

**CONSTRUCTING A PROFILE FOR PROACTIVE CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN
PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

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I, **Isaac Tetteh Kwao**, student number: 61019070, declare that this thesis, entitled “**Constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher education institutions in Ghana**”, is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged through complete references. I further declare that this thesis has not, in part or whole, been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.


I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I also declare that the study has been carried out in strict accordance with the policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (Unisa) and the participating institution – the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Furthermore, I declare I took great care to ensure that the research was conducted with the highest integrity, considering the University of South Africa’s policy for infringement and plagiarism.

As can be seen in **Appendices A and B**, I further declare that ethical clearance to conduct the research was granted by the Department of Human Resource Management, University of South Africa. Again, in the form of permission to conduct the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the institution where the data were collected, the University of Cape Coast.

Signed



I.T. Kwao

Date

.....28/03/2023.....

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ABSTRACT/ SUMMARY

CONSTRUCTING A PROFILE FOR PROACTIVE CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA

By

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The principal focus of this research study was to investigate the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness, and organisational commitment, and to determine whether an overall proactive career management profile can be constructed to inform career self-management practices in public higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ghana. Again, the research study intended to provide a background for testing hypotheses and theories as well as moderating the effect of socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status and job level) on the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

A cross-sectional quantitative approach was conducted on a purposively selected sample of senior staff comprising academic and administrative staff (n = 288), from a single public higher educational institution in Ghana. The measuring instruments include a career pre-occupations inventory workplace friendship scale and an organisational commitment scale. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis), bi-variate correlation analysis (Pearson product moment correlation coefficient), and inferential and multivariate statistics (SEM analysis, moderated regression analysis, ANOVAs and independent sample t-test) were used for the study.

Descriptive, bi-variate correlation and inferential statistics revealed that individual psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment can be used as elements within a proactive career self-management framework within the Ghanaian higher

education institutions. The results of the moderated analysis showed that respondents' gender and job level moderated employees' level of psychosocial career pre-occupations in predicting organisational commitment. Furthermore, the test for significant mean differences revealed that gender, marital status and job level differed marginally in their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and commitment to the organisation.

Theoretically and empirically, the results advanced the career construction theory by empirically validating the core elements of career self-management. Practically, a recommendation was made to inform human resource (HR) managers and HR practitioners in public higher education institutions in Ghana and the consequences indicated in the study offer the opportunity to monitor and provide strategies and interventions for employees in their quest for career choices.

Keywords: Proactive career self-management, psychosocial career preoccupations, social connectedness, organisational commitment, career construction theory.

Isicatshulwa: Mnu I Kwao (isiXhosa)

Ugqaliselo oluphambili kolu phononongo lophando yayikukuphanda ubudlelwane phakathi komsebenzi wangaphambi kwekhondo ngokwesimo sengqondo nangokwezentlalo (psychosocial career pre-occupation), ukuziphatha, nokunxulumana kwezinto zokuziphatha nezentlalo (social connectedness), kunye nokuzibophelela kulungelelaniso /kucwangciso lombutho (organisational commitment), nokuqonda ukuba ingaba iprofayili yeendlela zokulawula ikhondo elisebenzayo elipheleleyo inokwakhelwa ukwazisa izekho lomsebenzi lokuzilawula kumaziko emfundo ephakamileyo karhulumente/oluntu (HEIs) eGhana.

Kwakhona , uphononongo lophando lwaluzimisele ukunikezela ngomhlaba osisiseko wokuvavanya ingcinga ethathwa njengeyinyaniso engekaqinisekiswa (hypothesis) neethiyori kwakunye nokumodereyitha impembelelo yeempawu zedemografi yoluntu, i-*socio-demographic characteristics* (iminyaka, isini, imeko yomtshato, kunye nenqanaba lomsebenzi) kubudlelwane phakathi kwemisebenzi yangaphambi kwekhondo nemeko yezengqondo nabantu (psychosocial career pre-occupations), unxulumano lwabantu kunye nokuzibophelela kumbutho (organizational commitment).

Inkqubo yophando ngokobungakanani enqamlezileyo ngokwamacandelo ahlukeneyo (cross sectional quantitative approach) yenziwe kwisampulu ekhethwe ngenjongo kujoliswe kubasebenzi abaphezulu/abadala ababandakanya izifundiswa nabasebenzi bezolawulo (n = 288), besuka kwiziko elinye loluntu lemfundo ephakamileyo eGhana. Izixhobo zokulinganisa zibandakanya uluhlu lwezinto kwisikali semisebenzi yangaphambi kwekhondo ubudlelwane kunye nokuzibophelela kumbutho kwindawo yokusebenzela. Iinkcukacha-manani ezichazayo (i-avareji, ukutenxa kumgangatho (standard deviation), ubugoso (skewness) kunye nomlinganiselo weenkukacha-manani osetyenziselwa ukuchaza ukuhanjiswa kwedatha ephawulweyo malunga nentsingiselo (kurtosis), uhlalutyo lolungelelwaniso oluphindwe kabini kunye neenkukacha-manani ezinokutheleleleka (i- Pearson product moment correlation coefficient), kunye neenkukacha manani ezizintlobo-ntlobo ezininzi ezinokuthelelelelwa (uhlalutyo lwe-SEM, uhlalutyo oluhlehlayo olonganyelweyo/ olumodareyithiweyo, i-ANOVA kunye novavanyo oluzimeleyo lwe-t-test) zasetyenziswa kolu phando/phononongo.

Inkcukacha-manani ezichazayo, ulungelelwaniso/unxulumaniso oluphindwe kabini kunye nezinokuthelelelelwa ezinentsingiselo zibonise ukuba imisebenzi yangaphambi

kwekhondo,ngokwemeko yengqondo neyentlalo, unxulumano lwentlalo yoluntu kunye nokuzibophelela kumbutho kunokusetyenziswa njengezinto ezingaphakathi kwesakhelo solawulo esisebenzayo ngaphakathi kumaziko emfundo ephakamileyo yaseGhana.Iziphumo zohlalutyo olumodareyithiweyo zibonise ukuba isini sabaphenduli nenqanaba lomsebenzi samodareyitha inqanaba labasebenzi kwimisebenzi yangaphambi kwekhondo kwimeko yengqondo nezentlolontle ekuqikeleleni ukuzibophelela kumbutho. Ngaphaya koko, uvavanyo olubalulekileyo lweyantlukwano lubonise ukuba isini, meko yomtshato kunye nenqanaba lomsebenzi lahlukile kancinci ngokwe-avareji kwimisebenzi yaphambi kwekhondo labo yengqondo nentlalontle, unxibelelwano lwentlalo kunye nokuzinikela embuthweni.

Ngokwethiyori nangobungqina, iziphumo ziqhubele phambili ithiyori yolwakhiwo lwekhondo lomsebenzi ngokuqinisekisa ngobuchule izinto ezingundoqo zokuzilawula kwekhondo lomsebenzi.Ngokwenene, kwenziwa isindululo sokwazisa abaphathi bezabasebenzi neengcali ze-HR kumaziko emfundo ephakamileyo yoluntu eGhana kwaye iziphumo ezibonakaliswe kuphononongo zinika ithuba lokubeka esweni nokubonelela ngezicwangciso-qhinga nongenelelo ngoncedo kubaqeshwa kwiphulo labo lokukhetha amakhondo omsebenzi.

Amagama angundoqo: inyathelo lokuqala lokuzilawula kwikhondo lomsebenzi, ukuzixakekisa ngemisebenzi yekhondo ngokwengqondo nangokwentlalontle, unxibelelwano loluntu, ukuzibophelela kombutho, ithiyori yokwakha ikhondo lomsebenzi.

Isifinyezo esiqukethe umongo wocwaningo: Mnu I Kwao (IsiZulu)

Lesi sifundo socwaningo sasigxile kakhulu ekuphenyeni ngobudlelwano phakathi kokucabanga ngomkhakha womsebenzi komuntu, ukuxhumana nabantu, ukuzibophezela komuntu emsebenzini, kanye nokunquma ukuthi iphrofayili yokukwazi ukuzilawula ngokuzenzela ekukhetheni umkhakha womsebenzi kungahlelwa yini ngendlela yokuthi kudlale indima ekuzilawuleleni maqondana nomkhakha womsebenzi ezikhungweni zezemfundo ephakeme zomphakathi (ama-HEI) eGhana. Kanti futhi, isifundo socwaningo sihlose ukunikeza umlando maqondana nokuhlola imicabango kanye nemibono yezinjulalwazi kanjalo nokulinganisa umphumela wezici zokuhleleka kwabantu emphakathini (iminyaka yobudala, ubulili, isimo somshado kanye nezinga lomsebenzi) ebudlelaneni phakathi kokucabanga ngomkhakha womsebenzi komuntu, ukuxhumana nabantu, kanye nokuzibophezela emsebenzini.

Kwalandelwa indlela yokubheka isibalo samaqoqo abantu emphakathini ngokukhetha ngokuqaphela isampula labasebenzi abasezikhundleni eziphezulu elibandakanya abasebenza ngezemfundo kanye nezokuphatha ($n = 288$), esikhungweni sezemfundo ephakeme somphakathi esisodwa eGhana. Amathuluzi okukala afaka kuwo isilinganiso sobungane basemsebenzini ekukhetheni ezinhlobeni zemikhakha ecatsangwayo kanye nesilinganiso maqondana nokuzibophezela kwabantu emsebenzini. Kulolu cwawano kwasetshenziswa izibalo ezichazayo (okujoywayelekile, ukuphambuka okuvamile, ukungalingani kanye nobukhali), ukuhlaziywa kokuhlobana okukhona phakathi kwezinqombolo ezimbili (isilinganiso sokuxhumana kwezinqombolo ezimbili ngokukaPearson), kanye nezibalo eziveza izimbangela nezibalo ezahlukahlukene (ukuhlaziywa kwe-SEM, ukuhlaziywa kokubuyelamva okulingene, ama-ANOVA kanye nesampula elizimele lokuhlola).

Izibalo ezichazayo, eziveza ukuhlobana phakathi kwezinqombolo ezimbili kanye nezibalo eziveza izimbangela ziveze ukuthi ukucabanga ngomkhakha womsebenzi komuntu ngamunye, ukuxhumana nabantu nokuzibophezela emsebenzini kungasetshenziswa njengezinto ezikhona ohlakeni lokukwazi ukuzilawula ngokuzenzela ekukhetheni umkhakha ezikhungweni zezemfundo ephakeme zaseGhana. Imiphumela yokuhlaziywa okulingene yakhombisa ukuthi ubulili bababambiqhaza kanye nezinga labo ngokwezikhundla zomsebenzi kuhambisana nezinga abasebenzi abacabanga ngalo nomkhakha womsebenzi ekuqageleni indlela abazibophezela ngayo emsebenzini. Ngaphezu kwalokho, ukuhlolwa komehluko omkhulu ojoywayelekile kwaveza ukuthi ubulili, isimo somshado kanye nezinga ngokwesikhundla somsebenzi kwahluka kakhulu

nendlela abacabanga ngayo ngomkhakha womsebenzi, ukuxhumana nabantu nokuzibophezela emsebenzini.

Ngokombono wenjulalwazi nocwaningo olufakazelwe, imiphumela ithuthukise umbono wenjulalwazi wokuhlela umkhakha womsebenzi okuqinisekiswa ngokocwaningo olufakazelwe izinto ezingala zokuzilawulela umkhakha womsebenzi. Ekusebenzeni, kwenziwa izincomo zokufundisa abaphathi babasebenzi (ba-HR) kanye nabasebenza ngezabasebenzi (ngezakwa-HR) ezikhungweni zezemfundo ephakeme zomphakathi eGhana, kanti nemiphumela evezwe ocwaningweni inikeza ithuba lokuqapha nokuhlinzeka amasu kanye nokungenelela kwabasebenzi ekwenzeni kwabo izinqumo zomsebenzi.

Amagama abalulekile: I-proactive career self-management, i-psychosocial career preoccupations, ukuxhumana kwabantu, ukuzimisela kwinhlangano, kanye ne-career construction theory.

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focused purely on constructing a proactive career self-management profile for higher educational institutions operating in this new world of work. The primary objective was to investigate the relationship between individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment in the selected Ghanaian public higher educational institution. The new world of work is characterised by a dynamic and changing landscape, and this, therefore, warrants the study of this phenomenon. The structure of this chapter provides an outline of the background and rationale for the study by means of a literature review as well as the paradigm, which eventually leads to the formulation of the problem statement and research questions as well as the hypotheses. The chapter concludes with a layout of the chapters and a summary.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

The context of the study is career self-management practices within Ghanaian higher educational settings. The research investigates the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment, career adaptation and work-life adjustment) and social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) as the independent study variables. For this study, the variable of social connectedness will be used interchangeably with the term "workplace friendship". The dependent variable of the study is organisational commitment, which consists of affective, continuance and normative commitment dimensions. Knowledge of the relationship between these constructs allows the researcher to develop an overall career self-management profile that could assist individuals in choosing and managing their career path in Ghanaian higher educational settings, specifically within the context of the new world of work. Individuals or employees tend to strive to meet their career-related desires/expectations through their work (Ma et al., 2018; Walsh et al., 2018), and this has an adverse effect on the organisation.

Wilhelm and Hirschi (2019), Rahim (2020) and Coetzee et al. (2019) contend that employees within the traditional world of work depend on organisations to provide direction and career progression. However, within this new world of work, employees are mostly responsible for their own development, unlike in the past, where both the employee and the employer shared the responsibility. Several researchers have indicated that in the past, individuals had a more passive role in the management of their careers in the traditional work setting, and they relied on the organisation to provide direction (Baillargeon & Caristron, 2013; Barley et al., 2017; Celen-

Demirtas et al., 2015; Chetana & Mohapatra, 2017; Rossier et al., 2017). However, the changes in the new world of work have resulted in employees taking greater responsibility and managing their own careers. Again, researchers agreed that career management has changed within the new world of work (Aguinis & O'Boyle, 2014; Landy & Conte, 2016; Litano & Major, 2016; Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014).

Currently, many career management experts believe that the world is in a state of transition from the 21st century world of work to a digital world of work (Robinson et al., 2020; Shmatko & Volkova, 2020; Tømte et al., 2019; Van der Heijden et al., 2020). Studies show that a digital world of work can be defined as the “totality of the elements that constitute the environment of daily experiences that are enabled by or embodied in digital technologies” (Recker et al., 2021, p. 4). Global changes such as rapid rises in unemployment and full-time remote employment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are faced by many organisations. Changes in individual careers and career management have occurred due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic across the globe. Studies reveal that a greater number of individuals who were previously engaged in full-time employment in an organisation are now encouraged to work remotely. Many employees are uncertain about what implications this may have on their career management and development in the future (Bowen, 2020; Dingle & Neiman, 2020; Ferrari et al., 2021; Prasad et al., 2020). Furthermore, employees are uncertain whether this transition will result in limited career advancement opportunities for those working remotely or not.

According to Guirguis et al. (2020), personal development, acquiring new skills and competencies, and staying abreast of new developments are the responsibility of every employee and not that of the organisation. Līce and Sloka (2019) agreed that individuals need to proactively manage their own careers not only to meet and evaluate short-term goals but also to revise their goals as a result of changing employment market conditions. Ehler (2020) asserted that counselling may assist in evaluating job and prospects and can provide guidance for establishing clarity of values for undergoing changes in an individual's career over time. According to Hirschi et al. (2020), career self-management is a sequential process that entails conscious planning of one's activities and engagements in the job one undertakes in the course of one's life—for better fulfilment, occupational awareness, growth and financial stability.

Moreover, organisations and individuals with effective career management programmes can meet their organisational goals and objectives (Moon & Choi, 2017). It is envisaged that the study of career self-management would provide a blueprint that can guide the development of career

management programmes and policies among higher educational institutions in Ghana and beyond to provide a documented scientific approach to handling employee career issues efficiently. Furthermore, the integration of social connectedness and psychosocial career pre-occupation would delineate how the management of higher educational institutions can build socially oriented programmes to facilitate career management to induce commitment, which will translate into the attainment of underlining organisational goals and objectives (Moon & Choi, 2017).

A study conducted by Abugre (2018) and Debrah et al. (2018), assert that African continent as a whole which Ghana is no exception within higher educational institutions (HEIs) tend to record massive problems in terms of skilled and knowledgeable human capital. In event, this problem of lack of skilled and knowledgeable human capital could have devastating effect on political and socio-economic development in the career enhancement of individuals such as their psychosocial career pre-occupations and commitment to their organisation (Debrah et al., 2018). Furthermore, previous studies conducted by Deas and Coetzee (2020) and Debrah et al. (2018) suggested that about 13% shortage of highly skilled and knowledgeable academic staff may occur in the year 2020 across the globe. This therefore means that higher educational institutions in Ghana have a greater responsibility in the advancement of the workforce career progression.

Research into the dimensions of psychosocial career preoccupations, social connectedness and organisation al commitment are however, extremely limited in the Ghanaian higher educational workplace environment, particularly with regard to career self-management outcomes such as employees' work-related commitment (Akpebu-Adjah & Van der Walt, 2019; Amoako et al., 2019; Owusu-Acheaw & Akussah, 2018). Little research has focused on the differences over the various career stages as well as career strategies, however, particularly in the case of academics in the higher educational environment. Amoako et al. (2019) conducted a study to determine the degree to which academics in the early career stage at a Ghanaian higher educational institution were committed to their institution. Individuals may continue to defer their tertiary-level education either by choice or by necessity, there will always be a need to develop their knowledge and skills to meet evolving labour market requirements and so for higher education providers to develop appropriate career programmes (Owusu-Agyeman & Fourie-Malherbe, 2019).

Ghanaian higher educational institution's programmes indeed have received lesser attention especially staff services seems to be less of a priority at a policy level or at the institutional level. According to Mohamelbhai (2017), majority of the country's polytechnics colleges have been converted into universities and that these institutio focus on professional development which include technical and middle-level management, and serve technical education to meet the Ghanaian workforce needs. Mohamelbhai (2017), hold the assertion that this conversion has resulted in institutions unable to produce technicians or middle management supervisors which therefore affect the professional development of the country's workforce. Studies shows that there is a saturation of graduates in the advanced technical fields resulting to unemployment of these graduates in Ghana (Arhin et al., 2017; Mohamelbhai, 2017). With regard to career prospect in the Ghanaian higher educational work settings, the rate of employability is alarming among college graduates and this eventually slows and weakens economic activities (Owusu et al., 2019).

A study conducted by Nkadimene (2020), revealed that HEIs are greatly experiencing significant problems in maintaining academic staff and there is an intense need for concentrated research in order to investigate the practice that influence the management of career of academic staff. However, a major challenge contributing to this problem among higher educational institutions in Ghana is ineffective career management programme implementation linked to tertiary education (Akpebu Adjah & Van der Walt, 2019). Due to the globalised nature of the work environment, higher educational institutions must be adequately prepared for the shaping of their graduates to meet the demands of the job market, including industry-based knowledge (Baldrige & Kulkarni, 2017; Srivastava, 2018; Wang et al., 2019). Higher education institutions in Ghana, such as universities, must be seen as a beacon of knowledge in research and information sharing, which, in effect, helps in obtaining, producing and transferring knowledge to the community (Hemmert, 2017; Takawira et al., 2014).

In order to ensure efficient and successful functioning of the higher educational institutions in Ghana, these institutions must pay much attention to the skills, knowledge and experiences of the academic staff as these employees are the core pillar to the functioning and success of any academic institutions be it polytechnic or university (King et al., 2018). Hence, the professional career advancement is deemed necessary in building a career profile in the work settings. A study conducted by Owusu et al. (2019) found that 15.9% of academics indicated a moderate to strong intention to leave higher educational institutions as a results of unclear career progression plan for staff. This suggests that in the event of labour market conditions improving, it will become more

and more difficult to recruit young academics, and to retain the current academic workforce, if appropriate attention is not given to the career dilemmas of academics (Abugre, 2018; Cheng et al., 2018).

The phenomenon of global graduate unemployability has placed employability education as the epicentre of the educational systems of countries across the globe (Sadik, 2017). According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2017), an unemployed graduate is (1) a person who is 18 years and above and who is searching or looking for employment and (2) is available for employment and is without employment. Ghana is no exception in the quest to enhance employable-graduate education in higher educational institutions in the country (Baah-Boateng, 2013; Baah-Boateng & Baffour-Awuah, 2015). Unemployment is a major political and socio-economic challenge facing policymakers in Ghana (Afriyie & Abass, 2020; Sadik, 2017). This has been attributed to the failure of higher educational institutions to produce graduates with relevant employable competencies to meet job requirements (Sadik, 2017).

Furthermore, studies conducted by Bawakyillenuo et al. (2013) revealed that the challenges confronting the Ghanaian economy are partly due to mismatches, such as (1) the ability of graduates to objectively analyse situations and be able to realise conclusive solutions, (2) a lack of certain skills in the labour market that employers truly require to perform effectively, and (3) a lack of employment opportunities. The fundamental issues surrounding this mismatch were unearthed due to the institutions with oversight responsibility not being efficient and effective in the provision of industrial policy to guide tertiary education (Bawakyillenuo et al., 2013). There is an absence of a national development plan linked to higher educational institutions and a shift in focus of tertiary education that is not career-focused (Hemmert, 2017).

In support, Aggrey-Fynn (2020) postulated that individuals in higher educational institutions in Ghana who occupy managerial positions usually face greater challenges in managing staff due to disunity among the staff of such institutions. This challenge has been attributed to administrative challenges such as inadequate human resources, funding, infrastructure, and teaching and learning resources (Abdulai, 2012; Aggrey-Fynn, 2020). To this effect, it has been acknowledged that higher educational institutions are more likely to lose their staff to private institutions due to concerns about poor career management and workplace friendship (Potgieter et al., 2018).

Hartung and Cadaret (2017) and Thrift (2012) emphasise that in today's volatile and swiftly changing environment, it is exceedingly important for employees to be accountable and responsible for their own careers. The new world of work has been characterised by the transformation that has coerced organisations to depend more on their employees to ensure organisational success in the future (Mone & London, 2018). Therefore, organisations must assist their employees by providing them with continuous learning opportunities and essential resources to manage their careers (Ababneh, 2013; Bugg, 2015; Hassan et al., 2013; Ndzube, 2013; Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011).

Traditional employment relationships have become less common, and the new world of work has introduced new employment relationships, including part-time, temporary, flexible, virtual, and contract work (Alcover et al., 2017). Hess et al. (2012) noted that traditional psychosocial pre-occupation is changing—including the promise of a secure job in return for loyalty is no longer accepted. Employers can no longer commit to providing their employees with secure jobs, and as a result, employees no longer commit to the same organisation for a long period (Sparrow & Cooper, 2012). The inability of employers to provide job security for employees at their workplaces has led to a shift in employee loyalty. Instead of an employee being loyal to an organisation, they are more likely to foster loyalty towards their career and take actions to advance within their career (Buyken et al., 2015).

Many researchers in the field of career management suggest that individuals need to be more mindful of their work-related capabilities and career meta-competencies or psychosocial career resources (Baruch et al., 2019; Blickle et al., 2009; Hess et al., 2012; Hoekstra, 2011; Puffer; 2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Competencies or resources such as knowledge, skills and abilities influence individuals' general careers in organisations (Midhat et al., 2021). Furthermore, these competencies or resources could play a more vital role than career development planning within the professional environment. Since technology and competencies are changing rapidly, the world is becoming increasingly global every day, and demographic labour forces and organisational structures are continually changing (Coetzee & Veldsman, 2022).

A study by Coetzee (2019) emphasised the shift from organisational career management to contemporary career self-management. Furthermore, Wesarat et al. (2014) define organisational career management as policies and practices designed to improve employee effectiveness. Individual career management, on the other hand, is the personal effort an individual makes to progress his/her career goals, which involves the management of individual career planning and

individual career tactics (Runhaar et al., 2019). De Vos and Dries (2013) add that individual career management includes the improvement of learning about oneself and taking concrete initiatives to manage one's career. Career self-management can be defined as the proactivity employees show concerning managing their careers and include an individual's efforts to identify and define their objectives, which may or may not be aligned with the objectives of the organisation (Huber, 2017; Hunt et al., 2017; Rahim, 2017). The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD, 2011) also considers career management as the means of modelling the progression of individuals within an organisation by aligning employee preferences, talent and potential with organisational resourcing need both now and in the future.

Additionally, Pitan (2016) posits that individuals must be more proactive and flexible in their quest to fit into an organisation, and this can be achieved through constructive assessment of their career path in the chosen organisation. Coetzee (2016) identified new trends towards the conceptualisations of individual behaviour that increasingly focus on the growing career needs and pre-occupations of individuals and the proactive flexibility and adaptiveness demanded from individuals in organisations.

Career management and career development are viewed as a life-long process of learning and adapting to changing contexts in the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2015). The responsibility of career management lies with the individual and not the organisation (De Vos & Cambre, 2017). Coetzee et al. (2015) believe that developing employability attributes facilitates proactive career management behaviours. Many organisations in the new world of work require employees to engage in proactive career management to develop their careers and achieve personal goals (Direnzo et al., 2015). According to Ferreira (2012), several trends relating to the changing nature of careers have been identified. Careers are generally becoming more parallel as opposed to upwardly mobile, and individuals are taking more ownership of their own careers, with the organisation playing a supportive role (Inkson et al., 2014). Continuous learning and development are essential to living up to new opportunities within the workplace (Chanani & Wibowo, 2019). Ndzube (2013) notes that in the volatile labour market conditions of the new world of work, the external career is bound to take different shapes and forms, and individuals may be forced to make decisions that have not been carefully considered and therefore see career management as more holistic in focus. Ndzube (2013) further maintains that individuals need a deeper sense of career identity and self-awareness that assist them in their career choices.

Career meta-capacities denote individuals' career-related psychological capital and social resources and strengths that enable them to be self-directed learners and proactive agents in the construction and design of their careers in contemporary turbulent work settings (Coetzee, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Employers across the globe are compelled to reduce staff strength to reduce the cost of survival in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic (Morgan, 2020). Evidence from Singapore economists suggests that retrenchment in the job market of employees could range from 45,000 to 200,000 in the face of the current global economic crisis (Clark, 2018). Therefore, individuals must be proactively prepared to mitigate the effect of the current pandemic on their employment.

Again, arguments extend that the responsibility for career success has shifted from organisations to individuals (Akkermans et al., 2013; Ballout, 2015). Therefore, career management behaviour by individuals is considered a prerequisite to career success (Akkermans, et al., 2013). Previous studies have revealed a positive correlation between career management behaviour and employees' attitudes towards organisations. That is, career management behaviour promotes employees' job expertise and networking in the workplace, thereby creating a better career path within the organisation, which inadvertently leads to the commitment of the workforce (Ballout, 2015).

De Vos and Cambré (2017) are of the view that individuals adopting career change to be efficient and committed to the organisation should take primary responsibility for the management of their own careers. A changing attitude toward employee career development is required to successfully adopt contemporary careers within the new world of work (De Vos & Soens, 2008; Hedge & Rineer, 2017). King (2004) concluded that employees who adopt a career self-management attitude over some time would master developmental tasks and thus achieve their desired outcomes. De Vos and Cambré (2017) again added that individuals within the new world of work must engage in career self-management activities to create career options that allow them to realise their goals and security at the workplace. Coetzee (2018) holds the notion that an unpredictable and rapidly changing business environment has been created and that employees can no longer be guaranteed life-long employment.

This has resulted in a shift from careers with restricted organisations to boundaryless and protean careers, comprising many occupations (Monroe, 2013; Mujajati, 2016; Parry et al., 2015; Reis & Baruch, 2013). 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 engagement with organisations (Al-dalahmeh et al., 2018; Kumudha, 2016; Reis & Baruch, 2013).

According to Coetzee (2018), individual psychosocial career pre-occupations denote their psychosocial (career self-concept or identity) and social (career-social roles interface) concerns at a specific point in time. In this regard, career pre-occupations are seen to facilitate proactive career attitudes and behaviour in the endeavor to improve the match between the evolving individual self and the situation in which the career is constructed. Coetzee (2016) conducted a comprehensive literature review and concluded that career pre-occupations might be predominant in individuals' career experiences in an uncomfortable economy and uncertain labour market. Several authors have expressed concerns regarding individuals' career pre-occupations which are associated with continuous learning and development, upskilling, work-life integration and flexibility, career mobility, renewal and change, career agency, self-awareness, and developing closer ties with members of one's work and society (Coetzee, 2015; Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Post et al., 2013; Savickas, 2005).

Studies by Marx (2016) indicate that the demands of the individual's career life are more of adaptive behaviour, which assists in the developmental life cycle and constantly changes over a given period. The unsettled nature of the work environment brings about the establishment of a new job and being able to adjust to the changing work. Career pre-occupation focuses on career development needs at a given point in time in the employee's working life (Coetzee, 2019b). The psychological disposition of workers tends to influence their career pre-occupation and it is an important facet for enhancing their career satisfaction and wellbeing, such as the work-related commitment that an organisation will achieve (Coetzee & Takawira, 2019).

Psychosocial career pre-occupation is directly influenced by how individuals manage their own careers (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). In support of this, Kaski and Kinnunen's (2021) and Potgieter et al.'s (2019) empirical studies provide evidence of a positive relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and proactive career self-management attributes, which include career behaviour connected to problem solving. According to the extant literature, career self-management effectively assists individuals with the intention of entering into a job, being adequately prepared for a job opening and enhancing the development of one's capability in an unpredictable environment (Zhou et al., 2016). As multiple transitions of a career in an unstable work environment, career self-management reiterates the essence of one's career development and the enactment of the adaptability of resources.

In addition, Akkermans et al. (2013) and Rodrigues et al. (2015) contend that individuals need to develop personal career agency and enact adaptive career behaviours to manage more frequent career transitions, and this can be achieved through effective career self-management behaviours. Unsworth and Mason (2016) re-echoed that proactive career self-management attitudes must be exhibited in achieving career success. Based on these trends, Coetzee (2014a; 2015) identified three dimensions of psychosocial career pre-occupations:

Preoccupation career establishment - has to do with creating opportunities for self-expression, personal growth and development, as well as integrating into a society or team to advance in one's career in the chosen contemporary organisation;

Pre-occupations career adaptation - considers varying contexts that might involve one's career variations and adjusting one's competencies (knowledge, interests, talents, skills, capabilities and experience) to fit with opportunities in precise engagement in the labour market; and

Pre-occupations work-life adjustment - this is associated with the ability of the workforce to create an equilibrium between personal lives in connection with family commitments and their work schedules to prevent conflicts among the multiple roles (Van Dyke et al., 2013). It includes reducing one's workload, settling down, and achieving greater harmony between an individual's work and personal life (Amiani, 2014; Drenzo et al., 2015; Yadav & Saxena, 2015).

Organisations that assist their employees with their personal growth plans and career development in the organisation will possibly gain more benefits by ensuring that employees truly recognise how to proactively manage their career development (Baruch et al., 2019; Chetana & Mohapatra, 2017; Potgieter et al., 2019). However, the fear of repeatedly losing valuable employees surfaces as a result of inaccessible career plans to support individuals in terms of their career progression as well as balancing their work (Sonnenstuhl & Trice, 2018). Work-life balance is the perception of an acceptable balance between an employee's personal life and work schedule, as well as being able to fulfil the various roles that individuals need to fulfil in their personal and work life, without conflict (Dockel et al., 2006). Work-life balance policies may include flexible working programmes, family leave policies, authorising employees to be away from work to attend to family issues and childcare assistance facilities (Dockel et al., 2006).

Studies revealed that, a growing trend is to be acknowledged to encourage individuals to become actively involved in managing their own careers in the environment they find themselves (Karen

et al., 2017). Spurk et al. (2019) hold the perception that for individuals to be able to adapt to ever-changing work settings, it is essential that they actively plan and apply career self-management behaviours to achieve career satisfaction and career wellbeing.

Social connectedness is an integral element of the personal health and wellbeing of individuals in the workplace (Bowles & Scull, 2019). The concept of social connectedness strongly lies in the subjective experience of individuals in the workplace and is based on the interactions and information provided by each other in the work environment (LeDou & Hofmann, 2018). Morgan et al. (2019) postulated that employees with similar cultural backgrounds share social knowledge, which informs their career advancement in work setting. According to Bowles and Scull (2019) and O'Rourke et al. (2017), social connectedness can be defined as a situation whereby an individual experiences a sense of belongingness and the association among groups such as peers, coemployees, family or community within the same work environment over a period of time.

Saeri et al. (2018) believe that the importance of social connectedness in the current dispensation is related to career management in the life of individuals having the mindset to begin an engagement in the current world of work. Studies have revealed that social connectedness is linked to workplace friendship, which is deemed a multidimensional element in the employee's work life (Saeri et al., 2018). Social ties in the work setting are major indicators that show career progression in the individual's field of work in this modern era (Huo et al., 2019; Wang & Seifert, 2017).

Studies also show that social interaction or connection stems from two main perspectives, namely, social connectedness at the individual level and social connectedness at an overall level (Anggraini et al., 2019; Kelley et al., 2019). Moreover, empirical studies also indicate that individuals in the workplace are more likely to be connected with similar characteristics (Bailey et al., 2018). One of the key elements that assist in the social connectedness of individuals at the workplace is purely networking. Networks at the workplace bring about cohesion and shape economic and social activities such as social mobility and job seeking (Muller & Peres, 2019). Muller and Peres (2019) further iterated that effective networking in the lives of individuals brings about great mutual influence among the members, high connectedness and a low level of employee redundancy at the workplace—and these have a greater impact on the decisions of the organisations.

The literature has revealed that social connectedness and workplace friendship are similar concepts; they will be used interchangeably in this study (Yu-Ping et al., 2020). It is believed that workplace friendship and feeling connected on a social level are critical for the wellbeing of employees in performing their duties in their chosen organisation—and this is a result of proactive career self-management (Ascenso et al., 2018). Research shows that proactive career self-management is exhibited through proactive career behaviour (Hirschi et al., 2020). Proactive behaviour comprises taking control of one's career, which suggests that individuals engage in proactive career behaviours consciously by taking control of their careers. These proactive behaviours are expected to be experienced as volitional and self-endorsement, which satisfies the basic human need for autonomy (Van den Broeck et al., 2016; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). Additionally, proactive behaviour also serves as an inducement for feelings of personal career success and career accomplishment (Smale et al., 2018). Individuals have a personal desire to develop a close relationship with each other; however, the question is still asked whether workplace friendship produces more negative than positive consequences (Khaleel et al., 2016; Uno et al., 2021). Perceptions of workplace friendship opportunities and workplace friendship prevalence have important implications for employees' perceptions of the overall employment relationship (Nielsen et al., 2000). Friendship opportunities were conceptualised as the perceived chances an individual has to get to know, communicate and work together with other individuals in the same organisation. Additionally, friendship prevalence refers to the feeling an individual has with regard to strong friendships at work, which are usually categorised by trust, confidence and a strong desire to interact and even socialise with individuals outside the workplace (Nielsen et al., 2000).

Over the last two decades, organisational commitment has been studied comprehensively. Organisational commitment is a psychological condition that binds the employee to the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). One of the reasons for the attractiveness of organisational commitment may be its vital location in human resource management policies and career management practices. Commitment plays a key role in the employee-organisation relationship. The feeling of belonging helps to connect individuals to a specific organisation. Organisational commitment usually stimulates the aspiration to remain an employee of the organisation, the intention to reside, retention of membership, presence and possible performance (Ferreira, 2012; Martinex, 2016).

Studies by Deery and Jago (2015) found that an organisation's policies and practices should help its employees manage the relationship between their work and their nonwork activities, and

organisations may develop stronger employee commitment to the organisation through support for employees' out-of-work life and effective management of aspects of the psychological contract. Studies have confirmed that employees working for organisations with work-life balance policies have a stronger organisational commitment and have significantly lower intentions to leave their organisation (Deery & Jago, 2015; Döckel et al., 2006; Nei et al., 2015).

The concept of organisational commitment is domineering in the stability and intensity of an employee's dedication to an organisation (Al-Jabri & Ghazzawi, 2019; Hanaysha & Majid, 2018; Lumley et al., 2011). Studies have indicated that strong organisational commitment is negatively related to employee turnover and intention to leave the organisation (Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2017; Fleig-Palmer & Rather, 2015; Kumari & Priya, 2017). In other words, organisations need to manage their employees in such a manner as to ensure that they have a strong sense of organisational commitment. Encouraging improvements in the commitment levels of individuals may foster behavioural consequences as well as indirect results to improve employee satisfaction (Lim et al., 2017; Mathieu et al., 2016; Tuna et al., 2016). Feelings about job performance, which refer to commitment and satisfaction as well as being in a profession and organisation that match an individual's values and goals, eventually influence employee's intention to leave or remain with a particular organisation (Hanaysha & Majid, 2018). Hence, an individual's commitment may be influenced by their feelings, values and goals in the job they are currently doing.

Studies have shown that socio-demographic characteristics have a moderating effect on the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness (workplace friendship) and the commitment of employees to the organisation (Bester, 2018; Coetzee & Bester, 2019; Deas & Coetzee, 2020). Studies conducted, concluded that socio-demographic characteristics including age, gender, race, job level and tenure may have an impact on the psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness of the employees at the workplace (Deas, 2017; Randmann, 2013; Synman, 2021). According to Randmann (2013), the study further discovered that individuals' job level at the workplace could have an important effect on the strength of the psychosocial career pre-occupations and eventually on the commitment level. However, there is a sparsity of research which has been carried out where the moderating impact of socio-demographic variables were examined on the interrelationship dynamics between psychosocial career pre-occupations and other variables such as individuals level of commitment (Rafiee, 2015).

Furthermore, Bester (2018) and Synman (2021), hold the assertion that demographic differences between individuals are the most several important factors that predicts organisational commitment and also assist organisations to reach their objectives and enhancement of performance. Organisational commitment has a positive correlation with the age, job level, and managerial records of individual (Rafiee et al., 2015). Consequently, taking into account the age, race, working and managerial records and education of employees may help to strengthen organisational commitment and also be effective in improving employees' perceptions of psychosocial career pre-occupations, gaining organisational trust and enhancing career self-management practices (Peltokorpi et al., 2015; Rafiee et al., 2015).

It was projected that there would be a statistically positive interrelationship between the socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status and job level), psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment influencing career self-management. The study further expected that the socio-demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, marital status and job level), psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment would positively and significantly predict career self-management. Finally, it was anticipated that individuals from the diverse age, gender, marital and job levels groupings would differ significantly with regard to their individual psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

In connection to the background of the study, the ultimate focus of the investigation was to construct a profile for proactive career self-management in the public higher educational institutions in Ghana. With regard to the discussion above, it was proposed that there is a relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. It was also anticipated that investigating the relationship between the constructs under consideration would assist in constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in the public higher educational institutions and again, would help inform human resource managers and HR practitioners to offer the opportunity to monitor and provide strategies and interventions for employees in their quest for career choices.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Ghana have become increasingly vulnerable in addressing the challenge of proactive career self-management in the work environment towards preparing and sustaining individual careers for further employment engagement in organisations (Amoako et al., 2019; Bai & Liu, 2018; Jena et al., 2017; Tran, 2019). In Ghana, the various forms of career programmes to assist employees that are run by tertiary institutions do not address the needs of such employees (Education Sector Performance Report, 2016; Gyimah-Brempong, 2017; Livingstone et al., 2016; Takyi et al., 2019). Senior staff within the higher educational institutions in Ghana are not well recognised regarding their career self-management compared to other members (including lecturers and administrators) whose career development is well addressed in the university's statute (University's Annual Report, 2017). Again, the conditions of service of the senior staff are constantly reviewed, and this eventually affects individuals who intend to develop and progress in their careers (University's Condition of Service, 2016). This means that senior staff of the public higher educational institutions in Ghana does not have clear guidelines and regulations regarding their career self-management.

Against the background above, the study intends to investigate the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment in the in the Ghanaina higher educational institution, particularly with regard to senior staff within public universities in Ghana (Alabi & Abdulai, 2016; Akpebu-Adjah & Van der Walt, 2019; Amoako et al., 2019; Owusu-Acheaw & Akussah, 2018).

Following the literature review, this study found that no empirical study has been carried out to holistically examine the nature of interrelationships among psycho-social career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment in the context of higher education in a developing country such as Ghana. Theoretically, it is assumed that there is scanty information with regard to the three constructs of interest—psychosocial pre-occupation, social connectedness, and organisational commitment, as informed by the extensive literature review conducted. Hence, this study will provide new insights that could be relied upon to formulate strategies for career self-management, given the social context of such strategies, to improve the level of organisational commitment in higher educational institutions in Ghana.

In addition, there exist a plethora of studies (Coetzee, 2015; Heidarian et al., 2015; Naser & Shokouh, 2016; Oosthuizen et al., 2014) on the relationship between demographic variables such

as age, gender, marital status and position status in connection to career self-management, but none is thus far found to be related to all three constructs of proactive career-management, such as psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, or organisational commitment. With respect to these, a theoretical and empirical profile would be developed to establish the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment based on evidence from the various literature studies and research results.

In relation to the above, this current study seeks to develop a feasible career framework by exploring the relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and to propose a profile for proactive career self-management for public higher educational institution in Ghana.

1.2.1 Research questions with regard to the literature review

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

Research question 1: How does the literature conceptualise individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work?

Research question 2: How are career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment conceptualised in the literature, and how do individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs?

Research question 3: Based on the theoretical relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, can an integrated, proactive career profile be constructed that may be used to inform career self-management practices?

Research question 4: What are the theoretical implications of the proactive career profile for career self-management?

1.2.2 Research questions with regard to empirical research

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

Research 1: What are the empirical interrelationships between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian higher educational context?

Research question 2: Do career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment?

Research question 3: Do socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment?

Research question 4: Do individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment?

Research question 5: What recommendations can be made for industrial and organisational and human resource practitioners in terms of the management of career self-management practices and for future research?

1. 3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

Given the research questions stated above, the following research aims were formulated for the study.

1.3.1 General aims of the research

The general aim of this study is to investigate the relationship among individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and to determine whether an overall proactive career profile can be constructed to inform career self-management practices in the Ghanaian context. The proposed profile also considers the moderating effect of individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status and job levels, on career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

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

1.3.2.1 Literature review

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

Research aim 1: To conceptualise individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work.

Research aim 2: To conceptualise psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment and how individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs.

Research aim 3: To construct a theoretically integrated proactive career profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices based on the theoretical relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Research aim 4: To outline the implications of career self-management in Ghanaian public higher educational institutions.

1.3.2.2 Specific aims in terms of empirical study

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

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical interrelationships among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context. *This research aim relates to the testing of research hypothesis Ha1.*

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment. *This research aim relates to the testing of research hypothesis Ha2.*

Research aim 3: To assess whether socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job position moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. *This research aim relates to the testing of research hypothesis Ha3.*

Research aim 4: To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. *This research aim relates to the testing of research hypothesis Ha4.*

Research aim 5: To provide appropriate recommendations for human resource practitioners in terms of how individuals in the work environment manage their own careers and to enable further research.

1.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The goal of this study is to investigate whether there is a relationship between individuals' career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and to determine whether an overall proactive career self-management profile can be constructed to inform career self-management practices in the Ghanaian context. Individuals' career pre-occupation would be pre-occupation was measured using the Career Pre-occupations Inventory (CPI) developed by Coetzee (2015). Social connectedness will be measured using the Workplace Friendship Scale (WFS) developed by Nielsen et al. (2000), and organisational commitment will also be measured by the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS) developed by Meyer and Allen (1991). This study is significant on three levels, namely, the theoretical level, empirical level and practical level.

1.4.1 Potential contribution at the theoretical level

This research provides a theoretical contribution to the literature, which seeks to establish the relationship between individuals' career pre-occupation (career establishment pre-occupation, career adaptation and work-life adjustment pre-occupation), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) and organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). The findings reveal whether the constructs of individuals' career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment are theoretically relevant in the development and construction of a career self-management profile.

Again, where relationships are found between the variables, the findings may prove useful to future researchers in exploring the possibility of effectively and efficiently creating a career self-management intervention to develop a person's psychosocial career pre-occupation and social connectedness to increase their organisational commitment level. Furthermore, the research results could contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with individual career paths. In addition, exploring how individuals' demographic variables influence the manifestation and

development of these meta-competencies and dispositions may prove to be useful in understanding proactive career self-management in a multicultural context. Where no relationships are established, then the usefulness of this study is restricted to the elimination of a relationship between the constructs (psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment). Much effort could be transferred to other research studies that will yield significant results in order to construct a proactive career self-management profile for employees within the Ghanaian higher educational context.

1.4.2 Potential contribution on an empirical level

On an empirical level, this study is the first step in constructing a profile for establishing proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana. Empirically, the research may contribute to constructing an empirical profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices in the selected Ghanaian higher educational institution. This study will also enable policy makers and higher educational institutions' management to understand and appreciate the dynamics of the various profiles needed for efficient and effective career management since such institutions are considered the backbone of initial training grounds for potential employees. The inability of employees to manage their own careers will eventually influence the ability to impart the right knowledge to learners based on the understanding of the concept of career self-management.

The intended study on the empirical level is to assess whether there is a relationship among the three constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupation (career establishment, career adaptation, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity) and organisational commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitments). In a situation where the study establishes that there is no significant relationship among the three constructs, the study could have been handled at a different level by incorporating different scientific data as a means of overcoming the shortfalls. Furthermore, if the study proves that there are no significant relationships among the constructs under study, then other mediating variables such as socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, and job level) could be eliminated from the study objectives.

This, therefore, means that the understanding of these three constructs in the study will help the individual build a sustainable and workable career in the chosen occupation. Additionally, it will inform policy makers and human resource practitioners to appreciate the dynamic nature of the

profiles needed as an organisation to be effective in the career management of their employees. Similarly, the assessment of models tested empirically of the various constructs, that is, psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, can be utilised by academic practitioners to develop a framework to assist employees in the management of their careers.

1.4.3 Potential contribution on a practical level

On a practical level, the profile will present the basis for understanding the interactions among the study variables, which will be valuable information for researchers in career self-management in Ghana. The results of this career self-management study would be a useful resource in designing a workable and comprehensive career self-management practice in the context of higher educational institutions in Ghana. Moreover, the study would offer a staff of higher educational institutions the opportunity to monitor and provide strategies in their quest for career choices since it is evident that employees who are much more occupied with their own careers are less committed to the organisation in this new world of work (Coetzee et al., 2015; Klehe et al., 2011).

Furthermore, higher educational institutions may use relevant information gathered to assist employees in developing in terms of understanding the essence of proactive career self-management and the impact it could have on the organisation. Individuals working in the institution could be trained in proactive career self-management programmes to enhance work-related activities. However, in a situation whereby individuals are perceived to lack much knowledge in managing their career in a proactive manner, practitioners could put certain interventional solutions in place to ensure that such individuals could obtain essential benefits from the career programmes instituted in the organisation.

The research study is carried out on the premise that it would add value to employees in the quest to build a profile on their career ambitions in the chosen organisation. This can be possible if employees understand or have much knowledge of the existing relationship among the constructs under investigation. Additionally, it is believed that the findings of the study will help improve or assist individuals in higher educational institutions in Ghana to be proactive in managing their own careers in this world of work.

1.4 THE RESEARCH MODEL

This research is based on a model developed by Mouton and Marais (2001) and Pickard (2010). Most scientific research studies in the social sciences can be viewed as a compliant human actions in which social veracity is accurately examined with the intent or rationale of attaining a valid understanding of real-life situations (Mouton & Marais, 2001, 1996; Keith, 2019). Pickard (2010) identified five main dimensions of social science research, namely, sociological, ontological, teleological, epistemological and methodological stances. Mouton and Marais (2001) and Pickard (2010) view research as an essential social practice, which is known as a theoretical system model. This theoretical model is linked with three interrelated subsystems connected with the research domain of a precise discipline (Mouton & Marais, 2001). Social research is associated with a co-operative human action in which social reality is objectively studied to obtain a valid and reliable understanding of a given phenomenon (Babbie & Mouton, 2010; Lor, 2012; 2011; Pickard, 2010). Mouton and Marais's model (1996) is often seen as concepts that are thematically based on opinions, values, traditions, cultures, principles, rules and regulations and that cannot be easily discarded at a snapshot (De Gialdino, 2011; Raddon, 2010). Subsystems frequently represent the following: intellectual climate, the market associated with intellectual resources and the research process itself (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

1.5 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Paradigm connotes an implicit as well as explicit view of reality, which is based on the intended purpose of the study (Babbie, 2016; Morgan, 1980; Pickard, 2010). Scientific research is associated with paradigm and is concerned with intellectual climate or meta-theoretical principles and assumptions underpinning theories and models in the real world as well as in the context of a study. The conventional theories, models, body of research and methodologies of a specific outlook are mostly surrounded by social sciences (Mouton, 2001; Mouton & Marais, 1996). The philosophical paradigm is the main origin of the study and is neither testable nor meant to be tested to unearth relevant issues regarding study constructs. Human resource management practices, specifically career self-management, are the main focus of the current study. Human resource management is the means and process of identifying, developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices to enhance performance in an organisation (Meliou & Maroudas, 2011; Rogers, 2012). The literature review is based on the humanistic viewpoint as well as the open system and the empirical study from the postpositivist research stance.

1.6.1 The intellectual climate

The intellectual study is built on the literature review, which is presented from the perspective of the humanistic as well as an open system to construct the career self-management profile and the empirical study from the postpositivism point of view.

1.6.1.1 *The literature review*

The study covers the humanistic paradigm and open system approach as well as the career self-management contextual framework. These are the paradigms from which the literature review of this research is presented.

(a) The humanistic paradigm

The humanistic approach is based on the principles and assumptions propounded by Aanstoos (2003) and Meyer et al. (1989). Brockett et al. (2016) and Pirson (2013) assert that the humanistic paradigm addresses the dignity, freedom and potentials of individuals in the workplace or any other aspect of the work environment. According to Aanstoos (2003), Keith (2019), and Pirson and Stecker (2018), there are a number of assumptions underlying the humanistic paradigm:

- People realise their full potential and try to be true of themselves due to the process of dynamic and continuous growth in the work environment.
- personal choices are at the mercy of individuals
- individual's growth and race are unlimited
- the critical aspect of mankind in terms of maturation is normally associated with self-development
- self-actualization is the main driver of an individual in the chosen career
- reality has a great influence on individual perception
- the individual has conscious processes
- human nature is positive
- human beings are an integrated whole.

The humanistic paradigm relates to psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, thematically.

(b) The open systems paradigm

The open system is built on the belief that all organisations are unique. As such, they operate in a way that should be structured to accommodate their unique problems and opportunities (Hatch, 2018). Individuals are viewed as part of the organisation who interacts with the outside environment, which is based on a system called the open-systems model (Keith, 2019; Tiezzi et al., 2010). An organisation is a system of networks that works as an integrated whole, which helps individuals and organisations reach their specific goals and objectives (Hodge et al., 1996; Supriadi & Pheng, 2018). According to Cunliffe (2008), Demetis and Lee (2018), and Schuetz and Venkatesh (2020), the assumptions underlying the open systems paradigm are as follows:

- A rational-legal system of authority is (1) universally applicable and (2) the most efficient model of organisation.
- The open-systems theory also assumes that all large organisations are comprised of multiple subsystems, each of which receives inputs from other subsystems and turns them into outputs for use by other subsystems.
- It is assumed that the open system is hierarchical in nature, meaning that not all subsystems are equally essential. Furthermore, a failure in one subsystem will not necessarily impede the entire system.
- The open system is viewed as an interreliant subsystem that works in isolation and eventually come together to form a whole.
- Feedback is the main mechanism in open systems to ensure that other processes occur.
- Open systems are mostly the criterion for career management practices in organisations.

The constructs of psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment are thematically related to the open system paradigm of the study.

1.6.1.2 The empirical research

The empirical study of this research can be conducted from the postpositivism paradigm as well as positivism. Postpositivism accentuates meanings in research (Henderson, 2011; Keith, 2019). This research on proactive career self-management profiles was based on the postpositivist paradigm. The postpositivist approach considers the study to be independent and involves the interaction of human behaviour in workplace settings. Ryan (2009) believes that people live in a world context, which determines their behaviour as well as their thinking in the wider society, which eventually shapes their career path. The postpositivist approach is also based on the idea

of realism, independent of one's thinking, which is based on scientific study. However, it is not possible that reality is certain in real-world situations (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Hui, 2019). Based on this assertion, it is impossible to be completely objective when conducting research. Postpositivist philosophy does not consider the researcher to be wholly separated from the study but rather involved in the research, and the researcher's personal ideologies and actions are recognised as being characteristics of human enquiry. The postpositivist paradigm does not suggest that positivism is no longer relevant; rather, it proposes that something exists after positivism that is also worth considering (Primecz, 2020).

According to Tekin and Kotaman (2013) and Cohen et al. (2018), the postpositivism paradigm has the following assumptions:

- Research is based on objective and extrinsic reality
- The researcher cannot obtain the objective and extrinsic reality
- Postpositivist conclusions are not laws but conditional realities that can be valid for a period in each society.
- Reality is complex. To acquire as much comprehensive a grasp on reality as possible, the postpositivist researcher should gather data from multiple sources. Moreover, the researcher is expected to collaborate with the participants in the field of research (Hui, 2019; Lor, 2011; Morris, 1999; Yang, 2010; Yu, 2003).

Post-positivism is relevant in this study because it could help address problems, such as a lack of a more scientific research approach, in the higher educational institutions linked to proactive career self-management.

1.6.2 Market intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to the crew of beliefs and assumptions that have an undeviating association with the epistemic states of logical and scientific statements (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Theoretical models, meta-theoretical statements and conceptual descriptions in relation to individual psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, the central hypothesis, and theoretical and methodological assumptions are presented, and these form the principles of beliefs and values of the study.

1.6.2.1 Meta-theoretical statements

The meta-theoretical statements are seen as vital assumptions and principles that underpin the research's theories, models and paradigms. This study focuses, in terms of disciplinary context,

on human resource management, specifically career self-management, as a field of application (Mouton & Marais, 1996). The research study is designed in a manner that would add value to employees practising proactive career self-management in higher educational institutions.

1.6.2.2 Theoretical models

The theoretical beliefs ascribed here are testable statements about the rigid and explanatory nature of human behaviour and social phenomena. Theoretical beliefs include all statements that form part of hypotheses, typologies, models, theories and conceptual descriptions (Mouton & Marais, 1996). In the work of Coetzee (2008), the theoretical framework helps individuals analyse the need to develop their interior career resources and draw on their psychological resources to advance their personal characteristics and abilities at work within an organisation. The psychosocial career pre-occupation model (Coetzee, 2014), workplace friendship model (Nielson et al., 2000) and organisational commitment model (Meyer & Allen, 1991) were considered in the study.

1.6.2.3 Conceptual descriptions

Concepts express a logical, sequential meaning of the world (Clarke, 2005; Clarke et al., 2016). The conceptual description of this research includes the following: Psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Psychosocial career pre-occupations

Coetzee's (2014) theory of psychosocial career pre-occupations was considered in this study. Psychosocial career pre-occupation was explained as one's mental state that addresses certain anxieties of one's career development and management that are at the forefront of one's thoughts at a given period (Coetzee, 2016; Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; Coetzee et al., 2014; Fouad & Bynner, 2008; Oyewobi et al., 2012; Sullivan, 2013; Super, 2013). Coetzee (2014) further noted that psychosocial career pre-occupations help potential employees manage and exhibit behaviours in the environment either externally or internally to achieve their career objectives. Psychosocial career pre-occupations are severally connected to concerns about certain developmental tasks or career adaptability that confronts employees within the work settings.

Predominantly, individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations are normally associated with their work-related commitment to the chosen career life cycle (Savickas, 2005; Sharf, 2010). The study adopts Coetzee's (2014, 2015a) psychosocial career pre-occupational elements, notably

(1) career establishment pre-occupation; (2) career adaptation pre-occupation and (3) work-life adjustment pre-occupation. These elements envisage in Coetzee's study intend to measure individual career management.

Social connectedness

Nielsen et al. (2000) consider workplace friendship as a twofold dimensional construct, which includes workplace friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Social connectedness is a stable condition of the individual who reflects the awareness the person experiences in terms of interpersonal closeness regarding family, friends, strangers, community and society (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Social connectedness can be conceptualised as the way an individual views themselves in relation to the social world as emotionally connected or disconnected (Germine & Hooker, 2011; Miller & Lenzenweger, 2012; Preacher & Kelley, 2011; Seghers et al., 2011; Stafford et al., 2013; Tiliopoulos & Goodall, 2009). Liu et al. (2013) view workplace friendship as unique interpersonal relationships considered acceptable in an organisation. Furthermore, Huang (2008) considers friendship to be a close relationship among friends. People show their friendship through sentiment and behaviour (Huang, 2008; Spencer, 2012). Friendship at the workplace refers to individuals' friendship with their peers, subordinates, and superiors (Austin, 2009; Lee, 2005; Mao & Hsieh, 2012).

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to the strength of the feeling of responsibility that an employee has towards the achievement of the organisational objective (Business Dictionary, 2013). According to Balay (2000), organisational commitment is a feeling of bond and attachment that links the employees and the organisation and unites them around a common value and goal. Singh and Gupta (2015) argued that organisational commitment is an element of force that fixes an individual to a course of action that is considered relevant to multiple targets within an organisation. Organisational commitment is the employee's state of being committed to assisting in the achievement of the organisation's goals and involves the employee's level of identification, involvement, and loyalty (Caught & Shadur, 2000). Organisational commitment is an emotional response that can be measured through people's behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes and can range anywhere from very low to very high (Caught & Shadur, 2000; Freeborn, 2001; Kirby & Orlando, 2000; Testa, 2001). Meyer and Allen (1997) stipulate that organisational commitment emanates from a three-component model, expressed in terms of affective, continuance or normative domains.

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

Table 1.1

Overview of Core Constructs

Construct	Sub-Constructs	Description	Theoretical models	Measuring instruments
Psychosocial career pre-occupation	Career pre-establishment pre-occupation Career adaptation pre-occupation Work/Life adjustment pre-occupation	This concept is described as a situation whereby employees advance in their careers, feel a sense of stability in their current job and think about the long-term career path.	Coetzee (2015); Sharf (2010); Coetzee et al., (2015); Coetzee (2017)	Psychological Career Preoccupation Scale (Coetzee, 2014)
Social Connectedness	Prevalence Opportunity	The development of connectedness of personal social network in order to achieve a sense of belongingness or bond among individuals in workplace settings. It is also seen as a part of socialising one's experience	Tolbert, Graham & Andrews (1999) Baumeister and Leary (1995); Baumeister, Twenge & Nuss, (2002); Barber and	Workplace Friendship Scale (Nielsen, 2000)

		among colleagues in the workplace environment.	Schluterman (2008); Lee and Robbins (1998); Whitelock (2006)	
Organisational Commitment	Affective commitment Continuance commitment Normative commitment	The psychological connection (attachment) individuals have and identify with their organisation, characterised by strong acknowledgement of the organisation and craving to contribute towards the accomplishment of the overall goals of an organisation.	Meyer and Allen (1991) Meyer and Allen (1997) Miller (2003) O'Reilly (1989)	Organisational Commitment Measurement Scales Meyer and Allen (1991)

Source: Author's own work

1.6.2.4 Central hypothesis

The central hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

A significant positive relationship exists between psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Moreover, individuals' socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Finally, it is assumed that a proactive career self-management profile can be established to inform employers and employees within higher educational settings.

1.6.2.5 Theoretical assumptions

The following theoretical assumptions can be addressed in relation to the research based on the literature review:

- People have the ability and opportunity to make career choices for their lives. The amount of freedom in choices is partially dependent upon the social, economic and cultural context of individuals.
- The basis of research seeks to isolate psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.
- Individuals are naturally presented with career choices throughout their lives.
- Socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status and job level, might influence individuals' proactive career self-management.
- The construct of proactive career self-management is multifaceted and can be influenced by external factors, such as age, gender, marital status and job level.
- Proactive career self-management assists employees in exploring, pursuing and attaining their career goals.

1.6.2.6 Methodological assumptions

Methodological assumptions are based on beliefs and concerns about social and scientific research (Ganiyu & Egbu, 2018; Neuman, 2014). The methodology is the strategy, plan of action, or design underlying the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes (Coates, 2021). A methodological belief goes beyond methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions that constitute sound research in the social world. Ganiyu & Egbu (2018) and Hui (2019) establish a direct link between methodological beliefs and the epistemic status of research findings. Methodological assumptions that affect the nature and structure of the research horizon are normally associated with the premise of epistemological assumptions. Appropriate research relates to methodological choices, assumptions and suppositions.

- Sociological dimension

The sociological dimension is considered a scientific study that explains and outlines research activities in a combined context. The sociological dimension is much associated with the setting upon which the study is being carried out and the individual involved in the study. Ganiyu et al. (2020) view sociological research from this perspective as more quantitative, which is more investigational or nonexperimental, analytical and exact. The sociological dimension is mostly linked to the requirements of the sociological research ethic and draws on the study community for sources of theory development.

- Ontological dimension

The ontological dimension of research is the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2016). Ganiyu et al. (2020) posit that ontology is associated with dimensions of what exist in real life situations or the fundamental nature of reality. It also addresses how individuals can understand their existence in the world. Ontology is concerned with the study of anthropological activities and institutions whose behaviour can be measured (Landiyanto, 2018). Ontology consists of two main facets, namely, realist and nominalist. According to Neuman (2014) and Ganiyu et al. (2020), a researcher who holds to the realist ideology considers the world to be 'out there', and the world is organised into prior categories. Additionally, he goes further to assert that reality is difficult to access because human beings, by nature, are more independent in their worldview. In the case of the nominalist, humans seldom experience reality, and that, what one feels about reality out there is just interpretation and inner subjectivity. Neuman (2014) asserts that cultural influences, what one sees and how one experiences is seen as reality.

- Teleological dimension

The teleological dimension posits that research should be more systematic in terms of scientific study and goal direction (Ganiyu et al., 2020; Neuman, 2014). Ganiyu further iterated that teleology violates the temporal order requirement of causality. There is no true independent variable because the "causal factor" is extremely vague, distant, and unseen. Therefore, it is important to state the problem being investigated emphatically and should be related to the research goals. The research goals in this current study are explicit in nature, namely, to investigate the relationship among individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. In practice, the teleological dimension of this research aims to assist practitioners in the field of human resource management, thereby

contributing knowledge that can enable an individual to develop a higher level of attachment to the organisation while pursuing their career choices.

- Epistemological dimension

According to Ganiyu et al. (2020) and Saunders et al. (2016), the epistemological dimension relates to the comb for truth in scientific research. A principal aim of research in the social sciences is to generate reliable and valid verdicts that ballpark reality as closely as possible. In this study, the truth can be achieved through a good research design and a rigorous emphasis on reliable and valid results. The epistemological dimension enables us to expound on the different paradigms that give different answers to the questions raised by epistemology (Coates, 2021; Pritchard, 2016).

- Methodological dimension

Methodological assumptions are principles and beliefs relating to the nature of social science and scientific study. To test for theoretical hypotheses, a well-organised research design and appropriate methodology must be established. Methodological beliefs can be viewed as going beyond methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ought to constitute a sound and acceptable research (Mouton & Marais, 2001). The methodological dimension involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, which in turn form the bases of scientific study (De Gialdino, 2011; Hui, 2019; Keith, 2019; Lor, 2012; Pickard, 2010; Schliesser, 2013). This study will use a quantitative approach to address the research questions.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study is discussed in connection with the types of research conducted in the field as well as the provision of an explanation of validity and reliability. Sekaran and Bougie (2016, p. 96) assert that “the quality of a research design depends on how appropriate it was to the research objectives and the research questions set for the study”. Additionally, studies indicate that research objectives, research questions and hypotheses have some level of influence on the type of research design adopted for the study (Hair et al., 2022; Rhein, 2021; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Therefore, research design can be considered the technique that is used in carrying out the study, and its purpose is to help in finding the most suitable and appropriate answers to the research questions (Cohen et al., 2018; Gyollai et al., 2019; Hui, 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is a strategic plan or a consistent blueprint of the procedure a

researcher intends to use to conduct the research (Creswell, 2014; Hair et al., 2019; Hui, 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). Creswell and Poth (2017) stated that the research design helps as a vital plan of the research that interconnects the methodology and analysis to address the whole process of the research.

1.7.1 Exploratory research

Studies by Hair et al. (2019) and Sahim and Mete (2021) consider exploratory research as research carried out with the intent of gaining first-hand insights, inventing new ideas and increasing understanding of a well-structured phenomenon when there is little or nothing is known about a subject. According to Sahim and Mete (2021), exploratory research can either be qualitative or quantitative. Experts in the research field conducting exploratory research tend to be more creative, exposed and flexible and usually adopt an investigative stance and explore all sources of information needed for scientific study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Hair et al., 2019). Exploratory research examines the relationship between different variables (Saunders et al., 2016). An exploratory study is used when a researcher studies a new area of interest or when the field of study has little or no data for investigation (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2016).

Therefore, this study is more exploratory because it links various theoretical perspectives on psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Empirically, the exploratory nature of the research relates to the cross-sectional design.

1.7.2 Explanatory research

Explanatory research is viewed as a process that involves more than just demonstrating that a relationship exists between constructs under study, as advanced by Mouton and Marais (2001). According to Saunders et al. (2016) and Sekaran and Bougie (2016), explanatory research is that aspect of research that tends to explain why events occur and to extend or test a theory. The main purpose of explanatory research is to show the connectedness between variables as well as happenings (Hair et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). In this study, explanatory research will be explored to assess its applicability with regard to establishing a relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment and its impact on proactive career self-management in organisations. As outlined above, the research, therefore, requires fulfilling the requirements of the type of research needed in social science research.

