, coloureds and Indians than for whites. The results of this study furthermore, indicate that compensation was higher for whites than for Africans. Unfortunately, these findings are not supported by any literature in this study.

With regard to career opportunities, the Africans reported a lower score than whites, indicating that whites responded more defensively to employability attributes items than Africans. The study revealed that job characteristics and career opportunities were the only two variables that differed significantly between single (separated/divorced/widowed) and

married groups. The results of this study indicate that, job characteristics score was higher for married individuals, than for single individuals.

These findings are supported by Ferreira and Coetzee (2010), Gray (2011), Moshupi, (2013), Nkambule (2010), Reis and Baruch (2013) and Walsh (2012) who found that married individuals seem to battle with their career adaptation, because marriage comes with multiple life roles. Single and divorced (separated) individuals show stronger career adaptability than married individuals, because they are not particularly affected by multiple life roles in their employment careers.

With regard to career opportunities, single individuals reported a lower level than married individuals, indicating that married participants responded more defensively to the career opportunity items than single participants.

The study revealed that career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and emotional literacy were the only three variables that differed significantly between full-time and part-time employed groups. The results of this study indicate that, career resilience was higher for full-time employed individuals, than for part-time individuals. The results of this study also indicate that, entrepreneurial orientation was higher for full-time employed participants, than for part-time participants.

These findings are supported by Gray (2011), Moshupi (2013) and Walsh (2012) who found that there is a positive significant relationship between employment status and employability attributes.

With regard to emotional literacy part-time employed individuals reported a lower level than full-time employed individuals, indicating that full-time employed individuals responded more defensively to the emotional literacy items than part-time employed individuals.

6.5 SUMMARY OF DECISIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 6.17 presents an overview of the research hypotheses that were formulated for the purposes of this research study, the statistical procedures that were performed to test the research hypotheses and the final decisions reached.

Table 6.17

Summary of Decisions Regarding the Research Hypotheses

Aim	Research hypothesis	Supportive evidence
1	H01 – There is no statistical significant positive relationship between individuals' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.	No
	Ha1 – There is a statistical significant positive relationship between individuals' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.	Yes
2	H02: The career adaptability and employability attributes variables as a composite set of independent variables are not significantly and positively related to the retention factor variable as a composite	No
	Ha2: The career adaptability and employability attributes variables as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factor variable as a composite set of dependent variables.	Yes
3	H03: Differences exist in career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level).	No
	Ha3: Differences do not exist in career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status and job level).	Partial supportive evidence

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics relevant to the study in order to integrate the findings of the literature review with the findings of the empirical research study that was conducted. Chapter 6 thus addressed the following research aims of the study:

Research aim 1: Investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in a sample of respondents in a recruitment advertising industry.

Research aim 2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status, and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors.

Research aim 3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

Thus, the empirical research aims of the study were achieved. Chapter 7 will conclude the empirical study by addressing the following research aim:

Research aim 4: To formulate recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management and suggest further research strategies based on these research findings.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research study. This chapter addresses research aim 4, namely to formulate recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management and to suggest further research strategies based on these research findings.

7.1 CONCLUSIONS

This section focuses on the conclusions drawn from the literature and empirical studies in accordance with the aims of the research, as set out in Chapter 1.

7.1.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

The general aim was to investigate whether a relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variable). The general aim was achieved by addressing and achieving the specific aims of the research.

Conclusions were drawn in terms of each of the specific aims regarding the relationship dynamics between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

7.1.1.1 Research aim 1: To conceptualise talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context

The first aim, namely to conceptualise talent retention in the 21st century world of work: in a recruitment context, was achieved in Chapter 2.

(a) Conclusions relating to talent retention as defined in the 21st century

The literature indicated that retention is an effort taken by an organisation to hold onto and prevent its highly-talented employees from leaving the organisation, especially by rewarding them and providing them with incentives for performing their jobs efficiently and effectively

(Inda, 2016, Nirmala & Pandey, 2015b). The most holistic strategy for attracting and retaining highly-talented, intelligent and exceptional employees is to ensure that the work environment is conducive for their development and empowerment.

The dynamic and challenging workplace of the 21st century calls for a highly talented workforce, one that is driven and self-directed by protean and boundary-less careers in order to remain employable (De Vos & Van der Hiejden, 2015). It is imperative for organisations to give employees room to balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside their workplace. There should be a healthy balance that will assist in attracting, recruiting and retaining valued and talented individuals (Amiani, 2014; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a). The challenges of work in the dynamic and changing landscape have a powerful effect on the retention of the top talent, and therefore companies should develop strong and holistic strategies to ensure the retention of high-performing employees. The retaining of superior employees and their critical expertise is vital for the development of the organisation's special talent pool, because such individuals are deemed to have highly marketable skills, are expensive to replace, and are critical to the organisation's survival objectives (Ferreira *et al.*, 2013; Sharma, 2015).