1.7.3 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is the study as well as a description of the characteristics of a prevailing occurrence (Ho & Yu, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2021; Sahim & Mete, 2021; Salkind, 2012). Mouton and Marais (1996) posit that descriptive study is the comprehensive explanation of an individual, situation, group, organisation, culture, subculture, interactions or social object. Sahim and Mete (2021) reiterated that descriptive research is usually the most appropriate method for assembling information that demonstrates relationships and describes the world as it subsists. The main drive for descriptive research is to logically identify the relationships between variables in a specific research area (Sahim & Mete, 2021; Saunders et al., 2016). In the literature study, the descriptive review is applicable with reference to the conceptualisation of the main constructs: psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Jenkins et al. (2021) emphasised that descriptive research is the basis for the study in terms of the demographic variables of the sample of participants as well as their mean scores on the various measuring instruments with regard to the empirical study.

1.7.4 Validity

A research design is intended to serve as a plan that eventually structures the research project in a way that could guarantee that the literature review and empirical study are consistent and valid with reference to the variables under consideration (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Mackey & Gass, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The validity of research refers to both internal and external validity. Several researchers argue that the constructs under consideration should be measured validly for the research to be internally valid (Hair et al., 2016; Saunders et al., 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). External validity, on the other hand, is the extent to which the research outcomes of a particular study can be generalised from the original sample to the entire population from which the sample originated (Salkind, 2018; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Saunders et al. (2016) argued that for the assessment of a solid research design, there is a need for both internal and external validity of the research. Validity can be ensured when a series of informed decisions are made regarding the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigms needed for the study, the framework within which the enquiry will take place and the methods that will be used to collect and analyse the entire data (Gyollai et al., 2019; Rose & Johnson, 2020). The discoveries of the study must be valid or similar to other studies for informed decision making (Cohen et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2022).

1.7.4.1 Validity of the literature review

This study considers the literature that is essential with regard to the scope, problems and goals of the research to validate the literature review. The researcher will ensure that the literature sources employed in the study are the most recent. That notwithstanding, this study will also refer to some classical studies because of their essence in the conceptualisation of the models that are important to the proposed study.

1.7.4.2 Validity of the empirical research

To validate the empirical research, the instruments intended to be employed are considered to be felicitous and standardised (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Hui, 2019; Mackey & Gass, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The validity of the measuring instruments as well as content validity and construct validity, ensure the extent to which the theoretical constructs that are supposed to be measured were calculated (Cohen et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Focusing on the staff working at the institutions of higher learning in Ghana guaranteed internal validity by controlling biases in participants' selection. The research questionnaire also consists of standard instructions to ensure that participants understand it easily, and eventually, statistical procedures and analyses were controlled for the demographic variables. According to Rubin and Babbie (2016), a researcher must conduct statistical analysis to regulate the differences among demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level.

According to Hair et al. (2019) and Tasios and Giannouli (2017), external validity is the extent of the possibility to generalise the gathered data as well as the generalisation of the context of the study to larger groups of people and settings. It also includes the procedures used for sampling, the duration and setting of the research, as well as the circumstances prevailing over the conduct of the study (Cohen et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2016). To ensure external validity, it is relevant to generalise the results obtained in the study beyond the research institution. To ensure the generalisability of the findings to the target population, the total population of staff in the selected higher education institution (HEI) was targeted.

1.7.5 Reliability

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the degree to which a test can be repeated and still produce consistent results that can be measured without much error is usually referred to as

reliability. Essiam (2013) and Pallant (2016) believe that, for a researcher to have a reliable instrument for the outcome of the study, it is necessary to carry out a pretest ahead of the main survey. Pallant (2016) further asserts the following reasons for the pretesting of the instrument, namely, (1) that the instrument's questions and scale items are clear and (2) to help the potential respondents comprehend and respond appropriately. Nunnally (1978) posits that Cronbach's alpha is computed to verify the internal consistency of items used to measure the construct. The study is associated with reliability that deals with establishing literature through the usage of available literature sources, theories and models (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2009; Hair et al., 2016; Ryan-Wegner, 2017; Van Der Westhuizen & Ramasodi, 2016). Sekaran and Bougie (2016) further state that the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concepts and ideas to assess the "goodness" of a measure is considered reliability.

To ensure the reliability of the empirical research, samples that are truly representative will be used. In the research, confounding factors will be minimised through the sampling procedure and by including instruments whose reliability has been ascertained through previous studies.

1.7.6 Unit of analysis

Cohen et al. (2018) opine that there are four units of analysis, namely, organisations, social artefacts, groups and individuals. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual and plays a critical role in career self-management. The purpose of the study is to establish the interplay of the relationship between the study variables of psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment to construct a profile for proactive career self-management. The study focuses on the traits, characteristics and behaviour of the individual since the individual is the main focus with regard to the unit of analysis.

The study was conducted among a random sample of senior staff (academic and supporting) working in the selected public higher education institutions in Ghana. These categories of employees form the unit of analysis for the study. The study cannot consider all the employees of the higher education institutions in Ghana; therefore, only senior staff were used for the study. The rationale for the selected unit of analysis is that the university's statute of the higher educational institution has not made clear provisions for the progression of such employees within the senior staff category.

Preliminary investigation shows that senior members, which are one of the staff categories within higher educational institutions, are much recognised regarding their career self-management, but

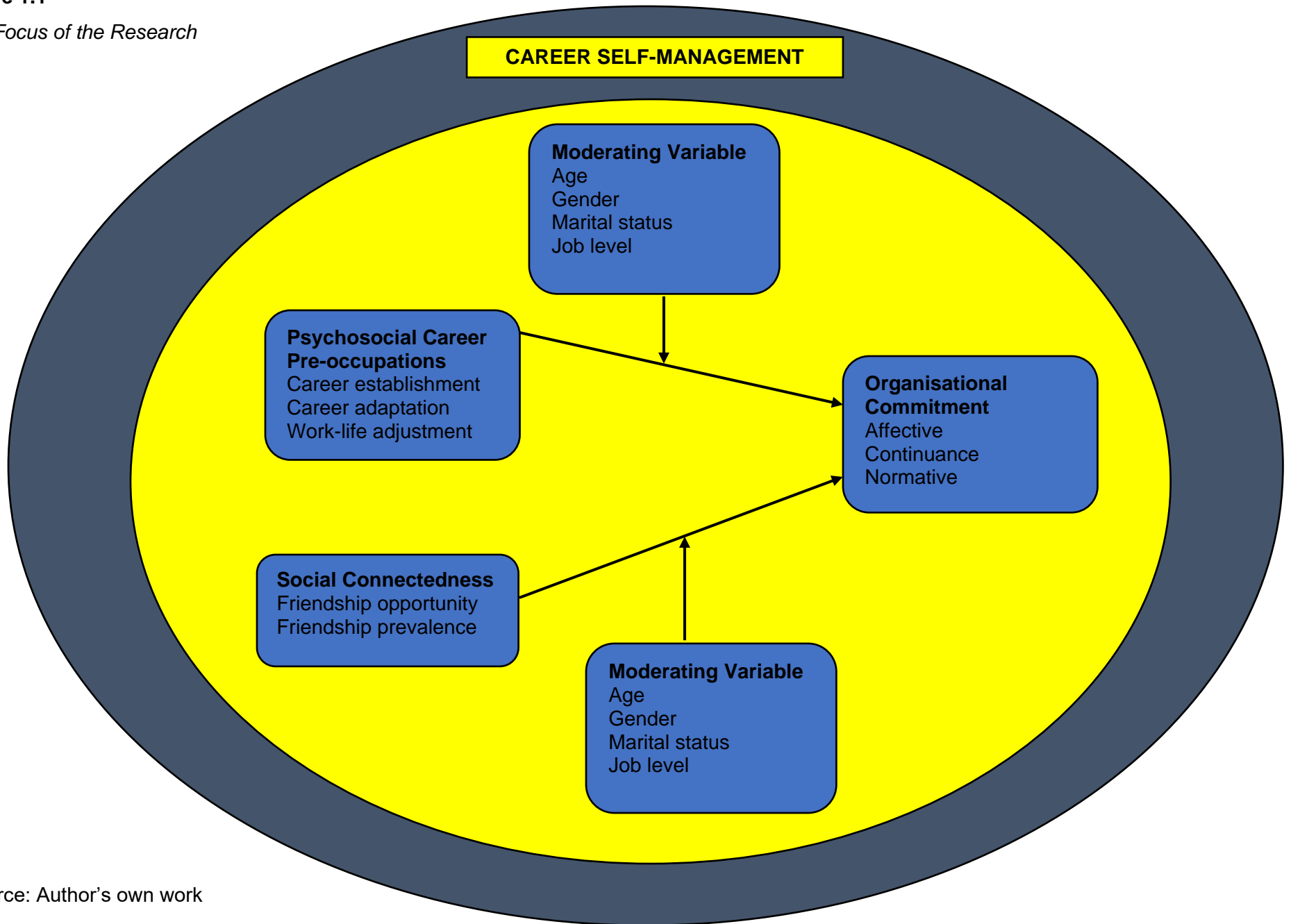
in the case of the senior staff category, not much has been done to recognise their career self-management. This shows that little has been done with regard to rules and regulations of the senior staff conditions of service. Again, senior staff conditions of service are constantly reviewed, which eventually affects individuals who intend to develop and progress in their careers in this new world of work. Against these dynamics of the conditions of service of the senior staff of higher educational institutions, this therefore warrants the study.

1.7.7 The variables

According to Huyler and McGill (2019) and Kaur (2013), a variable can be defined from a layman's point of view as anything or elements that can change over time and can have more value. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) also view variables as characteristics that can take on varying values. Gyollai et al. (2019) further iterated that there is no limit to the number of elements a variable should take up in scientific research. The investigation examines the relationship between the two independent constructs relating to individuals' career self-management (psychosocial career pre-occupation and social connectedness) and organisational commitment (dependent variable). In the study, independent constructs are considered the reputed cause of the dependent construct – the presumed effect (Neuman, 2014). Additionally, Sekaran and Bougie (2016) consider an independent construct as a component considered, influenced or chosen by the research to establish its relationship with a practical phenomenon. To establish and measure the relationship between the two main constructs (independent and dependent) and criterion data, appropriate measuring instruments were selected for this study. Figure 1.1 illustrates the focus of the study.

Figure 1.1

The Focus of the Research



Source: Author's own work

1.7.8 Delimitations

The study is limited to the three main constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, which are intended to establish a relationship with regard to career self-management. To twist factors that could sway an individual's levels of psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, the variables used as control variables were narrowed to age, gender, marital status and job level. The focus of the study emphasises the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Depending on the relationship established, either positive or negative, future researchers and academicians would be informed as to how to address unattended or attended issues in the research field. The researcher eventually does not attempt to influence or classify any of the information, the results or data based on physical factors, spiritual beliefs and family upbringing. In the event of a significant effect being attained, the groundwork information can be useful for researchers to address other issues relating to the constructs.

The design is purely limited to cross-sectional studies, and it involves the analysis of data collected from a population at a specific point in time, which means that cross-sectional data will be more useful and can be either qualitative or quantitative (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Gyollai et al., 2019; Spector, 2019). This type of study does not determine cause and effect, and the sample is not guaranteed to be representative because the data are collected at one specific time, which in effect, could be taken over a period of time (Spector, 2019).

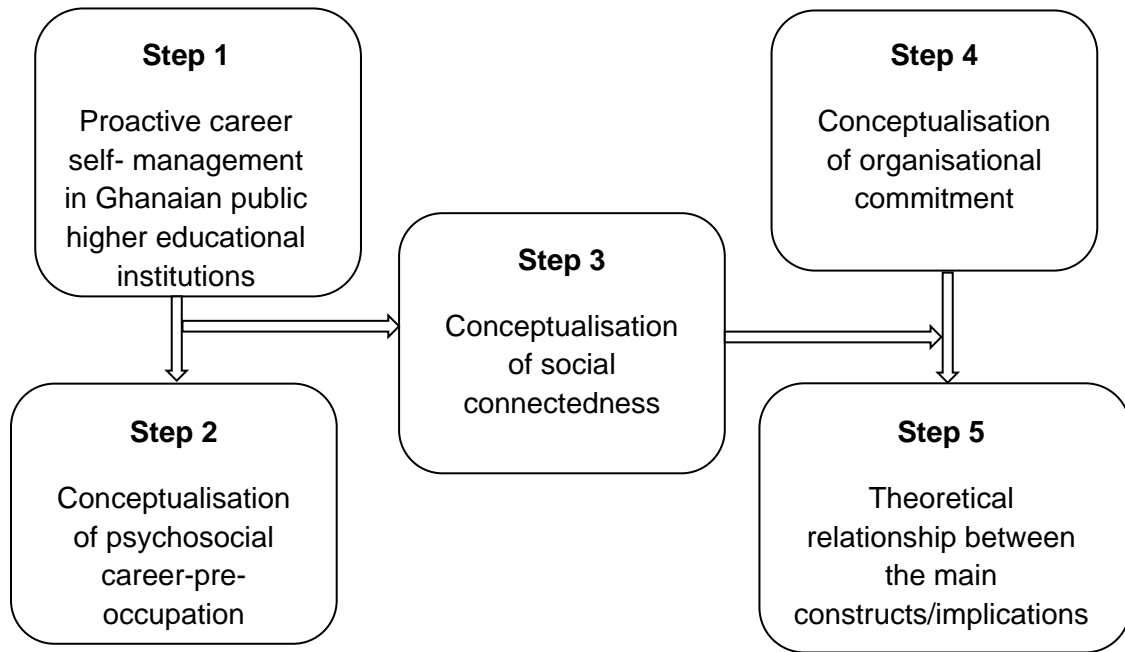
1.8 RESEARCH METHODS

The research comprises two phases, namely, a literature review and an empirical study. These are discussed thoroughly in the section below. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the different stages in the methodology.

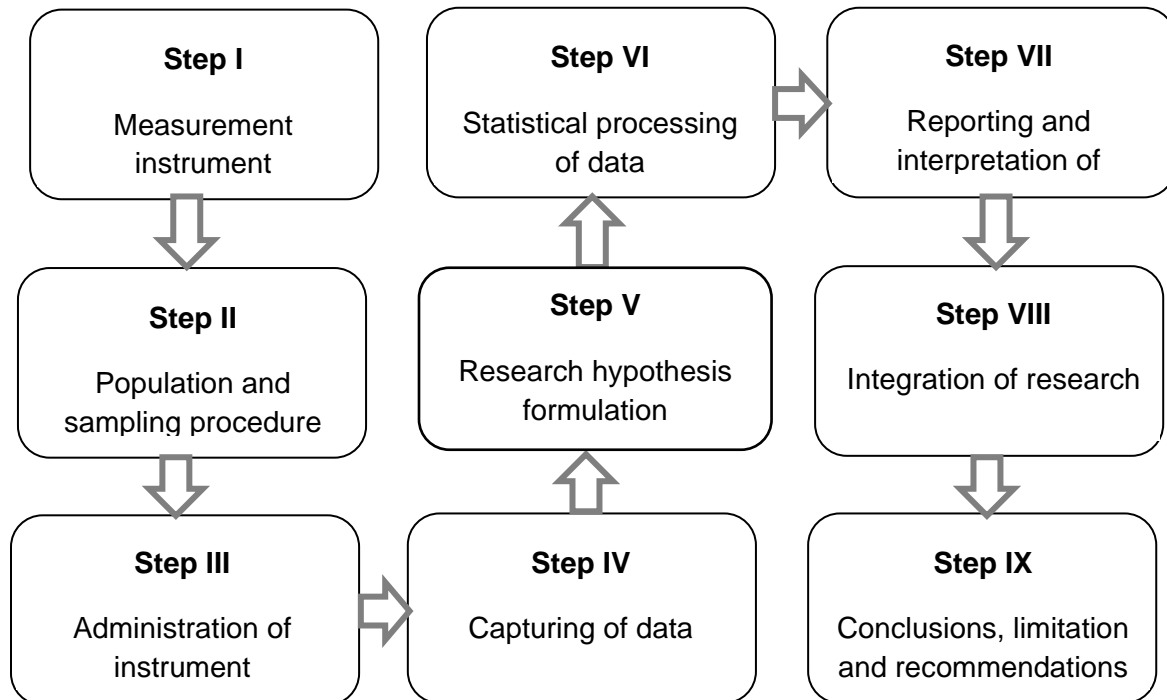
Figure 1.2

Overview of Research Methodology

PHASE I: LITERATURE REVIEW



PHASE II: EMPIRICAL STUDY



Source: Author's own work

1.8.1 Phase 1: The literature review

The literature review considers a review of proactive career self-management that eventually establishes the relationship among the three key constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Step 1: address research aim 1 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work.

Step 2: address research aim 2 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment and how individuals' demographic variables influence the development of these constructs.

Step 3: address research aim 3 of the literature review, namely, to construct a theoretically integrated proactive career profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices based on the theoretical relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Step 4: address research aim 4 of the literature review, namely, to outline the implications of the proactive career self-management profile in the Ghanaian context.

1.8.2 Phase 2: The empirical study

This stage, which is the empirical study, was carried out at the selected higher educational institutions in Ghana and involves the following steps:

Step 1: Measuring instruments

The instruments are intended to measure the three main constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment within the selected higher educational institutions in Ghana, which are discussed in Chapter 4. In terms of soliciting data, a questionnaire was used and was categorised into four main sections. The first section of the instrument addresses demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job levels. The second section captured the psychosocial career pre-occupations with the psychosocial career pre-occupation scale (PCPS) developed by Coetzee (2014). Additionally, the third section catered to social connectedness with the social connectedness scale (SCS) developed by Nielsen

et al. (2000), and the final section dealt with organisational commitment with a scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1991).

Step 2: Description of the population and sample

The total population comprises two purposively selected higher educational institutions in Ghana. The data were collected from all senior staff of the total population, including employees across all colleges, faculties and schools within the selected higher educational institutions in Ghana. The total number of employees as per the database of the selected higher educational institution, was 1651 staff. The processes involved in determining and describing the population and the sample are further discussed in Chapter 4.

Step 3: Ethical considerations in administering the measuring instrument

To ensure that ethical standards were upheld in this study, an ethical clearance letter and other appropriate supporting documents clarifying the intent and legitimacy of the survey would be obtained from the University of South Africa and would further be submitted to the institutional review board of higher educational institutions in Ghana for their consideration for the data collection. This step was further discussed in Chapter 4.

Step 4: Data capturing

Data capturing at this stage can be made possible by way of information gathered from the respondents from the selected public higher educational institutions, and this was made possible through the use of IBM SPSS (version 28) and AMOS (version 28), which were captured electronically. This phase of the data capture was further discussed in Chapter 4.

Step 5: Research hypotheses formulation

To conduct this study, research hypotheses were formulated from the central hypothesis to be empirically tested, and this is discussed in Chapter 4 in detail.

Step 6: Statistical processing of data

The research aims and hypotheses are analysed based on different statistical techniques comprising descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, skewness and frequency analysis; inferential statistics such as bivariate correlation statistics; moderated regression analysis; SEM analysis; and test for significance mean differences. The statistical approach to the study was quantitative in nature. The relevant analytical tools used are further discussed and explained in detail in Chapter 4.

Step 7: Reporting and interpreting the results

The results, discussions and findings are demonstrated through tables, diagrams, figures and graphs systematically and logically, with the aim of ensuring that conclusions are clearly conveyed for better understanding by the stakeholders in the research setting. This step is also discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Step 8: Integration of research

The formulation of the study integrates the constructs under consideration. The findings in the literature review were incorporated into those of the empirical study to determine the overall findings of the study. This step is explained in Chapter 6.

Step 9: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

This section is the final stage of Chapter 6, which is intended to address the empirical issues drawn from the literature and to outline the core conclusions drawn in the study. The conclusions associated with the results are integrated with previous literature. The limitations of the research were discussed and explained. Recommendations with regard to the three constructs, namely, (1) psychosocial career pre-occupations, (2) social connectedness and (3) organisational commitment, were made to assist in building a profile in efficient and effective proactive career self-management in the higher education institutions in Ghana based on empirically validated career management models.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters in the study are as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research

Chapter 2: Meta-theoretical context of the study: Career self-management in higher educational institutions in Ghana.

Chapter 3: Psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Chapter 4: Research methods

Chapter 5: Research results and discussion

Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The background and rationale for the research, problem statement, objectives of the study, the perspective of the research paradigm, the design of the research and the research methods of the study were all discussed in the chapter. The aim of this study is based on the fact that the career management of individuals is one of the concepts that is truly evolving in this current new world of work, which needs to be considered or investigated to address relationships and the major challenges that organisations confront in their quest to ensure proper performance.

Chapter 2 addresses the first aim of the literature review, namely, the meta-theoretical context of the study, which is proactive career self-management in higher educational institutions in Ghana. This chapter includes a critical assessment of career self-management in higher educational settings with specific reference to the selected higher educational institution in Ghana as well as a discussion of the variables influencing career management in higher education institutions.

CHAPTER 2: META-THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to place the study in a context by outlining the meta-theoretical context that addresses the main variables of the research with regard to proactive career self-management. In an organisation, human resources (HR) is now an essential strategic partner, and the role of human resource management departments can no longer be overlooked in the new business space (Nasir, 2017; Scholz, 2017). Employees who enter present work environments are usually faced with numerous challenges, including fast-changing technology, globalisation, tough competition, decreasing employment opportunities, organisational reform, finding role models, balancing employee expectations, fluctuating business confidence and mastering new skills (Baruch & Reis, 2016; Baruch et al., 2019; Nasir, 2017; Scholz, 2017). Accordingly, the current work situation calls for fresh coping mechanisms from employees, thereby necessitating the idea of developing career management strategies that help employees recognise their career meta-competencies, which are crucial to sustaining their jobs (Ismail, 2017; Othman et al., 2018; Potgieter & Ferreira, 2018). The abovementioned trends demand an appreciation of the work arena and the changing essence of careers in the new work space relative to conventional careers. There are numerous emerging issues and practices associated with career management in the current work environment that call for thorough investigations.

2.2 CAREERS IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

The new world of work is dynamic and constantly changing, and individuals need to be proactive in adapting to these changes in the face of career self-management. Career theories entail how an individual experiences a career and the atmosphere in which it takes place. This section focuses on career evolution, changing nature of careers, boundaryless careers, protean careers, the individual as a career agent, and proactive career self-management.

2.2.1 The emergence of the concept of career in the new world of work

Conventional careers, which are considered the standard, have been recognised by many academics to have been more significant in recent decades (Baruch & Reis, 2016; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Vijai et al., 2017). Studies show that career models such as boundaryless, the protean, the portfolio, the intelligent, and post-corporate careers are mostly characterised by

flexible employment contracts and multiple changes in individual careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Hall, 2013; Handy, 1994; Peiperl & Baruch, 1997). The central point of all the models is that a person's work security should progressively be built not just in a specific direction but in the employees' own flexible skills, knowledge and employability (Ademola et al., 2019; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Tran, 2019). Hence, employees are stimulated to pursue career self-management (Greco & Kraimer, 2020; Kim et al., 2018; Lent et al., 2019; Van der Heijden et al., 2020) and to perceive job success stories in terms of human psychological triumphs (involving individual success or feeling of happiness and performance achievement) rather than quantitative measures such as organisational progression and growth (Guan et al., 2019; Clark & Clark, 2019).

The new world of work has radically changed the long-standing employment relationship to proactive career self-management due to the convergence of socio-economic conditions across the globe (Callanan et al., 2017; Tran, 2016). Additionally, the changes in these economic conditions, such as technological sophistication and globalisation, have stimulated researchers to examine the key competencies required by employees to effectively navigate their own career prospects (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Baruch & Reis, 2016). In the era where information technology is evolving rapidly, individuals in work settings can adjust and establish their careers to meet the changing demands of the environment (Bai & Liu, 2018; Baruch & Reis, 2016). However, economic development is sunken in the face of the novel disease (COVID-19), and this obviously has a trending effect on business organisations as well as individual careers (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020). The relationship between individuals and organisations regarding career management has changed over the years. At the same time, for organisations to survive and gain competitive superiority in the prevailing work environment, they need to create and assist individuals in adapting to the changing face of the work environment for superior performance (Balliester & Elsheikhi, 2018; Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015).

Again, the new world of work has had to contend with massive globalisation in business operations (Amundsen, 2019; Mahmutović et al., 2017; Tran, 2016). The pressure of globalisation and the subsequent changes has forced businesses to transform. A consequence of globalisation is mergers and acquisitions of several businesses as organisations try to capture market share and remain competitive in the world of work (Baruch & Reis, 2016; Tran, 2016). In addition to globalisation, Baruch and Reis (2016) emphasise that the increased use of digital technologies, modern media strategies and the transition from purely industrial to information sciences constitute primary drivers for change witnessed in the new world of work.

The word “career” is common in our ordinary vocabulary. Its root can be traced to the French word carrier, which refers to a circuit and stretches to symbolize a journey (Garbe & Duberley, 2019; Hofstetter & Rosenblatt, 2017; Mouratidou, 2016). The concept of a career as a journey could not be more important in the current world because conventional organisational professions have been reduced and replaced with new forms. Individuals can develop several different career experiences in the current changing financial climate, which can be represented as journeys or career paths. Even though a career belongs to the employee, in the vast majority of instances, organisations play a role in managing the individual’s career (Baruch, 2004a, 2004b; Coetzee et al., 2019; Gubler et al., 2018).

Moreover, the value of organisational fitness and individual work fit has resulted in an increasingly central role for qualitative career success as a measure of proactive career self-management (Ardıç et al., 2016; Arthur et al., 2005; Rahmadani & Sebayang, 2017). Hirschi et al. (2018) emphasised two relevant indicators that are deemed relevant to career success. Several authors in the field of research have emphasised the challenges that individual employees face within the new world of work. Amongst the varieties of the challenges include decreased employment opportunities, constant changes in technology, deterioration of job security, challenges with regard to adapting to a new work environment, mounting personal responsibility to remain relevant, personal agency to upskill oneself, the importance placed on developing employability attributes, and the need to engage in lifelong learning (Atitsogbe et al., 2019; Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2016; Frey & Osborne, 2017).

From the above, it is concluded that the working environment has fundamentally changed over time, reshaping individuals’ attitudes towards work in an organisation. Constantly restructuring the entire organisation is often accompanied by redundancies, which results in permanent changes in the traditional system of working known to be more bureaucratic in nature (Dhir, 2019; Heerwagen et al., 2017). Bloom and Canning (2006) note that many organisations focus on and develop systems for cost optimisation, cost reduction and sustainable cost management. Focusing on optimising cost-effectiveness ultimately improves the competitiveness of organisations. According to Ishrat (2016) and Alcover et al. (2017), the traditional psychological contract prioritises job security and promotions within the same organisation. The contemporary psychological contract between an employer and employee emphasises continuous personal development, competency training and prioritisation of work and life balance.

Several studies posit that traditional organisations stipulate the work period, that is, both time and days with a standard number of holidays each year in the employee working life (Ikeda et al., 2017; Sato et al., 2020; Vedaa et al. 2016). In the contemporary workplace, many people work more hours as a result of organisations assisting them in their career development and work where and when is suitable to them (Angerer et al., 2017). Therefore, it is becoming increasingly necessary to manage the employees' job, family, and social life. As a result of the importance placed on work-life balance, many workplaces offer flexible time to all employees (D'cunha, 2019; Pahwa, 2019). Work/life balance is achievable because of the increase in enabling modern technologies, such as mobile technology. Work can be done wherever an employee is, without being physically present in the office, as was the traditional norm (Hopkins & McKay, 2019; Long & Richter, 2019). Dittes et al. (2019) agree that there is greater use of dispersed work groups that are often global in the contemporary workplace.

This is evident from the development of careers into a greater use of video conferencing and computer-based team tools and a greater focus on conference calls and facilities beyond normal working hours (Al-Samarraie, 2019; Giboney et al., 2019). Therefore, the workplace highly depends on technology to satisfy geographically diverse staff meetings (Dittes et al., 2019). Hopkins and McKay (2019) observe that in the new world of work, the management style is more relaxed, and staff are no longer micromanaged but are trusted to set their own work schedules and work more productively. Managerial structures are thus more linear and democratic, replacing the traditional hierarchical management style. In the new world of work, each employee, irrespective of age, is valued rather than subjected to superiors' directives (Hopkins & McKay, 2019). The role of more experienced employees is mentorship as opposed to being dictatorial (as in the past). Modern organisational culture encourages profitability by investing in employee satisfaction and contentedness (Dittes et al., 2019; Hopkins & McKay, 2019). According to Miller et al. (2019), most highly skilled employees seek satisfaction from accomplishment rather than the amount of time spent on tasks. It, therefore, presupposes that employees in the new world of work place much emphasis on continuous learning and competency development (Cabral & Dhar, 2019; Manoury & Buche, 2019).

Heerwagen et al. (2017) describe the contemporary workplace as characterised by teamwork to accomplish tasks. However, teamwork brings unintended increased distractions and interruptions. Teamwork also causes employees to work longer hours to compensate for lack of time to do individual tasks. To support efficient teamwork, most organisations organise meetings that are more flexible and can take the form of video conferencing. The other major transformation

in contemporary workplaces aims to improve costs and productivity efficiency (Heerwagen et al., 2017). High efficiency in costs and productivity has been achieved through more efficient space use whereby work station sizes are reduced and overall densities increased, filing systems are centralised. There is increasing overall spatial diversity to handle various forms of work at the same time (Kurths et al., 2019).

According to Phillipson (2019), diversity has increased significantly in the modern workplace due to globalisation and changes in population composition. Diversity can be described as how individuals in the workplace have different characteristics. That is, not just gender, ethnicity and disability are more obvious (Arifeen & Gatrell, 2019; Salloum et al., 2019). Contending with diversity is more important in the contemporary workplace, where investments and employees are spread across different countries. This wide diversity of employees has brought both opportunities and challenges (Van Rossum, 2019). Managing diversity provides grounds for reaching larger and more diverse markets with regard to employees. Failure to understand the challenges of diversity, such as integrating employees to work as a unit, stifles the growth of the organisation (Li et al., 2017).

The cultural shift whereby employees are in different locations has brought other challenges of unity and cultural assimilation in organisations (Ratnam, 2016). Fragmented locations have forced some organisations to create their own social networks to encourage socialisation among employees who seldom meet face to face. As such, employees are encouraged to collaborate to promote unity among themselves (Ellingson, 2002). Traditionally, employees were described as being conservative, organised, dedicated and showing signs of minimal restraint in the work environment (Dueck, 2019). Communication was formal, and there was a top-down chain of command with decisions made based on past experiences and seniority (Hampson et al., 2016). Jenkins (2007) observes that the contemporary world of work is characterised by employees who aspire to achieve work-life balance. Employees are more independent, autonomous and self-reliant than the traditional way of working (Naydenov & Ivanov, 2018).

According to Peerzadah et al. (2018) and Shumilina et al. (2019), organisations show an increasing awareness of the significance of going green and applying various environmental management techniques to ensure proactiveness in the wellness of employees. Thus, the wellness of employees is a concern for most contemporary organisations, and employees turn out to be generally happy in the chosen work environment. Healthy and happy employees record low absenteeism and are highly productive (Ratnam, 2016). In the traditional workplace,

employees were personally responsible for the expenses of maintaining their health. Currently, most organisations subsidize or offer health insurance schemes for their employees (FitzGerald et al., 2017; Ratnam, 2016).

Furthermore, a modern capacity-based economy adopts and explores the green economic facets of business, which leads to a shift from traditional financial structures and is basically the result of many businesses becoming global (Khan et al., 2019; Morgan & Rayner, 2019). A green workplace concept is now a marketing tool that brings benefits to organisations. Working environments are now designed to allow adequate air circulation, natural lighting, energy-efficient conditioning and others (Shuja et al., 2017). Practices that are environmentally conscious have proven to be highly effective and beneficial to organisations in the contemporary world of work (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Suharti & Sugiarto, 2020), and career self-management cannot be underestimated.

The evolution in terms of how careers are perceived has been due to the significant socioeconomic changes within the modern work environment. Socioeconomic changes such as globalisation, changing technology, tough competition, employee expectations of organisational restructuring and workplace flexibility have a great impact on careers. These socioeconomic changes are further discussed in the subsection below.

2.2.2 Socio-economic indicators that influence career self-management in the new world of work

Haseeb et al. (2019) have also recognised the growing use of digital technologies, communication strategies, globalisation, and the shift from industrial to information sciences as major drivers of change in the modern working environment. Coetzee et al. (2019b) confirmed the findings of Haseeb et al. (2019). (2019) and incorporated mergers and acquisitions into the list of driving forces. Kim (2019) and Schnall et al. (2017) identified downsizing, organisational restructuring and subcontracting as factors driving improvements in the modern working environment.

According to Cappellen and Jansens (2010), globalisation has eventually led to a greater rise in global careers, which involves individuals seeking career prospects from different cultures. It is obvious that the strength of an economy has a greater impact on employment relationships for individuals intending to pursue a career (Poon, 2019). According to Miao et al. (2017), the most key indicator of the health of the economy relies on the unemployment rate. Studies indicate that several socioeconomic indicators, such as globalisation, technological advancement, tough

competitions, balancing workforce expectations, organisational restructuring and flexibility, have a greater influence on individual career management and how individuals in this new world of work perceive career management (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Hirst & Thompson, 2019; Liu & Lin, 2016; Safari, 2020). Most organisations in this contemporary world of work are faced with several challenges in the quest to be productive and competitive in the work environment. The socioeconomic indicators that influence career self-management are discussed below.

2.2.2.1 Globalisation

The new world of work has had to contend with massive globalisation in business operations (Amundson, 2006; Mahmutović et al., 2017; Tran, 2016). The pressure of globalisation and the subsequent changes has forced businesses to transform. A consequence of globalisation is mergers and acquisitions of several businesses as organisations try to capture market share and remain competitive in the world of work (Baruch & Reis, 2016; Tran, 2016). Together with globalisation, (Baruch & Reis, 2016) emphasised that the increased use of new technology, new communication practices and the change from purely industrial to information sciences are key drivers for changes witnessed in the new world of work. Globalisation has resulted in drastic changes in general operations as well as the structures of the organisation (Amundson et al., 2014).

Additionally, Haseeb et al. (2019) identified globalisation, the increasing use of new technology and communication techniques and the shift from industrial to information sciences as the key forces driving the changes in the new world of work. Globalisation has a great impact on the individual's career management in the sense that large- and medium-scale technological developments have caused a reduction in the area of unskilled and semiskilled employees (Hood & Creed, 2019). Nica et al. (2016) believe that there has been much competition in most countries around the globe as a result of globalisation, which in turn makes it difficult for individuals to proactively construct their own careers.

2.2.2.2 Changing technology

The next driving force of the socioeconomic indicator in the contemporary world is changing technology. According to Cascio and Montealegre (2016) and Cooper (2019), changes in the workplace with regard to career are a result of overreliance on and rapid advancement of technology. Bejinaru and Balan (2020) opine that technological changes could enable or oppress employees in the workplace. Research indicates that technology has a positive influence on the

employee and the organisation and in turn assists businesses in operating better and faster—eventually changing how work is done (Wooldridge, 2015). However, technology also impacts the employment and career management of individuals in this contemporary world of work (Barley et al., 2017). In a globalised environment, information and communication technology has changed the way organisations operate, and this has an adverse impact on the individual’s career planning effort (Safari, 2020).

In the modern work environment, employers, in their quest to be competitive, integrate technology into all their processes and operations to increase individual demands and adapt to the technological needs of the entire organisation (Rojewski & Hill, 2014). Research conducted in one European country indicates that employees now work more than in the past due to industriousness and self-discipline and increased technological capabilities for their career enhancement and development (Rojewski & Hill, 2017). Additionally, in the African context, the introduction of digitization in most workplaces has an adverse turn on the career pattern of employees and individuals planning to engage in a given career. These challenges necessitate quick career interventions and strategies to mitigate further changes in the career decisions of individuals (Safari, 2020).

Moreover, technological changes are shaped by human factors and influenced by economic, social and political forces. Understanding these forces is essential when technological change is to form part of an employee’s career path in an organisation (Rodhiah & Hidayah, 2021). Organisations hold the assertion that the transformation of society is based on the knowledge of technological changes that form the larger systems. Furthermore, technology allows individuals to operate globally without much restriction in their businesses (Rojewski & Hill, 2017).

2.2.2.3 Competitiveness

Digitization in the modern age and knowledge economy has heavily shaped individuals’ attitudes and their career progression in the corporate world (Hirschi, 2018; Safari, 2020; Youssef & Mashhour, 2021). There is a high level of dynamism, uncertainty and transformation in the complex work environment due to the stiff competition faced by organisations (Warner & Wäger, 2019). The competitive nature of work is mostly caused by modernization, which is also globalisation. This competition in the workplace has positive and negative impacts on the proactive management of individual careers. According to Witschel et al. (2019), globalisation coupled with competition has rendered most of the indigenous employees unemployed in certain

parts of the African continent. As a result of this challenge, individuals seeking to engage themselves in employment tend to open up to foreign engagements, which promise higher rewards and a greater level of career satisfaction (Safari, 2020). Organisations have a major responsibility to ensure that they are adapting and responding to their working environment, being flexible, and producing skills to gain a competitive advantage and survive (Youssef & Mashhour, 2021).

2.2.2.4 Employee expectation

There are some expectations that are clearly understood by both the employer and employee in a typical employment situation in an organisation (Frenkel & Bednall, 2016; Stegmann et al., 2020). The individual's expectations could either be implied, visible or expressed in the working environment (Oginni et al., 2018; Scharf et al., 2020). Wages and salaries, hours of work, responsibilities, and rules and regulations spelled out in the code of conduct could be regarded as visible employee expectations. Etodike et al. (2020) hold the opinion that implied and expressed employee expectations are mostly linked to the employee's concept of work and level of experience, which may be unspoken and could provide an avenue for misunderstanding and miscommunication in the workplace. However, employees' expectations are not static or stable. This is because their expectation to work may be considered a function of several indicators, including experience from various workplaces, their personality and attitude, culture and family background (Curtiss et al., 2020; Scharf et al., 2020).

Therefore, balancing workforce expectations is one of the key indicators of organisational success and survival (Huang et al., 2020). Studies indicate that when an employee is not satisfied at the workplace, the motivation to pursue a higher level of career progression tends to have an adverse effect on the organisation; hence, the quality of work could be besmirched (Huang et al., 2020; Singh & Amandeep, 2017). Huang et al. (2020) and Scharf et al. (2020) assert that the traditional system of employee expectations, such as just employment and reward, has changed over the years.

According to Chopra and Bhilare (2020) and Mullins (2007), employee expectations such as promotion opportunities, better working conditions and good rewards are the most valued elements every individual may consider, and if not present, individuals could withdraw their services from the organisation. A number of studies have been conducted by researchers with regard to employee expectations. Nasurdin et al. (2018) hold the belief that monetary rewards are

essential to frontline employees in organisations, and in situations where their expectations are not satisfied, they could negatively affect the organisation and eventually have an adverse effect on their career pattern. Other studies conducted by Raziq (2015) and Syrigou (2018) show that organisations that do not pay proper attention to employees' expectations, such as working conditions, will have an impact on the morale level of the employees as well as their satisfaction, which could lead to turnover in the organisation.

2.2.2.5 Organisational restructuring

Contemporary work organisations operate in more dynamic and unstable work settings and, as a result, compel organisations to adopt some form of restructuring to remain competitive in the work environment amidst COVID-19 (Harney et al., 2018; Jogie, 2022). An evolving study shows that the organisational environment has seen an increase in volatility with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the change required to combat this volatility remains the same (Karr et al., 2020; Morgan, 2020). According to Kral and Kralova (2016), restructuring of organisations includes (1) mergers, (2) subcontracting, (3) downsizing, (4) outsourcing, (5) internal job mobility, (6) offshoring, and (7) joint ventures. Evidence from a global perspective indicates that organisational change or organisational restructuring has adverse impacts on the careers of employees as well as the organisation (CIPD, 2018; Fleming, 2017; Foster et al., 2019). From the employee point of view, restructuring means that the job security of the individual has been compromised and that normal operations can no longer exist (Kral & Kralova, 2016). In this regard, the individual lives under uncertain conditions, affecting their health and safety in the environment. When restructuring an organisation, different categories of stakeholders – even those who remain on the job – become adversely affected. Additionally, in an environment where the level of organisational restructuring is rampant, individuals and organisations face the challenge of proactively managing careers, especially amid COVID-19 (Harney et al., 2018).

2.2.2.6 Workplace flexibility

Person and Rossin-Slatter (2019) assert that workplace flexibility is a key indicator of employee wellbeing and is influenced by the nature of the work schedule in a given organisation. There is the assertion that when individuals have a flexible work plan, it assists them in rearranging their working hours and can perform their tasks away from home; hence, career management is enhanced (Fan et al., 2019). Studies reveal several workplace flexibility opportunities, including the rearrangement of working hours and flexible leave entitlement (Olivetti & Petrongolo, 2017; Person & Rossin-Slatter, 2019). According to Bal and Izak (2021) and Jena and Memon (2018),

employee working hours, one of the workplace flexibilities, tend to have an impact on the relationship and the quality and wellbeing of coemployees.

As organisations change in their core values as a result of the changing nature of the work environment, the workplace has become a learning centre in which positions need to be filled by individuals who tend to be more adaptive and creative in learning faster and can understand the rationale for performing tasks in the organisation (Bal & Izak, 2021). According to Fan et al. (2019), organisations, however, need individuals with the right competencies and flexibility to assist in the operations of the organisation as well as to solve problems that might arise in the work environment. Research carried out in South Africa by Savickas (2013) shows that organisations rely mostly on individuals with the skills and education to satisfy the organisations' core objectives, and this is manifested through promotion and rewards. Hence, workplace flexibility can be achieved through knowledgeable employees. Table 2.1 provides a synopsis of the key socioeconomic drivers of change in the new world of work.

Table 2.1

Key Socioeconomic Drivers of Change in the New World of Work

Globalisation	Amundson (2006); Amundson, Mills, and Smith (2014); Arnold et al (2019); Blickle and Witzki (2008); Briscoe et al. (2012); Brooks et al (2012); Coetzee et al (2015); Gunz and Coetzee, (2012); Hall and Chandler (2005); Haseeb et al. (2019); Nasir, (2017); Perraton, (2019)
Changing technology	Akenroye (2012); Cascio and Montealegre (2016); Cooper (2019); Goffin and Mitchell (2005); Hughes et al. (2019)
Competitiveness	Adams, (2003); Cooper, (2001); Goffin and Mitchell, (2005); OECD, (2004)

Balancing employee expectations	Bryant and Zimmerman, (2003); Erickson, (1992); Harris et al. (2016); Hurd et al. (2011); Iqbal et al (2017); Rowley et al. (2004); Syrigou, (2018); Yamada, (2019)
Organisational restructuring (mergers, joint ventures, acquisitions, outsourcing, downsizing and subcontracting)	Baruch (2006); Blickle and Witzki (2008); Brown (2012); Brown et al. (2006); Burke and Ng (2006); Clarke (2008); CIPD, (2018); Gubler et al. (2014); Lin (2015); Nasir, (2017); Perraton, (2019); Savickas (2011); Sullivan, (1999)
Flexibility	Bal and Jansen, (2016); Jeffrey-Hill et al. (2008); Jena and Memon, (2018); Giovanis, (2016); Kossek and Thompson, (2016); O'Connor and Cech, (2018); Rhee et al. (2020); Ugargol and Patrick, (2018); Wickramasinghe (2019).

Source: Author's own work

With the workplace that has drastically changed over the years, inevitably, careers have also changed. According to Chetana and Mohapatra (2017), career management is a systematic mechanism for planning, developing, executing and monitoring career plans and strategies performed by the employee or in accordance with the career system of the organisation. Career management requires the efforts of an organisation to control individuals' work flow across positions over a given period of time in ways ideally suited for both the organisational and individual goals. Furthermore, Ndegwa et al. (2016) maintain that career management is a primary antecedent for the development of organisational careers and involves the development of individual and organisational activities related to the different policies and practices in ensuring career effectiveness. Furthermore, career management provides employees with opportunities to develop in their career path, thus improving the talent pool within the organisation (Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019; 2020). An organisation with formal and informal career development processes strengthens the employee-organisation psychological relationship (Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2012; Henderson, 2013; Zacher & Rudolph, 2021).

Career management skills refer to multifaceted attributes that involve the collection, analysis, composition and organisation of information regarding oneself, education and profession (Hooley, 2014). This construct is considered very significant, as it may support individuals in taking full benefit of educational and career prospects and dealing with career complications in the workplace environment and in sustaining balance among several roles at work and family. In addition, career management skills can help employees react effectively to the uncertainty of the labour market and career enhancement (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2012). Several studies have focused on career identity and complex mediation relationships between preparatory career actions and career progress indicators (Praskova et al., 2014) or career attitudes in employability and professional success (Lo Presti et al., 2018).

Moreover, career management covers two broad fields, namely, individual career management and organisational career management (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2020). It also emphasises the significance of effective career management, which ultimately leads to the career advancement of individuals and organisations. By strategically aligning both internal and external assimilation of employees' career practices, career progression systems have changed from stable and linear career systems to transitional and dynamic ones (Sainidis & Kolawole, 2019). Career management is indeed a continuous work-life process (Kong et al., 2020). Furthermore, a gratifying career can foster satisfaction, while impoverished career decisions can have a tragic effect on a person's sense of well-being (Adekola, 2011; Erdiasari & Herachwati, 2020).

Wilhelm and Hirschi's (2020) research work supports the argument that successful career management can allow individuals to make informed decisions that are compatible with their skills, goals and values and improve the effectiveness of organisations. Many authors argue that career management initiative is a link between organisations and individuals where organisations strive to match individual interests and abilities with organisational opportunities through a planned programme that includes activities such as career systems, career counselling, job rotation and other resources and tools for career management (Arokiasamy et al., 2011; De Vos & Cambré, 2017; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). In addition, Engel et al. (2017) and Miller (2020) argue that career management strategies and practices need to help individuals in their efforts to build the information, skills, and behaviours that will assist them in succeeding on the job.

Therefore, once the employee meets the career goals set, the combination of both individual career planning and institutional career management processes eventually contributes to career growth. Coetzee (2019) posits that career management in the career development process signifies the aspirational description of the organisation. Career attributes are explained when organisations strive to match individual interests and capabilities with organisational opportunities through a planned programme that includes activities such as designing effective internal career systems, employee counselling, job rotation opportunities and mixing positional experiences with on- and off-the-job training tasks (Wesarat et al., 2014).

Again, Wesarate et al. (2014) believe that career management and career self-management are synonymous constructs. Theorists believe that career management includes specific human resource activities such as job rotation, possible future appraisal, career counselling, and training and education created to match the interests and abilities of employees with organisational opportunities. Arguably, career management strategies and practices can help encourage employee perspectives, target and plan development, gain relevant inputs and assist individuals in the use and advancement of skills and expertise to support their employees' growth and self-esteem (Coetzee, 2019; Ongiti, 2018).

Contemporary research shows that most organisations are shifting from organisational career management to the modern system of what is termed career self-management (Runhaar et al., 2019). Organisational career management policies and practices that can also be connected with organisational career management initiatives or organisational support for career development typically include various programmes and activities. Given the lack of theoretical approaches (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000), previous research has tried to create groups or clusters, although there is no consensus on how such career management practices should be organised (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000; Eby et al., 2003; Sturges et al., 2002).

Even though theorists in the last three decades have tried to elaborate the link between career management and career self-management, the findings have yet to converge at one point (Deas, 2017; Ferreira, 2012; King, 2001; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2020; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2017). In relations, the concept of career self-management is critical to individuals who work for temporary jobs in organisations (Wesarat et al., 2014). In highly project-based careers, individuals turn to being responsible for their own career management, including developing skills and seeking opportunities to work in other organisations (Wesarat et al., 2014). The concept of career

management is mostly applicable to project-based as well as temporary employees (Miller, 2020; Kong et al., 2020).

Within the concept of career management, there are many facets. One of the facets is career self-management, which is considered below.

2.2.3 Concept of career self-management

Career analysts consider career self-management to be an important concept in the contemporary career work environment (Polanska, 2016). Coetzee (2018) theorizes and conceptualises career self-management as the proactivity an individual shows in the cause of managing his or her own career. Coetzee and Engelbrecht (2020) and Kaur and Kaushik (2020) indicated that career self-management is one of the attributes that impact an individual's ability to be employable in the work environment. The authors further iterated that other attributes, such as proactivity, self-efficacy, emotional literacy, entrepreneurial orientation and sociability, have the potential to increase the probability of career success. When drastic changes occur in workplaces, it is inevitable that careers also change. It is believed that organisations, from time to time, will withdraw the structured aspect of career management interventional programmes such as employee development plans and that individuals must be more tactical and proactive in managing their careers (Presti et al., 2021, as cited in King, 2004).

As mentioned previously, the contemporary world of work is associated with changes in individual career, which is more of career self-management (Turgut & Neuhaus, 2020; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2019). With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused drastic changes in the current world of work, individuals and organisations must be proactive and responsive to cope with the changing nature of the novel world of work (Turgut & Neuhaus, 2020). The concept of career self-management must be properly embraced by all stakeholders, especially employees. In adopting career self-management, career diversity and career sustainability must be key indicators that inform an individual's success in the workplace (Daudi et al., 2021; Hakovirta & Denuwara, 2020; Rapuano, 2020). The rapid technological advancements and general changes in the global world put much pressure on workers to perform at maximum output and further enhance competitiveness in workplace settings (Daudi et al., 2021).

According to Wilhelm and Hirschi (2020), for an individual to perform exceedingly better in their chosen career, such individuals must perform a multiplicity of tasks in the workplace to keep themselves abreast with changes in the work environment. This diversity of tasks is positively and significantly associated with the diversity in individual careers. According to Vicentini and Boccardelli (2016), individuals who intend to accomplish a life-long career must truly appreciate the dynamics of career diversity. Spurk and Straub (2020) posit that the traditional system of employment relationships is on the decline, and the contemporary approach to employment relationship has incorporated new ways such as temporary work, contract work and virtual working spaces in achieving the objective of the organisation. Furthermore, in the traditional approach, employees were able to develop their competences through the effort of their employers, who assisted them in coping with the ever-changing philosophies of the organisation (Spurk & Straub, 2020). Studies indicate that most organisations are shifting from organisational career management to the modern system of what is termed career self-management (Donohue & Tham, 2019; Hirschi et al., 2022; Kost et al., 2020).

Employability attributes in the context of career management refer to self-management psychosocial career attributes that help individuals build the self-regulations they need to handle their career task in an unpredictable work setting (Presti et al., 2021; Spurk & Straub, 2020). Several studies have been carried out on career self-management, revealing several definitions. According to Coetzee and Schreuder (2018) and Kost et al. (2020), career self-management is considered a situation whereby employees proactively manage and control their careers, and such employees rely solely on their own efforts to identify their career goals and aspirations. Coetzee et al. (2015) and De Vos and Cambre (2016) conceptualise career self-management as a life-long process that aids in learning and adapting to changes in the context of the organisations' goals and aspirations. In addition, Greenhaus et al. (2010) refer to career self-management as a "process by which individuals develop, implement, and monitor career goals and strategies" (p.12). The most prominent aspect of career self-management is what is conceptualised by King (2004) in the form of a framework and asserts that career self-management "is a dynamic process involving the execution of a set of co-occurring behaviours that are intended to prevail upon the decisions made by those gatekeepers who are in a position to influence desirable career outcomes" (p.119).

Based on the framework attached to the definition of career self-management, King (2004) conceptualises career self-management from three main perspectives. First, career self-management is identified as a process of both resource management and action regulation (Hirschi & Koen, 2021; Raabe et al., 2007). Hirschi et al. (2022) propose that career self-management, which is captured as both resource management and action regulation, can be achieved when individuals and organisations adopt the best practices of building, maintaining and using acceptable resources in the form of goal setting, monitoring activities, mapping the workplace environment for adequate resources and processing feedback that could help achieve desirable outcomes. Again, King (2004) believes that “the process of career self-management ranges from a highly conscious, proactive, integrated process of setting, executing, and regulating goals pursuits in a strategic and well-planned manner, to a more reactive, loosely integrated process that occurs more or less improvised as a response to external cues and events” (p. 120)

The second conceptualisation of career self-management emphasises the individual as an agent of career management. According to King (2004), the individual ultimately is responsible for his or her own career and such an individual generates and regulates the process of his or her own career and not the organisation or the entity as a whole. Finally, career self-management therefore focuses on the individual behaviour and not on attitude and abilities or other related psychological aspects of the person. The author further iterated that theoretically, the psychosocial aspect and abilities are more related to career self-management but can be considered outcomes of career self-management. Studies show that to build a proactive career self-management profile, individuals must develop career management strategies and practices through professional networks (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Ferreira, 2012). Career strategies assist individuals in improving their employment prospects and play an important role in navigating a successful career (Wong & Wee, 2019).

A change in career attitude toward individual career development is greatly needed to successfully adopt modern careers in the novel world of work (Kost et al., 2020). However, King (2001, 2004) opines that individuals who adopt proactive career self-management behaviour for a period of time can have control over their developmental responsibilities. Therefore, individuals must be encouraged to accept the concept of career management as well as adaptive career self-management and not rely on organisations to provide career directions (Saviskas, 2013). As individuals participate and practice in their career activities, it behooves them to develop a greater sense of control over their own and other people’s careers because it eventually increases the level of employability in the changing workplace as well as career satisfaction (Veld et al., 2016).

Studies by Coetzee and Schreuder (2018), Savickas (2019), and Sullivan (2013) indicate that contemporary careers are connected with factors such as independence, adaptivity and proactivity, which individuals must show when taking part in self-management. In addition, when these factors are well managed, they eventually assist the individual not to overrely on the organisation for the management of their own career.

According to Coetzee (2018), Coetzee and Schreuder (2018), and Nasir and Zaki (2021), individuals must take a proactive measure to enrich their career success. Nasir and Zaki (2021) further believes that proactive measures such as coaching, mentoring and training and development could be achieved when the individual can understand and establish his or her own career-related strengths and weaknesses as well as his or her developmental needs. Saviskas (2013) and Wilhelm and Hirschi (2019) added that career self-management should comprise those activities that aid the individual in self-evaluating and regulating their own competencies in the confines of their work environment and those actions the individual needs to accomplish their career goals and aspirations.

Furthermore, Saviskas (2013) identifies network creation, the creation of career opportunities and being able to take responsibility for more work as examples of career actions that could inform the existence of individuals taking charge of their own careers. Table 2. 2 indicates some selected contexts of the research in which the study was carried out, how the construct “career self-management” was measured from the 20th century until the present, how the construct was conceptualised, the various authors and the models used.

Table 2.2

Selected Research on Career Self-Management, its Measures and the Models Used.

Career self-management measures	Conceptualisation of career self-management	Authors and Models
(1) Career exploration	Defined as a	Noe (1996, p. N/A
(2) Career goal characteristics	“process by which	119)
(3) Career strategies	individuals collect information about values, interests, and skill strengths and	

	weaknesses (career exploration), identify a career the goal, and engage in career strategies that increase the probability that career goals will be achieved”.		
(1) Job mobility preparedness.	“The degree to which one regularly gathers information and plans for career problems solving decisions marking”.	Kossek et al. (1998, p. 938)	Expectancy theory
(2) Development of feedback seeking			
(1) Developmental feedback seeking and	The degree to which one regularly gathers information and plans for career problem-solving and decision-making.	King (2001)	N/A
(2) Job mobility preparedness			
(1) Behaviors of career exploration	Career self-management is a process that must occur continuously and regularly in the life-cycle of an individual to promote healthy personal and professional trajectories	Pinto and Taveira, (2013)	King’s model, (2001); Noe’s model (1996)
(2) Reactions to career exploration			
(3) The belief in career exploration			

(1) Self-knowledge	Relates to a tri-dimensional construct consisting of self-knowledge, goal commitment, and plan quality.	Raabe et al. (2007)	Action theory, Frese & Zapf (1994)
(2) Goal commitment			
(3) Plan quality			
(1) Internal networking behavior	This relates to the psychological contract, which potentially provides a useful framework through which the relationship between employee attitudes and behaviors is examined	Sturges et al., (2002, 2005)	Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)
(2) Visibility behavior			
(3) Mobility-oriented behavior			

Source: Author's own work

2.3 THE CHANGING NATURE OF CAREERS

With the rapid changes in the economic environment, it appears to be a “lifelong career is not the norm” (Humphreys, 2017, p.15). Constant and unexpected shifts characterise the contemporary world of work. Consequently, jobs are less stable and predictable, and job changes accelerate irregularity and complexity. Employment or individual transitions cover entry into the labour market, advancements and leave-or-seek transitions (Atitsogbe et al., 2019; Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Duffy et al., 2016). The above contributes to transitions from one profession to another (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Kim, 2014). Job transitions can be complicated in such cases because employees need to integrate a previously unknown occupational background and learn new skills. To have a successful career transition, employees might decide or be asked to enrol in a formal qualification process for changes in a career (Atitsogbe et al., 2019).

Change over the years has always been dynamic and not static. However, the rate at which change occurs is deemed to be increasing rapidly in most organisations (Litano & Major, 2016). All organisations, such as public organisations, nonprofit making organisations and private firms,

normally feel the effects of speedy advancement in various areas, including the economy, technology and the workplace in general (Ferreira, 2012). All of these modifications have a huge effect on people's management at work and on career path management and forecasting (Nie et al., 2018). There are frequent work variations and turnover leading to a switch in a comparable job with another organisation or a position involving the ordinary career path route (McGinley et al., 2014).

According to Masdonati et al. (2017), career changes refer to a segment of work position transitions that involve employer change, along with some level of transformation in the actual job or job role and the personal understanding that these changes constitute a career shift. The demands for career transition are varied and multiple (Holms & Cartwright, 1994; Phanse & Kaur, 2015) but could be linked to unsuccessful initial career choice, indicating that making career choices at an early phase in one's career may be especially difficult (Gupta & Hacamo, 2019). Zeltner (2019) suggests that individual career transition takes place later in the worklife of a person and is rarely driven by organisational processes but directed by individuals. The work trend has completely changed, and a new form of career, such as proactive career self-management, has been embraced in the new world of work (Humphreys, 2017; Yamani et al., 2018). However, employees no longer have the same career aspirations but rely more on their own resources and are free to accept their own career responsibility (Kost et al., 2020; Van der Horst & Klehe, 2019).

Litano and Major (2016) stated that the complexity of the work environment is undergoing change and that the notion of a career or 'job for life' will also fade extensively. Several authors have emphasised that mid-career transformation is a common trend that has become more predominant in the new world of work despite being a facet of career management that has received relatively little attention in modern dispensation (Humphreys, 2017). Therefore, these phenomena motivate employees to decide their career options in midlife and career transition. Owing to recent globalisation, economic instability, and significant changes in the work environment, the individual's career must be considered to facilitate the continuous growth and well-being of employees and organisational success (Frieden, 2018; Perraton, 2019).

Evidence from the study indicates that mid-career changes have become increasingly extensive and that responsibility for managing careers is now the work of the individual (Coetzee, 2019). Therefore, in light of the unkind economic climate, corporate organisations need to realise the relevance of implementing a collaborative, effective career management strategy to work together

in conjunction with the individual, targeted to meet the needs of both, to readjust and build organisational resilience and gain a competitive edge. Current intellectual reasoning on career self-management resonates with similar sentiments (Brushfield, 2016; CIPD, 2016; Paichadze et al., 2019). Statistics indicate that employees make career transitions at every stage of their professional life, and this eventually assists in anticipating and securing a lifelong career (Reilly et al., 2012; OECD Employment Outlook, 2019). Job changes and turnovers happen regularly from a switch to a comparable job with another employer or to a role that involves the route of the 'normal' career path (Coetzee et al., 2019b). The transition of careers occurs for people upon entry into a new occupation which requires fundamentally different skills (Coetzee et al., 2019b; Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020).

Table 2.3 below illustrates a comparison between traditional and modern workplace practices with regard to proactive career self-management.

Table 2.3

Comparison of Traditional and Modern Workplaces

	Conventional	Transformed approach
Employment contract	Job security for loyalty	Employability for performance
Baruch (2004); Baruch (2006); Witzki (2008); Ratnam (2011); Shagvaliyeva and Rashad (2014); Yazdanifard (1999)	Job-oriented Pluralist collective low trust	flexibility and wellbeing unitarist individual high trust
Boundaries	One or two organisations	Several organisations
Baruch (2004); Blickle and Witzki (2008); Coetzee (2014); De Vos and Soens (2008); Mcdonald and Hite (2016); Ouye (2011); Ratnam (2011); Schabracq		

and Cooper (2000); Sullivan (1999)

Skills	organisation-specific	Transferable
Cox & King (2006); David et al. (2015); Sullivan (1999); Arar & Oneren (2018)	Stable	Open for improvement
Succession Criterion	Payment, position, promotion	Psychological contentment
Baruch (2004); Baruch (2006); De Vos and Soens (2008); Hall (2004); Sullivan (1999); Coetzee (2014); Arar and Oneren (2018); Sullivan (1999)		
Responsibility level for career management	Employer manages individual employee's career	Employees manage their individual career
Baruch (2004); Blickle and Witzki (2008); Briscoe and Hall (2006); Coetzee (2014); Coetzee and Harry (2014); Cox and King (2006); Hall (2004); Devaraju and Ashoka (2015); De Vos and Soens (2008); Grimland et al. (2012); Osibanjo et al. (2014); Savickas (2012), Pekeur and Karodia (2015); Arar and Oneren (2018); Sullivan (1999)		

Career horizon (workplace)	Single institution	Several institutions
Baruch (2004)		
Career horizon (time)	Extended period	Short period
Amundson (2006); Baruch (2004); De Vos and Soens (2008); Ng and Feldman (2014); Savickas (2012); Schabracq and Cooper (2000); Super (1980)		
Career path	Once at an earlier career age	Repeated, cyclical and possible at different age phases
Amundson (2006); Baruch (2004); Sullivan (1999); Mogale (2015); Okurame (2014); Bersin (2015); Baruch (2004)		
Scope of change	Incremental	Transformational
Baruch (2004)		
Progress criteria	Based on tenure	Based on competencies and results
Baruch (2004)		
Career direction	Linear	Multidirectional
Allfred et al. (1996); Baruch (2004); Baruch (2014); Eby et al. (2003)		
Hierarchy level	Tall ladder	Flatter
	Mechanistic	Organistic

Baker (2015) ; Baruch (2013) Chudzikowski (2012); Chen and Liu (2013); Enache et al. (2013); Ratnam (2011)

Inflexible
Rigid

Flexible

Flexibility

Individuals have limited Flexible work-family balance opportunities to work

Baruch (2006); Baruch (2014); Burke and Cooper (2006); Burke and Ng (2006); Golden (2008); Perlow and Kelly (2014); Perrons (2003)

Putnam et al. (2014); Yildiz et al. (2015)

Orientation type

Official programmes

Job oriented

Arar and Oneren (2018); Sullivan (1999)

Source: Author’s own work

A thorough research on careers over the last decades has revealed that contemporary careers are increasingly changing, as organisations view careers as moving away from an adaptive style to a proactive style (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2019; Smale et al., 2019). To cope with the alarming volatility, mobility and boundaryless nature of work, employees need to be mindful of career self-management (Ashford et al., 2018; Gubler et al., 2020; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2020). The transitional ways of career attitudes of employees and success are moderately due to economic conditions and are necessitated by individuals to build their career competencies (Briscoe, 2018; Lo Presti et al., 2018; Smale et al., 2018; Sultana & Malik, 2019). The change from conventional occupations encourages employees to pursue personal goals rather than wait for their companies to provide them with opportunities to move forward. Modern careers have questioned conventional career models, leading to new discourse that better describes promising career orientations (Redondo et al., 2019). Steiner et al. (2019) reported that organisational activities

such as reducing the size of the work force, threatening job security, and increasing the constructive role of employees and their career obligations could assist in increasing efficiency and building a sustainable organisational objective.

2.3.1 The boundaryless career

In the past, it was expected of individuals to work with one or more organisations throughout their entire working life and lay down fully their expertise in the service of these organisations (Kundi et al., 2020; Ranasinghe et al., 2020). In modern dispensation, the focus on careers has changed, and employees expect the organisation to assist them in the quest to select and plan for their career choices throughout their working life (Rodrigues et al., 2019; Sengler, 2019). The psychological needs as well as the aspirations of the workforce and employers, have also changed as a result of decreasing loyalty and a shorter working relationship. Under the previous employment contract, individuals at the workplace were more loyal and felt a sense of job security in exchange compared to the current job relationship. However, employees exchange performance for continuous learning and growth under the new employment relationship (Tran et al., 2019; Van Hootehem & De Witte, 2019; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019).

Organisational structures, technology, processes and systems have changed, which has called for the shifting and redesigning of the entire work. Practically, every organisation has some pattern of transformation (Kaye et al., 2018; Kossek & Ollier-Malaterre, 2019; Moen, 2017). These shifts in the working environment made it necessary for a new view of careers and the availability of mobility relevant to maximise the employee experience and expectations (Moen, 2017). It is envisaged that career mobility is crucial for both organisations and individuals because it is possible to create desirable outcomes. One can argue that career transition requires favourable external and internal conditions, which does not allow employees to constantly make changes to their incumbent jobs (Budtz-Jørgensen et al., 2019; Gustavson et al., 2020; Kornblum et al., 2018).

The concept of boundaryless careers refers to a series of job openings that go beyond a particular job situation (Guan et al., 2019; Ozer, 2020). Similarly, Yildiz et al. (2015) referred to boundaryless careers as a situation whereby employees own their career-management cycle to remain competent for employment opportunities in a dynamic environment. In a boundaryless career, individuals move across jobs and organisations beyond physical limits in a boundless career (Donohue & Tham, 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2019). Boundaryless career has been categorised into

multiple dimensions, notably psychological and physical mobility (Hunt & Xie, 2019; Joshi et al., 2019; Kahn et al., 2019).

Rodrigues et al. (2019) reinforce the need to explore careers outside a specific organisational context. By stressing the adaptability of boundaryless career principles, Hall et al. (2019) and Loacker and Šliwa (2016) endorse that future work considers variations in boundaryless careers depicted by physical mobility as a situation in which a worker moves literally through job, profession, organisation and industry boundaries (Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014). Primarily, individuals move physically across jobs in search of new skills, knowledge, abilities, personal development and the desire to gain from more favorable benefits elsewhere (Nagovitsyn et al., 2019; Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). Moreover, physical mobility is defined as the desirability of remaining with a single organisation. The physical mobility facet of the general employee mobility phenomenon is a basis for measuring an employee's level of commitment to an organisation, whereas psychological mobility has been more connected to the perception of an individual's career transition.

Psychological mobility relates to psychological barriers, which are not physically crossed by individuals but exist only in the employees' professional minds (Wang et al., 2019; Yuki & Schug, 2020). Individuals with the desire for psychological mobility continue to consider themselves as important to the labour environment, are motivated to look for work and are more likely to be happy with their employment and careers (Kun & Gadanez, 2019). According to Yuki and Schug (2020), employees with a strong attachment to psychological mobility usually find it easier to sustain working relationships through organisations and to aspire for more advantageous opportunities. According to Rodrigues et al. (2019), employees first confirm their career chances within the home context before progressing with the possibility of exploring global careers. There is a radical shift in careers with regard to how work is organised in modern-day practice in career development, and this shift is a result of globalisation, international competition, technological advancement and external labour tides (Budtz-Jorgensen et al., 2019)

Boundaryless career epitomises the situation where career choices are not structured based on time, place, employer or profession, but individuals have the flexibility of movement in terms of jobs at will, taking cognizance of one's own aspirations in the employment arena. This option is, however, not a reality (Baruch & Reis, 2016; Inkson et al., 2012). Thus, practically, by the label boundaryless, it denotes relatively less bounded as there is no such thing as a pure boundaryless system. The contemporary world of work now defines careers as "boundaryless" in the logic that

the working environment is increasingly viewed in a dynamic, boundary-spanning, knowledge-prone economy that is associated with opportunities that are beyond the organisation as well as the employer (Ferreira, 2012; Kundi et al., 2020; Presti et al. 2018).

Several works have indicated the potential gains and losses connected with boundaryless careers (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Guan et al., 2019; Inkso et al., 2012). With this background, it has been argued that employees' careers are gradually becoming more "boundaryless" and less independent of traditional settings in relation to organisational career management. Considering the far-reaching changes in organisational structure and employment relations, a great number of employees are experiencing a swing from constant and incremental or traditional career systems; thus, individuals are taking responsibility for their own career growth to pursue career development opportunities without conventional organisational boundaries (Kornblum et al., 2018; Rodrigues et al., 2015). This points toward the fact that the conventional career path is steadily becoming nonexistent and no longer the practice for a sizeable sector of the workforce (Presti et al., 2018). These significant changes in the employment relationship indicate that realistic practices to achieve and maintain employability have become a primary reference point for career success (Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018; Greer & Waight, 2017).

2.3.2 The protean career

A protean career similarly refers to career ownership (Donald et al., 2017). The organisational environment is surrounded by factors that change or shift the traditional career to modern career practice (Abessolo et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2018; Hassard et al., 2012; Wolf, 2019). Currently, protean careers are driven by individuals rather than organisations. Again, a protean career is characterised by continuous and consistent learning, growth and psychological achievement rather than upwards movement within the corporate hierarchy (McElroy & Weng, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2019). One of the ways a graduate can be fully employable is through transition, which has increasingly become unpredictable in the working environment in modern practice (Abessolo et al., 2017; Donald et al., 2017). Tomlinson (2012) and Zafar et al. (2017) envisage that the activities of organisations are now moving towards being firm-specific, which requires an appreciable level of competencies, and that such changes warrant employees to develop skills that can easily be transferred as part of one's learning career path and should be based on the career attitude of the individual.

According to Aydogmus (2018) and Da Silva et al. (2016), career attitude refers to an employee's predisposition to choose a career with an emphasis on achieving subjective success through self-governing career management. The move to a protean career is informed by the desire to follow careers with a good worker's personal match (Clarke, 2013; Sultana & Malik, 2019; Tomlison et al., 2018; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). Again, Da Silva et al. (2019) describe the protean career as a process managed by the employee rather than the organisation. However, Sirén et al. (2018) posit that to espouse a protean career, employees should be much concerned with two main dimensions, namely, value-driven and self-directed attitudes, which will enable them to use personal values as guidance in managing their careers to achieve their personal desires. Value-driven and self-directed careers are purely considered dimensions of protean careers (Coetzee, 2019; Engel et al., 2017; Okurame & Fabunmi, 2014).

Donohue and Tham (2019) posit that value-driven career is one of the phases of a protean career and that a protean career can be considered a situation whereby individual career goals are guided by a higher level of motivation, values and standards. Value-driven principles are defined as the "guiding principles in people's lives" in the choice and evaluation of behaviours (Ros et al., 1999, p. 51). Additionally, employees who are mostly driven by value are normally associated with career mobility, leading to lower career satisfaction and resilience (Abessolo et al., 2017; Lyons et al., 2015; Sirén et al., 2018). This motive of individuals is driven by internal and external drivers, which serve as a benchmark for measuring specific career objectives (Hirschi, 2018). It is believed that the only place that allows individuals to align their career with that of the personal value is the workplace or work setting. The value-driven individual in a work environment is normally associated with unique features such as value for loyalty, conformity, service, security and lifestyle (Ravlin, 2015; Superli & Creed, 2016).

Furthermore, another phase of the protean career is self-directedness. Self-directedness in personal career management is mostly associated with having the potential to adapt quickly in relation to job performance and learning demands (Gubler et al., 2015; Sirén et al., 2018; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). Employees within the work environment with self-directed behavior search for their own personal career decisions and goals to accomplish a set target (Ngo & Hui, 2018; Chui et al., 2020). The phases of protean careers are mostly considered to be subjective. Hence, the changing nature of employees' careers in this new world of work necessitates a critical assessment of these phases to ensure proactive career self-management.

Most researchers have emphasised that the protean career provides individuals with significant work, which leads to the development of freedom, growth and professional commitment of the individual (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019; Zafar et al., 2017). Furthermore, these individuals are adaptable, agile and autonomous and can adapt easily to changing situations in the internal and external environment. Gubler et al. (2014) assert that protean and boundaryless careers overlap greatly, but the protean career focuses on the motivation of individuals to pursue a specific career path. Employees can either take career possession and establish a protean career or give up ownership and align more towards a conventional career (Mullins, 2019). On the other hand, the concept of a boundaryless career is mainly concerned with different forms of mobility. Hirschi and Koen (2021) and Lin (2015) believe that employees are migrating from a specific organisational career to career ownership that reflects the dimensions of their work.

From the above, it can be concluded that individuals have largely ceased relying on organisations to control the affairs of their careers but have rather adopted a proactive attitude in managing their own careers. Employees within the work settings develop specific competencies such as skills, knowledge, abilities and experiences to assist them in directing their careers and achieving their personal goals as well as organisational objectives.

2.4 INDIVIDUALS AS CAREER AGENTS

Careers in today's turbulent and complex business working environment have been reframed to accommodate the dynamics of individuals' responsibility in taking personal agency in their career development (Savickas, 2019). Individuals can engage in career self-management behaviours by using a comprehensive range of self-regulatory capabilities called career meta-capacities (Coetzee, 2018; Coetzee & Engelbrecht, 2020). Serving as important personal resources, career meta-capacities facilitate career behaviours and autonomous intrinsic motivation that help individuals deal positively with setbacks and career success and craft changes that contribute to their career success, career satisfaction, and wellbeing (Haibo et al., 2018; Rudolph et al., 2017; Van der Heijde, 2014). Career meta-competencies also contribute to the employability capital of individuals, which enhances their chance of achieving career success in the modern career context (Ferreira & Mujajati, 2017). Potgieter and Mawande (2017) further iterated that the employability potential of employees depends on how employees are capable and able to make self-evaluations about their career resilience, sociability, proactivity and emotional literacy.

Career management roles are gradually moving from managers to responsive and proactive employees (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Fawehinmi & Yahya, 2018; Stauffer et al., 2019). With the essence of work changes and the protean career concept (Hall et al., 2018; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019), the responsibility for employment has been passed from employers to employees, and individuals need to be conscientious in their career management to align with their employment in a given organisation (Sengler, 2019). This requires an enhanced degree of individual initiative and creativity (Zani, 2018). To understand the essence of career management, it is important to accept the self-regulation theory. Organisations strive to shift the attitudes of employees towards their career progression and their own position in the work environment (Hall et al., 2018; Jacobs et al., 2019). The idea of a protean career is inspired by the fact that employees are primarily entrusted with managing their own career and that a good sense of identity is essential for decision-making throughout the profession (Hall et al., 2018; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). Redondo et al. (2019) deduced in their analysis that individuals adopting a career attitude such as a protean career are able to display a high rate of job satisfaction accompanied by high perceived employability and that this association is facilitated by the growth of job insight.

The evolving macroenvironment reinforces the observation that individuals and organisations are in an era of “do-it-yourself career management” where individuals are confronted with the need to play a greater role in constructing their own career development, an era where ‘careers are now forged, not foretold” (Watts, 1996, p.46). In a highly competitive and volatile working climate, the need to maintain top talent has made career management significant and critical for organisations. A central idea revolving around career is the psychological factors that hook employees up to remain in an organisation (Deas, 2017; Khaleel et al., 2016; McLennan et al., 2017; Stoltz, 2015). According to Potgieter et al. (2018), individuals participate in cognitive evaluations of their career progress in the workplace and can see workplace environments and procedures as either an obstacle to adapting to new demands or as a barrier to their career progress, which may give rise to particular career concerns.

For organisations and practitioners, the philosophy of commitment typically refers to the perception of the psychological factors and practices that connect the individual to the firm and promote communication or adaptation between the person and the environment (Collie et al., 2018; Stoltz, 2015). In the study of career management, the notion of human–environmental interaction (Tan & So, 2019; Verano et al., 2018) has become important since it addresses the mutual needs of employees and organisations. Employees are mostly fulfilled, efficient and dedicated when they realise a connection between the job they perform and their career needs,

which also highlights the need for the organisation to maintain high-performance employees in a competitive market setting (Blustein et al., 2017; Joo & Lee, 2017; Unanue et al., 2017).

The individual career cycle is normally guided by self-regulation theory (Coetzee, 2019; Hu et al., 2018). Self-regulation provides individuals with the necessary means to achieve goals that can either arise from their own interests or societal demands (Ferreira, 2018; Raabe et al., 2007). Attaining targets in both cases would encourage individuals to experience self-fulfilment and achievement. Self-regulatory mechanisms often keep our behavior within reasonable limits and discourage inappropriate behavior. Self-regulatory learning helps learners achieve higher goals, as it gives them control over their learning. To regulate one's learning successfully, it is imperative to acknowledge the essential components of self-regulatory learning that help in choosing learning measures and strategies.

The study of career models emanates from Raabe et al. (2007). To understand the concept of individual career, Raabe et al. (2007) framed two models that relate to the theory of action of career self-management. The first model in Figure 2.1 is based on how career-focused intervention supports the principle of action regulation theory and improves career self-management through self-knowledge and goal commitment, thereby affecting the quality of career plans (Figure 2.1). The model labelled Figure 2.2 elucidates how carrying out proactive self-management behavior may affect career satisfaction directly through feedback variables based on the nature of the environment. The principle of feedback in the theory of action refers to the motivation that the person can interpret as knowledge about the action. This is the premise on the knowledge of the acting individual's mode of action (vestibular input), provided by other employees (in the sense of getting a smile when the person said a joke), objective atmosphere (getting pay raise) or feedback interaction (when others provide information on the acting individual's actions for that individual to learn from it).

Figure 2.1

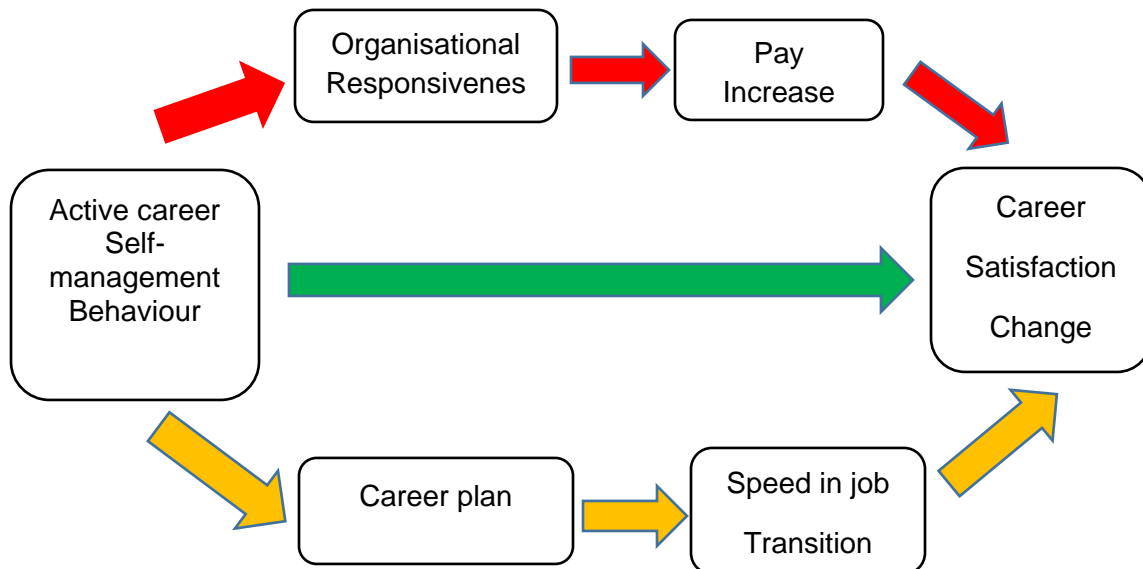
First Career Self-Management Model



Source: (Raabe et al., 2007, p. 299)

Figure 2.2

Second Career Self-Management Model



Source: Adapted from Raabe et al. (2007, p. 299)

In short, the above section discussed the various perspectives on career self-management that have emerged in the new world of work. The studies identified that career self-management is

informed by the various changes in socio-demographic variables such as globalisation, changing technology, competitiveness, employee expectations, organisational restructuring and workplace flexibility. Again, career perspectives, including boundaryless and protean careers, have a greater impact on individual career management in a chosen work environment. Coetzee and Schreuder (2018) assert that individuals must proactively manage their own careers to identify their career goals and aspirations. Based on this assertion, individuals play the most significant role in enforcing efficient and effective career management practices in the current world of work, and this is informed by careful career strategies that assist individuals in exploring their employment prospects.

The next section discusses proactive career self-management in the new world of work.

2.5 PROACTIVE CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Proactive career self-management has gained much prominence and attention in the current career literature, including boundaryless career, protean career, human capital and career self-management (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018). The author iterates that individuals, in their quest to prepare for a given career, need to incorporate adaptability and proactivity into their thinking to be employable. Again, Coetzee and Schreuder (2018) posit that a common theme that runs through the concept of proactive career self-management is psychosocial career resources. In addition, proactive development, including problem-solving, the ability to work in different teams, and communication, are among the highest attributes required by employers. Furthermore, career development has taken on a sensitive urgency regarding how work will be carried out in the future (Hirschi, 2018; Ireland & Lent, 2018).

Again, proactive management of the individual career becomes indispensable as a result of changes in the work environment (Van Vianen, 2018). Significant focus is given to the present and future person–work fit for a productive career (Kooij & Boon, 2018). Optimum work fit can be established through strategic career preparation and the growth of skills, social capital through the creation of massive networks, and job crafting (Kooij & Boon, 2018; Kooij et al., 2015). Job crafting is a redesign of one's work to promote job satisfaction, including the formation of physical or cognitive work boundaries, career-related boundaries, or both (Petrou et al., 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019). The crafting of a job is a powerful tool to achieve a better fit between the need for meaningful work and the supply of a job for an organisation (Moghimi et al., 2015; Nagy, 2019).

According to Li and Takao (2019), three ways of job crafting exist: physical, emotional and cognitive. Physical job crafting includes adjusting the number, variety and shape of work tasks; emotional job crafting involves shifting relationships with managers, colleagues or customers; and cognitive job crafting involves an emphasis on positive outcomes and a rethinking of one's work as more important (Moghimi et al., 2015). The concept of job crafting is in line with the concept of primary control in Barlow et al.'s (2016) life-span control theory and is an important tool for employees throughout their lifetime.

Research shows that when employees attain higher ages in their careers, job crafting tends to be important (Kooij et al., 2015). According to Petrou et al. (2018), job crafting has two main dimensions, namely, (1) accommodative crafting and (2) utilisation crafting. Accommodative crafting is related to job craftsmanship that seeks to control older-age-related requirements and evolving supplies, whereas utilisation crafting applies to the application of unused existing skills and expertise to achieve current objectives. Employees of all ages, especially aging employees, should thus make use of these strategies to remain employable and develop in their workplaces (Kooij, 2015).

Additionally, research shows that employers and academic institutions globally have a role in improving individual careers if they understand the particular needs of different generations in the workplace (Foster, 2017). Career self-management in the higher educational system in Ghana must address emerging skills and attitudes for the contemporary work of individuals characterised by the unstable changing nature of their careers and must be considered in a holistic manner (Rawtlal & Pillay, 2017).

Thrift and Amundson (2005) assert that the trend in career self-management interventions in the postmodern world is towards "validating individuals' unique career experiences in a globalised environment" (p. 10). The most notable effects of globalisation on higher education increased demand for learning opportunities in the acceleration of knowledge and cultural integration in the global community of work (Lau & Yuen, 2014). Globalisation's impact has resulted in the rapid distribution of technologies for higher education in the workforce to meet the growing demands of today's competitive and resilient global market economy (Alalshaikh, 2015). Moreover, the impact of globalisation serves as a catalyst for young adult students to receive practical education and training with skills to compete for high-skilled employment opportunities to improve their quality of life in Ghana (Treat & Hagedorn, 2013).

In addition, career knowledge has become a powerful tool for advancing technology and innovation in contemporary competitive workforce environments. It is viewed as a profitable product and a productive resource for developing local labor market economies (Li, 2016). For developing countries such as Ghana, the demand for career knowledge has become a crucial instrument for socio-economic development and one of the strategies for internationalisation (Alemu, 2014). Therefore, adapting to a higher learning model in Ghana could help educate college students to receive practical education and training to build a vibrant economy and improve their standard of living. Moreover, the effectiveness of reducing joblessness in today's economy is less dependent on the allocation of wealth and more dependent on the distribution of knowledge.

The demand for knowledge has become a predictor of success in today's global labor market (Gokee, 2015). It has become a way of influencing individuals' career intentions and aspirations toward entrepreneurship education (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). In addition, responsible participation in today's global workforce requires the acquisition of knowledge and the development of 21st-century labor skills to compete for sustainable employment and enhance career capabilities (Besnoy et al., 2015). The sustainability of one's career is a critical component in the current work environment. Sustainable careers connote "a sequence of career experiences reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, thereby crossing several social spaces, characterised by individual agency, herewith providing meaning to the individual" (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015, p. 7).

Akkermans and Kubasch (2017) and De Vos et al. (2018) opine that it is appropriate to align careers in cyclical contexts and is deemed suitable for reflecting a variety of careers rather than considering careers from a linear perspective. It can be envisaged in many cycles of academics that the sustainability of individual careers has gained prominence. However, studies indicate that its development has not yet been outdoors (Anseel, 2017). In the works of De Prins (2014) and De Vos and Gielens (2014), there are dual indicators of a sustainable career, which include employability and workability. In the context of employability, an individual tends to be employable when such a person has the opportunity to be gainfully employed in short and long run (Lawrence et al., 2015).

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As discussed earlier, the boundaryless career demonstrates a modern career paradigm in which the occupational relationship between employer and employee no longer necessarily involves a guarantee of life-long employment and steady career advancement. As a consequence of these transitions, occupations have also shifted and switched from what was known as conventional careers to boundaryless careers and protean careers. The innovations experienced in the career context have enhanced competencies such as skills, knowledge and abilities of potential employees wishing to enter the world of work in this new corporate era. Nevertheless, higher qualifications or professional competencies alone are now inadequate to obtain a job. This modern era has agitated employees to work for several organisations in their lifetimes, thereby compelling employees to have the technical expertise needed to be versatile in the working environment. Owing to the nature and changes in the working arena, it is no longer normal for employees to depend on their organisation for their career enhancement; rather, it behooves individuals to take charge of their career progression, which necessitates that employees manage their careers by themselves.

The following literature research aim was achieved in this chapter:

Research aim 2: To conceptualise individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work.

Chapter 3 focuses on research aim 2, which addresses the objective of the conceptualisation of the three research variables, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, and how individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs.

CHAPTER 3: PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Chapter 3 addresses the second research aim, which focuses on the association between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and how an individual's socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job levels tend to influence the development of the above constructs. In this chapter, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment serve as the basis for the formation of proactive career self-management. This chapter further conceptualises and provides an in-depth explanation of the constructs: (1) psychosocial career pre-occupations (2) social connectedness and (3) organisational commitment and the theoretical models underpinning the constructs. Finally, the theoretical implications of proactive career self-management in higher educational institutions will be discussed.

3.1 PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS

This section focuses on the conceptualisation of psychosocial career pre-occupations, theoretical models underpinning psychosocial career pre-occupations, socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job levels influencing psychosocial career pre-occupations and finally the practical implications for proactive career self-management.

3.1.1 Conceptualisation

With recent changes in the world of work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals must be conversant with the challenges at the workplace to prepare and manage themselves for appropriate career choices (Hite & McDonald, 2020). Bester (2018) asserts that employees in modern work situations are mostly preoccupied with developing key competencies such as skills, knowledge and attributes that help them in the development, management, and maintenance of their respective careers. Proactive career attitudes and behaviours assist individuals in building their career by improving the best fit between the individual and the situation that is informed by one's career pre-occupations (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2017; Coetzee et al., 2015; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018). It is also believed that the opportunity for individuals to learn and develop within a specific work organisation has a direct influence on their career decisions, career satisfaction and commitment to the organisation (Allida, 2021; Coetzee & Engelbrecht, 2020; Marta et al., 2021).

The concept of psychosocial career preoccupations is usually psychological career-related concerns involving career establishment, career adaptation and work-life adjustment, which contribute proactively to overall success in the ever-changing work environment. Studies indicate that the current work environment is highly connected with frequent technological changes, which adversely have a greater impact on the career choices of individuals (Baruch et al., 2019; Coetzee, 2021; Coetzee et al., 2021; De Vos & Cambre, 2017; Giulioni, 2021). As such, the individual job security and life-long career of such individuals are no longer guaranteed as a result of the changing work environment. Due to technological changes and global trends such as the COVID-19 pandemic, employees must equip themselves with multitasking competencies through education, training and career fairs to sustain their careers in a turbulent work environment (Hite & McDonald, 2020; Konstant, 2020). Deas (2018) believes that one's career pre-occupation can be achieved through a proper understanding of career establishment, being adaptive to one's career, and ensuring work-life balance.

3.1.1.1 Defining psychosocial career pre-occupations

According to Bester (2018) and Coetzee (2014; 2016), psychosocial career pre-occupation is defined as an individual's mental and psychological state of having certain subjects connected to an employee's career at the centre of one's mind over a given period of time. Modern careers are considered a multifaceted and rigid approach through which individuals form an integral part of the working environment (Baruch & Vardi, 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2016). Due to the multifaceted nature of careers in this new world of work, employees must appreciate and understand that career progression, or the individual life cycle in a given occupation, is no longer a single responsibility of an employer; rather, employees must be charged with their own career progression, which is known to be a boundaryless career (Jackson & Wilton, 2017). Several studies show that in managing one's career self-management in an era of a global pandemic such as COVID-19, individuals may enhance their career expectations regarding their future career progression and fit into an organisation with the needed competencies (Dragolea & Scorte, 2020; Herman et al., 2021; Manoharan et al., 2021).

Several authors view career as the sequence of individual work experiences through one's working life engagement in the chosen industry (Arthur et al., 1989; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2018; Harris et al., 2015; Jiang, 2017; Yang et al., 2019). In the event of trying to establish one's career, the employee may change or move from one industry to another to get a feel of the various jobs

or to have adequate experience in what is called career adeptness (Bester, 2018; Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Employee psychosocial career meta-capabilities are associated with a variety of adaptive self-regulatory behaviours (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018), which include career adaptability and full cognizance of one's career preferences, values, problem-solving and relational skills, career self-management competencies, motivations, self-esteem and emotional literacy (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2016). These identified capabilities enable employees to become self-sufficient and adaptive learners in managing their careers (Bozin, 2018; Brown & Lent, 2017; Campion, 2018; Heslin et al., 2019; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Most studies emphasise that psychosocial meta-capacities of career could negatively affect the general employability attribute of an individual, which is considered a substitute for job security and a decisive enabler of career success in the new world of work (Callea et al., 2016; Coetzee et al., 2016; Guest & Isaksson, 2019; Plomp et al., 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Due to constant market pressures evolving from accelerated changes in technological advances and innovation as well as globalisation at the workplace, organisations have witnessed continual changes in job requirements, more frequent reorganisation of work, destabilising discontinuity in employment and the blurring of career paths (Perraton, 2019; Wilkinson & Barry, 2020). Because of this, employers place greater emphasis on employee flexibility, adaptiveness, proactivity and cognitive receptivity toward technological change and innovation (Coetzee et al., 2015; Cullen et al., 2014; Park & Park, 2019; Uy et al., 2015; Van der Heijden et al., 2019). These trends have led to new conceptualisations of vocational behaviour that increasingly focus on the evolving career needs and pre-occupations of individuals and the proactive flexibility and adaptiveness demanded from them (Guan et al., 2017; Perera & McIlveen, 2017; Savickas, 2013; Uy et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, as a result of constant developments in information know-how together with globalisation at the inception of the new world of work, it has become more critical and challenging to forecast what the future holds for committed employees in a globalised setting with reduced career prospects and increased multifaceted career hitches (Cook & Maree, 2016; Maree, 2019; Patton, 2019). Traditional career models can no longer provide an acceptable basis for interventions designed to help apprehend the constant changes in the new world of work in an environment that is mostly related to an acceptable individual career (Maree, 2015; Savickas,

2015). The term contemporary career has emerged as a result of the changing phase of globalisation (Brewer & Brewer, 2020; Islam, 2019).

Organisational and work-related changes as well as the associated job changes, involve adaptations that give rise to unique job issues that affect individual minds at a particular point in their career life (Van Hootegem et al., 2021). Typical contemporary issues relate to psychosocial dimensions of adaptation, change, and self-definition as work-life functions and job contexts move with more frequent shifts in the job role (Caprara et al., 2019; Hirschi, 2018). Contemporary careers are mostly considered multifaceted in the sense that employees within the work environment have absolute control over their career paths as well as career decisions rather than the employer. Therefore, the psychological satisfaction of individual career needs is paramount in work setting (Baruch & Reis, 2015). Career self-management virtually incorporates behaviours that are related to the improvement in one's current job as well as behaviours related to the internal or external movement in one's work (Coetzee & Engelbrecht, 2020; Riaz et al., 2018).

In the work of Coetzee (2016; 2019) and Bester (2018), psychosocial career pre-occupations shape an individual to show a more adaptive work attitude towards a career in the future, which eventually helps towards positive work engagement in the chosen work settings. Coetzee (2015) further iterated that when an individual can adjust to changes, it goes a long way to adequately prepare the individual physically and emotionally in any chosen work situation. Contemporary researchers conclude that psychosocial individuals need to adapt proactively and cope with increasing work and job instability when developing a productive professional life (Coetzee, 2017; Coetzee & Takawiri, 2019; Coetzee et al., 2016; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The modern world of work is based on the premise that individuals must have employable competencies to be more prepared for the job market, and this can be achieved through the knowledge of psychosocial career pre-occupations (Coetzee, 2017; Deas, 2018).

A person's employability has major consequences for his or her future jobs, including economic and social status, lifestyle, and career wellbeing, all of which are seen as critical career considerations (Clarke, 2018; Selenko et al., 2017). The construct of psychosocial career pre-occupations has to do with positive job attitudes and activities that are seen as promoting work identity growth (Coetzee et al., 2019). Career identity reflects the creation of individuals within the framework of a career (Coetzee et al., 2019) and, in general promotes self-direction in career-related actions (Hirschi, 2018; Wiernik & Kostal, 2019).

Psychosocial career pre-occupations really shape an adaptive employee to the needs of the ever-changing work environment to have a proactive and satisfied career (Coetzee, 2014b). Contemporary occupations, on the other hand, are associated with psychosocial problems, which include work adjustment, adaptation and self-definition in circumstances where work-life dynamics and the meaning of work shift with more frequently occurring changes in the role of work (Coetzee, 2015; Hall, 2013; Savickas, 2019; Verbruggen et al., 2013). Typically, most researchers emphasise the need for individuals to build psychological skills to tackle the difficulties in connection with multiple career transitions in the new world of work (Coetzee, 2016; Coetzee & Takawiri, 2019; Zhou et al., 2016).

3.1.2 Theoretical models

This section provides an overview of the theoretical models that underpin psychosocial career pre-occupations. Theoretical models deemed useful to psychosocial career pre-occupations are described and discussed in the current study below:

- Coetzee's (2014) model of psychosocial career pre-occupations
- Super life-span development theory (1957)
- Career construction theory (Savickas, 1997)

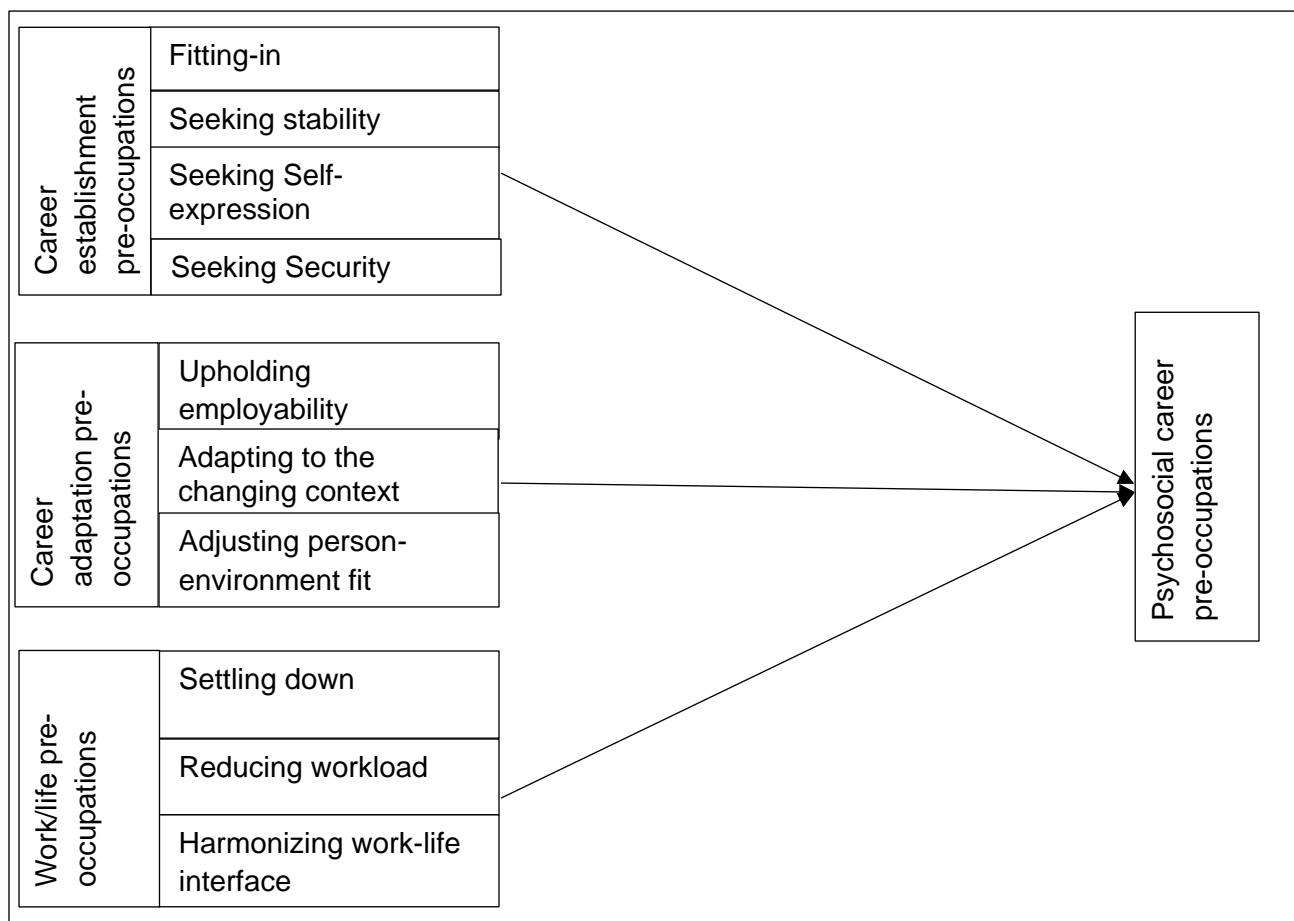
3.1.2.1 Coetzee's (2014) model of psychosocial career pre-occupations

Coetzee (2014b) believes that psychosocial career pre-occupations consist of three core components. The first is *career establishment preoccupations*. Career establishment preoccupations are associated with fitting into a group, attaining career and economic stability and security, establishing opportunities for self-expression and personal growth and development, and advancing one's career in the present organisation. The second component is *career adaptation preoccupations*. Career adaptation preoccupation is employability-related and concerns adapting to changing contexts that might involve career changes and adjusting one's interests, talents and capabilities to fit opportunities in employment settings. The third is *work-life adjustment preoccupations*, which involve settling down, reducing one's workload, and achieving greater harmony between one's work and personal life. It may also involve withdrawing from paid employment altogether (Coetzee, 2014b). These three components of psychosocial career preoccupations above are discussed further with the help of Coetzee's (2016) theoretical model.

Research indicates that psychosocial career pre-occupations assist the individual in successfully preparing and managing his or her career proactively and adaptively in an unkind work environment (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2017). Again, to understand the career choices made by individuals, Coetzee (2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b) developed a theoretical model of psychosocial career pre-occupations and this model is based on findings gathered from previous studies (Savickas, 2005, 2011, 2013; Super, 1957, 1990). Figure 3.1 presents a summary of psychosocial career pre-occupations developed by Coetzee (2014b; 2016).

Figure 3.1

Theoretical Framework of Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations



Source: Adapted from Coetzee (2016, p. 6)

(a) Career establishment pre-occupations

These career preoccupations signify the developmental tasks of individual adaptability, which is opined by Super's (1990) theory. Career establishment pre-occupations encompass concerns relating to fitting-in in a stratum or a unit, job and economic stability, developing career opportunities for the individual, financial stability and individual growth and advancing in the newly found organisation (Coetzee, 2015). Savickas (2005) reports on career pre-occupations as the exploration of career life phase, which is connected to managing a new workplace or job and the advancement within the job market and feeling a sense of stability on the job. Coetzee (2015; 2016) further iterated that career establishment is the growing pattern within one's chosen organisation. Career establishment is mostly connected to the career growth of the individual seeking employment in his or her life stages (Coetzee, 2014; 2016).

(b) *Career adaptation pre-occupations*

Coetzee (2016) holds the assertion that career adaptation pre-occupations is associated with the changing nature of individual careers that readily help in career progression and deal with adjusting one's career interests. Career adaptation, also known as job adaptation, in a sense is considered a psychosocial means that can assist employees in managing work and career-related demands effectively as well as the changing needs of organisations (Hirschi, 2018; Hirschi et al., 2015).

Individuals within the current labour market must constantly adjust to the prevailing unkind environmental conditions to be employable, and this can be achieved by being proactive in changing or adjusting to any economic conditions (Coetzee, 2015; Coetzee & Takawira, 2019). Coetzee (2017) contends that career competencies play a significant part in meeting the needs of the labour conditions and fitting into the employability of both internal and external markets (Coetzee, 2017). According to Coetzee et al. (2019), career adaptation has a positive impact on employees' careers, as it prepares them for the potential effect of changing work environments. The psychological preparedness of the individual's mind has a positive impact on their adaptive attitude towards work (Coetzee, 2015).

Career construction theory is mostly engrained in career adaptation (Savickas, 2013), and career adaptation in the face of construction theory is referred to as psychosocial tools that allow employees to manage their career developmental challenges, changes and traumas of their work

(Savickas, 1997). Such positive behaviours form an adaptation sequence, which is repeated regularly as recent transformations surface on the globe. As each transformation takes place, employees can respond more efficiently if they approach the change with increased awareness, information acquisition accompanied by educated decision-making, trail strategies leading to expected stable commitment for a certain period of time, active role management and ultimately deceleration and detachment from the organisation (Coetzee & Takawira, 2019). Career adaptation is more of a four-dimensional self-regulatory framework (concern, confidence, control and curiosity) that promotes existing and expected changes in the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2015; Ismail, 2017; Savickas, 2013). A study by Tolentino et al. (2014) found that proactive personality, learning objective orientation and career satisfaction are significantly linked to the four parameters of career.

(c) *Work-life adjustment pre-occupations*

Work-life adjustment pre-occupations are mostly associated with the situation whereby an employee strikes a greater work balance in a given work environment and that of the individual's life (Coetzee, 2015; 2016). Coetzee (2016) further iterated that the individual work-life centre's on how one reduces coordination between the actual work performed and the individual personal life activities. Work-life is more of having the courage to eliminate oneself from existing paid engagement in a given occupation that keeps one from his or her personal life, and this eventually allows an individual to settle down in life and focus on a chosen career path. As echoed by Coetzee (2014b), work-life career pre-occupation theoretically consists of settling down, reducing workload and harmonising the work-life interface.

Table 3.1 below summarizes the core conclusions drawn from psychosocial career pre-occupations. This will help enhance our understanding of the conceptualisation of the three constructs, the main conclusions drawn and the various authors.

Table 3.1*Summary of the Core Conclusions of Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations*

Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Conceptualisation and Dimensions	Core Conclusions Drawn	Authors & Date
Conceptualisation	The term psychosocial career preoccupation is mostly connected to career-related philosophy that aims at preparing individuals when first entering the employment market, and help an individual to adapt, harmonise their personal work life and that of the organisation in totality.	Coetzee (2014b, 2015, 2016 & 2017a)
Career establishment pre-occupations	Career establishment preoccupation is seen as the exploration of the career life phase, such as dealing with entry into a new workplace or employment and advancing in the job market and feeling secure at work. In simple terms, career establishment is the stage of fitting one's career work and addressing developmental needs.	Coetzee (2016)
Career adaptation pre-occupations	This term is normally associated with the changing nature of an individual career that readily helps in career progression and deals with adjusting to one's career	Coetzee (2015, 2016); Hirschi, Herrmann, & Keller, (2015)

interests. Career adaptation is considered as a psychosocial resource that can help employees manage work effectively and career-related demands as well as changing needs of organisations.

Work-life adjustment career pre-occupations	Work-life adjustment pre-occupations is much centered on how one reduces coordination between the actual work performed and the individual personal life activities as well as preparing towards one's retirement.	Coetzee, 2014b; 2015; 2016 & 2017)
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Source: Author's own work

In summary, research indicates that psychosocial career pre-occupations assist in the development of career self-management profiles for employees in higher educational institutions. Studies show that psychosocial career pre-occupations serve as a bedrock that helps individuals psychologically prepare themselves to be employable (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2016; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018). The theoretical perspective of psychosocial career pre-occupations is based on the premise that psychosocial career pre-occupations prepare potential employees to show a positive and proactive mindset to be effective in the management of their own careers within the world of work. Coetzee (2015, 2016) postulated that career construction theory can truly work better by taking into account the three psychosocial career pre-occupations namely, career adaptation preoccupation, career establishment preoccupation and work-life adjustment preoccupations.

Coetzee (2014) proposes a theory that differentiates between three core dimensions of psychosocial career pre-occupations that are not related to age or career stage. Employees might find themselves in one of these dimensions: career establishment pre-occupations; career adaptation pre-occupations; and work/life adjustment pre-occupations (Coetzee, 2014).

The next theoretical model discussed under psychosocial career pre-occupation is the super life-span development model.

3.1.2.2 Super's life-span development theory

As can be envisaged in the work of Coetzee (2014), the theory of psychosocial career preoccupation is deeply rooted in life span development theory propounded by Super (1957) and career construction theory propounded by Savickas (2005; 2013). The most widely known and accepted theory with regard to individual development in a chosen career is Super's (1957 & 1990) theory. This theory presupposes that employees in a given field must go through a series of developmental stages when preparing to start up a given job (occupation). This phase of human development is connected to developing careers in the form of life stages of growth and exploration, which are inherent to the stage of acquisition of competencies such as abilities, knowledge and interest to align with the requirements of individual occupations (Kosine & Lewis, 2008). Developing a career is a cycle and not a one-time affair. Individuals are confronted with substantial career and lifetime decisions at an early stage, surrounded by limited career opportunities for career exploration. These phases of career development are echoed in career construction theory (Savickas, 2005; 2013). Career construction theory mostly describes the respective career preoccupation and adaptation, which is connected to the phases that potential employees go through during their quest for a given career at a stage in their life.

According to Super's (1957) theory, an individual's career development phases are distinctive to each individual and the chosen career path. These phases can be influenced by factors such as personality, ability, socioeconomic status, social learning, values, individual needs, sex, ethnicity, geography and family size. These factors presuppose that a critical element in the career development of individuals needs to be well addressed in the quest to plan for a career in one's life cycle. This theory believes that each life stage has many challenges and concerns and that employees must engage in rigorous organising and planning to subdue new life patterns (Super, 1957, 1990). The life stage theory of development is a combination of social role and stage development (Super et al., 1996). These stages progress through the five main career developments of the individual life cycle. These five stages have been described by Super (1957, 1990) as the growth stage, exploration stage, establishment stage, maintenance stage and finally, the decline stage of employees' career path.

The first stage of Super's (1957) theory, which is considered the growth stage, is associated with vocational self-concept. According to Super (1957), the growth stage begins as young adolescents are introduced to various professions and begin to develop their vocational self-concepts. A young person in this regard refers to children between the ages of 4 and 13. Self-concept involves characteristics that are professionally relevant to the upbringing of a child. During this stage of career preoccupation of the individual, they develop concerns about the development of their interest, attitude, abilities, knowledge and skills (Super, 1957). In another vein, this stage is connected to developing awareness, a sense of control over one's life, exhibiting competent work habits, and acquiring an understanding of the concept of achievement in life (Coetzee, 2014; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Savickas, 2013). Super (1957) further iterated that the growth stage of the development of the young individual brings about autonomy in planning for their career.

The second life stage of the theory is the exploration stage, and it is normally associated with the discovery of interest through training and hobbies. According to Super (1957, 1990), individuals within the age bracket of 14 to 24 are considered to be exploring new areas of interest and abilities to acquire a better understanding of themselves. This stage is also known to be feet-gaining in the environment in which employees develop. During the exploratory stage, workers engage in experiences that support developing their identity through education and training, apprenticeship, investigating their career prospects and other related work experiences. In manifesting career exploration, individuals in the world of work apply what they have learned in real-life situations. Super (1957) further posits that in entering the chosen occupation, three major tasks need to be considered. These are formulating tentative career goals, developing career preferences and undergoing training.

The third life stage is known as the establishment stage, and it falls between the ages of 25 and 44 as categorised by Super (1957). This stage is called competency stability and can be achieved through experience on the job. At this stage, the individual becomes focused on the chosen occupation and establishes a stable work environment that supports career advancement. The major aspect of this stage is for the employee to stabilise their work roles within the chosen career dimension (Coetzee, 2016; Savickas, 2013). Three main themes are normally considered when employees intend to have stable job roles. These include adapting to the organisations' philosophies and the demands of the role via the establishment of individual positions in the organisation, building of positive and productive working relationships, and finally increasing

employees' work-related responsibilities through promotions and advancement (Patton & McMahon, 2006; Super, 1957).

The fourth life stage is the maintenance stage, which is concerned with continuous adjustments at the workplace to maintain a given position, and this can be achieved through the building of a good image at work. This stage usually connotes how individuals have maintained what they have achieved during their life span in the chosen occupation. The maintenance stage is mostly between the ages of 45 and 65 (Coetzee, 2014; Super, 1957). At this phase, the individual is deemed to have gone through the stabilisation stage and would want to have a reputable name while preparing for retirement (Bakari, 2014; Super, 1957, 1990).

The final stage of life development is the decline, also known as the disengagement stage. This phase of the adult is much considered the unproductive period of the worker where one becomes vulnerable in keeping their current job. Vulnerability in this regard is seen as being physically and mentally weak in performance. According to Super (1957), this stage is normally associated with the transitional period of the employee, which eventually leads to the retirement of the person in the work environment. Super (1957) further iterated that this stage occurs at ages above 65. An individual at this stage becomes conscious by planning for their retirement as well as engaging in more developmental activities at the workplace for continuous survival. Individuals at the workplace see this stage as the departure or exit period with their current employer, peers, colleagues and customers. This period is also associated with challenges. Table 3.2 below summarises the stages of occupational career development related to individuals' pre-occupations.

Table 3.2

Summary of the stages of occupational development

Phases	Age	Characteristics	Life preoccupation themes
Disengagement	65 to death	Slightly unproductive, aging, preparing for retirement	Unable to keep the current job due to health conditions Part-time work Work-life balance

Maintenance	45 to 65	Continuous adjustment of current work to keep the immediate position	Maintaining or building a reputable work image
Establishment	25 to 44	Achieving stable competencies through consistent experience at the workplace	Job stability Career advancement Understanding work requirement
Exploration	15 to 24	Realising work interest through experiential training	Building relationship with all the stakeholders at the workplace Gaining grounds for employability Career possibilities establishment
Growth	0 to 14	Establishing vocational self-concept, interest, needs, attitude and the nature of job to be performed.	Basics of work Establishing a relationship with families, friends, peers and trainees

Source: Adapted from Super (1957, 1990)

The next theory, that is, career construction theory, is discussed below.

3.1.2.3 Career construction theory

Career construction theory propounded by Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2019) is relevant and used in describing the construct of psychosocial career pre-occupations in the current research. This theory provides further insight into the study of career pre-occupation. The theory was developed to provide a great understanding of the need for a flexible modern task for an individual in a selected work setting. According to Baruch and Rousseau (2018), careers in

this new world of work are becoming more heterogeneous as a result of changes in psychological agreement, the nature of work activities, socio-economic factors and organisational organograms. Owing to these changes, individuals must construct meaning into the task that is being performed in the work environment to be successful in the discharge of their duties (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Blustein et al., 2016). Savickas (1997, 2002, 2005, 2011, 2013) further believes that individuals going through a certain career phase at the workplace must systematically develop a task.

In addition, career construction theory asserts that tasks and responsibilities are not always dependent on the individual's age but also on other factors, such as gender, religion, creed and ethnicity. The theory opines that there are different ways workers think about their careers and how they select a procedure to meet the demanding task of the work (Savickas, 2005).

Career construction theory, propounded by Savickas (1997), presents a theoretical model for understanding vocational behaviour and methods transversely, the life phases in order to help workers make vocational choices as well as satisfying work lives (Zacher et al., 2018). Contemporary career self-management may provide comprehensive data on the perspective of vocational career development behaviour, which include (a) career differential, (b) career development and (c) career dynamism.

From the individual differential point of view, vocational content explores the forms of personality and what specific individuals choose to do during their lifetime or at their chosen place of work (Savickas, 2005, 2013). Additionally, from a developmental psychology viewpoint, the research explores the mechanism of psychosocial adaptation and how individuals manage vocational growth activities, job changes and work ordeals. In addition, narrative psychology explores the mechanisms by which themes of life phases impose cognitive and psychological meaning on vocational behaviour and why people fit into the environment that they operate. The three perspectives in collaboration allow consultants and academic experts to examine how employees in the workplace use career theories by using life experiences to combine personality and career resourcefulness into a self-defining whole that stimulates work, guides job choices and forms occupational transition (Savickas, 2013).

The theory of career construction relates to the needs of current mobile employees who may feel divided and uncertain when faced with occupational change, workforce transition and multicultural challenges (Savickas, 2005, 2013). This inherent realignment of the new world of work makes it extremely difficult to understand professions with only personal work settings and models of

occupational growth that reinforce dedication and steadiness as contrasted with versatility and mobility. The modern work market in an unsettled world needs a career to be seen not as a lifetime commitment to one employer but as the selling of services and skills to several employers in need of completed deliverables (Savickas, 2005).

Based on career construction theory, the career relationship is with the individual in the chosen organisation in this new world of work, but the olden system of career contract was the responsibility of the employing organisation (Lyness & Erkoven, 2016; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas (2005) further stated that employees develop what is called vocational attitude and make career decisions based on their career-related competencies, such as skills, abilities, knowledge, values and interest in the chosen occupation. Employees decide to inculcate a given career vocation based on the social settings in which they find themselves, which eventually facilitates the strategies used to develop it.

Career construction theory includes the interpretive and interactive process by which individuals enforce meaning and direction in their career behaviour (Savickas, 2005). According to Creed and Blune (2013), the model is strongly associated with career adaptability, which includes self-exploration, career planning, career exploration and self-regulation, and eventually mediates the relationship between proactive disposition and social support. To show a clear distinction to the phases of career development, three components are related to the theory of career construction, which include the themes of life, occupational personality and career adaptability (Coetzee, 2014). Table 3.3 illustrates an outline of psychosocial career pre-occupations connected to the career developmental stages of construction theory.

Table 3.3

Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Stages and Dominant Life Themes (Coetzee, 2016, p. 4)

Career stage pre-occupations	Dominant Life themes
Exploration pre-occupations	“Clarification of what individuals want to do, learning about entry-level jobs and the required skills, may choose to work part-time or give preference to engage in specialised field of education”.
Establishment pre-occupations	“Concerns about advancing in one’s career, settling down and becoming comfortable in a job, being able to meet the job requirements,

Management pre-occupations	and there is a concern as to whether the individual has the necessary skills to function in the job for the long-term”. “Concerns of holding onto one’s job while at the same time updating, learning or developing new skills as required by the job, improving performance and dealing with new technological innovations”.
Disengagement pre-occupations	“Concerns about losing one’s job due to physical limitations or health incapacity, slowing down one’s work responsibility or working part-time, and ultimately dealing with retirement”.

Source: Adapted from Coetzee (2016, p.4)

3.1.3 Integration of psychosocial career pre-occupations theoretical models

The theoretical models of psychosocial career pre-occupations reviewed in the previous subsection of the chapter include Coetzee’s (2014) psychosocial career pre-occupations model, Savickas’s (1997) career construction model and Super’s (1957) model. The identified models are deemed to be relevant to the study of psychosocial career pre-occupations and complement each other in the study. The most dominant model that has gained much attention in the recent research field on the construct psychosocial career pre-occupation is Coetzee’s (2014) model, and it is more applicable to modern work situations than Savickas’ (1997) and Super’s (1957) models. According to Coetzee (2014), an individual’s career development depends on the preparedness of the mind, and it can be manifested through the establishment of a career, adaptation to a changing unkind work environment and harmonization of the work-life interface.

Coetzee further stated that differences among the three core dimensions of psychosocial career pre-occupations are not related to age or career stage but career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations (Coetzee, 2014). Based on this view espoused by Coetzee (2014), the study adapted Coetzee’s (2014) theoretical model for psychosocial career pre-occupations.

In summary, research indicates that psychosocial career pre-occupations might assist in developing career self-management profiles for employees in higher educational institutions. The theoretical perspective on psychosocial career pre-occupations is based on the premise that psychosocial career preoccupation prepares potential employees to show a positive and proactive mindset to be effective in the management of their own career within the world of work. Coetzee (2015, 2016) postulated that career construction theory can truly work better by considering the three psychosocial career pre-occupations namely, career adaptation preoccupation, career establishment preoccupation and work-life adjustment preoccupations.

Coetzee's (2014) model on career pre-occupations was adopted in the study. Coetzee's model was considered because it is the most dominant model in most literature and shows how individual careers are managed and developed in the new world of work. Additionally, it is appropriate to identify the variables that influence the development of psychosocial career pre-occupations, which will be discussed in the following subsection.

3.1.4 Variables influencing psychosocial career pre-occupations

In this section, some socio-demographic variables have been identified as antecedents of psychosocial career pre-occupations. The key socio-demographic variables relevant in this study were age, gender, marital status and job level and are further discussed below.

3.1.4.1 Age

Bourke (2014) and Coetzee (2016) stressed that most of the population is ageing and would undoubtedly deal with the challenges associated with demographic change and budget constraints, as in many other developed countries. An individual's workplace adaptability has become increasingly relevant, as it can help older workers obtain, sustain and restore personal-environmental fitness (Gragano et al., 2017), as it leads to a successful career (Converso et al., 2018; Zacher et al., 2014). Coetzee (2015) holds the assertion that individuals whose ages range between 25 and 45 have fairly similar concerns with regard to their professional growth and development and are much more connected with career establishment, career adaptation and work-life adjustment. This further indicates that the relevant age bracket above could serve as a compactor (Coetzee, 2015; 2018).

Nonetheless, Rossier et al. (2012) and Coetzee (2018) suggest that workplace adaptations are usually not affected by age. This is in contrast with the development model of vocational maturity,

which proposes that maturity tends to grow with age. Consequently, Rossier et al. (2012) affirm the suitability of career adaptation as a concept in psychosocial career pre-occupations positively correlates with age. Contradictory arguments have been established in the course of studies in connection with researchers such as Stoltz (2014) and Coetzee (2015), theorizing that job adaptation decreases as the person grows. Rostami et al. (2012) and Savickas' (2012) empirical studies have shown that motivation for improvement in the workplace diminishes as the individual grows in age and that younger and middle-aged workers are much more resilient than older people.

Furthermore, Converso et al. (2018) and Rostami et al. (2012) confirm that aged workers may have adverse attitudes towards growth interactions and that the need to adapt as such interactions can occur at unpredictable periods in their lives. Koen et al. (2010) further support the view that career exploration is an aspect of work adaptability that tends to decrease as workers grow older. Beginners, particularly younger workers joining the existing labour force, need a great deal of workplace adaptation compared to older workers and current job seekers (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2019; Eurostat, 2016), and this is because these employees who are fresh graduates are expected to have a significant impact on the organisation in which they find themselves (Koen et al., 2010).

3.1.4.2 Gender

With regard to career self-management, most literature argues that examining gender gaps in the work sense is very significant. This is because it has been found that female career growth behaviours vary substantially from those of males (Maree, 2020; Perera & McIlveen, 2017). Nonetheless, few of the results concentrated on gender in relation to career pre-occupations. Several academic works suggest that feminine in the control subscales scores higher than masculine because feminine faces more social barriers than masculine dominant (Reverberi et al., 2021; Rossier et al., 2012). However, research by Ghosh and Fouad (2017) and Havenga (2011) reported that career pre-occupation such as career establishment, was significantly related to gender. Ferreira (2012) and Hawes et al. (2020) confirmed the results of their study, suggesting that females have a higher career pre-occupation rate than their male counterparts, as females appear to have a greater career planning motive than their masculine counterparts.

Carless and Arnup (2011), on the contrary, conclude that men are much more likely to shift their occupations; this implies that men are much more adaptive than women. Maggiori et al. (2013)

maintain that there is no establishment of a substantial positive or negative connection between gender and work adaptability. Hirschi (2018) argues then that gender does not affect employment adaptability in any way. These assertions prove that the observations and findings are uncorroborated concerning gender gaps in career adaptation (Carless & Arnup, 2011; Havenga, 2011; Patton et al., 2004; Patton & Lokan, 2001).

3.1.4.4 Marital status

Neck (2015) states that there are multiple obstacles confronting married women, and as a result, they do not advance in organisations, which leads to an immense shortage of senior women in organisations. Some decades ago, males were always the key breadwinners in marriage, leading to fewer female career opportunities (Kuo & Raley, 2016). Furthermore, Kuo and Raley (2016) affirm that several facets of the profession could make marriage feasible or that could impede marriage. Studies on marriage suggest that semistandard work arrangements are aligned with a high risk of divorce and that career flexibility has strong links to lower work-family tensions (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Clark, 2001). According to Holth et al. (2017), any job that is characterised by high pay, high status, educational opportunities and career development can be much more affected by the conventional type of males than by conventional females because this type of male is often available for work than their female counterparts.

Studies by Cahusac and Kanji (2014) and Holth et al. (2013) have also concluded that childcare impacts women's career in general to a significant degree compared to males. Studies further suggest that the gender employment pattern is still inextricably linked to the household gender pattern, where females are still mainly responsible for parenthood and family care (Holth et al., 2017).

Again, according to Kuo and Raley (2016), a rising number of interdisciplinary analytical and empirical studies attempt to illustrate how job characteristics influence married life in modern workplace settings. Metz's (2011) research focused on whether married women or divorced women leave their work or profession to concentrate on family duties. His conclusions show that most married or divorced women, professionals and managers decide to leave their organisations based on job-related indicators or a blend of family and work factors. In addition, research indicates that because women are the primary caregivers of their children, they may not advance in their employment at the same frequency as their male counterparts (Barsh & Yee, 2012; Rakic, 2016).

Studies conducted by Kark and Eagly (2010) and Metz (2011) have shown that married couples' household duties are not the main reason why they are underrepresented as organisational leaders, especially women, but various communities do not recognise flexible schedules for mothers who need to combine work and family responsibilities. Fider et al. (2014) conclude that career management creates or strengthens conflict between husbands and wives, which can result in decreased job satisfaction and individual well-being. Fider et al. (2014) further concluded that a strong marital partnership characterised by cooperation, transparency and a romantic relationship can be a source of encouragement for the advancement of women's careers.

3.1.4.5 Job level

Ferreira (2012) explains that employees with adaptive careers have the opportunity to take part in career self-advancement activities that allow them to leverage potential future job opportunities. The study results by Brown et al. (2012) underline that stressful work increases the impact of career circumstances. Research shows that the level that individuals find themselves in the workplace determines their career construction (Sharf, 2010). Sharf opines that career life stories indicate the developmental task of the individual and also reflect the career establishment that preoccupies the minds of the employees.

Again, Takawira (2018) revealed that individuals occupying managerial positions obtained significantly lower mean scores on psychosocial career pre-occupations than lower-level staff. In a similar study by Bester (2018), it was reported that job position is significantly directly correlated with the three psychosocial career pre-occupation. Studies by Brown et al. (2012) also contend that individuals can boost their career competencies by learning from workplace experiences at all phases of career growth or at any level of employment in the chosen work environment.

Brown et al. (2012) further claimed that if workers continue on the same job for a prolonged period of time without critical skills or retraining, their work adaptability gradually deteriorates, adversely affecting their career advancement. Again, Coetzee (2015) concluded that graduates from higher learning institutions seem to have greater career establishment pre-occupations.

In summary, socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level were found to have direct or indirect influences on psychosocial career pre-occupations. The present research discovered the extent to which the identified socio-demographic variables had an influence on psychosocial career pre-occupations among staff of higher educational institutions in Ghana. Researchers have highlighted the significance of psychosocial career pre-occupations

with regard to individuals' employability, career satisfaction and career wellbeing (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2017). Again, studies show that individuals in the current world of work show much concern about developing their employability and professional competencies (Faller et al., 2021; Gupta et al., 2020; Ng & Feldman, 2014; Presti et al., 2021; Rakowska et al., 2021; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016).

This subsection in short describes the socio-demographic variables that influence psychosocial career pre-occupations. Research from the African continent, especially black South Africans, indicates greater concerns about career establishment pre-occupations such as skills and knowledge enhancement, than their white counterparts (Joao & Coetzee, 2012). A study on psychosocial career pre-occupations was established and showed that individuals who exhibit psychosocial career pre-occupations may not necessarily be of the same age group (Coetzee, 2016b)

3.1.5 Evaluation: Practical implications for career self-management

The outcome of psychosocial career pre-occupations has important implications for career self-management in Ghanaian higher educational settings based on the literature review. As part of career self-management practices, individuals in the workplace should recognise socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level as important predictors of psychosocial career pre-occupations. Psychosocial career pre-occupations indicate the degree to which individuals prepare themselves mentally and psychologically to show proactive and adaptive attitudes in terms of coping with environmental challenges (Coetzee, 2014b).

Career self-management policies and practices are believed to focus on the learning and development of competencies such as skills, knowledge and abilities, as well as equipping individuals in work settings to manage their career choices (Rakowska et al., 2021; Wilhelm & Hirschi, 2020). Studies on the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and career self-management are also limited and warrant further investigation, particularly in the various Ghanaian higher educational institutions that must pursue proactive career self-management in the context of the new world of work.

From the perspective of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), psychosocial career pre-occupations may be viewed as concerns that arise when the individual's psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness have not been met. Therefore, it may be argued that the pre-occupations of career establishment, career adaptation and work/life adjustment arise when

certain psychosocial career meta-capacities (psychological career resources) have not been fully developed. This may occur in the quest to help the individual engage in proactive career self-management behaviour, which would reduce or align psychosocial career preoccupations and increase career satisfaction. Hence, the specific lack of a psychological career resource, or an underdeveloped psychological career resource, may contribute to a specific psychosocial career concern being prevalent within the individual. Studies by Bester (2018) revealed that the only psychological career resource that significantly correlated with the three psychosocial career preoccupations was career values, although career values did not correlate with the overall psychological career preoccupations scale.

The next section discusses the construct of social connectedness.

3.2 SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

The concept of social connectedness will be discussed in the following subsections. The concept of social connectedness will be conceptualised, and the focus will then be shifted to theoretical models. Again, the variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level that influence the development of the construct 'social connectedness' will be discussed. Finally, the practical implications for career self-management will also be addressed.

3.2.1 Conceptualisation of social connectedness

Social connectedness is perceived to be a topical issue in modern work environments, and it is conceptualised as a sense of self that indicates the endured closeness in the environment as well as the social world. Social connectedness is closely linked to interpersonal relatedness in the workplace (Coetzee et al., 2019; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018). Individuals at the workplace influence major aspects of activities in an organisation, and these activities have an impact on the lifestyle of employees as well as the organisation (Demerouti et al., 2014). Social ability influences how people adjust themselves within work settings (Fiorilli et al., 2017; OECD, 2018). The development of social ability plays a major role in the development of employees, which goes beyond the society in which activities take place. Employees at the workplace need to be adaptive, resourceful, and render respect and work well with each other in the chosen organisation (Semedo et al., 2016).

Winslow et al. (2019) asserted that informal workplace social interactions are conceptually related to social connectedness, workplace friendship and social support. At the workplace, employees

have diverse means of communicating and interacting with one another, including face-to-face communication, email and telephone communication (Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018). However, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, other forms of social media, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, have become the most commonly used platform by employees in the workplace for communicating and interacting (Block et al., 2020; Van Orden et al., 2020). These changes at the workplace have led to employees developing more intimate relationships rather than coworker relationships (Jiang et al., 2014; Sias et al., 2012; Sias & Shin, 2019). Thus, with the aid of new technological platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams, the emotional connections among employees have heightened. Social connectedness is an influential indicator of individuals' career progression at the workplace, which eventually influences the success of the organisation. Socially connected individuals become happier and healthier and better positioned to take responsibility for their lives and find solutions to the problems they face (Frieling et al., 2018).

Rosales (2015) shares the opinion that individuals at the workplace develop a high level of connection when they share mutual awareness, experience and social interaction. Social connection in the work of Holt-Lunstad (2018) is considered a way in which two or more people connect: (1) physically, (2) behaviourally, (3) cognitively and (4) emotionally at work settings. Holt-Lunstad (2018) further asserts that social connection has three forms: (1) structural support via the physical and behavioural presence of relationships; (2) functional support via the resources the individual's relationship generates; and (3) quality support developed through positive and negative emotional relationships. Based on this categorisation, social support can be defined as the perceived amount of support an individual receives from family, friends, supervisors and other colleagues at the workplace.

Numerous studies indicate that social connectedness is associated with workplace friendship and other social connectivity, such as socialising, social support, social networking and social cohesion (Demirkiran & Gencer, 2017; O'Rourke et al., 2018; Stansfeld, 2006). Individuals at the workplace form the social aspect of the organisation (Von Salisch, 2018). Social connectedness can be seen from different perspectives in academic settings. Jiang's (2017) studies on social connectedness reveal a supportive function in assisting employees in progressing in their careers through informal and formal network connections, adjusting to changing workplace situations, and providing information regarding work-related resources that support individuals at the workplace.

3.2.1.1 Defining social connectedness

Several researchers have varying views on the definition of social connectedness (Eraslan Capan, 2016; Lee & Robbins, 1995; Rioseco Lopez, 2015). According to Rioseco Lopez (2016), social connectedness is defined as a set of concepts associated with human relationships and interactions and involves four key attributes, namely, (1) individuals' networks, (2) the quality of their networks, (3) the support they receive from their networks and (4) their social engagement with network members, groups and organisations. Lee et al. (2017) share the opinion that social connectedness is connected to the subjective and objective reflection of oneself and interpersonal closeness to the social environment. They add that social relationship is fundamentally important and relates to an individual's feelings, attitude, and perception that such individuals have towards other members in work settings. Furthermore, in the work of Samuel et al. (2018), social connectedness is the relationship an individual has with one another and the associated benefits allied to the relationship.