Highly employable employees are described as those individuals who are willing and flexible to make frequent moves into entirely new jobs, fields or occupations that build on their current skills, and to develop new ones (Deeley, 2014; Merrill, 2015). Employability attributes are skills that are not limited to gaining employment, but also to enabling individuals to take the initiative for their own learning, to take charge of their careers, and to contribute to the success of the organisation (Botha, 2015).

Career adaptability is a central component of employability. Individuals who are adaptable in career decision-making, career planning and career exploration are more employable (Maree, 2015; Spurk *et al.*, 2015). The adaptability of careers is paramount to staying employable. Individuals with high levels of adaptability can maintain their employability and remain employable (Reis & Baruch, 2013; Yang *et al.*, 2015). Highly adaptable individuals are tenacious, resilient and more ready to face the career transition and traumas in stressful times and environment (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). The four major dimensions of career adaptability (concern, control, curiosity and cooperation) help individuals to cope with changes in the society, and in the 21st century work environment (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

(b) Conclusions relating to changes in retention practices

It is imperative for organisations to realise that retention and satisfaction of key and top performers and the whole workforce is the foundation of sustainable and successful organisations (Micik & Ludvik, 2015; Miryala, 2015). Organisations should draft their retention strategies in such a way that they promote the retention of knowledgeable, highly talented superstars who will make sure that the success, effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation is prioritised. It is critical for organisations to develop and implement a cost effective HRM retention strategy that will attempt to minimise turnover among strong and top performers in order to retain them within the organisation for a long time (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Palwasha *et al.*, 2015). It is important for all those who are responsible for talent retention within the organisation to realise that key and bright individuals are rare and should be looked after with sensitivity and special care in order to be able to retain and keep them longer in the organisation. According to Piti (2010) the vital art of talent retention is for an organisation to find talent, attract, build, mentor and retain them and do whatever it takes to make them remain with the organisation, in order to build a solid talent pool within the organisation. Trends for talent retention, talent wars, talent raids, talent shortage and talent metrics challenge organisations globally to develop and implement strong and holistic talent strategies in order to retain key and top employees to remain competitive and successful now and in the near future (Giannetti & Metzger, 2015; Gogate & Pandey, 2015).

The critical shortage of talented and skilled individuals, and the growing demand and competition for talent globally has made talent retention a major strategic challenge in organisations (Kane, 2015; Kheswa, 2015). This can be accomplished by making sure that the organisation develops and implements a comprehensive talent retention strategy that involves attracting, motivating and retaining talented, superior, exceptional and high performers and especially employees with highly marketable scarce skills and competencies, who are extremely expensive to replace easily and who are vital to the survival objectives of the organisation (Born & Kang, 2015; Dadie, 2015). Talented, high potential and high ability employees should be treated as the greatest assets within an organisation in order to achieve business results in today's highly competitive environment (Ismail *et al.*, 2015; Jansink, 2015).

(c) Conclusions relating to careers and retention practices

Several researchers ascertained that globalisation, shrinking career opportunities, decreased job security and employment for life are the most paramount and challenging changes in the 21st century world of work (Guan *et al.*, 2014; Kishore *et al.*, 2014; Taber &

Blankemeyer, 2015). Many people have experienced challenging career transitions and moved away from the traditional careers in respect of a new mind-set, a new attitude, and a new way of being and doing things, which is referred to as *boundary-less* and *protean careers* (Aldrich, 2013; Van der Heijden, 2015). This dynamic movement from the traditional to the new mind-set is also challenging organisations to implement solid retention practices in order to retain talented employees. It is vital for organisations to implement career development opportunities that will make superior talent remain in the organisation for longer and at the same time enhances their loyalty to the company (Mehta *et al.*, 2014; Sharma, 2015). Boundary-less and protean careers follow from the erosion of the idea of employment for life to new employment patterns (Nota & Rossier, 2015). Boundary-less and protean careerists are self-directed and are driven by intrinsic values; they are flexible, versatile, mobile, open and adaptive in seeking new employment opportunities (Barto *et al.*, 2015; Zacher, 2014b). For organisations to be able to retain such rare and scarce talent, solid and attractive career development programmes, continuous learning opportunities and productivity training should be implemented in order to attract and retain highly talented and productive employees (Hassan *et al.*, 2014; Okech, 2015).

Today's career and professional landscape that is characterised by changing career patterns, the erosion of job security and employment for life, and the emphasis on transferable skills, has led to a growing and challenging emphasis on employability as essential benchmark of success and competitiveness, for both the organisation and the individual (Barnes *et al.*, 2015; Maggiori, *et al.*, 2013). It is important that the focus has changed from lifetime employment to lifetime employability. It is clear that security lies in employability rather than in employment (Boden, 2015; Botha, 2015). Employability is a vital key for the success and competitiveness of both the organisation and the individual. It is imperative for organisations in this competitively driven labour market landscape to be able to retain superior and top talent, since talent is a vital engine that drives the organisation towards success and operational and service delivery excellence (Deery & Jago, 2015). It is vital for organisations to motivate and retain these top, talented and highly employable employees through the implementation of holistic and strong retention strategies.