Again, Eraslan-Capan (2016) asserts that a person's perspective about how close they are to friends, family, and the outside world is regarded as social connection. That is, social relationships in the workplace are anchored in a person's perception, feelings and attitude towards other employees in the workplace (Madsen et al., 2005). This makes workplace friendship an important aspect of social connection (Milam 2012). Friendship, as postulated by Milam (2012), has different meanings in most demographic and cultural settings. To some extent, friendship is the common interest a person has with another (Winstead et al., 1995). In the view of Gates et al. (2019), friendship is a deliberate act of two or more people offering care, trust and emotional support to each other to create a bond. However, although employees do not have control over who should or should not join the organisations they work for; employees can create friendships at the workplace. Potgieter et al. (2019) found that workplace friendship positively predicts employees' affective, continuance and normative commitment.

3.2.1.2 Antecedents of social connectedness

Motivational theories, including Elton Mayo, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McClelland's needs theory and Alderfer's theory on existence, relatedness and growth (ERG), suggest that relationships in the workplace are very significant. Elton Mayo studied the importance of workplace friendships by focusing on the social needs of employees. Mayo (1945) highlighted the importance of good leadership and satisfying personal relations in the workplace and believed that these factors contribute to job satisfaction. Later, Abraham Maslow developed a five-level

hierarchy of human needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the desire of an individual to feel connected with others may be identified as a basic human need (Winslow et al., 2019).

Humans have a distinctive desire to fulfil needs ranging from very basic needs to more complex needs such as friendships (Cao & Zhang, 2020). Furthermore, Maslow's theory suggests that friendship is one of the ways of fulfilling love and belonging needs (Ozbek, 2018). Individuals are motivated to develop meaningful relationships with other people to fulfil their psychological 'need for belonging' (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). McClelland's needs theory includes the need for affiliation, implying that people desire strong and positive relationships (Milam, 2012). Alderfer's (1972) existence, relatedness and growth (ERG) theory includes a need for relatedness, implying that people who experience relatedness with coworkers have increased social esteem (Milam, 2012). Ozbek (2018) emphasised the importance of friendships in the workplace and asserted that working environments that are described as friendly, happy and pleasant led to positive employee outcomes.

Human beings are social ;psychologically, they desire to interact with others and, to some extent, form relationships with them (Bicer & Buyukyilmaz, 2017; Khaleel et al., 2016; Potgieter et al., 2018). As emphasised by social identity theory, individuals inherently desire to engage, build and share values with others (Ting & Ho, 2017). This suggests the likelihood of an employee's self-esteem and social identity being affected by connecting with others (Shimmin, 2019). It may therefore be laudable to investigate the impact of social connectedness on employees in the workplace. Research indicates that social connection is one of the indicators of workplace friendship that can alter one's sense of belongingness and relatedness (Holt-Lunstad, 2018; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018). The current world of work is highly connected with people with high affection for friendships (Gates et al., 2019).

Again, social exchange theory rests on the assumption that workplace friendship could serve as an important element to all stakeholders in an organisation (Khaleel et al., 2016). This means that individuals such as peers, coworkers, subordinates and colleagues must exhibit an act of reciprocity in their relationship at work settings to assist in their career progression. According to Akila and Priyadarshini (2018), workplace friendship is mostly related to an act of give and take, and this is manifested through exchange theory.

Research has revealed that social connectedness is closely linked with workplace friendship and is used interchangeably, which is deemed to be a multidimensional element in the employee's

work-life (Saeri et al., 2018). In addition, several research scholars describe workplace friendship as voluntary in nature and organisations must play a central role in assisting the creation of friendship at the workplace (Goetz & Boehm, 2020; Holt-Lunstad, 2018; Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). Workplace friendship in organisations helps individuals to advance competencies that will enable them to cope with stressful and demanding tasks (Goetz & Boehm, 2020). Khaleel et al. (2016) postulated that some individuals at the managerial levels in an organisation support the concept of workplace friendship, while others do not. This is a result of the negative and positive influence of workplace friendship on organisational operations. They therefore identify these negative outcomes to include sexual harassment, conspiracy, office gossips and the like. Again, Hiaso et al. (2009) supported the idea that formal procedures within the work settings may dissuade the formation of friendships and eventually lead to positive work outcomes.

Berman et al. (2002) defined workplace friendship as an informal relationship between employees who build trust and commitment and share common values and interests. This relationship does not need to be solely between people of the same age, gender and status (Berman et al., 2002). Similarly, Zarankin and Kunkel (2019) defined workplace friendship as an informal and voluntary relationship among workers of an organisation. Nielsen et al. (2000) asserted that workplace relationships could be defined to include the following: (1) opportunity and (2) prevalence. Opportunity refers to the number of chances an individual gets to be introduced, acquainted and work collectively with colleagues in an organisation. Prevalence relates to the feeling that an individual's friendship with others is strong because there is trust, confidence and social interaction in the relationship.

Friendships at work naturally develop from an individual's personal desire to have a close relationship with others in the workplace (Khaleel et al., 2016). Additionally, as employees in an organisation work in teams on a project, they get to know each other better, which leads to friendship at the workplace (Berman et al., 2002; Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). Akila and Priyadarshini (2018) opine that workplace friendship is transactional. According to Rai and Agarwal (2018), workplace friendship provides employees with emotional and social support that aids them in coping more effectively with stress and other adverse workplace situations. Employees' happiness and wellbeing are heightened through workplace friendships or relationships (Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018).

Owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the practice of working from home or remotely from the workplace as an employee has become the new normal (Bordi et al., 2018). This has

necessitated a more wide use of advanced information communication applications such as teleconferencing and Zoom by employees (Golden 2008; Oesterreich & Teuteberg 2016). Some studies reveal that working from home can have an impact on establishing workplace friendships (Sias et al., 2012).

According to Rai and Agarwal (2018), relationships created at the workplace with colleagues and peers may create a pool of resources for individuals in managing their careers. They believe that the relationships created may be fundamental in determining their respective behaviours and reactions to a given event in the work environment. Moreover, supportive workplace friendship assists individuals in progress in their career choices coupled with the challenges associated with the changing world of work. Another school of thought believes that individuals within the restricted workplace network do not display a high level of physical and mental health in the discharge of their responsibilities compared to the more diverse network (Holt-Lunstad, 2018; Rioseco Lopez, 2015).

Additionally, employees spend a significant part of their lives at the workplace, which in turn assists in developing stronger relationships (Ahjad et al., 2015; Goetz & Boehm, 2020; Holt-Lunstad 2018; Khaleel et al., 2016; Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). As iterated by Bicer and Buyukyilmaz (2017), the workplace is a social setting where employees can interact among themselves to enhance their career opportunities. Workplace friendship offers mutual benefits to the individuals involved (Khaleel et al., 2016; Rumens, 2018). A study conducted by Zarankin and Kunkel (2019) found that the major source of happiness in an employee's working life is friendship, and it is regarded as a fundamental asset in the discharge of one's responsibility in an organisation. Again, they believe that friendship serves as a social support system and one's source of happiness. Individuals in an organisation are ascribed as social creatures; therefore, the formation of friendships at work allows these individuals to show signs of happiness and eventually flourish in their careers (Gate et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Stephens et al. (2012) carried out a study on the importance of workplace friendship. Their findings revealed the following assumptions: (1) individuals are social beings and that the need to affiliate or connect is based on the fundamental premise of social experience, (2) connections depend on how people in the workplace feel and behave while they are interacting with others, (3) connections are important elements in the individual's task and therefore reflect the social processes used in performing tasks, and (4) connections reflect the quality of relationships. Research has found that the development of friendships in the workplace is

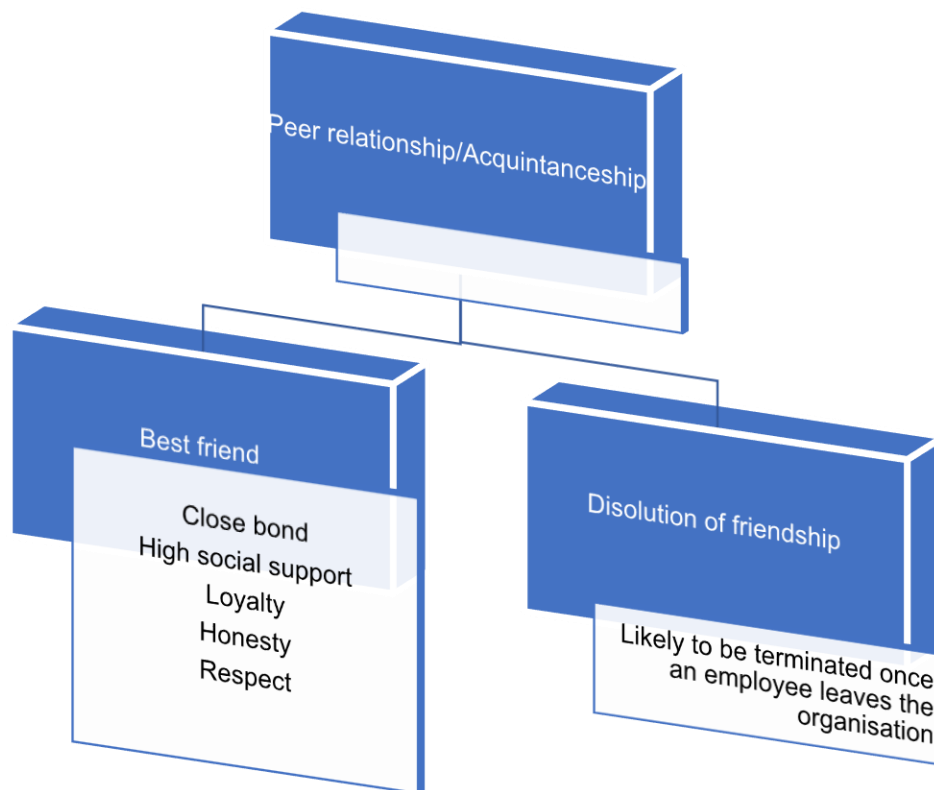
considered important and that these friendships, when developed, may extend beyond what is recognised as an acquaintance as a result of both parties sharing common elements such as trust, commitment and benefits (Cao & Zhang, 2020).

Lin (2010) holds the assertion that to ensure successful work performance, supervisors and individuals in teams must recognise the essence of workplace friendship. Again, Lin (2010) found that teams with better workplace friendships are able to achieve organisational objectives. The findings of Nielsen et al. (2000) on the workplace also support the assertions made by Lin (2010).

According to Nielsen et al. (2010), the development of friendship in work setting is based on the standards set by the respective supervisors and teams in the organisation. Again, Sias et al. (2012) and Sias and Cahill (1998) investigated how friendships are formed, and their findings revealed two main types of factors that influence friendship formation, namely, (1) individual friendship and (2) contextual friendship. According to their studies, individual friendship concerns factors such as personality, perceived similarity and the desire to connect with peers and colleagues that are generated by the individuals themselves. Moreover, the contextual factors include internally and externally generated factors that are formed based on the context of friendship. One could further explain the internal factors as those constituents that reveal themselves in the form of workplace proximity, shared responsibility and work-related challenges. Furthermore, the external factors of contextual friendship refer to those activities that emanate from outside the workplace and include socialising and life events. Figure 3.2 depicts the visual display of the development of workplace friendship.

Figure 3.2

Development of Workplace Friendship



Source: Adapted from Sias and Cahill (1998, p. 288)

The literature indicates that both the employees and the organisation benefit from workplace friendships (Winstead et al., 1995). In organisational settings, employee friendships enhance institutional participation, motivate employees, and increase productivity and employee retention. It also enables smoother diffusion of information via communication outlets (Potgieter et al., 2018). Friendships among coworkers reflect a harmonious working environment where employees freely share resources and have each other's back (Cao & Zhang, 2020). On the personal level, employee friendships stimulate workers, enhance their sense of security, build trust and respect and lessen feelings of anxiety (Potgieter et al., 2019). Social connectedness or workplace friendships have the possibility of reducing tension, increasing communication and enabling employees and managers to work more effectively (Berman et al., 2002). Chadsey and Beyer (2001) argued that social relationships are accompanied by insignificant stress levels and advanced quality of life. Employees with strong, friendly relationships have a lower tendency to be depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem. Moreover, they are more likely to participate in

social engagements (Lee et al., 2008). There exists a strong correlation between close relationships and good health, as they guard against the negative impact of stress (Rosales, 2015). Since employees who are friends usually work closely together and engage in habitual conversations, they can offer themselves valuable counsel to handle job demands arising from a hectic job (Milam, 2012).

Employees who have established strong workplace friendships and social support are more capable of surviving the demands placed on them (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Coworkers who are friends provide social support to themselves, which leads to better employee engagement (Khaleel et al., 2016). These friendships provide desirable support and lift employee spirit and morale in diverse ways, including fighting for each other on promotions, soothing each other's pain and discomfort on mistakes and providing counselling and help in personal situations (Bicer & Buyukyilmaz, 2017). Ismail et al. (2013) assert that social support brings out the best in workers due to their recognition of the support from their colleagues to help overcome negative emotions. Social connections in the workplace allow employees to freely offload their anger and frustrations over a situation, which can help them release their tension (Rai & Agarwal, 2018).

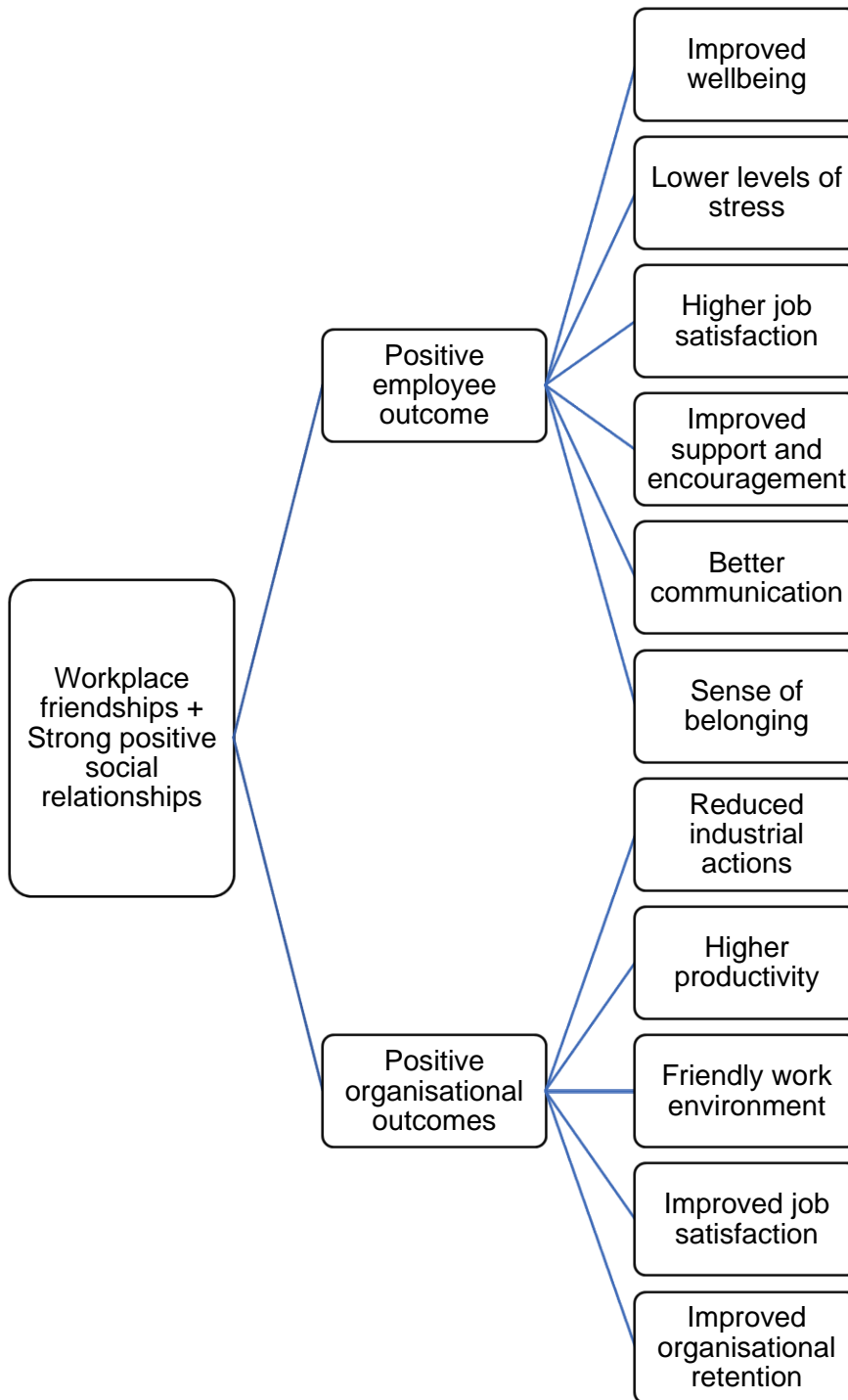
Strong friendships provide several benefits, including having someone who listens to you and someone who guides, directs and accepts you. It also induces a feeling of belonging to a social group (Goetz & Boehm, 2020). Workplace friendships serve desirable purposes, such as encouraging assistance and information sharing among employees, providing enhanced job satisfaction and involvement, higher organisational commitment and reduced turnover (Hsiao-Yen et al., 2009; Song, 2006). Furthermore, these friendships enable employees to stand the rising uncertainties in contemporary workspaces (Gates et al., 2019). Stronger bonds between coworkers can boost emotional safety (Cao & Zhang, 2020). In agreement with the positive influence of workplace friendships, Ozbek (2018) opines that employees feel a sense of control and become more relaxed in the workplace when they understand their coworker's thoughts. Accordingly, Cao and Zhang (2020) explain that friendships create a supportive and friendly working environment for workers where they feel secure and cherished.

Workplace friendships provide an avenue for informal communication, which enables employees to have access to information on events occurring in the workplace as well as policy changes and opportunities for career development (Sias et al., 2003). The friendships formed at work expedite career advancement and serve as sources of support to employees who are experiencing anxiety and stress (Sias et al., 2012). Individuals who form strong friendships at work produce a higher

quality work and higher levels of career wellbeing compared to those who do not form strong friendships at work (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). Song (2006) found that employees with a best friend at work exhibited higher positive work attitudes and showed higher levels of work engagement. Likewise, Morrison and Cooper-Thomas (2015) discovered that employees who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged in their jobs, offer better customer service, show higher wellbeing and are often more productive. Figure 3.3 below indicates the benefits associated with workplace friendship.

Figure 3.3

Pictorial Representation of Positive Workplace Friendship



Source: Adapted from Berman et al. (2002; p. 222)

Moreover, the literature reached a consensus that individuals who fail to develop healthy friendships in their workspaces tend to suffer from behavioural, physiological and psychological problems (Froneman, 2014). Song (2006) argues that employees without workplace friendships are less likely to volunteer for extra work and demonstrate lower productivity. Employees with weak connectedness levels experience psychological misery due to a lack of meaningful and helpful relationships (Eraslan-Capan, 2016). These employees lack a sense of belonging and often identify their environments as being gloomy and hostile. Such employees lack the support accessible to them and cannot discuss their thoughts and feelings with others (Eraslan-Capan, 2016). The absence of friendship at work may lead to an individual experiencing feelings of loneliness and a longing for companionship (Ashida & Heaney, 2008). Individuals who are lonely and isolated at work keenly listen to negative information, recognise more danger in social situations and view other workers as being antagonistic towards them (Holt-Lunstad, 2018).

Additionally, Holt-Lunstad (2018) contends that lonelier individuals are more likely to feel alienated and less connected to their coworkers, which lessens their commitment to the organisation as they lack a sense of belonging. The absence of friendships in the workplace can disturb the quality of life for employees, particularly if an employee has hostile relationships with his or her colleagues in the workplace (Gates et al., 2019). Poor interpersonal relationships may culminate in undesirable outcomes, including burnout (Milam, 2012). Social disconnectedness may happen among employees who have poor-quality relationships in the workplace (Holt-Lunstad, 2018).

Feeley et al. (2008) point out that not all relationships in the workplace are developed deliberately. In fact, employees are often forced into building relationships with their coworkers to achieve organisational goals. These unintentional relationships can be cold and cause pointless pressure, which may even result in employee turnover (Feeley et al., 2008; Sias & Cahill, 1998). Coworkers can contribute to interpersonal stress in the workplace, as some employees may hurt their coworkers' feelings, be rude and condescending to them as well as bully them (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). Employee bullying may manifest in extreme monitoring of work, unreasonable work deadlines and high workloads (Holt-Lunstad, 2018). Person-related bullying, on the other hand, may include verbal abuse, persistent criticism, isolating certain individuals, and office gossip (Holt-Lunstad, 2018).

Next are the theoretical models to be discussed in the subsection.

3.2.2 Theoretical models of social connectedness

The study of social connectedness has been recognised in the contemporary work environment as a key determinant of career progression as well as organisational commitment (Bader et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2000; Song, 2006). Rumens (2017) maintains that social connectedness is usefully perceived as a set of social practices rather than an organisation to which employees are connected. From a theoretical perspective, social connectedness specifically refers to the multidimensional construct, including friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence, that assist employees in discharging their work obligations (Fritz, 2014; Nielsen et al., 2000).

The study considers the following workplace friendship models relevant and is further discussed below:

- Nielsen et al.'s (2000) workplace friendship model
- Zarankin and Kunkel's (2019) workplace friendship model
- Wright's (1985) workplace friendship model

3.2.2.1 Nielsen et al.'s (2000) model of workplace friendship

According to Berman et al. (2002) and Nielsen et al. (2000), workplace friendship is an interpersonal relationship that includes (1) shared interests and values, (2) mutual commitment and (3) trust among individuals at a workplace. Khaleel et al. (2016) observed that workplace friendships progress from employees' innate psychological need for belonging and having close relationships with others. Nielsen et al. (2000) assert that individuals at work settings spend a greater part of their lives compared to the relationship they create at their homes. They believe that it is necessary to accord much importance to the interpersonal relationships created among coworkers, peers and colleagues at the workplace. A study conducted by Kanbur (2015) and Potgieter (2021) found that individuals at the workplace had a greater level of a direct and meaningful relationship, which revealed itself in the form of opportunity for friendship as well as friendship prevalence.

As mentioned earlier in this section, different authors measured workplace friendship in various ways. Friendship opportunity and prevalence are the key dimensions used to measure workplace friendship (Cemaloglu & Duykuluoglu, 2019; Nielsen et al., 2000; Potgieter et al., 2018). Different views of workplace friendship opportunities have major consequences on workers' perception

about overall working relationship (Nielsen et al., 2000). Friendship opportunities refer to the perceived chances that a person will learn, interact and work in the same organisation with other individuals. Working friends are typically the people with whom the person works closely and can therefore be seen to have ties to career development and direction in the work environment (Khaleel et al., 2016).

According to Potgieter et al. (2019), as cited in Jiang (2017), positive workplace attachments, such as opportunities to communicate and work collaboratively within the work environment, are mostly connected to friendship prevalence and friendship opportunities. Nielsen et al. (2000) and Yavuzkurt (2017) hold the assertion that behaviours exhibited at the workplace, which include finding the best opportunity to know peers and colleagues at the workplace, collectively working with friends and easily communicating and exchanging information with friends in the organisation, help to achieve organisational success. Friendship opportunity is based on the idea that employees or individuals talk to each other and in turn establish social and informal relationships with one another in the workplace (Bilgin & Kiral, 2019). A study by Nielsen et al. (2000) referred to friendship opportunity as “friendship perception”, and it shows the existence of opportunity that improves the working relationship.

Furthermore, the prevalence of friendship is associated with the feeling that a person has about strong friendships at work, which is typically seen in the form of assurance and a strong need to communicate and socialise that goes beyond the corporate environment (Nielsen et al., 2000). Studies indicate that the presence of formal and informal friendships in the workplace environment is important for the success of the organisation (Bilgin & Kiral, 2019; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018). Research further shows that workplace friendship includes sharing secrets, sharing talks on personal issues with colleagues and discussing job-related issues. Opportunities for friendship were positively associated with job fulfilment and workers’ job engagement, increased commitment to the work, and reduced turnover intentions (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995).

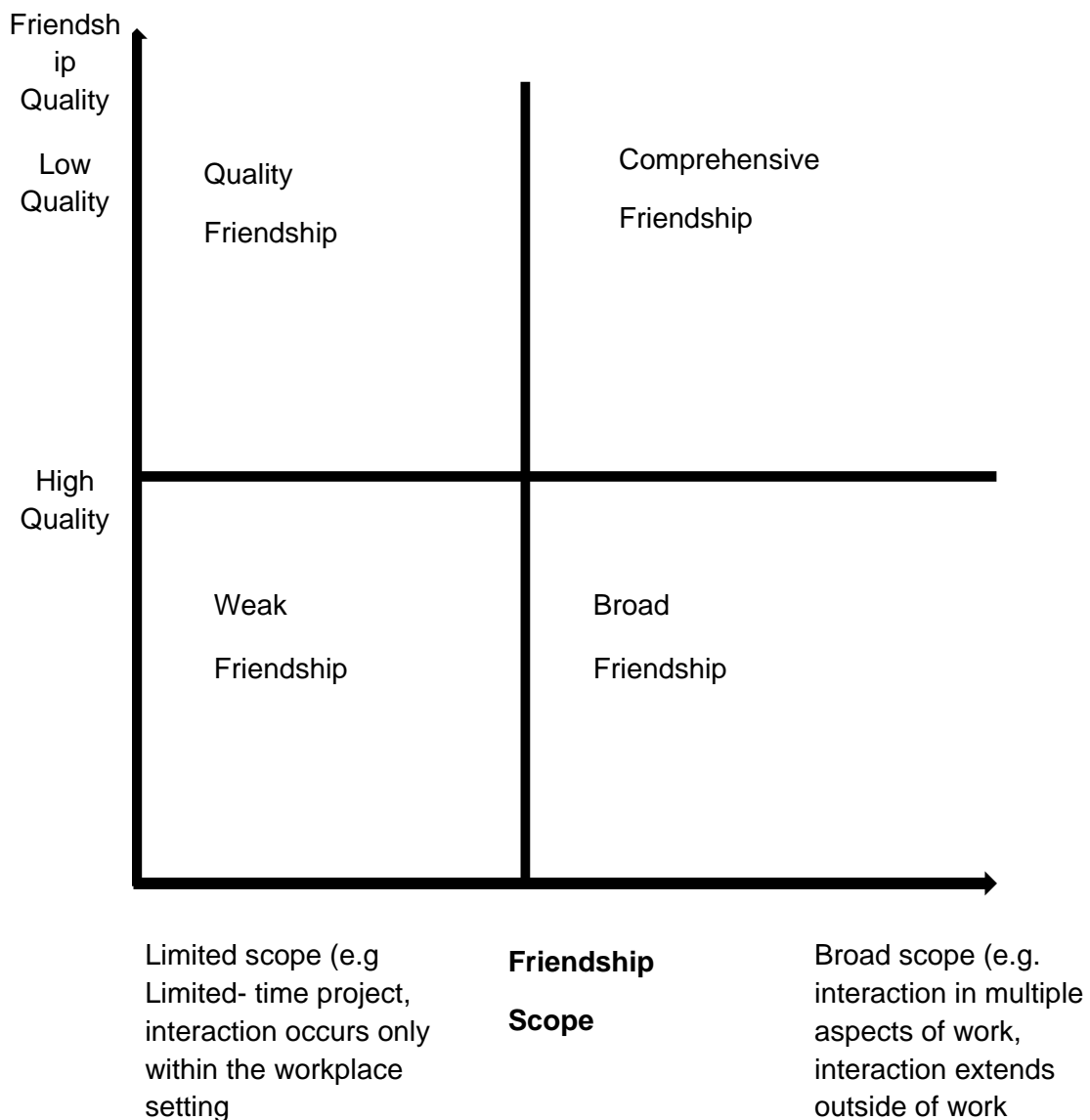
3.2.2.2 Zarankin and Kunkel’s (2019) workplace friendship

Zarankin and Kunkel (2019) opined that workplace friendship should be conceptualised as a multidimensional phenomenon but not a dichotomous concept. According to them, the elements of a friendship include reciprocity, commitment, trust and positive affect. They further suggest that each element has the tendency to predict the quality of a relationship. Zarankin and Kunkel (2019) have argued that workplace friendships differ on two magnitudes, notably friendship scope and

friendship quality. They further assert that the two factors together produce four divergent friendship categories: weak friendships, quality friendships, broad friendships and comprehensive friendships. Figure 3.4 demonstrates a synopsis of Zarankin and Kunkel's (2019) workplace friendship typology. This will enhance our understanding of the measures used by the researcher in measuring workplace friendship.

Figure 3.4

Workplace friendship typology



Source: Adapted from Zarankin and Kunkel (2019, p.162)

(a) Weak friendships

Weak friendships have a low degree of quality and a narrow scope. In other words, a weak friendship has low levels of quality factors, including reciprocity, commitment, trust and positive affect. Moreover, it is limited only to the workplace setting (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019).

(b) Quality friendships

Quality friendships have moderate to high levels of quality but a narrow scope. A quality friendship enables individuals to enjoy the elements of trust, commitment, reciprocity and affect. The interactions are limited to a certain aspect of work, such as a specific time project or restricted to a certain context. These friends only tend to have meaningful interactions in the workplace (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019).

(c) Broad friendships

Broad friendships have fairly low levels of quality but a somewhat high scope. Individuals in broad friendships interrelate in diverse workplace settings or even outside the walls of the corporate environment. These individuals may interact a little while at work but also socially outside of the workplace setting, allowing them the opportunity to become acquainted with each other better in all spheres (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). They further asserted that broad friendships are more beneficial than weak friendships but less beneficial than quality friendships.

(d) Comprehensive friendships

Comprehensive friendships manifest in low levels of quality and scope. These individuals are privileged to access relatively high levels of trust, mutuality, commitment and positive affect. Such individuals interact in multiple contexts both inside and outside the workplace (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019).

3.2.2.3 Wright's (1985) friendship model

Wright's (1985) model of friendship indicates that individuals cultivate certain attributes and qualities through experience that determines their behaviour. These attitudes and qualities inspire the individual to behave in such a way that their well-being and self-worth are promoted (Lea, 1989). Wright (1985) classifies self-reverent behaviour into five categories. These are:

- (a) A sense of uniqueness and individuality reaffirms through one's behaviour
- (b) Important or highly valued self-attributes reaffirm through one's behaviour
- (c) Positive self-evaluation is encouraged through individual behaviour
- (d) Behaviour that encourages growth or positive elaboration to the self
- (e) Behaviour that avoids events that threaten wellbeing or self-worth

Interpersonal relationships constitute one way an individual can attain these motives. Wright's model of friendship highlights the fact that the main reason for forming and maintaining friendships is because they are worthwhile (Lea, 1989). Adopting Wright's (1985) model of friendship, Winstead et al. (1995) examined the relationship between employee friendships and other job-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction.

According to the model, friendships are advantageous because they promote general wellbeing and provide specific rewards such as encouragement from fellow coworkers and emotional support (Winstead et al., 1995). Wright (1985) developed two criteria to capture the strength of friendship:

- (a) Person-qua-person factor: This refers to the degree of mutual concern and interest that both parties show towards each other.
- (b) Voluntary independence refers to the degree to which the relationship partners spend interacting with each other.

Next, the integration of social connectedness theoretical models will be addressed.

3.2.3 Integration of social connectedness theoretical models

Practitioners in the field of career management recognise the importance of social connectedness for individual and organisational success (Al-Falah, 2016). Social connectedness is one of the key determinants of individuals' career success (Bilgin & Kiral, 2019). According to Kopperud (2012), friendship generated from formal and informal relationships in work settings is much sustained within organisations. To appreciate the concept of social connectedness in connection to individual career management, it is appropriate to consider workplace friendship models. The workplace friendship models, which include Nielsen et al. (2000), Wright's (1985), and Zarankin and Kunkel (2019), have been reviewed in the preceding sections.

However, the Nielsen et al. (2000) model was adopted since the study is on workplace friendship. This model is deemed most important because it clarifies how the researcher intends to measure the construct of social connectedness. The study adopted the two main measures of workplace friendship developed by Nielsen et al. (2000), and it comprises friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Although the other models (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019; Wright, 1985) stress the measures of workplace friendship, including friendship scope, friendship quality, person-qua-person factors and satisfaction, they cannot capture the elements that influence workplace

friendship. Table 3.4 provides a summary of the theoretical models related to the construct of social connectedness.

Table 3.4

Summary of the Theoretical Models Related to Social Connectedness

	Nielsen et al (2000) model	Wright's (1985) model	Zarankin & Kunkel's (2019) Model
Defining the constructs	They proposed that workplace friendships can be categorised into two-dimensional constructs, namely, (1) friendship opportunity and (2) friendship prevalence	The model examines the interrelationship between workplace friendship and other related job components such as job satisfaction	They propose that workplace friendship varies on two main dimensions, namely, friendship scope and friendship quality. These dimensions are further categorised into four distinct elements; (1) weak friendship, (2) quality friendship, (3) broad friendship and (4) comprehensive friendship
Model relatedness to social connectedness	The importance of studying workplace friendship is influenced by three main reasons, which include: (1) the association between friendship in the workplace and significant work-related outcomes,	Wright (1985) asserts that friendship created at the workplace are important in the sense that it promotes the general wellbeing of individuals	The quality of workplace relationship is influenced by four main elements, which include (1) reciprocity, (2) trust, (3) positive affect and (4) commitment

(2) the contribution of workplace friendship to organisation's informal structure and (3) the growing trend of using teams and groups within organisations

Source: Author's own work

Next, socio-demographic variables that influence social connectedness were discussed.

3.2.4 Socio-demographic variables influencing social connectedness

Several studies show that socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level have a significant relationship with social connectedness, especially workplace friendship (Chen et al., 2012; Pauksztat & Salin, 2020; Sias et al., 2012; Stirpe et al., 2018). The section below further reveals how these socio-demographic variables influence social connectedness.

3.2.4.1 Age

The labour force of every organisation is made up of different age groups, and these demographic characteristic studies show influence on the development of friendships and connections at the workplace (Blieszner & Ogletree, 2017; Jeewandara & Kumari, 2021; Ribeiro, 2015). According to Stirpe et al. (2018), employees within the youthful age range tend to socialise and build friendships compared to older employees. Sias et al. (2012) reported that because of the use of social media, instant messaging and text messages, young employees can communicate often to build and maintain their workplace friendships. Chopik (2017) argued that employees who are old in age seem to feel reluctant to form new friendships (social connections) in the workplace. The reason is that older people prefer social relations emanating from their family to fulfil their social and health needs (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019a; Rioseco-Lopez, 2015).

3.2.4.2 Gender

Studies show that males and females have similar reasons for developing friendships with coworkers (Hart et al., 2016; Hojjat et al., 2021; Reeder, 2017). Such reasons include but are not limited to personality, proximity and shared tasks. Among females, friendship appears to be

complex and supportive and requires more self-disclosure, sharing of resources and empowerment (Jeewandara & Kumari, 2021; Knickmeyer et al., 2002; Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2015). In other words, friendship among females happens to have greater intimacy and large and integrated networks (McGuire & Leaper, 2016; Rioseco Lopez, 2015). This is due to the importance women attach to friendships (Dang, 2021; Greif & Sharpe, 2010). Therefore, the role of gender in friendship development in the workplace cannot be overruled.

According to Machia et al. (2020) and Potgieter et al. (2019), there is a tendency for females to face challenges such as loneliness, depression and other psychological problems if they do not have friends. Morrison and Cooper-Thomas (2015) and Jeewandara and Kumari (2021) opine that males' friendship is described as instrumental because it centres on shared interests and activities. Again, they believe that friendship among males generally tends to demand less emotional support.

3.2.4.3 Marital status

Life choices such as marital status have the potential to affect workplace friendship (Khalilzadeh et al., 2021). For instance, an employee may decide to reduce the number of friends due to marital responsibilities, or an employee who is not yet married or divorced may decide to socialise more (Schmidt et al., 2021). All these situations will influence the formation and development of friendships in the workplace (Gates et al., 2019; Rioseco Lopez, 2015). They opined that married males have a low level of workplace friendship, as these individuals tend to seek emotional support from their spouse.

3.2.4.4 Job level

A study by Mao (2006) and Jeewandara and Kumari (2021) found that higher job levels had less association or relation with workplace friendship. This finding affirms scholars' assertions (Abun, 2021; Jung et al., 2021; Pellegrini et al., 2021) that higher organisational level employees rarely socialise or interact with colleagues at the workplace compared to employees at the lower level of an organisation. Similarly, Yavuzkurt and Kiral (2020) found that secondary school administrators and groups that determine educational policies have a moderate positive level of perception of workplace friendships.

3.2.5 Evaluation: Practical implications for career self-management

Social connectedness has a great impact on the career choice of individuals in the new world of work. Informal friendships created at the workplace influence the overall performance of an organisation and the commitment of employees towards the achievement of organisational objectives.

Studies conducted by Nielsen et al. (2000) reveal that although individuals can discharge their obligations effectively due to the formation of formal and informal friendship, such friendship created could also lead to negative consequences such as gossiping at the workplace and low performance as a result of the intimacy of friendship created. Due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, most organisations cannot embrace the concept of friendship at work, and as a result, online platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams communication have dominated the current work environment.

The relationship between individual demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level and career self-management at the workplace has not been fully explored (Kyndt et al., 2009). Research indicates that a positive work environment contributes positively to effective career management. This is because such a workplace atmosphere (workplace friendship) creates the opportunity for individuals to feel recognised and allows them to display their strength in developing their competencies. Therefore, it is believed that employees' perception and understanding of the factors greatly influence their career planning and progression in the chosen workplace. Again, one needs to realise that the manner in which workplace friendships are recognised by managers in the working environment may have an impact on individuals' career management.

The next section discusses the construct of organisational commitment.

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

The focal point of this section is to conceptualise the construct organisational commitment and to provide an overview of the theoretical models, which include Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, Randall and Cote's (1991) model, O' Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model, and Etzioni's (1961) model. This section will also discuss the socio-demographic variables, including age, gender, marital status and job level, that influence organisational commitment. Finally, the section concludes with the practical implications for career self-management.

3.3.1 Conceptualisation of organisational commitment

Theorists in organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Morrow, 1983) contend that the contemporary work environment is connected with higher uncertainty and disruptive instability globally, leading to whether workers have a satisfactory experience in their career as well as commitment to their organisation. Commitment is difficult to explain distinctly because of its multifaceted nature (Saifudin & Nawaz, 2012). Commitment has largely been studied, but it continues to be a thought-provoking and perplexing research area for human resource management and organisational behaviour practitioners (Pangil & Nasurdin, 2019). The phenomenon of “organisational commitment” provides insight into the conceptualisation of this research. It is important to highlight the point that the study of organisational commitment is shifted on the theoretical models and eventually establishes relationships between the main constructs of the study. According to Bashir and Gani (2020), commitment at the workplace has become a substantial topic for discussion and a burning issue confronting many organisations.

The contemporary concept of organisational commitment has advanced because an organisation’s interest ought to come first before the benefits of persons or groups within an employment environment (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018). The new world of work has exposed several challenges and changes in the modern work environment; thus, it is necessary for individuals who intend to enter into an engagement as well as employers, to understand the dynamics surrounding job commitment in such an environment (Sahi & Mahajan, 2014). Correspondingly, Megfire (2019) contend that the significance of this employee commitment is in the connection of the worker’s involvement in numerous activities comprising increasing cost, competitiveness or cooperation in the face of the advent of new technology, among others. Megfire (2019) further pointed out the importance of supporting employees in an organisation. Again, Megfire (2019) contends that it is essential to give consideration to the concepts of commitment, loyalty and performance in a bid to increase organisational commitment.

3.3.1.1 Defining organisational commitment

Different definitions and measures have been formed over the years to shed light on the concept of organisational commitment. According to Mowday et al. (1979), organisational commitment is the attachment and involvement individuals have with an organisation. Brown (1996) supported the view of Brckman (1987) and further described commitment to an organisation as a controlling force that stabilises an employee, thereby reducing the rate of turnover in an organisation. Brown

(1996) further believes that organisational commitment is the inner feeling an employee develops to honour their obligations to the organisation.

As argued by Meyer and Allen (1991), organisational commitment could be explained as a psychological bond. They further assert that satisfied employees are likely to be encouraged to accomplish better feats in their day-to-day work and show a strong psychological connection with the organisation, which enables the organisation to achieve its desired goals and increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Mayer and Allen (1991) further iterated that organisational commitment rests on three main themes, namely, (1) affective, (2) continuance and (3) normative. Therefore, one could conclude that organisational commitment reflects sentimental reference points towards the organisation's recognition of repercussions, which makes employees decide to or have the intention to quit the organisation and ethically decide to remain with the chosen or existing organisation.

According to Cook and Wall (1980, p.40), "the concept of organisational commitment refers to a person's affective reactions to characteristics of his employing organisation. It is concerned with the feelings of attachment to the goals and values of the organisation, one's role in relation to this and the attachment to the organisation for its own sake rather than for its strictly instrumental value". Moreover, organisational commitment is expressed as a psychological state that determines controls over the relationship workers have with their organisation and affects their decision of either remaining a member of the organisation or quitting the job (Allen & Meyer, 1993). Simply put, organisational commitment is the interest exhibited by members in an organisation.

O' Reilly (1989, p. 17) defines organisational commitment as "an individual's psychological bond to the organisation, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organisation. Organisational commitment is reinforced by employees' willingness to exert their effort on behalf of the organisation due to the acceptance of organisational goals, norms, values and beliefs (Miller & Lee, 2001). In this light, Marrow (1993) posits that organisational commitment is normally characterised by behaviour. In a similar vein, Meyer et al. (1990, p. 711) opine that organisational commitment is an attitude "characterised by a favourable positive cognitive and affective component about the organisation".

Miller (2003, p. 73) identifies organisational commitment as "a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the

organisation". Therefore, organisational commitment is the extent to which an individual wishes to be maintained as a member of an organisation because of the goals and values attached to the organisation. Sahi and Mahajan (2014) further conceptualised organisational commitment into four main perspectives, namely, (1) an affective attachment to an organisation, (2) a desire to remain with the organisation, (3) a willingness to put in effort towards remaining with the organisation, and (4) a desire characterised by shared values of the organisation.

Deshpande (2013) and Mitonga-Monga et al. (2018) considered organisational commitment as the degree of employees' connection to and the degree to which they identify with their job. Potgieter et al. (2016) further confirm that organisational commitment is a situation whereby employees remain loyal as productive role players in a work setting. Organisations in this new world of work are recognised as the most effective pillar in terms of employability and economic development (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Sehunoe et al., 2015).

As mentioned above, it is difficult to define the term commitment broadly, as it is connected with defining the concept of organisational commitment. Even though several authors have methods that are akin, most of them vary marginally from one another because employee commitment is more detailed than the meaning of organisational commitment (Anttila, 2015). That is, commitment is owned by employees despite the varied approach devised by many researchers. The rules in the contemporary world of organisational commitment are changing, and they are eventually becoming more challenging to deal with than what organisations originally anticipated. Pangil and Nasurdin (2019) maintain that commitment, which is connected to trust, is defined as a situation where employees believe that a continuing relationship with one another is exceptionally substantial to merit an all-out effort to sustain it. The elements of commitment comprise personal characteristics, job role features, structural features, and job experience, while the aftermaths of commitment include performance, seniority, attendance, and turnover (Chiedu et al., 2017; Kohlmeyer et al., 2017; Oh, 2019; Priya & Sundaram, 2016).

Employees' commitment shows the readiness to be vigorously immersed in the work life of the organisation and afterwards remain employed in the organisation (Jung et al., 2021). Organisational commitment is a joint role played by both the employee and employer towards the goals of the organisation in a similar manner (Amdan et al., 2016). Hence, organisational commitment could be conceptualised as the effective psychological (emotional, mental and social) attachment of an individual towards the organisation, which encompasses a feeling of job involvement and loyalty to the organisation.

Correspondingly, Sow (2015) stresses that commitment could be seen as a function of satisfaction with the service provider, excellence of the alternative providers and investment in the relationship. According to Muthukumaran (2017), organisational commitment connotes a worker's attachment to his organisation, which is believed to reflect the employee's loyalty and his identity with the organisation. Muthukumaran (2017) further stressed that when employees are committed, they accept organisational goals and values and strive to achieve them. Moreover, Anttila (2014) argues that commitment at work could further be classified into diverse facets, including employee commitment to their career, job, aims, teams or organisation. This submission is in line with the review and conceptualisation of workplace commitment study carried out by Jung et al. (2021), in which they reason that it is common for workers to nurture many work-relevant commitments. Although all of these occur in the place of work and are believed to impact employees' entire workplace commitment, they all manifest in their own features.

Likewise, commitment is allied to the psychological contract fostered through unique involvement practices and is built on collective values, which integrate internalizing organisational goals (Megfira, 2019). Megfira (2019) further proposes employee commitment as a psychological connection between a worker and an organisation. The strength is contingent on the extent of employee involvement, employee loyalty and belief in the organisation's values. According to Bashir and Gani (2020), commitment is the inclination to persevere in a particular agenda and the reluctance to alter plans, often due to a feeling of obligation to stay on that particular course of action. Again, if human resources are indeed viewed as an organisation's chief resources, then devoted human resources are to be perceived as an organisation's competitive advantage (Yogamalar & Samuel, 2019).

Haque et al. (2019) believe that commitment is a powerful element that drags a person to a target and to a course of action in relation to an organisation's success. This implies that commitment is one of the major activities undertaken by an organisation and is included in their strategic plan as a means of motivating employees for better performance and as an initiative to reduce attrition. According to Muthukumaran (2017), employee commitment is mirrored in at least three thematic areas of the organisation: to be actively connected to the organisation, being able to predict the cost of exiting the organisation and being obliged to stay in the organisation. The assertion that commitment is a psychological state characterised by the relationship between employees and the organisation is commonly associated with organisational commitment.

Cohen (2003) and Colquitt et al. (2011) hold the opinion that organisational commitment has gained prominence in both the industrial and organisational psychology literature. In the organisational commitment literature, there exists a clear irreconcilable difference amid three ideologies: attitudinal commitment and behavioural approach and side-bet theory (Aryee et al., 2002). Previous studies on organisational commitment consider the concept of organisational commitment as uni-dimensional, based on an attitudinal perspective, embracing individual identification, loyalty and commitment involvement (Porter et al., 1974). They describe attitudinal commitment as the situation whereby employees consider their working relationship with the organisation in terms of whether their own values and objectives are compatible with that of the organisation.

Becker's (1960) concept of organisational commitment is more of a calculative approach to commitment. In support, Porter et al. (1974) emphasised the attitudinal approach to commitment, which concentrated much on three factors in formulating a positive attitude towards organisational commitment. Therefore, these factors explain organisational commitment as follows: (1) strong culture in acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, (2) willingness to apply much effort on behalf of the organisation and (3) a fixed desire to maintain members of the organisation. This, therefore, indicates that there is a linkage between the individual and the organisation with respect to commitment.

Again, another aspect of organisational commitment is the assertion expounded by Meyer and Allen (1993). They consider organisational commitment as a three-dimensional construct, namely, affective, continuance and normative. Again, they define affective commitment as "positive feelings of identification with an attachment to and involvement in the work of the organisation". Additionally, continuance commitment was further defined by Meyer and Allen (1984, p. 375) as "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the cost that they feel are associated with leaving". In contrast, Folger and Crapanzano (1998) believe that when individuals with negative continuance commitment leave the organisation or exhibit counterproductive behaviours that are detrimental to the organisation, there is a derailment of commitment in the said productivity.

Based on the assertions espoused above, one can conclude that numerous explanations of commitment are undergoing thorough literature criticism, which has made it obvious that the study of this phenomenon has progressed in varied angles. Upon consistently reviewing the divergent views on the definitions and measures of organisational commitment, research concludes that

organisational commitment is seen as an individual's connection or link with their organisation (Mathieu et al., 2016). Andrew (2017) and Khan et al. (2021) believes that when employees are emotionally attached to their careers, they tend to have few relationships with their coworkers and the organisation. Individuals, in turn, improve performances and properly serve the organisation after their career ambitions are achieved. The efficacy of the organisation rests on the employees' great performance to meet organisational objectives.

Again, on the divergent views on the concept "organisational commitment", the study adopted the definition proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 67). According to Meyer and Allen's definition, organisational commitment is "a psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation". Therefore, the researcher conceptualises organisational commitment as the emotional and psychological attachment an individual attains towards the organisation as a result of recognition given to the employee in the organisation. The theoretical models of organisational commitment are discussed in the next section.

3.3.2 Theoretical models of organisational commitment

The following theoretical models are deemed relevant to the study of organisational commitment and are further discussed below.

- A three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997)
- Commitment model developed by Randall and Cote (1991)
- O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of organisational commitment
- Etzioni's (1961) model of organisational commitment

3.3.2.1 Meyer and Allen (1997) model of organisational commitment

The most recognised proponents of organisational commitment are Meyer and Allen (1990, 1991), and they influence the organisational commitment literature. According to Meyer and Allen (1990), organisational commitment is a psychological condition that indicates an individual's association with an organisation and thus has consequences for the decision to maintain membership with an organisation. Again, Meyer and Allen (1991) hold the assertion that the commitment of an individual to an organisation arises as a result of psychological feeling and loyalty, which is manifested based on their connection to the organisation. The model proposed

by Meyer and Allen (1991) with regard to organisational commitment effectively integrates Becker (1960), Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and Porter et al. (1974). Becker (1960) asserts that an employee's commitment tends to flourish when the employee continues to work in the same work settings thus far as there is the probability of exchange of valued reward within the organisation and that their resignation could cost them in a form of loss. Hence, employees receive higher benefits as long as they stay with the same organisation.

Despite all the facts about organisational commitment, the most influential development was made by Meyer and Allen (1990), who categorised organisational commitment into tri-dimensional components, namely, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) conceptualise organisational commitment using three dimensions, that is, affective, continuance and normative, which they further term a tri-dimensional model in the study. The tri-dimensional model assists in showing the different means of developing organisational commitment and the implications of employee behaviour in the workplace. Additionally, according to Meyer et al. (1993), the three main forms of the model could give a better understanding of the employee's level of commitment and the organisation in relation to the employment contract in the work settings.

(a) Affective organisational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1990) argue that affective commitment strengthens individual identification with a given organisation. This category of commitment is more psychological. Individuals committed affectively to an organisation will continuously work because they intend to work. To Meyer and Allen (1997), employee affective commitment is the individual's affective connection to acknowledge as part of and participate in the organisation. Kanter (1968) defines affective commitment as the connection of an individual's support of affective feelings towards the group. Affective commitment is a reference point for employees to show their identification with the organisation. Additionally, affective commitment is a way towards the organisation, which links the uniqueness of the individual to the organisation (Zhang & Jiang, 2020).

Studies by Potgieter and Ferreira (2018) revealed that affective commitment reflects the emotional reason for a worker to stay in the current work environment, and it is more of a feeling of loyalty, belongingness, warmth, being recognised and affection received by the employee in the organisation. These means of affection reflect a person's psychological needs and support and eventually increase the degree of affective commitment in the organisation. Meyer and

Allen's (1997) organisational commitment model affirm that the individual level of affective commitment is usually influenced by several factors, such as role clarity, challenging job, openness and support by management, group cohesiveness, fairness, personal recognition, constant feedback, creativity and dependability. Several people invest more into their career than is required to complete the job successfully, and this quality is the affective component of organisational commitment (Zhang & Jiang, 2020). Again, researchers believe that the strength of an employee's commitment to an organisation depends on the employee's expectations and needs, which match real experience (Thien & Adams, 2021). Therefore, these expectations inform the individual's decision to manage his/her career in the workplace.

An affective commitment is premised on the intrinsic personal desire that encompasses workers' emotional connection to the organisation, their identification with the organisation's participation in the operation, and the agreement to the objective of the organisation by the individual employees (Anitha, 2016; Meyer & Allen, 1990). According to Sow (2015), members of an organisation who are committed affectively stay with the organisation because they see their individual employment relationship as compatible with the values and goals of the organisation. Muthukuaran (2017) also contends that a person's fund of affectivity and emotions to a group at the workplace is affective attachment. Koc (2018) also posits that affective commitment is an approach or an orientation towards the organisations that connects or attaches the identity of the person to the organisation.

Affective commitment measures the degree to which workers feel passionately connected, recognised, and involved with the organisation and thus desire to remain at the organisation (Balassiano & Salless, 2012). More often than not, employees may be committed to the employing institutions because the individuals feel satisfied and develop an inherent conviction that they belong to the organisation (Kimura, 2013). When workers remain committed because they want to and not because they have to, affective commitment is said to have occurred (Kimura, 2013; Zhang & Jiang, 2020).

Despite the growing literature on organisational commitment, theoretically, the affective component of organisational commitment was comprehended as the process whereby the aspirations of the organisation and those of the workers progressively correspond. Again, from the perspective of Megfire (2019), the affective commitment composition of organisational commitment is considered one-sided because it involves being affectively committed to the aims and ideals of an organisation and to one's role in relation to aims and ideals, as well as to the

organisation for its own sake aside from its purely instrumental value. Megfire (2019) further stresses that certain workers exert much energy in their work far above what truly is required of them for the expected reward, which he ascribed to the affective component of organisational commitment.

Correspondingly, Bashir and Gani (2020) also submitted that affective commitment's causes are narrowed into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, the characteristics related to the kind of work being accomplished, and finally, work experience. They further posit that the variables of work experience associated with affective commitment include impartiality in the distributions of rewards, lucidity of roles and freedom from conflict, attentiveness of supervisors, justice in rewarding as against performance and challenges of the work itself, prospect for career development and involvement in decision-making. Again, Meyer and Allen (1997) made a similar submission that job challenges, role and goal simplicity, goal difficulty, openness by management, peer cohesion, equity, personal importance, feedback, participation and dependability are factors that impact affective commitment. That is, affective commitment development involves the organisation and internalization of organisational aims and ideas (Beck & Wilson, 2000). This kind of commitment, according to Sharm and Pareek (2019), is crucial for constructing an efficacious and sustainable organisation.

(b) Continuance commitment

The second dimension of the tri-dimensional component of organisational commitment is the continuance commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen (1990). Meyer and Allen (1997; 1990) established that continuance commitment comprises the cognizance of the costs of exiting the organisation. Thien and Adams (2021) agree with the definition given by Meyer and Allen (1997) and state that the associated cost of leaving the organisation in addition to the advantage related to sustained involvement with the organisation is continuance commitment.

Coetzee and Bester (2020) and Amaewhule and Mebom (2022) further considered continuance organisational commitment as individual instrumental attachment whereby the individual's connection to the organisation is based on economic benefits enjoyed after vigorous appraisal. Again, Meyer and Allen (1991, p. 67) emphasised that "employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so". Therefore, individuals may compare the benefits associated with staying and leaving their current job at a given point in time. Researchers argue that continuance commitment strongly

relies on the availability of alternatives and that when individuals are given better alternatives, the probability of leaving the organisation tends to be high (Coetzee & Bester, 2020; Li & Xie, 2022; Mahmood & Sahar, 2017; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Potgieter et al. (2019) further showed that continuance commitment is the psychological feeling that an employer perceives when he or she is threatened with the idea of an employee leaving the organisation. Organisations might have invested in the employee; therefore, when the threat of leaving exists, that could cost the organisation. Employees would at all costs remain with an organisation with good staff packages. Meyer and Allen (1991) postulate a clear difference between affective and continuance commitment. The difference is that in affective commitment, the employee tends to remain with the job as they are privy to the philosophy of the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2019).

Continuance commitment is premised on the mindfulness of the related costs of exiting an organisation. The probable associated costs of exiting an organisation entail the risk of wasting time and energy used in the attainment of noncommunicative skills, loss of attractive benefits, relinquishing privileges that bring long tenure of service, and the collapsing of family and subjective corporation (Megfire, 2019). Correspondingly, Fischer et al. (2020) posited that regarding the associated costs of exiting the organisation, employees with a continuance commitment mindset would progress in the absence of other job openings. According to Balassiano and Salles (2012), continuance commitment measures the degree to which workers stay in the organisation due to recognizing the costs that come with exiting the organisation. They further asserted that other factors such as the absence of some other job to substitute the one that they have left or having sentiments of personal detriments that accompany exiting one's job are substantially great.

An employee may commit to hiring an organisation because of the absence of better job replacements or repercussions connected to failure to commit (Muthukumaran, 2017). In continuance commitment, workers commit to hiring organisations due to the consequence they probably would face should they quit these organisations (Malaysia et al., 2020). Continuance commitment arises when workers commit not necessarily because they want to, but due to their need to (Mendes & Jesus, 2018). Continuance commitment could be seen as an instrumental attachment to the organisation, where the employees' association with the organisation is grounded on the assessment of the economic benefits from the employment contract (Dinc et al., 2019).

From the perspective of Pangil and Nasuridin (2019), continuance commitment is a structural phenomenon that happens as a result of individual–organisational transactions as well as the modifications one’s investment over time. Similarly, Meyer (1990) posited that accumulated investments and poor employment substitutes tend to force individuals to manage their line of action and are responsible for these individuals being committed because they need to. Megfire (2019) added that people remain in an organisation due to the investment they accrue due to the time spent in the organisation, not because they desire to. This is unlike affective commitment, wherein individual employees remain in the organisation because they desire to, and they identify with the organisation and its core goals and principles. Ahmad (2011), in contrast, contends that encouraging continuance commitment is wrong and could have a deleterious bearing on an organisation.

(c) Normative commitment

With regard to normative commitment, employees exhibit commitment as a result of certain ethical obligations (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). When a person feels that it is expedient for them to reciprocate after they have received certain benefits from an organisation, normative commitment is said to have occurred (Gelaidan & Ahmad, 2013). Megfira (2019) also viewed normative commitment as the entirety of normative pressures that have been internalized by individuals and thereby cause them to take actions that lead to the achievement of the goals and interests of an organisation. Again, Megfira (2019) continues to say that normative organisational commitment’s power is fueled by the rules that are acknowledged to govern the obligation to reciprocate between the organisation and its members.

The reciprocal duty is based on the social exchange theory propounded by Blau (1964), who suggests that an individual who receives benefits is bound by tough normative obligation and suggests that a person receiving a benefit is under a strong normative rule or duty to pay back the benefits to the organisation at some other time. Sharma and Dhar (2016) further argued that those workers subsequently have the impression of the obligation to pay back the benefits they have derived from the organisation by continuing as members of the organisations’ workforce.

The strength of normative organisational commitment is influenced when the organisation and its employees acknowledge the regulations that pertain to reciprocated responsibility existing between the two (Aisyah et al., 2022; Wilson et al., 2016). Normative commitment is more of an

obligation to remain employed in a chosen organisation, and it solely relies on one's belief in an organisation. This model is more of moral or ethical principles surrounding the individual. Employees are allowed to appreciate their continuous association with a particular organisation due to the idea of normative responsibility and commitment (Ross & Ali, 2017). The committed individuals have as regards their right to stay with an organisation, notwithstanding the level of development or accomplishment the organisation has given them over a given period in the organisation (Ben Mansour et al., 2017; Zhang & Jiang, 2020).

According to Coetzee et al. (2019), an employee shows a normative commitment even though such an employee may be dissatisfied with the organisation. Normative commitment is more of a mindset that tends to be more psychological. In conclusion, personal characteristics, including tenure, gender and ethnicity, are major dynamics that influence employees' level of organisational commitment (Van Dyk, 2012). This component of organisational commitment concerns the feeling of obligation to carry on with a contract of employment. This conviction of obligation to continue working with an organisation is reached through the internalization of normative pressures on the individual primarily to approach the organisation from the family and cultural perspectives or from the orientation given by the organisation such that being influential in the work environment can lead to an employee feeling a strong moral responsibility towards the organisation (Megfire, 2019).

Conversely, Haque et al. (2019) posited that when an organisation permits workers to receive awards in advance, normative commitment can also develop. Again, Muthukumaran (2017) posited that when these investments are identified, an employee is made to feel indebted to be committed to the organisation in anticipation of the recompense of such debt. Muthukuaran (2017) further contended that commitment behaviour is a socially acknowledged conduct that surpasses official and, or normative, anticipations connected to the object of commitment. According to Al-Yami et al. (2018), normative commitment also measures the degree to which workers have a moral duty to remain in the organisation and feel that they must stay in the organisation.

In addition to the aspiration to be committed and the aftermaths of leaving, workers might also commit to organisations because they feel morally obliged to the organisation (Al-Yami et al., 2018; Gelaidan & Ahmad, 2013; Megfira 2019; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018; Muthukumaran, 2017). To appreciate the dynamics of the three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1990), a relationship must be drawn to show a clearer link between the models. Table 3.5 indicates a relationship among the models developed by Meyer and Allen (1990).

Table 3.5*The Relationship between the Three-Component Model of Organisational Commitment*

Measurements of the models	Affective organisational commitment	Continuance organisational commitment	Normative organisational commitment	Authors & Dates
Meaning of the components	Refers to the emotional attachment, identification and involvement of the employee to an organisation.	Refers to the situation whereby the employee stays after evaluating the cost attached to leaving the organisation	Refers to the feeling of moral contractual obligation to the organisation	Meyer and Allen (1990)
Characteristics	Intrinsic attachment (emotional in nature)	Extrinsic benefits and rewards in	Both intrinsic and extrinsic indebtedness to the organisation	Meyer and Allen (1990); Scholl, (1981)
Relationship between employee and organisation	Employee desires to remain in the organisation	Employee cannot afford to leave and so remains in the organisation	The employee perceives moral obligation to remain within the organisation	Meyer and Allen (1990)
Contribution to the research	The affective shows the emotional feeling displayed by the employee in the organisation	Shows the employees intention to leave or stay with the organisation	Shows the level of reciprocity of loyalty displayed by the employee to the organisation	Meyer and Allen (1990)

Source: Author's own work

Randall and Cote's (1991) organisational commitment will be discussed in the next section.

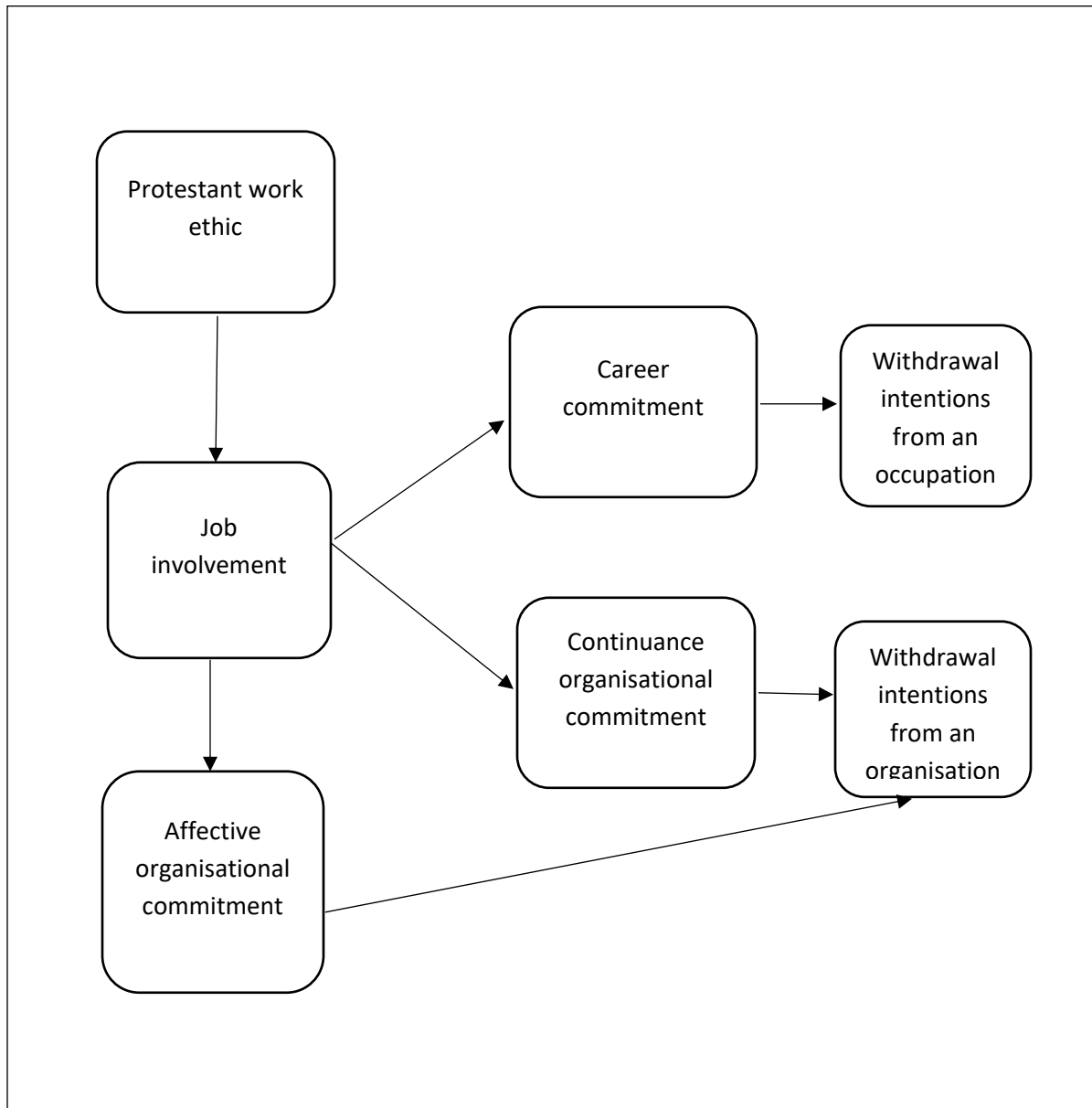
3.3.2.2 Commitment model developed by Randall and Cote (1991)

The multivariate model of organisational commitment developed by Randall and Cote (1991) proposes that employees exhibit a series of work commitments in multiple ways at the workplace concurrently based on acquired experience. According to Randall and Cote, the model is organised into five universally acceptable forms that indicate several aspects of employee attachments to an organisation. Hackett et al. (2001) believe that these levels of attachments are relatively organised in a sequential order that can be easily manipulated. According to Randall and Cote (1991), “organisational commitment, career salience, work group attachment, job involvement and protestant work ethics are the five main forms of work commitment” (p. 195).