In today's turbulent and unpredictable work environment, careers are no longer characterised by stability, vertical progression and job security as it was in the past (Douglass & Duffy, 2015; Hirschi *et al.*, 2015). In this dynamic 21st century world of work, organisations are changing drastically; traditional boundaries are diminishing, and career patterns are becoming more permeable, unpredictable, unstable and unstructured (Lyons *et al.*, 2015). Currently several researchers emphasise that careers are dynamic, boundary-

less, protean, fluid and individually focused (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Duffy *et al.*, 2015). Boundary-less and protean careers are the best way into the future. It is imperative for the organisation to provide its employees with growth and development opportunities in order to retain highly talented individuals in this technological and globalised business environment, but it is entirely the responsibility of the employees to build their own intellectual capital and transferable skills that will ensure their continued employability (Chopra & Rodrigues, 2016; Mathur, 2016). Organisations must ensure that retention strategies are solid and always updated to ensure that they will attract and retain top talent at all times (Dockel, 2003; Were, 2015).

(d) Conclusions relating to retention challenges for organisations in the 21st century world of work

The literature indicated that South Africa is experiencing a critical global skills crisis especially in retaining the country's talented knowledgeable workforce (Mehta *et al.*, 2014). It is imperative for South Africa to attract and retain its knowledgeable workers in order to be able to compete globally (Deshmukh, 2015). The critical shortage of a skilled workforce is making it extremely difficult for companies to attract and retain competent and skilled employees (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2015). Kishore *et al.* (2014) point out that many organisations globally are facing formidable competition when attempting to attract and retain the highly-talented and top performers for the right positions and at the right time. It is paramount that organisations create internal solid talent pools. The internal solid talent pool will provide a reliable and consistent internal source of talent by means of providing extensive training and development, in order to win the battle for talent locally and globally (Sharma, 2015; Whelan & Carcary, 2014).

It is clear that the identified retention-challenges may point to whether the organisations are committed to their employees, and this will help in the retention of superior talent. It is imperative for organisations to convince their employees that all the identified retention-factors are motivated and inspired by the goodwill to retain highly talented employees (Dockel, 2003; Dockel *et al.*, 2006; Osman-Gani & Paik, 2016).

7.1.1.2 Research aim 2: To conceptualise and explain the three constructs career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models in the literature

The second aim, namely to conceptualise and explain the constructs career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models in the literature, was achieved in chapter 3 and chapter 4.

(a) Conclusions relating to career adaptability

Career adaptability is a critical construct in individuals' career development processes, and has been recommended as an essential key competency in career success (Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Guan *et al.*, 2015). Career adaptability is an adaptive and resiliency resource that enables individuals to adapt and cope with career transitions and traumas in stressful times and environments (Yang *et al.*, 2015). According to Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005) career adaptability is the readiness to cope with the unpredictable tasks of preparing for and participating in work, and also with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes at work and in the working conditions. Gadassi *et al.*, (2012) summarise career adaptability to include the following five core process dimensions, namely plan-fullness/career planning; exploration; information-informed decision-making and reality-orientation. It may be argued that the four major dimensions of career adaptability, namely concern, control, curiosity and cooperation, refer to an individual's preparation, flexibility and willingness to utilise dynamic job search strategies, which in turn may influence the individual's finding a new job (Eshelman, 2013; Maree & Symington, 2015).

Savickas (1997) identified four dimensions of career adaptability, namely career planning, career decision making, career exploration and career confidence. Several researchers identified 4Cs of career adaptability namely concern, control, curiosity and cooperation; these are global dimensions of resources that facilitate the realisation of personal goals and values, irrespective of work conditions that may foster or constrain career adaptability (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Duffy *et al.*, 2015; Hirschi *et al.*, 2015).

Individuals' career adaptabilities differ as a result of certain variables. The key variables found in the literature include: age, gender, marital status and job level (Coetzee & Harry, 2015; Griffin, 2015; Walsh, 2012).

(b) Conclusions relating to employability attributes

Employability attributes refer to a pattern of personality attributes, generic skills, competencies and work-related skills that help individuals respond to employment even in

the midst of unemployment (Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Ito, 2014). These attributes of employability entail diverse competencies, transferable skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviour that empower and enlighten individuals to recognise and grab employment opportunities and remain employed even in the midst of difficulties and a challenging economy (Ibarraran *et al.*, 2014; Lane, 2016).

Individuals' employability attributes differ as a result of certain variables. The key variables found in literature are: age and gender (Bal *et al.*, 2015; Han & Rojewski, 2015).

(c) Conclusions relating to retention factors

Retention factors are factors that facilitate the retention or departure of employees, and decisions to leave or remain with organisations depends on the employees' priorities (Jackson, 2014; Okech, 2015).

Retention factors are vital factors that instil and encourage organisational commitment and increase the retention of key employees (Dockel *et al.*, 2006; Herbert, 2016; Thang, 2016). Retention factors are essential retention tools for attracting, developing and retaining exceptional and high calibre talent, in order to achieve and exceed the goals and objectives of the business (Jakhar, 2015; Perring, 2014; Wisniewaska & Wisniewski, 2013).