Due to a lack of empirically tested evidence, Carmeli and Gefen (2005) and Cohen (1999) could not incorporate work-group attachment in their studies, which was done by Randall and Cote (1991). Carmeli and Gefen (2005) further explained that job involvement is the most influencing moderator of the relationship between protestant work ethics and Meyer and Allen (1991) models of organisational commitment. Similarly, Randall and Cote’s (1991) model suggests that job involvement, deemed a major factor, also influences both organisational commitment and individual career commitment. Therefore, the central premise of Randall and Cote’s model is that a better understanding of how work commitment is interrelated could help in the effective management of organisational commitment. The multivariate work commitment model proposed by Randall and Cote (1991) is pictorially presented in Figure 3.5 and further explained below.

Figure 3.5

Randall and Cote's (1991, p. 205) Organisational Commitment Model



Source: Author's own work

Figure 3.5 above could be explained further to establish the relevance of the model to reflect organisational commitment.

(a) Work group attachment

Work group attachment in the literature is believed to have a direct impact on the overall organisational commitment. According to Randall and Cote (1991), work group attachment connotes an employee's identification, loyalty and a sense of cohesiveness with other individuals in the organisational set-up. Mensele and Coetzee (2014) hold the opinion that the higher the social tie or relationship an individual develops in the organisation, the greater the level of commitment to work. Studies indicate that work attachment is the propensity to make stronger bonds with employees, which are mostly considered the basic human component of life in an organisation (Bowlby, 1991 as cited in Yip et al., 2018).

Research has found that an employee's attachment has generated additional evidence that attachment style positively correlates with job satisfaction and work turnover intentions (Lopez & Ramos, 2016; Tziner et al., 2014). Additionally, Schmidt (2016) confirms that work group attachment indicates an association between employee attachment style and organisational commitment in the sense that the probability of employee attachment style may relate differently to other commitment dimensions, such as affective, continuance and normative commitment.

(b) Protestant work ethics

According to Randall and Cote (1991), the Protestant work ethic is an integral aspect of commitment to work, as it plays a critical role in affecting the affective responses of an employee at work. Protestant work ethics have been researched over the years, and several authors view the concept differently. Furnham (1990) defined protestant work ethics as "a set of beliefs which mainly but not exclusively concern work" (p. 33). Protestant work ethics is a relatively dominant principle that shapes individuals' work attitudes towards the discharge of responsibility in the workplace throughout their lives (Mensele and Coetzee (2014). Similarly, Blood (1969, p. 196) refers to work ethics "as the extent to which a person feels that personal worth results from self-sacrificing work or occupational achievement". The core of this idea is the conviction that hard work is good and contributes to even greater motivation to work. Individuals who support the protestant work ethic consider hard work to be necessary and eventually lead to ascetic behaviour to succeed (Townsend et al., 2013).

Again, Townsend and Thompson (2014) hold the assertion that individuals with a higher level of work ethics tend to succeed and sustain their work, which in totality generates ascetic value in

their lives and finally leads to relaxation. Rusu (2018) conceptualises the protestant work ethic into four dichotomous dimensions comprising hard work, nonleisure, independence and asceticism. Clarence and George (2018) believe that the concept under consideration is readily a sign of virtue and personal satisfaction that the individual holds in the discharge of their duty, eventually leading to employee commitment in the organisation.

Therefore, the significance of protestant work ethics can be concluded from the belief that individual sustainability of work is inherently good and contributes to a greater willingness to work. Cohen (2003) further explained that the protestant work ethic is a multidimensional construct constituting sustained work and individual discipline, temperance, work diligence and the willingness for independency.

(c) Job involvement

Dalal et al. (2008) posit that job involvement as a model of organisational commitment is a work behaviour that constantly remains stable over a period of time. According to Alliger and Stone-Romero (1994), job involvement refers to “the degree to which one is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one’s present job” (p. 225). Randall and Cote (1991) further establish a relationship between job involvement and the protestant work ethic and propose that an individual with stronger work ethic can internalize his or her job. Therefore, in situations where the individual gets involved in the job, they eventually tend to be committed to the work as well as the organisation. Studies indicate that job involvement invariably leads to increased performance and commitment of employees and assists in promoting and achieving organisational goals (Pelkey, 2017; Vargheese & Praveen, 2014).

Again, Vargheese and Praveen (2014) hold the assertion that in situations where individuals at the workplace identify that their employment is central to their lives and not just a place to earn their remuneration, such individuals tend to have a higher level of job involvement, which eventually helps them feel satisfied and committed to the organisation. In this study, the concept of job involvement is conceptualised as social relationships that create a stronger sense of cohesiveness that shapes the psychological wellbeing of an employee towards the accomplishment of their job. Commitment and job involvement continue to be important predictors of organisational efficacy in the workplace (Mohsan et al., 2011). Therefore, employees’ efficacy greatly relies on their involvement and commitment to the objectives of the organisation.

(d) Career salience

According to Randall and Cote (1991), career salience can be defined as an important component of an individual career. Career salience in most literature is considered the critical aspect of one's working life and shows how individuals care for their life at the workplace (Savickas 2002). Morrow (1983) believes that career salience is more of career commitment and that when employers are much concerned about the employee's career progression, such individuals tend to replicate to the organisation a higher level of commitment. Randall and Cote (1991) establish a strong relationship between career salience and job involvement. In contrast, research indicates no specific relationship between organisational commitment and career salience and that such identification is deemed to be incompatible (Aranya & Feerris, 1984). Therefore, to explain further, individual employees may have the dual effect of having high in both organisational commitment and career salience, both low and high in the two constructs (organisational commitment and career salience).

(e) Organisational commitment

According to O' Reilly (1989, p. 17), organisational commitment is defined as "an individual's psychological bond to the organisation, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values and norms of the organisation". Again, Cohen (2003) postulates that the commitment of employees is both the intrinsic and extrinsic force that binds an employee to a given cause of action that is deemed relevant to the goals of the organisation. Based on these ideologies of organisational commitment, it can be concluded that organisational commitment is the degree to which the employee desires to maintain membership in relation to the philosophy of the organisation. Hence, several links have been established with regard to organisational commitment. Randall and Cote (1991) and Mensele and Coetzee (2014) iterated that there is a direct association between job involvement, organisational commitment and workgroup attachment.

Mowday et al. (1977) hold the opinion that organisational commitment is influenced by four major factors consisting of situational factors that relate to the job, personal factors, role-relatedness, and structural characteristics. According to Steers (1977), situational factors have been considered the most potentially important set of antecedents of organisational commitment. Therefore, job involvement highly influences the commitment level of employees in the organisation or the workplace.

Ghosh et al. (2013) realised that it is important for employees to spend the rest of their careers with their current organisation, to demonstrate their desire to belong to the organisation and to feel the need to reciprocate with the organisation. As a result, employees with a stronger affective and normative commitment to their employer will have fewer plans to leave.

In summary, Randall and Cote's model is premised on the fact that organisational commitment is mostly influenced by work group attachment, protestant work ethics, job involvement and career salience and thus inform the commitment of employees to the organisation. In the case of work group attachment, individuals develop a higher level of commitment to the values of their work and a strong loyalty to the organisation. Additionally, in situations where individual protestant work ethics tend to be high, commitment at the workplace becomes high as well. Additionally, career salience has a direct impact on the commitment of employees in the organisation.

Finally, the dominant or the topmost influencer of organisational commitment is job involvement. Furthermore, Randall and Cote (1991) and Carmeli and Gefen (2005) opine that job involvement adversely influences affective commitment, continuance commitment and career commitment.

The next model to be reviewed is O' Reilly and Chatman's (1986) commitment model.

3.3.2.3 O' Reilly and Chatman's (1986) organisational commitment model

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) assert that an individual's psychological attachment towards an organisation is known as commitment. Consistent with this view, Ezirim et al. (2012) postulated that being identified with an organisation is referred to as organisational commitment. Thus, organisational commitment is the emotional mindset that connects employees to the organisation (Meyer et al., 2012).

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment based on the work of Kelman postulates that commitment represents employees' attitudes towards the organisation. O'Reilly and Chatman further stated that these attitudes are developed via the following stages: compliance, identification, and internalisation (Johnson et al., 2010).

(a) Compliance

Compliance, being the first stage, relates to an employee's acceptance of the impact of others generally to gain something from them through compensation or promotion. Employees thus stay

with the organisation because of the costs and benefits (Beck & Wilson, 2000; Coetzee & Botha, 2012). The costs include leaving the organisation and a lack of alternative employment opportunities, while the potential benefits include attractive compensation packages, nontransferable skills and seniority-based privileges (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). Organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the continuance element of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

(b) Identification

Identification occurs when the employee acknowledges the power of others to sustain a fulfilling self-defining connection with the organisation. The social values of the organisation are accepted by the employee to have a fulfilling relationship (Manetje, 2009). Coetzee and Botha (2012) posit that the employee thus feels obliged to continue employment with the organisation by fulfilling duties and remaining loyal (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012). Meyer and Allen (1997) believe that organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the normative element of commitment.

(c) Internalisation

Internalisation occurs when the employee discovers that the values and beliefs of the organisation are in congruence with his or her identity. O'Reilly and Chatman (as cited in Wymer & Rundle-Thiele, 2016) argue that employees' psychological attachment to an organisation is predicted on the congruence between the employees' and the organisation's values and beliefs. Ferreira et al. (2010) also believe that individuals connect emotionally with an organisation because they see their employment as harmonious with their values, objectives and goals (Ezirim et al., 2012; Qaisar et al., 2012). Manetje (2009) and Meyer and Allen (1997) postulated that organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the affective element of commitment because individuals develop a sense of belonging and a willingness to perform intra- and extra roles needed. Employees with high affective commitment feel a strong longing to continue their membership with the organisation (Lambert et al., 2015).

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model provides evidence that identification and internalisation have negative connections to turnover. Thus, turnover connects positively to pro-social behaviours and actions. Compliance indicates the opposite and contributes uniquely to the prediction of turnover intention. Meyer and Allen (1997) nonetheless believe that the impact of

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model has diminished because of the difficulty in differentiating between identification and internalisation.

The final model to be discussed is Etzioni's (1961) model of organisational commitment.

3.3.2.4 Etzioni's (1961) model of organisational commitment

According to Etzioni's (1961) model, organisational commitment may arguably be categorised into three multidimensional perceptions. These categories include moral commitment, calculative commitment and alienated commitment. Potgieter et al. (2019) further offered supportive evidence of the affective character of moral and alienative commitment. Although the evidence is ambivalent, there is support for the independence of moral and alienative commitment. They further indicate the differential association of the three dimensions of organisational commitment with related aspects of organisational behaviour. The perceptual categories of organisational commitment are further discussed in the section below.

(a) Moral commitment

Etzioni (1961) observed moral commitment as emanating from a representative compliance structure. Moral commitment signifies one of the two affective outlooks of organisational commitment (Etzioni, 1961). According to Jaros et al. (2017), the most appropriate way to differentiate organisational commitment from the other models is through acceptance and recognition of organisational goals. Ross and Ali (2017) and Triana (2017) assert that moral commitment can be seen as a type of organisational identification that shows how committed and loyal an employee is towards the organisation. Again, Wiener (1982) branded such forms of affective organisational attachment as moral commitment. Thus, measures such as those of Hall et al. (1970) and Porter et al. (1974) are presently intended to operationalise affective dimensions of commitment equivalent to Etzioni's moral involvement.

(b) Calculative commitment

Etzioni (1961) believes that calculative commitment epitomizes the instrumental view of organisational commitment. Etzioni labelled calculative commitment as a connection of distinctive fulfilment based on replacement. Research theorists contend that the individual level of commitment is dependent on the inducement attached to the roles and responsibilities (Porter, et al., 1974; Etzioni, 1961). Hence, inducement is a contributory factor for employee performance,

which needs to be well calculated and implemented throughout the organisation. Additionally, Etzioni (1961) asserts that once there is a calculative commitment, it tends to induce the employee to have a sense of attachment to the organisation. Theoretically, the sense of attachment exhibited from the side of the employee has its root in the theory of social exchange (Bernard, 1938; Wiener, 1982).

Therefore, commitment considered calculative may arguably be conceived as significantly distinct from affective organisational commitment. Furthermore, employee recognition in the organisation may be replicated due to membership maintenance, and this can be influenced as a result of moral connection to the organisation (Etzioni, 1961). In contrast, the willingness exhibited by the employee to be retained in the organisation as a member is negatively correlated with affective commitment.

(c) Alienated commitment

Alienated commitment in the literature signifies the level of emotional association with an organisation. Alienated commitment also emanates from a perceived absence of alternatives. According to Etzioni (196, p. 47), "alienated commitment is perceived as a foundation for effective organisational commitment and that employee's level of commitment to an organisation is considered to be an outcome of two major elements which include (1) lack of power over the internal organisational environment and (2) the perceived absence of alternatives for organisational commitment". Etzioni further contends that an individual's perception of randomness eventually provides a sense of loss control in an organisation.

There is a contention that individuals who tend to be much alienated with regard to organisation tend to lack control over the external environment (Etzioni, 1961). An employee who is alienatively committed to the organisation may arguably not be willing to leave the organisation due to a lack of options or fear of serious financial loss. Therefore, alienative commitment is an optimistic organisational association that is distinguished through low control of purpose to satisfy organisational demands and to preserve organisational membership. Table 3.6 shows the overall comparisons among the four major models relating to organisational commitment.

Table 3.6

Comparison of Organisational Commitment Models

	Meyer and Allen's (1990) tri-dimensional model of commitment	Randall and Cote's (1991) model of commitment	O' Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model of commitment	Etzioni's (1961) model of commitment
Conceptualisation of the model	Described as a multidimensional approach to organisational commitment that describes three forms of organisational commitment.	Describes as a multivariate construct with five main components.	Described as a multidimensional element which focuses on the individual's psychological attachment to an organisation.	Described as a tri-dimensional model involving three components.
Indicators of the model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Affective commitment (2) Continuance commitment (3) Normative commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Protestant work ethics (2) Career commitment (3) Continuance commitment (4) Affective commitment (5) Job involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Compliance (2) Identification (3) Internalisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Moral commitment (2) Calculative commitment (3) Alienated commitment

Previous studies	Connected to extended work carried out by Meyer and Allen (1987).	Connected to research carried out by Morrow (1983) indicating that not much studies have been conducted to incorporate work commitment.	Related to Kelman's (1985) study on career attitude and behaviour	Connected to a borrowed concept from Marx (1844) and extended work of Seaman (1959).
Characteristics of the models	<p>Employees maintain employment with the organisation based on three premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Because they want to. (2) Because they need to. (3) Because they feel obligated to do so. 	Proposes a strong positive association among the five identified indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Changes/adopting to attitudes (2) Establishing and maintaining relationships at work. (3) Accepting attitudes and behaviours that support the organisational values. 	Employees show intensity of intentions to meet organisational demands coupled with intentions to be retained as organisational members.

How to achieve organisational commitment	Attained through the enhancement of emotional, physical and mental attachment to an organisation.	Attained through an examination of the relationships among different forms of work commitment.	Attained through individual's attachment to the organisation.	N/A
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Source: Author's own work

3.3.3 Integration of organisational commitment theoretical models

With regard to the theoretical contributions, research has revealed that individual career progression depends on the level of commitment to the organisation. Again, research shows that organisational commitment has received substantial recognition from the days of Becker (1960) through the existence of Meyer and Allen (1997) and Somers (2009). Organisational commitment continues to be a fascinating concept in the arena of organisational behaviour and human resource management (Cohen, 2003; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Research has found that the strongest predictor of individual attitude and behaviour towards the organisation is dependent on the commitment level, which eventually determines the withdrawal tendency, turnover behaviours and organisational behaviour (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Morrow, 1993).

Again, owing to the changing nature of the world of work, such as extensive socioeconomic changes that have occurred over the decades, traditional theories in the field of organisational commitment no longer provide a meaningful framework for modern decision-making and still rely on the models developed in the 20th century (Maguire, 2001; Mahal, 2012; Singh & Gupta, 2015). The study further conceptualised organisational commitment from different perspectives. Mathieu and Zajac (1990), upon consistently reviewing the divergent views on the definitions and measures of organisational commitment, concluded that organisational commitment is seen as an individual's connection with or link to their organisation. Andrew (2017) believes that when employees are emotionally attached to their career, they tend to have little relationship with their coworkers and the organisation, and they put up improved performance and properly serve the organisation after their career ambitions are achieved.

In establishing the relationship between organisational commitment and career self-management, four models comprising Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, Randall and Cote's (1991) model, O' Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model, and Etzioni's (1961) model were considered to be relevant to career self-management. Based on the divergent views on the concept of "organisational commitment", the study adopted the model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1997). According to them, organisational commitment "is a psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organisation" (p. 67). They further assert that organisational commitment is greatly influenced by the three key models: affective, continuance and normative commitments. Among the four models presented above, Meyer and Allen's (1997) model is considered to be the most

current and, thus, more applicable to modern-day practice. Again, Meyer and Allen's (1997) model was deemed appropriate because of the restrictions and limitations connected to the other three models, as mentioned in the preceding sections.

Next, socio-demographic variables that influence organisational commitment were discussed.

3.3.4 Socio-demographic variables influencing organisational commitment

Research indicates that age, gender, marital status and job levels are socio-demographic variables that may arguably influence the development of employees' level of commitment towards an organisation (Yeves et al., 2019; Van Dyke et al., 2013). The section below further reveals how socio-demographic variables influence organisational commitment.

3.3.4.1 Age

Several studies have been carried out with regard to organisational commitment and demographic characteristics, especially age (Ebeh et al., 2017; Huang et al., 2020; Khodadadei & Salehi, 2016). Scholars have made extensive progress in the last decades examining the effect of socio-demographic variables such as age on organisational commitment. Additionally, it was established that age is positively related to organisational commitment; moreover, employees in the older age bracket tend to be more committed than youth and as a result of not having challenges with their retirement packages (Potgieter et al., 2019; Stirpe et al., 2018). Again, Amangala's (2013) and Katz et al.'s (2019) results indicated a positive relationship between age and organisational commitment. Similarly, as individuals grow older, their sense of maturity and commitment tend to be high due to family obligations (Akintayo et al., 2010; Yeves et al., 2019). There was a significant relationship between age and organisational commitment (Katz et al., 2019; Park et al., 2014).

3.3.4.2 Gender

Research indicates that employee commitment either positively or negatively correlates with gender (Jeewandara & Kumari, 2021; Messner, 2013; Shyamsunder et al., 2015). According to Khan et al. (2013), the gender of the employee could affect absenteeism, performance, intention to leave the organisation, job satisfaction and the commitment displayed in the organisation. They believe that in situations where both females and males dominate in the organisation, the energy level exhibited at the work premises tends to be high, hence increasing productivity and a higher

level of commitment. Again, research indicates that men are more committed to their organisation due to the family and financial obligation on them compared to their feminine counterparts (Ebeh et al., 2015; Jeewandara & Kumari, 2021; Mensah & Adjei, 2015).

Furthermore, conflicting ideas exist between gender and employee commitment differences, and Khalili and Asmawi (2012) and Leszczynska (2018) concluded that males and females have relatively the same affective commitment level, but in the case of normative commitment, females show a higher level of commitment than their male counterparts. Mensah and Adjei (2015) and Sehunoe et al. (2015) indicate that women are less committed to their organisation, and others also suggested that some women are more committed than men. They further reported no differences among genders in the area of being loyal and committed to their organisations. Furthermore, Sehunoe et al. (2015) revealed no statistically significant association between organisational commitment and gender.

3.3.4.3 Marital status

Several studies indicate the effect of spousal support on commitment (Amin et al., 2017; Heikkinen & Lamsa, 2017; Oladejo & Awolusi, 2018). According to Ferguson et al. (2016) and Patel et al. (2008), varying studies on the definition of spousal support exist and are the direct and indirect encouragement that one receives from partners, peers and spouses. Khan et al. (2013) assert that married spouses are more loyal and committed than their divorced or single counterparts, and this is a result of married spouses having more family responsibilities and obligations than their counterparts. They further believe that to have job stability and security, such individuals must be committed to their respective organisations.

Therefore, it can be concluded that marital status is directly associated with organisational commitment. Again, empirical studies show that marital status plays a pivotal role in enhancing employees' commitment level to an organisation (Saifuddin & Nawaz, 2012). A meta-analytical study was conducted by Cogaltaya (2015) on the influence of marital status on the organisational commitment of teachers in Turkey, and it was found that married spouses are more committed than their single counterparts due to several obligations to married couples. Again, age and gender also have a mediating role in enhancing the commitment and loyalty level of the employee towards the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives.

3.3.4.4 Job level

A study conducted by Suman and Srivastava (2012) shows that job levels in an organisation are important indicators in determining the commitment level of employees. Again, their studies found that managers in the middle level enjoy higher organisational status due to their tenure of service and having the authority and power to control work situations, which eventually increases their commitment level. In support, Van Dyk et al. (2013) concluded in their study that operational managers experience a decreased level of organisational commitment, and this is as a result of the perception that they have less to offer when exiting the organisation compared to their senior-level counterparts. According to Ferreira et al. (2010), supervisors who believe in affective commitment have a significantly higher score than other employees. Again, they assert that managers in higher positions in an organisation exhibit a higher level of normative commitment than their lower-level counterparts. Clinton-Baker (2013) carried out similar research and showed that there is a significant difference in affective, continuance and normative commitments.

3.3.5 Evaluation: Practical implications for career self-management

The findings of the study on organisational commitment have important implications for career self-management in the new world of work. Career self-management policies and practices intend to focus on the development and management of individuals towards the achievement of organisational objectives (Mani, 2020). Hirschi et al. (2020) and King (2004) indicate that the career management of individuals in this current new world of work has resulted in human resource practitioners placing much emphasis as well as concern on individuals' psychological attachment to their organisation. Hennings et al. (2021) and Sahi and Mahajan (2014) assert that building and maintaining a competitive and committed workforce assist in increasing organisational efficiency, building strong market shares and increasing organisational profitability. According to Goldsby et al. (2021), a committed workforce is mostly considered an asset to an organisation, and organisations must carve stronger policies and practices in human resource management that bind the employees and operations of the organisation.

Further research conducted by Maheswari and Krishnan (2014) asserts that it is important for organisations to allow their employees to have the opportunity to learn and enhance their competences, which leads to their commitment to the organisation. Again, they believe that development opportunities such as career training allow employees to adjust easily to the challenges of their current jobs. However, organisations that believe in the career well-being of

employees should support such individuals in their career paths (Hirschi, 2021; Ndzube, 2013). Wickramaratne (2021) opines that the levels of employee commitment are influenced by several uncontrollable factors, such as social, economic and psychological variables.

According to Coetzee and Bester (2021) and Lee (2020), organisations can attract and retain committed employees by fulfilling the basic and special needs of individuals in an organisation. Thus, it is evident that organisations need to develop and implement career strategies that enhance an employee's employability attributes and increase organisational commitment. Moreover, Culpepper (2011) suggests that the three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) defines organisational commitment in terms of employee retention. According to him, individuals will remain with an organisation because they want to, need to or feel obligated to do so. Allen and Meyer (1990) believe that commitment is strongly linked to turnover, and strongly committed employees are less likely to leave an organisation. Successful organisations have come to realise and understand the importance of career management with high levels of organisational commitment (Peters et al., 2014). Organisational commitment serves as a source of competitive advantage in sustaining the growth of individual careers in the work environment. Peters et al. (2014) identify improving job satisfaction and organisational commitment as a foremost challenge to employees' careers. Sahi and Mahajan (2014) describe commitment as an anticipated characteristic that should be nurtured in employees, as committed employees are less likely to leave an organisation than uncommitted employees (Babaei et al., 2021).

3.4 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS, SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Employees who are equipped in their career bring in diverse skills and characteristics to an organisation (Deas, 2017). The emergence of technology in organisations has compelled employees to develop a wide range of competencies, including the ability to analyse complex information, innovation, creativity and social skills through career management (Colbert et al., 2016; Potgieter, 2021). This competency, such as the skills, could be enhanced when the individual understands the importance of managing one's career. This is usually ignited through a proper and well-planned career. Career scholars have indicated that a successful career is influenced by one's psychosocial career pre-occupation which involves career establishment, career adaptation and work/life adjustment (Brewer, 2020; Potgieter, 2019; Rizal et al., 2021; Zhang & Bowen, 2021).

Studies indicate that one's career can be connected to the kind of workplace friendship built at the organisation (Coetzee & Bester, 2021; Ferreira, 2019; Potgieter, 2021). Workplace friendships are an essential mechanism for sustaining individuals' careers (Potgieter, 2019). With the infusion of COVID-19, social distancing and the 'new normal' of working from home, reduced social support and the opportunity to invest in workplace friendships, Coetzee et al. (2017) proposed that employees should develop coping resources to deal with their career challenges such as loss of job amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is now considerable evidence signifying the benefits to the organisation of having a strongly committed workforce (Saripudin & Kurnia, 2021). At present, however, individuals seeking to gain personal career growth can do so across different organisations. If such opportunities are lacking within their current organisation, it makes organisational commitment less salient to these individuals (Abbas & Kumari 2021). On the other hand, the loss of such talent is harmful to organisations; thus, organisations strive to prevent such talent loss by developing and ensuring a committed workforce. Keeping employees committed to the organisation is a top priority for many contemporary organisations (Madhani, 2021; Murray & Holmes, 2021). Especially in times of economic catastrophes and job cuts, committing top performers to the organisation becomes a challenge. Organisations that fail to accomplish this will have reduced resources for the capability of competing in the future (Saripudin & Kurnia, 2021).

According to Agarwal et al. (2022) and Baruch and Sullivan (2022), individuals are becoming increasingly responsible for managing their own careers and sustaining their own careers; therefore, organisations have to work harder to generate organisational commitment. The most puzzling and challenging issue facing organisations in current dispensation is employee career management (Aburumman et al., 2022; Mineva et al., 2020; Sulbout et al., 2021). Employees who are much concerned with the management of their own career believe that there are several benefits for the individual as well as the organisation, including career satisfaction, improved productivity, a higher level of creativity and professionalism in their relations with other colleagues at the workplace (Zhou et al., 2021). To keep pace with ongoing challenges such as governmental regulations, compensation and general initiatives, other organisations have seen massive increases in the consolidations of industries and mergers. These changes are mostly unexpected, and they tend to negatively affect an individual's career (Kong et al., 2020).

In recent studies, career-related experiences and psychosocial career resources have tended to assist individuals in the realisation of their career needs (Joshi et al., 2021; Kim & Smith, 2021;

McAlexander et al., 2022; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016; Zacher & Rudolph, 2022). Studies, again, show that an understanding of the key role of motivators, either intrinsic or extrinsic and psychosocial career resources may strengthen or weaken the career relationship (Ding & Yu, 2020; Shin & Hur, 2021). In this regard, practical value may help assist employees in managing their careers in the current world of work.

Career self-management in higher educational institutions is the major focus of the study, and it is intended to establish a relationship among the constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Higher educational institutions in Ghana tend to have a lower level of organisational commitment (Gabal & Elhussiney., 2020; Guo et al., 2021) and thus have resulted in such institutions being unable to retain academic staff for a longer period. Again, the management and development of staff careers at higher educational institutions are not well addressed, especially their conditions of service, and thus affect their performance and intention to leave those institutions (Guo et al., 2021).

It is thus believed that career self-management has received much attention in most literature, and there is a dearth of research on how individuals perceive the establishment of the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment from the Ghanaian perspective. Studies conducted by Baranchenko et al. (2020) revealed that career orientation influences the disposition of the individual with regard to how one prepares themselves towards challenges in the world of work. This is mostly connected to psychosocial career pre-occupation. Psychosocial career pre-occupations according to (Coetzee & Govender, 2020), indicate the preparedness of an individual during the conception of a career in the mind of that individual. Again, respectful working relationships are a fundamental basis for workplace wellbeing and satisfaction that individuals could achieve, but it is believed to be difficult to achieve due to the many differences existing among individuals at the workplace (Walton, 2021).

There is considerable evidence showing the importance attached to organisations that are able to attract strongly committed individuals in the workplace and understand the sustainability of their careers in the workplace (Sibunruang & Kawai, 2021). Current research conducted by Van Osch and Schaveling (2020) revealed that employees seeking to gain personal career growth can do so across different organisations based on how prepared they are in the world of work. Moreover, when opportunities cease in the current workplace, it eventually makes the individual have a lower

level of commitment in the discharge of their jobs. The critical factors that influence individual career management in an organisation are summarised in Table 3.7. The factors identified include career establishment, career adaptation, work-life adjustment, friendship prevalence, friendship opportunity, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

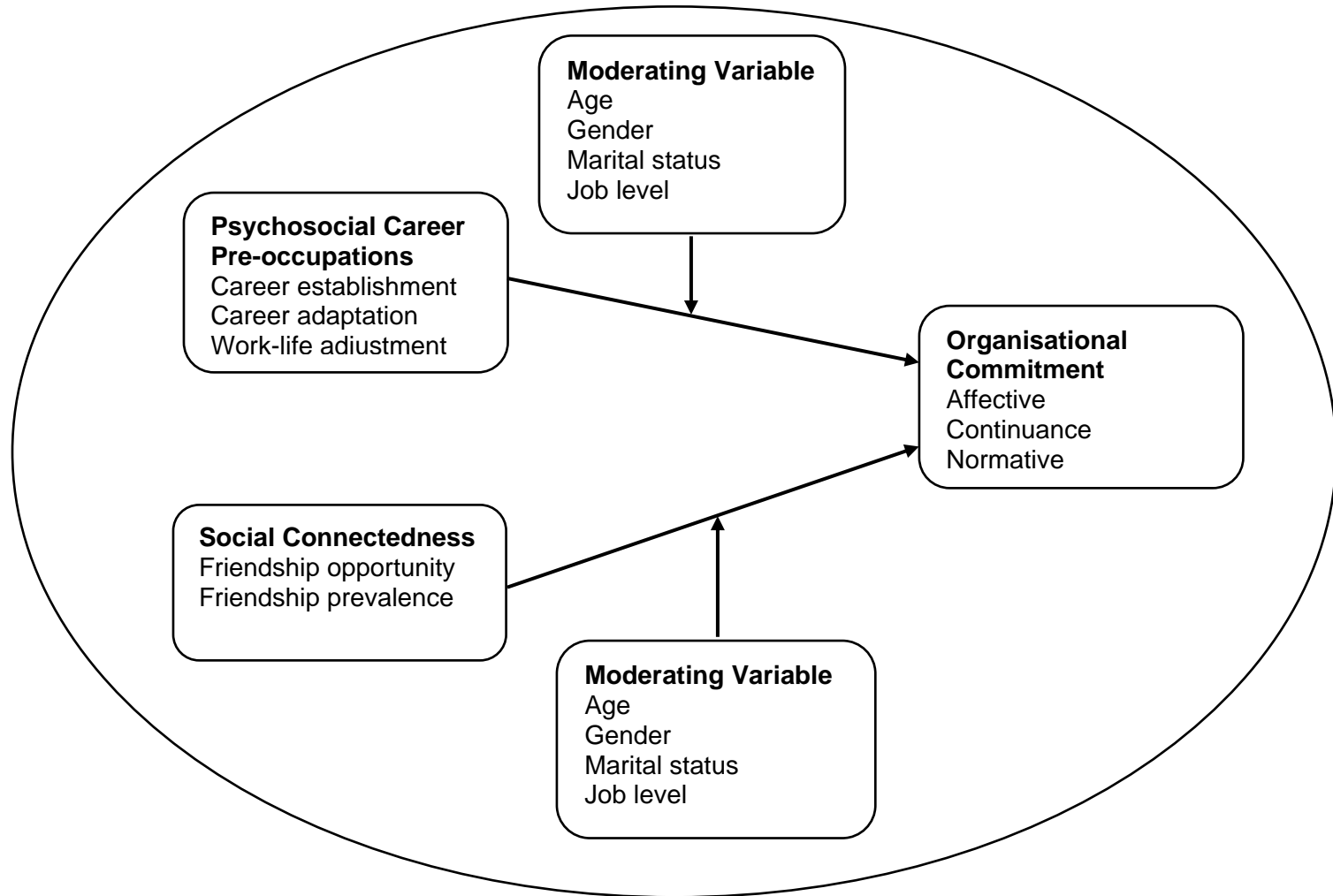
The purpose of this review under Chapter 3 was to provide an understanding of the three main constructs that are deemed relevant to proactive career self-management. The chapter conceptualises constructs such as psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and further discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the constructs.

The theoretical integration in this study tries to explore whether a theoretical relationship exists among psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This section tries to address the theoretical integration and is aimed at answering research objective 3, that is, to conceptualise the theoretical relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment and to assess whether an integrated proactive career profile can be constructed that may be used to inform proactive career self-management practices.

Based on the theoretical evidence provided, this study focused on confirming the existence of a relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment in the new world of work. Figure 3.6 depicts the overall hypothesised relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Figure 3.6:

Overall Hypothesized Relationships among Psychosocial Career Pre-Occupations, Social Connectedness and Organisational Commitment in the New World of Work.



Source: Author's own work

3.4.1 Career self-management in the new world of work

Career scholars assert that individuals' career scenery has become more multifaceted, vibrant and open, and career theory indicates signs of moving in that direction as well (Lodi et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2020). Careers have changed radically over the last two decades due to economic, social, technological and political changes. In most traditional career cycles, issues of upwards mobility in a single hierarchy and rapid career changes have increasingly been replaced by boundaryless careers that are considered fairly unpredictable and uncontrollable (Hewapathirana & Almasri, 2021; Rudolph & Zacher, 2021). It has become evident that building a portable repertoire of skills, knowledge and abilities assists in enhancing one's competitive edge and eventually maintains the organisations' market value (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022; Boyle, 2022).

3.4.1.1 Psychosocial career pre-occupations

The construct of psychosocial career pre-occupations was conceptualised in section 3.2 of this chapter and depicted in Figure 3.1. Coetzee's (2014) theoretical model was discussed in detail, and the subscales of career establishment preoccupations, career adaptation preoccupations and work-life adjustment preoccupations were explained. Employees at different stages in their career development have different psychosocial career pre-occupations; psychosocial career pre-occupations might assist in determining the levels of satisfaction with various career factors of employees with different psychosocial career preoccupations.

3.4.1.2 Social connectedness

The construct social connectedness was defined and explained as in Figure 3.6, and all the subscales (friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity) were explained in detail in Chapter 3. Factors such as age, gender, marital status and job level were considered as factors that influence the development of social connectedness at the workplace and eventually have an impact on the career of individuals. Career scholars hold the assertion that individuals who embrace a positive level of workplace friendship are able to manage and sustain their careers.

3.4.1.3 Organisational commitment

The construct organisational commitment was defined and explained as in Table 3.6, and all the subelements (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) were explained in-depth in Chapter 3. The factors influencing the development of organisational commitment were identified and discussed as age, gender, marital status and job level. If an

individual shows signs of commitment and has a positive outlook in their career life and within the work context, he or she will probably find it easier to fit within the organisation. The reason for this is that individuals with a positive mindset might feel a sense of belonging and might be much more committed towards the organisation and might be less inclined to leave the organisation.

Additionally, the relationships among the constructs psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment were explored extensively. Figure 3.6 provides a conceptual overview of the constructs under consideration and how they interrelate with one another on a theoretical ground. The study hypothesised that employees' psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment, career adaptation and work-life adjustment) will influence the other two constructs, notably social connectedness (friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity) and organisational commitment (affective, continuance and normative).

This study deemed it necessary to investigate the nexus among the various subelements of each of the three constructs, that is, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. It was hoped that this would provide human resource practitioners with important insights into the nexus among the various constructs and ultimately indicate the actions required to build the careers of employees. The hypothesised relationships among the constructs, based on information assembled from the literature review, are outlined in Figure 3.6. The hypothesised integrated nexus between the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment constructs are illustrated in Table 3.7 according to their dimensions, namely, individual, practical and organisational. Human resource practitioners and industrial psychologists could use this theoretical relationship to formulate meaningful career strategies for employees from different career phases. This could ultimately enhance the management of one's career in an organisation. Additionally, to be of greater assistance to human resource practitioners and industrial psychologists, this study developed a theoretically tested career self-management profile, illustrated in Figure 3.6 and summarised in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Career Pre-occupations, Social Connectedness and Organisational Commitment Career Self-Management Profile Constituting Psychosocial.

Career management	self-occupations	Psychosocial career pre-occupations	Social connectedness	Organisational commitment
At individual level	✓ Career establishment pre-occupations	✓ Career adaptation pre-occupations	✓ Friendship opportunity	✓ Affective commitment
	✓ Work/life career adjustment		✓ Friendship prevalence	✓ Normative commitment
				✓ Continuance commitment
At organisational level	✓ Career establishment pre-occupations	✓ Career adaptation pre-occupations	✓ Friendship opportunity	✓ Affective commitment
	✓ Work/life career adjustment		✓ Friendship prevalence	✓ Normative commitment
				✓ Continuance commitment
Implications of the constructs for the study	The psychosocial career pre-occupations have the potential to assist in determining the levels at which individuals within the work environment establish, adapt and adjust preparing for a given career.		Social connectedness has the potential of influencing individual's career, based on the level of friendship created in the workplace.	Organisational commitment tends to assist employees in the workplace based on friendly and conducive work environment; helps to develop a stronger career path.

Source: Author's own work

Based on the hypothesised theoretical models, the researcher formulated the following theoretical hypotheses:

3.4.2 Theoretical relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness

Research conducted by Deas (2018) shows that individuals at different stages of their career have different psychosocial career pre-occupations and that these differences might assist such employees in making satisfactory career choices. Again, according to Coetzee and Schreuder (2018), proactive career behaviour helps to construct an individual's career by increasing the fit between such an individual and the situation confronted at a time and eventually informed by one's career pre-occupations. Research depicts that self-determination theory, which is opined by Deci and Ryan (2000), shows that a state of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be achieved by trying to satisfy the needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness. Self-determination theory further echoed that the needs above offer a meta-theoretical lens for explaining how an employee experiences psychosocial career pre-occupations. Additionally, studies address the nexus between psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness. Research has revealed that career pre-occupations address the need for autonomy, whereas social connectedness addresses relatedness in the workplace. Workplace relatedness, notably social connectedness, has a significant positive influence on career pre-occupation (Bester et al., 2019; Collie et al., 2018; Kirdok & Bolukbasi, 2018; Potgieter et al., 2019).

3.4.3 Theoretical relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment

Individuals in a workplace setting with a well-developed psychosocial career pre-occupations profile might show a stronger feeling of commitment towards the organisation, notably affective commitment (Deas, 2018). An individual who plans his or her career makes certain decisions based on this planning, explores new opportunities and has the confidence to implement these decisions to carry out the activities needed to accomplish his or her career objectives, and this in turn helps to establish and sustain one's career. A relationship may exist between psychosocial career pre-occupations including career establishment pre-occupation, career adjustment pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupation and organisational commitment, including affective, normative and continuance commitment. Studies show that an individual might be more committed to the organisation on an emotional (continuance) level and that such an individual will also not decide to quit his current job due to the cost associated with leaving the organisation (Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018; Ferreira, 2019). Additionally, on the normative level, such individuals may have a stronger sense of responsibility due to a well-developed career pre-occupation.

3.4.4 Theoretical relationship between social connectedness and organisational commitment

Studies conducted by several researchers indicate that workplace connectivity is a deliberate relationship that stems among members of an organisation and that the kind of relationship created at the workplace connects individuals and the organisation in ensuring employee trust and respect for the organisation and hence organisational commitment (Choi et al., 2020; Coetzee et al., 2019; Gatling et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). The results from studies by Li et al. (2021) show that affective commitment mediates the relationship between supervisors' workplace relationships and employee proactive behaviour. Additionally, it is believed that when a supervisor-employee relationship is built on credibility and integrity, employees are inspired to engage in behaviors that may be considered constructive, and such individuals go beyond the expectations of the organisation and apparently lead to organisational commitment. Research shows that there may be a relationship between workplace connectivity (social connectedness) and organisational commitment. This means that when employees at the workplace are treated well and given respect and recognition by their supervisors, such employees will tend to be committed to the objectives of the organisation.

According to Hui et al. (2015), workplace friendship provides emotional support to employees and thereby improves work commitment and positively impacts work-related outcomes such as proactive work engagement. Finally, the argument stems from various studies that workplace friendship moderates the inverse relationship between supervisors' behaviour and affective commitment (Li et al., 2021). This relationship is premised on attachment theory, which presupposes that employees who receive inconsistent support from their supervisors are more likely to become preoccupied with their own attachment needs and hence have a negative commitment to the organisation. In a similar vein, subordinates who do not receive friendly support or attachment may be resistant to supervisors as a result of previous unsupportive relationships.

3.4.5. Hypothetical moderating role of socio-demographic variables on psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Research hypothesis 3: Socio-demographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Research hypothesis 3 assumed that employees from diverse socio-demographic groups moderate significantly in connection to their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and their commitment to the organisation they find themselves.

Several research studies revealed that employees' socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, race, marital status and job level, have a significant moderating effect on the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment (Arya et al., 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Bester et al., 2019; Coetzee et al., 2019; Callea et al., 2016; Deas, 2017; Gatling et al., 2020; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kung et al., 2018; Mishra & Kumar, 2017; Ojo, 2017; Thomas et al., 2016; Synman, 2021; Zeffane et al., 2016).

Furthermore, research studies have concluded that employees commitment to the organisation is strongly influenced by their respective socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status and job level (Adebivi et al., 2020; Ferreira, 2012; Marcoux et al., 2020).

The importance in terms of this study, lies in the fact that employees socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level may directly interact with their psychosocial – career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment in predicting their career self-management at the workplace. Again, employees socio-demographic differences in a way influence individuals commitment to the organisation, and thus is the reason why these socio-demographic characteristics are considered as moderating variables, seeing that moderation explains why commitment (affective, normative and continuance) level will be increased or decreased.

Subsequently, the assumption can be highlighted that employees socio-demographic characteristics may have a significant moderating impact with psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness in predicting the variations in individuals commitment to the organisation.

As indicated previously, other studies have concluded that employees socio-demographic characteristics have a moderating impact on individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, their social connectedness, as well as organisational commitment in predicting their career self-management at the workplace (Arya et al., 2017; Basit & Duygulu, 2017; Bester et al., 2019; Coetzee et al., 2019; Callea et al., 2016; Deas, 2017; Gatling et al., 2020; Jackson & Wilton, 2017; Kung et al., 2018; Mishra & Kumar, 2017). Nevertheless, the moderating effect of socio-

demographic variables of employees with regard to their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment in predicting employees' career management, have not been adequately researched, especially in the public HEI in Ghana and thus, this study on career self-management intends to address this gap identified.

3.4.6 Hypothetical differences between the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level)

Research hypothesis 4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Research hypothesis 4 assumed that individuals from various socio-demographic groupings differed significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

As can be seen in the literature review (refer to sections 3.1.4, 3.2.4 and 3.3.4), significant differences have been revealed between the diverse socio-demographic characteristics including age, gender, marital status and job level and the variables under investigation such as psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

The study hypothesised that individuals from different age groups (20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51 and above) would differ significantly in connection to their commitment to the organisation. It was in fact expected that employees in the age bracket (30-40) would experience higher levels of organisational commitment (affective, normative and continuance) in relation to the other age groups. Furthermore, this hypothesis is based on previous studies which revealed that individuals in the age bracket, (31-40 and 41-50) tend to value their career progression more than those in the age bracket, especially 51 and above (Bester, 2018; Zacher et al., 2017). This hypothesis was in connection to the literature review, which posit that younger employees can invest more of their energy in their career self-management practices which in event enhances their commitment to the organisation.

It was also hypothesized that significant differences would be revealed for the variable, organisational commitment between the gender groups at the workplace. More specifically, it was

hypothesized that male dominant would experience greater organisational commitment than their female dominants. Furthermore, previous research have shown that significant gender bias still exist in the Ghanaian higher educational environment thereby not making the female dominat comfortable in terms of their success in managerial positions as compared to their male counterparts (Coetzee & Harry, 2015; Curran et al., 2015). It was then hypothesised that similar outcome would be obtained in the current research study with regards to the variables under consideration.

The literature review pointed out that employees who fall within the marital status (either being married or single), their career progression could be affected therefore could impact their commitment to the organisation. It was also hypothesized that significant differences would be revealed for the variable, organisational commitment between the marital groups at the workplace (Adebivi et al., 2020; Ferreira, 2012). More specifically, it was hypothesized that single counterparts at the workplace would experience greater organisational commitment than their married counterparts.. It was then hypothesised that similar outcome would be obtained in the current research study with regards to the variables under consideration.

The study hypothesized that employees in higher positions (job levels) at the workplace would experience greater career commitment than their junior counterparts. This hypothesis was based on previous study which revealed that because employees in the higher roles have much authority and power over their junior counterparts and that they tend to be more committed in their respective roles. As indicated in previous study, it has been established that job levels influences the type of commitment that employees have towards their career, it was expected that there would be differences in the type of psychosocial career pre-occupations that employees would develop with regard to their job level (Bester, 2018; Sharf, 2010). At the time of of the study, there appeared to be scanty Ghanaian research into the differences between the various job levels with regards to career self-management.

To achieve the objectives of this study, research hypotheses were formulated to establish the relationship existing among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

The research hypotheses are as follows:

Ha1: There is a statistically positive significant interrelationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Ha2: psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.

Ha3: Socio-demographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Ha4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the constructs of psychosocial career preoccupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment were conceptualised. The variables influencing the three constructs were also discussed thoroughly. After the discussion of the variables, the concepts were integrated to build proactive career self-management within the novel work environment in the selected higher educational institution in Ghana.

With this, the second aim of the research has been realised. This aim is to conceptualise psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment as well as the manner in which the characteristics of individuals affect these constructs' development.

Chapter 3 included the theoretical integration that will assist in constructing a theoretical career self-management profile for higher educational institutions in Ghana.

Finally, Chapter 3 concludes the literature review aims, which in turn address research aims 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In Chapter 4, the empirical investigations, notably research methods with the specific aim of examining the statistical strategies, are discussed. This part of the study investigated the relationship dynamics among the psychosocial career pre-occupations constructs (career

establishment, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence), and organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment).

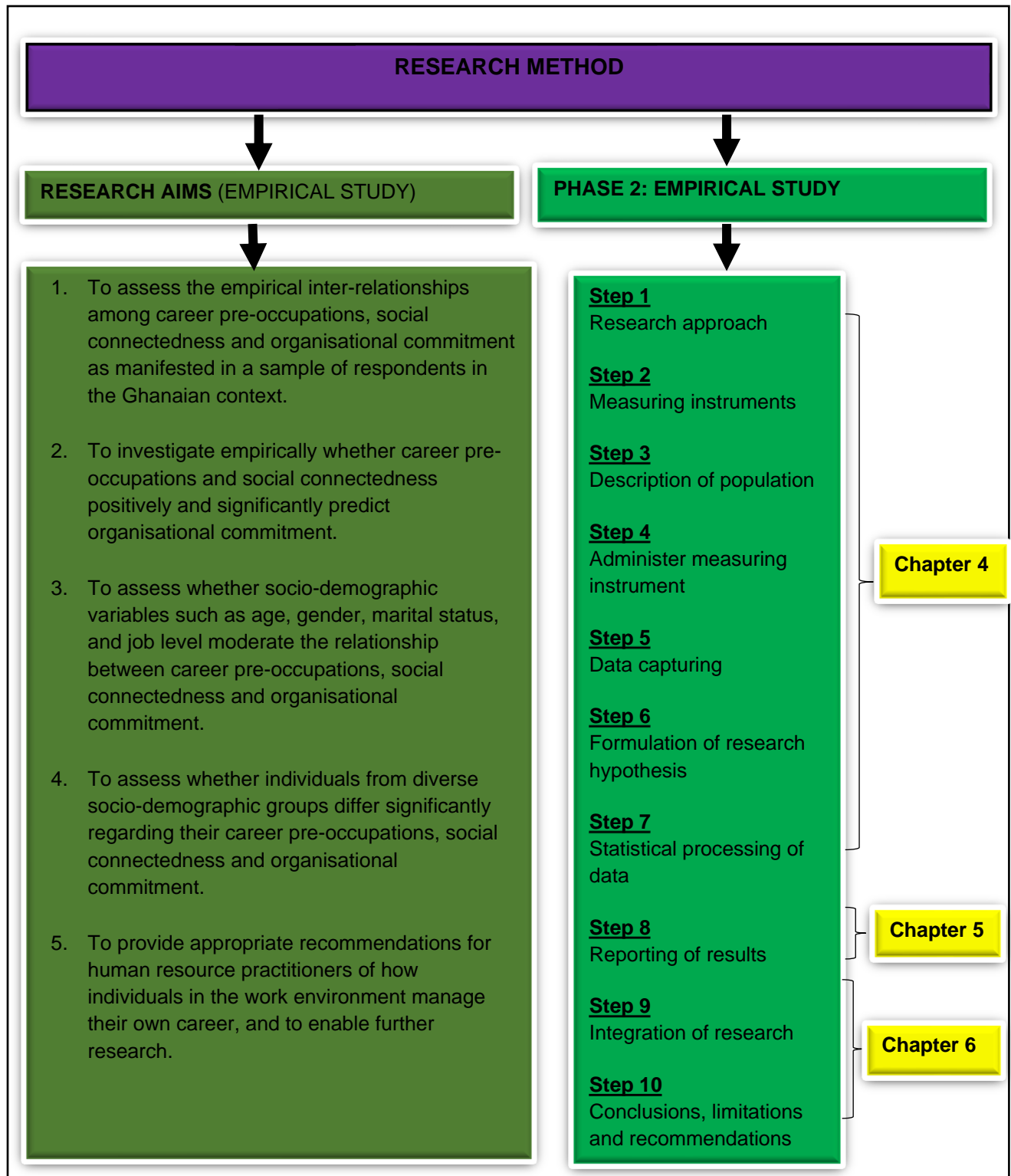
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter focuses on the statistical techniques which were employed to ascertain the possibility of constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in Ghanaian public higher educational institutions. This involved establishing a relationship among the three main constructs, namely: psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations); social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence); and organisational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance). The research method involved the implementation of a cross-sectional quantitative research design, specifically, a survey. The intention of the design was not to determine a cause-and-effect relationship; it was rather intended for the exploration of the nature, magnitude, and direction of the relationship dynamics that exist among the variables under consideration. This chapter discusses the population and sample size adopted for the study, the selected measuring instruments and the reasons for their selection, the processes for collection of data and procedures for statistical computations, and the formulation of research hypotheses.

Ten steps constituted the empirical phase of the study. These are depicted in Figure 4.1 overleaf:

Figure 4.1

The Empirical Study – Research Aims and Steps



Source: Author's own work

Chapter 4 discusses steps 1 to 7. Chapters 5 and 6 deal with steps 8, 9 and 10.

4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach adopted for the study is the quantitative approach. Salkind (2018), and Bell et al. (2018) describe quantitative research methods as the explaining of an issue or phenomenon through gathering of data in numerical form and analyzing with the aid of mathematical methods; in particular statistics. The quantitative nature of the data assist the researcher to obtain descriptive, inferential and explanatory information on variables such as; psychosocial career preoccupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, which leads to the testing of hypotheses of the study. The deductive approach gives credence to the use of the quantitative approach to research study.

A deductive research approach was embraced in this study of proactive career self-management. Saunders et al. (2016) describe deductive research as involving the test of theoretically hypothesised relationships among specific variables by using empirically generated data. Through the deductive approach, the researcher was able to identify and conceptualise the necessary variables applicable in the construction of a suitable career self-management profile in the context of higher education. Secondly, the approach enabled the researcher to suggest relationships existing among the identified variables with reference to the reviewed literature. Thirdly, the researcher was able to confirm empirically, and to substantiate, the theoretically formulated relationships.

The study involved a cross-sectional quantitative survey design, which was carried out using an electronic survey to collect empirical data. The survey respondents were senior staff of the selected Ghanaian public higher educational institution. The purpose of collecting empirical data was to enable the researcher to meet the objectives of the study, and to ensure that the chosen variables were in agreement with the study's theoretical conceptualisation (Hair et al., 2016).

Employing a cross-sectional research design comes with limitations. One of them is that the researcher cannot use the generated results in the analysis of attitudes or behaviour over a time period. Another is that the design does not allow for the making of causal inferences from the generated data (Levin, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016; Spector, 2019). Despite these limitations, the researcher considered the design to be appropriate for this study.

This design was seen as suitable because it allows the researcher to explore (Spector, 2019), and to collect large-scale data from, a large population. In addition, a cross-sectional research design can be implemented at a relatively low cost, it is time-saving, and can capture respondents' information, opinions, and perceptions at a given point in time (Spector, 2019). The researcher can also incorporate multiple variables into the design, and the results can be analysed to generate in-depth understanding and to formulate new theories, and to prove or disprove existing assumptions (Bell et al., 2018; Levin, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016). The empirical inter-dynamics associated with the study's constructs constitute an unknown phenomenon and, as such, must be explored in the first place in order to determine the possibility of a later longitudinal study (Spector, 2019).

4.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS AND THE MOTIVATION FOR THEIR SELECTION

The selection of the measuring instruments for the current study was determined by the instruments' cost-effectiveness, reliability, validity, and suitability in the evaluation of the constructs under consideration.

Listed below are the measuring instruments selected for the study. They are discussed in the sections that follow.

- A socio-demographic information questionnaire
- The psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) (Coetzee, 2014b)
- The workplace friendship scale (WFS) (Nielsen et al., 2000)
- The organisational commitment scale (OCS) (Meyer & Allen, 1991)

4.2.1 The Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Scale (PCPS)

The subsections below contain a discussion of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale, with regard to the motivation and rationale for its selection, and its purpose, validity, reliability, administration, and interpretation.

4.2.1.1 Rationale and purpose

The psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) was developed by Coetzee (2014b). It is a self-rating and multi-factored measurement scale associated with elements of career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-

occupations. This instrument was designed to measure the career concerns and career pre-occupations of respondents.

4.2.1.2 Dimensions of the PCPS

There are 23 items on the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale. These items are grouped into three subscales as described overleaf.

Career establishment pre-occupations

The subscale on the career establishment pre-occupations is meant to measure the concerns of individuals regarding the need to fit into an organisation or group, concerns about stability and security, and the need for development in the individuals' careers (Coetzee, 2014b). There are 13 items on this subscale, with typical questions such as "*To what extent are you concerned about fitting in with others in your job or study group?*" and "*To what extent are you concerned about exploring career possibilities?*"

Career adaptation pre-occupations

The subscale on career adaptation pre-occupations is designed to measure the concerns of individuals regarding employability, for example, adapting to the changing work environments. These adaptations and adjustments may relate to an individual's interests, talents and abilities, for the purpose of realising employment opportunities (Coetzee, 2014b). There are five items on this subscale, with questions such as "*To what extent are you concerned about making a career change?*" and "*To what extent are you concerned about changing your current career field?*"

Career work-life adjustment pre-occupations

The subscale on work-life adjustment pre-occupations is employed in the measurement of individuals' concerns with regard to the achievement of greater harmony between their work and personal lives. These pre-occupations may further concern reduction in the amount of work an individual does, settling down, and withdrawing completely from paid employment. Under this subscale, there are six items. Typical questions include: "*To what extent are you concerned about balancing work with family responsibilities?*" and "*To what extent are you concerned about withdrawing from paid employment altogether?*"

4.2.1.3 Administration of the PCPS

The psychosocial career pre-occupations scale is designed to be self-administered. The questionnaire thus contains detailed information for the respondent on how the items are to be completed. Participants are required to complete the questionnaire in about 15 to 20 minutes. There are statements structured on a five-point Likert-type scale which the participant is supposed to complete in order to help determine the extent to which he or she feels concerned about his or her career needs or pre-occupations.

4.2.1.4 Interpretations of the PCPS

To ascertain the participant's career pre-occupations, the researcher measures separately the three subscales, that is, career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations. Based on the measurements, the researcher makes evaluations as to whether the participant perceives the dimensions as being true or not. If the participant attains a higher score on a particular statement, it indicates that such statement is truer in the participant's case. The subscale that emerges with the highest values in terms of mean scores indicates the dominant career stage pre-occupations for that participant.

Below are the ratings on the scale:

- 1 = Not concerned
- 2 = Somewhat concerned
- 3 = Much concerned
- 4 = Highly concerned
- 5 = Extremely concerned

4.2.1.5 Reliability and validity of the PCPS

The PCPS shows high internal consistency reliability through Coetzee's (2014b) exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Coetzee's (2014b) study also showed high Cronbach's alpha coefficients between the range of .72 and .95. The figures for the bivariate correlations ranged between $r \geq .53 \leq .66$ ($p = .000$). This confirms the construct validity of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale.

4.2.1.6 Motivation for using the PCPS

The PCPS was deemed relevant for the current study because the scale measures the career pre-occupations and the career concerns of persons in an employment context. In addition, the researcher does not intend to make individual predictions using the PCPS; instead, broad trends and specific relationships among given variables are considered, which makes the PCPS a reasonable choice for such purpose.

4.2.2 Workplace Friendship Scale (WFS)

The next subsections entail a discussion of the rationale and motivation for the selection of the WFS, its purpose, administration, interpretation, and its reliability and validity.

4.2.2.1 Rationale and purpose of the WFS

The workplace friendship scale was devised by Nielsen et al. (2000). It is also a self-rating instrument employed in the determination of participants' perceptions concerning workplace friendship. This scale ascertains the feelings of individuals regarding the friendliness of interpersonal relations in the organisational setting. Two subscales under the WFS have been adopted for this study because they are in line with the study's aims. These subscales are friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. The two subscales have been applied to measure participants' perceptions of friendship at the workplace (conceptualised as social connectedness), specifically their relationships with co-workers and immediate supervisors.

4.2.2.2 Dimensions of the WFS

The workplace friendship scale consists of 12 items grouped into the two subscales, that is, friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. These subscales were deemed necessary because they are relevant to the aims of the study. The two subscales are discussed below.

Friendship opportunity

According to Riordan and Griffith (1995), the friendship opportunity subscale is mostly associated with positive outcomes that are relevant to all stakeholders (both employers and employees) in an organisation. Riordan and Griffith (1995) postulated that friendship opportunity has direct positive relationship to employees' job satisfaction and job involvement, which eventually translate to organisational commitment. There are six items on this subscale, with typical questions such

as "Does employees have the opportunity to talk and know co-workers?" and "Does informal talks tolerated by the organisation as long as the work is completed?"

Friendship prevalence

This friendship prevalence subscale measures the feeling an individual has with regard to strong friendships at work, which are usually categorised by trust, confidence and a strong desire to interact and even socialise with individuals outside the workplace (Okoe et al., 2018). There are six items on this subscale, with typical questions such as "Does employees form strong friendship at work?" and "Does employees feel that anyone they work with is a true friend?"

4.2.2.3 Administration of the WFS

The WFS is designed as a self-administered questionnaire with clear instructions to guide the respondent on how the instrument is to be completed. The scale has a series of structured statements, with each statement having a five-point Likert-type rating. A participant should take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the set of items on the instrument.

4.2.2.4 Interpretation of the WFS

The friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence subscales are measured separately. There are six items on the friendship opportunity subscale, and six items also on the friendship prevalence subscale. Higher scores depict an employee with high levels of agreement regarding workplace connectedness. Below are the ratings for the items:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Somewhat disagree
- 3 = Somewhat agree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

4.2.2.5 Reliability and validity of the WFS

The internal consistency reliability of the workplace friendship scale was reported by Nielsen et al. (2000) using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each subscale, that is, friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Nielsen et al. (2000) found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for friendship opportunity was ($\alpha = .84$) whereas that of friendship prevalence was ($\alpha = .89$).

4.2.2.6 Motivation for using the WFS

The workplace friendship scale is employed in the measurement of employees' connectedness within the context of employment. The WFS thus allows participants to rate their perception of the extent of opportunities for friendship, and friendship prevalence in their engagement with others at the workplace. Due to its reliability as a measuring instrument for employee connectedness, it was deemed fit for the purpose of the current study.

4.2.3 The Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

The following subsections explore the development of the organisational commitment scale, and the rationale for its adoption in this study. The OCS's dimensions, administration, interpretation, reliability and validity, and motivation for its use are also discussed (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.2.3.1 Development of the OCS

The organisational commitment scale is a three-component model developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). The components are affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) developed the affective, normative, and continuance commitment subscales based on the definitions of the three constructs that were employed to generate an initial pool of items administered to a sample of men and women workers in varied occupations and organisations.

4.2.3.2 Rationale and purpose for the OCS

The organisational commitment scale was designed by Meyer and Allen (1997) for the purpose of measuring the three components of organisational commitment, that is, affective, normative and continuance commitments.

4.2.3.3 Dimensions of the OCS

The organisational commitment scale is designed as a questionnaire that addresses 24 structured items grouped into three subscales as below:

- **Affective commitment:** This subscale measures an individual's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The affective

commitment subscale contains eight items, with a typical statement such as “*I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it.*”

- **Normative commitment:** The normative commitment subscale is meant to measure an individual's feelings of responsibility or obligation to remain with an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This subscale also contains eight items, with a typical statement such as “*I owe a great deal to my organisation.*”
- **Continuance commitment:** The subscale on continuance commitment is designed to measure an individual's commitment to an organisation on the basis of the costs involved in leaving that organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). There are eight items on this subscale, with “*It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organisation in the near future*” being a typical statement.

4.2.3.4 Administration of the OCS

The organisational commitment scale has been designed as a self-administered questionnaire, with clear instructions to guide respondents in completing it. Though there is no time limit, a respondent may typically take between 15 to 20 minutes to complete it. There are structured items in the statement format, with each statement having a rating scale (five-point Likert-type rating). Participants respond to the statements by rating each statement according to their own self-perceived organisational commitment scale.

4.2.3.5 Interpretation of the OCS

The three subscales under the organisational commitment scale, namely, affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment, are measured separately. Employees with higher scores feel more committed to the organisation. The ratings for the statements are:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Somewhat disagree
- 3 = Somewhat agree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

4.2.3.6 Reliability and validity of the OCS

All the three subscales under the organisational commitment scale have been confirmed by current studies in terms of their validity and reliability. The internal consistency of each subscale under the OCS varies, with ($\alpha = .85$) in the case of affective commitment; ($\alpha = .73$) in the case of normative commitment; and ($\alpha = .79$) in the case of continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.2.3.7 Motivation for using the OCS

The organisational commitment scale (OCS) devised by Meyer and Allen (1997) has been adopted for the current study due to the instrument's ability to measure a specific nature of the organisational commitment, rather than using the affective commitment scale only, which is usually employed (Meyer et al., 1993). The measuring instrument was further considered as fitting because the study is not aimed at using the OCS in making individual predictions, but rather to explore the broad trends and relationships among specific variables under consideration. Adopting the OCS to measure organisational commitment thus provides greater insight into such construct.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The measuring instruments adopted for this study have all been designed to be self-administered. Self-reporting instruments have various problems. Because self-administered questionnaires rely on the respondents' ability to verbalise feelings that they have towards themselves or other people, respondents may be unable or unwilling to reveal certain feelings or things about themselves (Plieningner, 2017). The accuracy of the self-perceptions of an individual thus depends on the extent to which that individual is willing and able to honestly express him or herself (Costa & Hauck, 2019; Plieningner, 2017). Besides, it is possible for a respondent to provide fake answers or spurious responses; to rate themselves in a favourable light, or respond "true" to every statement regardless of the nature of that statement; or respond in a deviant manner (Batchelor & Miao, 2016; Stangor, 2014). Self-reporting instruments may also yield biased results due to the possibility of participants failing to give honest responses to certain constructs. Also, the methods employed to determine the validity of the instruments, and their comparison with other instruments, may be limited by the nature of the instruments (Babbie & Roberts, 2018).

Being aware of the limitations of the self-reporting instruments noted above, the researcher endeavoured to curtail the undesirable effects by putting certain mechanisms in place. The researcher ensured that participants were properly enlightened on the research aims and purpose (Cohen et al., 2018); confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses were also assured (Costa & Hauck, 2019); existing valid and reliable measuring instruments were employed so as to ensure the validity of the constructs (Babbie & Roberts, 2018); relevant theories were applied to guide the conceptualisation of the dependent and independent variables, and the intricate relationships or moderating and mediating effects that exist among such variables (Batchelor & Miao, 2016; Chang et al., 2010).

To sum up, the researcher carried out an extensive review of diverse instruments designed for measuring the relationships among constructs. Upon that review, the researcher selected three instruments that are fitting for the study's purpose of constructing a profile for proactive career self-management. The three instruments adopted are the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS), the workplace friendship scale (WFS), and the organisational commitment scale (OCS). The ability to employ statistical correlation analyses to ascertain the degree of relationships among the study's variables was a decisive factor in choosing the instruments for the study. The researcher is aware of the limitations of the three instruments, and has therefore taken consideration of such limitations in the interpretation of the study's results.

4.4 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

A research population is constituted by a complete set of objects or a cluster of people forming part of the purpose of a study and about which a researcher is interested in identifying certain characteristics (Hair et al., 2019; Salkind, 2018). A sample, on the other hand, is drawn from a given population and thus refers to a section of the total population that has been drawn by the researcher for the study's purpose (Manna & Mete, 2021; Saunders et al., 2016). The researcher identifies a specific sample by performing the right calculation in order to draw a sample that is relevant to the goal of the research (Saunders et al., 2019; Saunders & Frey, 2019).

The population in the study consists of all the full-time senior staff of a higher education institution (HEI) in Ghana, both academic and non-academic staff (administrative) with a total number of 1651 employees. A purposive sample of the entire sample unit was targeted to assist the researcher obtain a maximum number of usable questionnaires. The main rationale behind the adoption of the non-probability sampling, notably purposive sampling method, was to help the

researcher obtain a representative population (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020; Salkind, 2018). Due to the representative nature of the study, the researcher included the entire population of senior administrative staff and teaching staff of the HEI.

These individuals in the HEI vary by age, gender, marital status, and job level. Participants were reached online, specifically through emails and social media sites. Participants were requested to complete an online survey that comprised the four measuring instruments. A number of 313 respondents (i.e sample size) were issued with the questionnaires because this exceeded the minimum of 66 ($N \geq 50 + 8m$; De Vaus & De Vaus, 2013) sample size required for the study. In all, the researcher received 288 usable questionnaires ($n = 288$), constituting a 92% response rate.

The degree to which a sample size is expected to be representative of the total population is the decisive factor that determines the choice of the sample size (Saunders et al., 2016). In other words, a major issue to consider in sampling is whether the sample is representative of the entire population or not (Bernard et al., 2016). There are two main approaches that a researcher can adopt in the sampling process (Salkind, 2018). These are probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, all the participants have an equal chance of being part of the sample (Saunders et al., 2019). By contrast, in non-probability sampling, not all the participants have an equal chance of being selected to form part of the sample (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020).

A purposive sampling is considered a non-probability sampling method in which a sample is chosen based on its ability to fulfil a specific purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In other words, purposive sampling involves identifying a particular sample, by performing the right calculation, so as to arrive on a selection that is relevant for the realisation of the study's goals or purpose (Hair et al., 2019). It is therefore important to ensure that the selected sample is made up of participants who possess as many diverse features as are necessary for the results of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The application of purposive sampling as a sampling technique comes with advantages and disadvantages (Saunders et al., 2018). One advantage is that purposive sampling ensures precision in the sample that is selected, since the selection is made according to the features and variables that are peculiar to the study. A disadvantage is that purposive sampling may be time-consuming in searching for the particular sample that fits the variables and features considered in the study (Ritchie et al., 2013).

The study's sample has been described by socio-demographic variables, that is, age, gender, marital status, and job level. The researcher incorporated these socio-demographic variables into the study because the findings of the reviewed literature show the variables' impact on the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

4.4.1 Composition of age group in the sample

The age distribution of the sample is displayed in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2. The ages of the participants have been grouped into distinct categories that range from 20 to 60 years. The frequency distribution shows majority of the participants (56.6%) fall within the age group of 31 to 40 years; 28.1% between 41 and 50 years; 11.1% between 20 and 30 years; with the least (4.2%) being between 51 and 60 years.

Table 4.1

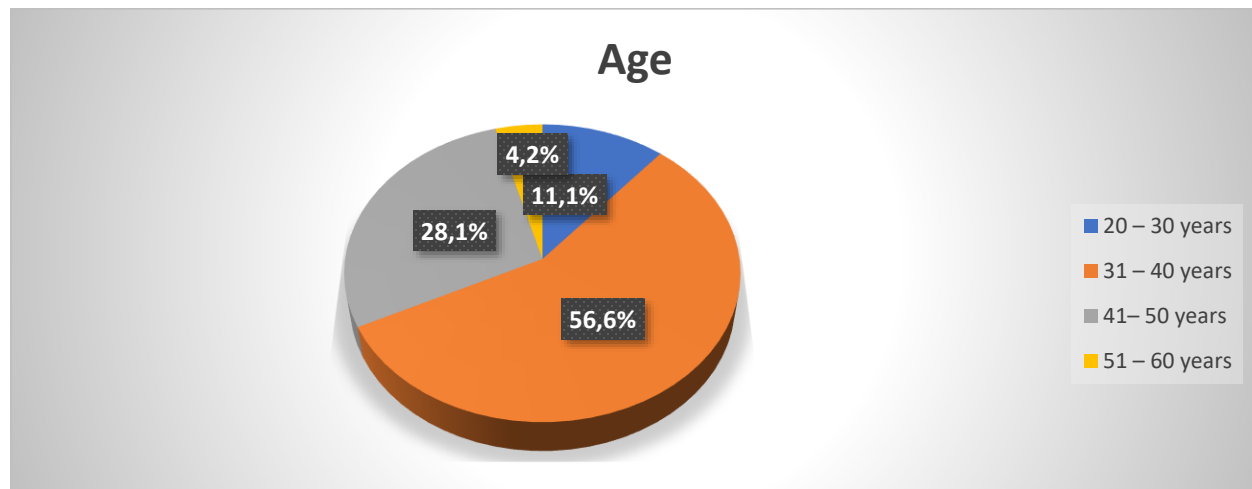
Age Composition in the Sample (n = 288)

Age group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20 – 30years	32	11.1	11.1	11.1
31 – 40 years	163	56.6	56.6	67.7
41 – 50 years	81	28.1	28.1	95.8
51 – 60 years	12	4.2	4.2	100
Total	288	100	100	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 4.2

Sample Composition by Age (n = 288)



Source: Author's own work

4.4.2 Composition of Gender Groups in the Sample

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.3 demonstrate the composition of gender groups of respondents in the sample. Of a target sample $n = 288$, male participants made up 146 (50.7%) of the sample and female participants 142 (49.3%).

Table 4.2

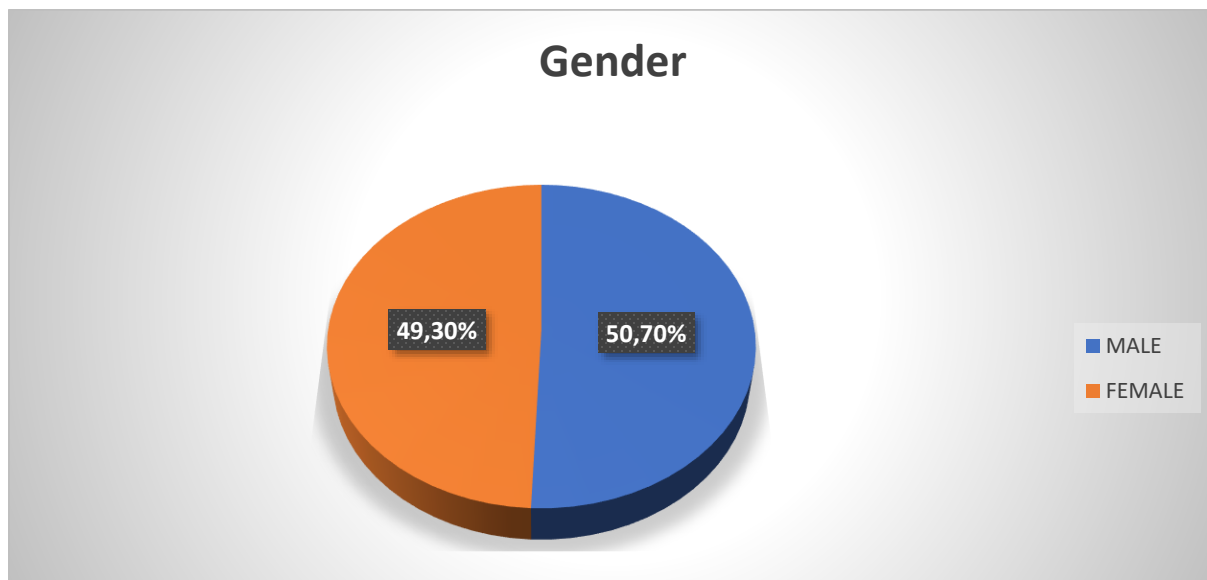
Gender Composition in the Sample (n = 288)

		Gender			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	146	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Female	142	49.3	49.3	100
Total		288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 4.3

Sample Composition by Gender (n = 288)



Source: Author's own work

4.4.3 Composition of Marital Status Groups in the Sample

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.4 demonstrate the marital status composition of the total sample (n = 288). The distribution revealed that 208 (72.2%) of the participants were married and 70 (24.3%) were single. Further, participants in the “other” category numbered 7 (2.4%), and finally, only 3 (1.1%) were recorded as divorced.

Table 4.3

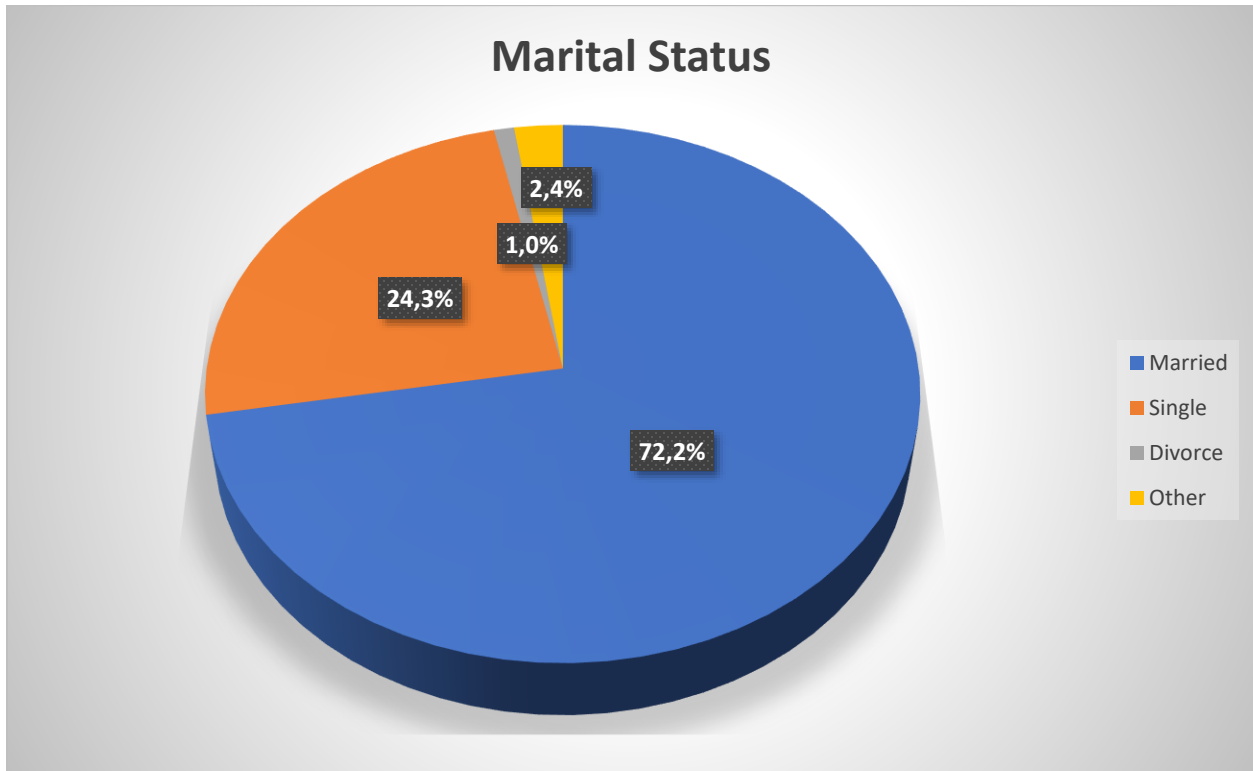
Marital Status Composition in the Sample (n = 288)

		Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	208	72.2	72.2	72.2
	Single	70	24.3	24.3	96.5
	Divorced	3	1.1	1.1	97.6
	Others	7	2.4	2.4	100
Total		288	100	100	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 4.4

Sample Composition of Marital Status (n = 288)



Source: Author's own work

4.4.4 Composition of Job Level Groups in the Sample

Table 4.4 and Figure 4.5 indicate the composition of the job level in the sample (n = 288); 14.2% of the participants worked as administrative assistants; 24.3% worked as senior administrative assistants; 34.4% worked as principal administrative assistants; 4.2% worked as chief administrative assistants; 1.7% worked as technicians; 1.0% worked as senior teaching associates; 5.6% worked as principal teaching associate; 2.1% worked as chief teaching associates; and 12.5% were classified as "other" (comprising assistant internal auditor, principal auditing assistant, assistant systems analyst, senior designer, senior ICT assistant, chief accounting assistant, assistant laboratory technologist, assistant registrar, principal ICT assistant, chief teacher, principal teacher, principal teacher, senior nursing officer, principal nursing officer, chief teacher-UCC basic school, chief accountant assistant, principal technician, principal accounting assistant, library assistant, principal research assistant, senior library assistant, senior technician, junior hall assistant, chief ICT assistant, hall assistant, faculty member, senior

accounting assistant, chief library assistant, assistant civil engineer, stores superintendent, and accounting assistant).

Table 4.4

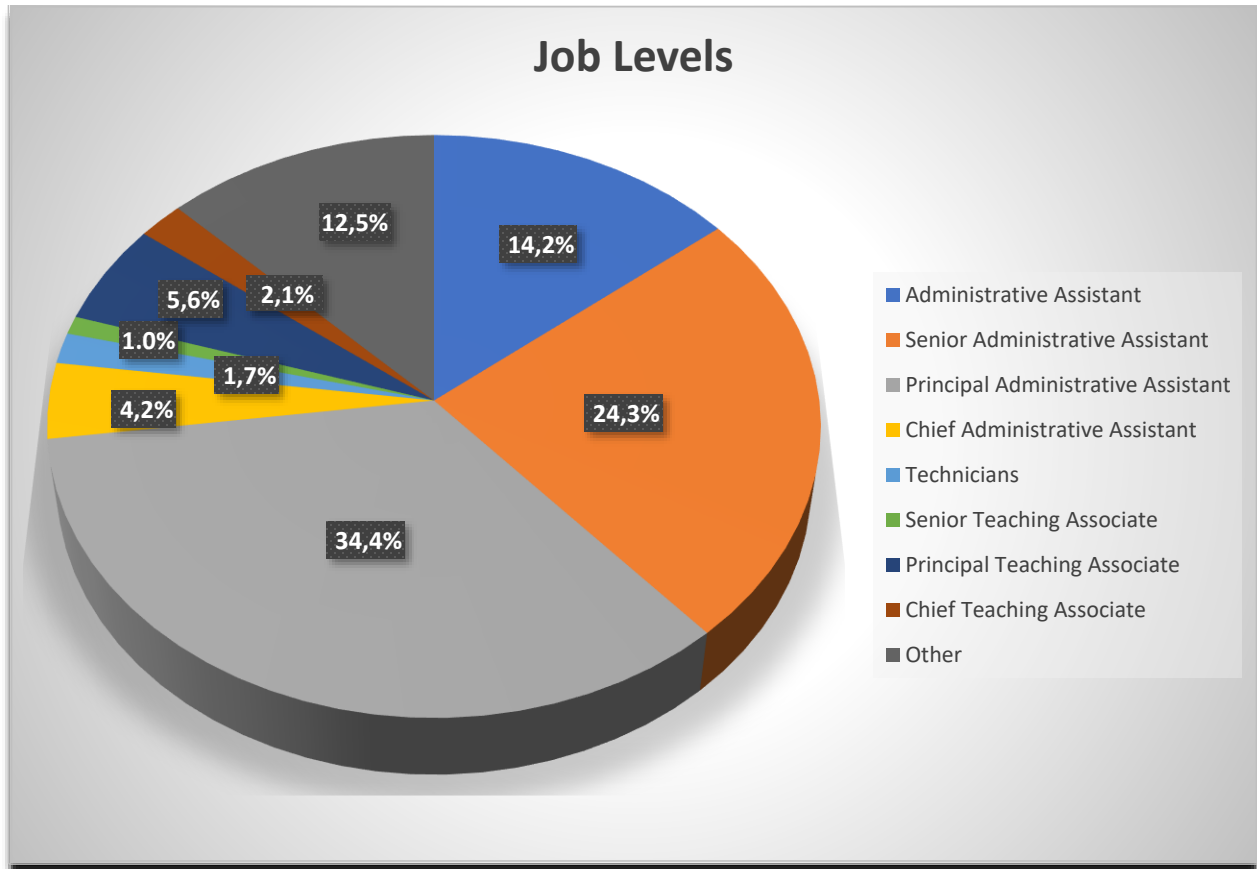
Job Level Composition in the Sample (n = 288)

		Job Level			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Administrative assistant	41	14.2	14.2	14.2
	Senior administrative assistant	70	24.3	24.3	38.5
	Principal administrative assistant	99	34.4	34.4	72.9
	Chief administrative assistant	12	4.2	4.2	77.1
	Technician	5	1.7	1.7	78.8
	Senior teaching associate	3	1.0	1.0	79.8
	Principal teaching associate	16	5.6	5.6	85.4
	Chief teaching associate	6	2.1	2.1	87.5
	Other	36	12.5	12.5	100
	Total	288	100	100	

Source: Author's own work

Figure 4.5

Sample Composition of Job Level (n = 288)



Source: Author's own work

4.4.5 Summary of Socio-demographic Profile of the Sample

In interpreting the empirical results of the study, the main sample characteristics the researcher considered were age, gender, marital status, and job level. Table 4.5 depicts the majority of the participants as married, and falling within the age group 31-40 years. Men constituted the majority of participants. Principal administrative assistant was the most common job level (34.4%).

Table 4.5*The Dominant Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample Profile*

Socio-demographic variables	Predominant characteristics	Percentage
Age	31–40 years	56.6
Gender	Male	50.7
Marital status	Married	72.2
Job level	Principal administrative assistant	34.4

Source: Author's own work

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

In this study, ethics implies a set of moral principles that underlie the quality of the research procedures and involves adherence to social, legal and professional obligations towards the participants in the research (De Vos et al., 2011; Louw & Delport, 2006). The ethical considerations that are made are meant to guide the data collection process. In the current study, the researcher followed the approach that is described next.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee, University of South Africa (UNISA), with ethical clearance certificate reference number (2021_HRM_005 – refer to Appendix A). Ethical clearance was also obtained from the Institutional Review Board, University of Cape Coast (UCC) where data was collected, with clearance certificate reference number (UCCIRB/EXT/2021/30 – refer to Appendix B).

The moral and ethical principles outlined in the University of Cape Coast Research Ethics Policy were adhered to by the researcher. They include the following:

- **Autonomy** – The research being conducted will respect the participants' autonomy, rights, and dignity.
- **Beneficence** – The research will contribute positively to the participants' welfare.
- **Non-maleficence** – The research will not bring harm to any participant or people as a whole.

- The risks and benefits associated with the research will be distributed fairly among the participants.

The researcher further sought permission from the University of Cape Coast, the higher educational institution where the study was conducted. Upon receiving permission from the HEI, the researcher administered the questionnaires through online survey, to the HEI employees who constituted the sample of the study. Every senior staff member was sent an email inviting them to voluntarily take part in the survey. The items stated in the email included the following: the study's purpose; participant's role; estimated time for the completion of the questionnaires; personal and contact details of the researcher; clarification and assurance of participant's anonymity, privacy and confidentiality; an explanation of the intended future use of the gathered data; and a description about the participant's voluntary involvement in the survey. By completing the online survey, the participant was deemed to have given their informed consent.

Participants were not required to give any personal details that could be used to identify them. This was meant to ensure participant anonymity in both data collection and analysis processes. Since there were no personal details of participants such as names and personnel numbers that would link them to their responses, the researcher codified the responses. The codes are used as reference in the data, publications, and future conference proceedings. To guarantee participant confidentiality, the completed questionnaires were received through an external online survey platform. The researcher endeavoured to ensure that the highest research standards were observed, including integrity, objectivity, and transparency in the process of data collection, recording, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher also endeavoured to avoid plagiarism in the conduct of the study.

4.6 CAPTURING OF CRITERION DATA

After administering the four-questionnaire instrument through the online survey platform, the researcher captured the responses of participants in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The use of the online platform removed the human element from the data collection process and consequently prevented the accuracy of the data from being impaired (Salkind, 2018). Also, in order to avoid bias in the data collection, the researcher engaged the services of an independent statistician in the scoring of the data from the completed questionnaires onto the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The statistical program the researcher employed in the data importation and analysis was the IBM SPSS (version 28).

4.7 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND AIMS

A hypothesis in research can be described as a tentative explanation of a particular phenomenon which must undergo empirical testing in order for it to be integrated into a theory and to be accepted as a fact (Godwin & Godwin, 2016). Further, Godwin and Godwin (2016) describe the hypothesis of a study as a rational but cautious preposition regarding the relationships that exist between or among given variables. In the current study, the researcher derived the hypotheses from the reviewed literature and the central hypotheses, and they thus align with the empirical aims of the study.

In order to address the research questions, the following research hypotheses were formulated below in Table 4.6

Table 4.6
Research Hypotheses

Research aims	Research hypotheses	Statistical procedure
<p>Research aim 1: To assess the empirical inter-relationships between the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context.</p>	<p>H₀₁: There is no significant positive inter-relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.</p> <p>H_{a1}: There is a significant positive inter-relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.</p>	Bivariate correlation analysis
<p>Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment.</p>	<p>H₀₂: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness do not significantly predict organisational commitment.</p> <p>H_{a2}: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.</p>	SEM analysis
<p>Research aim 3: To assess whether the biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship</p>	<p>H₀₃: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) does not significantly moderate the relationship between psychosocial</p>	Moderated regression analysis

between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

H_{a3}: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Research aim 4: To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

H₀₄: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) does not differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

ANOVAs and independent sample t-test

H_{a4}: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Note: H₀ (null hypothesis); H_a (alternate hypothesis)

Source: Author's own work

4.8 STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF THE DATA

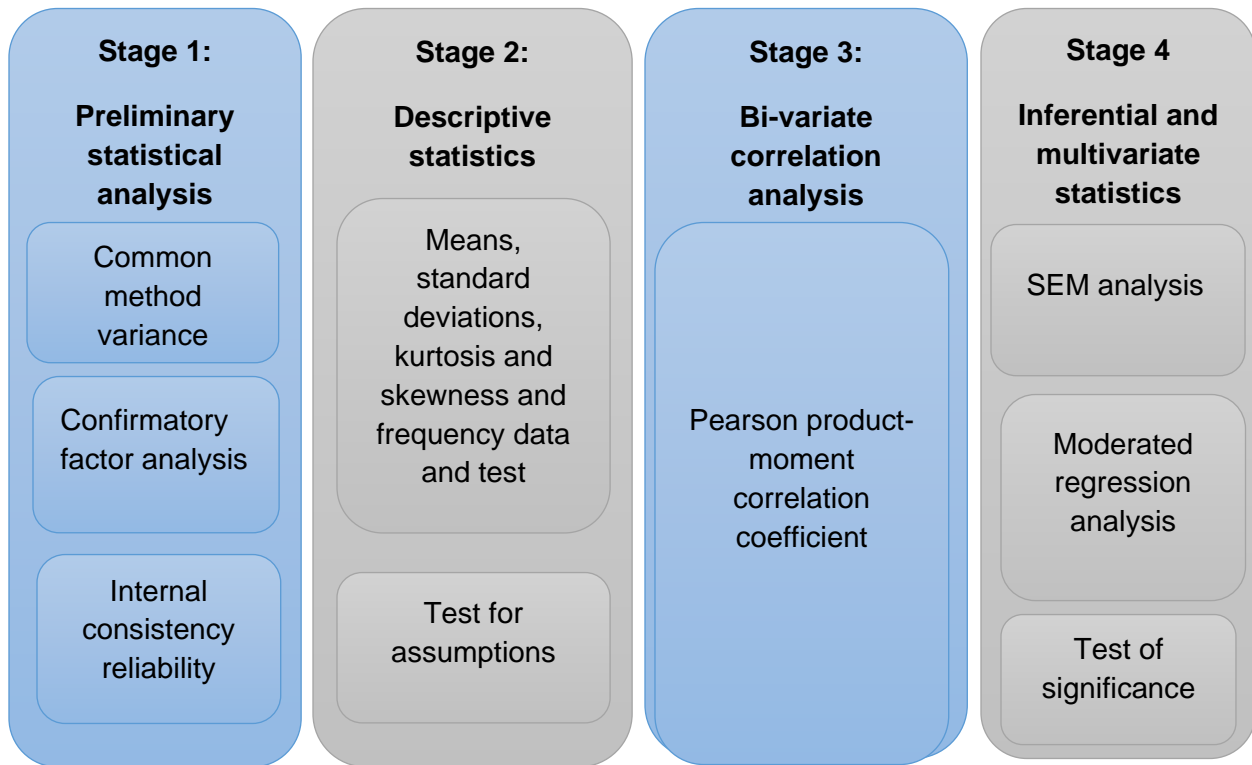
The researcher approached the statistical processing of the data by following these procedures:

- Preliminary statistical analysis – including common method variance and internal consistency reliabilities, and confirmatory factor analysis and internal consistency reliability.
- Descriptive statistical analysis – comprising means, standard deviations, kurtosis, skewness, frequency data, and test for assumptions.
- Bivariate correlation analysis – that is, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients.
- Inferential and multivariate statistics – consisting of moderated regression analysis, SEM analysis and tests for significant mean differences.

The process for the data analysis thus consisted of four stages as displayed in Figure 4.6 below:

Figure 4.6

Overview of the Data Analysis Process and Statistical Procedures



Source: Author's own work

4.8.1 Stage One: Preliminary Statistical Analysis

In the preliminary statistical analysis, the researcher determined the common method variance, the measurement model relationships between the constructs (Garger et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2018; Pallant, 2020) and the common validity and internal consistency reliabilities of the data.

4.8.1.1 Step 1: Testing for common method bias

Common method bias is a form of inconsistency that occurs in experiential measures as a result of the particular measurement method employed in the study, rather than occurring due to a given construct under consideration (Hair et al., 2022; Garger et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2018). In other words, common method bias concerns discrepancies in responses that are caused by the data collection method adopted. Common method bias could be described as a confounding variable

systematically influencing the dependent and independent variables (Hair et al., 2018; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Spector et al., 2019). Several scholars maintain that common method bias occurs when a researcher uses the same respondent to provide answers to the survey measures for both dependent and independent variables (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019; Garger et al., 2019; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Spector et al., 2019). In the current study, the researcher tested the model fit data for each measurement scale by applying Harman's single-factor test and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (one-factor solution).

Under Harman's single-factor test, each construct's items are loaded into an exploratory factor analysis in order to arrive at a conclusion as to whether a single factor or one general factor is responsible for the greater part of the covariance occurring between the measures (Aguirre-Urreta & Hu, 2019; Fuller et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2018). In the case where both a single factor and a general factor do not account for majority of the covariance existing between the measures, it signifies that common method bias poses no threat to the study's findings (Hair et al., 2022; Fuller et al., 2016; Pallant, 2020).

Another test that can be run to ascertain the common method bias is the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015). The confirmatory factor analysis is a more sophisticated approach than Harman's single-factor test to ascertain whether the variance in a given dataset can be accounted for by a single factor (Chang et al., 2020). The confirmatory factor analysis is performed by loading each construct's items into the CFA so as to determine whether the main variance was caused by a single factor or not (Chang et al., 2020; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In the present study, the researcher ascertained the common method bias by interpreting the Harman's single-factor test results together with the results of the model fit statistics obtained from the CFA (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015).

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

The researcher performed the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) so as to ascertain the measurement model's construct validity and to improve each scale's model fit. The CFA was run also to ascertain the overall measurement model's construct validity (multidimensional). The CFA was performed because it is an objective test that enables a researcher to determine the acceptability of a theoretical model – a in other words, to confirm a measurement theory or reject it (Pallant, 2020; Perry et al., 2015; Yu, 2018). Hair et al. (2022) describe construct validity as the

extent to which a given test measures what it set out to measure. In other words, it concerns whether a researcher can draw conclusions about a given test score based on the model under study (Heale & Twycross, 2015; Stone, 2019). For the purpose of verifying a model, a researcher can thus apply the confirmatory factor analysis to ascertain the construct validity of a hypothesis-based testing (Atkinson et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2019).

In running a confirmatory factor analysis to ascertain the construct validity and model fit, the researcher looks out for the presence or absence of errors that occur between a prescribed model and its estimated parameters (that is, misspecifications) (Perry et al., 2015). In the current study, the CFA served as an important statistical method supporting the validation of the study's constructs (Hair et al., 2018; Yu, 2018). Two confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on each of the measurement scales. Model 1 tested the data fit of the original multifactor model. Mode' 2, however, entailed an optimised version with respect to each measurement scale so as to improve the scales' model fit.

Model optimisation entailed the Levenberg-Marquardt optimisation method in covariance structure analysis (Levenberg, 1944; Marquardt, 1963). As a popular mathematical and statistical technique, the Levenberg-Marquardt algorithm can be employed in the optimisation of a model fit (Bellavia et al., 2018). Further, the researcher applied the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion to assess the measurement models' convergent validity. Convergent validity can be explained as the extent to which a given instrument significantly correlates with instruments that measure related constructs (Francis et al., 2019; Heale & Twycross, 2015).

The Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion is employed to ascertain the convergent validity that exists in a model's latent variables. Here, the average variance extracted (AVE) and the composite reliability (CR) utilised (Hair et al., 2018). Under the AVE, the researcher determines the overall amount of variance that could be attributed to a given construct, in relation to the amount of variance that is attributed to error in measurement (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Teo, 2011). Under CR, the researcher ascertains the overall variances and covariances that are in the scores of the combination of indicator variables related to the constructs, and then divides the sum by the total amount of variance in the combination (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Teo, 2011). A value of AVE \geq .50 is regarded as acceptable. When the AVE value is \geq .70, it is considered to be a good statistic (Hair et al., 2018). These values indicate the construct reliability and the convergent validity of a given scale (Hair et al., 2014). With regard to the CR, a value of \geq .70 is considered satisfactory (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Pallant, 2020).

Composite reliability (CR) is also applied in the determination of internal consistency reliability of the construct measures (Hair et al., 2018). Traditionally, internal consistency is assessed by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). CR, however, serves as a more robust and appropriate measure of internal consistency reliability. This is because the Cronbach's Alpha (α) tends to lower reliability (Hair et al., 2018; Pallant, 2020). Internal consistency reliability can be explained as the extent of interrelatedness that exists between items on a scale which measures the same construct (Rose et al., 2014; Supino & Borer, 2012). That is to say, when participants complete a multiple-item construct measure, the degree to which the participants rate the items in a comparable manner constitutes an indication of the internal consistency (Supino & Borer, 2012).

In the current study, the researcher used the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) and the composite reliability (CR) coefficient to assess the internal consistency reliability of each measurement scale. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient that is $\leq .70$ is considered an acceptable threshold for scale reliability (Rose et al., 2014), while a value of CR that is $\geq .70$ is regarded as acceptable (Ali & Haseeb, 2019; Sideridis et al., 2018).

Determination of the discriminant validity of the measurement model was the last step of the preliminary statistical analysis. The extent to which a given construct is empirically distinct from other constructs is what is termed "discriminant validity" (Hair et al., 2014). Through the discriminant validity, a researcher can discriminate between constructs that are dissimilar (Ali & Haseeb, 2019). There is discriminant validity when the maximum shared variance (MSV) $<$ AVE and the average shared variance (ASV) $<$ AVE (DeVellis, 2016). Again, in order to examine the discriminant validity, the most appropriate procedure is the use of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) (Appau et al., 2021; Benetiz et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). The threshold for HTMT is $\leq .85$. When the HTMT values obtained are $\leq .85$, there is no problem of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019).

4.8.2 Stage Two: Preliminary Descriptive Statistical Analysis

There are two steps in Stage 2 of the analysis process. The first step entails the determination of means and kurtosis and skewness of the categorical and frequency data. The second step involves a test of underlying assumptions. The researcher employed descriptive statistics in clarifying the data characteristics that relate to the study's main construct variables, that is, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

4.8.2.1 Step 1: Means and standard deviations, kurtosis and skewness, and frequency data

The researcher used IBM SPSS (version 28) in the calculation of means and standard deviations. The means and standard deviations were calculated for all the dimensions under the psychosocial career pre-occupations variable (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations); the social connectedness variable (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence); and the organisational commitment variable (affective, normative, and continuance).

Summarised versions of the data are presented through descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics provide a straightforward, coherent, and overall picture of a large quantity of data (McCarthy et al., 2019; Khan, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2014). The summaries of descriptive statistics thus present concise forms of the broad nature of data, such as how a given measured characteristics are “on average”, the amount of variability that exists among different data pieces, and the strength of interrelatedness between two or more features (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; McCarthy et al., 2019). In the current study, the researcher determined the total sample’s categorical and frequency data, including the means and standard deviations.

By dividing the summation of the confirmed values by the total number of values in a group, the mean score is attained (Chalmer, 2020; Flick, 2015). The computation of the mean score is purposely to determine the sample’s central tendency. The calculation of standard deviation is purposely to ascertain the inconsistency in a sample’s responses (Gravetter et al., 2020). The standard deviation can be explained as the average quantity by which each individual score differs from the mean of a given set of scores (Salkind, 2018). A more variable set of scores leads to a higher standard deviation (Gravetter et al., 2020; Salkind, 2018).

A sample group’s dataset is described as symmetrical when the dataset is parallel on both sides of the middle viewpoint (Salkind, 2018). The extent to which the distribution of scores in a dataset varies from a perfect symmetry is termed “skewness” (Chalmer, 2020). In a positively skewed distribution, the distribution is skewed to the right, while a negatively skewed distribution has the distribution skewed to the left (Gravetter et al., 2020). Kurtosis refers to the “peakedness” of a given distribution, that is, the degree to which a given distribution is flat or peaked relative to the normal curve (Salkind & Frey, 2019).

4.8.2.2 Step 2: Test for the underlying assumptions

In research, a dataset from a given sample may usually be applied to draw valid conclusions about the larger population from which the sample was obtained. Nonetheless, it is not always possible to use samples from larger populations to make specific assertions about the entire population. Consequently, in the present study, the researcher employed statistical procedures to determine the degree to which certain assertions could be made about the findings of the study.

The multivariate procedures and tests for significant mean differences which were conducted in the study were underpinned by the following assumptions:

- The accuracy of data entered into the data file and missing values.
- The ratio of cases to independent variables.
- Outliers (univariate and multivariate).
- Normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.
- Multicollinearity and singularity.

(a) The accuracy of data entered into the data file and missing values

The researcher screened the dataset to be sure that there was no miscoding and to guarantee the accuracy of the data. Frequency statistics for the various scales and items were recovered with the help of IBM SPSS (version 28). The researcher inspected the minimum and maximum values and means and standard deviations so as to certify the precision of the data. The researcher found the data to be suitable for further statistical analyses after determining that all the items were within the probable range of values. Because the researcher accepted only fully completed questionnaires, there were no missing values found.

(b) The ratio of cases to independent variables

In research, the sample size influences the degree to which the study's population can be represented by the sample (Khalilzadeh & Tasci, 2017). The size of a sample thus plays a critical role in warranting the statistical power of a study (Gravetter et al., 2020). When a researcher wants to determine the adequacy of a particular sample size for multiple correlation coefficient test, a rule of thumb that may be applied is $N \geq 50 + 8m$ (with m representing the number of independent variables) (De Vaus & De Vaus, 2013). Based on the calculation above, the required sample size becomes $n = 66$. In the current study, the sample size of $n = 288$ was thus considered

as adequate in accomplishing acceptable statistical power. This was necessary in determining the effects through regression and correlation analysis.

(c) Outliers

An outlier refers to an individual data point which is profoundly different from other individual data points in the same dataset (Chalmer, 2020). In other words, an outlier in a given dataset is a particular value with considerable dissimilarity in relation to other values in that dataset (Gravetter et al., 2020). The purpose of conducting an outlier test is to determine the extent to which a given outlier value is due to chance, or whether the value is so huge that it may show an error in the measurement instruments (Salkind, 2018). Possible outliers are identified by using graphing methods for residuals (Chatterjee & Hadi, 2015). In the present study, the researcher identified the outliers by inspecting the graphic boxplots for the standardised normal scores of each variable.

(d) Normality, linearity and homoscedasticity

The multivariate normality operates on the assumption that, to follow a multivariate normal distribution, each single variable needs to have a normal distribution (Field, 2018; Pituch & Stevens, 2016). In the current study, the skewness and kurtosis together with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were applied to test for multivariate normality. The researcher adopted this approach because it was seen as the most applicable way of testing for multivariate normality (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). Linearity operates on the assumption that a linear relationship occurs between all the dependent variable pairs and all the covariate pairs through all groups (Pallant, 2020; Salkind, 2018). The researcher observed each group's scatterplots of the dependent variable pairs in order to determine the linearity (Salkind, 2018). The linear relationship is depicted by a scatterplot with an elliptical shape (Hair et al., 2018). Homoscedasticity operates on the assumption that the variability levels in quantitative dependent variables need to be equivalent across a sequence of independent variables (Salkind, 2018). Graphical methods including scatterplots can be used to determine homoscedasticity violations (Salkind, 2018). In the present study, the researcher created bivariate scatterplots for all the impending variable pairs in order to test for linearity and homoscedasticity. The researcher found no problems within these scatterplots.

(e) Multicollinearity and singularity

When two or more variables strongly correlate with one another ($r \geq .80$), multicollinearity is said to have occurred (Cohen & Cohen, 2014). Multicollinearity can also refer to an undue redundancy that occurs among variables (Cohen & Cohen, 2014). On the other hand, singularity occurs when the variables are perfectly correlated ($r = 1.00$). In the present study, the researcher tested for multicollinearity by applying the variance inflation factor (VIF), tolerance, eigen-values and condition indices. No incongruities were specified by these tests.

4.8.3 Stage Three: Bi-variate Correlation Analysis

In bivariate correlation analyses, statistical procedures are applied for the purpose of assessing and describing the nature of the relationships occurring between variables (Chalmer, 2020; Rovai et al., 2013). A relationship is said to exist between two variables when a change in one variable is supplemented by a continuous and anticipatable change in the other variable (Cohen & Cohen, 2014). In the present study, the researcher analysed the bivariate correlations by employing the IBM SPSS (version 28) to ascertain the strength and direction of the relationship occurring between the study's constructs, namely: psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations); social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence); and organisational commitment (affective, normative and continuance).

Research hypothesis 1 was tested using correlation analysis:

H1: There is significant positive interrelationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

The researcher tested for the strength and direction of the relationship between the study's variables by applying the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient (r). As a bivariate correlation coefficient, the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient is used to clarify the linear relationship between two variables with at least an interval scale measurement (Humphreys et al., 2019; Liu, 2019). For the purpose of measuring the extent to which the relationship occurring between two variables can be explained through a monotonic function, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is normally applicable (Prion & Haerling, 2014). Below are features of the (r) and the (p) values that have been identified as being most important (Humphreys et al., 2019; Prion & Haerling, 2014; Rovai et al., 2013):

- The r and p values range from -1 (that is, perfect converse relationship), to 0 (that is, no relationship), to +1 (that is, perfect direct relationship).
- Values grouped around a straight line on the scatterplots depict linear relationships.
- Tightly assembled values around the straight line indicate a high linear correlation.
- When values are widely spread around the straight line, it signifies weak relationships.

In the present study, the researcher applied cut-off points for the purpose of establishing the correlation coefficients' practical significance, thus, $r \geq .10 \leq .29$, (small effect), $r \geq .30 \leq .50$ (medium effect), $r \geq .50$ and above (large effect size) and $p \leq .05$ (Humphreys et al., 2019; Liu, 2019).

4.8.4 Stage Four: Inferential and Multivariate Statistical Analysis

In the fourth stage of the statistical analysis of the study, the researcher applied inferential and multivariate statistical procedures to draw conclusions about the dataset. There were three steps in this stage.

Step 1: the first step involves the testing of the relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment. The test was done through the use of bi-variate correlation (Pearson product moment correlation coefficient), using IBM SPSS (version 28).

Step 2: The second step involved a test as to whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment. The test was done through SEM analysis, by employing IBM SPSS (version 28).

Step 3: The second step involved assessment as to whether a significant interaction exists between the variables. This was done through moderated regression analysis, by employing Hayes's (2022) PROCESS Procedure for SPSS (version 28). The researcher further applied the moderated regression analysis to ascertain whether biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Step 4: The third stage involved a determination as to whether persons belonging to the various age groups, gender, marital status, and job levels differ significantly in their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. The researcher approached this by applying IBM SPSS (version 28) to test for significant mean differences.

4.8.4.1 Step 1: SEM analysis

The researcher conducted a SEM analysis, by applying IBM SPSS (version 28) to empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment (that is, research aim 2). SEM analysis was thus carried out to test research hypothesis 2 (H2).

H2: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.

SEM analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS (version 28). The SEM analysis in this study was based on the significant effect of psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness on organisational commitment. A predictive relationship was founded on the data; hence, two SEM models were tested so that the data that best fit the final empirically manifested career self-management profile are identified.

SEM analysis was again used to determine whether the constructs' empirical inter-dynamics have a good fit with the data, and which eventually informed the researcher in constructing a profile for career self-management for research aim 2. SEM analysis assisted the researcher as a baseline and covariance structural analysis to test research hypothesis 2 (H2).

H2: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.

SEM analysis is a statistical tool which is solely used to fit networks of constructs to given data (Hair et al., 2019; Marsh et al., 2020). This multivariate method of data analysis combines both factor analysis and path analysis (Marsh et al., 2020). According to Sadikaj et al (2019), SEM is constantly exploited to measure latent constructs. The main objective of SEM is to elucidate and explain the effect between latent variables and observed variables in various kinds of theoretical models (Hair et al., 2019; Sadikaj et al., 2019). In other words, SEM is used to determine whether the sample data supports the theoretical model (Marsh et al., 2020).

Westland (2016) asserts that SEM is generally carried out in either one or two phases, namely:

- Phase I: This phase can be done in synchronised estimation of both: (1) measurement and (2) structural models.
- Phase II: This phase also commences by way of: (1) the development of the measurement of models and (2) then modifies with the intention of estimating the structural model.

In the current study, SEM analysis was applied to establish the relationship between the data from the sample and the theoretical model of career self-management. Schumacker and Lomax (2016), and Keith (2014), identified five main benefits of SEM analysis, namely:

- SEM analysis assist researchers to statistically model and test relationships among several variables;
- SEM analysis cater for measurement-error during the statistical data process;
- Misleading results are reduced when SEM analysis is adopted in a study;
- SEM analysis provide an appropriate explanation and reasoning behind the results obtained by the researcher; and
- SEM analysis improves complex theoretical models when an enhanced software competency is adopted.

To ascertain whether the model fits of a given study, absolute fit indices are relevant and used in a CFA, which helps to examine how well the model fits and also replicates the data used. The chi-square test, the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the Akaike information criterion (AIC), the standardised root-mean-square residual (SRMR) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are constantly exploited as absolute fit indices.

The following fit models reveal inconsistencies with hypothesised models:

- CFI: The CFI shows the fit of the hypothesised model in contrast to the baseline model (Hair et al., 2019; Keith, 2014; Mueller & Hancock, 2018);
- RMSEA: The RMSEA is intended to help determine the degree to which the model does not fit the data (Gao et al., 2020);
- AIC: The AIC is a predictive fit index, and is typically exploited to connect non-hierarchical hypothesised models with related data (Keith, 2014; Mueller & Hancock, 2018);

- SRMR: The standardised RMR (SRMR) shows the standardised difference between the detected correlation and the hypothesised correlation (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016; Shi et al., 2018); and
- TLI: The TLI is intended to scrutinise the inconsistencies among the fit indices, such as chi-square values of the predicted model and the chi-square value of the null model (Mueller & Hancock, 2018).

In short, for the purpose of this study, a structural model was developed to examine the fit between the elements of the empirically manifested structural model and the theoretically hypothesised model. The fit was based on the statistical effect between the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment which intended to construct a profile for proactive career self-management.

4.8.4.2 Step 2: Moderated regression analysis

The researcher used Hayes's (2019) PROCESS Procedure for SPSS (release 4.00) to carry out moderated regression analysis to find out if a significant interaction (moderating effect) exists between the biographical variables and the study's constructs. That is, whether biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, and job level) moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment (research aim 3). Moderated regression analysis was thus conducted to test research hypothesis 3 (H3).

H3: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, and job level) significantly moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

Through moderated analysis, the researcher is able to understand the specific relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable, with particular emphasis on how that relationship is influenced by a given moderating variable. Moderated analysis also clarifies the degree to which the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is affected by a moderating variable (Aguinis et al., 2016; Hayes, 2013, 2015, 2018a; Pallant, 2020). Stated differently, through moderated analysis, a researcher can derive insight into how a given variable transmits its effect to another variable and the conditions under which such effect occurs. The researcher is also able to test the hypotheses connected with the

conditional effects (Hayes, 2013; Hayes, 2018a; Hu & Jiang, 2018). Moderated analysis thus investigates how certain effects behave (that is, mediation or indirect effects) and the circumstances under which the effects occur (that is, moderation or interaction effects) (Hayes, 2018b; Hsu et al, 2011; Pallant, 2020).

In the current study, no causal interpretations were derived from the analysis of the data collected (Aguinis et al., 2016; Park, 2018). In order to eliminate the risk of multicollinearity occurring between the main variables and the interaction effects, all the continuous variables were mean centred prior to the analysis (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Hayes, 2018b).

4.8.4.3 Step 3: Test for the significant mean difference

The researcher tested for significant mean differences in order to find out whether persons from the various socio-demographic groups (that is, age, gender, marital status, and job level) differ significantly in their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment (research aim 4). Research hypothesis 4 (H4) was tested by applying the tests for significant mean differences to determine if the outcomes provided significant evidence to support the hypothesis.

H4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status, and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

To establish whether the dataset possessed a normal distribution, the researcher applied IBM SPSS (version 28). These tests are based on the null hypothesis that the study's population has a normal distribution. When the value of p is greater than the selected alpha level, the null hypothesis that the data come from a population that is normally distributed cannot be rejected (Ho & Yu, 2015). In view of this, the researcher conducted parametric tests to determine the significant mean differences. ANOVA tests were conducted to ascertain the differences between the socio-demographic variables (that is, age, gender, marital status, and job level). T-test and Tukey's studentised range test were also applied to measure the differences occurring between the two genders (Lee & Lee, 2018).

The researcher further carried out post hoc tests to determine the significant mean differences between the socio-demographic variables, namely: age, gender, marital status, and job level – since these variables comprised more than two groups (Lee & Lee, 2018). In addition, the researcher applied Cohen's d test to ascertain the practical effect size in terms of the differences existing between the relevant groups (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013).

4.8.5 Statistical Significance Level

The likelihood of a Type 1 error being made is indicated by the statistical significance level (Heston & King, 2017). In Type I error, a true null hypothesis is rejected, whereas one is unable to reject a false null hypothesis in the case of a Type II error (Gravetter et al., 2020). The level of statistical significance chosen for the present study was $p \leq .05$. Choosing such statistical significance level allowed for a 95% level of confidence in the study's outcomes. Having $p \leq .05$ as a statistically significant level implies that, should there be a rejection of the null hypothesis, the likelihood of being wrong is only 5% (Gravetter et al., 2020).

Generally, the level of statistical significance is set at either .05 or .01 (Morgan et al., 2016). In the case where the test for significance is specified as $p \geq .05$, the conclusion can be drawn that the results of the research are not statistically significant (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Morgan et al., 2016). In consequence, when a study's outcomes show a p value that is less than .05, it will result in the null hypothesis being rejected and thus imply that the research outcomes are statistically significant.

4.8.5.1 Level of significance: Bi-variate correlation analysis

The effect size of a dataset is utilised to determine the extent to which the study results can be applied in the real world (Pallant, 2020). That is to say, one must determine the effect size of a given set of data in order to establish its practical significance (Morgan et al., 2016; Rovai et al., 2013). The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) is usually employed to ascertain the effect size (Morgan et al., 2016; Rovai et al., 2013), with $r \leq .29$ at $p < .05$ indicating a small practical effect; $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ at $p < .05$ indicating medium practical effect; while $r \geq .50$ at $p < .05$ indicates a large practical effect. In the current study, the level of significance $p \leq .05$ and medium practical effect size $r \geq .30$ were chosen to be the limit for the rejection of the null hypotheses (Cohen & Cohen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013). The levels of statistical significance and practical effect size under the Pearson product moment correlations can be summarised as below:

Where level of significance is $p \leq .05$:

$r \geq .10 \leq .29$ represents small effect

$r \geq .30 \leq .49$ represents medium effect

$r \geq .50$ and above represents large effect

4.8.5.2 Level of significance: Regression analysis (SEM)

Under regression analysis, the ANOVA value (F_p) had to be calculated so as to establish the significance level – with a low F_p value ($< .05$) indicating that the null hypothesis can be rejected. Thus, a predictor value with a low F_p value ($p < .05$) shows likelihood that the independent variable significantly predicts the dependent variable. In a multiple regression analysis, the adjusted value R^2 indicates the extent to which the variation in the dependent variable is clarified by the independent variable (Hair et al., 2021). The range of the adjusted R^2 value is always from 0% to 100%, with 0% showing that the model clarifies none, while 100% shows that it clarifies all of the inconsistencies in the response data around its mean (Hair et al., 2021).

One problem encountered is that, by adding more variables, the R^2 value goes higher, which could mistakenly indicate a given model that has increased number of variables as having a better fit to the data simply because it has more relationships (Hair et al., 2021). This problem can be solved by calculating the adjusted R^2 value and then comparing the explanatory power of the corresponding models with a varied number of predictors (Hair et al., 2022). The adjusted R^2 value is consequently an unprejudiced estimation of the R^2 value, and thus, it is interpreted just the same way as the value of R (Hair et al., 2022).

The levels of statistical significance and practical effect size under the multiple regression analysis can be summarised as below:

Where level of significance is $p \leq .05$:

$R^2 \geq .02 \leq .12$ represents small effect

$R^2 \geq .13 \leq .25$ represents moderate effect

$R^2 \geq .26$ represents large effect

4.8.5.3 Level of significance: Moderated regression analysis

In drawing conclusions on the outcome of regression coefficients, a bootstrapping confidence interval is adopted (Hayes, 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). As a statistical method, bootstrapping

involves a random selection of individuals from the original dataset to develop a new dataset constituted by the same number of individuals (Jose, 2013; Zhang et al., 2019). A bootstrap confidence interval is created by taking a random sample from the original dataset in a repetitive manner, with replacement, and then making an approximation of each resamples indirect effect (Jose, 2013). The process is repeated several times, after which the values are arranged in ascending order (Hayes, 2019). The values represent the lower boundaries and the upper boundaries of the confidence interval of 95% (Hayes, 2018).

In the present study, the first analysis involved the moderator's mean values. The second involved the value one standard deviation above the mean (that is, +1, SD). The third involved the value one standard deviation below the mean (that is, -1, SD) (Preacher et al., 2007). The researcher interpreted the level of significance ($p < .05$) of the main and interaction effects by using the more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% lower-level and upper-level confidence levels, with the exclusion of zero in the range of the lower level and upper level (Hayes, 2019).

4.8.5.4 Level of significance: Tests for significant mean differences

Under the tests for significant mean differences, a level of significance with $p \leq .05$ implies significant and valid mean differences. Cohen's d is used in determining the effect size of the mean differences. The practical effect sizes under Cohen's d can be summarised as below (Cohen et al., 2013; Gravetter et al., 2020):

Where level of significance is $p \leq .05$:

$d = .02$ represents small effect

$d = .05$ represents moderate effect

$d = .08$ represents large effect

4.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the research design adopted for this study came with certain limitations. The researcher gave due consideration to these limitations while interpreting the findings of the study. The limitations include:

- The researcher was unable to control the study variables because of the cross-sectional nature of the research design;

- Additionally, due to the cross-sectional nature of the research design, the causal connectedness of the significant relationships occurring between the study variables could not be determined. That is to say, the researcher could not establish the cause-and-effect relationship. The study was thus limited to the establishment of the nature, direction, and magnitude of the relationship occurring among the variables, for the purpose of enabling the researcher to construct a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana;
- The cross-sectional research design is also prone to common method variance. The researcher addressed this limitation by testing for common method variance. The study was susceptible to the occurrence of bias, and support for mediation effects, while there is no true mediation process in the study sample. This susceptibility is as a result of the use of cross-sectional mediation analysis (Fairchild & McDaniel, 2017). However, in carrying out the cross-sectional mediation analysis, the aim of the researcher was not to ascertain the causal effects. Instead, the aim was to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationships occurring among the study variables. Through cross-sectional mediation analysis, the researcher is able to understand the possible reasons underlying the research outcomes (that is, career self-management). Additionally, it helps in generating ideas that can be employed to design future longitudinal mediation studies (Mitchell & Maxwell, 2013);
- The socio-demographic variables considered in the study were limited to participant's age, gender, marital status, and job level; and
- The study was based on a sample of (n = 288). This size of the sample unit was deemed small, and could not assist the researcher to make generalised conclusions about the entire population with regard to higher education institutions (that is, public higher education institutions) in Ghana.

4.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The focus of this chapter has been the discussion of the empirical research. It entailed descriptions of the study's population and sample. The measuring instruments, the motivation for their selection, their administration and scoring were discussed. The chapter also presented the ethical considerations of the study, capturing of criterion data, and the research hypotheses formulation. The discussion further covered the statistical processing of data gathered; including descriptive statistical, correlational, and inferential statistical analyses. The levels of statistical significance which were applied in the interpretation of the data were also discussed.

Chapter 5 discusses the reporting and interpretation of the results and the integration of the empirical results.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter provides in-depth information on the results of the various statistical analysis that were considered in the study, and a thorough discussion in order to address empirical research aims 1, 2, 3 and 4. The purpose of this analysis was to test and affirmed the formulated research hypotheses in Chapters 4, Tables 4.6. In this chapter, the statistical results of the empirical study are reported in terms of preliminary statistical analysis, descriptive statistics, bi-variate correlation analysis (person product moment correlation coefficient) and inferential and multivariate statistics as can be seen in figure 4.6. Tables and figures are used to present the statistical results. The empirical results are integrated and interpreted in the discussion section of the chapter.

Statistical results with regard to the following empirical aims and hypotheses are reported in the section below:

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical inter-relationships between the career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context. This research aim is related to the research hypothesis H1.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the research hypothesis H2.

Research aim 3: To assess whether biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the research hypothesis H3.

Research aim 4: To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the research hypothesis H4.

5.1 PRELIMINARY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The following three statistical analyses are presented and discussed in this section, namely; (1) common method variance, (2) confirmatory factor analysis and (3) internal consistency reliability. These statistical measurements were considered because of the nature of the scales used in the study. The three scales used in the study: (the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale

(PCPS), the social connectedness scale (SCS) and the organisational commitment scale (OCS) were subjected to the above tests as explained in Chapter 4.

5.1.1 Common Method Bias (CMB)

The test for common method bias is necessary because of the research design and the reporting instrument used, namely a cross-sectional research design and a self-reporting measurement instrument (Hair et al, 2018; 2022). Common method variance as espoused by Aguirre-Urreta and Hu (2019) and Rodríguez-Ardura and Meseguer-Artola (2020) showed a systematic variance that is caused by the type of data collection method used in self-reporting surveys. In situations where measures are affected by common method variance, the relationship existing, that is, positive or negative covariance among the indicators, could either be inflated or deflated. In this study, Harman's one-factor test and one-factor solution (i.e. confirmatory factor analysis) were employed to test for the common method variance (Amora, 2021; Fuller et al., 2016).

Common method bias was established by using Harman's one-factor solution and a one confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedure (N = 288). Harman believes that a one-factor test of $> .50$ implies a one-factor scale and also, there is a presence of common method variance (bias). In addition, a factor of $>.50$, means a CFA of good fit with presence of common method bias. These assertions can be envisaged in Table 5.1 which provides a summary of the results obtained in the current study. Table 5.1 shows the goodness-of-fit where the root mean square error of approximations are indicated (RMSEA) and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) are $\leq .08$ (good fit index). Again, a good fit in a model is manifested by a comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), when they are $\geq .90$ (Amora, 2021; Benitez et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019; Kock, 2021). The analysis of a fit was measured through a confirmatory factor analysis and this was done with the help of IBM SPSS (version 28).

Table 5.1*Harman's One-Factor Solution and One-Factor CFA*

	%	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	P	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NNI	TLI	AIC	
The Psychosocial Career Pre-Occupation Scale (PCPS)												
Harman's one factor solution	37.74	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
One factor CFA	n/a	1137.35	230	4.95	<.000	.12	.09	.72	n/a	.69	1229.3	
Social Connectedness Scale (SCS)												
Harman's one factor solution	42.26	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
One factor CFA	n/a	494.91	54	9.17	<.000	.17	.11	.71	n/a	.64	542.9	
Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)												
Harman's one factor solution	23.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
One factor CFA	n/a	1485.44	230	6.46	<.000	.14	0.14	.46	n/a	.40	1577.4	

Notes: N = 288

Source: Author's own work

5.1.1.1 Common method bias of the psychosocial career Pre-occupations (PCPS)

The one-factor solution for the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) (Coetzee, 2014b) showed that a loading of all the items of the PCP onto a single factor accounted for only 37.74% of the covariance between the scales' constructs. When PCPS variables were loaded onto a single construct in the CFA model, the fit indices showed a poor model fit. The acceptable chi-square ratio in a model should fall below 3 (chi-square/df < 3). Such a value is considered to be a good fit. The chi-square in connection to PCPS recorded a value above the threshold (chi-square/df ratio = 4.95), which is a poor fit in the model. Further, a preferred RMSEA and SRMR should be between 0 and 1. For a model to have a better fit, it should assume a value closer to zero (a value < .05). A moderate fit ranges between .05 and .10. Finally, with the RMSEA and the SRMR, a value of > .10 showed a poor fit. With regard to the CFI and TLI, an acceptable or good fit must fall within a threshold of > .90 (Amora, 2021; Hair et al., 2019; Kock, 2021).

The one-factor CFA indices per the analysis were reported as RMSEA = .12; SRMR = .09; CFI = .72; TLI = .69; AIC = 1229.3. Based on the results generated, the overall one-factor CFA of the PCPS indicates a poor fit (Tehseen et al., 2017). Hence, the researcher can affirm that common method variance is not a severe treat when interpreting the results of PCPS.

5.1.1.2 Common method bias of the social connectedness scale (SCS)

Table 5.1 reveals that the Harman's one-factor solution for the SCS loaded onto one construct explained only 42.26% of the covariance between the scale variable. The variance obtained indicates that there is no threat of common method bias in the sense that an average result indicating threat must exceed 50%. Again, the following indices were reported; chi-square/df ratio was 9.17, which shows a high index and is a poor indicator of fit. The one-factor CFA fit indices were: RMSEA = .17; SRMR = .11; CFI = .71; TLI = .64; AIC = 549.90. The following indices of the one-factor CFA overall showed a poor fit, hence there is no serious threat of common method variance in interpreting the results of the SCS.

5.1.1.3 Common method bias of the organisational commitment scale (OCS)

In the organisational commitment scale (OCS), the one-factor solution indicated that the loading of all the indicators onto a single factor accounted for only 23.3% of the covariance among the subscale variables. When the OCS variables were loaded onto a single construct in the confirmatory factor analysis model, the fit indices were: RMSEA = .14; SRMR = .14; CFI = .46; chi-square/df = 6.46; $p = <.000$; TLI = .40; AIC = 1577.40. In all, the one-factor confirmatory factor analysis of the OCS indicates a poor fit, meaning there were no serious threats in interpreting the results pertaining to the OCS.

Concluding on the common method variance, it was apparent that the results on the one-factor CFA from the various scales, notably PCPS, SCS and OCS were consistent with the guidelines of Podsakoff et al. (2003). This poor fit suggests that common method bias was not a probable threat to the research findings. Again, the Harman indices obtained for all the constructs also recorded below the 50% threshold, hence, no probable threat of common method variance was recorded in all the scales.

5.2 ASSESSING THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASUREMENT SCALES

In this section the internal consistency of the three instruments, namely psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (Coetzee, 2014b), social connectedness scale (Neilsen et al., 2000) and organisational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1991) are reported, having been subjected to CFAs, using IBM SPSS (Version 28). The validity and reliability of each scale was assessed. The researcher adopted a strategy to assess the model fit of the measurement model of each of the scale before examining the research hypotheses.

This section describes the computation of two confirmatory factor analyses on each measurement scale, model one and model two. The test of model fit of the initial multifactor base was considered in model one (which could not meet the threshold). Again, model two considered the optimised version of the corresponding measurement scale in order to improve the loading of the scales. According to Levenberg (1994) and Marquardt (1963), model optimisation is deemed necessary and is done by means of the Levenberg-Marquardt optimisation procedure to assess the covariance of the data. Further, convergent validity of the measurement model of each scale was assessed with help of Fornell-Larcker (1981) criteria.

In order to determine the construct validity of a given measurement scale, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), IBM SPSS (Version 28) was used (Amora, 2021; Hair et al., 2018). The main purpose of the CFA is to assess and measure the validity of the measurement model of all the scales adopted in the study, which allow the researcher to reach a valid conclusion. Research conducted by Tehseen et al. (2017) and Amora (2021) reveals that the mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) are $\leq .10$. Such a result is deemed acceptable (model acceptance) and considered to be a good fit at $\leq .08$. Again, the CFI (the comparative fit index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis index) at $\geq .90$ is deemed to be good fit in assessing a given model.

Again, according to Hair et al. (2019), the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) assess the number of shared variances between the latent constructs in a model. Hair et al (2019) assert that an AVE value of $> .70$ (good statistics) and CR $> .70$ indicate a good model fit. Again, AVE is considered acceptable with a threshold (AVE $\geq .50$). Hair et al. (2019) note that the aforementioned statistics are used to measure the construct reliability and convergent validity of a measurement scale.

In addition, discriminant validity is deemed worth considering in such analysis. Hamid et al. (2017), and Kock (2021) assert that discriminant validity is necessary in any study that consists of latent variables in order to avoid multicollinearity problems. Discriminant validity is established using the following statistical tools: maximum shared variance (MSV), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation. Composite reliability is also used in establishing the construct validity (when CR > AVE). Further, discriminant validity is ascertained when the MSV < AVE. Again, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio must be less or equal to .85. When the HTMT is above .85 it implies there is a problem with the latent constructs (multicollinearity). According to Ali and Haseeb (2019), a CR value should be greater than or equal to .70 (CR ≥ .70). These tools are considered as more robust in assessing the internal consistency of the measurement scale of a study.

5.2.1 Assessing the Validity and Reliability of the Psychosocial Career Preoccupations Scale (PCPS)

Table 5.2 below indicates the CFA results for the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS).

Table 5.2

Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the PCPS

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	AIC
CFA model 1	804.09	227	3.54	≤.001	.09	.07	.82	.80	1902.1
CFA optimised model 2	255.4	87	2.94	≤.001	.08	.05	.93	.91	321.40

N=288

Source: Author's own work

As indicated in Table 5.2, model 1 revealed the following model fit indices using the IBM SPSS (version 28) and AMOS (version 28): chi-square = 804.09; df = 227; chi-square/df = 3.54; p = ≤.001; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .07; CFI = .82; TLI = .80; AIC = 1902.1. Research showed that a chi-square ratio less than 3 (chi-square/df < 3) indicates a good fit. From the above, the chi-square/df in the model = 3.54 (slightly high). A preferred value for RMSEA and SRMR should

range between 0 and 1. A value closer to 0 indicates a better fit. When they attain a value $< .05$ that is a good fit, between $.05$ and $.10$ is a moderate fit, and finally, a poor fit is depicted by a value $> .10$.

Based on these indicators above, the RMSEA and SRMR values obtained are $.09$ and $.07$ respectively, and are considered to be a moderate fit.

In addition, with regard to the CFI and TLI values, the most appropriate value should be greater than $.90$ (acceptable fit). The reported values for the CFI and TLI are $.82$ and $.80$ respectively are considered to be a poor fit because of the results falling below the threshold of $> .90$.

From the above Table 5.2, model 2 indicates the optimised multifactor model which reveals the following model fit indices: chi-square = 255.4; df = 87; chi-square/df = 2.94; $p = \leq .001$; RMSEA = $.08$; SRMR = $.05$; CFI = $.93$; TLI = $.91$; AIC = 321.40. The chi-square/df ratio in the model was considered a good fit (2.94). The RMSEA and SRMR values attained a moderate fit ($.08$ and $.05$ respectively). Both the CFI and TLI in model 2 showed an acceptable fit (recorded $.93$ and $.91$ respectively).

In summary, when comparing the two models, model two (optimised model 2) shows an improved model as compared to model 1, based on the values recorded for the chi-square, chi-square/df, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, TLI. Therefore, one can argue that the optimised model 2 shows a better fit than model 1. Again, the optimised model shows a lower AIC than the AIC for model 1. Based on the conclusions drawn from the above, the best fit model for CFA measurement model regarding PCPS is the optimised model and thus is used for further statistical analysis.

Table 5.3 overleaf reports the internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of PCPS.

Table 5.3*Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant of the PCPS*

Scale dimensions	CR	AVE	MSV	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)			Construct validity CR>AVE AVE>.50	Discriminant validity MSV<AVE HTMT≤.85
				CE	CA	WA		
Career establishment (CE)	.92	.56	.70	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	No MSV > AVE
Career adaptation (CA)	.84	.63	.58	.57	n/a	n/a	Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < AVE HTMT (No problem)
Work-life adjustment (WA)	.70	.43	.70	.84	.78	n/a	Partially CR>AVE AVE<.50	No MSV > AVE HTMT (No Problem)
Overall PCP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Note: N = 288; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; HTMT: heterotrait-monotrait; PCP; psychosocial career pre-occupations.