Dockel (2003) identifies six top retention factors, namely compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies. Individuals' retentions differ as a result of certain variables. The key variables found in literature include: age, gender and marital status (Agyeman & Ponnial, 2014; Brown & Lent, 2013; Du Plessis & Sukumaran, 2015).

7.1.1.3 Research aim 3: To identify and conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in terms of theoretical models

The third aim, namely to identify and conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability, employability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models was achieved in chapter 3 and chapter 4

(a) Research aim 3.1: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes from a theoretical perspective

Career adaptability is positively related to employability attributes (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015; Zacher, 2016). Blackford (2013) found that career adaptability sharpens and improves employability within and outside the organisation, and especially when the individuals have a

flexible and proactive attitude towards the planning of their careers. Career adaptability has also been found to serve as a substantial predictor of an individual's employability (Guan *et al.*, 2016). Career adaptability is profoundly reflected in the rapidly changing demands of employers who are constantly seeking a proactive, adaptive and employable workforce (Havenga, 2011; Tak, 2012). Highly employable individuals have the willingness, openness, flexibility, adaptability, proactivity, tenacity and resiliency to increase and acquire new critical knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to remain employable and to maintain and enhance their attractiveness and marketability in the volatile and dynamic labour market (Botha, 2015; Praskova *et al.*, 2015). According to Blackford (2013), continuing professional development, career development and effective networking is essential to enhance and maintain employability at every stage of an individual's life even in retirement. Highly employable individuals have the courage and stamina to take control and realise their present and future career potential (Babos *et al.*, 2015; Siddiqui & Siddiqui, 2016). Career identity and adaptability are essential key aspects of employability (Vanhercke *et al.*, 2014; Zin, Shamsudin & Subramanian, 2013). Higher employability has also been positively associated with strong career identity, flexibility, adaptability and career resilience, which empowers individuals to handle career challenges and to be successful in this turbulent and volatile world of work (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Froehlick *et al.*, 2015).

(b) Sub-aim 3.2: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective

In the 21st century world of work, it is imperative for organisations to understand the individual's career adaptability because this may influence talent retention in the organisation (Hajian *et al.*, 2013). There is a strong positive relationship between retention factors and career adaptability, because organisations that implement retention factors are capable of retaining highly adaptive, flexible, resilient and proactive individuals (Ambrosius, 2016; Mehta *et al.*, 2014). Career planning is vital to employee retention (Akila, 2012). The opportunities to learn and enhance new skills and expertise will boost their careers with the result that they will be retained by their current organisations (Miryala, 2015; Shakeel, 2015). Highly retainable individuals are those employees who are capable of constructing their careers, who are highly adaptive, proactive and flexible, as well being able to develop their adaptability resources (Oncel, 2014).

Career adaptability is positively related to retention factors (Senior *et al.*, 2014). Maruska and Perry (2013) found that individuals who are highly adaptable, resilient, flexible and proactive are highly retainable. Career adaptability has also been found to serve as a

substantial predictor of an individual's chances of being highly marketable and retainable (Aggarwal, 2016; Cai *et al.*, 2015; Oncel, 2014).

Employees are also expected to be able to develop their career competencies including career-oriented attitudes in order to improve and enhance their being retainable in the organisation (Jain & Jain, 2013; Schroever & Hendricks, 2014). Individuals who have strong career identity or work identity are highly adaptive and are more marketable, attractive and retainable to various employers in this new world of work (Beukes, 2010; Ndzube, 2013). Highly adaptive individuals can identify and realise career opportunities, advance and again promotion to higher career levels, and this can enhance their being retainable in organisations (Jain & Jain, 2013; Van der Heijde, 2016; Zacher, 2016). Konstam *et al.* (2015) found that adults with high levels of the 4Cs (concern, control, curiosity and confidence) of career adaptability have a good chance of being retained in organisations.

(c) Sub-aim 3.3: To conceptualise the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors from a theoretical perspective

Individuals with high levels of employability are capable of sustaining employment, realising, understanding and utilising professional opportunities that will increase and enhance their retention (Botha, 2015; Patel, 2015). Highly employable individuals have the capacity to increase and acquire new critical knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to remain employable and to maintain and enhance their attractiveness and marketability in the volatile and dynamic labour market (Blackford, 2013; Praskova *et al.*, 2015). Employers require their employees to possess certain personality attributes, transferable skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, generic skills, competencies and work-related skills in order to remain marketable and retainable to various employers in this new world of work (Butcher & Rose-Adams, 2015; Ito, 2014). According to Maruska and Perry (2013), rare talents that organisations would like to retain are highly employable. Highly attractive and retainable individuals are capable of developing their employability skills.

It is imperative for employers to understand and grasp profoundly the factors that motivate employees to stay with the organisation, to be able to effectively retain their competent and high calibre employees, who will guarantee a competitive advantage to the organisation (Bussin, 2012). Employability is the pillar that facilitates employees to remain retainable in this volatile and unpredictable new world of work (Marks & Huzzard, 2010). Organisations are more interested in retaining employable individuals.

Retention factors enhance employability (Deery & Jago, 2015; Shakeel, 2015). Continuous learning and development enhances one's employability (Dockel *et al* 2006; Ejaz, 2015).

Career development opportunities are crucial prerequisites of employability (Ahuja & Chaudhary, 2016; Appireddi & Hariharan, 2016). Individuals with high levels of employability are highly retainable (Inda, 2016).

(d) Sub-aim 3.4 To explain the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors by means of an integrated profile

In order to deal with the multiple transitions facing the employees in the 21st century world of work, it is vital that these individuals must be able to adapt promptly to the changes in the nature of work, be accountable for their career development and continuous learning in order to become effective and efficient, to enhance their employability and remain employable and to have the chance of being retained with their current organisations (Palwasha *et al.*, 2015; Were, 2015). Within the context of these transitions, employees are expected to adopt a more proactive stance towards their careers by drawing on their career self-management skills and career resilience to sustain their employability so as to remain marketable and retainable (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011). Individuals' continued employability will depend on their competency to proactively and creatively manage their career development, continuous learning and adapting to change in this new world of work, in order to remain retainable (Ambrosius, 2016; Blackford, 2013). Individuals must construct their own careers; to do so they must be flexible, resilient, adaptive and proactive as well as develop their employability skills and adaptability resources, to remain attractive and retainable (Oncel, 2014).

There is a theoretical connection between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors (Konstam *et al.*, 2015; Lane, 2016; Oncel, 2014). Individuals with high levels of the 4Cs (concern, control, curiosity and cooperation) of career adaptability are highly employable and they have a good chance of being retained in organisations (Konstam *et al.*, 2015). Individuals' career concern, career control, career self-management, self-efficacy, training and development and career opportunities might influence their ability to create employment opportunities, sustain their employability and remain retainable (Ahuja & Chaundary, 2016; Sverko & Babarovic, 2016; Van der Heijde, 2016).

Individuals' career confidence, utilisation of their emotional literacy and being recognised and rewarded for high performance and positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues may influence their ability to realise their personal career goals irrespective of work conditions, thus will sustain their employability and make them highly retainable (Dockel, 2003; Jakhar, 2015; Nirmala & Pandey, 2015a; Nota *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore,

individuals' curiosity, career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and proactivity, work/life balance, conducive work conditions and employer branding may influence their ability to adapt to career and organisational changes. This will ensure they are ready to take and accept risks and challenging career development opportunities in order to improve themselves and their work environment, which will enhance their employability and facilitate their retention in organisations (Bell, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2015; Wilkins *et al.*, 2015). Ultimately individuals' cooperation, cultural competence, sociability and organisational culture may influence their ability to interact and network with others. Effective interaction and networking may assist individuals in getting relevant information and feedback that can advance their careers, find new job opportunities, enhance their employability and let them remain retainable (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010; Haider *et al.*, 2015; Tian & Fan, 2014).

7.1.1.4 Research aim 4: To conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, employment status and job level) on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors

The fourth aim, namely to conceptualise the effect of socio-demographic variables on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors was achieved in chapters 3 and 4.

With regard to career adaptability, the literature reported age differences in control, curiosity concern and cooperation (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Griffin, 2015; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). The literature showed that age affects changes in career adaptability in that younger individuals (25 and younger) seem to have greater confidence and determination in their ability to achieve their career goals and develop meaningful social networks than older individuals (56 years and older) (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Younger employees are more likely to be fully engaged in career development and advancement than mature aged employees (Tones *et al.*, 2010). The literature has also shown that marital status has a negative relationship with career adaptability, because marriage comes with multiple life roles (Gray, 2011).

There is a positive significant relationship between job level and career adaptability, especially in that job level challenges individuals to grow and may lead to career success (Gray, 2011; Moshupi, 2013; Walsh, 2012). With regard to employability attributes, the literature reported that there is a positive relationship between age and employability (Tisch, 2015). The literature has also shown that gender was found to have a significant effect on employability, especially that males were more likely to find employment after graduation than females (Han & Rojewski, 2015). Han and Rojewski (2015) concluded that males are more employable than females.

With regard to retention factors, the literature showed that age affects changes in retention factors in that years of work experience is a strong predictor of retention (Lee *et al.*, 2010). Lee *et al.* (2010) hypothesise that as people grow older they have more opportunity to learn about emotions, increase emotional vocabulary, and experience more and more varied life situations and this will strongly influence employers to retain such individuals (Lee *et al.*, 2010; Pauw, 2011). Literature has also shown that gender affects changes in retention factors in that women are less retainable than their men counterparts because of gender stereotypes and family responsibilities. Literature has also shown that marital status affects changes in retention factors in that the retention of women is significantly related to whether they are married or not, while the retention of men is not significantly related to whether they are married or not.

7.1.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical study

The general empirical aim of the study was to carry out four principal tasks:

- (1) To investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes, and retention factors in a sample of respondents in an advertising recruitment industry. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ha1.
- (2) To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ha2.
- (3) To assess whether the individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ha3.
- (4) To formulate recommendations for further research in the field of Human Resource Management and suggest further research strategies based on this research's findings. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ha3.

The statistical results provided supportive evidence for the research hypotheses and were reported in Chapter 5. The findings in terms of each of the research aims that merit discussion will be presented as conclusions in the following section.

7.1.2.1 Research aim 1: To investigate the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes, and retention factors in a sample of respondents in a recruitment industry. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ha1.

Owing to the fact that limited empirical studies have been conducted on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors that are relevant to this study (especially in the multicultural South African context), it is necessary to exercise caution against over interpreting the current findings with reference to the practical implications, without any further research.

The results displayed non-supportive evidence for Ha1: There is no significant and positive relationship between individuals' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This aim has been broken down into three parts, as follows:

(a) To empirically investigate the relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes

The results found a significant relationship between career adaptability and employability attributes. According to the results, participants with high career adaptability displayed a high level of employability attributes. These findings suggest that participants with higher concern, control, curiosity and cooperation are also likely to have a higher level of career self-management, cultural competence, self-esteem, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. These findings also suggest that individuals who are adaptable in career decision-making, career planning and career exploration are more employable.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Employees with high levels of adaptability could maintain their employability and remain employable. Highly adaptable individuals are tenacious, resilient and more ready to face the career transition and traumas in stressful times and environment. Individuals with higher career adaptability are able to demonstrate employability attributes and are more employable as opposed to individuals with low career adaptability.

- (b) To empirically investigate the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors

The results found that there was a significant relationship between career adaptability and retention factors. According to the results, participants with high career adaptability display high levels of retention factors. These findings suggest that the higher an individual's concern, control, curiosity and cooperation, the more likely it is that such an individual will have a high level of retention factors.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Highly adaptable, resilient and proactive individuals are highly retainable. Employees who are capable of constructing their careers, who are proactive and flexible, as well as busy developing their adaptability resources are retainable. They develop their career competencies including career-oriented attitudes in order to improve their attractiveness and retainability within organisations. These employees have strong career identity or work identity and are normally highly proactive, flexible and adaptive in order to be marketable and retainable to various employers in this new world of work. Employees must possess a wide range of psychological career resources in order to be able to adapt to changing career circumstances and enhance their retention.

- (c) To empirically investigate the relationship between employability attributes and retention factors

The results found a significant relationship between employability attributes and retention factors. According to the results, participants with high levels of employability attributes display high retention factors. Employers require their employees to possess competencies, transferable skills and expertise that enable them to secure sustained employment and remain attractive and retainable. Employees are also expected to improve their employability in order to enhance their being retainable in the organisation. Employees must also have a sense of self-directedness, an inner sense of stability and personal agency in retaining a job, based on the set of attributes and competencies in an uncertain and unpredictable employment context in order to remain retainable.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The results suggest that the higher an individual's employability attributes, the more likely it is that such an individual will be concerned with receiving a competitive and attractive benefits package, doing an interesting and challenging job, being involved in training and development opportunities and creating a balance between their lives and their work. Individuals who display career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy are more concerned about increasing the likelihood of securing and sustaining employment opportunities, sustaining their employability, achieving career success and enhancing their retention (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2011; Van der Klink *et al.*, 2016).

7.1.2.2 Research aim 2: To assess if individuals' ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predict their retention factors (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 2)

The results displayed supportive evidence for Ha2: The career adaptability and employability attributes variables as a composite set of independent variables are significantly and positively related to the retention factors variables as a composite set of dependent variables.

The results showed that only race acted as significant predictors of retention factors. Career adaptability contributed the most towards explaining the variance in retention factors. Individuals' race and their career adaptability and employability attributes significantly and positively predicted their retention factors. In conclusion, the results revealed that employability attributes and retention factors significantly and positively predicted career adaptability. Furthermore, the results showed that race was the only demographic variable that predicted career adaptability.

7.1.2.3 Research aim 3: To assess whether individuals from different ages, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 3).

The result provided partial supportive evidence for Ha3: Individuals from different ages, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The results of the empirical study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between different age groups in control, curiosity, cooperation, compensation, training and development opportunities and overall retention factors. Statistical significant differences between age groups were thus observed only between two of the retention factors, namely compensation and training and development opportunities.

With regard to gender, the results of the empirical study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in terms of self-efficacy, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation and training and development opportunities. No other statistically significant differences between males and females and the remaining variables were found.

With regard to race, the results of the empirical study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between race groups in curiosity, career resilience, compensation and career opportunities. No other statistically significant differences between race groups and the remaining variables were found.

With regard to marital status, the results of the empirical study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between single and married individuals in terms of job characteristics and career opportunities. No other statistically significant differences between single and married individuals and the remaining variables were found.

With regard to employment status, the results of the empirical study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between full-time and part-time employed individuals in terms of career resilience, entrepreneurial orientation and emotional literacy. No other statistically significant differences between full-time and part-time employed individuals and the remaining variables were found.

In conclusion, individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status, job level and employment status differ significantly regarding their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

7.1.2.4 Research aim 3: Formulate recommendations for further research in the field of Human Resource Management and suggest further research strategies based on this research's findings (This research aim relates to research hypothesis 3).

The implications of the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors assisted in providing recommendations for career counsellors and HR practitioners on how to provide meaningful guidance in terms of the relationship between the various constructs. Furthermore, the relationship provides an indication of the necessary interventions to facilitate the enhancement of career adapt-abilities and employability attributes for the retention of highly talented employees. Furthermore, career counsellors and HR practitioners can use the empirical relationship in order to assist individuals to develop their less developed career adapt-abilities and enhance their employability attributes in order to enhance the retention of superior employees as a desired outcome.

HR practitioners and career counsellors should therefore engage in interventions to facilitate the enhancement of career adapt-abilities and employability attributes for the retention of highly talented employees. Career development interventions should aim at enhancing employees' career adaptability through the enhancement of their career control, concern, curiosity and cooperation. Employees should be supported in their career development and career counselling, this should help individuals to gain profound insight, improve their own personal self-esteem and to manage their own emotions and use their emotions appropriately within the new world of work.

Along with this, employees' career adaptability and employability attributes should be enhanced. Career counsellors and HR practitioners should team up with employers to understand the importance of and reach consensus on how to aid employees in bettering their career adaptability and employability attributes to enhance their retention.

Career counsellors and HR practitioners can enhance employees' career adaptability and employability attributes in the world of work by implementing training and development programmes, career development opportunities and continuous learning programmes, and interventions to assist them in gaining these necessary skills, in order to improve their employees.

Career development interventions should concentrate on supporting employees in formulating their employability capacities in order to increase their confidence and self-

efficacy in demonstrating their skills and abilities to manage their careers and employability (Bell, 2016). Career adaptability resources can be enhanced through the facilitation of career interventions such as time perspective workshops, which promote future orientation and planfulness (concern), information-seeking activities (curiosity), self-esteem enhancement (confidence), and decision-making training (control) (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014).

7.1.3 Conclusions relating to the central hypothesis

The central hypothesis (Chapter 1) stated that a relationship exists between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This hypothesis further assumes that individuals with different levels of career adaptability and employability attributes will display different levels of retention factors. Also, individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status and job levels will display different levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

The literature review and empirical study provided supportive evidence of the central hypothesis.

7.1.4 Conclusions relating to contributions to the field of human resource management

The findings in the literature review provided insights into the various concepts and theoretical models that promote career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The literature review, further explained the way in which employees' career adaptability and employability attributes relate to their retention factors.

The findings of the empirical study provide a novel contribution in terms of the relationship dynamics between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The understanding of the findings adds to an extensive perspective in which employees' career adaptability and employability attributes explain their retention factors.

Furthermore, these findings can be utilised by HR Practitioners to enhance the career adaptability and employability attributes of young adults, which in turn will improve their retention, thus enabling them to become and remain employable and retainable.

7.2 LIMITATIONS

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

7.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

The following limitations were encountered in the literature review:

The exploratory research on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors was limited to the research literature on these three constructs that is currently available.

By utilising the Savickas (1997) model of career adaptability, the study was limited to concern, control, curiosity and cooperation. Similarly, by utilising Bezuidenhout and Coetzee's (2010) employability attributes framework, the study was limited to career self-management, cultural competence, self-efficacy, career resilience, sociability, entrepreneurial orientation, proactivity and emotional literacy. Furthermore, by utilising Dockel's (2003) retention factors model, the study was limited to compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work/life policies.

There is a shortage of research both in the South African context and abroad on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Although there is a broad research base on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, few studies have focused specifically on the relationship of these constructs in terms of employees in the 21st century world of work.

7.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The findings of this study may be limited to the ability to generalise and make practical recommendations because of a number of factors, including both the size and characteristics of the sample as well as the psychometric properties of the CAI, EAS and RFMS. The following limitations of the empirical research should be taken into account:

Although the findings of the study shed some light on the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in the South African environment, it is not possible to generalise the results to include the broader population because of the

demographic confines as well as the small size of the sample. The sample was limited to full-time and part-time employees in two advertising recruitment organisations in Johannesburg, Gauteng province with sister offices nationally, therefore the results may not be generalizable to the general public in South Africa. A sample size of 337 does not appear large enough to conclusively establish whether there is a definite relationship between the variables of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

In view of the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the relations between the variables have been interpreted in an exploratory manner. In addition, the potential risk of common method bias should be considered because of the fact that the questionnaires utilised a self-report methodology. In addition, the CAI (Savickas, 1997), EAS (Bezuidenhout & Coetzee, 2010) and RFMS (Dockel, 2003) were dependent on the respondents' self-awareness and personal perceptions, which could potentially have affected the validity of the results, as a self-report methodology was used. Nevertheless, acceptable internal consistency reliabilities were reported for the three measuring instruments.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions and limitations of this study, recommendations for human resource management and further research in the field are highlighted below.

7.3.1 Recommendations for the field of human resource management

The main aim of the study was to identify the implications of the empirical relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors and, based on the findings, to make recommendations for career counsellors and HR practitioners on how to provide meaningful guidance in terms of the relationship between the various constructs. Furthermore, to provide an indication of the necessary interventions to facilitate the enhancement of career adapt-abilities and employability attributes for the retention of highly talented employees. Furthermore, the empirical relationship can be used by career counsellors and HR practitioners in order to assist individuals to develop their less developed career adapt-abilities and enhance their employability attributes in order to enhance the retention of superior employees as a desired outcome.

The empirical study confirmed the significant relationship between employees' career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The results of the empirical study further provided evidence of the predicting role of career adaptability in the relationship

between employability attributes and retention factors. Human resource practitioners and career counsellors should therefore engage in interventions to facilitate the enhancement of career adapt-abilities and employability attributes for the retention of highly talented employees.

Career development interventions should aim at enhancing employees' career adaptability through the enhancement of their career control, concern, curiosity and cooperation. Employees should be supported in their career development and career counselling, this should help individuals to gain profound insight, improve their own personal self-esteem and to manage their own emotions and use their emotions appropriately within the new world of work.

Along with this, employees' career adaptability and employability attributes should be enhanced. Career counsellors and HR practitioners should team up with employers to understand the importance of and reach consensus on how to aid employees in bettering their career adaptability and employability attributes to enhance their retention.

Career counsellors and HR practitioners can enhance employees' career adaptability and employability attributes in the world of work by implementing training and development programmes, career development opportunities and continuous learning programmes, and interventions to assist them in gaining these necessary skills.

Employers always seek individuals high on career adaptability, as they respond to transitions better than those low on career adaptability. Career development interventions should concentrate on supporting employees in formulating their employability capacities in order to increase their confidence and self-efficacy in demonstrating their skills and abilities to manage their careers and employability (Bell, 2016). Career adaptability resources can be enhanced through the facilitation of career interventions such as time perspective workshops, which promote future orientation and planfulness (concern), information-seeking activities (curiosity), self-esteem enhancement (confidence), and decision-making training (control) (Cai *et al.*, 2015; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014). From the results of this study, it is recommended that, by enhancing employees' career adaptability and employability attributes, this will improve their retention, thus making them employable and retainable.

7.3.2 Recommendations for further research

To enhance external validity, further research should focus on acquiring a larger, more representative sample. The sample should be expanded in terms of representation of different ages, genders, races and employment status, which would provide a better representation of different levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

There is also a need for more research on career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in the South African context. Further studies would be beneficial for career counselling in that it would offer direction to employees when making career-related decisions built on the foundations of their capacities to interpret their career self-concept and motivators as employment opportunities that would align with their personal needs (Bell, 2016; Wilkins *et al.*, 2015).

Different career and life stages influence the relationship between an individual's career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. Future longitudinal research would contribute much in analysing the shift in levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, as the career self-concept evolves over time (Hirschi *et al.*, 2015).

7.4 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

7.4.1 At a theoretical level

At a theoretical level, this research is useful because of the potential relationship found between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The findings are useful in talent retention within the modern world of work. Furthermore, the study results will contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to the levels of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors in the modern workplace.

7.4.2 At an empirical level

At an empirical level, the research may contribute to constructing an empirically tested profile that may be utilised to inform talent retention practices. The study highlighted that individuals from different age groups, gender, race, marital status and job levels differ

significantly in terms of their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. The results are valuable in the employability of knowledgeable, valuable and talented employees, by identifying differences in terms of demographical information that addresses the needs of a diverse group of adults.

7.4.3 At a practical level

At a practical level, the results might help the industrial and organisational psychologists and human resource practitioners to develop a better understanding of the career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors of an individual that could positively influence the retention of exceptionally talented employees. Furthermore, the readers of this research may develop a solid understanding of the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors, which may positively or negatively influence their own career development. Positive results from the study might raise awareness of the fact that individuals differ with regard to their career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors and that these constructs could influence a person's career development and the organisation's retention strategies. Human resource professionals could be more aware of these factors influencing talent retention practices. This information could be utilised in talent retention processes to assist employees realise the importance of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

In conclusion, the findings of this research study provide some initial insights into the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors. This may prove to be useful to HR practitioners and career counsellors, who wish to improve the employability of employees. Furthermore, recommendations were made for further research.

7.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the conclusions of the research study in terms of the theoretical and empirical objectives. Possible limitations of the study in terms of both the theoretical and empirical stages of the study were discussed. Recommendations for further research investigating the relationship between career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors as well as the influence of age, gender, race, marital status, job level and employment status on these constructs, were suggested. To sum up, the chapter integrated the research of this study with relevant published research, emphasising the extent to which the results of the study provided support for the relationship between the constructs of career adaptability, employability attributes and retention factors.

With this, research aim 4 (Formulate recommendations for further research in the field of Human Resource Management and suggest further research strategies based on this research's findings) has been achieved and the study is concluded.

This concludes the study.

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