Source: Author's own work

As indicated in Table 5.3, the subscales for the PCPS showed a high overall reliability ($r \geq .70$), which indicates high internal consistency of the PCPS. In assessing the reliability of a measurement scale, Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability could be used for such assessment. Due to the limitations of the Cronbach alpha (stated in Chapter 4), the composite reliability was deemed appropriate for this research. Also, Table 5.3 reveals evidence of the convergent validity of the PCPS, with the composite reliability values being greater than the AVE values. In addition, the AVE is deemed adequate in that all the AVE values attained a threshold, being greater or equal to .50 ($AVE \geq .50$). The AVE relationship with career establishment pre-occupations scale (.56) is $\geq .50$, which is acceptable. Further, the AVE relationship with career adaptation pre-occupations scale (.63) is also $\geq .50$, which is acceptable. However, the AVE of work-life adjustment pre-occupations scale (.43) which is $\leq .50$ (fall in the threshold), may be deemed unacceptable (Henseler et al., 2015).

Moreover, in the case of discriminant validity as mentioned earlier, MSV, AVE and HTMT are used for decision-making. The MSV value is greater than the AVE value ($MSV > AVE$), this means that there is low discriminant validity. This is as a result of measurement error with the scale. The MSV (.70) for career establishment is greater than AVE (.56), showing low discriminant validity.

The report showed that career adaptation revealed high discriminant validity, where the MSV (.58) is less than the ASV (.63). Finally, work-life adjustment recorded a low discriminant validity, where the MSV is greater than the ASV (MSV = .70 and ASV = .43).

In addition, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) can be used to establish discriminant validity (Appau et al., 2021; Benetiz et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). According to the report from the Table 5.3 above, there is no discriminant validity problem with regard to the relationship among the variables. The values obtained are all lower than the threshold of $HTMT \leq .85$. In all, the best approach for establishing discriminant validity is the use of HTMT rather than MSV and AVE. Again, the HTMT criterion do not mislead in the interpretation of causal effect in the modelling analysis. HTMT results of discriminant validity assist to detect multi-collinearity among the latent variables in a study. Hence, the results obtained above showed there are no multi-collinearity problems in the study construct, notably career establishment pre-occupations.

5.2.2 Assessing the validity and reliability of the social connectedness scale (SCS)

Table 5.4 below indicates the report for CFA results for the social connectedness scale (SCS)

Table 5.4

Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the SCS

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square/df	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	AIC
CFA model 1	306.29	53	5.78	≤.001	.13	.09	.83	.79	356.30
CFA optimised model 2	10.58	8	1.32	.227	.03	.03	1.00	.99	36.60
Overall SC									

N = 288

Source: Author's own work

Model 1 as revealed in Table 5.4 shows the following model fit indices using the IBM SPSS (version 28) and AMOS (version 28): chi-square = 306.29; df = 53; chi-square/df = 5.78; p = ≤.001;

RMSEA = .13; SRMR = .09; CFI = .83; TLI = .79; AIC = 356.30. Studies conducted by Hair et al. (2022) show that a chi-square ratio less than 3 (chi-square/df < 3) indicate a good fit. From the above, the chi-square/df in the model = 5.78 (deemed to be high). With regard to the RMSEA and SRMR, the preferred values range between 0 and 1. A value closer to 0 means a good fit. A value < .05 means good fit, between .05 and .10 means a moderate fit, and finally, a poor fit is depicted by a value >.10. From the results obtained for RMSEA (.13) and SRMR (.094) respectively indicate that the RMSEA has a better fit, and the SRMR shows a moderate fit.

Again, on the model fit, for the CFI and TLI values, the most appropriate value should be greater than .90 (acceptable fit). The reported values for the CFI and TLI are .83 and .79 respectively. These values are considered to be a poor fit because of falling below the threshold of >.90.

From the above Table 5.4, model 2 indicates the optimised multifactor model which reveals the following model fit indices: chi-square = 10.58; df = 8; chi-square/df = 1.32; p = .000; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .03; CFI = 1.00; TLI = .99; AIC = 36.60. The chi-square/df ratio in the model was considered a good fit (1.32). The RMSEA and SRMR values attained a good fit (.03 and .03 respectively). Both the CFI and TLI in model 2 showed a good fit (recorded 1.00 and .99 respectively).

In conclusion, with regard to the comparison between the two models, model two (optimised model 2) is an improved model over model 1, based on the values recorded for the chi-square, chi-square/df, RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, and TLI. Therefore, one can argue that the optimised model 2 shows a better fit than model 1. Again, the optimised model shows a lower AIC than the AIC for model 1. Based on the data generated above, the best fit model for CFA measurement model with regard to SCS is the optimised model, and is thus used for further statistical analysis.

The internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of the SCS are explained in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5*Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant of the SCS*

Scale dimension	CR	AVE	MSV	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)		Construct validity	Discriminant validity
				FO	FP	CR>AVE, AVE>.50	MSV<AVE, HTMT≤.85
Friendship opportunity (FO)	.82	.60	.13	n/a	n/a	Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < AVE
Friendship prevalence (FP)	.85	.65	.13	.38	n/a	Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < AVE HTMT (No problem of discriminant validity)
Overall SC							

Note: N = 288; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; HTMT: heterotrait-monotrait; SC: social connectedness.

Source: Author's own work

From Table 5.5, the subscales for the SCS showed a high overall composite reliability ($r \geq .70$) which indicated high internal consistency of the measurement scale. In assessing the reliability of a measurement scale, composite reliability was used to test the reliability of the instrument (social connectedness scale, Nielsen et al. 2000). Again, Table 5.5 shows evidence of the convergent validity of the SCS, with the composite reliability (CR) values being greater than the AVE values. In the case of friendship opportunity (FO), the CR recorded $\alpha = .82$ and AVE $\alpha = .60$. This shows that the convergent validity is acceptable, and at the same time having higher AVE ($\alpha > .50$). Similarly, the other scale, friendship prevalence (FP), has a CR $\alpha = .85$ and AVE $\alpha = .65$. This again represent an acceptable convergent validity with AVE $>.50$ (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015).

Further, in the case of discriminant validity as discussed earlier, MSV, AVE and HTMT are used for decision-making. The MSV values are less than the AVE value ($MSV < AVE$). This means that there is high discriminant validity. This is as a result of measurement error with the scale. The MSV (.13) for friendship opportunity (FO) is less than AVE (.60), showing high level of discriminant

validity. The report shows that career adaptation pre-occupations has high discriminant validity, where MSV (.13) is less than AVE (.65).

Moreover, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) can be used to establish discriminant validity (Appau et al., 2021; Benetiz et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). According to the report from Table 5.5 above, there is no discriminant validity problem regarding the relationship among the variables. The values obtained are all lower than the threshold of $HTMT \geq .85$. In all, the best approach for establishing discriminant validity is the use of HTMT, rather than MSV and ASV. Again, the HTMT criterion does not mislead in the interpretation of causal effect in the modelling analysis (Henseler et al., 2015; Kock, 2021). HTMT results of discriminant validity assist to detect multi-collinearity among the latent variables in a study. Hence, the results obtained above show there are no multi-collinearity problems among the study constructs, notably friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence.

5.2.3 Assessing the Validity and Reliability of the Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

Table 5.6 below reports the CFA results for the organisational commitment scale (OCS).

Table 5.6
Results for CFAs Testing the Construct Validity of the OCS

	Chi-square	df	Chi-square	p	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	AIC
CFA model 1	909.23	227	4.01	≤.001	.10	.14	.71	.67	1007.20
CFA optimised model 2	73.79	32	2.31	≤.001	.07	.62	.97	.95	119.8
Overall OC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

N=288

Source: Author's own work

Two models were tested to examine the fit between the construct, organisational commitment scale (OCS). As mentioned in Table 5.6, model 1 was tested and the following model fit indices were obtained using the IBM SPSS (version 28) and AMOS (version 28): chi-square = 909.23; df = 227; chi-square/df = 4.01; $p = \leq .001$; RMSEA = .10; SRMR = .14; CFI = .71; TLI = .67; AIC = 1007.20. However, the chi-square/df value was above the threshold of 3. It was concluded that the model has a poor fit. Also, both the RMSEA and SRMR recorded moderate and poor fit respectively (RMSEA $\alpha = .10$ and SRMR $\alpha = .14$). Again, as the CFI and the TLI values were below the preferred threshold value of .90 (CFI $\alpha = .71$ and TLI $\alpha = .67$), it was then decided to test a second model in order to improve the construct validity of the OC.

Given the poor nature of model 1, the second model known as optimised model 2 was tested and the following findings emerged, namely chi-square of 73.79; chi-square/df ratio = 2.31; $p = \leq .001$; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .62; CFI = .97; TLI = .95; AIC = 119.8. From the values obtained in the optimised model 2, it can be concluded that the second model was an improvement on model 1. Hence, model 2 has the best model fit for further statistical analysis.

Table 5.7 reports the internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity of OCS below.

Table 5.7*Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant of the OCS*

Scale dimensions	CR	AVE	MSV	Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)			Construct validity CR>AVE AVE>.50	Discriminant validity MSV<AVE HTMT≤.85
				AC	NC	CC		
Affective commitment (AC)	.87	.69	.03				Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < ASV
Continuance commitment (CC)	.78	.55	.19	.08			Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < ASV HTMT (No problem of discriminant validity)
Normative commitment (NC)	.86	.61	.19	.19	.47		Yes CR>AVE AVE>.50	Yes MSV < ASV HTMT (No problem of discriminant validity)
Overall OC	n/a	n/a	n/a				n/a	n/a

Note: N = 288; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; HTMT: heterotrait-monotrait; OC: organisational commitment.

Source: Author's own work

As mentioned in Table 5.7, the subscales for the OCS showed a high overall reliability ($r \geq .70$), which indicates high internal consistency of the scale. In addressing the reliability of a measurement scale, composite reliability was the preferred instrument used for such assessment. Again, the composite reliability was chosen over the Cronbach alpha due to the limitations of the Cronbach alpha (as stated in Chapter 4). Further, Table 5.7 discloses the convergent validity of the OCS with the CR values being greater than the AVE values. In addition, the AVE is deemed adequate because all the AVE values attained a threshold being greater or equal to .50 ($AVE \geq .50$). The AVE relationship with affective commitment scale (.69) is $> .50$ which is acceptable. Further, the AVE relationship with continuance commitment scale (.55) is also $> .50$, which is acceptable. Again, the AVE of normative commitment scale (.61) which is $> .50$, was considered acceptable (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

In the case of discriminant validity as mentioned earlier, MSV, AVE and HTMT are all used for decision-making. The MSV values ranged between .03 and .19 for all the subscales of organisational commitment. The AVE values also ranged between .55 and .69. For the subscales of organisational commitment, since the MSV values are less than AVE ($MSV < AVE$), this is evidence of high discriminant validity.

Research indicates that the most preferred approach for testing discriminant validity is the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Kock, 2021). Evidence from the Table 5.7 above shows that there is no discriminant validity problem with regard to the relationship among the variables (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). The values obtained are all lower than the threshold of $HTMT \leq .85$. The focus of the HTMT results of discriminant validity assists to detect multi-collinearity among the latent variables in a study. Hence, the results obtained above shows there are no multi-collinearity problems among the study constructs, notably affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Again, the HTMT criterion do not mislead in the interpretation of causal effect in model analysis.

5.3 CFA: ASSESSING DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY OF THE OVERALL MEASUREMENT MODEL

IBM SPSS (version 28) were used to examine the discriminant validity of the overall constructs. CFA was conducted to assess whether the measurement models of the three scales and their subscales respectively measure discriminant validity. These three scales are the psychosocial career preoccupations scale (PCPS), the social connectedness scale (SCS) and the organisational commitment scale (OCS). The assessment of discriminant validity is necessary because it helps the researcher to have an objective view as to whether there is likelihood of multi-collinearity with regards to the scales before testing for hypothesis. According to Kalnins (2018), multi-collinearity occurs when the variables have strong correlation between two or more predictor variables. Again, multi-collinearity arises in two directions; notably (1) redundant of data results and (2) skewed results of a model (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Amora, 2021; Benitez et al., 2020; Kalnins, 2018).

As indicated in Table 5.8, one-factor solution CFA and multi factor solution CFA were used to examine the overall measurement model of discriminant validity. Evidence from the Table 5.8

below revealed that the overall measurement scale showed a good fit, based on the result from the multi-factor solution CFA.

According to research conducted by Kalnins (2018) and Hair et al (2019), for a model to be considered a good fit, it must have a threshold of RMSEA and SRMR \leq .08 and a CFI and TLI \geq .90. Based on these statistics, the CFA values for one-factor solution showed a problematic statistic. Hence, the multi-factor solution CFA revealed significant improvement and a good fit based on the values obtained in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8

CFA: Discriminant Validity of the Overall Measurement Model

		One factor solution (CFA)	Multi factor solution (CFA)
Overall measurement model		Chi-Square/df = 4.18	Chi-Square/df = 2.95
		RMSEA = .11	RMSEA = .08
		SRMR = .13	SRMR = .05
		CFI = .35	CFI = .93
		TLI = .32	TLI = .91
		AIC = 6899.60	AIC = 321.40

Source: Author's own work

The CFA for the overall multifactor measurement model showed discriminant validity, with the fit indices indicating RMSEA and SRMR of below .08 and a CFI \geq .90. (Chi-square/df ratio = 2.95; $p < .000$; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .05; CFI = .93; TLI = .91; AIC = 321.40)

The CFA results therefore provided evidence of the discriminant validity of the measurement model and justified proceeding with the testing of the research hypotheses. The fit statistics also indicate that multicollinearity was not a threat to interpreting the findings.

5.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics involves the use of statistical methods that quantitatively measure or encapsulate the features of data collection (Holcomb, 2016). With regard to this section, the

following statistical tools such as the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were carried out in order to assess three main measurement scales: psychosocial career preoccupations scale (PCPS), social connectedness scale (SCS) and organisational commitment scale (OCS).

In order to obtain a mean score, the sum of all the individual scores for each subscale is calculated and divided by the total scores of the number in each subscale. The mean gives an indication of normality of the data (Holcomb, 2016; Trafimow et al., 2018). Again, according to Trafimow et al. (2018), skewness of a data shows the data generated are considered as non-parametric. Further, on the descriptive statistics, the standard deviation obtained from the data shows how clustered the data is around the mean score while the kurtosis shows the peaked-ness (outlier) of the data (Holcomb, 2016).

5.4.1 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Scale (PCPS)

Table 5.9 overleaf presents the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS).

As indicated in Table 5.9, the PCPS scores were obtained by computing the mean scores for all the items regarding the subscales including career establishment pre-occupation, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations. These subscales were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 showed that employees were not concerned about their career pre-occupations and 5 indicated that employees were extremely concerned about their career pre-occupations. The subscale with the highest mean score indicates how concerned they are with regard to their career. Table 5.9 shows a synopsis of the descriptive information on the scale, notably psychosocial career pre-occupations.

Table 5.9*Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis (PCPS)*

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career establishment pre-occupations	4.09	.86	-.82	.31
Career adaptation pre-occupations	3.17	1.10	-.05	-.56
Work-life adjustment pre-occupations	3.66	1.01	-.40	-.42
Overall PCP	3.80	.96	-.56	-.04

Note: N = 288

Source: Author's own work

In terms of the PCPS, the mean scores range from 3.17 to 4.09 and the standard deviation scores range between .86 and 1.10. Therefore, participants scored the highest in career establishment subscale ($M = 4.09$; $SD = .86$), with work-life adjustment being the predominant psychosocial career pre-occupations ($M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.01$) reported by participants. The subscales of PCPS recorded fairly similar standard deviation ranging from .86 to 1.10. Again, the overall mean and standard deviation scale obtained were ($M = 3.80$; $SD = .96$). Information in Table 5.9 shows that the data obtained were negatively skewed for all of the subscales of PCP, with the overall scale indicating skewness of $-.56$. The values obtained for the skewness shows that the distribution was flatter, with a wider peak. The final descriptive statistic for PCPS was the kurtosis. The values obtained for kurtosis varied between $-.56$ to $.31$. The kurtosis for career establishment pre-occupations ($\alpha = .31$) indicates that the dataset has a lesser tail than the normal distribution. In the case of the other subscales of PCP (kurtosis, $\alpha = -.56$ and $\alpha = -.42$) the values recorded show the possibility for extreme values lower than the normal distribution, and again, they are widely spread around the mean.

5.4.2 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Social Connectedness Scale (SCS)

Table 5.10 overleaf reports the means, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the social connectedness scale (SCS).

Table 5.10*Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis for SCS*

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Friendship opportunity	4.00	.88	-1.00	1.41
Friendship prevalence	3.22	1.11	-.35	-.34
Overall SC	3.61	1.00	-.68	.54

Note: N = 288

Source: Author's own work

The SCS scores were obtained by establishing the mean scores for all the items regarding the subscales including friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. The above subscales were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 means “strongly disagree”, and 5 means “strongly agree”. The subscale with the highest mean score, the higher the extent of agreement of social connectedness and a lower mean score closer to 1 indicates the extent of disagreement. Table 5.10 provides the descriptive data on SCS subscales.

The SCS scores were ascertained by computing the mean scores for all the items relating to the subscales of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. The mean scores varied between the ranges of 3.22 to 4.00. The respondents gave the highest score to friendship opportunity subscale ($M = 4.00$; $SD = .88$), and the lowest rating was friendship prevalence subscale ($M = 3.22$; $SD = 1.11$). However, the standard deviation values were closely similar, varying from .88 to 1.11.

Table 5.10 indicates that statistics obtained has negatively skewed values for SC subscales. The SC subscale such as friendship opportunity had a -1.00 skewness whereas friendship prevalence obtained a skewness of -.35, with the skewness = -.68 for the overall scale (SC). The values obtained from Table 5.10 indicate that friendship opportunity is highly negatively skewed, whereas the friendship prevalence is moderately negatively skewed. The kurtosis values range from -.34 to 1.41, which shows the possibility for extreme values which tend to be lower than in a normal distribution more widely spread around the mean (Hair et al., 2017). The subscale friendship prevalence obtained a -.34 kurtosis, with an indication that the distribution is flat and has thin tails

called platykurtic. Again, the friendship prevalence obtained 1.41 kurtosis, with indication that the kurtosis for friendship prevalence being high and acceptable (Hair et al., 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

5.4.3 Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

Table 5.11 overleaf presents a report on the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the organisational commitment scale (OCS).

The OCS scores were determined by computing the mean scores for all the three items, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment subscales. Participants had to respond to statements with regards to the level of commitment to the organisation on a five-point Likert scale. 1 on the scale indicates “strongly disagree” and 5 on the scale shows strong agreement with regard to their level of commitment.

The mean scores varied from 3.18 to 3.45. Respondents attained the highest scores on the affective commitment subscale ($M = 3.45$; $SD = 1.10$), and the continuance commitment subscale had the lowest mean score with ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 1.18$). Information in Table 5.11 shows that the standard deviations for all the subscales shows similar values ranging from 1.10 to 1.18. With regards to the skewness of the distribution, all the subscales of the OCS showed a negatively skewed distribution, ranging between -0.19 and -0.51 . This indicates that the mean is lower than the median and the mode. The overall skewness for the subscale recorded -0.32 . The kurtosis values vary from -0.35 to -0.81 , showing that the chance for extreme values to be less than for a normally distributed data. Further, the overall value for the subscales attained a kurtosis of -0.60 , showing flat distribution because of value being < -1 .

From Table 5.11 below, the high score for affective commitment scale explains that the respondents seem to be more focused on emotional attachment to the institution they belong to. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), affective commitment is “the emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation” (p.67). High affective commitment could affect employee behaviour. The lower values obtained with regard to the mean shows that respondents seemed to be less focused on the cost of leaving the organisation. The results obtained indicate that respondents have a sense of attachment with the organisation and are willing to stay with the organisation, but the affective component is lacking.

Table 5.11*Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis OCS*

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Affective commitment	3.45	1.10	-.51	-.35
Continuance commitment	3.18	1.18	-.19	-.81
Normative commitment	3.20	1.15	-.27	-.64
Overall OC	3.28	1.14	-.32	-.60

Note: N = 288

Source: Author's own work

The following core conclusions were generated from the descriptive results:

- Overall, the highest score on psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) (Coetzee, 2014b) was the subscale career establishment with a mean score of (4.09), indicating that employees have financial or economic stability in their career life. The scores for career adaptation (3.17) show how employees' interest, talent and capabilities fit with the changes in the employment market. Again, the scores on work-life adjustment (3.66) reveal that employees have a high balance of work with family responsibilities. Finally, moderate concerns about employees' career establishment were predominant in the sample.
- With regard to social connectedness scale (SCS), (Nielsen et al., 2000), the highest mean score was for friendship opportunity (4.00), and it shows that employees are able to work with co-workers to collectively solve problems. However, the scores obtained for the second subscale, notably friendship prevalence with a mean score of (3.22), indicate that employees have formed strong friendships at work.
- The respondents gave a relatively moderate mean scores for all the subscales of the organisational commitment scale (OCS) (Meyer & Allen, 1991), indicating that they were somewhat committed to their organisation. From Table 5.11 above, affective commitment recorded the highest mean score (3.45), this further indicates that employees have no strong sense of belongingness to their institution. The next highest score among the subscales is the normative commitment (3.20), indicating that employees feel the institution deserves their loyalty. Finally, the lowest mean score recorded for continuance commitment (3.18) which

indicates that employees feel they are not afraid of what might happen if they quit the job without having another one lined up. Therefore, the scores revealed that the respondents somewhat agree with organisational commitment.

5.5 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

In this study, correlational statistics were conducted to determine the magnitude and the direction between the various constructs under consideration. Correlation is a bivariate analysis that examines the strength of a relationship and the direction of the variables (Benitez et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2019). In this section, a report regarding bivariate correlations among the three scales, psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS), social connectedness scale (SCS) and organisational commitment scale (OCS) was considered. This relationship was established with the help of IBM SPSS (version 28) and was intended to assess the empirical inter-relationships between the career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context (research aim 1). Further, the correlational result was assessed to provide significant evidence in support of the formulated research hypothesis 1 (H1).

H1: There is significant positive inter-relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment

5.5.1 Correlation between the Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Scale (PCPS), Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) and Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

Table 5.12 overleaf summarises the results of the correlation which intend establishes the relationship between the respective research variables. This relationship was achieved with the help of the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

Table 5.12

Bivariate Correlations of the Independent and Dependent Variables

Variables	Career establishment	Career adaptation	Work-life adjustment	Overall PCPS	Friendship opportunity	Friendship prevalence	Overall SCS	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment	Overall OCS
Career establishment											
Career adaptation	.50**										
Work-life adjustment	.67**	.59**									
Overall PCPS	.82**	.85**	.88**	-							
Friendship opportunity	.36**	.28**	.47**	.43*	-						
Friendship Prevalence	.05	.02	.13*	.08	.31**	-					
Overall SCS	.21**	.15**	.33**	.27*	.72**	.88**	-				
Affective commitment	.08	-.10	.01	-.02	.24**	-.04	.09	-			
Continuance commitment	.09	.19**	.13*	.17*	.15*	.20**	.22**	-.06	-		
Normative commitment	.03	.10	.13*	.11	.24**	.34**	.36**	.16**	.40**	-	
Overall OCS	.07	.17**	.15**	.16*	.23**	.32**	.35**	.06**	.84**	.84*	-

Note: N = 288; ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$; $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \leq .30 \leq .49$ (moderate practical effect size), $r \geq .50$ (large practical effect size)

Source: Author's own work

5.5.2 Bivariate Correlations among the Scale Variables

As specified in Table 5.12, the results indicated significant bivariate correlations among the three subscale dimensions of the PCPS, ranging between $r \geq .50 \leq .67$ (large practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). These values obtained reveals that there was construct validity among the subscales; notably career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations. The three subscale dimensions of the PCPS had significant positive correlation with the overall construct of PCPS ($r \geq .82 \leq .88$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .01$), indicating the relationship among the overall construct of psychosocial career pre-occupations.

With regard to SCS, no significant bivariate correlation between the two subscales dimensions of SCS was established, varied between $r \geq .08 \leq .31$ (small practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). From these values, we see that there was a low construct validity between friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. Again, the two subscales of the SCS indicated a positive and significant correlation with the overall construct of the SCS ($r \geq .72 \leq .88$; large practical effect size; $p \leq .01$), and this shows that the construct validity for the overall construct of social connectedness is deemed important.

In terms of the OCS, there was no significant correlation were attained between the three subscales of OCS with values ranging between $r \geq -.06 \leq .40$ (small and moderate practical effect size; $p \leq .05$). In addition, the three subscale of the OCS, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, revealed a significant and positive correlations with the overall construct of the OCS ($r \geq .84 \leq .85$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect size), showing construct validity for the overall construct, organisational commitment.

5.5.2.1 Bivariate correlations between the three scale variables

To determine the strength and the direction among the respective variables, a bivariate correlational analysis was considered in the following sub-sections.

(a) Bivariate correlations between PCP subscales and SC subscales

As mentioned in Table 5.12 above, the results for the career establishment pre-occupations subscale indicated significant positive correlations with the two subscales of the SCS, with friendship opportunity ($r = .36$; moderate practical effect; $p < .01$), friendship prevalence (not significant) and with the overall SCS scale ($r = .21$; small practical effect; $p < .01$). In the case of the career adaptation subscale, the outcome indicated a significant positive correlation with the overall scale of the SCS (r

= .15; small practical effect; $p < .01$). In the case of work-life adjustment, there was a significant positive correlation with the overall scale of the SCS ($r = .33$; moderate practical effect; $p < .01$).

As per Table 5.12, the overall PCPS revealed a significant positive correlation with the social connectedness subscales of friendship opportunity ($r = .43$; moderate practical effect; $p < .01$), friendship prevalence scale (not significant), and the overall SCS ($r = .27$; small practical effect' $p < .01$). According to Cohen et al (2013) and Hair et al (2019), a correlation with r values with a threshold of $\geq .85$ indicates the presence of multi-collinearity, but here, r values $< .85$ show that multi-collinearity is not present in the relationship established.

(b) Bivariate correlations between PCPS subscales and OCS subscales

The results for career establishment pre-occupations subscale showed no significant correlations with the overall scale of OCS (not significant). Again, the career establishment subscale revealed no significant positive correlation with all the OC subscale, affective commitment ($r = .08$; small practical effect; not significant), continuance commitment (not significant), and normative commitment (not significant). The career adaptation subscale also had a significant positive correlation with the overall OCS ($r = .17$; small practical effect; $p < .01$). However, the career adaptation subscale had negative but no significant correlations on subscale of OCS, notably affective commitment (not significant), but career adaptation had a positive significant correlation on the OCS subscale, continuance commitment subscale ($r = .19$; small practical effect; $p < .01$) and finally on the career adaptation subscale, there was a no significant correlation on the OCS subscale, normative commitment (not significant).

With regard to work-life adjustment subscale, there was a significant positive correlation on the overall OCS with ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p < .01$). However, the work-life adjustment subscale recorded no significant correlations with the affective commitment subscale (not significant). The work-life adjustment subscale had positive significant correlation on both OCS subscales, namely continuance and normative commitment respectively, with ($r = .13$; small practical effect; $p < .05$, respectively). The overall PCPS had a positive significant correlation with that of the overall OCS ($r = .16$; small practical effect; $p < .01$). In conclusion, the correlation values were all below the threshold value ($r > .85$), justifying that there is multi-collinearity concern with the analysis (Cohen et al., 2013; Hair et al., 2019).

(c) Bivariate correlations between SCS subscales and OCS subscales

In the friendship opportunity subscale, the outcome revealed positive significant correlation with the overall OCS ($r = .23$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$). Further, the friendship subscale indicated a positive significant correlation with all the subscales of OCS, affective commitment ($r = .24$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$), continuance commitment ($r = .15$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and normative commitment ($r = .24$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$).

With regard to the friendship prevalence subscale, the result reflected a positive significant correlation with that of the overall OCS ($r = .32$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .01$). However, the friendship prevalence subscale indicated no significant correlation with affective commitment subscale (not significant). Further, the friendship prevalence subscale showed a positive significant bivariate correlation with the other two subscale of OCS, continuance commitment subscale ($r = .20$; small practical effect; $p \leq .01$) and normative commitment subscale ($r = .34$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .01$).

The overall scale of social connectedness had a positive significant correlation with the overall scale of organisational commitment ($r = .35$; moderate practical effect; $p \leq .01$). In sum, the correlation values were all below the threshold value ($r > .85$), signifying that there is multi-collinearity concern with the analysis (Cohen et al., 2013; Hair et al., 2019).

In summary, the overall results obtained showed either a significant positive or negative correlation among the three main constructs, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. The values obtained for all the constructs vary from small, to moderate, to large practical effect size. Again, with regard to bivariate correlation, majority of the results showed a positive significant relationship (correlation) between the various subscales of PCPS, SCS and OCS, where the practical effect varied between small, moderate and large. Accordingly, the results for the bivariate correlation analysis provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 1 (H1).

H1: There is significant positive inter-relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

5.6 INFERENCE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

To draw concise conclusions from the sample population, inferential statistics were considered appropriate. These inferential statistics listed below were reported and interpreted based on the research aims and hypothesis in the following phases:

Phase 1: Structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis

Phase 2: Moderation regression analysis

Phase 3: Test for significant mean difference

5.6.1 INFERENCE STATISTICS: SEM ANALYSIS

For testing research hypothesis H2, SEM analysis was ascertained for such purpose. Below is the research hypothesis H2:

H2: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.

In the following section, one structural equation model, based on the significant predictions of a relationship found between the dependent variables (psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness) and dependent construct (organisational commitment) variables and subscales were investigated. SEM analysis was used as a baseline. Covariance structural analysis was conducted to test research hypothesis 2 (H2) empirically.

Table 5.13 below provides the goodness-of-fit statistics for the SEM model that was tested. The model only included the items of each construct loading onto the relevant overall construct of each scale. The AMOS procedure with maximum likelihood estimation of the covariance structure analysis was applied.

Table 5.13*Model Fit Statistics*

Chi-square/df	P	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI	AIC
2.875	<.001***	.081	.116	.95	.93	138.9

Note: *** $P < .001$

Source: Author's own work

The model had very high RMSEA ($\infty = .081$) and chi-square/df ratio values (2.875). The CFI and TLI were acceptable for the model. According to Assaf et al (2019), goodness-of-fit was indicated if RMSEA and SRMR values were $\leq .08$ and CFI and TLI values $\geq .90$.

As shown in Table 5.13 above, the chi-square/df ratio value (2.88) and AIC value (138.9) for the model were used to make a decision to retain the model as the measurement model with the best fit because of the better RMSEA and chi-square/df fit indices.

In the following section, one structural equation model was identified; the standardised path coefficients were evaluated to determine the convergent validity for the structural model's factor structure. A significant standardised path coefficient of .30 or more is an indication that a variable contributes effectively to the construct it was intended to measure (Kline, 2011; Loewenthal & Lewis, 2018). The results of the standardised path coefficients of the final best fit structural equation model are reported in Table 5.14 below.

Table 5.14*Standardised Path Coefficients for the Final Hypothesised Structural Equation Model*

Observed Variables	Latent variables	Estimate	Standard error	R – square
Friendship Prevalence	Continuance commitment	.22	.06	.22
Friendship Prevalence	Normative commitment	.40	.07	.40

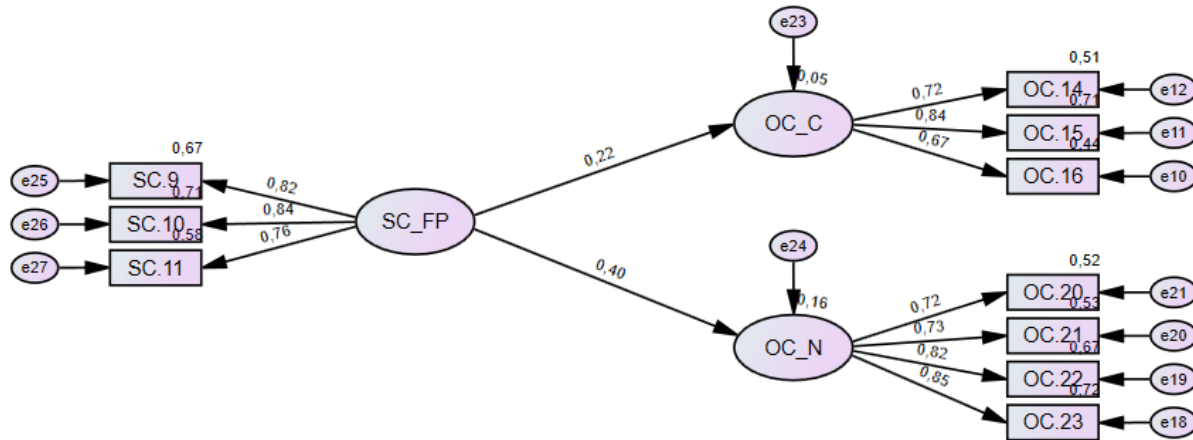
Note: N = 288

Source: Author's own work

Figure 5.1 overleaf provides a diagrammatic illustration of the direct effect of organisational commitment on the relationship dynamics between the psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness.

Figure 5.1

Diagrammatic Illustration of the Direct Effect of the Constructs; PCPS, SCS and OCS



Source: Author's own work

In summary, the results of the SEM indicated that the career self-management profile derived from the empirical relationship dynamics among the variables (psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment) had a good fit with the data, and could assist in constructing a proactive profile for career self-management from the data. Hence, the SEM provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis 2 (H2).

5.6.2 INFERENCE STATISTICS: MODERATED REGRESSION ANALYSIS

In this section, the moderated regression analysis was reported based on the process macro procedure for IBM SPSS (version 28) (Hayes, 2022). This process assisted to determine whether research aim 3 could be achieved.

Research aim 3: To assess whether biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Again, in order to assess whether the results provide significant supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3 (H3), a moderated regression analysis was carried out.

H3: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship between career pre-preoccupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Based on the results obtained from Tables 5.15 and 5.16 below, the socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level were considered as moderating variables, whereas the overall organisation commitment was considered a dependent variable, and psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness were considered as independent variables. According to Hayes (2022; 2018), a study that assesses whether a relationship between predictor variables and outcome variables is associated by a moderator is considered as moderated regression analysis. Further, Hayes (2022) and Hu and Jiang (2018) assert that moderated regression analysis procedure assist researchers to plan and understand the conditional nature in which a variable assumes its effect on a different variable, which again helps to analyse a given hypothesis regarding conditional effects. Consequently, moderated regression analysis as opined by Hayes (2018b) tests research questions regarding in what situation certain effects (moderation, or interaction effects) are found. The moderation effect can be explained using Tables 5.15 and 5.16.

5.6.2.1 Moderation Effects: Effects of socio-demographic variables on the PCP in predicting OCS

Table 5.15 overleaf presents the moderated regression analysis results showing the moderating effects of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) on the psychosocial career pre-occupations Scale (PCPS) in predicting organisational commitment scale (OCS).

Table 5.15

Interaction and Indirect Effects of the Moderated Regression Analysis: Effects of Socio-Demographic Variables on the Psychosocial Career Pre-occupations Scale (PCPS) in Predicting Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

	Coefficient/effect (β)	SE	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
					LLCI	ULCI
Outcome variable: Organisational commitment Scale (OCS)						
constant	3.17	.05	67.85	.00	3.08	3.27
PCPS	.20	.07	2.77	.01	.06	.35
Age	.04	.07	.61	.54	-.09	.17
PCP*age	-.05	.10	-.53	.60	-.26	.15
Model Info						
F = 2.79						
P = .041						
R ² = .03						
Outcome variable: OCS						
constant	3.18	.05	69.33	.00	3.09	3.27
PCP	.21	.07	2.94	.00	.07	.35
Gender	.25	.09	2.73	.01	.07	.43
PCP*Gender	.34	.14	2.35	.02	.06	.62
Model Info						
F = 7.01						
P = .000						
R ² = .07						
Outcome variable: OCS						
constant	3.17	.05	68.30	.00	3.08	3.27
PCP	.20	.07	2.82	.01	.06	.35
Marital status	.18	.10	1.76	.08	-.02	.39
PCP*Marital Status	.18	.16	1.12	.27	-.14	.51
Model Info						
F = 4.07						
P = .007						
R ² = .04						
Outcome variable: OCS						
constant	3.28	.05	64.79	.00	3.17	3.38
PCP	.36	.08	4.67	.00	.21	.51
Job level(w1)	-.33	.18	-1.84	.07	-.69	.02
PCP*job level (w1)	-1.05	.32	-3.27	.00	-1.68	-.42
Model Info						
F = 7.80						
P = .000						
R ² = .12						

Note: N = 288; 95% confidence limit; LLCI: lower-level confidence interval; ULCI: upper-level confidence Interval; SE: standard error; PCP: psychosocial career pre-occupations;
Source: Author's own work

Table 5.15 above shows that the overall model testing the interaction effect between the psychosocial career pre-occupations and socio-demographic variable such as age in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 2.79$; $p = .04$; $R^2 = .03$; small practical effect). This means that 3% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (psychosocial career pre-occupations), age and the interaction of the psychosocial career pre-occupations and age. Further, psychosocial career pre-occupations had a significant main effect on organisational commitment ($\beta = .20$; $t = 2.77$; $p = .01$; LLCI = .06; ULCI = .35). Age did not have a significant effect ($\beta = .04$; $t = .61$; $p = .54$; LLCI = -.09; ULCI = .17). The interaction effect between PCPS and age also showed a non-significant effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = -.05$; $t = -.53$; $p = .60$; LLCI = -.26; ULCI = .15).

Table 5.15 indicates that the overall model testing the interaction effect between psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) and **gender**, in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 7.01$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .07$; small practical effect). This means that 7% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (psychosocial career pre-occupations), gender and the interaction of the psychosocial career pre-occupations and gender. Both psychosocial career pre-occupations and gender tend to have a significant effect on organisational commitment; PCP: ($\beta = .21$; $t = 2.94$; $p = .00$; LLCI = .07; ULCI = .35) and gender: ($\beta = .25$; $t = 2.73$; $p = .01$; LLCI = .07; ULCI = .43). With regard to the total interaction effect between PCPS and gender, the result revealed a marginal significant interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = .34$; $t = 2.35$; $p = .02$; LLCI = .06; ULCI = .62).

Further, Table 5.15 indicated that the overall model testing the interaction effect between psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) and **marital status**, in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 4.07$; $p = .007$; $R^2 = .04$; small practical effect). This means that 4% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (psychosocial career pre-occupations), marital status and the interaction of the psychosocial career pre-occupations and marital status. Only psychosocial career pre-occupations had a significant main effect on organisational commitment

($\beta = .20$; $t = 2.82$; $p = .01$; LLCI = .06; ULCI = .35). Marital status did not have a significant main effect ($\beta = .18$; $t = 1.76$; $p = .08$; LLCI = -.02; ULCI = .39) nor a significant interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = .18$; $t = 1.12$; $p = .27$; LLCI = -.14; ULCI = .51).

Finally, as can be seen in Table 5.15 with regard to the moderating effect of social-demographic variable, specifically job level on psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment, the overall model testing the interaction effect between psychosocial career pre-occupations and job level, in predicting organisational commitment tend to be significant ($F = 7.80$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .12$; small practical effect). This means that 12% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (psychosocial career pre-occupations), job level and the interaction of the psychosocial career pre-occupations and job level. Psychosocial career pre-occupations recorded a significant main effect on organisational commitment ($\beta = .36$; $t = 4.67$; $p = .00$; LLCI = .21; ULCI = .51), whereas the job level (moderator) recorded no significant main effect ($\beta = -.33$; $t = -1.84$; $p = .07$; LLCI = -.69; ULCI = .02). There was a significant interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisation commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = -1.05$; $t = -3.27$; $p = .00$; LLCI = -1.68; ULCI = -.42) but the interaction had a negative effect on the dependent variable.

5.6.2.2 Moderated Effects: Effects of Socio-Demographic Variables on the SCS in predicting OCS

Table 5.16 overleaf reports the moderated regression analysis results indicating the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) on social connectedness scale (SCS) in predicting organisational commitment scale (OCS).

Table 5.16

Interaction and Indirect Effects of the Moderated Regression Analysis: Effects of Socio-Demographic Variables on the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) in Predicting Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)

	Coefficient/effect (β)	SE	t	p	Bootstrap 95% confidence interval (CI)	
					LLCI	ULCI
Outcome variable: Organisational Commitment Scale (OCS)						
Constant	3.30	.13	24.73	.00	3.04	3.57
SC	.43	.20	2.14	.03	.03	.82
Age	-.18	.15	-1.24	.22	-.47	.15
SC*age	-.14	.22	-.64	.53	-.57	.29
Model Info						
F = 6.89						
P = .000						
R ² = .15						
Outcome variable: OCS						
Constant	3.18	.04	73.26	.00	3.09	3.26
SC	.42	.07	6.39	.00	.29	.54
Gender	.24	.09	2.76	.01	.07	.41
SC*gender	.36	.13	2.79	.01	.11	.62
Model Info						
F = 18.79						
P = .000						
R ² = .17						
Outcome variable: OCS						
Constant	3.17	.04	71.73	.00	3.09	3.26
SC	.42	.07	6.28	.00	.29	.55
Marital status	.16	.10	1.60	.11	-.04	.35
SC*marital status	.18	.15	1.15	.25	-.13	.48
Model Info						
F = 14.49						
p = .000						
R ² = .13						
Outcome variable: OCS						
Constant	3.25	.05	68.05	.00	3.15	3.34
SC	.56	.07	7.74	.00	.42	.70
Job level	-.50	.15	-3.23	.00	-.79	-.19

SC*job level	-0.72	.19	-3.83	.00	-1.09	-.35
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Model Info

F = 14.89

P = .000

R² = .21

Note: N = 288; 95% Confidence limit; LLCI: Lower-level confidence interval; ULCI: upper-level confidence Interval; SE: standard error; SC: social connectedness.

Source: Author's own work

Table 5.16 above shows evidence that the overall model testing the interaction effect between the social connectedness and socio-demographic variable such as **age** in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 6.89$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .15$; small practical effect). This means that 15% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (social connectedness). Further, social connectedness had a slightly significant main effect on organisational commitment ($\beta = .43$; $t = 2.14$; $p = .03$; LLCI = .03; ULCI = .82). Age did not have a significant effect ($\beta = -.18$; $t = -1.24$; $p = .22$; LLCI = -.47; ULCI = .15). The interaction effect between SCS and age also shows no moderation effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = -.14$; $t = -.64$; $p = .53$; LLCI = -.57; ULCI = .29).

Table 5.16 indicates that the overall model testing the interaction effect between social connectedness scale (SCS) and **gender** in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 18.79$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .17$; small practical effect). This means that 17% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted by the variations in the independent variable (social connectedness). Both social connectedness and gender tend to have a significant main effect on organisational commitment; SCS: ($\beta = .42$; $t = 6.39$; $p = .00$; LLCI = .29; ULCI = .54) and gender: ($\beta = .24$; $t = 2.76$; $p = .01$; LLCI = .07; ULCI = .41). With regard to the total interaction effect between SC and gender, the result revealed a moderation interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = .36$; $t = 2.79$; $p = .01$; LLCI = .11; ULCI = .62).

Table 5.16 shows evidence that the overall model testing the interaction effect between social connectedness scale (SCS) and **marital status**, in predicting organisational commitment was significant ($F = 14.49$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .13$; small practical effect). This means that 13% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (social connectedness). Only social connectedness had a significant main effect on

organisational commitment ($\beta = .42$; $t = 6.28$; $p = .00$; LLCI = .29; ULCI = .55). Marital status did not have a significant main effect ($\beta = .16$; $t = 1.60$; $p = .11$; LLCI = -.04; ULCI = .35) nor a moderation interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisational commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = .18$; $t = 1.15$; $p = .25$; LLCI = -.13; ULCI = .48).

With regard to the moderating effect of socio-demographic variables, specifically job level on social connectedness and organisational commitment, the overall model testing the interaction effect between social connectedness and job level in predicting organisational commitment tend to be significant ($F = 14.89$; $p = .00$; $R^2 = .21$; moderate practical effect). This means that 21% of the change in the organisational commitment construct is accounted for by the variations in the independent variable (social connectedness). Social connectedness revealed a significant main effect on organisational commitment ($\beta = .56$; $t = 7.74$; $p = .00$; LLCI = .42; ULCI = .70), and the job level (moderator), also revealed a significant main effect ($\beta = -.50$; $t = -3.23$; $p = .00$; LLCI = -.79; ULCI = -.19). There was a significant interaction effect in explaining the variance in organisation commitment, with the following values obtained ($\beta = -.72$; $t = -3.83$; $p = .00$; LLCI = -1.09; ULCI = -.35) but the interaction had a negative moderation effect on the dependent variable (organisational commitment).

In summary, with regard to practical effect size, only the overall model testing the interaction effect between social connectedness and job level in predicting organisational commitment tend to have a moderate practical effect, but the other moderators showed a small practical effect which can be seen from both tables (Table 5.15 and 5.16). Again, the results from Table 5.16 revealed that socio-demographic variables (except age and marital status) highly moderate social connectedness in terms of predicting organisational commitment. Thus, the results for the moderated regression analysis provided only partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis 3 (H3).

H3: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

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Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis 3 (H3).

With reference to the moderation analysis effect (sections 5.6.2.1 and 5.6.2.2), the results provided partial supportive evidence for H3. With regard to Table 5.15, on the whole, the findings revealed that the socio-demographic variable such as age and marital status did not have a significant moderating effect on the psychosocial career pre-occupations in predicting organisational commitment in developing a framework for career self-management. Again, only **gender and job level** provided supportive evidence towards hypothesis 3 (H3).

Thus, gender groups in an organisation, specifically in the HEI, do affect the strength and direction of the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and commitment to an organisation in predicting the level of career self-management. From the data in Table 5.15, the socio-demographic variable such as age, marital status and job level do not predict any relationship between the psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment.

However, from Table 5.16, the results obtained revealed that only **age and marital status** did not assist in moderating the relationship between social connectedness and organisational commitment. Hence, gender and job level moderate in predicting organisational commitment and this shows that the socio-demographic variables (gender and job level) partially support research hypothesis 3 (H3), and these variables assist in predicting the commitment of individuals in an organisation.

The framework for proactive career self-management in public higher education environment, which was the main aim of the study, would eventually not consider **gender and job level** as a moderating factor in establishing the direction and the strength of a relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupation (independent variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable). Again, in establishing a relationship, **age and marital status** may also not be considered as a moderating variable in establishing a relationship between social connectedness (independent variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable).

5.6.3 INFERENCE STATISTICS: TESTS FOR SIGNIFICANT MEAN DIFFERENCE

IBM SPSS (version 28) and AMOS (version 28) were employed in this section to report the test of significant mean differences which was used to examine whether socio-demographic variables, (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment (research aim 4). In order to test whether the results revealed significant evidence in support of the research hypothesis 4 (H4), the test of significant mean difference was considered.

H4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

The parametric statistics such as ANOVAs and post hoc tests were considered to measure the differences between the socio-demographic variables listed above in hypothesis 4. The ANOVAs and post hoc tests were used because the variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level had several different groups of items. Again, the practical effect size with regard to differences between the respective groups for each variable was determined with the help of Cohen's *d* test. Finally, the test for significant mean differences between gender was also determined with the help of the *t-test* procedures and Tukey's studentised range test, as this gender variable had only two groups of items (Hair et al., 2018).

For the purpose of this study, the section considers the variances between variables that were both significant and not significant for the socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level). The results are presented in the table overleaf.

5.6.3.1 Age

Table 5.17 presents a summary of the ANOVAs test investigating the relationship between age, with regard to the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale variables (PCPS), social connectedness scale variables (SCS) and organisational commitment scale variables (OCS).

Table 5.17

Test for Significant Mean Difference: Age

Variables	Sources of differences	N	Mean	SD	Anova sum of squares	Mean square	F	P	Sources of significant differences between means	Eta-square η^2
PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS SCALE (PCPS)										
Career establishment	20 – 30 years	32	4.40	.58	1.32	.66	1.52	.220	N/A	.011
	31 – 40 years	163	4.24	.67						
	41 – 60 years	93	4.17	.66						
Career adaptation	20 – 30 years	32	3.60	.82	.77	.38	.52	.597	N/A	.004
	31 – 40 years	163	3.45	.88						
	41 – 60 years	93	3.52	.85						
Work-life adjustment	20 – 30 years	32	3.90	.84	.64	.32	.57	.569	N/A	.004
	31 – 40 years	163	3.88	.74						
	41 – 60 years	93	3.98	.74						
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS SCALE (SCS)										
Friendship opportunity	20 – 30 years	32	4.15	.68	1.56	.78	1.83	.163	N/A	.013
	31 – 40 years	163	4.15	.64						
	41 – 60 years	93	4.31	.67						
Friendship prevalence	20 – 30 years	32	2.95	.99	.54	.27	.28	.754	N/A	.002
	31 – 40 years	163	3.09	.97						
	41 – 60 years	93	3.09	1.00						
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE (OCS)										
Affective commitment	20 – 30 years	32	3.75	1.01	5.72	2.86	2.65	.072	N/A	.018
	31 – 40 years	163	3.50	1.04						
	41 – 60 years	93	3.80	1.04						
Continuance commitment	20 – 30 years	32	3.09	1.00	.75	.37	.41	.667	N/A	.003
	31 – 40 years	163	3.12	.92						

	31 – 40 years	93	3.22	1.02						
	41 – 60 years									
Normative commitment	20 – 30 years	32	3.44	1.04	3.28	1.64	1.79	.168	N/A	.012
	31 – 40 years	163	3.12	.93						
	41 – 60 years	93	3.26	1.00						

Note: N = 288; 95% Confidence limit

Source: Author's own work

Table 5.17 above revealed that there was no significant mean difference between **all** the constructs: for PCPS subscales (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), SCS subscale (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) and OCS subscales (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment).

5.6.3.2 Gender

Table 5.18 overleaf presents a summary of the t-test and mean scores investigating the variance between the socio-demographic variables of gender and the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale variables (PCPS), social connectedness scale variables (SCS) and organisational commitment scales variables (OCS).

Some of the variables showed significant relationship whereas others revealed no significant relationship. With regard to this section, only **normative commitment** subscale of organisational commitment (OC) recorded significant mean value.

Table 5.18*Test for Significant Mean Differences: Gender*

Variables	Sources of differences	N	Mean	SD	t-value	95% confidence CL Mean		p	Cohen d
						Lower	Upper		
Organisational Commitment (OCS)									
Affective commitment	Male	146	3.66	1.01	.56	-.17	.31	.579	.07
	Female	142	3.60	1.08					
Continuance commitment	Male	146	3.05	.90	-1.75	-.43	.03	.082	-.21
	Female	142	3.30	1.00					
Normative commitment	Male	146	3.07	.92	-2.39	-.51	-.05	.018	-.28
	Female	142	3.34	.98					
OC	Male	146	3.26	.66	-2.48	-.42	-.05	.014	-.29
	Female	142	3.39	.65					

Note: N = 288; 95% confidence limit; $p \leq .05$

Source: Author's own work

Table 5.18 above indicates the results of the t-test procedure. With regard to the organisational commitment scale, there were significant mean differences between males and females for normative commitment (males: $M = 3.07$; $SD = .92$; Female: $M = 3.34$; $SD = .98$; $t = -2.39$; $d = -.28$; small practical effect), and the overall organisational commitment scale had slight significant mean differences between males and females (males: $M = 3.26$; $SD = .66$; Female: $M = 3.39$; $SD = .65$; $t = -2.48$; $d = -.20$; small practical effect). The other subscales of organisational commitment from Table 5.17, affective and continuance commitment, tend to have no significant mean differences.

5.6.3.3 Marital status

The results of the ANOVA tests establishing the relationship between the psychosocial career pre-occupations variables (PCPS), social connectedness variables (SCS) and organisational commitment variables (OCS) and the socio-demographic variable, notably marital status as shown in Table 5.19

Marital status of the participants appeared not to differ significant with regard to their psychosocial career pre-occupations (PCPS), social connectedness (SCS) and organisational commitment (OCS).

Table 5.19*Test for Significant Mean Differences: Marital Status*

Variables	Sources of difference	N	Mean	SD	F	P	Source of significant difference between mean	Cohen d
PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS SCALE (PCPS)								
Career establishment pre-occupations	Married	208	4.21	.66	.001	.242	N/A	-.09
	Single/divorced/other	80	4.28	.65				
Career adaptation pre-occupations	Married	208	3.47	.87	.078	.323	N/A	-.06
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.53	.85				
Work-life adjustment pre-occupations	Married	208	3.94	.76	.105	.216	N/A	.10
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.86	.73				
PCPS	Married	208	3.87	.65	.017	.0445	N/A	-.02
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.89	.63				
SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS SCALE (SCS)								
Friendship opportunity	Married	208	4.19	.68	.002	.382	N/A	-.04
	Single/divorced/other	80	4.22	.59				
Friendship prevalence	Married	208	3.05	.99	.006	.250	N/A	-.09
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.13	.94				
SCS	Married	208	3.62	.68	.090	.261	N/A	-.08
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.68	.63				
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE (OCS)								
Affective commitment	Married	208	3.61	1.07	.514	.349	N/A	-.05
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.66	.98				

Continuance commitment	Married	208	3.09	.95	.147	.064	N/A	-.23
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.30	.97				
Normative commitment	Married	208	3.16	.96	.004	.106	N/A	-.16
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.31	.97				
OCS	Married	208	3.29	.66	.131	.055	N/A	-.22
	Single/divorced/other	80	3.43	.64				

Note: N = 288; 95% Confidence limit

Sources: Author's own work

Table 5.19 above revealed that all the constructs including their subscales (psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment) tend to have no significant differences between married and single/divorced/other. However, there were mean differences observed among the variables. With regard to overall psychosocial career pre-occupations (Married; $M = 3.87$; $SD = .65$; Single/divorced/other = 3.89; $SD = .63$), with social connectedness (Married; $M = 3.62$; $SD = .68$; Single/divorced/other = 3.68; $SD = .63$) and organisational commitment (Married; $M = 3.29$; $SD = .66$; Single/divorced/other = 3.43; $SD = .64$).

5.6.3.4 Job level

Table 5.20 provides the results of the ANOVAs and post hoc tests establishing the relationship between the psychosocial career pre-occupations variables (PCPS), the social connectedness variables (SCS) and organisational commitment variables (OCS) and the socio-demographic variables of job level.

Significant mean differences were observed in psychosocial career pre-occupations (PCPS) scales (except career adaptations pre-occupations subscale), organisational commitment (OCS) scales. Moreover, the overall scale of social connectedness (SCS) tends to have no significant mean differences and is further reported in Table 5.20 below

Table 5.20

Test for Significant Mean Differences: Job Level

Variables	Sources of difference	N	Mean	SD	Anova sum of squares	Mean squares	F	P	Source of significant differences between means	Cohen d
PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS SCALE (PCPS)										
Career establishment pre-occupations	Administrative staff	227	4.12	.67	6.02	3.01	7.24	<.001	Administrative Staff-Teaching - .36*** Administrative - Other -.35*** Teaching-Other .01***	.048
	Teaching staff	25	4.52	.45						
	Others	36	4.51	.45						
Career adaptation pre-occupations	Administrative staff	227	3.43	.85	3.71	1.85	2.53	.081	N/A	.017
	Teaching staff	25	3.63	.88						
	Others	36	3.75	.89						
Work-life adjustment pre-occupations	Administrative staff	227	3.83	.77	7.63	3.81	7.07	<.001	Administrative - Teaching staff - .46*** Administrative-Other staff -.35*** Teaching-Other staff .12***	.047
	Teaching staff	25	4.29	.50						
	Others	36	4.18	.63						
PCPS	Administrative staff	227	3.81	.65	5.51	2.76	6.94	<.001	Administrative - Teaching staff - .34***	.046
	Teaching staff	25	4.15	.50						
	Others	36	4.14	.58						

Administrative-
Other staff $-.34^{***}$
Teaching-Other
staff $.001^{***}$

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS SCALE (SCS)										
Friendship opportunity	Administrative staff	227	4.17	.66	2.00	1.00	2.34	.098	N/A	.016
	Teaching staff	25	4.13	.83						
	Others	36	4.42	.45						
Friendship prevalence	Administrative staff	227	3.12	.96	3.15	1.57	1.66	.192	N/A	.012
	Teaching staff	25	3.07	1.09						
	Others	36	2.80	.99						
SCS	Administrative staff	227	3.64	.67	.07	.04	.08	.92	N/A	.001
	Teaching staff	25	3.60	.84						
	Others	36	3.61	.55						
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT SCALE (OCS)										
Affective commitment	Administrative staff	227	3.61	1.05	2.51	1.25	1.15	.318	N/A	.008
	Teaching staff	25	3.45	1.09						
	Others	36	3.84	.96						
Continuance commitment	Administrative staff	227	3.23	.92	7.00	3.50	3.90	.021	Administrative - Teaching staff $.44^{***}$.027
	Teaching staff	25	2.79	1.08						
	Others	36	2.90	1.05					Administrative-Other staff $.33^{***}$ Teaching-Other staff $-.11^{***}$	

Normative commitment	Administrative staff	227	3.27	.94	7.33	3.66	4.07	.018	Administrative - Teaching staff .53*** Administrative- Other staff .23*** Teaching-Other staff -.31***	.028
	Teaching staff	25	2.74	1.04						
	Others	36	3.04	.94						
OC	Administrative staff	227	3.37	.62	3.35	1.67	4.01	.019	Administrative - Teaching staff .38*** Administrative- Other staff .11*** Teaching-Other staff -.27***	.027
	Teaching staff	25	2.99	.76						
	Others	36	3.26	.76						

Note: N = 288; 95% Confidence limit

Sources: Author's own work

As indicated in Table 5.20 above, some of the constructs showed a significant mean difference with regard to the socio-demographic variable, specifically job level, **while** other constructs did not.

In the case of psychosocial career pre-occupations variable, **career establishment** revealed a significant mean differences between the job level of **administrative staff** and **teaching staff** groupings (**administrative staff**: $M = 4.12$; $SD = .67$; **teaching staff**: $M = 4.52$; $SD = .45$), **administrative staff** and **other staff** job level (**administrative staff** $M = 4.12$; $SD = .67$; **Other staff**: $M = 4.51$; $SD = .45$), and teaching staff and other staff job level (**teaching staff**: $M = 4.52$; $SD = .45$; **Other staff**: $M = 4.51$; $SD = .45$; $d = .048$; small practical effect). Overall, the effect on career establishment tends to be a small practical effect.

However, significant mean differences for career adaptation scales were not achieved with regards to socio-demographic variable, notably **job level**, as can be identified in Table 5.20 above.

Lastly, on the psychosocial career pre-occupations, a significant mean difference was observed with regard to **work-life adjustment** and socio-demographic variable **job level** of **administrative staff** and **teaching staff** (**administrative staff** $M = 3.83$; $SD = .77$; **teaching staff** $M = 4.29$; $SD = .50$), **administrative staff** and **other staff** job level (**administrative staff** $M = 3.83$; $SD = .77$; **other staff**: $M = 4.18$; $SD = .63$), and teaching staff and other staff job level (**teaching staff**: $M = 4.29$; $SD = .50$; **other staff**: $M = 4.18$; $SD = .63$). In all, work-life adjustment recorded small practical effect size, with the value $d = .047$.

In terms of social connectedness scale, there was no significant mean difference between socio-demographic variable **job level** and all the subscales, notably friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. The overall social connectedness scale revealed no significant mean differences between job level of **administrative staff** and **teaching staff** (**administrative staff** $M = 3.64$; $SD = .67$; **teaching staff** $M = 3.60$; $SD = .84$), **administrative staff** and **other staff** job level (**administrative staff** $M = 3.64$; $SD = .67$; **other staff**: $M = 3.61$; $SD = .55$) and teaching staff and other staff job level (**teaching staff**: $M = 3.60$; $SD = .84$; **other staff**: $M = 3.61$; $SD = .55$). Cohen d value for the **overall** social connectedness was ($d = .001$), indicating a small practical effect size.

Also, with regard to organisational commitment variable, significant mean difference was not achieved between affective commitment and socio-demographic variable **job level**, and this can be seen in Table 5.19 above. Further, a significant mean differences were found between the **job levels** of **administrative staff** and **teaching staff** for **continuance commitment** (**administrative staff** M = 3.23; SD = .92; **teaching staff** M = 2.79; SD = 1.08), **administrative staff** and **other staff** job level (**administrative staff** M = 3.23; SD = .92; **other staff**: M = 2.90; SD = 1.05), and **teaching staff** and **other staff** job level (**teaching staff** M = 2.79; SD = 1.08; **other staff**: M = 2.90; SD = 1.05). In all, continuance commitment showed a small practical effect size, with the value $d = .027$.

In addition, a significant mean difference was found between normative commitment variable and job level of **administrative staff** and **teaching staff** groupings (**administrative staff** M = 3.27; SD = .94; **teaching staff** M = 2.74; SD = 1.04), **administrative staff** and **other staff** job level (**administrative staff** M = 3.27; SD = .94; **other staff**: M = 3.04; SD = .94) and **teaching staff** and **other staff** job level (**teaching staff** M = 2.74; SD = 1.04; **other staff**: M = 3.04; SD = .94). Overall, with regard to normative commitment scale, the d value obtained was ($d = .028$), indicating small practical size.

To sum up, the empirical findings that emerged from Tables 5.17 to 5.20, the tests for significant mean differences, revealed that individuals from various socio-demographic groups such as gender, marital status and job levels differ **marginally** in their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and commitment to the organisation. However, the socio-demographic group **age** tend not to differ significantly with regard to psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

These indicators show that the results of the tests for significant mean differences provided partial supportive evidence for accepting research hypothesis 4 (H4) in terms of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level):

H4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment

Table 5.21 below reveals the socio-demographic groupings that differed significantly in terms of constructing a profile for proactive career self-management: a relationship among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Table 5.21

Summation of Socio-Demographic Differences of the Profile for Proactive Career Self-Management

Variable	Source of difference	Highest ranking	Lowest ranking
PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS (PCPS)			
Career establishment	Job level	Teaching staff	Administrative staff
Work-life adjustment	Job level	Teaching staff	Administrative staff
Overall PCP	Marital status Job level	Single/Divorce/others Teaching staff	Married Administrative staff
ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT (OCS)			
Continuance commitment	Job level	Administrative staff	Teaching staff
Normative commitment	Gender	Female	Male
	Job level	Administrative staff	Teaching staff
Overall OCS	Gender Job level	Female Administrative staff	Male Teaching staff

Source: Author's own work

Preliminary analysis 4: Towards constructing a profile for proactive career self-management.

Core conclusions drawn in testing research hypothesis 4 (H4).

The findings of the test for significant mean differences provided new insights for constructing a profile for career self-management in public higher education institutions in Ghana. Again, the findings suggested that employees tend to be committed when their career needs are taken into considerations based on their socio-demographic groupings such as age, gender, marital status

and job levels. These socio-demographic variables could be addressed properly when linked to their career self-management framework (that is, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment).

In detail, the findings revealed that individuals from different socio-demographic background including age, gender, marital status and job level, differ significantly in respect to their overall psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) and their commitment to the organisation (affective, continuance and normative commitment).

5.7 DECISION IN SUPPORT OF RESEARCH AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

Table 5.22 overleaf shows a summary of the main inferences relating to the research aims and hypotheses.

Table 5.22*Decisions Relating to Research Aims and Hypotheses*

Research aims	Research hypothesis	Research analytical tools	Supportive evidence provided
Research aim 1: To assess the empirical inter-relationships between the psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context.	Ha1: There is significant positive inter-relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.	Bi-variate correlation analysis	Yes, the results generated through correlational analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1 (H1).
Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment.	Ha2: Psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness significantly predict organisational commitment.	SEM analysis	Yes, the results generated through SEM analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 2 (H2)
Research aim 3: To assess whether the biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.	Ha3: Biographical variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) significantly moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.	Moderated regression analysis	Research hypothesis 3 (Ha3) was partially supported by the results generated through moderated regression analysis.

Research aim 4: To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment

Ha4: Socio-demographic groups (age, gender, marital status and job level) differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

ANOVA's and independent sample t-test

Research hypothesis 4 (**Ha4**) was **partially** supported by the results generated through test of significant mean difference.

Source: Author's own work

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter encapsulates the findings of the analytical tools employed in the study. In order to establish the nature and the empirical relationship existing among the constructs, a preliminary statistical analysis including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and inferential statistics was utilised. The constructs mentioned were:

- Psychosocial career preoccupations variables (career establishment preoccupations, career adaptation preoccupations and work-life adjustment preoccupations);
- Social connectedness variables (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence);
- Organisational commitment variables (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment); and
- Socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job levels).

The key findings gathered from the literature, in combination with the empirical research were interpreted, and decisions in support of research hypotheses were provided.

The empirical research aims 1 to 4 were achieved.

Research aim 1: To assess the empirical inter-relationships between the career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H2.

Research aim 3: To assess whether the biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status and job level moderate the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H3.

Research aim 4: To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H4.

Chapter 6, based on an integration of the results from the literature review and the empirical research, focuses on research aim 5, namely, to provide appropriate recommendations for human resource practitioners in terms of how individuals in the work environment manage their own career, and to enable further research.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 6, which is the final stage of the study, commences with the discussion and integration of the results of the study, involving a discussion of the findings with regard to the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, the descriptive statistics, the empirical research aims, and the limitations of the literature review and the empirical study. The empirical results are reported and integrated based on the previous chapters' results obtained from the preceding literature review and interpreted to assess the extent to which the findings obtained affirm the study hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. Additionally, the constructs of the stipulated framework for proactive career self-management in the higher educational institution are outlined and presented with regard to the suggested framework. Furthermore, this chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the literature review and the empirical study. Finally, this study addresses research aim 6, notably to provide appropriate recommendations for human resource practitioners in terms of how individuals in higher educational institutions manage their own careers. In conclusion, suggestions and contributions are made and drawn for future research.

6.1 INTEGRATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section commences with a discussion based on both the literature and the empirical study with regard to the research aims, as outlined in Chapter 1. The results are further integrated in this section.

6.1.1 Socio-demographic profile with regard to research sample

As discussed in Section 4.4 in Chapter 4, the socio-demographic profile of the sample was predominantly represented by permanently employed senior staff. Information relating to gender showed that males as a category recorded the most dominant profile. Furthermore, respondents who fell within the married category recorded a higher profile, and within the age category, ages between 31 and 40 years were considered the predominant component in the socio-demographic profile. Finally, according to the socio-demographic data gathered with regard to job level, the most predominant ones were the principal administrative staff and senior administrative staff. Based on these characteristics, the researcher could generalise the findings because it reflected the wider educational population in the Ghanaian context (Egyir, 2015; Yalley, 2022).

In constructing a profile for career self-management for higher educational institutions in Ghana, the abovementioned aspects regarding the socio-demographic profile of the sample were considered in the interpretation of the results.

6.1.2 Discussion of the descriptive statistics

The following section on the descriptive statistics included an interpretation and discussion of the mean scores reported for each of the three measurement scales considered for the constructs; notably, the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS), social connectedness scale (SCS) and organisational commitment scale (OCS) of relevance in this research. As presented in Table 5. 9 to 5.11 in Chapter 5 are applicable to this section.

6.1.2.1 Profile of respondents in terms of psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS)

With regard to Table 5.9, in Chapter 5, the mean scores of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) (Coetzee, 2014b), the sample profile revealed that respondents showed high concern with regard to career establishment, resulting in employees advancing in their job or career, having a stable career, and having high growth and development opportunities. Furthermore, as reflected in the mean scores on the career establishment scale, the sample profile indicated that employees became financially independent from their family, which raised their commitment to the organisation.

Research has shown that when employees are financially stable in their career, such individuals tend to reciprocate to the institution they find themselves in, which, in effect, increases their commitment to the organisation (Coetzee, 2015; Deas, 2018). Research reveals that in situations where employees have a high chance of growth as well as development opportunities in their career, they tend to focus much on their chosen occupation (Deas, 2018).

Furthermore, with regard to career adaptation, the sample profile revealed that respondents were somewhat concerned about making career changes, as well as changing their career fields. Additionally, respondents were concerned about the concept of their interest, talent, and capability to fit different types of career opportunities and changes in the employment market. Previous research has revealed that when employees can fit into different career opportunities at the workplace, such individuals will be motivated and, hence, will be committed to the organisation (Bester, 2018; Ferreira, 2012).

Last, on the psychosocial career pre-occupation scale, with reference to work-life adjustment, respondents indicated much concern in terms of settling down in their current career domain and again showed much concern in reducing the current workload in the organisation. However, the results from the mean score sample profile revealed that high concern in balancing work with family responsibility and strengthening their expertise, talent and capability in their current job or career domain were the most important concerns to be addressed at the workplace. Furthermore, research from previous studies showed that when employees tend to be more concerned about their workload and show a high level of strengthening their expertise, talent, and capability, and when these issues are properly addressed, such individuals will be committed to the organisation and hence help in the proper management of their careers (Deas, 2018; Ferreira, 2012; Ferreira et al., 2022).

In summary, all subscales of psychosocial career pre-occupations revealed that participants were somewhat concerned about their careers. Regarding career establishment, individuals were interested in advancing their jobs or careers, having stable careers, and having high growth and development opportunities as the most important elements. Furthermore, with career adaptation pre-occupations, individuals are mostly interested in the concept of their interest, talent, and capability to fit with different types of career opportunities and changes in the employment market. Finally, in terms of work-life balance, individuals were concerned with balancing work with family responsibilities and strengthening their expertise, talent, and capability in their current job or career domain. All these interests contributed to employees' commitment to the organisation.

6.1.2.2 Profile of respondents in terms of the social connectedness scale (SCS)

Table 5.10 (Chapter 5) is deemed relevant to this section. The mean scores on the Social Connectedness Scale (SCS) (Nielsen et al., 2000) and the resulting sample profile were identified in terms of friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. In terms of friendship opportunity, employees at the workplace agreed that they have the opportunity to talk informally and visit others. Employees also showed somewhat that informal talk was tolerated by the organisation as long as the work was completed. Furthermore, some employees showed some agreement that communication among employees is encouraged by the organisation, while some respondents indicated that they have the opportunity to develop close friendships at their workplace. This indicates that the institution where employees work takes greater interest in friendship opportunity, which in turn helps individuals at the workplace to be more committed to the discharge of their core objectives. Previous research has shown that employees who have the

opportunity to talk informally at the workplace become more motivated to pursue greater career advancement and hence have a higher level of employee commitment to the organisation (Potgieter et al., 2019).

With regard to friendship prevalence, the sample profile showed somewhat agreement that employees are able to form strong friendships in the workplace. Again, on the same scale, socialisation with coworkers outside the workplace was encouraged by the organisation, which in effect is the reason why they took up that job in the organisation. As indicated by the mean scores, the sample profile indicated that perceived agreement existed between employees and the organisation that offered them the job. Furthermore, the sample profile revealed somewhat disagreement that employees feel that anyone they work with is a true friend in the organisation. This indicates that when employees perceive that workplace friendship is accepted by the organisation, their level of commitment to the organisation will be enhanced, thereby motivating them to build higher career self-management. However, previous research has shown that friendship prevalence is equally important, and if not well handled by the organisation, it may be detrimental to the organisation as well as the development of employees' careers at the workplace (Potgieter, 2021; Potgieter et al., 2019; Uno et al., 2021; Zeng & Xie, 2008).

In summary, the sample profile in terms of social connectedness revealed that both friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are equally recognised by the institution where the respondents work, which in turn strengthens their career advancement in the organisation.

6.1.2.3 Profile of respondents in terms of organisational commitment scale (OCS)

Table 5.11 (Chapter 5) is applicable to this section. The results from the mean scores of the Organisational Commitment Measurement Scale (OCS) (Allen & Meyer, 1997) indicated that respondents gave moderate (somewhat agreement) scores on all the subscales of the OCS. Thus, the sample profile relating to affective commitment revealed that respondents felt somewhat agreed pertaining to their commitment to the organisation, which included feeling of being part of the family to the institution. This indicates that respondents felt emotionally attached to the institution and were willing to spend the rest of their careers with the institution. Furthermore, the sample profile in the present study suggests that the respondents also felt a moderate (somewhat) sense of obligation towards their employer as a result of their own values being satisfied by the organisation or other favours received from the institution they work with. Previous studies have shown that in situations where employees feel affectively committed to the organisation, it is a

result of the benefits derived from the organisation in which they work (Ferreira, 2012; Khan et al., 2021).

In terms of continuance commitment, the sample profile revealed that respondents felt somewhat disagreed that they had not put so much of themselves into the institution they might have considered working somewhere. This shows that employees hold a particularly positive attitude towards the commitment of their career in the institution they find themselves. Furthermore, the sample profile revealed that the continuance nature with which employees are committed to the organisation tends to increase. Furthermore, based on the sample mean, the other respondents showed some agreement with regard to their continuance commitment. Based on this, previous studies have proven that respondents' feeling of continuance commitment increases as a result of individuals' focus on the cost, consequences, and risks of leaving the organisation (Ferreira, 2012; Li & Xie, 2022). Again, studies shows that continuance commitment arises because individuals working in an organisation lack alternative jobs (Amaewhule & Mebom, 2022; Spector, 2008).

Regarding the mean scores for normative commitment, the sample profile revealed that the majority of the respondents felt a somewhat (moderate) agreement with their commitment to the institution within which they worked. They feel obligated to remain with their current employer, indicating that the respondents are comfortable with the institution. Furthermore, respondents indicated that they would not leave the institution right now because they had a sense of obligation to the people in the organisation. According to the mean score obtained, the lowest score on normative commitment (somewhat disagree) in the current study corresponded with the results of Aisyah et al. (2022) and Ferreira et al. (2010). Research has found that participants' feelings of normative commitment are slightly out of balance and that they may not have experienced any form of obligation to continue working at a specific institution (Aisyah et al., 2022; Ferreira, 2012).

In summary, pertaining to respondents' commitment to the organisation, the sample profile revealed that employees showed somewhat agreement with regard to their affective commitment to the organisation. Furthermore, with regard to continuance commitment, it was revealed that respondents again have somewhat agreement, and respondents showed somewhat agreement in terms of their normative commitment. Overall, the sample mean profile of the organisational commitment scale indicated somewhat agreement, and respondents were ready to stay in the organisation they were currently working in.

6.1.2.4 Integration of the main findings

In conclusion, the sample profile on the psychosocial career pre-occupation scale revealed that respondents felt highly concerned that career growth and development opportunities were always available for employees working in the institution and that they tended to be financially independent from the family that raised them. Participants again indicated that in the area of the social connectedness scale, friendship opportunity were somewhat practiced in the institution and that employees have the opportunity to talk informally and are able to visit colleagues who are not closer to them. Furthermore, respondents have the opportunity to develop close friendships at their workplace, and because of that, the organisation encourages good communication at the workplace. Finally, respondents showed some agreement with regard to organisational commitment and that they enjoyed discussing their organisation with people outside the organisation. Furthermore, the respondent indicated that it would be difficult for them to leave the institution where they are currently working. Based on the information revealed with regard to the sample profile, the development of a profile for proactive career self-management was considered.

6.1.3 Research aim 1: Discussion of the correlation results

Research aim 1 was to assess the empirical interrelationships among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian HEI context.

6.1.3.1 Relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

As mentioned in Table 5.12 (Chapter 5), the results of the bivariate correlation analysis revealed that the three dimensions of psychosocial career pre-occupations (independent variable), namely, career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations were all significantly and positively related to each other. Furthermore, the results show a significant positive relationship with the overall organisational commitment scale. This implies that when respondents have a positive mindset about their psychosocial career pre-occupation, especially being able to fit with others in their job and being financially independent from their family that raised them, the extent to which concepts of interests, talent, and capabilities fit with different types of career opportunities in the employment market and the extent to which they are able to settle down in their career domain may lead to positive perceptions about their commitment to the organisation, hence, proactive career self-

management by employees in higher educational institutions. Studies by various authors confirm that psychosocial career pre-occupations fulfilment increases employees' level of commitment (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2015; Coetzee & Takawira, 2019; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2018; Deas, 2017; Hirschi & Koen, 2021; Potgieter et al., 2019).

The findings also showed that overall, social connectedness had a significant and positive nexus with respondents' perception of their commitment to the organisation. This implies positive perceptions of social connectedness, such as the opportunity to know coworkers, the opportunity to talk informally and visit others, the ability to socialise with coworkers outside the workplace, and the ability to communicate among employees in the organisation. Previous research confirms the findings of the current study and shows that workplace friendship has positive outcomes within the work environment (Potgieter et al., 2019) and increases organisational commitment (Nielsen et al., 2010). Furthermore, Potgieter et al. (2019) found that workplace friendships positively predicted employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

In terms of organisational commitment, a positive and significant correlation was reported between the three-dimensional scales of organisational commitment relevant to the current study, notably, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (the dependent variables). In this relation, when employees' psychosocial career pre-occupations needs are addressed by helping them fit into the organisation, such individuals tend to be committed to the organisation. This finding agrees with previous research studies that similarly confirm that employees' career establishment pre-occupations are likely to be positively related to their work-related commitment (Coetzee, 2015). Furthermore, the organisational commitment scale showed a significant and positive correlation with respondents' overall perception of psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness (workplace friendship). Again, when social connectedness, including being able to talk informally with coworkers and creating a friendly work environment, these individuals tend to be committed to the organisation. The results found in the current study agree with previous research studies, which similarly confirms that the perception of social connectedness (friendship opportunity) positively accounts for variations in organisational commitment (affective commitment) (Coetzee et al., 2019).

In summary, psychosocial career pre-occupations (independent variables), social connectedness (independent variable), and organisational commitment (dependent variable) were all significantly associated with each other. Hence, the findings for the bivariate correlational analysis yielded support for research hypothesis 1 (H1).

6.1.3.1 Main findings

Overall, the bivariate correlation analysis fashioned out significant findings; in the sense, significant and positive correlations were identified between the three dimensions of the psychosocial career pre-occupations, the two subscales of social connectedness, and the three dimensional subscales of organisational commitment. Furthermore, significant and positive associations were revealed between all subscale dimensions and respondents' overall psychosocial career pre-occupations, overall social connectedness, and overall organisational commitment.

These findings suggested that when employees perceive that their psychosocial career needs are satisfied and they have the opportunity to interact with coworkers (social connectedness) in the organisation without much difficulty, such individuals are more committed to the organisation. Hence, higher educational institutions in Ghana should implement policies and strategies to boost employees' morale in pursuit of an identified career path.

6.1.4 Research aim 2: Discussion of the SEM analysis

Research aim 2 was to empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment.

6.1.4.1 Main findings

As indicated in Tables 5.13 and 5.14 (in Chapter 5), the findings of the SEM analysis indicated that the theoretically conceptualised career self-management model had a satisfactory fit with the empirically manifested structural model. A goodness-of-fit model was used, which indicated the validity of considering psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness, specifically friendship prevalence, as an important antecedent of organisational commitment and hence career self-management. Furthermore, career self-management constructs of career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, work-life adjustment pre-occupations, and friendship opportunity were considered the core dimensions of the empirically manifested profile for proactive career management.

The SEM results revealed a significant positive fit between organisational among psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness and organisational commitment. Again, the SEM results provided transformed insight in terms of career construction theory (Savickas, 1997), which eventually provided additional understanding that contributes to the dynamics of the

proposed framework for proactive career self-management in a higher educational environment. The career construction theory (Savickas, 1997) presupposes that employees in a given field must go through a series of developmental career stages when preparing to begin a given job or/career. The ramification of career construction theory with regard to psychosocial career pre-occupation is that when individuals display proactive behaviour to satisfy their career goals, the behaviour should be supported by well-developed career choices to buffer against psychosocial career depletion (Bester, 2018; Coetzee, 2021; Deas & Coetzee, 2020).

Furthermore, the path coefficients revealed that social connectedness, namely, friendship prevalence, was a significant predictor of organisational commitment. Moreover, individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations including the subscales, did not show any significant predictor of organisational commitment. These results can be seen in Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5.

6.1.5 Research aim 3: Discussion of the moderating effects

Research aim 3: To assess whether biographical variables such as age, gender, marital status, and job level moderate the relationship between career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

6.1.5.1 Main findings

The relevance of this section is envisaged in Chapter 5 (Tables 5.15 and 5.16, respectively). In terms of the results in Tables 5.15 and 5.16, all socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, and job level) were considered moderating (control) variables in establishing the general aim of the current research study. Overall, both psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness were considered independent variables, and organisational commitment was treated as a dependent variable. The findings of the moderated analysis showed that respondents' gender and job level moderated employees' level of psychosocial career pre-occupations in predicting organisational commitment. This result contrasts with previous studies that concluded that age and job level did not moderate individual perceptions regarding psychosocial career pre-occupations (Coetzee, 2015; Deas, 2018; Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Potgieter et al., 2019; Synman, 2021) in predicting organisational commitment.

The findings indicated that both individuals' gender and job levels within the organisation have an impact on the strength and direction of the relationship between the participants' observations with regard to the psychosocial career pre-occupation in making a prediction in relation to the

organisation's commitment. The findings implied that individuals' gender (female) had a greater influence on establishing the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment. This is interesting because females are more motivated to search for higher career advancement than their male counterparts, and this confirms the findings of previous studies that showed that females are more committed in their careers than their male counterparts (Holth et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the results with regard to job level in this current study imply that when developing and implementing career self-management practices strategies, along with psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness, this may be key in predicting organisational commitment. Again, the moderated analysis findings showed that the nexus between individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment was conditional upon individuals' gender group and job level. Other socio-demographic variables, such as age and marital status, tended to have no relationship with the constructs under consideration. Based on these results, the results provide partial supportive evidence for the research hypothesis (H3).

6.1.5.2 Counter-intuitive findings

The current research study revealed that age and marital status did not show any moderating effect between individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupation and social connectedness in predicting organisational commitment. This implies that age and marital status did not play a significant role in this study. The results of the study are in agreement with previous studies that concluded that age groups did not moderate individual perceptions regarding psychosocial career pre-occupations (Deas & Coetzee, 2020; Synman, 2021) in predicting organisational commitment. Again, this study is in line with previous studies by (Tikare, 2016), which opines that there is no significant relationship in the total score of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment with reference to marital status. Based on these intriguing findings, management of HEIs should pay less attention to age and marital status in assessing the moderating role of psychosocial career pre-occupation in predicting organisational commitment, hence developing career self-management interventions and strategies.

6.1.6 Research aim 4: Discussion of the tests for significance mean difference

Research aim 4 was to assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

6.1.6.1 Gender: Differences in terms of constructing a profile for career self-management

As indicated in Table 5.18 (Chapter 5), it is relevant to this section. The tests for significant mean differences revealed that respondents' overall organisational commitment showed significant mean differences in terms of gender groupings. Furthermore, the results showed that female respondents were found to be significantly more satisfied with the organisation's normative commitment than male respondents. This could mean that females are more committed to their career in terms of having the obligation to remain with the organisation than males. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies that concluded that female employees appear to have a higher level of organisational commitment than their male counterparts (Kokubun & Yasui, 2020; Messner, 2017). Previous research has shown that lower levels of commitment among males in terms of their career might be a result of career programmes such as professional development opportunity, promotion speed and remuneration growth not well implemented in the organisation (Agus & Selvaraj, 2020; Al Balushi, 2022).

6.1.6.2 Job level: Differences in terms of constructing a profile for career self-management

As indicated in Table 5.20 (in Chapter 5). With regard to job level, several significant mean differences were revealed in constructing a profile for career self-management. The results showed that respondents from various job levels differed significantly in their psychosocial career pre-occupations specifically career establishment and work-life adjustment, as well as organisational commitment, including continuance commitment and normative commitment.

The results of the test for mean differences showed that respondents in the teaching categories had higher levels of career establishment pre-occupations than those in the administrative staff category. These results confirm previous studies showing that academic participants/employees are more likely to be satisfied in terms of their career establishment pre-occupations than administrative employees (Deas, 2017). This finding implies that teaching staff are comfortable because they have career growth paths and development opportunities that make them financially independent from the family that raised them.

Furthermore, the results in terms of work-life adjustment revealed that teaching staff revealed a significant and positive balance compared to administrative staff. The implication of this is that teaching staff experience less autonomy and are able to settle down in their current career domain than administrative staff. This result confirms the findings of previous research studies that found that academic employees tend to be less satisfied with their work-life balance than administrative staff (Deas, 2017; Fontinha et al., 2019).

6.1.6.3 Main findings

It can be concluded based on the findings that socio-demographic differences should be considered in the construction of a profile for proactive career self-management in higher educational institutions in Ghana. With regard to the socio-demographic variable, only job level showed significant differences in terms of psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment. Therefore, these differences are important when constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in higher educational institutions in Ghana. Furthermore, the tests for significant mean differences provided partial support for research hypothesis 4 (H4).

6.1.6.4 Counter-intuitive findings

The results revealed that the test for significant mean differences indicated no significant differences in terms of socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, job level, and any of the psychosocial career pre-occupations related subscales. This, in turn, contrasts with previous research studies that showed that participants from various age groups, genders and marital statuses (Bester, 2018; Coetzee & Takawira, 2019; Deas, 2017) differed significantly with regard to psychosocial career pre-occupations constructs. Furthermore, the results revealed that the test for significant mean differences showed no significant differences in terms of age, gender, marital status, and any of the social connectedness-related dimensions, contrary to previous research that showed that participants from various age groups (Ferres et al., 2021; Kiely et al., 2021), gender groups (Vella et al., 2020; Yavuzkurt & Kiral, 2020), marital status (Yavuzkurt & Kiral, 2020) and job level (Cao & Zhang, 2020) differed significantly in terms of the respondents' perception of their connectedness to the organisation. However, Potgieter's (2019) study on workplace friendships and socio-demographics confirmed that age and gender do not significantly influence workplace friendships.

Last, regarding the significant mean difference, the tests for significant mean differences revealed no significant difference in terms of organisational commitment, which is contrary to previous studies that revealed that participants from different age, gender, and marital status groups differed significantly in terms of organisational commitment (Ferreira, 2010).

In sum, socio-demographic characteristics such as age and marital status showed no significant differences among the constructs, notably psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. This implies that age and marital status do not play a significant role in decision-making regarding career self-management in public higher educational institutions. Furthermore, management of the HEI should be of great concern in terms of other socio-demographic variables, such as gender and job level, since they revealed a significant difference among the constructs. Again, management should consider gender and job level when developing career self-management strategies and interventions for their employees in higher educational institutions. Thus, the test for significant mean differences with regard to gender and job level provides supportive evidence for research Hypothesis 4.

6.2 INTEGRATION: CONSTRUCTING A PROFILE FOR PROACTIVE CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN GHANA

The central hypothesis of the current research study was to establish a significant positive relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. The study further hypothesised that individuals' socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, and job level) had a significantly moderate relationship with psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Finally, it is assumed that a proactive career self-management profile can be established to inform management/employer and employee decisions within higher educational settings in Ghana.

Based on these findings, this study provides evidence in support of the central hypothesis indicated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.6.2.4). The constructed profile for proactive career self-management in public HEIs was derived as a result of the understanding obtained from the core significant results in the discussion and integration section (Section 6.1.1 to 6.1.6 in Chapter 6). As seen in Figure 6.1, the insights obtained provide basic grounds for proactive career self-management for the purposes of achieving the general aim of the research study.

6. 2.1 Key insights in relation to higher educational institution

The significant nexus between the constructs emphasised the following aspects that were deliberated when contemplating the profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions:

- The results revealed that career self-management practices that focus on employees' career pre-occupations and social connectedness should emphasise the development and management of those individuals' work-life balance. Furthermore, these individuals should be encouraged to internalise their work activities in a balanced fashion by focusing on broader career activities that ensure the development of employees' careers and hence commitment to the institution.
- The results revealed that career establishment pre-occupations did not strengthen the relationship between friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence. This finding contradicts previous studies that revealed that career pre-occupations strengthen workplace friendships (Potgieter et al., 2019). This means that employees who internalize their career at the initial stage in a more organised and planned manner will eventually obtain a cordial working relationship in the environment they find themselves, which will translate into their commitment to the institution.
- The results revealed that friendship prevalence contributed immensely to predicting organisational commitment. Individuals who show interest in an organisation as a result of friendship prevalence should thus be supported to develop positive self-interest, the ability to understand and interpret their own work relationships, understand others' work interests, and the ability to be connected to each other in work settings. Furthermore, employees should also be advised that friendship prevalence can protect individuals and enhance their work commitment, motivation, and turnover, thus leading to investment in proactive career behaviour in the organisation (Nielsen et al., 2000; Strauss et al., 2017).
- The results revealed that the current sample specifically, research settings in the HEI, career self-management interventions including employee counselling programmes, employee career assistance programmes and coaching programmes are required for employees at the job level, such as the teaching and administrative level, at the age categories, such as 31-40 years, to effectively assist individuals attending to their psychosocial career pre-occupations

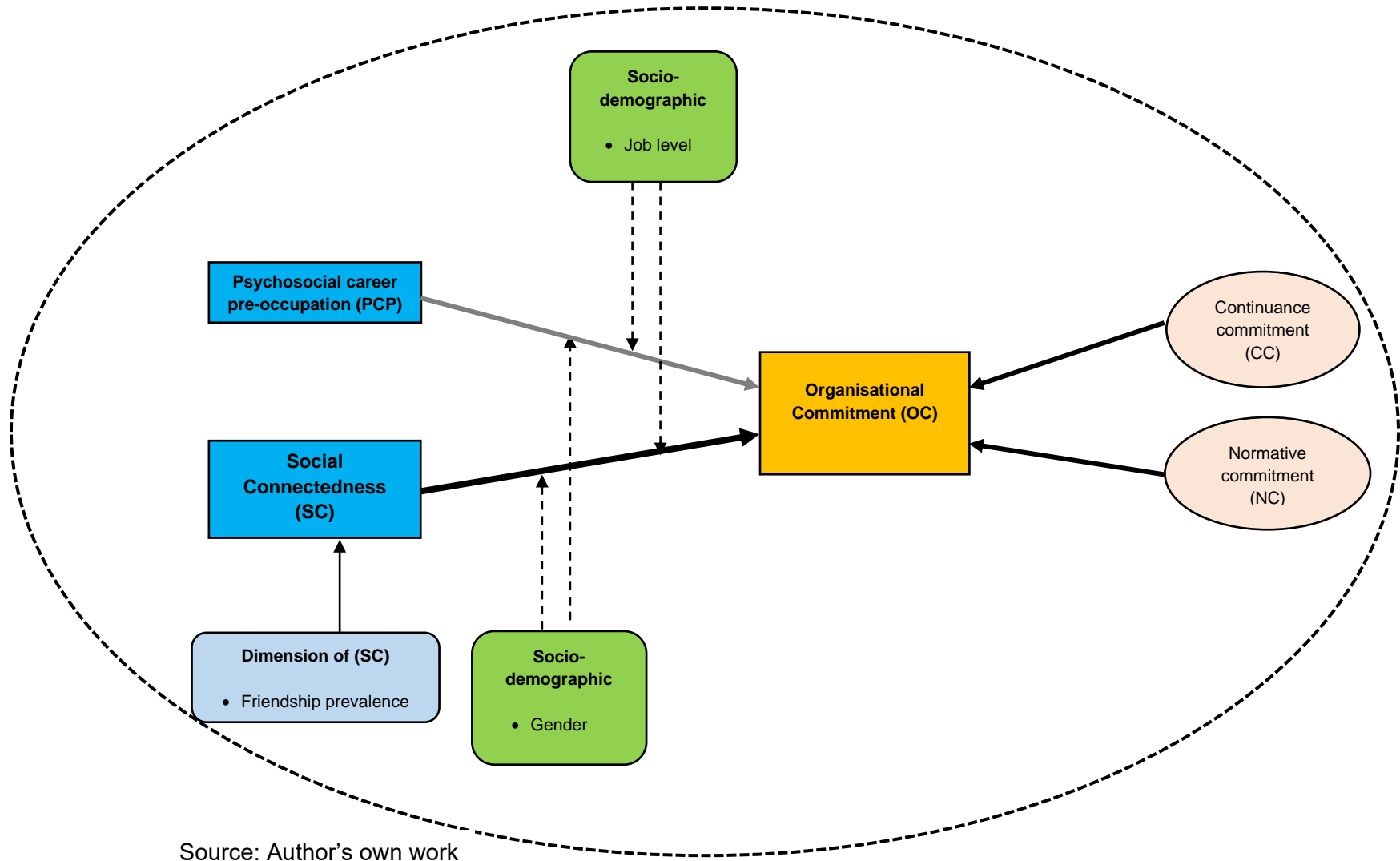
needs as well as social connectivity, which in event creates a higher level of commitment either in a continuance or normative commitment at the institution those individuals work.

- The results showed that senior staff in the age category between 31-40 years seem to be clear about their work-life balance as manifested in psychosocial career pre-occupations in public higher educational institutions. The age group identified (31-40 years) is considered as people who are adequately prepared towards the establishment of their career and that they need to be able to balance their work and family; hence, there is a need for the management of the public HEI to help in mentoring and coaching such individuals so that they can balance their work as well as family concerns, and when this happens, those individuals will be committed to their career and the organisation they find themselves.
- The results revealed that psychosocial career pre-occupations interventions for these age categories should include constant educational opportunities for establishing a given career, coaching and professional development opportunities, as well as work-life balance interventions such as flexible working hours, remote working programmes, family leave policies, authorising employees to be away from work to attend to family issues, and childcare assistance facilities (Dockel et al., 2006). Moreover, management of the public HEI must improve the level of supervision, such as giving employees the opportunity to be involved in decision making, open discussion, clarity in the objectives set and instituting appropriate mentorship programmes for individuals' careers.
- The results showed that gender and job level are important biographic variables to be considered in relation to predicting the commitment of employees towards the organisation and that the differences between the respective age, gender, marital status and job level groups should be considered when developing career self-management interventions for higher educational institutions.
- Overall, the current research findings revealed that psychosocial career pre-occupations and employees' commitment, either affective, continuance or normative, are considered to be relevant aspects of individuals' career management and that the way in which they are managed and presented in the organisation informs the success of the organisation. Therefore, the current research contributes immensely to important insights and knowledge that help the management of public higher educational institutions when developing strategies for individual career concerns in the workplace.

An overview of the empirically manifested profile for proactive career self-management is provided in Figure 6.1. This profile may be adopted when formulating career self-management strategies for public higher educational institutions.

Figure 6.1

Empirically manifested profile for proactive career self-management for the public higher educational institution



Source: Author's own work

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on the conclusions that are based on both the literature review and the empirical studies in relation to the research aims as set out in Chapter 1.

6.3.1 Conclusions regarding the literature review

The general aim of the research study was to construct a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in the Ghanaian context. Based on this aim, the study further investigated the theoretical interdynamic relationship among the constructs, psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship pre-occupations), and organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). With regard to specific aims, the study intended to conceptualise individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work.

Furthermore, the research aimed to conceptualise psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness, and organisational commitment and how individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs. Finally, to construct a theoretically integrated proactive career profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices based on the theoretical relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

The general aims were accomplished by addressing and achieving the specific aims of this research. Furthermore, the conclusions of the study were drawn in terms of each of the specific aims relating to the relationship dynamics among the constructs relevant to the study.

6.3.1.1 Research aim 1

To determine how the literature conceptualises individual career self-management behaviour in the new world of work.

The first aim was achieved in Chapter 2.

The modern Ghanaian work environment is associated with numerous challenges and changes that have occurred over the past few years, and these challenges and changes are a result of globalisation, changes in technology, balancing employee expectations, and workplace flexibility (Arnold et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2019). A study conducted by Coetzee (2019) emphasised the shift from organisational career management to contemporary career self-management. Furthermore, Wesarat et al. (2014) consider organisational career management policies and practices designed by the organisation to improve employee effectiveness. Individual career management, on the other hand, is the personal effort an individual makes to achieve his/her career goals, which involves the management of individual career planning and individual career tactics (Runhaar et al., 2019)

Coetzee (2018) holds the notion that an unpredictable and rapidly changing business environment has been created and that employees can no longer be guaranteed life-long employment. A comprehensive literature review concluded that career pre-occupations may be predominant in individuals' career experiences in an uncomfortable economy and uncertain labour market (Coetzee, 2016). Therefore, individuals who are constructing their own careers in the current work dispensation (contemporary work environment) find it more difficult to manage their careers and have a meaningful career. Due to these challenges, the current work environment is not conducive to organisational career management, rather than career self-management.

The difficulties associated with careers and the changes in the modern work environment have resulted in career theorists considering careers with new lenses in modern work environments. These new careers were termed boundaryless careers, protean careers, and global careers outlooks. Many researchers in the field of career management suggest that individuals must be more mindful of their work-related capabilities, career meta-competencies and psychosocial career resources (Baruch et al., 2019; Blickle et al., 2009; Hess et al., 2012; Hoekstra, 2011; Puffer; 2011; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Again, contemporary career theorists agree that the difficulties associated with careers in the work environment have resulted in individuals being preoccupied with career-related choices, which calls for proactive career and adaptive career behaviours and thus affirming their career outcomes (Coetzee, 2014b). Furthermore, the extent to which employees are comfortable with their career progression and outcomes is conceptualised as career self-management (De Vos & Cambré (2017). In addition, Pitan (2016) posits that individuals must be more proactive and flexible in their

quest to fit into an organisation, and this can be achieved through constructive assessment of their career path in the chosen organisation.

6.3.1.2 Research aims 2 and 3

Research aim 2: To conceptualise psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment and how individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs.

Research aim 3: To construct a theoretically integrated proactive career profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices based on the theoretical relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

The second and third aims, notably, to conceptualise psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, and how individuals' characteristics influence the development of these constructs, as well as to construct a theoretically integrated proactive career profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices based on the theoretical relationship among career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, were achieved in Chapter 3.

With regard to the literature review, an integrated hypothesised relationship among the constructs for the higher educational environment (Figure 3.6 in Chapter 4) could be constructed. Career construction theory underpins the theoretical foundations and explains the dynamic relationships among the three main constructs in the research study. The theoretical framework for career self-management revealed that psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness constructs may have a greater effect on individuals' level of commitment to an organisation, especially affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Furthermore, the literature review revealed that psychosocial career pre-occupation in the form of career growth and development opportunities are always available for employees working in HEIs and that they tend to be financially independent.

In addition, the literature review revealed that social connectedness interventions such as friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence are needed in the educational environment in the Ghanaian context due to the stressful nature of work activities. When these interventions are properly considered at the workplace, they can assist individuals in developing close friendships at the workplace; hence, organisations will be much more productive. Furthermore, the literature

review showed that there may be a relationship between workplace connectivity (social connectedness) and organisational commitment. This means that when employees at the workplace are treated well and given respect and recognition by their supervisors, they will tend to be committed to the objectives of the organisation. Based on these differences, the management of HEIs should pay much attention to the constructs in designing and developing appropriate career self-management interventions.

6.3.2 Conclusion relating to the empirical study

The empirical aims of the study were to address the following four specific aims:

- To assess the empirical interrelationships among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context (H1).
- To empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment (H2).
- To assess whether socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job position moderate the relationship between psychosocial career preoccupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment (H3).
- To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment (H4).
- To provide appropriate recommendations for human resource practitioners in terms of how individuals in the work environment manage their own careers and to enable further research.

6.3.2.1 Empirical research aim 1

To assess the empirical interrelationships among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, as manifested in a sample of respondents in the Ghanaian context. This research aim is related to the testing of research hypothesis H1.

The first aim, notably, to assess the empirical interrelationships among psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment as manifested in a sample of

respondents in the Ghanaian context, was achieved in Chapter 5 and thus provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H1.

Conclusion: Based on the findings from Table 5.12 (in Chapter 5), individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment are all positively and significantly related.

With regard to psychosocial career pre-occupations (independent variable), including career establishment, career adaptations and work-life adjustment pre-occupations were significantly related to organisational commitment (the dependent construct variable). Thus, individuals who are highly committed and pre-occupied in their careers may be more likely to remain with the organisation. Therefore, the findings indicate that public HEIs should pay much attention to psychosocial career pre-occupations when considering an appropriate strategy for career self-management in the Ghanaian context.

Furthermore, the social connectedness construct (independent variable) and organisational commitment (dependent variable) are significantly related to each other. This suggests that when employees have the opportunity to develop close friendships at the workplace, they eventually tend to be committed to the organisation and hence have high levels of affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Thus, the management of public HEIs should develop and constantly improve packages that ensure employees' connectedness at the workplace, since developing close friendships at work is key to employees.

6.3.2.2 Empirical research aim 2

To empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment. This research aim is related to testing research hypothesis H2.

The second empirical aim, notably, *to empirically investigate whether psychosocial career pre-occupations and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment*, was achieved in Chapter 5 and thus provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis H2.

Conclusion: Based on the findings from Table 5.13 (in Chapter 5), it was concluded that all variables had good fit among themselves (psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment). Furthermore, all the subconstructs of

psychosocial career pre-occupations, and social connectedness positively and significantly predict organisational commitment (see figure 5.1).

Therefore, the management of public higher educational institutions should develop appropriate workplace strategies to ensure that the workplace is conducive for employees to discharge their obligations. Again, in situations where employees could engage in informal communication with coworkers, this in effect ensures employees' commitment level to the organisation.

6.3.2.3 Empirical research aim 3

To assess whether socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status and job position moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to testing research hypothesis H3.

The third aim, notably, to assess whether socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and job position moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, was achieved in Chapter 5 and thus provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis H3.

6.3.3 Conclusion relating to empirical moderation between socio-demographic variables and psychosocial career pre-occupation in predicting organisational commitment.

On the basis of the empirical findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Individuals' socio-demographic characteristics (gender and job level) moderated the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment. Thus, the relationship between employees' psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment is conditional on socio-demographic variables such as gender and job level, which in effect influences the construction of a profile for proactive career self-management. As seen in Table 5.15 in Chapter 5.
- Furthermore, individuals' socio-demographic variables (in the case of age and marital status) did not moderate their psychosocial career pre-occupations and organisational commitment. Thus, in making decisions regarding employees' career self-management, socio-demographic variables such as age and marital status do not influence individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations and their commitment to the HEI. As seen in Table 5.15 in Chapter 5.

6.3.3.1 Empirical research aim 4

To assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. This research aim is related to testing research hypothesis H4.

The fourth empirical research aim, notably, is to assess whether individuals from diverse socio-demographic groups differ significantly regarding their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment.

Conclusion: Individuals of different genders and job levels differ significantly in terms of their overall organisational commitment. Specifically, individuals from different gender groups and job levels differ significantly in terms of normative commitment. In addition, individual job levels differ significantly in terms of their overall psychosocial career pre-occupations, as well as their perception of career establishment and work-life adjustment. However, individuals' age and marital status did not differ significantly in terms of their psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. Finally, age, gender, marital status, and job level did not differ significantly in terms of overall social connectedness. This implies that the management of public HEIs should not pay too much attention to socio-demographic variables such as gender and job levels in developing strategies for addressing career self-management.

Based on the empirical findings, the following conclusions were drawn regarding career self-management in public HEIs:

- Females appeared significantly more concerned about normative commitment than their male counterparts. This indicates that females have a moral sense of obligation to remain with the organisation, and this is a result of not being so much obliged to be responsible for the family as compared to males who have the responsibility of taking care of the family. Therefore, whether the employee is satisfied with the organisation's practices or not, they tend to be comfortable staying with the organisation without much pressure from family responsibilities.
- Teaching staff in public higher educational institutions appeared to be significantly more satisfied in terms of psychosocial career pre-occupations, specifically career establishment, than the administrative staff. This implies that teaching staff are much more concerned with the preparation of their careers because of the tedious nature of teaching work in the

educational environment. Therefore, management should ensure that a congenial workplace environment is created to support employees who are preoccupied with a given career.

- With regard to work-life adjustment, which is an aspect of career pre-occupations, teaching staff, including senior teaching associates, principal teaching associates and chief teaching associates, appeared to feel significantly more positive about the balance with regard to their work and family lives than the administrative staff. This implies that administrative staff have a greater need to improve their work/family live balance, as it may result in administrative staff being associated with daily administrative duties that may often be considered complex.
- In terms of organisational commitment, specifically continuance and normative commitment, administrative staff, including administrative assistants, senior administrative assistants, principal administrative assistants, and chief administrative assistants, showed significantly more positive perceptions in terms of commitment to the organisation through continuance and normative commitment. This implies that teaching staff with a well-developed mindset about their careers may also feel a low sense of responsibility for the organisation (normative commitment), which could eventually influence their decision to leave. Again, because individuals have positive perceptions about the organisation, such individuals (teaching staff) may decide to leave the organisation due to the cost associated with it (continuance commitment).

6.3.4 Conclusions based on the central hypothesis

The hypothesis in this study, as mentioned in Chapter 1, stated that a significant positive relationship exists between psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. Moreover, individuals' socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) showed a significantly moderate relationship with psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. Finally, it is assumed that a proactive career self-management profile can be established to inform employers and employees within public higher educational settings in Ghana. Based on the conclusions derived from the findings, both the literature review and the empirical study provided supportive evidence for the central hypothesis, except for some lack of testing for significant differences and moderating effects.

6.3.5 Conclusions relating to the field of human resource practitioners

The conclusions and interpretations drawn from the literature review, together with the results of the empirical study, should make a definite contribution to the field of human resource management, as well as HR practitioners and career self-management in the public higher educational environment.

The literature review provided grounds for the establishment of the relationship among the study constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, hence constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in the Ghanaian context. Specifically, the literature review provided new insights into the understanding of the relationship between the variables under consideration and how these variables interact with each other in forming a career self-management profile. Furthermore, from the results, it is evident that human resource management practitioners and management of public HEIs should focus on the concepts and theoretical models that influence the constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment.

The empirical findings provide new information on the relationship dynamics among psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence), organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment), and socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status, and job level). The new insight gained from the empirical studies assisted in creating a broader perspective on how individuals' psychosocial career pre-occupations (career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence), and organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) explain career self-management in the public HEI in the Ghanaian context. Furthermore, the results obtained from the empirical study could be used to help employees develop greater psychosocial career pre-occupations as well as social connectedness strategies, which in turn may improve individuals' career self-management practices in the work environment. In relation to these findings, the management of public HEIs should develop deeper insight into the perception that individuals have towards remaining in the

institution, which in event should be tailored towards their career self-management strategies accordingly.

The conclusions and interpretations show that human resource managers and HR practitioners should be constantly aware of the different concepts and theoretical models that influence the constructs of psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, organisational commitment, and socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status and job level, and take cognance of the strengths and weaknesses of the three measuring instruments (PCPS, SCS, and OCS) used in this study.

HR managers and HR practitioners should be mindful of the psychometric properties of the different measuring instruments mentioned in Chapters 1 and 4, namely, the PCPS, SCS, and OCS, before they are used in an organisation. Furthermore, the measuring instruments should be supported by sufficient reliability and validity for use in the Ghanaian educational work environment. The fundamental grounds of the measuring instrument must follow the principles of integrity in selecting, and again, administration and interpretation of the instruments must be adhered to to ensure appropriate career self-management decisions and strategies in an unbiased and fair manner.

Last, individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, and job level, should be considered when developing career self-management strategies in public higher educational institutions. Although the results of the current study have contributed new insights into the relationship dynamics among the constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, as well as the differences between gender and job levels, the usefulness of the research study is limited to the demographic constraints for the population sample; hence, it is difficult to generalise the entire population under consideration.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

Numerous limitations of the literature review and empirical study have been identified and discussed, as highlighted below.

6.4.1 Limitations of the literature review

Exploratory research into psychosocial career pre-occupations (including career establishment pre-occupations, career adaptation pre-occupations, and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (such as friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence), organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment) and socio-demographic characteristics (including age, gender, marital status, and job levels) in the Ghanaian public higher educational institution was limited by the following aspects:

- Various constructs could assist in constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana; however, only psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment were explored in this current study. Furthermore, there are several socio-demographic variables that could moderate the relationship between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. However, the study only explored socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, and job levels. For the reasons identified in this study, the study was unable to provide holistic indications of the factors that could potentially impact career self-management strategies in public higher educational institutions in Ghana.
- Numerous HEIs in Ghana experience difficulties in terms of staff managing their own careers; however, the study paid attention to only one HEI in Ghana, specifically the University of Cape Coast senior staff. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to reflect the overall HEIs in Ghana.
- There is a dearth of research studies both in the Ghanaian context, specifically the HEI, and in the international community on the nexus between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment. Even though a wide research study exists on psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, few studies have paid attention specifically to the nexus of these constructs regarding career self-management strategies.
- Career self-management encompasses a number of meanings; however, in the current study, it was limited to the notion of only three constructs: psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment. Therefore, the researcher could not generalise the study to reflect a broader perspective on career self-management.

6.4.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The findings of the current study may be limited by the ability to generalise and confer practical recommendations and, as a result, a number of factors, including both the size and characteristics of the sample population, as well as the psychometric properties of the PCS, SCS, and OCS. The following limitations with regard to the empirical study were taken into consideration:

- Even though the sample consisted of $N = 288$ participants, a larger sample was required to attain a confident association between the constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness and organisational commitment, as well as socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status, and job level, in this current study.
- As a result of the cross-sectional nature of the current research design, the researcher could not control the research constructs and thus could not establish causality in the significant relationship.
- The generalisability of the findings to the broader Ghanaian context of public HEIs was limited, as the results of the sample population primarily consisted of permanently employed administrative senior staff and females who were 31-40 years old in a single higher educational institution.
- Although common method bias was carried out, the measuring instruments comprising the PCS, SCS, and OCS were self-report questionnaires that were deemed to be personal views, feelings and perceptions of the respondents, which may prejudice the validity of the research outcomes.
- With regards to organisational commitment, previous studies also reported positive relationships on the overall OC variable. Therefore, the researcher kept the analysis on the overall constructs.
- Due to the online nature of the data collection, most of the respondents could not access the instrument as a result of not being able to remember their password to the email account. The high cost of data influenced their ability to respond to the instrument and, as a result, accounted for the response rate of 92%, hence, difficulty in generalising the findings to the entire population (HEI, Ghana).
- Other variables could have served as a precursor to the construction of the profile for proactive career self-management, but those variables were excluded from the current study, and only

three variables were considered. If these variables were included, they may have impacted the findings of the current study.

- Furthermore, socio-demographic characteristics were limited to age, gender, marital status, and job level in predicting the moderating effect and testing for significant mean differences. If other socio-demographic variables were included, this could have improved the current research findings.
- Finally, this study considered only the senior staff of one public HEI in Ghana. The researcher could have added other staff categories (such as senior members and junior staff) and more public HEIs and thus could have improved the generalisability of the current study results.

Based on the aforementioned limitations of the literature review and empirical study being taken into consideration, the study nevertheless revealed the probability of investigating constructs that influence psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment factors. Hence, the findings of the current study can be considered the first to stimulate further studies on career self-management in diverse Ghanaian higher educational contexts.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the research findings, conclusions, and limitations, a number of recommendations regarding HR management and HR practitioners as well as further research in the field are discussed below:

6.5.1 Recommendations for future research

Recommendations for human resource management and HR practitioners and further research in the field are highlighted below, based on the findings, conclusions, and limitations of the current study.

6.5.2 Recommendations for future research

The sample consisted largely of permanent principal administrative senior staff who were between the ages of 31 and 40. Furthermore, this study paid much attention to only one higher educational institution in Ghana. The ability to increase the generalisability of the current research findings should incorporate the use of larger heterogeneous samples deemed more representative of numerous socio-demographic and job levels in the Ghanaian context.

Again, it is recommended that future research studies pay more attention in a more detailed manner to exploring the relationship dynamics between psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment, as well as socio-demographic characteristics such as gender and job levels, in constructing the profile for proactive career self-management. The results of this current study provide a limited understanding of the constructs mentioned above. Based on these findings, future research studies are important for human resource managers and HR practitioners to improve career self-management strategies within the educational sector. Again, future research can be conducted to confirm that the overall organisational commitment construct can be significant or if not to investigate in HEI.

Finally, the findings revealed that different career and life stages have major impacts on establishing the relationship between the overall constructs (psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment) and a number of subconstructs as identified in the objectives (friendship opportunity, friendship prevalence, continuance commitment, and normative commitment). It is recommended that future longitudinal research studies be carried out to test the consistency of the relationship between the constructs and their subdimensions during an employee's career life cycle, such as the early stages of their career and middle and late adult periods. This would assist HR managers and practitioners in interpreting the outcomes and, again, help develop and construct a career profile that would aid higher educational institutions in the management of all staff categories in the work environment.

6.5.2.1 Recommendations for career self-management in HEIs

The current research findings and the significant relationship dynamics that evolved from the study may contribute to the development as well as interventions at the following levels: (1) organisational level and (2) individual level in relation to career self-management.

6.5.2.2 Organisational-level interventions

- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions be expressly clear on the comprehensive career self-management strategies and support systems that are available, which eventually focus on the progress of employees in the workplace.
- The study recommended that career self-management practices enforced by the management of public higher educational institutions should focus on diversity support with

regard to individuals' socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status and job level.

- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions should be proactive in initiating support systems such as employee counselling programmes, employee career assistance programmes and coaching programmes that would assist employees in managing their careers in the new world of work.
- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions should be proactive in the use of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS), social connectedness scale (SCS), and organisational commitment scale (OCS) to establish specific individual career needs and to develop individuals' career self-management strategies with wider organisational objectives.
- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions should be more proactive in the use of the psychosocial career pre-occupations scale (PCPS) to determine specific employee career pre-occupations in the organisation that intend to be tailored towards career management practices to enhance individual development towards their job.
- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions should develop and implement appropriate work-life balance opportunities. Based on the sample of the current study, senior staff, such as teaching staff categories and females, showed a need for clear work-life balance opportunities, which specifically included flexible working schedules and opportunity to work remotely from home (Bowen, 2020; Dingle & Neiman, 2020; Ferrari et al., 2021; Prasad et al., 2020).
- The study recommended that the management of public higher educational institutions should be more proactive in the use of the social connectedness scale (SCS) to determine specific employee workplace friendships that can be tailored towards a conducive work environment.

6.5.2.3 Individual-level interventions:

Regarding the findings and dynamic relationships that emerged from the current study, the following individual interventions in terms of career self-management strategies were recommended:

- Individuals should engage in self-reflection in situations, especially when feedback is given on their psychosocial career pre-occupation stages, such as career establishment, career

adaptation, and work-life adjustment stages. This will assist employees in preparing for further career advancement in any organisation they find themselves.

- Management of the public HEI should constantly provide individual employees with opportunities to review their psychosocial career concerns and social connectedness programmes (such as friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) on a day-to-day basis to assist employees in determining the elements that motivate them to be committed to the institution to which they belong.
- Management of the public HEI should assist individuals in paying attention to their individual biographic characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status, and job level, when deciding on the type of career development strategies for their career path.
- The management of public HEIs should have a constant discussion with individual workers to make them aware of their precise psychosocial career pre-occupations which will assist employees in understanding their own career needs. Moreover, specific workplace friendship dimensions (either friendship opportunity or friendship prevalence) that foster cordial relationships at the workplace must be properly developed, instituted and implemented to help individual workers achieve the overall goals of the institution.

6.6 EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This research study focused on constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in the Ghanaian context. The study further established the relationship dynamics among the following constructs: (1) psychosocial career pre-occupations, (2) social connectedness, and (3) organisational commitment. Finally, a moderating relationship between socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, and job level was established among the study constructs. The outcome of the study revealed that a relationship existed among the constructs and that their potential contribution to knowledge on career self-management in the workplace, specifically in higher educational institutions, is enormous.

6.6.1 Value added at the theoretical level

This research provides a theoretical contribution to the literature that seeks to establish the relationship between individuals' career pre-occupation (career establishment pre-occupation, career adaptation and work-life adjustment pre-occupation), social connectedness (friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence) and organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment). The findings reveal whether the constructs

of individuals' career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment are theoretically relevant in the development and construction of a career self-management profile.

Again, where relationships are found between the variables, the findings may prove useful to future researchers in exploring the possibility of effectively and efficiently creating a career self-management intervention to develop a person's psychosocial career pre-occupation and social connectedness to increase their organisational commitment level. Furthermore, the research results could contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with individual career paths. In addition, exploring how individuals' demographic variables influence the manifestation and development of these meta-competencies and dispositions may prove to be useful in understanding proactive career self-management in a multicultural context. Where no relationships are established, then the usefulness of this study is restricted to the elimination of a relationship between the constructs (psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment). Much effort could be transferred to other research studies that will yield significant results to construct a proactive career self-management profile for employees within the Ghanaian higher educational context.

6.6.2 Value added at an empirical level

On an empirical level, this study is the first step in constructing a profile for establishing proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana. Empirically, the research may contribute to constructing an empirical profile that may be used to inform career self-management practices in the selected Ghanaian higher educational institution. This study will also enable policy makers and higher educational institutions' management to understand and appreciate the dynamics of the various profiles needed for efficient and effective career management, since such institutions are considered the backbone of initial training grounds for potential employees. The inability of employees to manage their own career will eventually influence the ability to impart the right knowledge to learners based on the understanding of the concept of career self-management.

The intended study on the empirical level is to assess whether there is a relationship among the three constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupation (career establishment, career adaptation and work-life adjustment pre-occupations), social connectedness (friendship prevalence and friendship opportunity) and organisational commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitments). In a situation where the study establishes that there is no significant relationship among the three constructs, the study could have been handled at a different level

by way of incorporating different scientific data as a means of overcoming the shortfalls. Furthermore, if the study proves that there are no significant relationships among the constructs under study, then other mediating variables such as socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status and job level) could be eliminated from the study objectives.

This, therefore, means that the understanding of these three constructs in the study will help the individual build a sustainable and workable career in the chosen occupation. Additionally, it will inform policy makers and human resource practitioners to appreciate the dynamic nature of the profiles needed as an organisation to be effective in the career management of their employees. Similarly, the assessment of models tested empirically of the various constructs, that is, psychosocial career pre-occupation, social connectedness and organisational commitment, can be utilised by academic practitioners to develop a framework to assist employees in the management of their careers.

6.6.3 Value added at a practical level

On a practical level, the profile will present the basis for understanding the interactions among the study variables, which will be valuable information for researchers in career self-management in Ghana. The results of this career self-management study would be a useful resource in designing a workable and comprehensive career self-management practice in the context of higher educational institutions in Ghana. Moreover, the study would offer staff of higher educational institutions the opportunity to monitor and provide strategies in their quest for career choices, since it is evident that employees who are much occupied with their own career are less committed to the organisation in this new world of work (Coetzee et al., 2015; Klehe et al., 2011).

Furthermore, higher educational institutions may use relevant information gathered to assist employees in developing in terms of understanding the essence of proactive career self-management and the impact it could have on the organisation. Individuals working in the institution could be trained in proactive career self-management programmes to enhance work-related activities. However, in a situation whereby individuals are perceived to lack much knowledge in managing their career in a proactive manner, practitioners could put certain interventional solutions in place to ensure that such individuals could obtain essential benefits from the career programmes instituted in the organisation.

The research study is carried out on the premise that it would add value to employees in the quest to build a profile on their career ambitions in the chosen organisation. This can be possible if employees understand or have much knowledge of the existing relationship among the constructs under investigation. Additionally, it is believed that the findings of the study will help improve or assist individuals in the higher educational institutions in Ghana to be proactive in managing their own careers in this world of work.

6.7 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCHER'S DOCTORATENESS

In conclusion, the researcher is solidly expectant that the findings obtained from the study will eventually provide a greater understanding of how the overall dynamic relationships among the constructs, namely, psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, and organisational commitment, as well as individual biographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, and job level can inform the construction of the profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide new insights into the literature on career self-management in higher educational institutions. The research study exposed the researcher to an extensive intervention that could be applied to human resource managers and HR practitioners to maximise their psychosocial career pre-occupation needs. The current research results, conclusions, and recommendations for future research should be considered a positive contribution to the field of human resource management and HR practitioners in Ghanaian educational institutions.

Throughout the current study, the researcher gained greater insights into the constructs of psychosocial career pre-occupations, social connectedness, organisational commitment, and socio-demographic variables. Additionally, the researcher gained a tremendous volume of competence, such as knowledge regarding statistical data analyses and reporting. Based on the statistical analysis and reporting, the researcher deemed it necessary to consider the study from a holistic point of view with respect to career self-management, and the effect of the concepts may have on Ghanaian public higher educational institutions. During the completion of this study, the researcher acquired valuable lessons related to tolerance, collegiality, patience, and multitasking.

Finally, the doctorateness attained by way of completing the current study should assist the researcher in contributing immensely to national development with regard to enhancing education and innovation by growing a large percentage of PhD-qualified employees in public higher

educational institutions. Furthermore, the researcher should be able to make a greater contribution to the research field, which is considered a critical component in transforming employees in higher educational institutions in Ghana.

6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This final chapter discusses and integrates the findings of the current research study, after which the elements of the suggested profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions are outlined and presented thoroughly. Furthermore, the conclusions that emerged from the current study are discussed with regard to both theoretical and empirical aims. Again, the probable limitations on the theoretical and empirical grounds are discussed, which is followed by recommendations for further research and the field of human resource management and HR practitioners. Finally, the contribution of the current study is discussed, highlighting the extent to which research findings provide supportive evidence for the construction of the profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in the Ghanaian context, which resulted in establishing the dynamic relationship among the study constructs: (1) psychosocial career pre-occupations, (2) social connectedness, and (3) organisational commitment.

This chapter achieved the following empirical research aim:

Empirical research aim 5: To provide appropriate recommendations for Human Resource Practitioners in terms of how individuals in the work environment manage their own career as well as to enable further research.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE (UNISA)



UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 22 October 2021

Dear Mr Isaac Tetteh Kwao

**Decision: Ethics approval from
October 2021 to December 2026**

NHREC Registration #: (if applicable)

ERC Reference #: 2021_HRM_005

Name: Mr Isaac Tetteh Kwao

Student: #61019070

Researcher(s): Name: Isaac Tetteh Kwao
E-mail address, telephone # 61019070@mylife.unisa.ac.za, +233243011907

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof Ingrid Potgieter
E-mail address, telephone # visseil@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 3723

Co-supervisor(s): Name: Prof Nadia Ferreira
E-mail address, telephone # ferren@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 3966

Working title of research:

Constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institution in Ghana

Qualification: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for IT Kwao for a period of five (5) years.

The low risk application was reviewed by a Sub-committee of URERC on 30 September 2021 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The ethics application was approved on 22 October 2021.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

- 1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.**



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APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL (UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST)

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

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24TH NOVEMBER 2021

Isaac Tetteh Kwao
Department of Human Resource Management
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr. Kwao,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/EXT/2021/30)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research titled **Constructing a Profile for Proactive Career Self-Management in Higher Educational Institutions in Ghana**. This approval is valid from 24th November 2021 to 23rd November, 2022. You may apply for a renewal subject to submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samuel Asiedu Owusu'.

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD
UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Title of the research: Constructing a profile for proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana.

Expected duration of participation: ± 15 to 20 minutes

NOTE TO ETHICS COMMITTEE: The lime survey facilities combine the cover letter and informed consent form. This information is therefore also included in the Research Questionnaire for ease of processing by the lime survey administrator. The Unisa template was used as combined cover letter/informed consent form.

COVER LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Prospective Participant,

You are invited to participate in a survey conducted by Mr. Isaac Tetteh Kwao and supervised by prof, Potgieter Ingrid and prof. Nadia Ferreira.

The survey you have received has been designed to investigate your knowledge in proactive career self-management in public higher educational institutions in Ghana. We are interested in your concern for management of one's career in the new world of work. The information gathered could assist researchers in the designing of workable and comprehensive career self-management practices specifically in the higher educational environment and to help ensure that staff within the higher educational institutions are ready for the management of their own career.

You were selected to participate in this survey because of your role as a staff of the public higher educational institutions in Ghana regarding staff career. Your input will contribute to the representativeness of the sample, which increases the generalisability of the study to the selected unit of analysis. By completing this survey, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this survey will help us to draw up recommendations for higher educational institutions in Ghana. You are, however, under no obligation to complete the survey and you can withdraw from the study prior to submitting the survey. You also do not need to share any information that you feel uncomfortable disclosing. The survey is developed to be anonymous, meaning that we will have no way of connecting the information that you provide to you personally. Consequently, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once you have clicked the send button based on the anonymous nature of the survey. Because the research focus on anonymous, group-based data, individual feedback will not be provided to participants. Your responses to the questionnaire items are captured anonymously and integrated into a group-based research report. Your responses can therefore not be traced to you as an individual.

If you choose to participate in this survey it will take up no more than 15 - 20 minutes of your time.

You will not benefit from your participation as an individual, however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study will benefit academic lecturers involved in developing course material for modules and teaching modules in higher educational institutions in Ghana. By participating in this study, you will not only contribute to the research but may also assist in informing new module content. We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing the survey. However, should you require further information or have any concerns please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Mr. Isaac Tetteh Kwao).

The researcher(s) undertake to keep any information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual.

The records will be kept for five years after data analysis for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed. The electronic version of the survey will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the survey.

The research will be reviewed and approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Human Resource Management, UNISA. The primary/lead supervisor, Prof Ingrid Potgieter, can be contacted during office hours by email: Visseil@unisa.ac.za . Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the Departmental Research and Ethics Committee, Dr. Line Rudolph at rudolec@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

INFORMED CONSENT

You are making a decision whether or not to participate by continuing to the next page. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to clicking the send button.

By continuing on the next page and completing the research questionnaire,

- (1) It is assumed that you provide informed consent to participate (i.e. you understand the survey contents and the nature of the study, and voluntarily agree to take part in the study);
- (2) It is assumed that you provide informed consent that the results of the survey may be used for research purposes;
- (3) It is assumed that you provide informed consent that the researcher of this survey may use the findings for the purpose of informing course material development and module content of modules;
- (4) It is assumed that you provide informed consent that the information concerning you will be treated with confidentiality, is anonymous, and will not be made available to any person.

Procedures: The study will involve the completion a biographical section and three short questionnaires:

Section A: Biographical Information

Section B: Psychosocial career pre-occupations

Section C: Social connectedness

Section D: Organisational commitment

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, these should be directed to Mr. Isaac Tetteh Kwao, by email: 61019070@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Thank you for participating in this important research project.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please answer the questions below by indicating with a 'X'

Age:

1	20 – 30 years	
2	31 – 40 years	
3	41– 50 years	
4	51 – 60 years	

Gender:

1	Male	
2	Female	

Marital Status:

1	Married	
2	Single	
3	Divorce	
4	Other	

Job Level

1	Administrative assistant	
2	Senior Assistant	
3	Principal Assistant	
4	Chief Assistant	
5	Others (specify)	

SECTION B: PSYCHOSOCIAL CAREER PRE-OCCUPATIONS**(Coetzee, 2014).****Instructions**

- Please indicate the extent to which you are concerned with each statement in the questionnaire by marking **(X)** the appropriate response in the box to the right of the statement. A mark indicates the choice that best represents your opinion.
- The following are the marks allocation for each response. The responses are measured with five-point scale such that;

Not concerned	Somewhat concerned	Much concerned	Highly concerned	Extremely concerned
1	2	3	4	5

- To what extend are you concerned about the following psychosocial career pre-occupations.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to each question by marking the number that indicates your answer.
- Please try to answer every question as honestly as possible.

N/o	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
	Career establishment preoccupations					
1	Fitting-in with others in your job or study group					
2	Having a full-time job					
3	Exploring career possibilities					
4	Advancing in your job or career					
5	Having a stable career					
6	Growth and development opportunities					

7	Increasing your employability					
8	Improving your current job performance					
9	Being autonomous, finding your own niche in life					
10	Having financial or economic stability in your life					
11	Becoming financially independent from the family that raised you					
12	Learning more about your career interests, talents and capabilities					
13	Establishing a degree of job security					
	Career adaptation preoccupations					
14	Making a career change					
15	Changing your current career field					
16	How your concept of your interests, talent and capabilities fit with your current job or career					
17	How your concept of your interests, talent and capabilities fit with the changes in the employment market					
18	How your concepts of your interests, talent and capabilities fit with different types of career opportunities in the employment market					
	Work-life adjustment pre-occupations					
19	Settling down in your current career domain					
20	Balancing work with family responsibilities					
21	Reducing your current work load					
22	Strengthening your expertise, talent and capabilities in your current job or career domain					
23	Developing closer ties with the members of your job or study group					

**Section C: Social connectedness
(Nielsen et al., 2000).**

Instructions

- The general idea of this questionnaire is to give the respondents the chance to express their views on how they feel about their present workplace friendship. Specifically, the feelings on their present job and how they fit into the organisation.
- The following are the marks allocation for each response. The responses are measured with five-point scale such that;

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

- Be sure to answer all statements. Using the response scale below, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item by marking the applicable option with a cross (X).
- What is your state of agreement or otherwise in respond of these statements?

No.	Items on the scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Friendship opportunity dimension					
1	I have the opportunity to get to know my co worker					
2	I am able to work with my co-worker to collectively solve problems					
3	In my organisation I have the opportunity to talk informally and visit others					
4	Communication among employees is encouraged by my organisation					
5	I have the opportunity to develop close friendships at my workplace					
6	Informal talk is tolerated by my organisation as long as the work is completed					
	Friendship prevalence dimension					
7	I have formed strong friendships at work					
8	I socialize with co-workers outside the workplace					
9	I can confide in people at work					
10	I feel I can trust many co-workers a great deal					
11	Being able to see my co-workers is one reason I look forward to my job					
12	I do not feel that anyone I work with is a true friend					

**Section D: Organisational commitment
(Meyer & Allen, 1991).**

Instructions

- The purpose of this questionnaire is to give the respondents the chance to indicate their level of commitment to the institution they are currently attached to.
- The following are the marks allocation for each response. The responses are measured with five-point scale such that;

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

- Be sure to answer all statements. Using the response scale below, indicate your agreement or disagreement with each item by marking the applicable option with a cross (X).

	Scales in terms of items	1	2	3	4	5
Affective commitment scale item						
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this institution					
2	I enjoy discussing my institution with people outside of it					
3	I really feel as if this institution's problem are my own					
4	I think I could easily become as attached to another institution as I am to this one					
5	I do not feel like "part of the family "to this institution					
6	I do not feel emotionally attached to this institution					
7	This institution has a great deal of personal meaning for it					
8	I do not feel strong sense of belonging to my institution					
Continuance commitment scale item						
9	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up					

10	It would be very hard for me to leave my institution right now, even if I wanted to					
11	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my institution right now					
12	It would not be too costly for me to leave my organisation in the near future					
13	Right now, staying at my institution is a matter of necessity as much as desire					
14	I believe that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation					
15	One of the few negative consequences of leaving this institution would be the scarcity of available alternatives					
16	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this institution is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice; another institution may not match the overall benefits I have here					
17	If I had not already put so much of myself into this institution, I might consider working elsewhere					
Normative commitment scale items						
18	I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer					
19	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my institution now					
20	I would feel guilty if I left my institution now					
21	This institution deserves my loyalty					
22	I would not leave my institution right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.					
23	I owe a great deal to my institution					

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire.