THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RETENTION FACTORS WITHIN THE RETAIL SECTOR IN THE WESTERN CAPE

By

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DECLARATION

Student number: **41356438**

I, Rugshana Jabaar, declare that the dissertation **"The relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in the retail sector in the Western Cape"** is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

I also declare that the study has been carried out of strict accordance with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (Unisa). I took great care that the research was conducted with the highest integrity, taking into account Unisa's Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism.

I further declare that the ethical clearance to conduct the research has been obtained from the Department of Human Resource Management, University of South Africa. Permission has been obtained from the participating organisation to conduct the research.

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June 2017

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ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

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The objectives of the research were to examine the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors within the retail sector in the Western Cape and to determine whether the demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) influence an employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. A cross-sectional quantitative, correlational research approach was followed wherein a non-probability convenience sampling (N=224) of permanent customer service employees of a reputable retail store in the Western Cape was used. The data were collected by means of Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ by Meyer & Allen, 1997), Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS by Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS by Döckel, 2003). Correlational analysis revealded that statistical significant and positive relationships exist between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. A stepwise regression analysis indicated that organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predict retention factors. Tests for mean differences revealed that some differences do exists in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level). Recommendations are suggested for use by human resource managers and practitioners in terms of retention strategies and practices, specifically within the retail sector.

Key terms:

career adaptability, organisational commitment, retention factors, retention practices, socio-demographic variables

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CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors among permanent customer service employees within the retail sector. The aim of this chapter is to provide the background to and rationale for the study and to formulate the problem statement and research questions. On the basis of this, the aims of the research are then stated. The paradigm perspectives which guide this research are then discussed, while the research design and method together with their different steps, which give structure to the research process, are then formulated. The layout of the chapters is indicated, followed by a chapter summary.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE RESEACH

The context of this research is the retention of permanent customer service employees and the factors that influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. More specifically, the research examines the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors within the retail sector in the Western Cape. The retail sector has been identified as a highly labour-intensive industry, consequently its human capital performance is a huge determining factor in the overall success and sustainability of the organisation during the current challenging economic times (Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014). In the 21st century world of work, retail employees find it difficult to secure full-time employment (Coffey, Coufopoulos, & Kinghom, 2014; McDonnall, Zhou, & Crudden, 2013). Researchers such as Coetzee and Harry (2014) agree that the current global economy is associated with unpredictable and uncertain careers, which include high labour market insecurity, employment insecurity and fragmented career paths. As such it has now become mandatory for employees to adjust and cope continuously to these changes (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011). Retail employees now have to be more responsible towards managing their own careers and must continually develop their skills and competencies to remain employable (Savickas, 2011). They are also expected to be more efficient, more flexible and adaptable to these high demands when pursuing careers (Maree, 2013; Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bodia & Plewa, 2014b; Zacher, 2014). The current research therefore focuses on three Western-based concepts that are regarded as important psychosocial career meta-capacities (Ferreira, 2012; Harry, 2014), namely, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

The 21st century workplace is changing and as a result individuals entering organisations are now faced with a number of challenges, which include lower job security, reduced employment opportunities, evolving technology as well as international pressures on organisations to

perform better (Marock, 2008). Cascio (2001) asserts that the old psychological contract of predictability, stability, permanence, job security, as well as linear career growth and one-time learning has now changed to a new psychological contract. Other researchers agree that the relationship between the employers and their employees have changed from being stable to casual, flexible contracts where job tenure is no longer being associated with an increase in pay or promotional prospects (Ineson, Benke, & Laszlo, 2013). This 21st century contract favours extreme uncertainty, continuous change, temporariness and flexible work, the valuing of skills and competence, and employees who are self-reliant, adaptable and have life-long learning mind-sets in order to remain employable (Cascio, 2001). These rapid changes have started to raise the question of whether individuals will be able to cope with these changes, be more adaptable and whether they will stay committed to one organisation (Mclaggan, Bezuidenhout, & Botha, 2013).

These changes have fast resulted in individuals now becoming less dependent on organisational career arrangements; they experience more frequent career transitions, have greater agency in career decisions and are more adaptable learners (Arthur, Khapova, & Widerrom, 2005; Baruch, 2004). Consequently, Ferreira (2012) posits that this contemporary workplace thus witnesses a decrease in stability and security in careers.

Theorists' further believe that employees will only be seen to be flexible and adaptable if they have up to date technical knowledge, demonstrate openness and resilience towards workplace changes (Froehlich, Beausaert, Segers, & Gerken, 2014). Lent (2013), therefore states that employees are now more than ever expected to take greater control over their own training and development as well as their careers and they need to continually improve their knowledge, skills and competencies in order to remain employable (De Guzman & Choi, 2013). Hence entering the world of work today requires more effort, deeper self-knowledge, greater confidence and a number of employability attributes than ever before (Savickas, 2012).

Kurbanoglu and Arslan (2015) posit that these rapid global changes have a negative impact on the employment relationship, resulting in the decrease in career security and stability, other changes that occur include technological development and advancement, also have a major impact on the occupational lives of individuals. In recent decades, these changes have had an impact on the career lives of many loyal and committed employees (Sharf, 2010). Kerr-Phillip and Thomas (2009) assert that as a result of these global pressures on the employment relationship, South Africa is now experiencing a massive skills crisis in the retention of its top talent. This crisis is unlikely to end in the foreseeable future. Kanwar, Singh, and Kodwani (2012) believe that high labour turnover, when skilled and talented employees regularly leave organisations, is extremely harmful to organisations' productivity. Organisations are at present

also facing ongoing problems in terms of shortages of highly skilled employees (Department of Labour, 2012; Mohlala, Goldman, & Goosen, 2012). Consequently, skills shortages have become one of the major restrictions for sustainable economic growth in this country (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009). Moreover, these skills shortages appear to limit South African businesses' level of global participation and job creation (Rasool & Botha, 2011). It has therefore now become imperative for 21st century contemporary organisations to retain their skilled, talented and valuable employees (Van Dyk, 2011).

The retail sector environment is an example of the 21st century contemporary workplace, being characterised by uncertainty and concurrent transitions (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Harry & Coetzee, 2013), with a lack of skills variety designed into the job, low pay and low status. Kaur and Vijay (2016) describe this as a monotonous working environment, which is highly routinised with little opportunity for career progression (Harry, 2014). The retail environment has been renowned for being one of the world's most stressful working environments (Harry & Coetzee, 2011; Jacobs & Roodt, 2011). This creates a number of key challenges for managers and employees, which include high absenteeism, high turnover rates, constant monitoring and surveillance and the emotional labour that is required for this occupation (Banks & Roodt, 2011; Borgogni, Consiglio, Allesandri, & Schaufeli, 2012; Consiglio, Borgogni, Allesandri, & Schaufeli, 2013; Poddar & Madupalli, 2012).

Retail employees generally tend to experience lower levels of career satisfaction as a result of the repetitive and monotonous nature of their work and the limited opportunities for training and development and career progression (Choi, Cheong, & Feinberg, 2012). Karatepe and Ngeche (2012) claim that these employees have high turnover intentions and hence they tend to then render poor service and destroy organisational effectiveness, consequently resulting in many employees employed in the retail sector frequently changing jobs in pursuit of alternative employment and career opportunities (Harry, 2011).

The recent attention given to organisational commitment has centred heavily on career adaptability and retention factors when describing employee commitment to the organisation (Mercurio, 2015). However, in South Africa is there a paucity of studies on organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in one integrated study within the retail sector (Van Dyk, Coetzee, & Tebele, 2013).

1.1.1 Organisational commitment
Lumley (2010) posits that organisational commitment has attracted considerable interest over the past twenty years in attempts to better understand the intensity and the stability of employees' dedication, loyalty and commitment to the organisation. Van der Voet and

Vermeeren (2016) state that organisational commitment has traditionally been widely studied in the organisational and psychological sciences, pointing out its importance in terms of employees' psychological attachment and their relationship with the organisation (Sahoo & Sia, 2015). Some researchers agree that organisational commitment has been studied throughout the years because of its effects on a number of significant positive and negative organisational outputs such as person-organisation fit, high absenteeism and employees' intention to leave the organisation (Khasawneh, Omari, & Abu-Tineh, 2012). Srivastava (2013), however, asserts that organisational commitment has recently gained enormous attention due to organisations being confronted with one of the toughest challenges; that is, having a loyal and committed workforce in order to feature in worldwide economic competition. Research studies hence have started to shift their focus to examining employees' level of commitment toward their organisation and its relationship to various employee-related outcomes such as performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, adaptability, employee retention and actual employee turnover (Dhar, 2015).

Allen and Meyer (1996) define organisational commitment as a psychological condition that binds the employee to the organisation. Organisational commitment can further be defined as a psychological bond between the employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

In this study, the notion of organisational commitment is based on Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of organisational commitment, which includes (1) the psychological state that reveals the level of an individual's commitment and emotional attachment towards the organisation (affective commitment), (2) the pre-existing condition leading to the development of that commitment level (continuance commitment), and (3) the behaviours that are expected to result from this commitment (normative commitment).

Furthermore, many studies that have been conducted in India have revealed that organisational commitment has a direct relationship with trust (Nambudiri, 2012), cultural values (Singh, Bhagat, & Mohanty, 2011), participation satisfaction (Kanwar et al., 2012) and a mediating relationship between HR practices and turnover intentions (Guchait & Choi, 2012). Employees inner work lives, their self-identities, inner career goals, motivations and desires, as well as the characteristics of their jobs, have been shown to influence their attitudes towards their jobs and the organisation (Amabile & Kramer, 2012; Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Hirschi, 2012; Yuan, Lin, Shieh, & Li, 2012). The United States and other countries have now also indicated that there is expected to be shortages of skilled employees and talent gaps in the coming years (Cole & McCullough, 2012) as a result of uncommitted workers.

Recent research conducted in South Africa has found significant positive relationships between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Krüger & Rootman, 2010), as well as work engagement and organisational commitment (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Kuo (2013) found that organisational commitment is normally associated with job characteristics, employee behaviours as well as the socioeconomic environment of the organisation, and also has strong connections to employees' intention to stay with the organisation (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco, & Wayne, 2011). Other researchers regard organisational commitment predominantly as a powerful predictor of employee turnover, because employees' level of commitment depends on how they interpret and make sense of their work context (Chang, Wang, & Huang, 2013; Döckel, 2003; Döckel, Basson, & Coetzee, 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Organisational commitment leads to favourable organisational outcomes, including improved employee and organisational performance and organisational effectiveness and reduces employee turnover (Saif, Nawaz, Jan, & Khan, 2012). Caldarola (2010) asserts that employees who are highly committed to their jobs choose to stay with the employing organisation even if the circumstances are less than ideal. Knapp, Smith, and Sprinkle (2014) further add that these employees experience greater job satisfaction because they are more likely to focus on the positive rather than the negative elements of their working environment.

Tsai and Cheng (2011) state that organisational commitment comprises strong emotional components which include general interests, principles, values, objectives and goals. According to Ahmad and Oranye (2010), employees with high organisational commitment are most likely to identify with the organisational values, objectives and goals, dedicate their efforts to achieving organisational objectives and choose to remain with the organisation (Fisk & Friesen, 2012). Nawab and Bhatti's (2011) research findings suggest that organisational commitment increases employee commitment, which in turn influences employee retention in a positive way.

Research further shows that employees who feel positive about the possibility of career advancement opportunities tend to feel more emotionally attached to the organisation (João, 2010; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). The organisations that offer employees training and development for personal growth and career opportunities by means of career development practices will benefit from ensuring that employees truly recognise how to manage their own career proactively (Coetzee, Bergh, & Schreuder, 2010). It can therefore be concluded that if organisations support their employees with training and development and career advancement opportunities, their employees' will in turn develop feelings of strong emotional attachment, loyalty and commitment toward their organisation (Dhar, 2015).

Srivastava (2013) states that organisations that enhance the organisational commitment of their employees effectively will retain highly skilled, talented and valuable employees. It has therefore become of great importance for contemporary organisations to keep their employees loyal and committed and to retain these skills and competencies (Neininger, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Kauffeld, & Henschel, 2010; Stoltz, 2014). It is thus imperative that organisations, industrial psychologists and human resource practitioners focus on career development support frameworks and retention strategies and practices which will in turn develop organisational commitment, career adaptability and employee retention (Ferreira, Basson, & Coetzee, 2010; Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, & Ferreira, 2011).

1.1.2 Career adaptability

In today's world of globalisation and demographic change, the workplace is becoming increasingly diverse resulting in a greater variety of knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and attitudes, all of which contribute to the organisation's overall performance in what has become a highly competitive global business market (Arnold & Randall, 2010). The volatile economic conditions further create ambiguous job roles and career uncertainty, resulting in career adaptability becoming an increasingly relevant and desirable competency among job seekers and employees in this era (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). This has led to career adaptability becoming a core construct in the field of vocational psychology and in career construction theory (Brown & Lent, 2016).

Career adaptability has been defined by Savickas (1997) as the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changing the work and working conditions. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) recently described career adaptability as the professional duties, traumas, events, situations and transitions that individuals find themselves having to deal with, as well as the psychosocial strategies needed to cope and adapt. Career adaptability has been theorised as a range of attitudes, behaviours and competencies that individuals use in matching themselves to a job that fits them, as well as the ability of an individual to direct career role transitions (Tolentino, Garcia, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2013). Savickas's (2005) career adaptability model offers a blueprint for promoting career adaptability throughout the life-span of an individual. The four global dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) consist of the following: (1) career concern, (2) career control, (3) career curiosity, and (4) career confidence, which are relevant in this study.

Böhmer and Schinnenburg (2016) state that young, skilled and talented employees increasingly develop protean and boundaryless career orientations as the traditional organisational careers' promise of long-term employment and fast progression up the

enterprise hierarchy can no longer be perpetuated (Dries, Van Acker, & Verbruggen, 2012). Therefore, employees' career development has rapidly shifted to become more multifaceted, unstable, cyclical and transitional, and can no longer be viewed as linear or hierarchical (Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes, 2008; Hearne, 2010). Career patterns have, without warning, become increasingly diverse and successful, hence career development is now to a greater extent dependent on employees' initiative and their ability to adapt (Biemann, Zacher, & Feldman, 2012; Hirschi, Hermann, & Keller, 2015). With careers becoming obsolete, the existence of the traditional theories of career development and progression are therefore no longer sufficient (Lo Presti, 2009; Van Vianen, Pater, & Preenen, 2009).

According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), employees with high levels of career adaptability are generally both cognitively and emotionally more ready to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and the unpredictable adjustment prompted by changes in work and working roles. Research by Lent (2013) revealed that employees with high levels of career adaptability generally take a more proactive stance towards managing their personal lives and development and promoting their own careers.

Accordingly, employees with high levels of career adaptability possess greater competence and more psychosocial resources that enable them to adapt to and manage work and career-related demands and changes (Savickas, 2013). Coetzee (2008, 2014) believes that employees' self-esteem is vital in developing and sustaining high levels of career adaptability in this uncertain contemporary workplace. Dany (2014), however, indicates that despite the growing interest in career adaptability more research is needed to understand the intricate relationship between individual career agency and the structures within which the career unfolds. Lent (2013) also suggests more research, theory and practical models on how to help employees to prepare for, to cope with and adapt to critical work-life events, and transitions are needed in order to ensure that the field of career development and counselling remains vital and forward thinking in the 21st century. Chong and Leong (2015) further indicate that employees who lack career adaptability may face the risk of career maladjustment and excessive career stress; they therefore suggest that helping and supporting employees to develop greater career adaptability will enhance their career management process. Hence career counselling is a pivotal turning point in employees' lives as it promotes and supports both resilience and career adaptability (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012).

Zacher and Griffin (2015) highlight that several studies have now shown that career adaptability is positively related to indicators of subjective career success. Empirical studies across cultures have confirmed that employees with higher career adaptability show higher career satisfaction (Zacher, 2014), less work stress (Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch, &

Rossier, 2013) and higher person-environment fit (Guan et al., 2013). De Guzman and Choi (2013) similarly found that career adaptability is positively associated with communication, problem-solving and team work, and that it also relates positively to salary and promotion, career optimism and career satisfaction (Spurk & Volmer, 2013).

Recent studies have further shown that career adaptability and its dimensions relate positively to work and career outcomes, including career and job satisfaction (Chan & Mai, 2015; Zacher, 2014a; Zacher & Griffin, 2015), salary (Guan, Zhou, Ye, Jiang, & Zhou, 2015), job search success (Guan et al., 2013; Koen, Klehe, Van Vianen, Zikic, & Naute, 2010) and others' rating of job performance (Ohme & Zacher, 2015). Duffy (2010) demonstrated that career adaptability is also positively associated with sense of control, self-esteem, social support and a positive association with orientation to happiness (Johnston et al., 2013).

However, research findings by Johnston et al. (2013) highlight a negative relationship between career adaptability and work stress. Researcher Soresi, Nota, and Ferrari (2012) further indicate that career adaptability is negatively related to perceived within-person and external-person career barriers. Research has also shown that career adaptability strongly influences the retention and turnover of employees (Ferreira, Coetzee, & Masenge, 2013; Savickas et al., 2009). It is therefore important for organisations to assist, support, coach and guide employees to outline lifelong career plans for individual career development, as well as to develop and pursue their career goals, whether in a particular job or an organisation (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, & De Pater, 2011), or during career transitions (Latack & Dozier, as cited in Chan & Mai, 2015).

1.1.3 Retention factors

Organisations today are faced with the challenge of attracting and retaining highly talented human capital within these extremely turbulent business environments that compete for critical and scarce skills in times of global skills shortages (Brundage & Koziel, 2010; Chabault, Hulin, & Soparnot, 2012). The retention of these employees also seems to be influenced by psychological attributes that include their ability to adapt to and deal proactively with the changing and uncertain nature of their careers in the contemporary world of work (Ferreira, 2010, 2012; Savickas, 2011; Savickas et al., 2009).

The research literature has shown that given the characteristics of the 21st century contemporary workplace, the retention of employees is becoming increasingly more challenging (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). Moon and Choi (2014), however, state that employee retention factors are important for organisational competitiveness, long-term survival and sustainability.

Kumari and Chauhan (2013) indicate that employee retention can be described as the organisation's effort to keep desirable, high performing, highly skilled and talented employees in order to meet the organisational objectives and goals. Employee retention has be referred to as the organisation's effort to keep in employment those employees with whom the organisation has a positive association, and whereby those employees would only terminate employment with the organisation through voluntary resignation (Mengel, 2001). Browell (2003) states that organisations need to retain their employees especially their talented, highly skilled and valuable employees and together with their human resource managers, develop retention strategies and practices not lose them to the competitors.

There are several factors in the working environment that influence the extent to which employees are motivated to perform their job roles efficiently and effectively and why they remain loyal and committed to the organisation (Michel, Kavanagh, & Tracey, 2012). Döckel (2003) identified six critical factors for retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees, including: (1) compensation, (2) job characteristics, (3) training and development, (4) supervisor support, (5) career development, and (6) work-life balance, which will be relevant in this study. Hence, research into employee retention has increased importance due to global concerns about skills scarcity, an aging workforce, increased career mobility opportunities for knowledgeable and skilled employees, rapidly changing technologies and the need for survival in highly competitive business environments (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala et al., 2012; Samuels & Chipunza, 2009; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

Research has suggested that there are numerous reasons why employees consider leaving their employers, such as inadequate pay and benefits, poor communication and subordinate-supervisor relationships, a negative perception of leadership and culture, an unsatisfactory work environment, a lack of autonomy and decision-making authority, conflict between family and work responsibilities, lack of training and development opportunities as well as lack of career development opportunities and career growth (Gberevbie, 2010; Strothmann & Ohler, 2011). Recent research has highlighted that retention challenges are now related more to employee well-being (Radler & Ryff, 2010; Rothausen & Henderson, 2014). Other factors which have a direct effect on employee retention are the working environment, training and development, career development opportunities and work-life balance (Hassan, Razi, Qamar, Jaffir, & Suhail, 2013).

Bagga (2013) states that for employees to be become loyal and more committed, they must be able to see a clear career path for themselves within the organisation – only then will they stay longer. Bezuidenhout's (2011) research findings indicate that employees must have clear

career aspirations and must therefore be able to recognise the skills and competencies that are required to achieve those career goals. These findings further indicate that employees must be continuously engaged, committed and focused on these skills development activities (Bezuidenhout, 2011). The results of a study by Coetzee, Oosthuizen, and Stoltz (2015) provide evidence that employees who take personal responsibility for their career development and goals and who manage their own action plans experience greater satisfaction with training and development opportunities and career development opportunities. Bhattacharyya (2015) believes that well-managed organisations should develop their specific talent retention strategies and implement policies and practices from the date of hire of new employees; for example, when career development opportunities are used as a tool for talent retention, new hires are briefed on this during their on-boarding so that they can prepare their mind-set for career development and aspirations. Dhar (2015) states that training also helps to develop employee networks and abilities and improve their performance, and in turn helps employees to identify their career objectives and gives them the opportunity to pursue new career goals and paths.

Researchers believe that one of the best ways to retain employees is by providing them with job satisfaction and opportunities for development and advancement in their careers (Laddha, Singh, Gabbad, & Gidwani, 2012). The literature also holds that a clear retention strategy is crucial to retain high performing, talented and valuable employees with scarce and critical skills (Oehley & Theron, 2010). High performing, skilled, talented and valuable employees should therefore be encouraged to stay with the organisation and should remain productive and happy for as long as possible (Strydom, Schultz, & Bezuidenhout, 2014).

Coetzee et al. (2015) reiterate that the global skills shortages require managers, industrial psychologists and human resource practitioners not only to understand the reasons why people leave their organisations, but also the factors that influence turnover and the retention of employees.

The background discussed in the preceding sections leads to the following hypothesis statements:

Ho1: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.
Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Ho2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability do not significantly and positively explain the variance in retention factors.

Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance in retention factors.

Ho3: Differences do not exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

Ha3: Differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In view of the above, this study aims to investigate whether relationships exist between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. This research aims to make recommendations for retention strategies and practices for retaining highly skilled, talented and valuable retail employees in the 21st century workplace, as well as to make a novel and original contribution to the existing knowledge base in the field. It is evident from the theoretical background discussed above that understanding the variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors could ultimately influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

A review of the current literature on organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors indicates the following research problems:

- Theoretical models do not clarify the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in one single study.
- Industrial and organisational psychologists as well as human resource practitioners require knowledge about the nature of both the theoretical and the empirical observed relationship between the variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, because the knowledge that may be gained from the research may potentially bring new insight that could inform organisational retention strategies and practices.
- An empirical investigation of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors and the implications of utilising organisational commitment attributes and career adaptability strategies to enhance retention are not known in full, hence the need for further investigation.

- There seems to be a paucity of research that investigates the career-related psychological preferences, behaviours and attributes that potentially influence employees' organisational commitment and career adaptability and how their demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) contribute to the dynamic interplay between these variables, especially in the South African retail context.

It would seem that research on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors will make a significant contribution to the discipline of Human Resource Management, particularly with regard to retention factors aimed at enhancing employees' commitment to the organisation in a more uncertain employment context. Finally, observed results may be generalised to the retention factors other retailers could use to retain permanent customer service employees.

The problem statement leads to the following general research question and a set of subsequent specific research questions outlined below:

General research question:

To determine whether a significant relationship exists between the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors of permanent customer service employees within the retail sector in the Western Cape, and whether the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

From the above, the following research questions can be formulated in terms of the literature review and empirical study:

1.2.1 Research questions relating to the literature review

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

Research question 1: How are the three constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, conceptualised and explained by the theoretical models in the literature?

Research question 2: Does a theoretical relationship exist between the construct variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors and how can this relationship be explained?

Sub-question 2.1: What is the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors?

Sub-question 2.2: What is the theoretical relationship between career adaptability and retention factors?

Sub-question 2.3: What is the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability?

Sub-question 2.4: Can the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors be explained by means of an integrated theoretical model?

Research question 3: Do the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) influence the theoretical relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors?

Research question 4: What are the implications of the empirical associations for talent retention strategies and practices within retail organisations?

1.2.2 Research questions relating to the empirical study

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

Research question 1: What is the nature and direction of the empirical relationship between the variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in a sample of permanent customer service respondents employed in a retail organisational setting in the Western Cape, and what are the implications of the empirical associations for employee retention strategies and practices?

Research question 2: Do the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explains the variance in retention factors?

Research question 3: Do differences exist in the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors of individuals in terms of their demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) as manifested in the sample of respondents?

Research question 4: What conclusions and recommendations can be formulated for the discipline of Human Resource Management regarding the use of organisational commitment, career adaptability and the development of retention strategies and practices as well as possible future research?

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

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

1.3.1 General aim of the research

The general primary aim of the study is to firstly explore the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors among permanent customer service employees within the retail sector in the Western Cape.

The secondary aims of the study was to investigate (1) whether the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predicted retention factors, and (2) to investigate the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors with specific reference to the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) to see if they differ significantly in relation to these three variables.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the research

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

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

Research aim 1: To conceptualise and explain the three constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, in terms of the theoretical models in the literature.

Research aim 2: To identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models of these constructs.

Sub-aim 2.1: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 2.2: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 2.3: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Sub-aim 2.4: To explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the effect of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Research aim 4: To identify the implications for retention strategies and practices in South African retail organisations.

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

Research aim 1: To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explains the variance in retention factors.

Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

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

1.4 POTENTIAL VALUE ADDED

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors of permanent customer service employees within the retail sector in the Western Cape and the factors that influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation, in order to make recommendations for retention strategies and practices. Organisational commitment will be measured by using the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) as developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). Career adaptability will be measured by using the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) as developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). Retention factors will be measured by using the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) as developed by Döckel (2003).

Tladinyane (2012) indicates that there little theoretical and empirical research has been conducted on the relationship between psychosocial career meta-capacities (career adaptability) and retention-related disposition (organisational commitment), particularly in the South African context. This research study will therefore contribute valuable new knowledge and insight that could be used to inform retention strategies and practices for employees within the retail sector, which may in turn stimulate further research to promote a better understanding of the role of the three constructs described in the retention of employees (Takawira, Coetzee, & Schreuder, 2014).

This research is a starting point for determining a possible relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors within the retail sector in the Western Cape. If significant relationships are found, then the findings will be useful in informing industrial psychologists and human resource practitioners about retention strategies and practices, particularly with regard to retaining highly skilled, talented and valuable employees within the retail sector in South Africa.

Bridgstock (2009) posits that, as the labour market is moving away from job security toward continual task and role change, one may expect that career management skills (the abilities required to proactively steer the working world and successfully manage the process of career building) based on attributes such as lifelong learning and adaptability would be unequivocally included in the employability and generic skills policy debates, and would thus play a prominent role. As a result of globalisation and the mobilisation of employees across boundaries and

organisations, career patterns and career paths have thus now become unpredictable (Hall, 2013; Hess, Jepsen, & Dries, 2012). Employees are therefore now becoming increasingly more responsible for steering their own way in a workplace that does not offer clearly defined career paths (Converse, Pathak, DePaul-Haddock, Gotlib, & Merdebone, 2012).

Maree (2012) also mentions that career adaptability has become essential for employees, who must deal with continuous change and its effects on their lives, negotiate continuous transitions and design successful lives. Del Corso (2013) further posits that retention strategies should therefore focus on helping employees to articulate their employability capacities, which include the transferable skills that go beyond one occupation in order to increase their confidence and self-efficacy in demonstrating their skills, competencies and abilities to manage their own careers.

Organisations that require their employees to develop organisational commitment and career adaptability should provide supportive working environments, which in turn create mutually beneficial environments for both parties (Mclaggan et al., 2013), subsequently resulting in satisfied employees who will be more committed to their organisation, will be more likely to attend work, arrive on time at work and perform well (Rahman & Iqbal, 2013).

It is believed that this study could make a novel and original contribution in terms of the implications it will have on employee retention strategies as well as the influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Moreover, it could also highlight the attributes that should be focused on within the retail sector to improve organisational commitment and career adaptability of employees, thus informing retention strategies and practices for organisations on the whole.

1.4.1 Potential value at a theoretical level

At a theoretical level, this study may prove useful because of the potential relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variable). If significant relationships are found, then the findings should prove useful in the proposal and development of retention strategies and practices within the retail sector as a whole.

Furthermore, exploring the way employees' demographic variables influence the manifestation and development of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors may prove useful in understanding retention in the retail sector context. Research suggests that the inclusion of demographic data is important because person-centred factors such as age,

gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level have an impact on research results (Brown, Bimrose, Barnes, & Hughes, 2012; Coetzee, 2010; João & Coetzee, 2012). In addition, the research results could contribute to the existing body of knowledge relating to the levels of employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation as well as the reasons for their decisions.

1.4.2 Potential value at an empirical level

At an empirical level, the research may contribute to constructing an empirically tested profile that may be used to influence retention strategies and practices. In addition, this study may highlight whether employees from different demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, race, marital status, tenure and job level) differ in terms of their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

If no relationships are found between the variables, then the usefulness of this study will be restricted to the elimination of organisational commitment and career adaptability as predictors of retention factors. Researchers could then focus their energy and efforts on other research studies or avenues that could yield significant proof for solving the problems of how to reduce turnover and improve retention within the retail sector.

In light of the current organisational context, namely, permanent customer service employees within the retail sector, the results may be useful in the retention of highly skilled, talented and valuable employees by identifying differences in terms of demographic information that addresses potential decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation.

1.4.3 Potential value at a practical level

At a practical level, if industrial psychologists and human resource practitioners could develop a better understanding of the constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, which may positively or negatively influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation, then the outcomes will be significant enough to justify the continuation of this study. Positive outcomes from the proposed research could include raising awareness of the fact that employees in the workplace have different organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors and each employee needs to be treated in a manner that is appropriate to him or her in order to promote job and career satisfaction, which will thus influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

Another positive outcome may be the realisation of the way in which employees' organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors may influence their level of commitment and adaptability towards the employing organisation. The importance of mentoring and succession planning in retention strategies and practices may be emphasised and fully realised. Where empirically tested practically significant relationships are found, the findings could prove useful for future researchers in exploring the possibility of overcoming the effects of low commitment and adaptability in attempts to retain highly skilled, talented and valuable employees.

Research on the overall relationship between these constructs is sparse, especially within the organisational working environment of the retail sector in the Western Cape (Consiglio et al., 2013; Ferreira et al., 2010; Ferreira & Coetzee, 2010; Tladinyane, 2012). This is potentially ground-breaking research because to date there is no existing study on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in one single study, especially in an employee retention context.

Furthermore, the research results could contribute to the body of knowledge relating to the psychological factors that influence employee retention in the retail sector organisational context.

1.5 THE RESEARCH MODEL

This study will adopt part of Mouton and Marais's (1996) research model framework, as this model is based on the philosophical conviction that sociological, ontological, teleological, epistemological and methodological dimensions exist (Bryman, 2012).

The five dimensions are aspects of one and the same process, namely research. Of the five components of the model, the sociological dimension conforms to the requirements of sociological research ethics which makes use of the research community for its sources of theory development. The ontological dimension encompasses that which is investigated in reality, whereas the teleological dimension suggests that the research should be systematic and goal directed. The epistemological dimension relates to the quest for truth and the methodological assumptions are beliefs about the nature of social science and scientific research.

The assumption of the research model is that it represents a social process. Scotland (2012) states that social science research is a collaborative human activity in which social reality is studied objectively with the aim of gaining a valid understanding of it. This model is described

as a systems theoretical model with three interrelated subsystems, which also interrelate with the research domain of a specific discipline – in this instance, Industrial and Organisational Psychology. These subsystems represent the intellectual climate, the market of intellectual resources and the research process itself.

1.6 FIELD OF STUDY

The present study will be conducted in the field of Human Resource Management, which is conceptually described as a philosophy of managing people based on the idea that the human resources of an organisation are exclusively imperative to sustaining organisational success (Ferreira, Ismail, & Swanepoel, 2012; Price, 2011). Price (2011) therefore states that an organisation is said to gain and maintain competitive advantage by utilising its human resources (employees) effectively, extracting their expertise and skills in order to meet clearly defined objectives and goals.

Rogers (2012) states that Human Resource Management refers to a process of generating, executing and evaluating policies and practices for obtaining, developing and engaging numerous employees to do the work for the organisation. Kreitner and Cassidy (2011) further state that Human Resource Management places great emphasis on the fact that employees are valuable resources that require meticulous and continuous nurturing.

Human resource practitioners recognises the interdependence of employees, organisations, society and the impact of factors such as increasing government influence, growing customer awareness, skills shortages and the changing nature of the workforce (Landy & Conte, 2004). Landy and Conte (2004) further explain that human resource practitioners also act as scientists who derive certain principles relating to employee, group and organisational behaviour through research, consultants and staff psychologists who are responsible for developing scientific knowledge and applying it to the solution of problems at work, and teachers who train in the research and application of human resource management.

Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) believe that research results will contribute valuable new insight to the body of knowledge relating to organisational commitment, career adaptability and employee retention factors in the South African organisational context. Human resource managers and human resource practitioners should therefore assess their employees' commitment and adaptability with regard to these retention factors in order to improve their human resource practices, in support of attracting, developing and retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). Coetzee, Ferreira, and Potgieter (2015) suggest that human resource and career development practitioners should also ensure that

employees continue to engage in challenging job assignments that draw on their problem-solving, decision-making and teamwork skills, which form part of their on-the-job training and career development. Thematically, industrial psychologists and human resource management practitioners relate to the retention strategies support and the practices of the permanent customer service employees in the retail sector.

1.6.1 Theoretical models

The theoretical beliefs that are described here are testable statements about the "what (prescriptive) and "why" (interpretative) of human behaviour and social phenomena. These include all statements that form part of hypotheses, typologies, models, theories and conceptual descriptions (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Effective theory offers novel insights (it teaches us something new), it is interesting, focused and cohesive, it is grounded in relevant literature, it clearly defines constructs, it is testable, it has practical implications and it is well written (Klein & Zedeck, 2004). The literature review focuses on the organisational commitment model developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the career adaptability model developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) and the retention factors model developed by Döckel (2003).

1.6.2 Conceptual descriptions

Clarke (2005) posits that concepts are used to impose coherent meaning on the world and it is through them that people make sense of reality and perceive coherence and order. The following conceptual descriptions serve as a point of departure for discussions in this research:

1.6.2.1 Organisational commitment

Over the past few decades, extensive research studies have been conducted on organisational commitment, resulting in this topic developing increasing importance in the industrial and organisational psychology literature (Adzeh, 2013; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Chen, Wang, & Sun, 2012; Joo & Park, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 1991, Tladinyane, 2012). However, it has become very difficult to find a balance between employees' commitment to the organisation itself, and their commitment to their personal achievements in their careers (Kim, Kang, Lee, & McLean, 2016).

Meyer and Allen (1997) defined organisational commitment generally as a psychological state that binds an individual to an organisation. Organisational commitment can further be described as a psychological state that reflects a sense of shared values, identity, loyalty, support and pride in employees towards their organisation (Cho & Lewis, 2012). Theorists

Mensah and Adjei (2015) recently described organisational commitment as the emotional and functional attachment to one's place of work.

Based on the various definitions of organisational commitment provided in the literature, organisational commitment is defined for the purpose of this study. This definition reflects Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model, namely: (1) affective commitment, (2) continuance commitment and (3) normative commitment, which will be relevant to this research because it identifies individuals' relationships with the organisation and their decision to continue membership of it.

1.6.2.2 Career adaptability

Career adaptability is a psychological construct that indicates an individual's readiness to cope with current and anticipated occupational development tasks, vocational and personal traumas, as well as the resources they have for such coping (Ferreira, 2012; Maree, 2012; Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas (2005) states that adaptability shapes self-extension into the social environment as individuals connect with society and adjust their own professional behaviour proportionately to the developmental tasks imposed by a community and the transitions they are faced with in their vocational roles. Individuals now possess a careerist orientation whereby they no longer view their current organisation as the key architect of their career, nurturing and growing them from the early stage of work through to retirement by means of effective talent management programmes and succession planning (Crawshaw & Brodbeck, 2011). Zacher (2014a) further states that career adaptability is a psychosocial resource that can help employees achieve, maintain and re-establish person-environment fit and, in turn, career success.

Based on various definitions of career adaptability as provided in the literature, for the purpose of this research, career adaptability is explained by Savickas and Porfeli (2012). The career adaptability model developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) will apply to the current research; this model includes four specific dimensions, namely: (1) career concern, (2) career control, (3) career curiosity, and (4) career confidence.

1.6.2.3 Retention factors

Rothwell (2010) posits that retention refers to the number of employees in an organisation that remain in the employment of the organisation for a given period of time and an organisation's ability to maintain a competent and stable workforce. Retention attributes refer to the existence of a set of generic transferable meta-skills and personal attributes which employers regard as vitally important to their businesses and which employees are therefore expected to possess when entering the workplace (Coetzee, 2012; Griesel & Parker, 2009). There are numerous

retention factors that influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (George, 2015).

For the purpose of the current study, Döckel's (2003) framework of retention factors, which focuses on: (1) compensation, (2) job characteristics, (3) training and development opportunities, (4) supervisor support, (5) career opportunities, and (6) work-life balance will apply to the present study. **Table 1.1** provides a summary of the core constructs (organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors), their underpinning models and the measurement instruments as utilised in this study.

Table 1.1

Summary of the Core Constructs, Theoretical Models and Measuring Instruments of Relevance to the Study

Construct	Core Description	Measuring Instruments	Construct Dimensions	Relevance for Retention strategies for permanent customer service employees in the retail sector
Organisational Commitment	Organisational commitment has been generally defined as a psychological state that binds an individual to an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). More recently organisational commitment has been described as a psychological state that reflects the sense of shared values, identity, loyalty, support and pride that employees feel towards their organisation (Cho, Rutherford, & Park, 2013). Some researchers refer to organisational commitment as an emotional and social construct that indicates perceptions and feeling about individuals self-concepts and self-images which are based on the psychological need for acceptance and belonging within individuals (1) social groups, (2) the desire for	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Meyer & Allen, 1997).	Affective commitment Continuance commitment Normative commitment	There are many ways to enhance organisational commitment in order to enrich jobs and careers, namely: (1) through giving employees more authority (Coe, Zehnder, & Kinlaw, 2008; Greenberg, 2009), (2) by increasing employee involvement in the decision-making process (Gennard & Judge, 2005) and (3) by aligning the interests of the organisation with the interests of the employees (Wellin, 2007). Employees who perceive that their organisation supports skills development, training and development and career development, in order to find better solutions to work-related problems, will feel obligated to display a higher level of dedication and commitment towards their organisation (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton 2012; Teck-Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012). Employees with high levels of organisational commitment seem to have a higher sense of belonging, believe in and have a stronger desire to pursue the organisational values, objectives and goals; they are then more

| | affective and accurate functioning, and (3) competence and achievement in comparison to other members of the group (Coetzee, 2005; Hewitt, 2002; Potgieter, 2012b). | | | willing to devote themselves to offering their best efforts for the organisation's wellbeing and thus will remain within the organisation for longer (Alniacik, Cigerim, Akein, & Bayram, 2011; Yamaguchi, 2013; Yucel & Bektas, 2012). |

| Career Adaptability | Savickas (1997) describes career adaptability as the psychosocial resource that enables employees to cope with career development tasks, transitions and work traumas. Savickas (1997) developed the career adaptability construct on the basis of career construction theory (2005), so as to find a solution to the problems arising from the temporary jobs of post-industrial working conditions (Leong & Ott-Holland, 2014). An extension to the original description of career adaptability highlights that career adaptability resources are self-regulating strengths or capacities that a person may draw upon to solve the unfamiliar, complex and ill-defined problems, presented by developmental vocational tasks, occupational transitions and work traumas (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). | Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) | Career control
Career concern
Career curiosity
Career confidence | Career adaptability is a mechanism through which employees find their ideal work, it has therefore been found that career adaptability inversely relates to work stress and positively with happiness (Johnston et al., 2013). Proactive personality, learning goal orientation and career optimism relate significantly to the four dimensions of career adaptability (Tolentino et al., 2014b). It has been confirmed that certain individual characteristics emerge as central to the development of career adaptability, including personal dimensions that influence how well individuals adjust to working in different work contexts (the degree of control and self-regulation), how flexible they are when faced with change, how proactive they are in looking for challenges and how willing they are to make plans with implications for their future career (Bimrose & Hearne, 2012). |

Retention Factors	Retention factors are those organisational practices that influence the retention or departure of employees and their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (Döckel et al., 2006; Netswera & Rankhumise, 2005). Retention can further be described as the number of employees in an organisation that remain in the employment of the organisation for a given period of time, and it also refers to an organisation's ability to retain a competent and stable labour force (Rothwell, 2010). Other researchers define retention as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation, the extent to which employees are willing to work on its behalf and the likelihood that they will maintain membership of that organisation for a long period (Ezirim, Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2012).	Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) (Döckel, 2003)	Compensation Job characteristics Training and development Supervisor support Career development Work-life balance	Phillips and Gully (2012) believe that workplace flexibility could assist in retaining employees because arrangements such as job sharing, flexitime and telecommuting should help employees to balance their work and home lives well. Other researchers highlight that the best way to retain employees is by providing them with job satisfaction, training and development, opportunities for career advancement (Laddha et al., 2012), as well as compensation, which acts as a good motivator to attract and retain skilled and talented people (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). There is a great need for interdependency between the organisation and the employees, and that the organisation need for success and sustainability are achieved through addressing employees' career satisfaction and by creating balancing need with employees' career goals (Fleisher, Khapova, & Jansen, 2014).

1.6.3 Market of intellectual resources

Salkind (2012) states that the market of intellectual resources refers to the collection of beliefs that have a direct bearing on the epistemological states of scientific statements. For the purpose of this study, the theoretical models, meta-theoretical statements, conceptual descriptions of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, the central hypothesis as well as theoretical and methodological assumptions will be described in this section.

1.6.4 Meta-theoretical statements

Meta-theoretical statements represent an important category of assumptions underlying the theories, models and paradigms of a specific study (Salkind, 2012). In the disciplinary context, this study focuses on Human Resource Management as a field of application (Salkind, 2012).

Human Resource Management may be viewed in many ways, one of which focuses on its epistemological premises and the scientific status of these premises. According to Van Vuuren (2010) the scientist component indicates the use of rigorous scientific methodology. The epistemology of scientific knowledge in the discipline is intended to understand and predict and then either change or influence work-related behaviour.

Thematically, this research will provide an understanding of behaviour in the retail sector organisational setting by applying the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Van Vuuren (2010) states that both industrial psychologists and human resource practitioners are scientists, who derive principles of individual, group and organisational behaviour through research.

1.7 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical research is presented from the research paradigm. In the positivist research paradigm, researchers tend to separate themselves from the world of study, while researchers within other paradigms acknowledge that they have to participate in the real world, to some extent, in order to understand and express its developing properties and characteristics better (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Terre Blanche et al. (2006) further posit that the positivist approach is more objective and aims to describe the laws that govern society. The approach thus involves empirically testing and verifying hypotheses and theories by using instruments that have been validated and are reliable.

According to Morgan (1980) the main assumptions of the positivism paradigm are as follows:

- The positivist research perspective is primarily regulative and pragmatic in its basic orientation.
- It is concerned with understanding society in a way that generates useful empirical knowledge.
- Society has a concrete real existence and a systematic character oriented to produce an ordered and regulated state of affairs.
- It encourages an approach to social theory that focuses on understanding the role of human beings in society.
- Behaviour is always seen as being contextually bound in real-world, concrete and tangible social relationships.

Positivism can be viewed as the existence of a straightforward relationship between the world (objects, events and phenomena), our perception and our understanding of it. The positivists maintain that it is probable that one may describe what is "out there" and get it right. Such a position is also referred to as the "correspondence theory of truth" because it suggests that phenomena directly determine one's perception of them – hence the existence of a direct connection between things and their representation.

Frederick (2009) explains positivism by indicating that the outside world itself decides completely on what the one and only truthful view is that can be taken from the situation, independent of development or conditions. A positivist epistemology implies that the aim of research is to generate objective knowledge; that is, understanding that is fair and unprejudiced, based on a view from the outside, without personal involvement or vested interests on the part of the researcher.

Using the above explanations of the two paradigms and taking into account the validity of the study, it was therefore concluded that a post-positivist framework would be most appropriate for this study.

1.8 CENTRAL HYPOTHESIS

This study will endeavour to prove the following:

A relationship exists between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. This hypothesis further assumes that individuals with different levels of organisational commitment will display different levels of career adaptability and retention factors. Also,

individuals with different demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, race, tenure and job level) will display different levels of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Organisational commitment and career adaptability attributes significantly influence retention factors. Therefore, different levels of organisational commitment and career adaptability will indicate different levels of retention factors. This hypothesis also assumes that employees that display different demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, race, tenure and job level) will display different levels of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.9 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the literature review, this study addresses the following theoretical assumptions:

- There is a need for basic research that seeks to isolate the psychological career meta-competencies (career adaptability) relating to an employee's retention-related disposition (organisational commitment).
- Environmental demographic variables and psychological factors such as age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level, and employees' range of psychological career meta-competencies, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors will influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.
- The three constructs (organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors) are multidimensional and can be explained by factors such as age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level.
- Knowledge of employees' psychological career meta-competencies (organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors) as well as the level of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors will enhance the understanding of the factors that may potentially inform retention strategies.

1.10 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

According to Hammersley (2012), methodological assumptions are beliefs that concern the nature of social science and scientific research. Scotland (2012) indicates that these methodological beliefs are more than methodological preferences, assumptions and presuppositions about what ought to constitute proper research. There is a direct link between methodological beliefs and the epistemological status of research findings (Salkind, 2012).

Accordingly, the following main epistemological assumptions are the methodological assumptions that affect the nature and structure of the research domain. These relate to the methodological choices, assumptions and suppositions that make for sound research. In the following section, the methodological dimensions are discussed according to their relevance to the proposed study.

1.10.1 Sociological dimension

According to Salkind (2012) and Scotland (2012) the sociological dimension explains scientific research as a joint collaborative activity. These researchers further explain that the sociological dimension conforms to the requirements of sociological research ethics as it makes use of the research community for its sources of theory development, which is viewed as a joint or collaborative activity.

In terms of the philosophy of the sociological dimension, research is experimental or non-experimental, analytical and exact, since the issues that are studied are subject to quantitative research analysis of variables and concepts (Hammersley, 2012). This study will be non-experimental in nature and will focus on the quantitative analysis of variables and concepts that will be described in Chapter 4 (research methodology) and Chapter 5 (research results).

1.10.2 Ontological dimension

Hammersley (2012) states that researchers who use the ontological dimension are objective, subjective and pragmatic. The ontological dimension of research encompasses the study of being or reality (Scotland, 2012). Reality is referred to as the domain of social science research, which encompasses human activities and institutions whose behaviour can be measured. This research study measured the properties of the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.10.3 Teleological dimension

In the teleological dimension the research should be systematic in nature and also goal-orientated (Hammersley, 2012). Scotland (2012) further explains that the teleological dimension is the practice of science. Research goals refer to the immediate goal of a given research project, the different types of goals, and the relationships between goals and the ideals of social science (Scotland, 2012). The research goal in this research is explicit, namely, the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Furthermore, in practical terms, the teleological dimension looks to furthering the fields of Industrial and Organisational Psychology and Human Resource Management by providing them with knowledge that will enable retail organisations to retain permanent customer service employees.

1.10.4 Epistemological dimension

The epistemological dimension is concerned with the theory of knowledge which seeks to inform researchers about how they can know the world (Lees, 2012). The epistemic dimension may be regarded as the embodiment of the ideal of science, namely, the quest for truth.

The primary aim of research in the social sciences is to generate valid findings that approximate reality as closely as possible (Mouton & Marais, 1996). This research attempts to achieve the truth by utilising a well-structured research design and the achievement of reliable and valid results.

1.10.5 Methodological dimension

Methodological assumptions in the social sciences are related to research that may be regarded as objective by virtue of it being critical, balanced, unbiased, systematic and controllable (Salkind, 2012; Scotland, 2012). The methodological dimension entails beliefs concerning the nature of social science and scientific research (Hammersley, 2012).

According to Salkind (2012), the methodological dimension of research involves the theory of correct scientific decisions. The aim of the methodology dimension is to develop a more critical orientation on the part of the researcher by eliminating obviously incorrect decisions and in doing so, maximise the validity of the research findings (Salkind, 2012).

This study will present quantitative (exploratory, descriptive and explanatory) research, which will be presented in the form of a literature review and empirical study on organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.11 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kumar (2014) explains that a research design is a procedural plan that the researcher implements in order to respond to questions in a valid, objective, accurate and economical manner. Research design is defined as the arrangement of conditions for the collection and

analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose (Salkind, 2012).

Gorard (2013) states that research design is a means of organising a research project from the very beginning to allow the researcher the opportunity to capitalise on the chances of generating evidence that provides an influential answer to the research question for a given level of resource. The research design used in this study will be discussed with reference to the types of research conducted, followed by a discussion on validity and reliability.

1.11.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory research can be referred to as the exploration of a relatively unknown research field (Salkind, 2012). Kumar (2014) then explains that exploratory research takes place when not much is known about the research topic and the researcher merely wants to explore or investigate the topic area by gathering basic data. Grinnell and Unrau (2005) further explain that it involves asking very specific and complex research questions, also known as causality questions, based on existing substantial knowledge in the research topic area.

Mouton and Marais (1996) state that the main aims of exploratory research are to gain new insights, to undertake preliminary investigation, establish central concepts and constructs and then to determine priorities for future research. This research is exploratory in that it seeks to compare different theoretical perspectives on organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.11.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research, according to Salkind (2012), refers to an in-depth description of the individual, situation, group, organisation, tribe, culture, sub-culture, interactions or social objects. Its purpose is to systematically classify the relationship between variables in the research domain. Kumar (2014) states that the main aim of a descriptive study is to describe what is prevalent in terms of the issue or problem underlying the study; hence, the overriding aim is to describe issues as accurately as possible.

In the literature review, descriptive research is applicable with reference to the conceptualisation of the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. In the empirical study, descriptive research is applicable to means, the frequencies, standard deviations and Cronbach's alphas (internal consistency reliabilities) of the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

1.11.3 Explanatory research

The main emphasis of explanatory research is to clarify how and why a relationship exists between two aspects of a situation or phenomenon (Kumar, 2014). Salkind (2012) states that explanatory research goes further than merely indicating that there is a relationship between the variables; it also indicates the direction of the relationship in a causal relationship model.

However, due to the cross-sectional design of the research model, the focus will not be on establishing a cause–effect relationship. The researcher seeks to explain the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationship. This form of research will be applied in the empirical study of the relationship between the organisational commitment scores, career adaptability scores and retention factor scores of a group of subjects.

The end goal of the research is to formulate conclusions about the relationship between the constructs organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. This research thus meets the requirements for explanatory research as discussed above.

1.11.4 Validity

Salkind (2012) posits that research design is synonymous with rational decision-making during the research process and, irrespective of how structured or unstructured a research project is likely to be, it is the duty of the researcher to ascertain which factors may pose a threat to the validity of the findings. Kumar (2014) clearly states that research is only valid when it measures what it is supposed to measure and when it determines the extent to which an instrument fulfils the purpose for which it was intended (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda, & Nel, 2010).

Kumar (2014) further mentions that one of the main objectives of a research design is to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables with a high degree of certainty, accuracy, objectivity and validity. Should the research design achieve this objective, it will then be regarded as valid. Gregory (2011) describes validity as the extent to which a construct or test measures what it is intended to measure and that research should be both internally and externally valid.

Internal validity, according the Salkind (2012), refers to the study generating accurate and valid findings on a specific phenomenon; therefore for research to be internally valid the constructs must be measured in a valid manner and the data measured must be accurate and reliable.

Borden and Abbott (2014) explain that external validity is the extent to which the results of the research study can be generalised to other groups. Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) explain that external validity refers to a further stage in the research process, that is, that the findings of a given project are generalisable to all similar cases. In other words, the findings have a greater validity than merely the project in which they are generalised. External validity is also associated with the sampling procedure used, the time and place of the research and the conditions under which the research will be conducted (Salkind, 2012).

Salkind (2012) posits that for research to be internally valid the constructs must be measured in a valid manner and the data measured must be accurate and reliable. Moreover, the analysis should be relevant to the type of data collected and the final solutions must be adequately supported by the data. Internal validity also refers to whether variations in the dependent variables can be attributed to the independent variables and not to extraneous or confounding variables related to, for example, maturation, history, testing or instrumentation (Salkind, 2012).

1.11.4.1 Validity in terms of the literature review

The validity of the literature review will be ensured by literature that is relevant to the research topic, problem statement and aims of the study. In addition, this study will attempt to make use of recent literature from empirical sources in order to ensure that the literature is valid. However, other classical and contemporary mainstream research may be referred to when it is relevant to the conceptualisation of the variables under investigation in this study.

1.11.4.2 Validity in terms of the empirical study

In the empirical study, validity will be ensured through the use of appropriate and standardised measuring instruments. The measuring instruments used in this study will be critically examined for their criterion-related validity, in order to ensure the accurate predictions of scores on the relevant criterion, as well as content validity and construct validity (the extent to which the measuring instruments measure the theoretically constructs they purport to measure) (Bordens & Abbott, 2014; Coetzee & Schreuder, 2011; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2011).

As large a sample as possible is chosen to off-set the effect of extraneous variables. The questionnaire will also include standard instructions and information to all participants. The statistical procedures will also control the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level). The instruments will be tested for construct validity and reliability.

Internal validity will further be ensured by minimising selection bias (targeting the total population of permanent customer service employees in the retail sector in the Western Cape).

External validity will be ensured by the results being relevant only to permanent customer service employees within the retail sector. Targeting the total population of the national retail sector in the Western Cape will help to increase the generalisability of the results to the target population. The research will be cross-sectional in nature and non-probability sampling will be used. Standard instructions will be provided to all participants.

1.11.5 Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of a measure to generate consistent results every time that it is applied (Monnette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2014). Wilson (2014) further states that reliability is the degree to which measures yield consistent results and are free from error. In this research, confounding variables will be minimised through sampling procedure and by including instruments of which the reliability has been proven through previous research.

Reliability is the requirement that the application of valid measuring instruments to different individuals and groups under different sets of circumstances will yield results with the same conclusion (Salkind, 2012). Two important aspects that are related to reliability are repeatability and internal consistency.

1.11.5.1 Reliability in terms of the literature review

Wilson (2014) states that reliability refers to the notion that different research participants being tested by the same instrument at different times should respond identically to the instrument. Reliability in the literature will therefore be addressed by using the existing literature sources, theories and models that are available to researchers (Salkind, 2012; Wilson, 2014).The reliability of the literature review is ensured when other interested academics have access to the literature sources and the theoretical views in the literature.

1.11.5.2 Reliability in terms of the empirical study

The reliability of the empirical research is ensured when a truly representative sample is used. It is not possible in an empirical study to test the participants twice in order to confirm test-retest reliability. Therefore, the data that are gathered will be used to confirm consistency. In line with Wilson's (2014) recommendation, inter-item correlation will be performed in order to

determine the reliability of the terms contained on the questionnaires and improve the overall reliability of the research.

1.11.6 Unit of analysis

Babbie (2013) states that the unit of analysis refers to the objects or things that are being researched in order to formulate generalisations about these objects or things and to further explain the differences among them. Babbie (2012) further describes a unit of analysis as the people or things and the characteristics that social researchers observe, describe and explain.

Units of analysis may be divided into four major categories: individuals, groups, organisations and social artefacts (Mouton & Marais, 1996). In terms of individual measurement, the unit of analysis in this study is the individual.

The purpose of this study is to determine the nature, direction and magnitude of a relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in the individual. Babbie (2013) indicates that when the individual is the unit of analysis, the focus is generally on sub-groups - testing differences between person-centred characteristics, which include the demographic variables (age, gender, race, and marital status, tenure and job level).

1.11.7 Research variables

The aims of this research are to measure the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the two independent variables (organisational commitment and career adaptability) in relation to one dependent variable (retention factors). The research will also measure the overall relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability (as independent variables) and retention factors (as dependent variables).

According to Salkind (2012), the distinction between the independent and dependent variables resides in the basic cause-and-effect relationship between specific events or phenomena. However, due to the cross-sectional nature of the research, the focus will not be on establishing cause and effect, but rather on establishing the nature, direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables.

In this study, in order to determine the relationship between the independent variables organisational commitment and career adaptability, and the dependent variable retention factors, the criterion data of the latent variables and the dependent variable will be collected by means of standardised measuring instruments selected for the purpose of this research. In

this study the data will therefore be gathered by means of the following measuring instruments: the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ, Meyer & Allen, 1997), the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS, Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS, Döckel, 2003). The biographical information (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) will be considered as centred variables moderating the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

The research is interested in:

- measuring the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- measuring the relationship between organisational commitment (independent variable) and career adaptability (independent variable)
- measuring the relationship between organisational commitment (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- measuring the relationship between career adaptability (independent variable) and retention factors (dependent variable)
- measuring the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) in terms of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability (independent variables) and retention factors (dependent variable).

Figure 1.1 below provides a diagrammatic representation of the aforementioned relationship between the variables of the study.
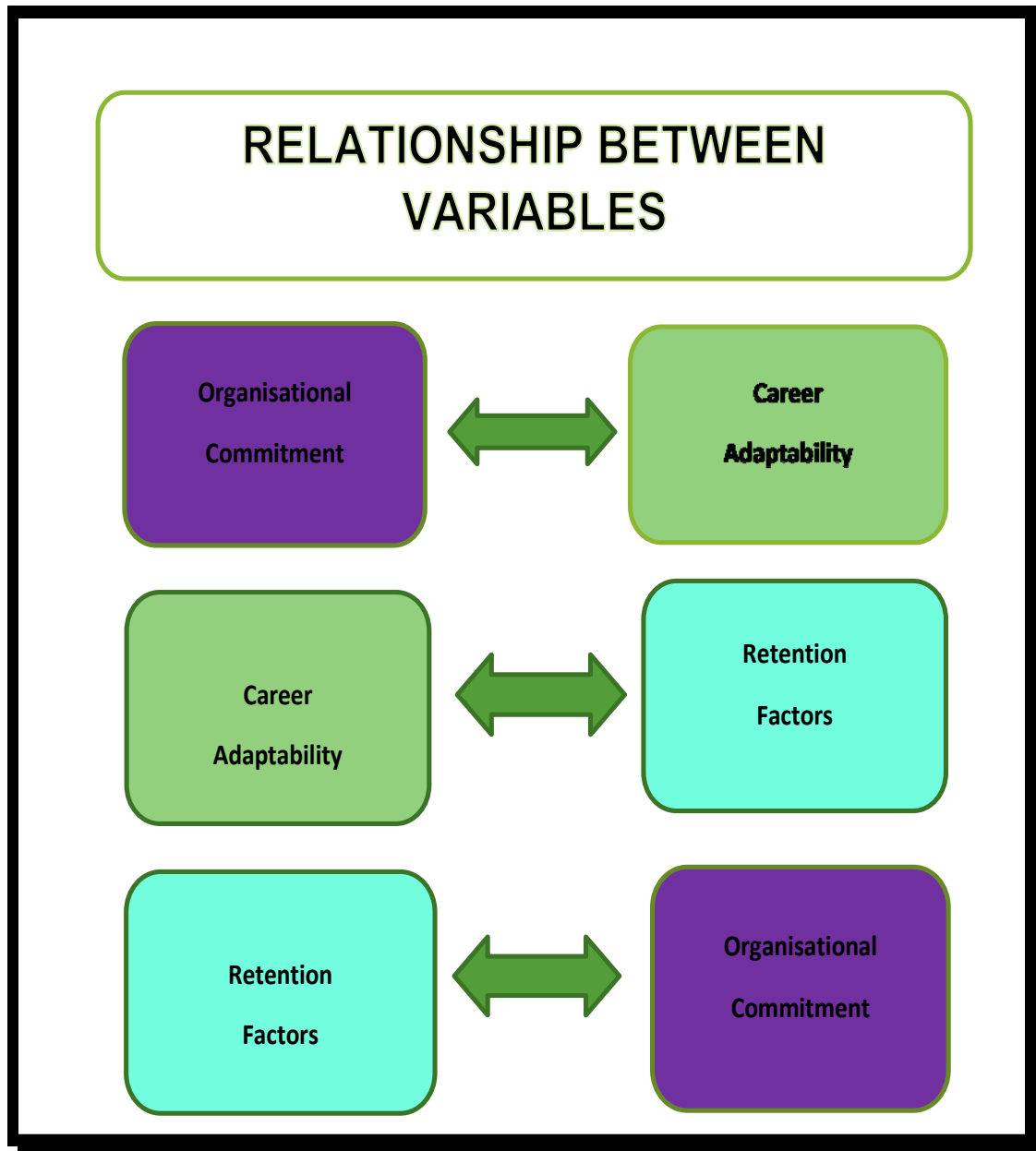
Figure 1.1. Relationship between the Variables

1.11.8 Delimitations

The study is confined to research dealing with the relationship between three core constructs, namely, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, each consisting of a set of variables. The organisational commitment construct comprises the variables of affective, normative and continuance commitment. The career adaptability construct comprises the variables of career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. The retention factors construct comprises the variables of compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career

opportunities and work-life balance. In an attempt to transverse factors that could influence an employee's organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, the variables used as control variables were limited to age, gender, marital status, race, tenure and job level.

No attempt has been made to manipulate or classify any of the information, results or data on the basis of family or spiritual background. Factors relating to disability or illness, physical or psychological, have not been included in any classification process either.

The study is intended as a ground research project that restricts its focus to the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. If such a relationship can be identified, the groundwork information could be useful for future researchers to address other issues relating to the three constructs (organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors). The selected research approach is not intended to establish the cause-and-effect of the relationship, but merely to endeavour to investigate whether such a relationship does in fact exist and whether the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors is influenced by demographic variables such as age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level.

1.11.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Babbie (2013) defines research ethics as the minimum standards of moral principles that guide the behaviour of researchers. Ethics is further defined as a set of moral principles which refers to the quality of research procedures with regard to adherence to professional, legal and social obligations to the research participants (De Vos et al., 2011). The procedures that are followed in the proposed research adhere to all the ethical requirements that are necessary to ensure ethical responsibility.

To ensure that the researcher meets the ethical requirements, the following ethical principles were adhered to (De Vos et al., 2011):

- Research was conducted within recognised parameters.
- Approval was obtained from the host institution.
- Permission was obtained from the research ethics committee of the particular organisation.
- Both classical and recent resources were used to analyse and describe the concepts.
- Experts in the field of research were consulted to ensure a scientific research process.
- All sources were cited.
- An informed agreement was entered into with the participants.
- All participants remained anonymous

- Information and feedback obtained from participants were kept totally confidential.
- All participation in this study was completely voluntarily.
- Participants were informed about the results of the research.
- Access to appropriate information on the research was provided by reporting the research process and findings in the form of a thesis.

1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted in two phases, each comprising different steps, which will be discussed in the section below. **Figure 1.2** provides an overview of the different phases.

PHASE 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

STEP 1:

Conceptualisation and explain the constructs organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models

STEP 2:

Identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models

STEP 3:

Explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model

STEP 4:

Conceptualisation effect of demographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors

PHASE 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY

STEP 1:
Psychometric Battery

STEP 2:
Population & Sample

STEP 3:
Administration of psychometric battery

STEP 4:
Data capturing

STEP 5:
Research hypotheses formulation

STEP 6:
Statistical processing of data

STEP 7:
Reporting and Interpreting results

STEP 8:
Integration of research

STEP 9:
Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

Figure 1.2. Overview of the research methodology

1.12.1 Phase 1: the literature review

The reviewing of literature provides the theoretical background, the findings of previous studies and the way these relate to the research objectives as well as the incorporation of the research to the existing body of knowledge (Kumar, 2014).

The literature review consists of a review of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in order to achieve the research aims proposed from a theoretical perspective.

Step 1: Addresses research aim 1 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise and explain the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models.

Research in the field of career psychology relating to the constructs organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors is critically evaluated. Based on the conceptualisations of these constructs, conceptual models are designed to illustrate the principles and concepts discussed in the literature. Finally, the implications for industrial and organisational psychology practices and human resource management practices pertaining to employee retention strategies and practices are discussed.

Step 2: Addresses research aim 2 of the literature review, namely, to identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models of these constructs.

This step related to the theoretical relationship between the constructs organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Step 3: Addresses research aim 3 of the literature review, namely, to explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

This step is related to the integration of the theoretical relationship between the construct organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Step 4: Addresses research aim 4 of the literature review, namely, to conceptualise the effect of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Research relating to the effect of demographic variables on the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors and thus the relationship between these three constructs are discussed.

1.12.2 Phase 2: the empirical study

Salkind (2012) posits that the advantages of a survey design are its cost-effectiveness and the large number of respondents that can be surveyed. The empirical study was conducted in a South African organisational context, and followed the steps below:

Step 1: Choosing and motivating the psychometric battery

The measuring instruments that measure the dependent variable (retention factors) and the two independent variables (organisational commitment and career adaptability) are discussed. This is accomplished in Chapter 4.

Step 2: Determination and description of the population and the sample

The population is identified and the sample is described. This is accomplished in Chapter 4.

Step 3: Administration of the psychometric battery

In this step the process used to collect data will be considered.

Step 4: Capturing the criterion data

This step discusses how the data will be captured and analysed. The responses of the subjects to each of the items of the four questionnaires are captured on an electronic database, which is then converted to SPSS 24 (Statistical Software Packages) and Statistical data files.

Step 5: Formulation of the research hypotheses

Research hypotheses are formulated from the central hypothesis to be empirically tested, in order to achieve the objective of the study. This is accomplished in Chapter 4.

Step 6: Statistical processing of the data

The statistical procedure relevant to this research includes descriptive statistical analysis (internal consistency and reliability, means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis and frequency data); correlational analysis (Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients); and inferential statistics (stepwise hierarchical regression analysis, hierarchical moderated regression analysis and test for significant mean differences). This is accomplished in Chapter 5.

Step 7: Reporting and interpreting the results

The results are presented in tables, diagrams and/or graphs and a discussion of the findings is presented by using a systematic framework in order to ensure that the interpretation of the findings is conveyed clearly and articulately. This is accomplished in Chapter 5.

Step 8: Integration of the research findings

The findings relating to the literature review are integrated with the findings of the empirical study thus combining the overall findings of the research. This is accomplished in Chapter 5.

Step 9: Formulation of research conclusions, limitations and recommendations

The final step relates to conclusions based on the results and their integration with the theory. The limitations of the research are discussed, and recommendations are made in terms of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as constructs used to inform effective retention strategies and practices. This is accomplished in Chapter 6.

1.13 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapters in this study include:

Chapter 1: Scientific overview of the research

Chapter 2: Literature review of organisational commitment and career adaptability

Chapter 3: Literature review of retention factors and the theoretical integration of the constructs organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 5: Research results

Chapter 6: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the background to and motivation for the research, the problem statement and the aims of the study, the potential value that this study will add, the research model, field of study, the theoretical research and its design and methodology, the central hypothesis and the research method were discussed. The rationale for the study is the fact that no known research has been conducted on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in the context of the retention of skilled, talented and valuable employees in the retail sector in the Western Cape. This research attempts to critically evaluate and, on the basis of sound research methodology, investigate the relationship between

organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors to be able to make suggestions for retention strategies and practices.

Chapter 2 comprises of an in-depth literature review of two of the constructs, namely, organisational commitment and career adaptability.

CHAPTER 2: ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY

Chapter 2 conceptualises the two constructs organisational commitment and career adaptability. The theoretical relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability in influencing employees' retention is explained, followed by the variables influencing these constructs. In conclusion, the practical implications for talent retention as well as the integration of organisational commitment and career adaptability are explained.

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

This section conceptualises organisational commitment and provides an overview of O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model, Etzioni's (1961) model and Meyer and Allen's (1997) commitment model. This section concludes with a discussion of the variables influencing organisational commitment and its implications for talent retention.

2.1.1 Theoretical background to organisational commitment

The term "organisational commitment" has attracted considerable interest from researchers who attempt to understand employees' dedication, loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Lumley, 2009; Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Organisational commitment has been studied extensively over the past few decades, thus becoming a topic of increasing significance in the literature of industrial and organisational psychology (Adzeh, 2013; Allen, & Meyer, 1990; Chen et al., 2012; Cohen, 2003; Joo & Park, 2010; Manetje & Martins, 2009; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991, Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Somers, 2009; Tladinyane, 2012). The continuous interest in the concept has been due to the relationships between organisational commitment and employee behaviour which include job satisfaction (Farris, 2012; Lumley et al., 2011; Singh et al., 2011), productivity and performance (Jaros, 1997; Suliman & Iles, 2000) and turnover intention (Chang et al., 2013; Farris, 2012; Lew, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Suliman & Iles, 2000). These factors, which influence employee loyalty and commitment to the organisation and their motivation to remain with the organisation, have thus been studied extensively (Ineson et al., 2013).

Dhar (2015) also agrees that large numbers of studies have tested the commitment level of employees towards their organisation and its relationship with various work-related outcomes, such as performance, organisational objectives and goal attainment, as well as actual turnover. Organisational commitment is a critical factor for achieving organisational objectives and goals (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012) which in turn lead to favourable organisational outcomes, such as

improved performance, organisational effectiveness, decreased absenteeism and employee turnover (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Saif et al., 2012). It can thus be concluded that organisational commitment is the fundamental determinant of turnover and employee retention due to its sensitivity to the elements surrounding the working environment (Chang et al., 2013; Döckel et al., 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

2.1.2 Conceptualisation of organisational commitment

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) state that the concept of organisational commitment has resulted in various definitions and measures being formulated over the years, with some researchers agreeing that a common thread in organisational commitment is the psychological connection between the organisation and the employee (Ferreira et al., 2010). Roodt (2004) confirms this golden thread in all of these conceptualisations and measures and concludes that organisational commitment is the connection to the organisation, with particular focus to the potential of fulfilling significant needs (Martin & Roodt, 2008). However, Mercurio (2015) proposes a core essence of organisational commitment, through a narrower and more assessable definition of the term, which may assist researchers and practitioners in continuing important empirical research to design effective interventions for developing and managing organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment was originally conceptualised in the literature by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) as (1) a strong connection, recognition and acceptance of the values and goals of the organisation, (2) the willingness to apply considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and (3) a desire to continue organisational membership, which measured employees' connection and devotion to the organisation (Luthans, 2010). Meyer and Allen (1997), however, viewed organisational commitment as a psychological association that employees have with their organisation, characterised by an identification with the organisation and having a strong longing to contribute to the accomplishment of organisational objectives and goals. Organisational commitment can be perceived as a sense of belonging, involvement in and an emotional attachment to the organisation (Meyer, Morini, & Vandenberghe, 2015). Coombs (2009) states that organisational commitment is the extent to which an employee experiences a sense of oneness with the organisation and an employee's level of commitment to remain with an organisation.

Dhladhla (2011) posits that even though the majority of researchers identify organisational commitment as an attitude, some refer to organisational commitment as an emotional bond that forms a connection between employees and their organisation. Johnson (2015) confirms that research on organisational psychology has long ago demonstrated that the attitudinal construct of organisational commitment is correlated with several desirable employee outcomes.

Consensus has now been reached that organisational commitment is referred to as employees' attitude implicit in a stable mind-set towards their organisation (Chiu & Ng, 2013; Judeh, 2011; Lumley et al., 2011; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Obi-Nwosu, Chaimaka, & Tochukwu, 2013). While identifying attitudes with respect to employees within the organisation, Sahoo and Sia (2015) believe that organisational commitment is an important aspect in terms of employees' psychological attachment and their relationship with the organisation.

Organisational commitment is a process whereby an individual creates an active relationship with the organisation and is involved in and willing to invest him or herself in the organisation in order to contribute positively to its objectives, goals and wellbeing (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013). Passarelli (2011) described organisational commitment as a complex concept that encompasses the involvement of employees in organisational activities, identification with organisational beliefs and values, as well as hard work, as it reflect the dependability and commitment of employees. Organisational commitment further refers to employees' emotional state that reflects a sense of identity, shared beliefs and values and their commitment towards the organisation (Cho & Lewis, 2012).

Theorists refer to organisational commitment as the connection employees have with the whole organisation (Murtaza, Shad, Shahzad, Shah, & Khan, 2011). Zeffane and Al Zarooni (2012) refer to organisational commitment as employees' loyalty and their commitment to remain with the organisation on the basis of a sense of obligation, which extends beyond the personal interests of employment. Greenberg and Baron (2010) agree that organisational commitment is the employees' connection with the organisation; he or she is linked with a high level of motivation to share and make sacrifices on behalf of the organisation, because organisations require employees who are prepared to go beyond the call of duty and participate in extra-role behaviours for long-term survival and success (Coetzee & Botha, 2012).

Researchers have come to some conclusions on a number of themes for a definition of organisational commitment: (1) employees with higher levels of organisational commitment have greater sense of acceptance and belonging to, (2) they have a greater sense of trust and believe in organisational values, objectives and goals, (3) they have a strong willingness to retain their membership and dedicating and (4) are committing themselves to offer their best efforts for overall organisational success (Alniacik et al., 2011; Yamaguchi, 2012; Yucel & Bektas, 2012).

Researchers emphasise the importance of studying employees' commitment to the organisation because of its influence on the prospering performance and success of organisations (Chovwen, 2012; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Lumley, 2009; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Nurittamont, 2012) and that loyal and committed employees are deemed to be precious resources for the

organisation (Bothma & Roodt, 2012; Ncube & Jerie, 2012; Nurittamont, 2012). Organisations should thus persist to place attention on human resource initiatives that will improve the engagement, satisfaction, loyalty and commitment of their employees (Ncube & Jerie, 2012; Takase, Nakayoshi, & Teraoka, 2012; Vuori, Toppinen-Tanner, & Mutanen, 2012). Igbal and Hashmi (2015) are of the opinion that organisations cannot survive and compete in the global market without competent, skilled, loyal and committed employees.

Mensah and Adjei (2015) posit that highly committed employees have higher productivity, have greater loyalty and are eager to accept more responsibility, which will lead to the attainment of overall organisational objectives and goals, and ultimately result in success. This suggests that those employees who have a sturdy association with an organisation, with higher commitment levels, will be more motivated and inspired to achieve organisational objectives and goals without looking for opportunities for any personal gain (Dhar, 2015). It can then be believed that employees who feel part of an organisation agree to the targets stipulated by management and perform their duties and responsibilities with sincerity, unlike employees who stay with the organisation under obligation (Malhotra, Mavondo, Mukherjee, & Hooley, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, the following definition of organisational commitment as developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) was adopted: Organisational commitment can be defined as an emotional bond between the employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely that the employee will intentionally leave the organisation.

The concept of organisational commitment was conceptualised in this section. A number of theoretical models and theories will now be discussed.

2.1.3 Theoretical models of organisational commitment

For the purpose of this research, the models that have generated the most research and will best explain commitment in terms of organisational performance are those of (1) O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), (2) Etzioni (1961) and (3) Meyer and Allen (1997).

2.1.3.1 O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) commitment model

In their commitment model, as discussed in Johnson, Chang, and Yang (2010), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) developed their multidimensional framework on the basis of Kelman's (1958) work on attitude and behaviour transformation. Kelman (1958) distinguished between three different processes, namely: (1) compliance, (2) identification and (3) internalisation.

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) define commitment as the psychological attachment an employee feels for a particular organisation. Other researchers agree with O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) definition: Ezirim et al. (2012) refer to organisational commitment as the relative strength of employees' identification with, involvement and participation in an organisation, the extent to which employees are prepared to work on its behalf, and the likelihood that they will continue their association with that organisation. Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova (2012) then describe organisational commitment as an emotional mind-set that connects individuals to the organisation.

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model postulates that commitment represents employees' attitude towards the organisation and that there are numerous mechanisms through which attitudes can develop. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggest that this psychological attachment to the organisation can reflect varying combinations of three distinct forms. According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), discussed in Johnson et al. (2010), this commitment develops through several stages, namely, (1) compliance, (2) identification and (3) internalisation.

2.1.3.1.1 Compliance
According to O'Reilly (1989), during the first stage compliance focuses on the employee accepting the impact of others generally to gain something from them through compensation or promotion. At this stage employees actually want to stay in the organisation because of the benefits and rewards they receive (Beck & Wilson, 2000), as well as the cost associated with leaving (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). Meyer and Allen (1997) posit that organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the continuance elements of commitment, therefore potential benefits include attractive compensation packages, non-transferable skills and seniority-based privileges (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). Apart from the costs associated with leaving the organisation, a lack of alternative employment opportunities also needs to be considered by the employee (Coetzee & Botha, 2012).

2.1.3.1.2 Identification
During the second stage according to O'Reilly (1989), identification occurs when the employee acknowledges the power of others in order to sustain a fulfilling self-defining connection with the organisation. Manetje (2009) assert that the employee accepts the social values of the organisation in order to continue a satisfying relationship with it. Meyer and Allen (1997) believe that organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the normative element of commitment. Coetzee and Botha (2012) posit that the employee now feels more obligated to continue employment with the organisation and as a result will fulfil the duties and remain loyal and committed to it (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012).

2.1.3.1.3. Internalisation

During the final stage (O'Reilly, 1989) internalisation occurs when the employee discovers that the values and beliefs of the organisation are fundamentally satisfying and in congruence with his or her personal values and beliefs. 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 employee's and the organisational values and beliefs. Ferreira et al. (2010) also believe that individuals who are dedicated to the organisation on an emotional level will continue with the organisation because they see their employment as harmonious with the values, objectives and goals of the organisation. Meyer and Allen (1997), as well as Manetje (2009), postulate that organisational commitment at this stage is supported by the affective element of commitment, as individuals start to develop a sense of belonging and a willingness to go beyond what is required in their jobs. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to (Qaisar, Rehman, & Syffyan, 2012) and they strongly identify with the values, objectives and goals of the organisation, thus they want to remain associated with it (Ezirim et al., 2012). These employees with high affective commitment feel a strong longing to continue their membership of the organisation (Lambert*, Griffin, Hogan, & Kelley, 2015).

O'Reilly and Chatman's (1986) model provides evidence that identification and internalisation have negative connections to turnover intention and actual turnover and 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 identification and internalisation. Therefore, owing to the restrictions of this model, Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model was more suitable for use in this study.

2.1.3.2 Etzioni's (1961) commitment model

Etzioni's (1961) commitment model consists of three main perceptions, namely: (1) moral commitment, (2) calculative commitment and (3) alienated commitment. These perceptions will be investigated in the section below.

2.1.3.2.1 Moral commitment

Etzioni (1961) regarded moral commitment as originating from a representative conformity structure that symbolises one of two views of organisational commitment. Moral commitment is characterised by the employees' identification with, recognition with and participation in the organisation (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). Wiener (1982) characterised such forms of commitment as affective attachment (e.g. moral involvement) or commitment to the organisation.

Researchers Coetzee, Mitonga-Monga, and Swart (2014) also regard moral commitment as employees' affective connection to, identification with and involvement in the organisation as a result of positive feelings that employees have created towards the organisation. Those employees with high moral commitment therefore reflect a moral obligation to connect with the organisation (Lambert et al., 2015). Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) are of the view that affective attachment creates emotional links that can cause employees to develop a sense of responsibility towards the organisation. Ezirim et al. (2012) argue that when an organisation has invested more resources in the form of training and the employee feels obliged to stay with the organisation to repay this debt, then affective attachment is even stronger. Organisational commitment is therefore a highly powerful mechanism for involving and connecting employees to their organisation (Kuo, 2013).

2.1.3.2.2 Calculative commitment

Etzioni (1961) identified this category of organisational connection as calculative commitment. It is distinctive fulfilment systems based on substitutes; hence the inclination of employees to remain organisational members is not necessarily aligned to calculative commitment. Coetzee et al. (2014) state that calculative commitment relates to essential elements of continuance commitment, that commitment is based on the cost that the employee associates with when leaving the organisation. Ezirim et al. (2012) therefore argue that the employee remains with the organisation owing to a perceived loss of sunken cost; the longer employees remain in the organisation the more they have to lose (Ferreira et al., 2010).

2.1.3.2.3 Alienated commitment

Alienative involvement was initially described as being representative of a military or prison training camp in which a forced or intimidating fulfilment structure was established (Etzioni, 1961). Etzioni (1961) further described alienation as the foundation for organisational commitment, as individuals' organisational commitment is considered to be an outcome of (1) lack of power over the internal organisational surroundings, and (2) the assumed non-existence of options for organisational commitment.

Etzioni (1961) believes that an employee who is alienatively committed to the organisation may remain purely because of the fear of a serious financial loss and lack of alternatives available outside the organisation. Qaisar et al. (2012), on the other hand, refer to alienative commitment as an employee's awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation, which include the risk of wasting time and effort on acquiring non-transferable skills, having a family, thus disrupting personal relationships, as well as a lack of alternative employment opportunities. Coetzee and Botha (2012) posit that these employees thus do not contribute beyond what is expected of them to keep their jobs.

The Etzioni (1961) commitment model places a strong focus on alienative commitment which describes employees as being part of a military or prison training camp in which a forced or intimidating fulfilment structure is applied. Thus individuals only stay with the organisation out of fear and because they have no alternatives. Meyer and Allen (1997) nonetheless believe that the impact of Etzioni's (1961) model has diminished. Therefore, owing to the restrictions of this model, Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model was deemed to be more suitable for use of this study.

2.1.3.3 Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model

Mercurio (2015) posits that after more than 50 years of scholarly work on the concept of organisational commitment, there remains rigorous debates as to the nature, types and bases of commitment and whether dominant frameworks such as Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model are valid across multiple contexts and accurately describe the phenomenon of organisational commitment. However, many researchers agree that Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component organisational commitment model is the leading model in organisational commitment research (Farris, 2012; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Nazari & Emami, 2012; Solinger, Van Olffen, & Roe, 2008; WeiBo, Kaur, & Jun, 2010) as it has undergone the most extensive assessments and evaluations to date (Johnson et al., 2010; Krishnaveni & Ramkumar, 2008; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

The model was developed on the basis that there are comparisons and variances in the existing unidimensional theories of organisational commitment (Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). The commonalities that exist between all the unidimensional concepts result in the confidence that commitment links employees to an organisation and decreases their intent to leave it (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2004). Meyer and Allen (1991) then combined attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment in order to create three distinct dimensions. These dimensions are described in the three-component model of organisational commitment as affective, continuance and normative commitment and differ in terms of the connection between employees and the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The affective and normative components reflect employees' attitudinal character, whereas the continuance component specifies their behaviour orientation (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that the three-components reflect either (1) affective commitment **(a desire)**, (2) continuance commitment **(a need)** or (3) normative commitment **(an obligation)** to remain in employment with an organisation.

This model has received considerable empirical support in research (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). **Figure 2.1** conceptualises the three-component model of organisational commitment.
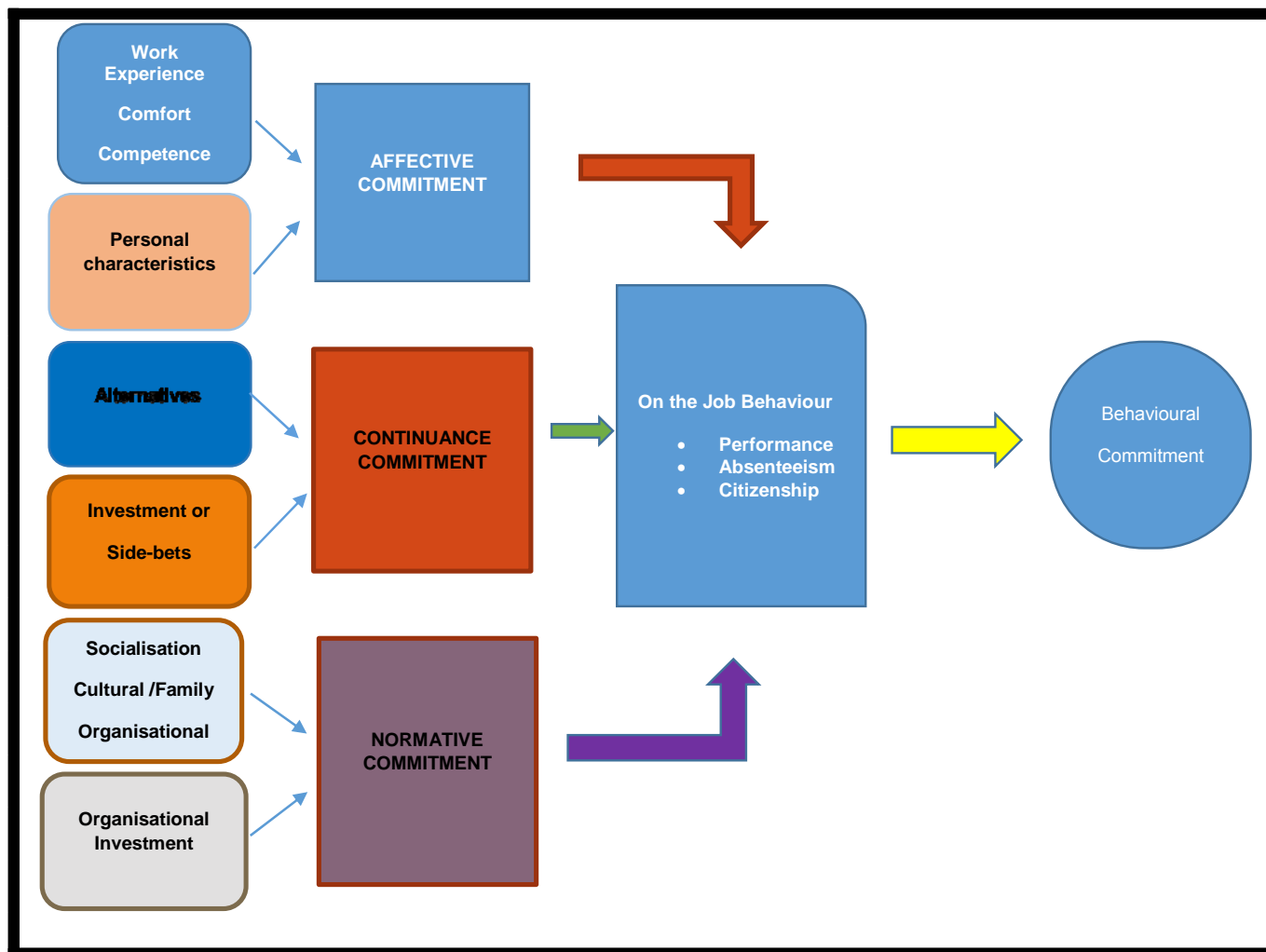
Figure 2.1. Conceptualisation of the Three-component Model of Organisational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)

Meyer and Allen (1997) conceptualised organisational commitment in terms of a three-component model, namely, **affective, continuance and normative** commitment.

2.1.3.3.1 Affective commitment

Mercurio (2015) defines and distinguishes affective commitment as the origin of organisational commitment, referring to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and participation in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). These employees have an emotional response to commitment and link their personal identity to the identity of the organisation (Dawley, Stephens, & Stephens, 2005; Rashid, Murali, & Johari, 2003). These employees also

strongly identify with the objectives and goals of the organisation and want to continue to be associated with and be a part of the organisation (Ezirim et al., 2012).

Meyer and Allen (1997) indicate that affective commitment is employees' emotional connection to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. They further indicate that employees who are affectively committed to the organisation will carry on working for it because ***they want to.*** However, recently Clifton (2014) found that only three out of every ten employees felt committed to their organisation. Mercurio (2015) maintains that these employees fully invest physically, mentally and emotionally in the organisation with the purpose of focusing on achieving the organisation's objectives and goals, resulting in organisations now having to refocus and invest more in emotional commitment (Davies, 2015).

Although affective commitment refers to employees' association with the organisation in terms of devotion, identification and participation (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2009), research continue to focus on employee retention as a major consequence of affective commitment (Mercurio, 2015). Solinger et al.'s (2008) research results indicate that turnover is mostly correlative to levels of affective commitment as a distinguished construct, than those of other behavioural and transactional commitment constructs. Research has also demonstrated that HR practices that are grounded in the theories of organisational commitment can positively shape employees' attitude, linking affective commitment to the organisation (Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Morrow, 2011).

Affective commitment has also been found to be one of the primary predictors of absenteeism in employees (Mercurio, 2015); the higher the affective commitment the lower the absenteeism, resulting in higher organisational commitment (Mowday et al., 2013).

Coetzee and Schreuder (2011) note that a positive correlation between commitment and performance has been reported from studies conducted where most of the measures used were related to affective commitment. Rostami, Veismoradi, and Akbari's (2012) research found employees' personal morals and principles are relatively related to affective commitment. Other research has indicated that employees with strong affective commitment tend to feel more autonomous as they perform their jobs, as opposed to those employees with more controlled forms of motivation (Gagné, Chemolli, Forest, & Koestner, 2008; Gagné, Forest, Gilbert, Aubé, Morin, & Malorni, 2010; Meyer et al., 2012).

2.1.3.3.2 Continuance commitment

Continuance commitment refers to employees' sentience of the cost associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It represents an employee's feeling that he or she has too much investment in the organisation to just walk away (Lambert et al., 2015). These employees continue at an organisation because of the professed loss of sunken costs (Ezirim et al., 2012).

Continuance commitment originated from Becker's (1960) side-bet theory, and is described as the professed cost an employee associates with when exiting an organisation (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Becker (cited in Mercurio, 2015) described continuance commitment as the result of a series of activities, such as time spent and money invested, which motivate an employee to remain in an organisation. Meyer and Allen (1997) further point out that employees who experience continuance commitment remain with an organisation because they feel ***they need to or have to***; hence the longer employees remain with the organisation, the more they have to lose (Ferreira et al., 2010).

Employees' working relationship with their co-workers and their job security, skills for particular tasks, retirement investment, career investment and community involvement are non-economic resources that are non-transferable and are important determinants for continuance commitment with the organisation (Jha, 2011). Becker (1960) states that continuance commitment may develop as employees acknowledge and realise that they have accrued investments that they could lose if they leave their organisation, or that there are limited alternative occupational prospects. Continuance commitment is based on employees' awareness that there would be a large number to sacrifices if he or she were to decide to leave the organisation (Vandenberghe, Mignonac, & Manville, 2015). Meyer and Allen (1991) agree with Becker (1960) by referring to continuance commitment as employees' perception of the benefits and rewards that they could lose if they leave their organisation. Vandenberghe et al. (2015) indicate that among these benefits and rewards associated with organisational membership, some are instrumental (i.e. pay, bonuses, promotional opportunities), while others are more psychologically rewarding (i.e. meaningful aspects of the job).

Furthermore, Manetje (2009) posits that continuance commitment is created on the basis of the employees' assessment of the economic gain from the organisation. Employees see commitment as a calculative process whereby they weigh up benefits such as pension, tenure, social position and social networks that tie them to the organisation (Dawley et al., 2005).

Rashid et al. (2003) highlight that the fewer potential job opportunities there are available at other organisations, the stronger the employees' continuance commitment will be within the organisation. Therefore, in order to retain employees who are continuance committed,

organisations need to give them more attention and also recognise the factors that increase employees' confidence to become more committed (Manetje, 2009).

2.1.3.3.3 Normative commitment

Normative commitment refers to employees' sense of obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991), as employees internalise normative beliefs of obligation and commitment thus feeling obliged to stay with the organisation (Manetje, 2009). Mensah and Adjei (2015) state that normative commitment reflects employees' sense of duty and indebtedness to the organisation and these employees will remain with the organisation by virtue of their faith that it is the ***moral or right thing*** to do (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Ezirim et al. (2012) agree that normative commitment describes the feeling of obligation to remain with an organisation (e.g. an employee who feels obliged to stay with the organisation to repay the debt when an organisation have invested resources in his or her training). The employee may then feel ***they ought to*** remain with the organisation because of pressures from others (Mclaggan et al., 2013), or they think that it is honourably right to continue to be involved in the same organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014).

Mercurio (2015) further posits that this psychological state of obligation may arise out of specific norms that are internalised by the individual. Morrow (2011) agrees that normative commitment develops as a result of socialisation, involvement and experiences that perpetuate the appropriateness of remaining loyal and committed to one's employer, or of organisational benefits and rewards (e.g. medical aid, car allowance or study leave). Normative commitment also develops when an organisation has invested (financially, time or resources) resources in training an employee, who now feels obliged to remain with the organisation to repay the debt (Ezirim et al., 2012). Normative commitment can also be seen as having significant, overlapping principles with the ideas of continuance or behavioural-transactional theories of commitment (Mercurio, 2015).

Highly normative committed employees are concerned with maintaining a good impression with their organisation and their colleagues (Naik, 2012); therefore they are worried about what their colleagues would think if they wanted to leave the organisation (Greenberg & Barron, 2003). Recent research findings have shown that normative commitment is associated with more positive outcomes when combined with high affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2012; Somers, 2009; Stanley, Vandenberghe, Vandenberg, & Bentein, 2013).

During their research, Meyer and Allen (1991) discovered that the differences between the various conceptualisations of commitment involved the psychological state, the antecedent conditions leading to its development and the behaviours that are expected to result from commitment.

2.1.3.3.2 Antecedents of organisational commitment

Antecedents to organisational commitment may assist in further understanding commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) noted antecedents to organisational commitment for each of these three components (affective, continuance and normative commitment), which can be seen in **Table 2.1.** These antecedents are important to consider as they provide deeper insight into where organisational commitment originated from and how it develops.

Table 2.1.

Dimensions of Organisational Commitment

DIMENSIONS	DESCRIPTION	REASON FOR STAYING
AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT	The individual's psychological and emotional connection to, identification with and participation in the organisation	Individuals who are dedicated at an emotional level usually remains with the organisation because they see their individual employment relationship as being harmonious with the gaols and values of the organisation for which they are currently working
CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT	The awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organisation	Individuals with a high continuance commitment remain with a specific organisation because of the value that they add as experienced employees in the organisation and not because they want to.
NORMATIVE COMMITMENT	A sense of responsibility to continue employment with a specific organisation	Individuals who are normatively committed remain because of internalised normative idea of ethical responsibility (moral obligation) to stay, which allows individual to value their continued membership of a specific organisation.

Source: Ferreira & Coetzee (2013, p. 242)

2.1.3.3.2.1 Antecedents of affective commitment

Mercurio (2015) posits that a significant amount of research and discussions have prevailed in distinguishing affective commitment from other forms of organisational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) suggest that the antecedents of affective commitment to the organisation fall into the following three categories: (a) personal characteristics (which include biographical

variables as well as dispositional variables such as personality and values), (b) work experiences and (c) organisational structural characteristics.

(a) Personal characteristics

Van Stuyvesant Meijen (2007) refers to personal characteristics as factors that define an employee, which include having interesting work, achievements and independence. Suman and Srivastava (2012) believe that the relationship between personal characteristics and the measure of affective commitment has been studied widely and agree with Meyer and Allen (1991) that personal characteristics correlate with affective organisational commitment.

The amount of freedom and independence (job autonomy) employees have during their work time and extent to which they are able to make decisions regarding their work influence their affective commitment (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Savickas and Porfeli (2012) believe that employees require job autonomy to think about and plan for their future tasks and their careers, to be able to make independent decisions and take full responsibility for their actions, to be able to explore their surroundings and look for opportunities for personal growth, to perform their tasks efficiently, learn new skills, and to be able to solve problems whilst at work. Meyer and Allen's (1997) findings suggest that job characteristics such as job role, challenging work and job autonomy have strong correlations with affective commitment.

(b) Work experiences

Meyer and Allen (1991) highlight that work experience can be divided into two groups of employees, namely: (1) employees who feel the need to be physically and psychologically at ease in the organisation, and (2) employees who feel it is important to contribute their abilities, knowledge and skills to the organisation.

The study of organisational commitment and employee involvement in the working environment has become very popular over the last few years (Yeh, 2013). Should organisations require their employees to develop strong affective commitment then it should provide them with healthy working experiences as well as healthy working environments (Mclaggan et al., 2013). Shah, Jatoi, and Memon (2012) discovered that employees who have clear career goals and are provided with the essential resources and tools to carry out their jobs can develop positive attitudes towards their career and the organisation. There are some researchers who are strongly of the opinion that owing to the sensitivity of components surrounding the working environment, organisational commitment is a key determinant of employee retention, turnover intention and actual turnover (Chang et al., 2013; Döckel et al., 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Tladinyane (2012) further advocates that employees with high levels of affective commitment are associated with positive feelings about the job as well as the nature of the job tasks. Meyer and Allen (1991) confirm that when employees' essential needs are satisfied and their experiences are similar to their expectations in the organisation, then those employees are more likely to develop strong affective commitment.

(c) Organisational structural characteristics

Suman and Srivastava (2012) describe organisational structures as the morphology of an organisation, that is, the observable or tangible aspects of the organisation. Suman and Srivastava (2012) explain further that organisational structures include the following tangible aspects: size, work rules and policies (formalisation), roles, number of levels in the organisation hierarchy, extent of centralisation and decentralisation, culture, communication, change, authority and decision-making.

Little research was found on the relationship between organisational commitment and organisational structures, thus these studies are focused on an individual level of analysis as opposed to the organisational level (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Ghina (2012) postulates that affective commitment could improve when employees are engaging and participating in high organisational communication and are more involved in the decision-making processes. Suman and Srivastava's (2012) research results indicate that organisational characteristics are more prevalent factors in determining organisational commitment in higher-level rather than lower-level employees.

Affective commitment is therefore relevant to this study because it may help to determine employees' feelings of attachment to the organisation.

2.1.3.3.2.2 Antecedents of continuance commitment

Panaccio, Vandenberghe, and Ayed (2014) describe continuance commitment as employees' emotional attachment to the organisation in terms of which they only continue at the organisation because of the perceived cost associated with termination of employment. Continuance commitment develops as a result of an event or action that increases the perceived cost of leaving the organisation, provided that the employee recognises that these costs have been encountered (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Mensah and Adjei (2015) further suggest that continuance commitment is related to employees' experiences and what an employee has given to the organisation. In their three-component model of organisational commitment, Meyer and Allen (1991) summarise these actions and events in term of two sets of antecedent variables, namely: (a) investment and (b) alternatives.

(a) Investment

Investment ties in specifically with Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. A side-bet can be described as the investment of something valuable and appreciated (e.g. effort, money or time) that an employee would lose if he or she were to leave the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Economic perspective plays a major role player in employees' decision to stay with or leave the organisation, as employees link the cost relative to leaving the organisation (Sahoo & Sia, 2015). Becker (1960) states that the probability that employees will stay with the organisation will be positively related to the number of side-bets they recognise and the number of feasible alternatives available.

(b) Alternatives

Alternatives refer to when employees become loyal and committed to the organisation as a result of the inability to leave owing to his or her investment made with the organisation over a period of time (McElroy, Morrow, & Wardlow, 1999). Meyer et al. (1993) imply that continuance commitment is related to higher levels of investment to the job, is revealed in tenure and in surges as positional tenure and organisational commitment increase. Earlier studies have related continuance commitment to adverse organisational outcomes such as employees' intention to leave the organisation (Labatmediene, Endriulaitiene, & Gustainiene, 2007; O'Donnell, Jayawardana, & Jayakody, 2012). In their research, Meyer et al. (2002) showed that continuance commitment is also negatively associated with turnover intention, and recommend that organisations that wish to decrease turnover intentions should potentially increase continuance commitment.

Continuance commitment is relevant to this because it may help to determine employees' intention to continue working for their current organisation.

2.1.3.3.2.3 Antecedents of normative commitment

Allen and Meyer (1990) theorised that normative commitment has been the last component to emerge in the organisational commitment literature. A potential antecedent of normative commitment is the psychological contract between the employee and the organisation, which creates either a relational or transactional employee obligation to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The relational psychological contract is based on social exchange (e.g. loyalty and commitment to the employer in exchange for job security), while the transactional psychological contract is based on economic exchange (e.g. a willingness to work overtime in exchange for extra pay) (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Gagné and Deci (2005) suggest that employees with high levels of normative commitment would feel obliged by their feelings of what is right and honourable and that employees with high normative commitment feel compelled to then fulfil

obligations towards the organisation in order to avoid feelings of guilt and anxiety or even to satisfy the expectations of others.

Theorists, specifically Gellatly, Meyer, and Luchak (2006), as well as Meyer and Parfyonova (2010), have recently argued that normative commitment is self-determined if it is experienced as a desire to do the right thing, but not self-determined if it is experienced as doing things in order to avoid negative outcomes (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). The present study of Vandengerghe et al. (2015) further argues that the normative self-determination level is influenced by the extent to which the employee feels trapped in the organisation owing to the few employment opportunities available.

It has been proposed (Meyer & Allen, 1997) that the antecedents of normative commitment to the organisation are (a) socialisation, and (b) organisational investment.

(a) Socialisation

Meyer and Allen (1997) believe that normative commitment develops during the socialisation process when employees first join the organisation, from stresses that the employee encounters in the early socialisation (e.g. from family, peers or culture) and within the organisation from group pressures. Moral commitment is the totality of internalised normative pressures on employees to act in such a way that meets the organisational values, beliefs, objectives and goals (Weiner, 1982). Clugston, Howell, and Dorfman (2000) support the idea of cultural socialisation and indicate that these processes are extremely important as they provide employees with the appropriate attitudes and behaviours in particular situations, resulting in loyalty and commitment towards the organisation being developed. Morrow (2011) posits that research has shown empirical evidence that socialisation has a positive correlation to high levels of normative commitment.

(b) Organisational investment

Meyer and Allen (1997) state that organisational investment refers to investment such as training or loans (e.g. job-related training or assistance with paying school fees) that the organisation may have given to employees, and which seems hard for them to reciprocate. Employees who gain access to training programmes develop a strong corporate culture and a positive relationship with the organisation (Bulut & Culha, 2010; Ehrhardt, Miller, Freeman, & Hom, 2011). It has been found that organisational commitment levels are high when employees are given training opportunities (Bartlett, 2001). Further findings revealed that employees who perceive that their organisation is making training accessible, in support of skill development, feel that the organisation has a desire to invest in them, and in turn they feel obligated to display

a higher level of organisational commitment (Brunetto et al., 2012; Teck-Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012).

Normative commitment is relevant to this study because it may help to determine employees' sense of duty and responsibility towards the organisation.

Meyer and Allen's (1997) organisational commitment model connects employees to the organisation and identifies retention factors that influence employees' intention to stay with or to leave the organisation. The different antecedents of commitment identify these retention factors. Meyer and Allen (1997) further combine attitudinal and behavioural approaches to commitment; therefore, Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model was suitable for the use of this study.

2.1.4 Variables influencing organisational commitment

Mensah and Adjei (2015) state that demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, educational qualifications and job tenure) play an important role in understanding the commitment of employees to the organisation. Several researchers have investigated the relationship between the demographic variables of employees in different organisations and their organisational commitment, with the findings showing positive correlations between the demographic characteristics of employees and their commitment to the organisation (Badu, 2001; Baker, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Joo & Park, 2010; Popoola, 2009; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009).

2.1.4.1 Age
Research conducted by Meyer et al. (1993) demonstrated that affective and normative commitment are strongly related to age, which confirms Ferreira and Coetzee's (2010) research results. They found older individuals to be affectively and normatively more committed to the organisation than their younger colleagues. Research findings (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012) indicate that age relates positively to continuance commitment. Several further studies have found positive correlations between age and organisational commitment (Adeleke, 2003; Badu, 2001; Jordan, Perryer, Firns, & Travaglione, 2010; Riketta, 2005; Tuzun, 2009), which indicates that the older the employee, the higher the level of organisational commitment.

In contrast, the findings of a Taiwanese study conducted by Chen et al. (2012) showed no significant relationship between age and organisational commitment. Similarly, the research results of Joolideh and Yeshodhara (2009) and Wiedmer (2006) did not find age to be a predictor of organisational commitment; they argued that the age (how young or how old) of an employee does not determine his or her level of organisational commitment. The recent research findings

of Sehunoe, Viviers, and Mayer (2015) also found no statistically significant relationship between age and organisational commitment. Kanwar et al. (2012) highlight that further investigation to comprehend this important relationship between age and organisational commitment is therefore required.

2.1.4.2 Gender

Mensah and Adjei (2015) indicate that research on gender and organisational commitment shows inconsistent results. Researcher Poon (2004) found that women are less committed to their organisation than men, while other researchers (Chang & Chang, 2009; Opayemi, 2004) found the opposite.

Researchers Khalili and Asmawi's (2012) findings show that affective and continuance commitment are alike for men and women, however normative commitment results appear to be different for men and women. Women place higher value on stable and secure working opportunities, thus showing more dedication and commitment to the organisation (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2009). Lumley et al. (2011) found significant differences between gender and organisational commitment; however recent research findings by Sehunoe et al. (2015) found no statistically significant relationship between gender and organisational commitment.

2.1.4.3 Race

There are conflicting findings in the related literature concerning the relationship between race and organisational commitment. Researchers Coetzee and Schreuder (2011) found that black managers appear to have a significantly lower level of commitment than white managers. Sehunoe et al. (2015), however, found no statistically significant relationship between race and organisational commitment. However, Lumley et al.'s (2011) study found significant differences between race and organisational commitment. Researchers therefore suggest that the conflicting findings on whether race has an influence on commitment could be a result of differences in the conceptualisation of commitment (Coetzee & Botha, 2012).

2.1.4.4 Marital status

The research results of Van Dyk et al. (2013) show that single participants experience significantly higher levels of job-fit than their married counterparts. Van Dyk et al.'s (2013) findings further indicate that the divorced participants experienced lower level of emotional connection to their organisation than their single and married participants. Married participants, however, experience higher levels of emotional connection to the organisation than their single or divorced counterparts, and in addition, married counterparts seemed to perceive a higher level of sacrifice in terms of what they have to give up when leaving their current occupations (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

2.1.4.5 Tenure

Researchers (Kwon & Banks, 2004; Popoola, 2009; Rajendran & Raduan, 2005) have reported in their findings a positive relationship between the number of years worked by employees and their organisational commitment. Van Dyk et al.'s (2013) research findings on tenure suggest that employees who had worked for the organisation for fewer than five years experienced a significantly lower level of affective commitment than other groups, suggesting that the longer employees work for the organisation, the stronger the emotional connection that will develop. Van Dyk et al. (2013) further suggest that the longer employees have worked for the organisation, the higher the normative commitment level as well as the overall organisational commitment.

Further research findings (Khalili & Asmawi, 2012) indicate that tenure relates positively to continuance commitment; that one can expect employees' commitment to change over a period as it develops and also increases with tenure (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Van Dyk and Coetzee's (2012) research findings showed that participants with longer tenure (11 years or more) had significantly more affective and normative attachments to the organisation. Ferreira and Coetzee (2010) thus suggest that older employees are affectively and normatively more committed to their organisation than their younger colleagues.

Suman and Srivastava's (2012) found that the tenure of executives has no significant effect on organisational commitment. Van Dyk et al.'s (2013) research findings indicate that employees who had worked for the organisation for longer than 15 years are significantly more satisfied with their person-organisation fit and therefore indicate a higher level of organisation commitment. These findings suggest that the longer employees work for the organisation, the happier they may feel about the organisation in general (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

2.1.4.6 Job level

Suman and Srivastava (2012) believe that as employees gain experience within the organisation, when they move upward in the hierarchy and gain other benefits such as increased salary, this will result in a change in their perception and attitude towards their job and the organisation. Suman and Srivastava's (2012) also found that job level plays an important role in determining the organisational commitment of supervisors.

Further research conducted by Van Dyk et al. (2013) suggests that participants at senior management level have significantly higher satisfaction levels on normative commitment, organisational fit, organisational sacrifice and person-job sacrifice as opposed to the other job-level groups. Suman and Srivastava's (2012) research results also found that middle level employees enjoy higher status by virtue of their service tenure, have authority to control their

work situation and have more job satisfaction, which result in the enhancement of their organisational commitment. Research findings by Van Dyk et al. (2013) also indicate that operational level participants experience lower levels of organisational commitment, as they perceive that they have less to give up when leaving their job and the organisation in comparison to their senior level participants.

Mercurio (2015) states that the most notable and relevant problem in organisations relating to commitment is employee turnover, which results in huge financial implications for the organisation. It can then be concluded that leaders in modern organisations are increasingly tasked with attracting, cultivating and retaining talented and committed employees with the knowledge, skills and capacities to maintain a competitive advantage in their industries (Aguirre, Post, & Hewlett, 2009; Alvino, 2014; Clifton, 2014; Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2013; Pangarkar & Kirkwood, 2013).

2.2 CAREER ADAPTABILITY

This section conceptualises career adaptability and provides an overview of Hirschi, Hermann, and Keller's (2015) theoretical model, Savickas's (2005) Career Construction Theory (CCT) and Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS). This section concludes with a discussion of the variables influencing career adaptability, its implications for talent retention as well as the integration of career adaptability and organisational commitment.

Career adaptability has been defined and measured in many different ways; however, more recently the notion of career adaptability has been refined and redefined as a set of psychosocial resources that condition adapting behaviours (Hirschi et al., 2015). Nota and Rossier (2015) aver that this reconceptualisation of vocational behaviour emphasises the importance of adapting to a rapidly changing environment as a fundamental resource to face the global market and to be able to design one's life and career. These characteristics have brought to light the importance of increased flexibility and adaptability and a constant capacity to change and develop (Rusu, Măirean, Hojbotă, Gherasim, & Gavriloaiei, 2015). This therefore results in the construct of career adaptability gaining significant importance in the study of the 21st century careers (Savickas, 2013; Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014b).

2.2.1 Theoretical background to career adaptability

Lent (2013) posits that the world of work has become more diverse, faster paced and less predictable for an increasing number of employees; as a result many employers can no longer

promise lifelong employment and regular promotions, causing employees to no longer feel obliged to remain loyal and committed to one organisation throughout their career (Maree, 2013). Organisations are now faced with decreasing their full-time employee levels, outsourcing some of their supporting functions and having to choose part-time, contract and project workers who are more flexible and adaptable and who do not require the same level of investment in benefits or career development (Blustein, 2006; Friedman, 2005; Savickas, 2011). Employees' career paths are now becoming non-linear and boundaryless (Savickas, 1997, 2005, 2013), where the career development of employees is no longer regarded as hierarchical and linear but rather multifaceted, unstable and transactional over one's career (Hearne, 2010).

Career development is to a great extent more dependent on individuals' initiative and their ability to adapt and cope (Biemann, Gielnik, & Frese, 2012; Hirschi et al., 2015; Raabe, Frese, & Beehr, 2007). Career adaptability has thus become increasingly relevant and a desirable competency among job seekers and employees in current times where volatile economic conditions result in ambiguous job roles and career uncertainty (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These trends have therefore created a greater need to better understand what career adaptability means for individuals (Chong & Leong, 2015).

Rossier (2015) highlights that in this unstable and challenging working environment, the career adaptability resources and the regulation of skills whereby individuals can activate or reactivate their career, are vital competencies for mastering unpredictable, changing tasks and work demands, as well as career transitions throughout the employee's career life-span. This indicates that individuals who lack career adaptability may be faced with the risk of career maladjustment and excessive career stress (Chong & Leong, 2015), hence suggesting that individuals be helped and facilitated to develop their career adaptability, which will in turn enhance their career management process.

Chong and Leong (2015) report that in order to facilitate the career adaptability construct, Savickas and Porfeli (2012) initiated a wide-scale programme of research on career adaptability to study how individuals stay resilient in the face of threats and challenges in their career domain. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) also believe that the essence of career management lies in the integration of inner career needs and outer work opportunities. Some theorists agree that career adaptability is not a fixed inherent trait and conceptualise it as a malleable competency that can be developed and improve over time (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Zacher & Griffin, 2015). Career adaptability is therefore a pivotal component of the phenomenology of strategic career management (Chong & Leong, 2015).

2.2.2 Conceptualisation of career adaptability

Super and colleagues (Super & Kidd, 1979; Super & Knasel, 1981) first introduced the psychosocial construct, career adaptability, to acknowledge the importance of the new and ongoing career-related challenges individuals encounter throughout their life-cycle (Savickas, 1997, 2013). Many theorists confirmed that Donald Super (1955) first introduced the concept of career adaptability to conceptualise how employees adapt and cope with the challenges in the changing world of work (Rottinghaus, Buelow, Matyja, & Schneider, 2012; Super & Kidd, 1979). Savickas (1997) developed the career adaptability construct based on a career construction theory to find a solution for the problems arising from the temporary jobs resulting from the post-industrial working conditions (Leong & Ott-Holland, 2014).

The career adaptability construct gained its reputation in the study of the 21st century careers and can be described as a set of psychosocial resources and transactional competencies that employees need to use when navigating career-related transitions and changes (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Savickas, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014b). Career adaptability is therefore an important concept that helps employees to deal effectively with ambiguous job roles and career uncertainty in current times (Chong & Leong, 2015).

Literature defines and assesses career adaptability in multiple ways (Hamtiaux, Houssemand, & Vrignaud, 2013). This concept was first defined by Savickas (1997) as the readiness to cope with predictable tasks in relation to preparing for and participating in the work roles and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions. Career adaptability can also be described as the origin of employees' attitudes, beliefs and competencies (ABC) and it involves the developmental tasks, role transitions and coping strategies used by employees to direct transitions and changes (Hartung, 2011). Career adaptability therefore involves (1) planful attitudes, (2) self and environmental exploration, and (3) informed decision-making (Savickas, 1997).

Leong and Ott-Holland (2014) note that career adaptability has recently been redefined by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) as a psychosocial construct that denotes individuals' resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, career transitions and work traumas in their occupational roles and which will influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Zacher (2014a) further refers to career adaptability as a psychosocial resource that can help employees achieve, maintain and re-establish person-environment fit and, in turn, achieve career success.

Numerous research findings indicate that career adaptability and its measurements relate positively to important career outcomes, including job and career satisfaction (Chan & Mai, 2015; Zacher, 2014a; Zacher & Griffin, 2015), job search success (Guan et al., 2013; Koen et al., 2010), salary (Guan et al., 2015) and others' job rating of job performance (Ohme & Zacher, 2015). Recent findings indicate that self-esteem and proactive personality serves as significant predictors of individuals' career adaptability (Öncel, 2014; Tolentino et al., 2014b).

Fiori, Bollmann, and Rossier (2015) claim that individuals with higher career adaptability experience less negative affect than others. Broader research findings explain that high levels of career adaptability are positively associated with perception of the work itself, person-environment fit, employment status, self-efficacy and future job search (Guan et al., 2014), as well as career satisfaction (Zacher, 2014). These empirical studies across cultures have confirmed that employees with higher levels of career adaptability show higher career satisfaction (Zacher, 2014), less work stress (Johnston et al., 2013), and higher person-environment fit perception (Guan et al., 2013) among other outcomes. Most recent findings indicate that employees with high career adaptability possess more resources to pursue new career options, such as starting their own business (Tolentino et al., 2014a; Tolentino, Sedoglavich, Lu, Garcia, & Restubog, 2014; Zacher, 2014; Biemann et al., 2012).

Zacher (2015) states that researchers in the field of vocational behaviour have so far neglected the possibility that career adaptability might also manifest behaviourally on a daily basis and these manifestations may vary intra-individually over shorter periods of time. However, there is limited empirical research support for Zacher's (2015) claim, as these assumptions at the between-person level state that employees may not behaviourally express their career adaptability to the same extent every day (Chan & Mai, 2015; Ohme & Zacher, 2015; Zacher, 2014a).

2.2.3 Theoretical models of career adaptability

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

2.2.3.1 Hirschi, Hermann, and Keller's (2015) theoretical model

Research conducted by Hirschi et al. (2015) empirically evaluates a theoretical model of a relationship among important career adaptation and development variables. The aim of the study was to make several key contributions, namely: (1) to reconsider the unfortunate lack of coherence in the career literature where the same or similar terms were used to denote variables

that are theoretically and empirically different, and (2) the study contributed to a theoretical and empirical integration of the dispersed literature regarding career adaptation (Hirschi et al., 2015).

Theoretical integration of different measurement approaches

Hirschi et al. (2015) first distinguish between (1) adaptive readiness, (2) adaptability resources, (3) adapting responses and (4) adaptation results.

1. **Adaptive** or **adaptive** readiness can be described as the psychological trait of willingness to meet the unfamiliar, complex and ill-defined problems presented by vocational developmental tasks, occupational transitions and work traumas, with fitting responses often operationalised as proactivity or flexibility (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Adaptive refers to individuals' hopes and aspirations in relation to work, which has been operationalised as future work itself (Guan et al., 2014; Strauss, Griffin, & Parker, 2012). Adaptive readiness refers to the individual's willingness to change themselves to meet career disequilibrium or transition with fitting responses (Guan et al., 2014) and enhances individuals' willingness to develop critical career dimensions in the form of career adaptability (Tolentino et al., 2014b).

2. **Adaptability** resources refer to the psychosocial strengths that conditions self-regulation in coping with the tasks, transitions and traumas (Savickas, 2013), and is measured in terms of career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Research findings indicate that adaptability is positively related to relevant psychological resources such as emotional stability and core self-evaluations (Zacher, 2014).

3. **Adapting** or **adapting** responses refer to performing adaptive behaviours and possessing adaptive attitudes that help when addressing changing career conditions and dealing with career development tasks (Savickas, 2013). Career adapting involves mastering vocational development tasks and coping with occupational opportunities and transitions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Hirschi et al. (2015) suggest that adapting should be considered an outcome of career adaptability, as it increases when an individual possesses career adaptability resources (e.g. career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence).

4. **Adaptation** results refer to the outcomes of adapting behaviours, often measured in terms of job satisfaction, career decidedness, work success and career commitment (Savickas, 2013). Adaptation is focused on shaping the self and the career through work and relationships and optimising self-environment congruency by the intentional use of personal self-regulatory resources (Hartung, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Zacher (2015) posits that successful adaptation has a positive impact on career tasks, career performance and career satisfaction.

De Guzman and Choi (2013) express that highly adaptable individuals should be less concerned about future employability and future earning potential because they believe in their career-related strengths, such as the ability to influence their own career development and work environment. Research has also shown that adaptability is on average positively related to different indicators of adapting, such as career exploration and career decision-making (Hirschi et al., 2015; Urbaviciute, Kairys, Pociute, & Liniauskaite, 2014).

Hirschi et al. (2015) argue that behaviours such as career planning and career exploration represent instances of adapting, because people use these behaviours to address career development tasks and changing work and career conditions. Apart from behaviour, obstacles and beliefs also represent instances of adaptive reactions to career challenges and changes (Hirschi et al., 2015).

Hirschi et al.'s (2015) theoretical model only evaluates the relationship among some career adaptation and development variables empirically and is thus not sufficient for the purpose of this study.

2.2.3.2 Savickas's (2002) career construction theory

Savickas developed the career construction theory in 2002. The construct of career adaptability subsequently originated from this theory, which is closely linked to the vocational psychology model of vocational development (Hartung, 2011; Maree, 2013; Savickas, 1997, 2005, 2013). According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), career construction theory conceptualises human development as being driven by adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person-environment integration. Hirschi et al. (2015) agree with Savickas (2002) that career construction theory conceptualises career adaptability as the attitudes, behaviours and competencies (ABC) that individuals use in fitting themselves to work that suits them, and consists of four dimensions: (1) career concern (**planning**, being planful), (2) career control (**decision-making**, being decisive), (3) career curiosity (**exploring**, being inquisitive) and (4) career confidence (**problem-solving**, being efficacious). Savickas's (1997, 2013) career construction theory presents a model for comprehending vocational behaviour across life cycles and career adaptability that represents the *'how'* of vocational behaviour (how an individual construct a career). Career construction theory also explains the explanatory and social processes through which employees impose meaning and direction on their occupational behaviour (Savickas, 2005).

Savickas (2013) further posits that career adaptability is embedded in career construction theory and therefore forms an integral part of the theory (Ferreira, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Career construction views adapting to these tasks, traumas and transitions as fostered principally by five sets of behaviours, each named for their adaptive functions: (1) orientation, (2) exploration, (3) establishment, (4) management and (5) disengagement (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Savickas's career construction theory structures the process of personal development which is shaped by adaptation for the proper social interaction of employees (Öncel, 2014). Career construction theory therefore emphasises that employees need to continuously adjust to their social and work environment in order to achieve person-environment fit and that they, in turn, will achieve career success (Savickas, 2013). Savickas (2013) also states that employees with a higher level of career adaptability possess more psychosocial resources and greater competence that enable them to adapt and manage work and career related demands and changes.

Savickas's (2002) career construction theory conceptualises career adaptability as the attitudes, behaviours and competencies (ABC) that individuals use in fitting themselves to work and careers that suit them, and it conceptualises human development only as being driven by adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person-environment integration. This model was thus not sufficient for the use of this study.

2.2.3.3 Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

Research conducted to date demonstrates that career adaptability influences career development and adjustment in a number of different contexts (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). Several studies have investigated career adaptability and its relationship with career-related variables (Creed, Fallon, & Hood, 2009; Koen et al., 2010), however the measurement of career adaptability has varied from study to study and therefore it has become difficult to generate meaningful conclusions from the accrued body of literature (Konstam, Celen-Demirtas, Tomek, & Sweeney, 2015). With the goal of expanding the body of literature, which allows for uniformity of the definitions and measurements of career adaptability, Savickas and Porfeli (2012) developed the CAAS, a concise, valid and reliable instrument that has been validated in 13 countries.

The development of this scale is significant as it provides an opportunity to analyse and compare studies across a variety of cultural contexts (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). An international team of vocational psychologists from 18 countries adopted a multi-centric approach to measure career adaptabilities (Daunte & Rossier, 2008), consequently confirming this theory-based model in all countries, with the best indexes observed in the USA, South Africa and Italy (Ambiel, Carvalho, Martins, & Tofoli, 2016). Maree (2012) confirms acceptable internal consistency estimates for

the CAAS in the South African context, and that the CAAS has been found to be a reliable and useful instrument when assessing the career adaptability of employees.

The construct of career adaptability signifies a multidimensional hierarchical structure of four crucial resources of adaptabilities (Maggiori, Johnston, Krings, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Hirschi and Valero (2015) agree that career adaptability is a multidimensional construct and that the CAAS model consists of four global dimensions, namely, **career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence** (Savickas, 2013). The main purpose of these four global dimensions is to explain the resources preferred by individuals who are career adaptable in order to reach their career-related targets (Leong & Ott-Holland, 2014). These four universal dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) as well as Ferreira (2012), are illustrated in **Figure 2.2** below and will then be explained.
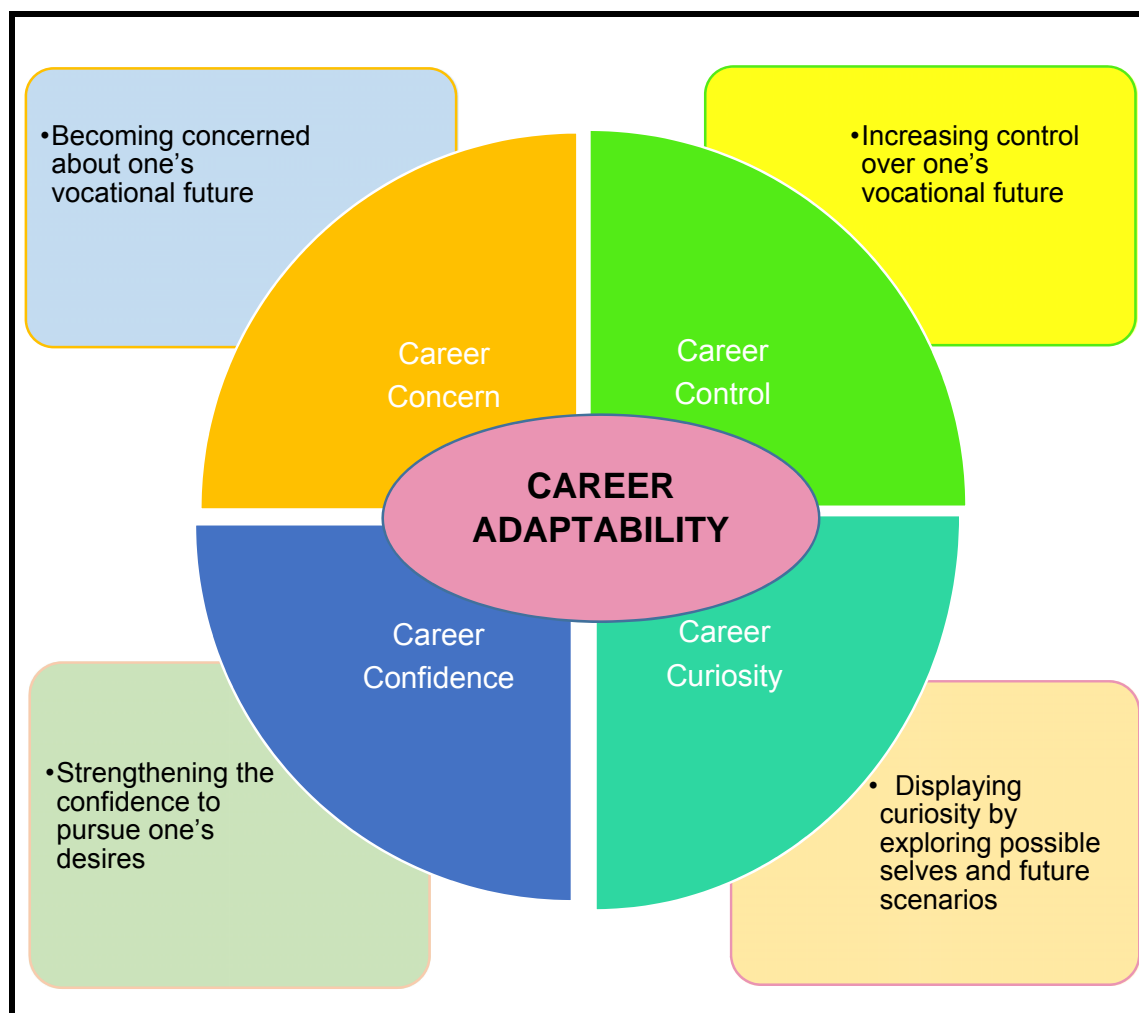
Figure 2.2. The Four Dimensions of Career Adaptability

2.2.3.3.1 Career concern

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career concern as the extent to which employees are future orientated and prepared for upcoming career tasks and challenges. Hartung (2013) describes career concern as involving a future orientation with feelings of being optimistic about it and demonstrating a planful attitude about the future.

Other researchers refer to career concern as the individual's capacity to be aware of and positively orientated to and plan for a vocational future (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career concern, according to Savickas (2013), is the most significant dimension of career adaptability, as it represents the importance of preparing for tomorrow and being concerned about one's vocational future. Savickas (2013) further indicates that being concerned about one's future requires one to be aware, involved and preparatory.

2.2.3.3.2 Career control

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career control as the extent to which employees take personal responsibility for influencing their developmental and work environment by showing effort, self-discipline and persistence. Hartung (2013) describes career control as an individual's sense of self-regulation and self-direction, encouraged by taking responsibility for one's future and the career decision-making tasks it involves. Career control reflects the capacity for persistence, decisiveness and independence regarding a vocational future (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career control suggests self-determination which is obtained by independent activities and behaviours that reinforce these activities (Pordelan, Abedi, Baghban, & Nilforooshan, 2013).

Coetzee et al. (2015) highlight that individuals with a low sense of career control may tend to struggle with indecisiveness and uncertainty. However, individuals that demonstrate personal control over their careers are empowered to embrace fear, uncertainty and change (Del Corso, 2013).

2.2.3.3.3 Career curiosity

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career curiosity as the extent to which employees are future orientated and prepared for upcoming career tasks and challenges. Hartung (2013) indicates that career curiosity leads to creative and productive career exploration stemming from an individual's inquisitive attitude toward the career. Career curiosity reflects the tendency of an employee to explore the environment through information-seeking and risk-taking, resulting in gaining the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Therefore in order to adapt to changing situations

individuals must display an inquisitive attitude and must engage in exploring by inquiring and being curious, experimenting and taking risks (Savickas, 2013).

Omar and Noordin (2013) state that individuals with high career curiosity do large amounts of research such as reading journals, brochures on training and development, asking expert advice and many more activities associated with developing the career. Career curiosity motivates individuals to experimentally design goals and achieve results (Pordelan et al., 2013). Savickas (2013) states that a curious individual displays inquisitiveness and explores their place in the world of work.

Taber and Blankemeyer (2015) indicate that the result of inquisitiveness is that it influences people to learn more about the self and possible career opportunities, which in turn leads to curiosity through which individuals start to develop and maintain relationships with others to help with their career. Taber and Blankemeyer (2015) further highlight that by eliciting advice from others on how to obtain information on getting the job that they really want, as well as how to be successful in one's career, leads to an increase in career curiosity.

2.2.3.3.4 Career confidence

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) define career confidence as the extent to which individuals' believe they can turn their career goals into reality, successfully solve problems and overcome obstacles. Hartung (2013) describes career confidence as demonstrating an efficacious attitude, solving problems and effectively navigating obstacles to building the future. Career confidence reflects the ability to feel self-efficient concerning one's ability to master the work successfully and solve problems and career-related challenges (De Guzman & Choi, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Del Corso (2013) posits that career confidence is a validation of the way individuals deal with the myriad stressors they may encounter throughout their career journey (e.g. pressure to learn new skills, unexpected workplace challenges, sudden unemployment, lack of available jobs, health problems, family struggles, etc.). Omar and Noordin (2013) indicate that career confidence denotes encountering challenges, overcoming obstacles and striving for success and that the level of career confidence will be determined by the individual's ability to solve problems related to work tasks. Savickas (2013) agrees that in order to realise an occupational choice, the individual must also have self-belief about the capacity to successfully execute a course of action and to overcome obstacles.

Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) CAAS model was chosen for this study because the construct of career adaptability signifies a multidimensional hierarchical structure that measures four crucial

resources of career adaptability. Individuals need all four components in order to enhance their careers.

2.2.4 Variables influencing career adaptability

Rossier, Zecca, Stauffer, Maggiori, and Dauwalder (2012) conducted an investigation to confirm how relatively stable characteristics such as personality traits influence career orientation and career adaptability. Further research has also been reported to show that employees' employment positions (e.g. job seeking, imminent career transition, job loss, unemployment and retirement) influence their career adaptability levels (Johnston et al., 2013; Koen et al., 2010). Coetzee and Harry's (2014) research findings uncovered that key demographic variables are linked to and influence career adaptability.

2.2.4.1 Age

Bourke (2014) stresses the fact that the workforce is aging and as in many other industrial countries working lives will likely be extended to meet the challenges associated with demographic changes and budget constraints. Therefore, individual career adaptability has become increasingly important as it may help older employees to achieve, maintain and re-establish person-environmental fit (Savickas, 1997) as it relates to career success (Zacher, 2014).

However, Rossier et al. (2012) posit that career adaptability is uninfluenced by age in general. This is in contrast to the vocational maturity development model, which suggests that maturity increases with age. Hence, Rossier et al. (2012) confirm the appropriateness of career adaptability as a construct in the 21st century world of work.

Conflicting statements were found during the literature review, with some researchers (Stoltz, 2014) postulating that career adaptability decreases with age. Research conducted has found that motivation to change decreases with age and that younger and middle-aged employees should be more adaptable than the elderly (Rostami et al., 2012; Savickas, 2012). Rostami et al. (2012) further explain that older employees will have negative attitudes towards the development experiences that are required of them to become adaptable, as such experiences may be taking place at unexpected times in their lives. This view is further supported by Koen et al. (2012), who found that career exploration – a dimension of career adaptability – decreases as employees get older. Newcomers and specifically younger employees entering the labour market require greater a degree of career adaptability than regular job seekers and older employees (BLS, 2011; Eurostat, 2012) due to the important school-to-work transition which they need to make (Koen et al., 2012).

Johnston et al. (2013) indicate that contrary to the above, career adaptability changes in response to different situations, and found that the transition from work to retirement displays rapid career adaptability. Heckhausen, Wrosch, and Schulz (2010) believe that career adaptability can increase with age and their findings are explained by using theories and findings from the life-span development literature. Zacher (2014) then states that the motivational theory of life-span development suggests that older employees experience a greater increase in career control and career confidence over time than younger employees.

2.2.4.2 Gender

Career literature stresses the importance of investigating gender differences in the career context, as the career developmental patterns of females have been found to differ significantly from those of males (Creager, 2011). However, limited research has focused on gender in relation to career adaptability; some research findings indicate that females scored higher in the control sub-scale than males, which is explained by the fact that females face more social barriers than males (Rossier et al., 2012). Havenga (2011), however, found career adaptability to be significantly related to gender. Ferreira (2012) and Havenga (2011) reported research findings which indicate that females display higher levels of career adaptability than their male counterparts, as females tend to be more purposeful in the planning of their careers than males (Zhang, 2010).

On the other hand, Carless and Arnup (2011) argue that males are more likely to change careers, which suggests that males are much more flexible than females. Maggiori et al. (2013) on the other hand found no significant relationship between gender and career adaptability. Hirschi (2009) then came to the conclusion that gender did not influence career adaptability development at all. This all proves that the research findings and results are unsupported regarding gender differences in career adaptability (Carless & Arnurp, 2011; Havenga, 2011; Patton, Bartrum, & Creed, 2004; Patton & Lokan, 2001).

2.2.4.3 Race

Coetzee and Stoltz's (2015) study contributed several important insights to the career adaptability of black and white participants, and showed that black participants had higher levels of career adaptability than white participants. The enhanced level of career adaptability of the black participants has been attributed to South Africa's post-apartheid workplace, which has positively influenced the increased intra-organisational career opportunities available to especially black people, which requires a higher level of career adaptability from black individuals (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). João and Coetzee (2012) also found that black employees in the South African organisational context considered career development support and growth

opportunities, as well as career advancement, to be most important, more so than any other racial group.

2.2.4.4 Marital status

Neck (2015) explains that there are many barriers to why married women are not progressing in organisations, resulting in a huge shortage of women at senior levels in organisations. In the past, men were always expected to be the primary breadwinners in the marriage, resulting in fewer employment opportunities for women (Kuo & Raley, 2016). Researchers Kuo and Raley (2016) believe that there are many aspects of the career that might enable or hinder the marriage. Presser (2000) indicates that non-standard work schedules are connected with an increased risk of divorce, and that job autonomy has strong links with lower work-family conflict (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Clark, 2001). Holth, Bergman, and MacKenzie (2016) suggest that any job characterised by high status, opportunities for training, career development and high compensation is often more shaped to traditional males than females, as males are always available to work. It has also been agreed by researchers that parenthood generally affects women's careers to a greater degree than men's (Cahusac & Kanji, 2014; Holth, Almasri, & Gonäs, 2013). Holth et al. (2016) posit that the gender order of work is still closely related to the gender order of the home, where women still have the main responsibility for parenthood and taking care of the family.

A large amount of interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical literature attempts to understand how work characteristics shape married life in current contemporary organisations (Kuo & Raley, 2016). Research conducted by Metz (2011) focused on whether married or divorced women leave their job or career to concentrate on family responsibilities. Her findings indicate that most married or divorced females (with and without children), professionals and managers make decisions about leaving their organisations based on work-related factors or a combination of work and family factors. Barsh and Yee (2012) posit that because females are the primary caregivers for their children, they do not progress in their careers at the same pace as their male colleagues.

The impact of careers on married men and women has long been a topic of discussion, debate and empirical testing (Cheng, 2015). Kark and Eagly (2010) found that married women's domestic responsibilities were not the main reason why they are under-represented as leaders; the cultures of many organisations do not support flexible working hours for mothers who need to balance work and family responsibilities (Metz, 2011). Managing careers creates or intensifies stress between husband and wife, which can lead to decreased work productivity and personal well-being (Fider, Fox, & Wilson, 2014). Fider et al. (2014) believe that a strong marital bond characterised by teamwork, openness and a caring relationship can be a source of support for

career development. These researchers highlight that married female employees who are parents were more prone to experience role conflict than their married male colleagues, primarily because the determinant variables are very long working hours and scheduled shifts. However, research findings indicate lower levels of role conflict have been shown to be positively associated with high levels of marital satisfaction for males (Fider et al., 2014). Fider et al. (2014) then postulate that flexible opportunities are limited, and can hinder career progression by making married females seem less committed or ambitious.

Litano and Major (2016) posit that married women who occupy positions of power have more responsibility and they receive social and organisational support. As such, the influence of non-work domains (family and personal life) has now integrated progressively into the career development literature (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). Therefore, by tending to employees' changing careers, personal and family needs, organisations can retain skilled, talented and valuable employees and in turn gain competitive advantage (Litano & Major, 2016).

2.2.4.5 Tenure

Research conducted by Brown et al. (2012) and Rossier et al. (2012) considered tenure in a specific job as well as tenure in the organisation. Their research found that employees will run the risk of becoming contented and complacent if they do not engage in essential up-skilling and re-skilling for an uninterrupted period of five to ten years. Their ability to be flexible and adaptable regarding career progression will consequently deteriorate, exposing them and thus making them vulnerable in the labour market.

In further research findings, Brown et al. (2012) highlight the way skills can be developed over time in difficult circumstances and encourage the exploration of a wide array of career opportunities, which subsequently encourages career change and career adaptability. Brown et al. (2012) also encourage career change as a means of stimulating flexibility and career adaptability, by mastering new or additional skills and knowledge bases, as well as learning through challenging work rather than through extended tenure in a specific job.

Zacher et al. (2012) then suggest that employees must improve their career adaptability, especially career concern and career confidence, as this has positive effects on job tenure. Porfeli and Savickas (2012) are in agreement with this statement, and support the notion that career adaptability predicts positive career commitment.

Other researchers believe that early career employees, who tend to have fewer years of service, may retain higher levels of career adaptability (Rostami et al., 2012). However, more recent research on years of service in relation to career adaptability still seems inadequate for making

these assumptions, therefore further research is required (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). It can therefore be concluded that reducing tenure in a specific job or encouraging career change can positively stimulate career adaptability (Brown et al., 2012), and from the above findings it would be assumed that high levels of career adaptability contribute to tenure in organisations (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012; Zacher, 2014).

2.2.4.6 Job level

Ferreira (2012) posits that career adaptable employees are more likely to engage in self-development activities that will enable them to take advantage of possible career opportunities. Brown et al.'s (2012) research findings highlight that challenging work increases influence over career situations. Further research findings show that employees who experiment with various new or different activities, as well as projects associated with a job change or a change in job level, can positively contribute to career adaptable competencies (career control, career concern, career confidence and career commitment). Brown et al. (2012) also found that employees can develop their career adaptable competencies through learning and mastering a new knowledge base, by updating a fundamental knowledge base or by adding an additional knowledge base as a result of a change in job or job level. The research also highlight that individuals at all stages of their career progression, or at any job level, can improve their career adaptability by learning through undertaking interactions at work (Brown et al., 2012).

Brown et al. (2012) also express that when employees stay in the same job for a period of five to ten years without engaging in essential up-skilling or re-skilling, their career adaptability will deteriorate and this will negatively affect their career progression.

2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR TALENT RETENTION

Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) suggest that research on organisational commitment and career adaptability within the South African organisational context will provide valuable new insights to the body of knowledge relating to employee retention. Harry and Coetzee (2013) agree that in order to support employees within the retail sector to manage their careers throughout their career life-span, insight into the role of organisational commitment and career adaptability has become crucial in the 21st century world of work. However, more recent research indicates that employees are now more committed to their personal career achievements than to the organisation (Kim et al., 2016). Researchers Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) appeal to all human resource managers to urgently assess their employees' organisational commitment and career adaptability, as it significantly influences their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

Research findings by Riggio (2009) imply that organisational commitment and career adaptability are influenced by various factors, which include the type and variety of work, job autonomy, level of responsibility related to the job, remuneration and reward, promotion and career advancement within the organisation. Bessick and Naicker (2013) also found that work-life policies, work-life conflict, poor salaries, supervisor support and the employee-supervisor relationship are key factors for attracting and retaining skilled and talented employees. Suman and Srivastava (2012) agree that employees' attachment and commitment are not only associated with the organisation but also with the immediate superior, who in turn has a significant impact on employees' intention to leave or to remain with the organisation. Therefore, managers should not make any assumption about employees' commitment to the organisation based only on their connection to a particular employee group (Coetzee & Botha, 2012).

Mercurio (2015) posits that as human resource managers and practitioners seek to build organisational commitment and career adaptability, is it important to focus on what current practices are in place to secure that emotional bond to the organisation and thus increase the retention of employees. Many organisations only focus on retention factors such as positions, benefits, salaries and career advancement structures as a means of building organisational commitment and career adaptability, thus they may be overlooking what research has found to be possible antecedent components (Mercurio, 2015). Mercurio (2015) further highlights that the affective emotional bond employees have with their organisation develops stronger organisational commitment and career adaptability and therefore recommends that HR practices should consider affective commitment when developing possible retention strategies and practices, as it is critical component of the retention of skilled, talented and valuable employees.

Other researchers make additional recommendations for implementing training and coaching interventions that directly focus on developing employees' career adaptability (Spurk, Kauffeld, Meinecke, & Ebner, 2016). Spurk et al. (2016) also suggest that these training and coaching interventions should form part of the overall HR strategy to make sure that employees feel safe within their current job and future career path. Chong and Leong (2015) strongly believe that human resource managers should also consider implementing rotation programmes for their employees in order to explore the career environment. This will help employees to develop their career adaptability. These practical recommendations will also be helpful for employees who wish to develop their loyalty and commitment to the organisation and their future careers (Spurk et al., 2016). In addition, it will aid employees to change or expand job responsibilities for the future (Chong & Leong, 2015) and in turn increase their skills and commitment.

Ferreira (2012) has confirmed that career adaptable individuals are more likely to have stronger attachment and loyalty to their organisation, therefore the closer the match between employees and the organisation, the more likely employees will be committed to the organisation and the more likely they will remain with the organisation (Van Dyk et al., 2013). It therefore seems that a positive relationship exists between organisational commitment and retention. Maggiori et al. (2013) also posit that career adaptability exerts positive effects in the organisation and therefore employees who are more satisfied with their job environments feel more empowered and will be able to cope with their working environmental challenges (Fiori et al., 2015). Career adaptability has therefore become a pivotal factor in the organisation that facilitates successful adjustment and proactive career behaviours (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014b), as research evidence has shown that organisational commitment and career adaptability influence the turnover and retention of employees (Ferreira et al., 2013; Savickas et al., 2009).

In conclusion it must be noted that managers and human resource practitioners are responsible for providing employees with career development support, especially for talent retention and organisational success (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013). Other researchers agree that both organisational commitment and career adaptability have therefore become vital components for career success (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014b). It is therefore imperative that individuals develop career self-management attributes and competencies that will enhance their career resilience, career adaptability and organisational commitment (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014), which potentially could optimise individuals' retention by the organisation (Coetzee, Schreuder, & Tladinyane, 2014).

2.4 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY

This section addresses step 4 of the literature review by integrating the theoretical constructs organisational commitment and career adaptability. The purpose of the literature study was to determine whether a relationship exists between organisational commitment and career adaptability and whether the demographic variables influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. The constructs of organisational commitment and career adaptability were conceptualised and the theories underlying these constructs were discussed. It would thus appear that there are close links between organisational commitment and career adaptability at a conceptual level, which is evident in the work of Meyer and Allen (1997) and Savickas and Porfeli (2012).

The theoretical integration of organisational commitment and career adaptability, shown in **Figure 2.3** below, involves a theoretical comparison of these two constructs by differentiating between these constructs, their sub-dimensions and the demographic variables influencing them.

Figure 2.3. Overview of the Integration Between Organisational Commitment and Career Adaptability

Employee retention has become a major concern for human resource managers and employers, and has been highlighted as an ongoing challenge for contemporary organisations (Abdulkareem, Chauhan, & Maitama, 2015). 21st century employees are more educated and intelligent than employees in the past (Salacuse, 2007), therefore the traditional retention

management methods are no longer the only way of retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Turnover is costly to any organisation, even more so when skilled, talented and valuable employees leave the organisation (Park & Shaw, 2013) to immigrate to more developed countries (World Economic Forum, World Bank & African Development Bank, 2011). Human resource managers and industrial psychologists in South Africa are thus increasingly faced with pressures to contribute more significantly to the retention of its top talent and the success of the organisation (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2011).

Monama (2015) states that organisations and employers around the world need to be more creative in handling this serious problem; they need to identify and evaluate the various retention factors and understand the reasons why employees decide to stay with or leave their organisations. HR managers of organisations should have effective retention policies, strategies and practices to retain existing employees. Therefore, retention management is the process of retaining the existing competent of skilled and talented employees and encouraging new employees to join the organisation (Kaur & Vijay, 2016). Nawaz and Pangil (2016) view the direct financial payment (salary and benefits) that employees receive as part of the employment contract as a significant focus for ascertaining employee commitment, as it directly influences employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Almas (2014) suggests that retention factors should include the following: (1) attractive competitive compensation packages that should be provided directly in the form of salary and bonuses, (2) indirect compensation in the form of paid leave, (3) health and life insurance, and (4) retirement plans that will encourage employee commitment and retention.

Other retention factors such as organisational structures, values, job characteristics, supervisor support and work-family policies all influence employees' commitment to the organisation (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). Karatepe (2016) further suggests family support as another important retention factor resource that positively influences employee commitment to the organisation. Organisations need to offer valid reasons for employees to stay committed to the organisation and dispense efforts that are beyond that of a job description (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015).

Coetzee and Schreuder (2014) believe that employees' career adaptability is an important career meta-capacity in modern career development, as it leads to clear career identity and deeper self-awareness (Ellison & Schreuder, 2000; Ndzube, 2013), and those employees who are not adaptable tend to seek careers outside of the organisation (Kim et al., 2016). It can also be implied that when employees perceive good training programmes for their career development within the organisation, they are less likely to leave (Abdulkareem, et al., 2015;

A'yuninnisa & Saptoto, 2015; Chew & Chan, 2008; Dardar, Jusoh, & Rasli, 2012; Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Yean & Yahya, 2013). Karavardar (2014) argues that organisations should focus on career development and growth and introduce career concern policies that could create improved psychological contracts with all its employees, in order to retain employees. Karavardar (2014) further indicates that career management practices are important as employees need to take personal responsibility for their own career development and growth, whether working in the current organisation or in other organisations. Performance appraisal is a vital human resource development tool as it will enhance employee performance and competencies, it helps to identify training needs for career development, assists organisations to identify high achievers, distributes recognition and rewards (such as merit, pay) fairly, identifies career promotions, which evidently will significantly increase organisational commitment, career development and retention (Al-Shuaibi, Shamsudin, & Subramaniam, 2013). Organisations that allow employees to takes an opportunistic approach to career advancement will encourage them to pursue careers within the organisation and attract potential employees who will develop sound career adaptability and organisational commitment (Kim et al., 2016).

The support of co-workers in the organisation has been found to be one resource that influences employee commitment positively. This seems to be important for employees in the retail sector, especially for the younger employees who value friendship in the workplace (Tews, Michel, & Ellingson, 2013). Organisations that have more family-friendly policies in place, such as flexitime and onsite-child care, can better meet employees' personal and domestic needs, thus reducing conflict between the work and personal roles; this in turn increases organisational commitment and retention (Dixon & Sagas, 2007).

Industrial psychologists and human resource managers need to remember that retention factors alone are not the solution to organisational commitment and career adaptability (Kim et al., 2016). Michel et al.'s (2012) research findings on customer service employees indicate that numerous work environment factors influence the extent to which customer contact employees are motivated to perform their roles efficiently and effectively, and continue to remain loyal, dedicated and committed to the organisation. Salacuse (2013) recommends managerial leadership should be used more persuasively; instead of direction, managers should move away from authoritative ways of managing to the use of more coaching and facilitation styles of leading. These differences may have implications for the implementation of retention strategies and practices in the retail sector.

Nawaz and Pangil (2016) state that the supporting literature would seem to purport that organisational commitment and career adaptability are two of the strongest and most imperative

predictors of retention. Nawaz and Pangil (2016) also posit that organisational commitment and career adaptability are mediating variables on the relationship between retention factors, which include salary, training and development and career management practices for career growth. Organisational commitment and career adaptability will enable human resource managers to attract and retain skilled and talented employees as they focus on the reasons why employees decide to stay with or to leave the organisation (Karatepe, 2016; Mitchell, Holtom, & Lee, 2001). Karatepe (2016) posits that turnover within the retail sector is very expensive, thus retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees is crucial for all retail organisations. Other researchers claim that retaining talented frontline customer service employees who are expected to execute and accomplish excellent customer service can help to manage both the direct and indirect costs associated with employee turnover (Robinson, Kralj, Solnet, Goh, & Callan, 2014). Ahammad, Tarba, Liu, and Glaister (2016) therefore state that employee retention is essential for maintaining the knowledge embedded in the organisation, as these employees are critical for the sustainable competitive advantage of the organisation. Retail organisations therefore require creative HR strategies and practices to manage and retain their best talent (Almas, 2014).

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the way in which the 21st century contemporary workplace has created immense changes for both the employer and the employee, and the impact these changes have had on the relationship between them. Globalisation and technology have also resulted in major changes in the employment relationship. The long-term employment relationship has shifted from being a long-life relationship to a more flexible, temporary and casual relationship, where training and development as well as career progression are no longer considered in many organisations. Thus, employees have shifted their focus from organisational commitment to being more committed to their own personal career achievements. These changes, in turn, have caused huge changes in careers, which have shifted from the traditional career to the "new boundaryless" career. These changes are forcing individuals entering the workplace to be more flexible and adaptable agents, and subsequently less committed to the organisation.

CHAPTER 3: RETENTION FACTORS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section conceptualises retention factors and provides an overview of Herzberg's (1959) two factor theory, Yazinski's (2009) twelve retention factors and Döckel's (2003) retention factor model. This section also includes a discussion of the variables influencing retention factors and their implications for talent retention. This chapter then concludes by explaining the theoretical relationship between the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

3.1.1 Theoretical background to retention factors

According to the researcher Temkar (2013), approximately 50% of retail organisations struggle to retain their employees, due to the workplace becoming an unfavourable working environment (Markey, Ravenswood, & Webber, 2015). Kaur and Vijay (2016) posit that attrition in the retail industry creates huge losses for organisations, impacting negatively on the entire retail operation. Organisations are also faced with radically transforming labour markets that are being reshaped as a result of globalisation, unemployment and underemployment, precarious work and rapidly changing technology (Blunstein, 2013; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Van Horn, 2014). Therefore organisations are now required to operate in globally competitive markets, which increases the demand for more knowledgeable, competent, skilled and committed employees in a variety of jobs (Nel & Neale-Shutte, 2013; Tran, 2013), thus having a positive impact on the retention of employees. Organisations should actively attempt to combat this major problem in order to retain their skilled, talented and valuable employees (Mitchell et al., 2001; Obeidat & Abdallah, 2014).

South Africa has also been experiencing a serious loss of skilled and talented employees in a number of critical industries (Grobler & De Bruyn, 2012), resulting in these organisations now experiencing shortages of skilled and talented employees, thus increasing employee turnover (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013). Researchers agree that these shortages of critical and scarce skills are major obstacles for job creation and economic growth, specifically in South Africa (Bhorat, Meyer, & Mlatsheni, 2002; Kraak, 2008; Rasool & Botha, 2011). Bhattacharyya (2015) appeals to organisations to retain their skilled and talented employees, as skills and talent are major drivers of business success. Hence, organisations are now redirecting their performance and career management systems to develop and retain their skill and talent pipeline (Brundage & Koziel, 2010).

Retaining key talent in a global market characterised by skills shortages is also imperative in order for organisations to sustain business performance in this fast-changing economic environment (Brundage & Koziel, 2010; Chabault et al., 2012; Doh, Stumpf, & Tymon, 2011; Schiller, 2011). Van Dyk et al. (2013) further posit that organisations should focus on retaining knowledgeable, skilled and talented employees, as the retention of this experience and talent is an important contributor to organisational sustainability and competitiveness (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014; Mohlala et al., 2012; Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012).

In this era of rapid change, keeping pace with globalisation and securing organisational commitment in order to retain experienced, skilled and talented employees have become key challenges for organisations (Kalyar, Rafi, & Ahmad, 2012; Suman & Srivastava, 2012). Van Dyk (2011) therefore urges contemporary South African organisations to consider retaining critical and scarce skills to be their top priority. Organisations now need to understand the reasons why employees leave, which should include factors influencing turnover intentions and retention in order for industrial psychologists, human resource practitioners and human resource managers to contribute positively to the design of organisational retention strategies and practices (Stoltz, 2014; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

3.1.2 Conceptualisation of retention factors

There are many different opinions available in the existing literature on the definition of employee retention and what approach to follow when defining a retention strategy and identifying the type of employee to retain (Mohlala et al, 2012). McKeown (2002) posits that there is no clear-cut definition of employee retention because managers' views on retention differ. Deo (2014) describes retention as an organisation's ability to keep its employees, a notion that can be described as the voluntary measures taken by an organisation in order to create a healthy working environment which will have a long-term effect on the retention of employees (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, and Baert (2011) clearly define retention as the effort by an employer to keep desirable employees in order to meet business objectives and goals. Mengel (2001) refers to retention as the organisation's effort to keep in employment those employees of whom the organisation has a positive evaluation and who would only terminate employment from the organisation through voluntary resignation.

Retention factors refer to an organisation's effort to create a working environment that encourages employees to remain with their current organisation (Sandhya & Kumar, 2014). Cascio (2003) describes retention factors as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation, including: (1) rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively; (2) ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and

managers; and (3) maintaining a safe, healthy work environment. Frank, Finnegan, and Taylor (2004) then defined retention factors as the effort by an employer to keep desirable employees in order to meet business objectives and goals. Frank et al. (2004) thus support Cascio (2003) in this regard, by emphasising the importance of a working environment that engages employees for the long term and that keeps desired employees in order to meet business objectives and goals.

Browell (2003) describes employee retention as keeping those employee members that managers and organisations want to keep and not losing them for whatever reason to the competing organisation. This definition of Browell (2003) has also recently been used in the study by Mohlala et al. (2012). Browell (2003) further explains that key employees are those who hold positions that are crucial for the success of the organisation. McKeown (2002) expands on Browell's view on employee retention by mentioning that retention factors should be aimed only at attracting and retaining top performing, skilled and talented employees and not at those with lower performance. McKeown (2002) then defines top performing employees as the type of employee who adds value, contributes to the overall success of the organisation and inspires other employees. McKeown (2002) further explains that some managers view employee retention factors as reducing the employee turnover figure to an acceptable level, while others think retention factors are about compensation and benefits; still others think of it as a component of culture, that is, how employees are treated within the organisation.

Ferreira (2012) identifies employee retention challenges in South Africa as follows: organisational culture, business dynamics, diversity, a new demographic employee pool, ethnicity, language, education, opportunities, competitiveness, personal characteristics, self-centredness and exclusiveness. Researchers are in agreement that the retention of employees is influenced by their psychological attributes, which include individuals' ability to adapt to and deal proactively with changes and uncertainty in the contemporary world of work (Ferreira, 2010, 2012; Savickas, 2011; Savickas et al., 2009).

George (2015) indicates that there are numerous retention factors that influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Academic research conducted by Mahal (2012) identified retention factors such as recruitment and selection, remuneration, training and development, career development and career progression prospects. Presbitero, Roxas, and Chadee (2015) further include non-financial compensation, quality working environment, continued job stress, job dissatisfaction and low organisational commitment (Deo, 2014) as retention factors that influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Other researchers agree with Döckel (2003), who identified retention factors such as compensation, good communication, provision for challenging work, the opportunity to be

promoted and to learn, as well as a healthy work-life balance (Deery, 2008; Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen, & Moeyaert, 2009), which will enhance employee retention.

Well-documented previous research indicates that remuneration as a retention factor plays a very important role in the retention of employees (Haines, Jalette, & Larose, 2010). Researchers Terera and Ngirande (2014) agree that compensation is a fundamental component of the financial remuneration that an organisation should offer to its employees. Further research has confirmed that compensation is one of the most identified factors when individuals decide on and describe their employer of choice (Terera & Ngirande, 2014).

The term "job autonomy" can be described as contemporary work design theories which include task and pace autonomy as well as decision-making (Hee & Ling, 2011). It is considered an essential retention factor for retaining employees (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013). It has been long speculated by researchers that when an organisation grants employees job autonomy, they may regard these discretions and freedoms as indications that the organisation values their inputs and respects them (Park & Searcy, 2012), which will positively influence their decision to remain with the organisation. Employees who perceive that they are empowered and supported by their supervisors are also more likely to remain loyal and committed to the organisation (Mahal, 2012). Supervisor-employee support occurs when employees perceive themselves to be empowered by their immediate supervisors and it has a direct impact on employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (Mahal, 2012). Deo (2014) further postulates that empowered employees feel like they are a part of the organisation; even when faced with pressure from other employees who intend to leave the organisation they are likely to remain (Deo, 2014).

Training can be described as imparting new knowledge, competencies and skills to employees, and in the process meeting both organisational and employee needs in an effective and efficient manner (Deo, 2014). Training and development has become an essential retention factor which encourages continued learning and has also been found to be a characteristic of high retention organisational cultures (George, 2015). Training and development opportunities have been shown to increase employees' feelings of competence and self-efficacy (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). Deo (2014) further states that training and development promote more clearly defined job roles, minimise job stress and revitalise the human capital within the organisation. Trained employees are more motivated which will encourage retention; however they are also more likely to leave the organisation since they have as a result become more marketable on the labour market and this will impede organisational commitment and retention (Hee & Ling, 2011).Therefore, identifying and meeting the development needs of employees is critical when it comes to the retention of outstanding talented performers, especially those

employees with growth opportunities for potential managerial positions (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2015). Presbitero et al. (2015) posit that superior training and development as well as learning programmes have been shown to lead to superior employee satisfaction, increased productivity and increased profitability for organisations, thus leading to higher employee commitment and retention.

Davis (2015) claims that in the contemporary world of work, the organisational hierarchical career is dead and has now been replaced by the protean and boundaryless careers. The concept of the new career has been altered by an emerging emphasis on continuous learning; these new career patterns involve new requirements for organisations aspiring to provide career developmental opportunities for employees (Noe et al., 2015). Career development and opportunities involve the extent to which employees are provided with the opportunities to further their careers (Presbitero et al., 2015), as well as their potential to reach higher career levels within the organisation, which will influence their career adaptability, organisational commitment and retention (George, 2015).

Work-life balance has become an increasingly important retention factor for the current employee-employer relationship (George, 2015), thus indicating a strong desire in employees to achieve success in both their professional and their personal lives. George (2015) further posits that work-life balance is the reason why the current generation of professional workers is demanding flexible work schedules, and this would ultimately be the deciding factor for employees' long-term commitment to the organisation (Temkar, 2013).

The concept of retention factors was conceptualised in this section. A number of theoretical models and theories will now be discussed.

3.1.3 Theoretical models of retention factors

For the purpose of this study, the models that have created the most research and that best explain employee retention factors are those of Herzberg (1959) and Yazinski (2009) as well as Döckel's (2003) retention factor model.

3.1.3.1 Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory

Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory (cited in Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005) provides a theoretical background for retention. Herzberg (1959) argued that employees are motivated by internal values rather than values that are external to the work. In other words, Herzberg (cited in Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005) believed that motivation is internally generated and is

propelled by variables that are intrinsic to the work. Herzberg termed these variables "motivators".

Herzberg's intrinsic variables (motivators) include: (1) achievement, (2) recognition, (3) the work itself, (4) responsibility, (5) achievement, and (6) personal growth (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005). Equally, certain factors cause dissatisfying experiences for employees and largely result from non-job variables (extrinsic). These factors are referred to by Herzberg as hygiene factors, which although they do not motivate employees, must be present in the organisation to make employees happy. These dis-satisfiers (hygiene or maintenance) are: (1) company policies and administration, (2) supervision, (3) work conditions, (4) relationship with supervisor, (5) personal life, (6) relationship with peers, (7) salary, (8) status, (9) security and (10) relationship with subordinates (Bassett-Jones & Lloyd, 2005).

Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) suggest that Herzberg's two-factor theory (motivation-hygiene) is based on the assumption that dissatisfaction leading to the avoidance of work and satisfaction leading to the attraction of work do not represent the end points of a single continuum. Instead, two separate *unipolar continua* are required to reflect employees' dual orientation to work, hence the two-factor theory (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009).

Owens' (2007) analysis illustrates that things that make people happy at work are not simply the opposite of things that make them unhappy, as they are different in nature. Organisations cannot just satisfy employees by removing the cause of the dissatisfaction (e.g. giving more benefits). Owens (2007) indicates therefore that the opposite of dissatisfaction according to the theory is not satisfaction but rather no dissatisfaction (e.g. salary, working conditions, and attitudes of management) can be sources of dissatisfaction. It can therefore be concluded that although improving salaries and working conditions as well as a concerned management might reduce dissatisfaction, it is not the ultimate approach to motivate employees (Owens, 2007).

Herzberg suggests that employees are more motivated by internal values than by values that are external to the workplace. The perspective adopted by this research appears to differ in this view. Hence, Döckel's (2003) retention factors for employee retention need to be explored in more detail.

3.1.3.2 Yazinski's (2009) twelve retention factors

Yazinski (2009) presents a brief introduction to and a review of the twelve retention factors that the organisation works towards in order to preserve its most important asset, its employees. Mbugua, Waigonjo, and Njeru (2015) highlight that the literature review on employee retention

has shown that various performance management indicators such as competitive salary, performance appraisal, training and development, career development and the reward system, among others, have been found to influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation, which ultimately affects employee retention.

3.1.3.2.1 Skills recognition

It has been recognised globally, especially in light of the high employee turnover rate, that the retention of skilled employees is of serious concern to managers and organisations alike (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Increasingly, job applicants are first considering organisations that focus on encouraging employee education, input, teamwork and growth and development, which go beyond the traditional compensation and benefit packages offered by the organisation (Yazinski, 2009).

Yazinski (2009) hence posits that an effective retention strategy for employees at any age is to provide skills recognition for personal job accomplishments. Employees who perceive that their organisation supports training and skills development in order to find better solutions for work-related problems will feel obligated to display a higher level of loyalty and commitment towards their organisation, which in turn will increase retention (Brunetto et al., 2012; Teck-Hong & Hong-Kean, 2012).

3.1.3.2.2 Learning and working climate

Hall (2013) posits that organisations in the contemporary career environment should enhance their employees' retention by placing enormous focus on learning for the long-term success and sustainability of the organisation. Sinha (2012) describes the concept of learning and working climate as (1) guidance and appreciation at work, (2) the pressure of work, (3) the amount of empowerment and the responsibility that employees experience, (4) choice in the job tasks and development, (5) provision for challenging and meaningful work, and (6) advancement and development opportunities.

Du Toit and Coetzee (2012) found that learning through applying new knowledge and skills, as well as development in the workplace, is related to employees' perceptions of career success. Career adaptability is an important self-regulatory psychosocial resource that will enhance employees' continuous learning (Bezuidenhout, 2011). More recent research findings have shown that lifelong learning is positively associated with high levels of career adaptability (Coetzee et al., 2014).

3.1.3.2.3 Job flexibility

Job flexibility focuses on scheduling variations that accommodate individual work times, workload and responsibilities and create a balance around family responsibilities (Pleffer, 2007). Job flexibility is therefore vital for employee retention at any age (Boomer Authority, 2009), as it empowers employees to build a healthier balance between work and personal obligations (Eyster, Johnson, & Toder, 2008). Employees who have job flexibility options have higher levels of concentration, mental capacity and productivity, thus resulting in an increase in loyalty and dedication and higher levels of individual commitment to the organisation (Prenda & Stahl, 2001).

3.1.3.2.4 Cost effectiveness

Recent studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between cutbacks and employees' attitudes in the United Kingdom, to ascertain whether cutbacks have an impact on loyalty and commitment toward the organisation (Conway, Kiefer, Hartley, & Briner, 2014; Kiefer, Hartley, Conway, & Briner, 2015). In times of austerity and economic crisis, South African organisations are also starting to cut back on expenses to improve organisational efficiency (Bozeman, 2010; Pandey, 2010; Raudla, Savi, & Randma-Liiv, 2013). This is standard practice that most European countries are already accustomed to (Kickert, 2012).

Kanwar et al. (2012) found that a satisfied employee has a positive effect and desirable work ethics, which lead to enhanced efficiency and increased productivity, ultimately leading to lower absenteeism, improved employee turnover and reduced hiring costs, which in turn reduce employee retention (Kanwar et al., 2012). However, Raudla et al. (2013) express concern that cutbacks to save costs may result in decreased job satisfaction, influencing staff morale negatively and thus increasing work-related stress and increasing employee intention to leave the organisation.

3.1.3.2.5 Training

Yazinski (2009) found that, statistically, training is a critical factor for both personal reasons, which focus on behaviour, and professional reasons, which focus on technical development, which is a key retention factor. João and Coetzee (2012) believe that training and career development opportunities are fundamental for employees with critical and scarce skills. Meyer and Allen (1997) claim that training provides employees with opportunities for personal development and career advancement; it leads to employees believing that they are being cherished by the organisation, which increases their loyalty and commitment to the organisation and positively affects retention. Dhar (2015) concludes that organisational support for employee participation in training programmes increases the perception of accessibility to

training programmes among employees, which ultimately relates to employees developing feelings of attachment to their organisation and impacts retention positively.

3.1.3.2.6 Benefits

Sinha and Sinha (2012) highlight that researchers always investigate the relationship between benefits and employee retention, as it is often this variable that influences their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Coetzee et al. (2014) state that perception of fair rewards creates long-term organisational commitment and this will lead to higher levels of retention. Therefore employees who are provided with benefits (e.g. increased salary, bonuses and promotions) develop stronger feelings of loyalty and commitment towards their organisation (Zaitouni, Sawalha, & Sharif, 2011) and positively influences employees' intention to remain with the organisation.

3.1.3.2.7 Career development

Sinha (2012) explains that career planning forms part of an employee's development programme; it is therefore not only intended to help employees believe that the organisation is investing in them, but also to help employees manage many aspects of their lives and deal with the fact that there is now a clear promotion and career path. Research has shown that employees who feel positive about the possibility of career advancement will feel emotionally attached to the organisation (João, 2010; Van Dyk, & Coetzee, 2012), thus influencing retention positively.

3.1.3.2.8 Supervisor-subordinate relationship

Döckel (2003) states that supervisor support can be defined as supervisory behaviours that sustain employee innovation. He found that supervisor support has a direct effect on affective commitment. Research findings in relation to social support in the workplace show that higher support from co-workers and supervisors is linked to lower turnover intentions across numerous occupational groups (Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007; Ng & Sorensen, 2008) and facilitates the management of both work and career roles (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011). Employees with critical and scarce skills often leave South African organisations because of poor relationships between the employee and his or her immediate manager (Muteswa & Ortlepp, 2011). Sinha (2012) highlights that both manager and supervisors must therefore take on new roles as coaches and mentors in order to help employees with their training and development and to support them with their career development and progress. Gentry and Sparks (2012) further indicate that managers need to create supportive cultures in order to attract, develop and retain skilled and talented employees.

3.1.3.2.9 Compensation

Compensation includes monetary reward such as a competitive salary, performance bonuses and scarce skills remuneration, as well as non-monetary rewards or benefits, such as extended leave, promotions, childcare facilities and recreation (Mokoka, Oosthuizen, & Ehlers, 2010). Sinha and Sinha (2012) posit that it is a distinct challenge for organisations to create a compensation strategy and structure that will support employee development. The compensation strategy and structure should focus on fair, competitive salary and benefits, as well as on growth opportunities and career development, as these have greater potential for retaining employees (Brundage & Koziel, 2010). Kuo (2013) agrees that a comprehensive compensation and reward structure and strategy augmented by an effectual system of disbursement, can play an effective role in attracting the best candidates, thus shaping employee behaviour and performance outcomes and creating employee retention.

3.1.3.2.10 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to the emotional and functional attachment to the organisation, which includes factors such as a strong belief in the organisational values, objectives and goals, willingness to exert one's self on behalf of these values, objectives and goals and a strong desire to continue working for the organisation (Mensah & Adjei, 2015). Organisational commitment has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction, job performance and employee retention (Yazinski, 2009). Mclaggen et al. (2013) believe that organisations that wish to develop employee commitment to the organisation should provide supportive working environments, which in turn will create a mutually beneficial environment for both parties.

3.1.3.2.11 Communication

Communication, whether upwards, downwards or horizontal, plays a critical role in organisational settings (Raina & Roebuck, 2016) and effective communication helps in building successful work-based teams (Sandy, 2012). Sinha (2012) found that effective communication improves employee identification with the organisation and builds a culture of openness and trust. Bordin, Bartman, and Casimir (2006) therefore recommend that supervisors should be sensitive to the needs of subordinates, should be approachable and understanding, and should be empathetic listeners and good communicators. Stumpf and Hartman (1984) suggest that a decision-making process that encourages member participation or a communication process which keeps the employees informed and engaged with respect to valued aspects and information of the organisation may influence employee responsibility and role involvement and therefore increase organisational commitment and employee retention. Ghina (2012) posits that when employees are participating in high organisational communication then organisational commitment and employee retention will be enhanced.

3.1.3.2.12 Employee motivation

Performance feedback plays an important role because employees become demotivated when not receiving feedback from their immediate supervisors (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011), resulting in employees with critical and scarce skills leaving South African organisations because of decreased morale and motivation (Muteswa & Ortlepp, 2011). Sinha (2012) claims that skilled and talented employees have more options than ever before and are most likely to leave the organisation if they are not motivated and satisfied with the job content or the organisation. Raina and Roebuck (2016) posit that providing feedback regularly will help employees assess their performance and identify their improvement areas, resulting in motivated employees becoming more attached to the organisation and consequently increasing employee retention.

Bogler and Nir (2015) further indicate that the feeling of role overload produces adverse consequences for employees, especially their motivation at work. Rasool and Botha (2011) posit that these psychological issues impact negatively on employee morale and motivation in the workplace, which in turn poses a risk for many organisations in terms of organisational commitment and retention. Singh (2012) maintains that in order to attract and retain employees on the basis of meaningful work, organisations now have to find competing dimensions within their jobs.

Although Yazinski's (2009) twelve retention factors are closely related to Döckel's (2003) retention factors, there is a minimal focus on training and development and career aspirations to enhance the employee retention. Hence this model will not be suitable for this study.

3.1.3.3 Döckel's (2003) retention factor model

For the purpose of this study, the following critical factors are believed to encourage organisational commitment and career adaptability based on individuals' satisfaction with those factors. The retention model proposed by Döckel (2003) consists of six factors, which have been identified as appropriate to the retail sector. These factors include the following: (1) **compensation**, (2) **job characteristics**, (3) **training and development opportunities**, (4) **supervisor suppor**t, (4) **career opportunities**, and (6) **work-life balance** (Döckel, 2003). Researchers state that these critical factors relate positively to organisational commitment, career adaptability and employee retention (Döckel, 2003; Du Toit & Coetzee, 2012; João & Coetzee, 2012; Van Dyk, Coetzee, & Takawira, 2013).

The six critical retention factors as proposed by Döckel (2003) are illustrated in **Figure 3.1** below and will subsequently be explained.

Figure 3.1. The Six Critical Retention Factors (Döckel, 2003)

3.1.3.3.1 Compensation

Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) describe compensation as both monetary and non-monetary reward by the organisation, in return for the work employees do. Compensation refers to the extent to which employees perceive their remuneration to be appropriate to their job role and responsibilities and that it is market related (Coetzee et al., 2014).

Sutherland (2011) posits that compensation is a major driver of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee retention. Khan (2010) on the other hand argues then that most managers believe that money is the prime reason why employees are leaving one employer

for another. Milkovich, Newman, and Gerhart (2011) maintain that employees' attitude and perception of work are influenced by the reward system of the organisation. According to Bhattacharyya (2015), compensation levels are therefore determined on the basis of levels of responsibility and the market levels prevailing in the industry.

Döckel et al. (2006) claim that although money seems to be the main incentive to attract employees it is not sufficient for retention (Zaitouni et al., 2011). A study by Mohlala et al. (2012) found that only when compensation is competitive will financial rewards become less of a powerful retention factor. Zaitouni et al. (2011) therefore suggest providing employees with other benefits such as increased salary, bonuses and promotions, through which they will develop strong feelings of loyalty and commitment towards the organisation, thus increasing employees' intention to remain with the organisation.

3.1.3.3.2 Job characteristics

Job characteristics refer to elements such as skills variety, job autonomy, challenging work, solving interesting work-related problems, flexibility and the freedom to structure own work (Döckel, 2003). According to the Oldman and Hackman model (2010), core job characteristics such as skill variety, task identity and task significance influence employees' critical psychological state in terms of meaningful work and feelings of responsibility for work outcomes (Oldman & Hackman, 2010).

Employees are likely to remain with the organisation when they experience high levels of skills variety in their jobs (De Vos & Meganck, 2009; Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007), as such employees use these knowledge, competencies and skills to develop their ability to connect positively with the organisation (Tladinyane, 2012). Further studies have also found that specific job characteristics such as skills variety and job autonomy influence employees' level of loyalty and commitment to the organisation (João & Coetzee, 2012). Researchers Bontis, Richards, and Serenko (2011) found that autonomy and challenging work contribute positively to employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention. Döckel (2003) also believes that job characteristics will increase the retention of employees as feelings of increased competence and meaningfulness of work will develop greater loyalty and commitment towards the organisation.

3.1.3.3.3 Training and development opportunities

Dhar (2015) posits that effective training programmes may lead to employees forming opinions about their organisation in that they feel that it demonstrates care for the employees and a willingness to invest in them. This in turn will encourage higher levels of organisational commitment among employees and increase employee retention (Brunetto et al., 2012; Tech-

Hong & Yong-Kean, 2012). Previous research has shown that training and development opportunities significantly predict career adaptability and reduce employees' intention to leave the organisation (João, 2010; Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden, & Bravo, 2011; Morrow, 2011; Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Lui, 2010).

The purpose of training is to correct performance issues and to enhance specific skills, which in turn will empower employees with the skills needed for current and future job requirements (Coetzee et al., 2014). Providing training and development opportunities for employees is an essential investment in their development and growth (Döckel, 2003; Kraimer et al., 2011) thus creating employee retention. Dhar (2015) states that many researchers have agreed that the perceived benefits of training and development programmes affect the commitment levels of employees, which has a positive impact on their level of commitment and retention. João and Coetzee (2012) emphasise that training and development opportunities are essential for the survival of talented employees with scarce skills, which in turn will enhance their loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Ghazanfar, Chuanmin, Bashir, & Yang, 2012).

3.1.3.3.4 Supervisor support

Döckel (2003) defined supervisor support as supervisory behaviour that sustains employee innovation and includes the recognition and feedback that supervisors give to the employees, therefore managers must ensure that supervisors are well trained to guide and support employees (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012). The organisational psychology literature conceptualises supervisor support as an important form of social support in the workplace (Kossek al., 2011). It is believed that employees' value feedback, therefore providing employees with performance feedback may help bolster positive attitudes towards the organisation, which in turn will help prevent early intentions to leave the organisation (Döckel et al., 2006).

Morrow (2011) posits that different research studies indicate that supervisor support has a positive effect on the retention of skilled and talented employees, and has a direct effect on affective commitment as it make employees feel important, resulting in higher affective commitment in the long term, thus positively influencing employee retention (Döckel, 2003; Morrow, 2011). Van Dyk (2012) also found that supportive relationships such as coaching, mentoring and supervisor support strengthen the relationship between employees and their organisations. Mclaggan et al. (2013) posit that employees experience a sense of achievement when their supervisors acknowledge their hard work, thus increasing employees' organisational commitment and their intention to stay with the organisation.

3.1.3.3.5 Career opportunities

Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) refer to career opportunities as both the internal (promotions or moving into different positions within the organisation) and external (career opportunities outside the organisation) career options employees have at their disposal. As organisations have shifted from paternalistic career management practices, employees are becoming increasingly responsible for navigating their own way in organisations that do not offer clearly defined career paths (Converse et al., 2012). Therefore, Govaerts et al. (2011) found that employees who experience appreciative learning climates within the organisation are motivated to remain with the organisation.

According to Döckel et al. (2006), organisational commitment is influenced positively when organisations create internal development opportunities and promotions, resulting in career opportunities that have important positive implications for employees' organisational commitment and retention factors (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012; João, 2010). Further research findings show that perceived career opportunities significantly predict job satisfaction, job performance, commitment, career adaptability and reduce intentions to leave the organisation (João, 2010; Kraimer et al., 2011; Morrow, 2011; Weng et al., 2010).

Dhar's (2015) findings suggest that when employees participate in training programmes it helps them to develop their abilities, competencies, skills and networks, hence improving their performance. It further helps them to identify career objectives and goals which will give them an opportunity to pursue new career goals and career paths, and in turn positively influencing employee retention (Dhar, 2015).

3.1.3.3.6 Work-life balance

Döckel (2003) refers to work-life balance as a balance between one's personal life and one's work schedule, with minimum conflict between these multiple roles, in order to fulfil both personal and work activities. Managing these multiple roles can be very challenging for employees (Calvona, 2015; Zacher et al., 2012), and competing responsibilities in these domains are associated with greater intentions to leave an organisation (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003). Parkes and Langford (2008) further describe work-life balance as an employee's ability to meet their work and family commitments as well as other non-work activities and responsibilities. Straub (2012) posits that it is therefore important that employees balance their life roles.

Workplace flexibility (e.g. job sharing, flexitime, and telecommuting) arrangements could further assist employees to balance their work and home lives better, resulting in organisations being perceived as concerned employers, which could result in employee retention (Phillips &

Gully, 2012). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) found that work-family balance is still difficult to achieve; even though organisations have relatively high job autonomy and scheduled flexibility, the balance between work and personal or family life still remain a critical issue for employees owing to high job pressures and heavy workloads (Watanabe & Falci, 2016). Döckel (2003) clearly states that employees' attitudes will be more positive towards their organisations when managers and supervisors, who are powerful change agents, start making the workplace more family-friendly through their decision-making powers and influences (Straub, 2012).

Retention challenges are related to employee well-being (Radler & Ryff, 2010; Rothausen & Henderson, 2014), as employee well-being is regarded as a predictor of employee retention (Sears, Shi, Coberley, & Pope, 2013). There seems to be consensus, according to Kim and Mullins (2016), that work-family programmes are becoming a necessity in organisations in order to alleviate employee stress levels from work-family imbalance and to attract and retain employees. Research findings show that if a balance is attained between family and personal life and work commitments employees' loyalty and commitment toward the organisation and ultimately retention will be enhanced (Coetzee et al., 2014).

Döckel's (2003) retention factors are best suited to this research study as reasons why employees choose to leave or to remain with the organisation, are closely linked theoretically to practical solutions to increase retention of employees. Döckel's (2003) model is very practical and can easily be applied to the retail sector. Hence this model will be best suited to this study.

3.2. Variables influencing retention factors

Kodikal, Pakkeerappa, and Ahmed (2012) believe that demographic factors such as age, tenure, educational level, income level, job category and gender influence employee retention. For the purpose of this study, the following demographic variables are of interest, namely, age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level.

3.2.1 Age

Research findings have shown that age is a key variable that will significantly influence turnover intention decisions, which in turn have a negative impact on employee retention (De Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen, & Mäkikangas, 2011). The findings of Chalwa and Shondi (2011), indicate that as age increases, intention to stay with the organisation increases. These findings thus indicate that in comparison to younger workers, older workers have lower intentions to leave and have greater commitment to stay longer with the organisation (Chalwa & Shondi, 2011).

Ertas (2015) found that age influences employee turnover decisions and that the millennial generation in any sector, specifically the retail sector in this study, was found to have a significantly higher probability of turnover in relation to older participants. Lewis and Choi's (2011) research findings indicate that young age groups are certainly more open to report on their intention to leave the organisation within the coming year and actually leaving the organisation. Other research has also found that younger employees have a greater response in enunciating an intention to leave the organisation compared with those employees above 50 years old (Pitts, Marvel, & Fernandez, 2011).

A study conducted by Bontis et al. (2011) found that the age group younger than 25 years considers job characteristics as the most important aspect that influences their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. This study further indicated that challenging work and job autonomy contribute to employees' career adaptability and commitment and thus will influence their retention by the organisation. However, younger employees who seek more task variety, job mobility and career opportunities that will enable them to improve their skills and talents are more likely to leave their organisations when frustrated and dissatisfied (Stoltz, 2014).

3.2.2 Gender

Research finding indicate that women show lower levels of attachment behaviours and higher tendencies to leave the organisation compared to men (Epstein, Saunte, Oglensky, & Gever, 1995; Griffeth, Horn, & Gaertner, 2000; Kanwar et al., 2012; Tanova & Holtom, 2008). Kodikal et al. (2012) is in agreement, as reports on some of their studies show that women tend to show higher intentions to leave the organisation as opposed to men. Tebele (2013) also found that women participants have significantly stronger insight into organisational fit than men, and have stronger perceptions of what they would have to sacrifice should they decide to leave the organisation. Mooney (2010) highlights that women also feel more challenged with regard to the balance between work-life and home-life, due to the fact that they receive less support from the organisation (Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, & Gordon, 2007). Although the balance between work and personal or family life still remains a critical issue for many organisations (Watanabe & Falci, 2016), results have shown that female participants still show stronger intention to leave the organisation compared to their male counterparts (Tebele, 2013).

3.2.3 Race

The affirmative action and employment equity legislation has resulted in black professionals regarding career advancement opportunities as very important in their career mobility and these influence their loyalty, attachment and commitment to the organisation (João & Coetzee, 2012). Subsequently, black employees in the South African organisational context are now

considering training and development, growth opportunities, career development and career advancement support to be more important than any other racial group (Pauw, 2011).

Research results confirm that black employees are most dissatisfied with their compensation (Martins & Coetzee, 2007). In addition, it has been found that black and coloured employees are the least satisfied with the nature of work, their job tasks and their compensation (Van Dyk, 2011). Many researchers have confirmed that compensation is a significant factor in influencing employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation; hence it is an important variable for retaining employees (Döckel et al., 2006; João, 2010; Lumley, 2009).

3.2.4 Marital status

Lumley (2009) found that married employees have a stronger preference for a secure and stable working environment because they generally tend to have greater family commitments and financial responsibilities, which enhances the need for this type of working environment (Martin & Roodt, 2008). However, Stanz and Greyling (2010) found that marital status does not influence employees' loyalty and commitment to the organisation, or their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

3.2.5 Tenure

Mohlala et al. (2012) posit that organisations are more eager and willing to attract and retain individuals who have years of working experience and who are knowledgeable, competent and possess scarce and critical skills. Van Dyk and Coetzee (2012) indicate that tenure groups differ significantly in terms of their levels of satisfaction with retention factors. Researchers Van Dyk et al. (2013) agree with other researchers that employees who have worked for the organisation for fewer than five years' experience significantly lower levels of job satisfaction and commitment than any other group, thus showing the lowest levels of retention. Further research findings indicate that employees who have worked for the organisation for longer than fifteen years are significantly more satisfied with person-organisation fit, display higher levels of organisational commitment and tend to remain longer with the organisation (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

3.2.6 Job level

Van Dyk et al. (2013) found that employees at senior management level have significantly higher satisfaction on organisational fit, person-job sacrifice, organisational sacrifice and continuance commitment as opposed to any other job-level group, and thus have the highest level of retention. Research findings also suggest that senior management level employees have a lot to sacrifice if they were to leave the organisation (Van Dyk et al., 2013). McDonnell

(2011) argues that this is as a result of the management of talent being too overly focused on leaders and top management.

Further research findings by Van Dyk et al. (2013) indicate that operational level employees experience lower levels of sacrifice in their jobs and in the organisation, having less to give up when leaving their job or the organisation, as opposed to the senior level. In addition, they do not show high levels of commitment towards the organisation, which has a negative impact on retention.

3.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR TALENT RETENTION

Statistics have shown that between July and November 2014, 3 523 000 employees separated from their organisations within the retail sector in the United States (Bureau of Labour Statistics, (BLS), 2014), resulting in low retention rates of employees and negative impacts on business operations (Echols, 2016). Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2012), who have been studying employee retention strategies, posit that with ongoing globalisation employee turnover is increasing at a very fast pace. The current labour market is rapidly shrinking as a result of the global economic recession and individuals across the world are facing a decrease in the employment rate (Loh, Lee, & Ali, 2016). Consequently, as Shekhawat and Sandhu (2016) state, the retention of knowledgeable, skilled and talented employees has been highlighted as a serious concern for human resource managers owing to the high employee turnover rate. Employee retention therefore has a crucial bearing on the knowledge, competencies and skills transferred because employees who have these special attributes are critical for sustainability and the competitive advantage of the organisation (Ahammad et al., 2016).

Allen and Bryant (2013) postulate that employee turnover is very costly for organisations, a cost that is often more than the annual salary of the vacant position. Arnaiz and Verseman-Morrison (2014) further highlight that these costs are associated with advertising, reviewing of applications, interviewing possible candidates, hiring the best suitable candidate and then training the new recruit. However, David (2015) summarised various reasons that impact on the retention of employees, including heavy stress resulting from demanding work pressures, lack of trust among employees, specifically towards their supervisors and their senior leaders, resulting in demotivation and a decrease in commitment and retention (David, 2015).

Different retention strategies and practices are therefore urgently required for improving employee commitment and retention, a huge area of focus which is currently emerging in numerous sectors (Echols, 2016). Allen and Bryant (2013) suggest that the retention strategies

an practices organisations should concentrate on must include compensation and benefits, the pay structure, the type of compensation as well as the perceived fairness around compensation, as it influences employees' turnover intentions. Rawat (2013) indicates that competitive wage, health benefits, retirement contributions and incentive plans are primary reasons for employees to remain with the organisation. This researcher also suggests that compensating employees fairly is an important step for organisations to retain their employees. Nayak and Sahoo (2015) agree that compensation and rewards are measures of how much organisations can satisfy their employees' work values, aspirations, personal ideals and hope for progress. They also act as pull factors to attract and retain skills and talent, to enhance competitive advantage and to increase employee loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). Echols (2016) also posits that pay and benefits are motivating factors that have positive effects on employee retention when used correctly.

Vorhauser-Smith (2012) introduced a cost-effective retention strategy, which includes giving employees job autonomy. Although this might take some organisational redesign, it will have a positive impact on the retention of employees. Vorhauser-Smith (2012) further states that it will be difficult to copy and replicate the structuring of employees' work elsewhere, thus giving employees some freedom in structuring their work can improve their commitment and their intention to stay. Westermann-Behaylo, Berman, and Van Buren III (2014) state that it is imperative that organisations do not view or treat employees as a means to an end; however organisations should focus on creating instrumental relationships with their employees. Allen and Bryant (2013) indicate that clearly defining role expectations and providing employees with training for development and growth, career development and advancement will reduce turnover and increase organisational commitment and employee retention.

Govaerts et al. (2011) suggest that, in order to retain employees' organisations should pay special attention to encouraging learning. Galbraith, Smith, and Walker (2012) add that organisations should also focus on talent management and employee succession planning as promotional opportunities as this will increase commitment and employee retention (Steinmetz, Vries, & Tijdens, 2014). Organisations should also understand their employees better and should create a healthier employee-supervisor relationship (Shashikala & Ravindra, 2013). Ahmad, Imran, Khanam, and Riaz (2013) agree that employees will feel that they are psychologically more empowered in their workplace when they are supported by their supervisors. Such employees are more positive at work and feel that they have all the resources required to perform their jobs efficiently, feel more appreciated for their efforts, thus creating a strong association with the organisation, which will increase retention (Igbal & Hashmi, 2015). It is therefore important for managers and supervisors to understand how to coach, empower, motivate, mentor and retain their employees (Igbal & Hashmi, 2015). Klerk

(2013) highlights that it would be valuable for organisations to develop leadership skills in the managers and supervisors so as enable them to empower their immediate employees, as this will lead to the retention of skilled and talented employees.

Another important retention factor includes work-life balance, which has an impact on job satisfaction and organisational commitment and increases employee retention to the organisation (Ueda, 2012). Roulin, Mayor, and Bangerter (2014) maintain that at an individual level, work-family balance has an impact on most employees. Types of flexibility that can be introduced to assist in maintaining balance include time flexibility, time off, leave and career flexibility (Idris, 2014). Long working hours negatively affect the balance between work and leisure time and poor lifestyle choices are then made (Taneja, 2013). Taneja (2013) further argues that reduced working hours may boost overall productivity and increase employee commitment and retention. It is thus crucial that organisations focus on providing employees with flexible work-life balance programmes in an attempt to retain their employees, especially the skilled and talented employees (Roulin et al., 2014).

Researchers posit that employee retention is important for both organisational competitiveness and success, as it impacts on productivity, reduces recruitment and selection costs, optimises training and positively influences career development and succession planning (Gupta, 2014; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Therefore, having adaptable employees, keeping them committed and retaining their scarce and critical skills are of the utmost importance for most South African organisations (Neininger et al., 2010). Researcher Jyoti (2014) suggests that executives in retail organisations should align retention strategies and practices with loyalty and commitment incentives in order to have a more stable and successful organisation.

3.4 INTEGRATION: THEORETICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND RETENTION FACTORS

This section addresses step 4 of the literature review by integrating the theoretical constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. The purpose of the literature study was to determine whether a relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors exists and whether the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. **Figure 3.2** presents an overview of the theoretical integration between these three constructs, which is discussed in the following sections.

RETENTION OF SKILLED,
TALENTED AND VALUABLE EMPLOYEES

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model (OCQ) conceptualises organisational commitment

Sub-elements

Affective Commitment refers to the emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation

Continuance Commitment refers to the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation

Normative Commitment refers to the moral obligation to continue employment with the organisation

INFLUENCING VARIABLES

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Marital Status
- Tenure
- Job Level

CAREER ADAPTABILITY

Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) conceptualises career adaptability

Global dimensions

Career concern refers to the capacity to be aware of and positively oriented to and plan for a vocational future

Career control refers to the extent to which employees take personal responsibility with regard to influencing their developmental and work environment by showing self-discipline efforts and persistence

Career Curiosity involves employees exploring possible future selves and opportunities, and thinking about how they might influence different work roles and environments

Career Confidence describe employees' beliefs that they can turn their career goals into reality and successfully solve problems and overcome obstacles

INFLUENCING VARIABLES

- **Age**
- **Gender**
- **Race**
- **Marital Status**
- **Tenure**
- **Job level**

RETENTION FACTORS

Döckel's (2003) retention factors framework conceptualising retention

6 CRITICAL FACTORS

- Compensation
- Job characteristics
- Training and development
- Supervisor support
- Career opportunities
- Work-life balance

INFLUENCING VARIABLES

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Marital Status
- Tenure
- Job Level

Figure 3.2. Overview of the Integration Between Organisational Commitment, Career Adaptability and Retention Factors

In Chapter 2 the concept of organisational commitment and career adaptability was explored, clarified and discussed. Both career adaptability and retention factors were found to be instrumental in affecting employees' commitment to the organisation. Mendes and Stander (2011) believe that commitment can be viewed as an important tool to improve the level of performance, help to minimise employees' intention to leave and in turn increase their retention. Researchers also agree that career adaptability is one of the most important factors that guarantee employee commitment to the organisation (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Van den Heavel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013). Kanwar et al. (2012) further indicate that organisational commitment has an important bearing on employee retention and ultimately turnover. Riana and Roebuck (2014) agree that organisational commitment influences retention, hence research on organisational commitment and career adaptability will contribute to the literature of employee retention (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013).

Researchers maintain that it has become increasingly challenging for organisations to attract capable and talented employees with the required skill set and they must therefore find techniques to retain them (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013; Tladinyane, Coetzee, & Masenge, 2013). Van Dyk et al. (2013) state that positive organisational behaviour fosters the development of satisfied and engaged employees, which is key to ensuring high performance and overall well-being for both the organisation and its employees. Such behaviour also increases employees' commitment and decreases the risk of losing skilled and talented employees (Van Dyk et al., 2013). Further research results have shown that employees who are satisfied and committed to the organisation are more likely to attend work, arrive at work on time, perform well and engage in behaviours that are helpful to the organisation, as well as being loyal and wanting to stay with the organisation (Kumar & Singh, 2011; Rahman & Igbal, 2013). Stoltz (2014) posits that now more than ever, industrial and organisational psychologists, human resource practitioners and human resource managers need to understand the reasons why employees are leaving the organisation as well as the factors that influence employees' organisational commitment and retention.

Coetzee and Pauw (2013) suggest various drivers which may result in employees leaving the organisation, including (1) dissatisfaction with compensation, (2) training and development opportunities, (3) organisational culture, (4) organisational communication, (5) relationship with management, and (6) the negative perceptions of organisational leadership. The relationship between the employees and the organisation can therefore only be strengthened through coaching and mentoring, as well as a supportive supervisor-employee relationship (Tanova & Holtom, 2008; Van Dyk, 2012).

Organisations should consider organisational retention factors in order to retain employees in the working environment (Van Dyk et al., 2013). Nyengane (2007) clearly states that if organisations want employees to develop organisational commitment and career adaptability, then they should provide them with comprehensive training and development and proactive career management, which has become essential in the contemporary workplace (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Chudzikowski, 2012; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2011; Tones, Pillay, & Kelly, 2010). Employees today are increasingly career conscious, therefore offering career opportunities has become a vital tool for enhancing employees' motivation and promoting involvement, loyalty and commitment to the organisation (Crawshaw, Van Dick, & Brodbeck, 2012; McClean, 2009; Moss, Salzman, & Tilly, 2008; Wang, Jaw, Tsai, & Chen, 2010).

Organisations must develop career opportunities with clear career goals and career paths for their employees (Tladinyane et al., 2013), as internal career transitions increase motivation, loyalty, commitment and employee retention (Verbruggen, De Cooman, & Vansteenkiste, 2015). Researchers posit that employees who are loyal and highly committed and to their profession and whose career goals are more intrinsically and less extrinsically motivated, are more likely to be retained by the organisation (Becker, Kernan, Clark, & Klein, 2015; Janus, 2015).

Taber (2015) designed a three-phase counselling intervention to facilitate future work self-clarity as this counselling process can enhance career adaptability and employee commitment, which increases employee retention. Organisations should provide employees with a supportive working environment in order for them to develop organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention (Mclaggan et al., 2013). Human resource practitioners and huma resource managers must also establish fair remuneration and reward practices in order to enhance employee commitment and retention to the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014). Zacher (2016) avers that organisations should also support their employees by providing them with motivational job demands, job autonomy and supervisory career mentoring.

Coetzee, Oosthuizen, and Stoltz (2016) state that employees' performance and their commitment are factors that facilitate their retention and, depending on their priorities, influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Organisations should therefore focus on becoming employers of choice and on developing employee commitment, career adaptability and retention to the organisation (Tladinyane et al., 2013).

Both organisational commitment and career adaptability were found to be instrumental in influencing employees' retention factors. See **Table 3.3**, which gives a summary of the integration of these three variables.

Table 3.3

Integration: Relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors

	Organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)	Career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)	Retention factors (Döckel, 2003)
Conceptualisation (definitions)	Organisational commitment is a psychological state or bond that forms a link between employees and their organisation (Dhladhla, 2011). Organisational commitment can be described as a multifaceted concept that encompasses the involvement of employees in organisational activities, the implicit and explicit identification with organisational values and work itself as it reflects loyalty to employees (Passarelli, 2011).	Career adaptability is a psychological construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions and traumas in their occupational roles (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and to some degree, large or small, alter their social integration (Zacher, 2014a). Career adaptability is an important characteristic that helps individuals to deal effectively with ambiguous job roles and career uncertainty in current times (Chong & Leong, 2015)	Retention refers to the efforts by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives (Govaerts et al., 2011). Retention factors are those organisational practices that influence the retention or departure of employees and their decision to leave or to remain with the organisation (Döckel et al., 2006; Netsware & Rankhumise, 2005).
	Organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)	**Career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)**	**Retention factors (Döckel, 2003)**
Core sub-dimensions influencing variables	Affective commitment Continuance commitment Normative commitment	Career control Career concern Career curiosity Career confidence	Compensation Job characteristics Training and development opportunities Supervisor support

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			Career development Work–life balance
Socio-demographic variables influencing constructs	Age Gender Race Marital status Tenure Job level	Age Gender Race Marital status Tenure Job level	Age Gender Race Marital status Tenure Job level
	Organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)	**Career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)**	**Retention factors (Döckel, 2003)**
Implications for retention	Research results indicate that satisfied employees tend to be more committed to an organisation and employees who are satisfied and committed are more likely to attend work, stay with an organisation, arrive at work on time, perform well and engage in behaviours that are helpful to the organisation (Kumar & Singh, 2011; Rahman & Igbal, 2013). Van	Researchers believe that practical recommendations will be helpful for individuals who desire to develop their careers (Spurk et al., 2016), resulting in career adaptability, therefore becoming a vital component of career development (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al., 2014b). It is therefore imperative that individuals develop career self-management attributes and	Ferreira and Coetzee (2013) agree that research on organisational commitment and career adaptability will contribute valuable new insights to the body of knowledge relating to employee retention, specifically in the South African organisational context. Researchers posit that employee retention is important for both organisational competitiveness and success, as it affects productivity, reduces recruitment and selection costs, optimises

	Organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997)	Career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)	Retention factors (Döckel, 2003)
	Dyk et al. (2013) state that positive organisational behaviour fosters the development of satisfied and engaged employees as it is the key to ensuring high performance and overall well-being for both the organisation and its employees, as well as increasing their commitment and decreasing the risk of losing highly skilled and talented employees.	competencies that will enhance their career resilience and career adaptability (Coetzee & Potgieter, 2014), which could potentially optimise individuals' commitment to and retention by the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014).	training and positively influences succession planning (Gupta, 2014; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Therefore having adaptable employees, keeping them committed and retaining their scarce and critical skills is of top priority for many contemporary South African organisations (Neininger et al., 2010).
Implication for practice	Janus (2014) supports the notion that individuals who are highly committed to their profession, relative to commitment to the organisation, are likely to be more intrinsically motivated and less extrinsically motivated (Becker et al., 2015). However, Pauw (2011) has suggested various drivers which may result in employees leaving the organisation. These include the following: dissatisfaction with	Zacher (2016) states that the organisation should support its employees by providing them with motivational job demands, supervisory career mentoring and job autonomy. According to Bhattacharyya (2015), it is therefore the responsibility of HR managers as well as top management in organisations to focus on appropriate talent management activities so that skilled, talented and valuable employees continue feeling satisfied with their job	Retention practices can be described as the systematic efforts of an employer to create and foster an environment that encourages skilled and talented employees to remain within the organisation, therefore implementing relevant policies and practices that address the diverse needs of employees (Gupta, 2014; McKeown, 2002; Tladinyane et al., 2013; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Robertson (2013) made a number of recommendations for retention in the literature which include: (1) developing self-efficacy and self-esteem to

compensation, training and development opportunities, organisational culture, and relationship with management, organisational communication and negative perceptions of the organisational leadership. Taber (2015) designed a three-phase counselling intervention to aid in the facilitation of future work self-clarity, as this counselling process can enhance employee commitment to the organisation.	along with the culture of the organisation as a whole. Maggiori et al. (2013) posit that career adaptability exerts positive effects in the workplace and therefore individuals who are more satisfied with their job environments feel more empowered and will be able to cope with challenges in their working environment (Fiori et al., 2015).	improve career resilience, (2) providing supportive relationships to assist with emotions and distress, (3) providing sufficient growth opportunities and challenging work, (4) providing work–life balance opportunities, (5) drawing up individual career development plans that take demographic factors into account, and (6) encouraging engagement in learning and self-development. When talented employees leave organisations, they take with them their skills and knowledge, which will increase the likelihood of the organisation losing its competitive edge (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013).

3.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR RETENTION STRATEGIES

Recent studies have indicated that the retention of knowledge, as well as skilled and talented employees, has become a challenging task for industrial practitioners, huma resource practitioeners and human resource managers (Shekhawat & Sandlu, 2016). Retention strategies are described as the systematic efforts of an employer to create and foster an environment that encourages skilled and talented employees to remain in the organisation (Gupta, 2014; McKeown, 2002; Tladinyane et al., 2013; Van Dyk et al., 2013). Human resource strategies and practices start from recruiting, the hiring of new employees and on-boarding and then continue throughout an employee's career (Echols, 2016). However, dramatic changes have taken place in the world of work, which have negatively affected the relationship between the organisation and its employees (Sharf, 2010). As employers can no longer guarantee lifelong employment and regular promotions, employees therefore no longer feel obliged to remain loyal to one single employer (Maree, 2013). Employees' career development is also no longer viewed as linear and hierarchical but rather multifaceted, unstable, cyclical and transitional over the life course (Bimrose et al., 2008; Hearne, 2010). Kanwar et al. (2012) state that high turnover, that is, the ongoing loss of skilled and talented employees, will also be very harmful for organisations' productivity and sustainability.

Kim et al. (2016) posit that organisations should also consider the turnover rate among newly hired employees, which greatly exceeds that of employees with greater tenure. Statistically, many employees leave the organisation within the first three months of joining (Mehta, Kurbetti, & Dhankhar, 2014); therefore the organisation's retention strategies and practices need to be the focus point and communicated from the early stages of the socialisation process (Kim et al., 2016). It is clear that if proper induction of new joiners is not done, they will tend to leave the organisation (Mehta et al., 2014). Bagga (2013) holds that the induction process plays a vital role in employee retention and has the potential to increase loyalty and commitment towards the organisation and its vision, objectives and goals.

Studies conducted on employee retention by researchers Mubarak, Wahab, and Khan (2013) and Zahra, Irum, Mir, and Chisthi (2013) suggest that specific retention factors, including promotions, the working environment, training and development, salaries and benefits, remuneration recognition, supervisor support and work-life policies, pay satisfaction, opportunities for learning and growth lead to employee retention being positively influenced.

Rossier et al. (2012) highlight that, in general, individuals who have better developed career adaptability skills are more engaged in their work. Accordingly, organisations should focus on

providing employees with regular learning and skill-enhancing opportunities and, using innovative ways, go beyond regular classroom training in order to unleash the human capital potential (Khatri & Gupta, 2015). They should also pay close attention to improving the reward and feedback processes, which in turn will increase employee retention (Kim et al., 2016). The role of the supervisor is also of vital importance, especially in promoting a supportive environment for employees with work-life responsibilities (Greaves, Parker, Zacher, & Jimmieson, 2015). It is important for industrial psychologists, human resource practitioeners and human resource managers to help employees manage these retention factors, thus becoming adaptable and committed employees (Coetzee, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Stauffer, Maggiori, Froidevauz, & Rossier, 2014; Tones et al., 2010).

Robertson (2013) makes a number of recommendations regarding retention factors, which include: (1) developing self-efficacy and self-esteem to improve career resilience, (2) providing supportive relationships to assist with emotions and distress, (3) providing sufficient growth opportunities and challenging work, (4) providing opportunities for work-life balance, (5) drawing up individual career development plans that take demographic factors into account, and (6) encouraging engagement in learning and self-development. These are essential because when talented employees leave organisations, they take with them their skills and knowledge, which in turn will increase the likelihood of the organisation losing its competitive edge (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013). Keeping employees committed to the organisation and retaining their valuable skills should therefore be of the utmost importance for many contemporary organisations (Neininger et al., 2010), as the retention of this knowledge, experience, skills and talent contributes positively to organisational competitiveness and sustainability (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012).

Nawaz and Pangil (2016) have introduced a retention strategy, which includes (1) *recognise your impact as a manager* – the manager should communicate directly and specifically to employees that their contribution is appreciated, (2) *implement effective work-life programmes* – organisations need to find work-life programmes that help employees cope with workplace stress, (3) *provide personal productivity training* – by providing proper productivity training for employees who work a 50-hour week, the same results can be achieved in 40 hours, benefitting both the employee and the employer.

Bhattacharyya (2015) states that it is the responsibility of both Humna Resource managers and top management of organisations to focus on appropriate retention strategies and practices, in order for skilled and talented employees to continue feeling satisfied with their jobs, along with the culture of the organisation as a whole. Coetzee and Pauw (2013) suggest that organisations

should consider all factors that attract and retain skilled and talented employees and pay special attention to their human resource policies, procedures and practices and how these relate to the retention factors. Ferreira (2012) appeals to industrial and organisational psychologists, human resource practitioners as well as human resource managers, that understanding employees' organisational commitment and career adaptability profiles will enable them to manage employee retention within the organisation more effectively. These findings will also serve as useful pointers for retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees in South African organisations (Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012).

Organisations must understand that career adaptability plays a vital role in developing a dedicated, loyal and committed workforce, as well as attracting and retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees who will contribute positively to organisational development and growth (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). The practical value of these research findings lies in the design of retention strategies and practices, which should be based on the association between employees' organisational commitment career adaptability and retention factors (Oosthuizen, Coetzee, & Mntonintshi, 2014).

3.6 DIFFERENT AIMS

The following literature research aims were achieved:

Research aim 1: To conceptualise and explain the three constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, in terms of the theoretical models in the literature.

Research aim 2: To identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models of these constructs.

Research aim 2.1: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 2.2: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 2.3: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research aim 2.4: To explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

Research aim 3: To conceptualise the effect of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Research aim 4: To identify the implications for retention strategies and practices in South African retail organisations.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 conceptualised the construct of retention factors by means of a comprehensive examination of the literature and the research on this construct. The factors influencing the retention of employees and practical implications for retention strategies and practices were discussed. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the theoretical integration of the constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Chapter 4 represents the research methodology of the study. It discusses the empirical investigation with the specific aim of determining the statistical strategies and practices that can be employed to investigate the relationship dynamics between the variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, as manifested in a sample of permanent customer service respondents within the retail sector in the Western Cape.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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

The empirical research phase consisted of nine steps, as outlined below:

Step 1:   determination and description of the population and the sample

Step 2:   choice and motivation of the psychometric battery

Step 3:   administration of the psychometric battery

Step 4:   capture of the criterion data

Step 5:   formulation of the research hypotheses

Step 6:   statistical processing of the data

Step 7:   reporting of the interpretation of the data

Step 8:   integration of the research findings

Step 9:   drawing research conclusions, highlighting the limitations and making recommendations

Steps 1 to 6 are addressed in this chapter, steps 7 to 9 are addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.1 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

A population can be defined as a set of clusters or objects of people that forms part of the purpose of the research and whereby the research would want to isolate certain characteristics (Weathington, Cunningham, & Pittenger, 2010). Salkind (2012) refers to the population as a group of people from which the sample is drawn from. Furthermore, the author (Stoltz, 2014) argues that the characteristics of the population will be represented, therefore suggesting that a relatively large sample size is required, thus reducing the impact of the non-response factor. Borden and Abbott (2014) state that since it is not always possible to study an entire population, a sample, which is a small subset of the population, is selected from the larger population which the researcher is interested in (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

Sampling can be described as the process of selecting items, elements or objects from the population in order to study and understand the characteristics of the subject, resulting in the researcher being able to generalise these to the larger population (Whitley, Kite, & Adams,

2012). Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) posit that there are two categories of sampling, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. With probability sampling the researcher decides in advance that each component of the population will be represented in the sample. With regard to non-probability sampling, the researcher cannot guarantee that each component of the sample will be a representative of the sample (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013). Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) indicate that the purposeful sampling method allows researchers to collect data in a purposive manner from a ready and available population; however, when researchers use non-probability sampling, they are faced with difficulties in terms of the cost involved as well as the limitations relating to the types of measures and the experimental manipulation that the researcher can use. Kumar (2014) further indicates that non-probability designs are used when the number of components is unknown, or they cannot be identified individually.

Kumar (2014) describes convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling design that is primarily directed by the convenience to the researcher in terms of choosing the prospective respondents, which could be related to a number of attributes, e.g. known contacts, easy accessibility, geographical proximity, ready approval for being part of the group or taking part in the study. The population of this research project consisted of permanent customer service employees in a retail organisation in the Western Cape. A total of 300 permanent employees answered the distributed questionnaire. Of these, 224 questionnaires were completed and were usable for the purpose of the study (N = 224). Thus a response rate of 74.7% was achieved.

4.1.1 Composition of age groups in the sample

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

Table 4.1

Age Distribution of the Sample (N = 224)

AGE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	**18–20 years**	24	10.7	10.7	10.7
	21–30 years	83	37.1	37.1	47.8
	31–40 years	58	25.9	25.9	73.7
	41–50 years	40	17.9	17.9	91.5

	51–60 years	18	8.0	8.0	99.6
	61–69 years	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	**224**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

As indicated in **Table 4.1**, the age group distribution shows that participants aged 18 to 20 years comprised 10.7% of the sample, participants aged 21 to 30 years comprised 37.1%, participants aged 31 to 40 years comprised 25.9%, participants aged 41 to 50 years comprised 17.9%, participants aged 51 to 60 years comprised 8%, while participants 61 to 69 years comprised only 0.4% (N = 244). It is important to note that the majority of the sample therefore consisted of individuals between the age of 21 and 40 years, thus representing the establishment stage (early adulthood stage) in terms of the career life stage theory. This information is illustrated in **Figure 4.1** below.
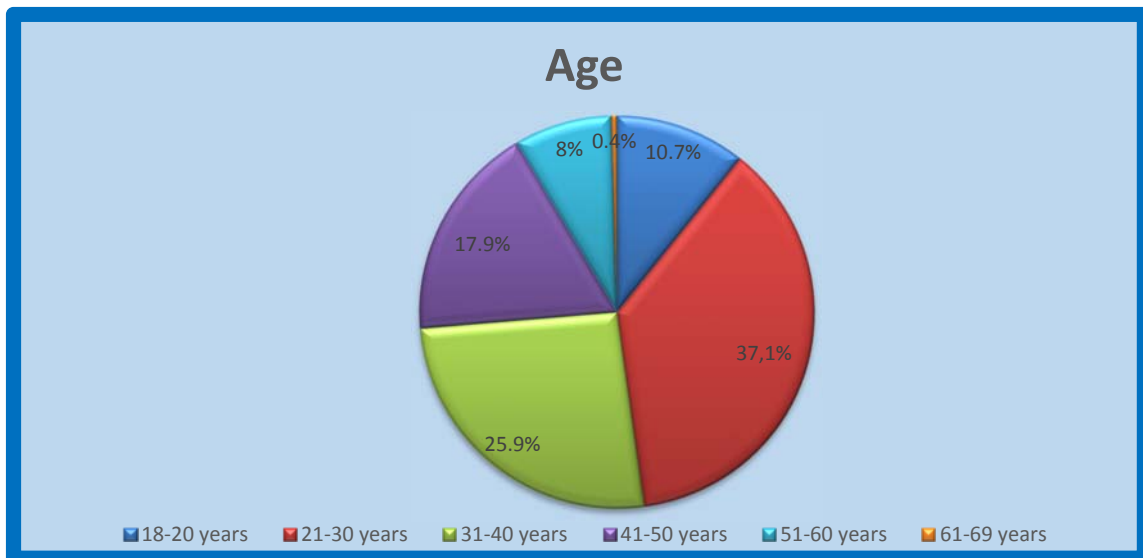
Figure 4.1. Sample distribution by age (N = 224)

4.1.2   Composition of gender groups in the sample

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

Table 4.2

Gender Distribution of the Sample (N= 224)

GENDER

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		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Males	114	50.9	51.1	51.1
	Females	108	48.2	48.4	99.6
	Total	224	99.6	100.0	100.0

As indicated in **Table 4.2**, the gender group distribution was 50.9% male and 48.2% female. It is thus evident that the sample consisted of slightly more males than females. This information is illustrated in **Figure 4.2** below.
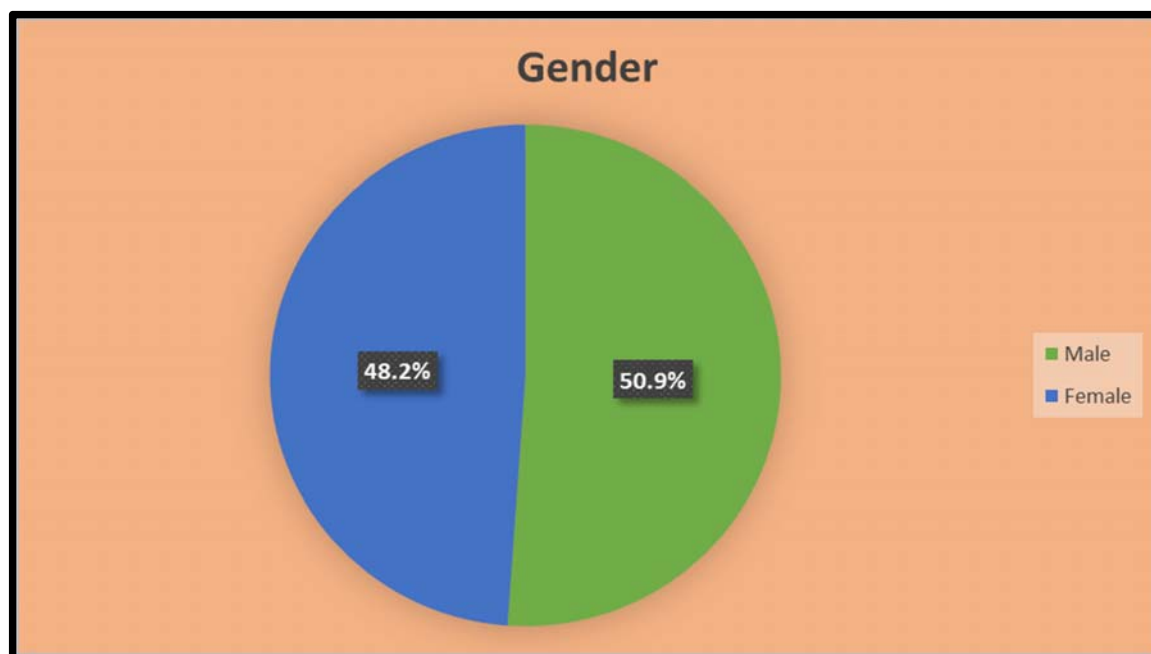
Figure 4.2. Sample distribution by gender (N = 224)

4.1.3   Composition of race groups in the sample

In this section the race distribution of the sample is provided.

Table 4.3

Race Distribution of the Sample (N = 224)

RACE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	African	99	44.2	44.4	44.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
	Coloured	105	46.9	47.1	91.5
	Indian	6	2.7	2.7	94.2
	White	13	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	**224**	**99.6**	**100.0**	

As indicated in **Table 4.3**, the race distribution of the sample shows that Africans made up 44.2% of the sample, coloureds comprised 46.9%, Indians comprised 2.7% and whites 5.8% (N = 224). The majority of the sample thus consisted of coloured individuals followed by Africans. This information is illustrated in **Figure 4.3** below.
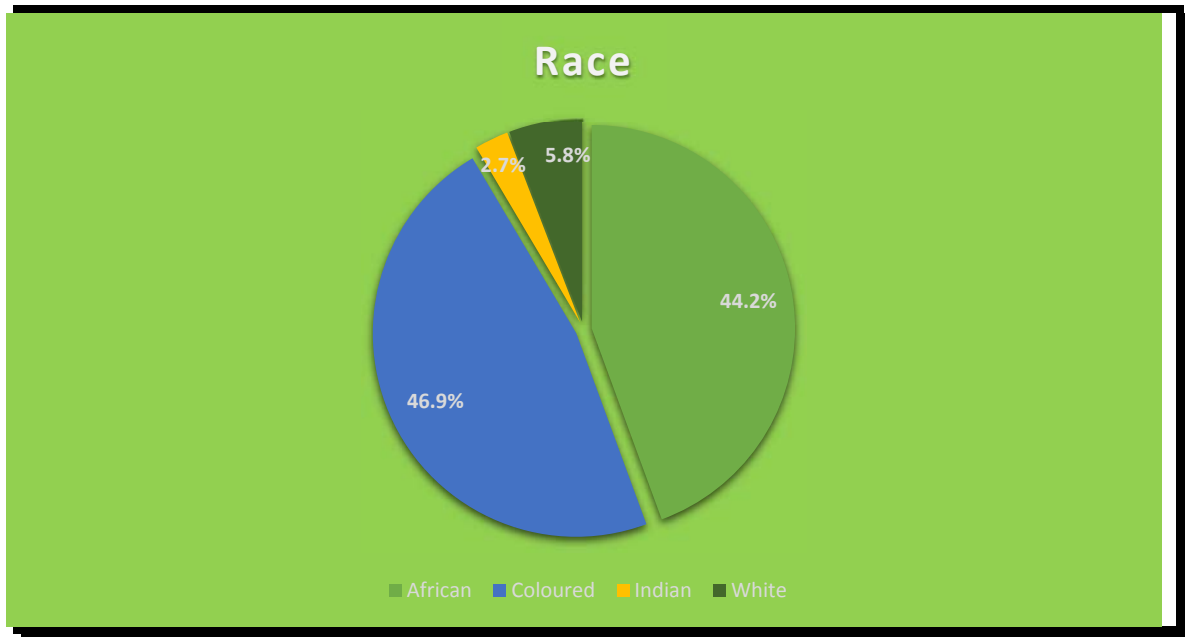
Figure 4.3. Sample distribution by race (N = 224)

4.1.4   Composition of marital status groups in the sample

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

Table 4.4

Marital Status Distribution of the Sample (N = 224)

MARITAL STATUS					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Valid	**Single**	115	51.3	51.8	51.8
	Married	93	41.5	41.9	93.7

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	Widowed	6	2.7	2.7	96.4
	Separated	3	1.3	1.4	99.7
	Divorced	5	2.2	2.3	
	Total	**224**	**99.1**	**100.0**	

As indicated in **Table 4.4**, the marital status distribution shows that 51.3% of the sample was single, 41.5% was married, 2.7% widowed, 1.3% separated and 2.2% divorced. The majority of the sample was thus single individuals. This is also illustrated in **Figure 4.4** below.
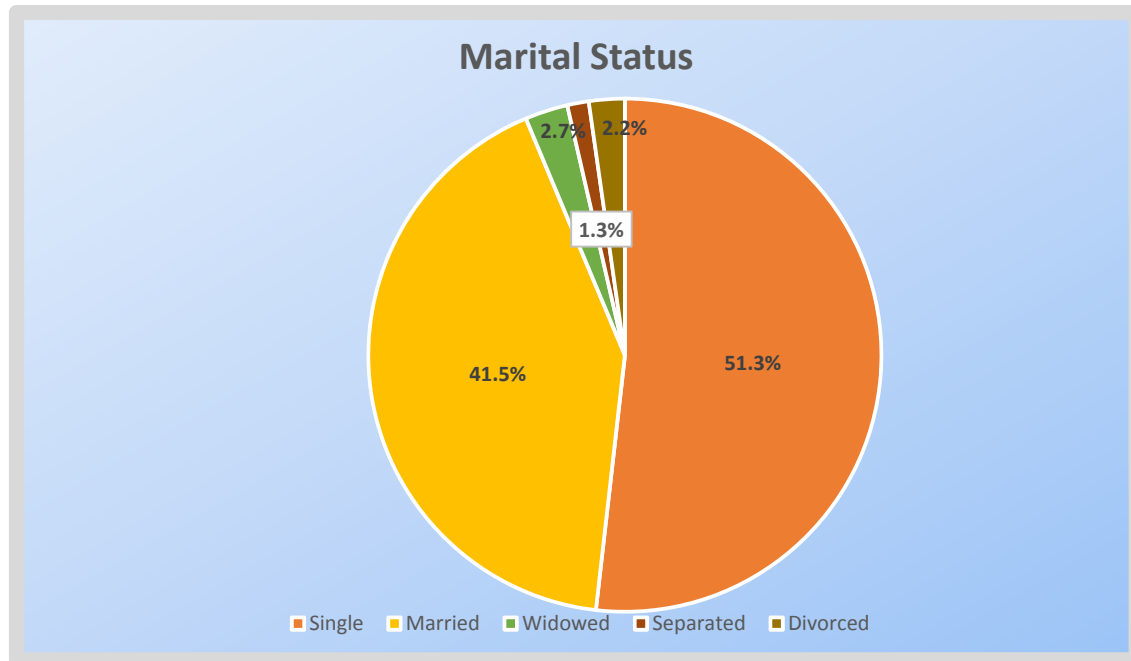
Figure 4.4. Sample distribution by marital status (N = 224)

4.1.5   Composition of the tenure groups in the sample

The tenure distribution in the sample is indicated below:

Table 4.5

Tenure Distribution of the Sample (N = 224)

TENURE					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
	0–5 years	110	49.1	49.1	49.1
Valid	**6–10 years**	52	23.2	23.2	72.3
	11–15 years	28	12.5	12.5	84.8

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16–20 years	23	10.3	10.3	95.1	
21–30 years	11	4.9	4.9	100.0	
Total	**224**	**100.0**	**100.0**		

As indicated in **Table 4.5**, tenure distribution was as follows; 49.1% of the sample had been working for the organisation for between 0 and 5 years, 23.2% between 6 and 10 years, 12.5% between 11 and 15 years, 10.3% between 16 and 20 years and 4.9% between 21 and 30 years. The majority of the participants had thus worked for a period of 0 and 5 years for the organisation. This information is also illustrated in **Figure 4.5** below.
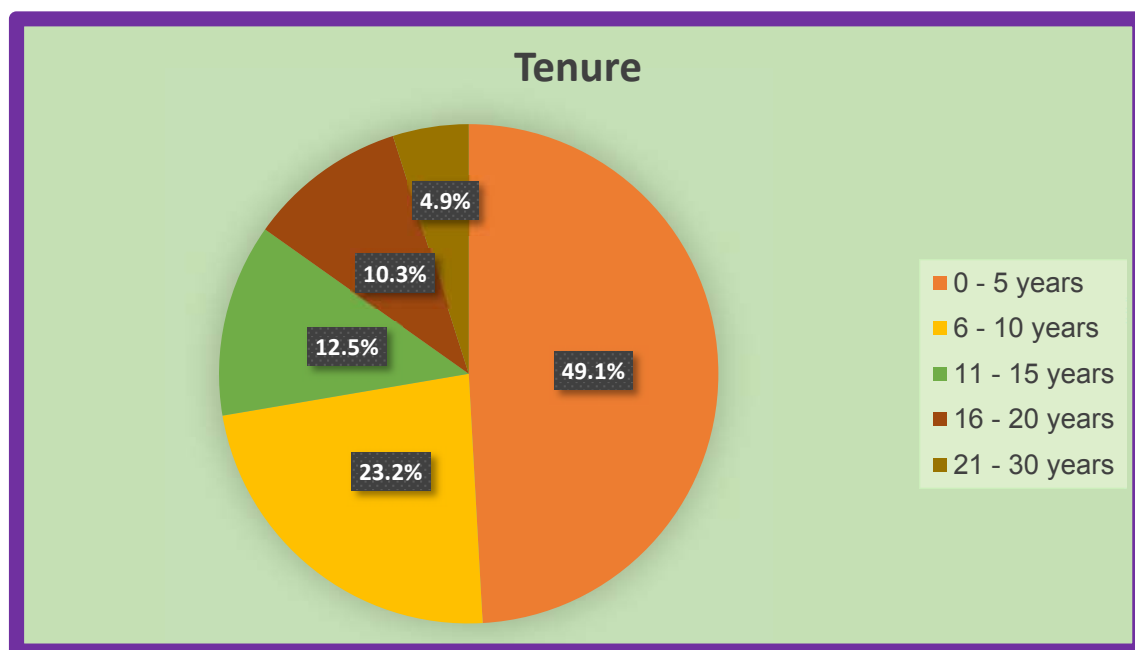
Figure 4.5. Sample distribution by tenure (N = 224)

4.1.6 Composition of the job level groups of the sample

In this section the job level of the sample is discussed.

Table 4.6

Job Level Type Distribution of the Sample (N = 224)

JOB LEVEL					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid percent**	**Cumulative percent**
Valid	**Till operator**	55	24.6	24.7	24.7

Sales assistant	116	51.8	52.0	76.7
Customer service assistant	26	11.6	11.7	88.3
Supervisor/controller	5	2.2	2.2	90.6
Shop-floor coordinator	12	5.4	5.4	96.0
Management	9	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total	**224**	**99.6**	**100.0**	

As **Table 4.6** shows, in terms of the job level types, 24.6.% of the sample were till operators, 51.8% were sales assistants, 11.6% were customer service assistants, 2.2% were supervisors/controllers, 5.4% were shop-floor coordinators, and 4% were management at the time of the study. The majority of the participants thus represent sales assistants in the organisation. This is also illustrated in **Figure 4.6**.
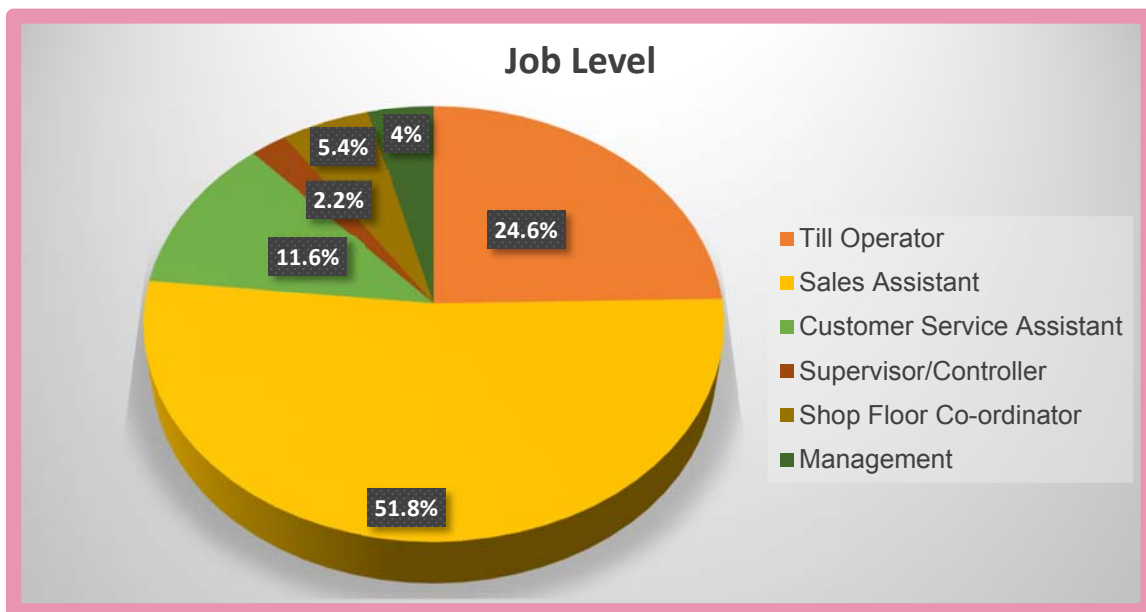
Figure 4.6. Sample distribution by job level (N = 224)

4.1.7   Summary

In summary, the sample for this study comprised mainly single, coloured, male participants, aged between 21 and 40 years. The results further indicate that more than half of the sample were sales assistants who had been working for the organisation for between 0 and 5 years.

4.2   CHOOSING AND MOTIVATING THE PSYCHOMETRIC BATTERY

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

- A biographical questionnaire to obtain data on age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level
- The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Meyer and Allen (1997)
- The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012)
- The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS) developed by Döckel (2003)

4.2.1 The biographical questionnaire

The biographical questionnaire was used to obtain personal information about the sample, namely, age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level.

4.2.2 The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

This section covers the development of the OCQ, the rationale for using it, a scale description, the administration, interpretation, validity and reliability of the OCQ, as well as the motivation for using this measuring instrument.

4.2.2.1 Development of the OCQ

The three-component model was developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) with the purpose of studying and understanding employees' commitment to the organisation (Meyer et al., 2002). Meyer et al. (2002) also confirmed that this model dominates the organisational commitment research, as it has been developed to predict pertinent employee outcomes, including tardiness, absenteeism, organisational citizenship and employees' intention to stay with or to leave the organisation.

4.2.2.2 Rationale for using the OCQ

The OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997) can be described as a self-rating measure, consisting of three-dimensional constructs, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment. The instrument was designed to measure employees' level of commitment to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

4.2.2.3 Description of the scales of the OCQ

The OCQ consists of 24 structured statements or measuring items that are divided in affective, continuance and normative commitment as elements of organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The following is a detailed description of the three dimensions.

1.   **Affective commitment**

This dimension measures the individual's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Affective commitment means that individuals remain with the organisation because they **want to** (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment consists of eight items (e.g. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation).

2.   **Continuance commitment**

This dimension measures the individual's commitment to the organisation based on the cost associated with leaving it. This means that the individual who decides to stay in the organisation on the basis of continuance commitment remains an employee of the organisation because they **need to** (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Continuance commitment consists of eight items (e.g. Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as a desire).

3.   **Normative commitment**

This dimension measures the individual's feelings of responsibility or obligation to remain with the organisation. This means that the individual may decide to remain with the organisation because they think that it is morally right to continue to participate in the same organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Normative commitment consist of eight items (e.g. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain).

4.2.2.4 Administration of the OCQ

The OCQ is a self-administered questionnaire and takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete, although there is no time limit. Clear instructions for its completion are provided on the questionnaire and the response sheet. Respondents are required to rate each item on a five-point Likert-type scale. The higher the number, the more true that item is to the respondent. Respondents are expected to rate their responses as (1) "strongly disagree", (2) "disagree", (3) "neutral", (4) "agree" and (5) "strongly agree". Each of the five subscales produces a separate score. The items are structured in a clear Likert-point statement format, with a rating scale being used for each statement. Respondents rate statements on the basis of their self-perceived organisational commitment.

The scores of affective, continuance and normative commitment are then added together to compute a total, overall score for the construct of OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The instructions are indicated on the questionnaire and the response sheet. The questionnaire is self-explanatory, hence supervision is not necessary.

4.2.2.5 Interpretation of the OCQ

Each subscale (affective, continuance and normative) of commitment is measured separately and reflects the participants' level of organisational commitment on these dimensions. It is therefore possible to determine which dimensions are perceived to be true for the participants and which are not. The higher the score, the truer the statement is for the respondent. The responses are measured on a scale rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4.2.2.6 Validity and reliability of the OCQ

Subsequent research studies have indicated substantial support for the validity and reliability of the affective, continuance and normative organisational commitment scales. Meyer and Allen (1997) reported an internal consistency Cronbach's alpha ranging from .85 for affective commitment, .79 for continuance commitment and .73 for normative commitment. Total organisational commitment has a reliability of .70 (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Meyer and Allen (1997) found that the correlation between the OCQ and the antecedent variables confirms that the scale is a valid measure of organisational commitment and can be used for potential research. The construct validity is based on the reality that the three constructs are linked as predicted in the proposed antecedent variables (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Therefore the above statement confirms that the OCQ is a valid measure for organisational commitment.

4.2.2.7 Motivation for using the OCQ

The OCQ was chosen for this study because of the conceptual congruence with the explication of the construct of organisational commitment and its high degree of validity and reliability. The psychometric assets of the OCQ also make it a valid and reliable measure to the three-component structures of organisational commitment in the South African context (Ferreira, 2010; Ferreira et al., 2010).

4.2.3 The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

This section covers the development of the CAAS, the rationale for using it, a scale description, the administration, interpretation, validity and reliability of the scale and the motivation for using it.

4.2.3.1 Development of the CAAS

The CAAS - International Form was compiled by an international team of vocational psychologists for 18 countries based on the initial development work done by Savickas during 2010 (Savickas, 2010; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

4.2.3.2 Rationale of the CAAS

The purpose of the CAAS is to measure career adaptability by assessing four facets of an individual's career adaptability, namely, career concern, career control, career curiosity and career confidence, as psychosocial resources for managing occupational transitions, developmental tasks and work traumas (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

4.2.3.3 Description of the scales of the CAAS

The CAAS is a self-rated, multifactorial measure consisting of 24 items that are divided equally into four subscales:

1. **Career control** (6 items, e.g. exploring my surroundings)
2. **Career concern** (6 items, e.g. realising that today's choices shape my future)
3. **Career curiosity** (6 items, e.g. investigating options before making a choice)
4. **Career confidence** (6 items, e.g. overcoming obstacles)

The CAAS measures career control, career concern, career curiosity and career confidence as psychosocial resources for managing occupational transitions, developmental tasks and work traumas (Maree, 2012). Each item in the questionnaire corresponds to a particular ability, where participants have to rate the given statement according to how strongly they have developed each ability from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

4.2.3.4 Administration of the CAAS

The CAAS is a self-rated questionnaire which can be administered individually or in groups and takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to answer, although there is no time limit. The instructions are indicated on the questionnaire and the response sheet.

Respondents are required to rate each item on a five-point Likert-type scale. The higher the number, the more true that item is to the respondent. Respondents are expected to rate their responses as (1) "strongly disagree", (2) "disagree", (3) "neutral", (4) "agree" and (5) "strongly agree". Each of the five subscales produces a separate score. Supervision is not necessary as the questionnaire is self-explanatory.

4.2.3.5 Interpretation of the CAAS

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

4.2.3.6 Validity and reliability of the CAAS

Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the data for the CAAS – International model fit the theoretical model very well, showing fit indices of RMSEA = .05 and SRMR = .04 (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The CAAS - South Africa shows fit indices of RMSEA = .05 and SRMR = .05 (Maree, 2012).

Maree (2012) concluded that the CAAS - South Africa performs similarly to the CAAS International in terms of psychometric characteristics and factor structure. His study showed that the total score and the four subscales demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency and a coherent, multidimensional hierarchical structure that fits the theoretical model and the linguistic explanation of career adaptability resources (Maree, 2012).

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) state that the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) - International Form 2.0 demonstrated excellent reliability and appropriate cross-national measurement equivalence. The CAAS - International has reported a reliability of .92, which is higher than the subscales for career concern (.83), career control (.74), career curiosity (.78) and career confidence (.80) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

The reliabilities of the subscales in South Africa were slightly lower than the international sample, with values for career concern (.77), career control (.71), career curiosity (.78) and career confidence (.80), and a reliability of .91 for the total score(Maree, 2012).

The above discussion confirms that the CAAS is a valid measure of career adaptability.

4.2.3.7 Motivation for using the CAAS

The CAAS was used for this research study because it allows the specific nature of career adaptability to be measured. The psychometric assets of the CAAS also make it a valid and reliable measure of the four dimensions of the structure of career adaptability.

Since the purpose of the research study was not to make individual predictions on the basis of the CAAS, but instead to investigate broad trends and certain relations between variables, this measuring instrument was considered to be acceptable for this study.

The inclusion of the CAAS in this research study therefore promoted an understanding of the construct of career adaptability.

4.2.4 The Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)

This section covers the development of the RFMS, the rationale for using it, a scale description, the administration, interpretation, validity and reliability of the scale and the motivation for using it.

4.2.4.1 Development of the RFMS

Cascio (2003) describes retention factors as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation, such as (1) rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively; (2) ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers and (3) maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. The RFMS was developed by Döckel (2003) to measure respondents' level of satisfaction with retention factors.

4.2.4.2 Rationale of the RFMS

The questionnaire consists of 38 items and is presented in the form of a five point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The RFMS was developed by using items that originated from questionnaires that were designed to measure compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance.

4.2.4.3 Description of the scales of the RFMS

The RFMS is a self-rated, multifactorial measure consisting of 38 items that are divided into six factors:

1. **Compensation** (12 items, e.g. the number of benefits I receive)
2. **Job characteristics** (4 items, e.g. the job is quite simple and repetitive)
3. **Training and development** (6 items, e.g. the company is providing me with job specific training)
4. **Supervisor support** (6 items, e.g. I feel undervalued by my supervisor)
5. **Career opportunities** (6 items, e.g. there are enough career opportunities for me in the organisation)

6. **Work-life balance** (4 items, e.g. my work schedule is often in conflict with my personal life)

4.2.4.4 Administration of the RFMS

The RFMS is a self-rated questionnaire, which can be administered individually or in groups and takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to answer, although there is no time limit. The instructions are indicated on the questionnaire and the response sheet.

Respondents are required to rate each item on a five-point Likert-type scale. The higher the number, the truer that items is to the respondent. Respondents are expected to rate their responses as (1) "strongly disagree", (2) "disagree", (3) "neutral", (4) "agree" and (5) "strongly agree". Each of the five subscales produces a separate score. Supervision is not necessary, as the questionnaire is self-explanatory.

4.2.4.5 Interpretation of the RFMS

Each factor is measured separately and reflects the respondents' preferences and feelings on the various items that relate to all the factors. As a result, analysis can be carried out as to which factors are perceived to be true for the respondents and which are not. The higher the score, the truer the statement for the respondent. Subscales with the highest mean score within the five scale components are regarded as the respondents' dominant retention factor.

4.2.4.6 Validity and reliability of the RFMS

Subsequent research studies have indicated substantial support for the validity and reliability of the retention factor (compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance) scales. A factor analysis of the RFMS conducted by Döckel (2003) confirmed the construct validity of the questionnaire. In terms of internal consistency reliability, Döckel et al. (2006) report the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: compensation (0.90), job characteristics (0.41), training and development opportunities (0.83), supervisor support (0.90), career opportunities (0.76), work-life balance (0.87) and commitment to the organisation (0.89).

Research has confirmed the correlation between the RFMS and the antecedent variables; this retention measurement scale is confirmed as being a valid measure of retention factors and can therefore be used for potential research (Döckel, 2003).

The above statement confirms that the RFMS is a valid measure of retention factors.

4.2.4.7 Motivation for using the RFMS

The RFMS is used in this research because it allows the specific nature of retention factors to be measured. The psychometric assets of the RFMS also make it a valid and reliable measurement of the six-dimension structure of retention.

Since the purpose of the research study was not to make individual predictions on the basis of the RFMS, but instead to investigate broad trends and certain relations between variables, the measuring instrument was considered to be acceptable for this study.
The inclusion of the RFMS in this research study therefore promoted an understanding of the construct of retention factors.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

Research ethics can be defined as the minimum standards of moral principles that guide the behaviour of the researcher (Barbie, 2013). De Vos et al. (2011) further define ethics as a set of moral principles which refer to the quality of research procedures with regard to adherence to professional, legal and social obligations to the research participants. The procedures that are followed in the proposed research adhere to all the ethical requirements that are necessary to ensure ethical responsibility.

The researcher followed the following ethical principles in order to meet and adhere to the ethical requirements (De Vos et al., 2011):

- In terms of ethics, permission for the research was obtained from the institution's research ethics committee. A covering letter was attached to the questionnaire that explained that by completing and returning the questionnaire, the respondent agreed to allow the researcher to use the results for the purposes of research only.
- The respondents were also informed of the aim of the study, the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses, as well as instructions for completing the questionnaire, on the day they were handed the questionnaire.
- A biographical questionnaire was included that asked the respondents for their age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level.
- The OCQ, CAAS and RFMS were distributed to all the respondents in the sample.
- The respondents completed the questionnaires during their various lunch breaks, after which they were collected by the researcher.

According to De Vos et al. (2011), this method of data collection is known as personal questionnaires and the researcher must limit his or her own part in the completion of the questionnaire to a minimum. This means that the researcher should stay in the background to

prevent any problems; however he or she must be allowed to encourage the respondents to complete the questionnaires. This approach of data collection ensures a high response rate, which is an advantage. With the help of the human resources manager, as well as the administrative support staff and the floor supervisors at the store, data collection took place over a few weeks during lunch breaks.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The term "ethics" implies certain preferences that influence human behaviour in compliance with a code of principles. This involves the rules of conduct, the responsibility of the researcher and the standards of conduct of a given profession. These ethical considerations are expected to adhere to professional, legal and social obligations in relation to the research participants (Babbie, 2007, 2015; Bless, Higson-Smith, & Kagee, 2006; De Vos et al., 2011; Sullivan, Monette, & DeJong, 2008; Walliman, 2006).

To ensure that the researcher adhered to all ethical requirements, the following procedures were followed:

- Research was conducted within recognised parameters.
- Permission was obtained from the host institution.
- Both classical and recent resources were used when analysing and describing concepts.
- Experts in the field of research were consulted in order to ensure a scientific research process.
- All sources were quoted and explicitly referenced.
- All participation in this study was completely voluntary.
- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Participants who were interested in the results of the study were requested to contact the researcher.
- Information and feedback obtained from the participants was totally confidential.
- All participants remained anonymous.
- Original data will be kept with the researcher for a period of five years.
- The research process and findings were documented in the form of a thesis to provide opportunities for obtaining accurate information.

4.5 FORMULATION OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Some researchers describe a hypothesis as an assumption, a prediction, an idea or a tentative explanation for an observation, phenomenon, relationship or situation that can be tested by further investigation (Bordens & Abbott, 2014; Kumar, 2014). Punch (2013) states that the hypothesis usually follows from the theory by means of deduction.

As evidenced in the literature review chapters, the main research hypothesis was formulated by determining whether a relationship exists between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Table 4.7 below displays the research hypotheses that were formulated with a view to achieving the empirical objectives of the study and to meet the criteria for the formulation of hypotheses.

Table 4.7

Research Hypotheses

Aim	Research hypothesis	Statistical procedure
	Research aim 1	
To conduct an empirical investigation into the statistical relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in a sample of permanent customer service respondents employed in a retail organisational setting in the Western Cape.	**Ho1:** There is no statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.	Correlations
	Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.	
	Research aim 2	

To empirically investigate whether the biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predict retention factors	**Ho2:** Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability do not significantly and positively explain the variance in retention factors.	Stepwise regression analysis
	Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance in retention factors.	
<td colspan="3" style="background:yellow">**Research aim 3**</td>
To empirically investigate whether differences exist in the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors of individuals in terms of their demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) as manifested in the sample of respondents.	**Ho3:** Differences do not exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).	Test for significant mean differences
	Ha3: Differences do exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).	

Note: Ho (null hypothesis); Ha (alternative hypothesis)

4.6 STATISTICAL PROCESSING OF THE DATA

According to Cresswell (2003) and Kumar (2014), a quantitative study may be viewed as an investigation into a human or social problem based on testing a theory that comprises variables measured with numbers, with the specific aim of quantifying the extent of variation in a phenomenon and then analysing that variation, using statistical procedures in order to determine

whether the predictive generalisations of the theory are true. In addition, the objective of quantitative research is to assure valid inferences from the available sample data obtained from a large population in order to develop generalisations (Tredoux & Durrheim 2013).

It cannot, however, be expected that a non-probability convenience sample will yield sample values (parameters) from a population because of the lack of representivity of the sample (Weathington et al., 2010). Consequently, statistical techniques and methods have been developed for this purpose, which make it possible to determine the confidence with which such inferences can be drawn. The two most commonly used methods of statistical inference are (1) estimation using confidence intervals and (2) null hypothesis testing. The present study made use of null hypothesis testing in order to verify the formulated hypotheses.

The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the Statistical Advanced Software (SAS) computer program for Windows version 9.2 (2010) and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program for Windows version 22 (2014). The statistical analyses consisted of three stages, each containing different steps of statistical analysis: (1) descriptive statistical analyses, (2) correlational analyses, and (3) inferential (multivariate) statistical data analyses.

The statistical data analyses that are covered in this chapter are illustrated in **Figure 4.7**
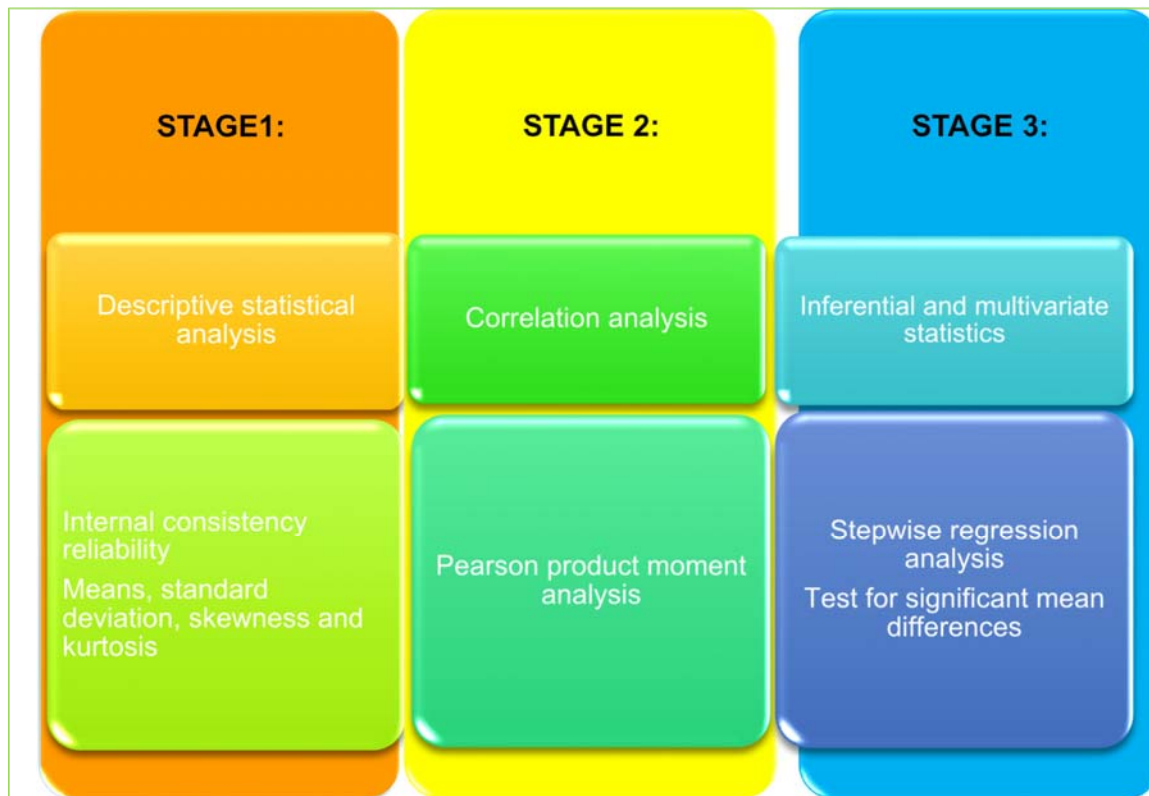
Figure 4.7. Statistical Data Analysis Process

4.6.1 Stage 1: Descriptive statistical analysis

Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) posit that descriptive statistical analysis describes the characteristics of the selected constructs of the sample and the demographic variables in the form of numerical data. Descriptive statistics can be used to display and summarise data in a meaningful way (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

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

4.6.2 Stage 2: Correlational analysis

Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) state that correlation statistics test the direction of the strength of the relationship between two or more variables, with the strength of this relationship being represented by a correlation coefficient. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were

used to specify the relationship between the variables of the OCQ, CAAS and RFMS. In those instances where the distribution of scores was skewed, Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. Pearson (*r*) correlation has values that range from -1.00 to +1.00. The level of statistical significance was set at *p* ≤ .05. The sign, *r*, provides information about the direction of the relationship between variables. A positive correlation of +1.00 indicates that as scores for the dependent (X) variable increase, scores for the independent (Y) variable also tend to increase. A negative correlation of -1.00 indicates that as scores for the dependent (X) variable increase, scores for the independent (Y) variable tend to decrease (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). A correlation value between .0 and .3 indicates a weak linear relationship; a correlation value between .3 and .7 indicates a moderate linear relationship; while a correlation value of .7 and 1.0 indicates a strong linear relationship (McGrath, 2014).

In this study, the Pearson product-moment coefficient was used to test for the statistically significant interrelationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Pearson product-moment correlations will be interpreted according to the guidelines provided by Cohen (1992):
r ≥ .10 (small practical effect);
r ≥ .30 (medium practical effect); and
r ≥ .50 (large practical effect).
The significance level of p ≤ .05 and r ≥ .30 was chosen as the cut-off point for rejecting the null hypotheses.

Steyn (2002) has criticised the sole use of statistical significance testing, recommending that effect sizes should be established to determine the importance of a statistically significant relationship. Significantly large, essential and important effects may be overlooked if the sample size is too small (Field, 2013). On the other hand, Field (2013) posits that small and trivial effects may result in important statistical significance simply because large numbers of respondents are used in a study.

Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) state that a relationship between an independent and a dependent variable in an observational study can be categorised in terms of the strength of the relationship or its effect size. The effect size is thus the magnitude of a relationship between two variables; it is objective and usually standardised (Field, 2013).

The significance level refers only to the possibility that a difference or influence exists in the whole population from which the sample is drawn and does not tell us about the importance of an effect, whereas the effect size is the magnitude of that influence (Field, 2013; Gifford, Hine, & Veitch, 1997). A practical effect size of $r \geq .30$ (medium effect) (Cohen, 1992; Gifford et al., 1997; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) was considered for the correlation analyses so as to be able to interpret the practical significance of the findings.

4.6.3 Stage 3: Inferential and multivariate statistical analysis

Cohen et al. (2011) indicate that inferential statistics allow the researcher to make inferences about data, which can be used to reach conclusions that are beyond the direct data. This entails making inferences from the data obtained to more broad-spectrum conditions. Inferential statistics were used to further examine the relationship between the variables organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Inferential statistics are concerned with making inferences about the data and were applied as below:

1. Stepwise hierarchical regression analysis
2. Hierarchical moderated regression analysis
3. Test for significant mean differences.

4.6.3.1 Hierarchical moderated regression analysis

Hair et al. (2010) state that hierarchical moderated regression is a method for detecting empirically how a variable influences or "moderates" the nature of a relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Hair et al. (2010) further explain that one variable (e.g. x) moderates the relationship between two other variables (e.g. y and z) if the degree of association between y and z varies as a function of the value held by x.

4.6.3.2 Test for significant mean differences

A t-test (for parametric data) and a Mann-Whitney U test (for non-parametric data) were conducted to determine whether there were any significant differences between the mean scores of age, gender, marital status, race, tenure and job level (Pallant, 2010), which were shown to be the variables that acted as moderators between the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factor variables. The level of statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$.

4.6.4 Level of significance

The level of significance expresses statistical significance in terms of specific probability (Cohen et al., 2011). In practice, a general level of significance at $p \leq .05$ is chosen to test the hypothesis, which therefore provides a 95% confidence level in the results as the standard when applied in the research context. The most commonly used significance levels are $p \leq .05$ and $p \leq .01$. For the purpose of this research study, the $p \leq .05$ level of significance was used.

Field (2013) states that researchers in the human sciences are concerned about missing a significant result, or making a type II error, that is, they are worried about falsely concluding a significant result. It has been confirmed that the researcher may make two types of error (type I and type II errors). Firstly, a type I error occurs when the researcher misleadingly rejects a null hypothesis by stating that a relationship exists when in fact there is no relationship. A type I error occurs when the researcher believes that there is no effect in the population when in fact there is (Field, 2013); in other words when the researcher falsely rejects a null hypothesis when it is in fact true (Williams, Sweeney, & Anderson, 2006).

Secondly, a Type II error occurs when the researcher misleadingly accepts a null hypothesis, stating that a relationship exists when there is no such relationship between the variables. Field (2013) also states that a type II error occurs when the researcher believes that there is a genuine effect in the population when in actual fact there is not; in other words when the researcher falsely accepts a null hypothesis when it is false (Williams et al., 2006). As the total number of statistical tests to be performed on a sample increases, the probability of a type I error also increases.

One approach to counter the accumulation of this effect is to set the level of significance smaller for the individual statistical test so as to compensate for the overall type I error effect. Hays (1994) believes that deciding on the significance level is never easy and the final choice is largely subjective. Various levels of significance have been identified; **Table 4.8** below indicates the different levels of statistical significance.

Table 4.8

Different Levels of Statistical Significance (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013)

Probability	Level	Significance

p	.10	Less significant
p	.01 to .05	Significant
p	.001 to .01	Very significant
p	.001	Extremely significant

Researchers state that when a test of significance reveals a *p*-value lower than the chosen significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected and the results are referred to as statistically significant (Field, 2013; Williams et al., 2006).

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the empirical investigation undertaken in the study. The population and composition of the sample that were used in the study, as well as the measuring instrument, the data collection process, the administration of the measuring instrument and the data analysis process were discussed. A discussion of the formulation of the hypotheses and the statistical processing of the data concluded the chapter.

Chapter 5 addresses the following aims of the research:

Research aim 1: To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.

Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

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

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH RESULTS

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

Research aim 1: To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.

Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

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

5.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistics allow for the description of the data obtained from the sample and are calculated to provide information about a population of interest (Malaudzi, 2015; Samuels, Witmer, & Schaffner, 2012). Researchers believe that descriptive statistics are used to address specific research carried out by a study and are employed in support of discovering very important, yet often hidden, patterns in the data that may shed light on the problems that need to be resolved through the study (Bordens & Abbott, 2014). In this section the internal consistency reliability of the three measurement instruments is assessed. This is followed by a discussion of the means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), skewness and kurtosis that were computed for each scale.

5.1.1 Reporting of internal consistency reliability

Punch (2013) posits that internal consistency reliability is correlated to the concept-indicator idea of measurement, whereby several items are applied to support the inferring of the level of the underlying trait and whether the question relates to the extent to which these items are consistent with each other, or are operating in the same direction. The reliability analysis focused on assessing the internal consistency reliability of the three measurement instruments, namely, the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) and the Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three instruments are reported in the following sections.

5.1.1.1 Reporting on scale reliability: Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used in this study to determine the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 indicating perfect consistency (Mayers, 2013); therefore, the higher the alpha coefficient, the more reliable the item or test. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70 is considered a desirable reliability coefficient, although it may decrease to .60 in exploratory research (Hair et al., 2010). In the case of individual testing, however, reliabilities as low as .30 are acceptable when instruments are used to gather group data (Terre-Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

Table 5.1 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the three subscales of the OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .83 (high) to .61 (low) for the total sample (N = 224). The total OCQ scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .85 (high), which was considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 5.1

Internal Consistency Reliability: OCQ

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Affective Commitment	.61	8
Continuance Commitment	.70	8
Normative Commitment	.83	8
Overall scale	**.85**	**24**

5.1.1.2 Reporting of scale reliability: Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS)

Table 5.2 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the four subscales of the CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .90 (high) to .86 (high) for the total sample (N = 224). The total CAAS scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .95 (high), which was considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 5.2

Internal Consistency Reliability: CAAS

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Career Concern	.86	6
Career Control	.86	6
Career Curiosity	.88	6
Career Confidence	.90	6
Overall scale	**.95**	**24**

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

Table 5.3 provides the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the six subscales of the RFMS (Döckel et al. 2006). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores varied from .93 (high) to .70 (medium) for the total sample (N = 224). Job characteristics obtained a Cronbach alpha of .17 which was considered too low and therefore could not be used for further interpretation. Moreover, none of the items could be deleted in order to increase the reliability of the subscale to a Cronbach alpha of at least .7. The original Cronbach's alpha obtained for the subscale of supervisor support was .43. When the item of "My supervisor often recognises an employee for work well done" was removed, the Cronbach alpha increased to .70. This particular item was therefore not included in the interpretation of the results and this subscale was thus not used for further interpretation. The total RFMS obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91 (high), which was considered adequate for the purpose of the current study.

Table 5.3

Internal Consistency Reliability: RFMS

Subscale	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Compensation	.93	12
T&D opportunities	.85	6
Supervisor support	.70	5
Career opportunities	.75	6
Work-life balance	.90	4
Overall scale	**.91**	**33**

5.1.2 Reporting of means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis

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

The mean can be described as a statistical model of the centre of the distribution of the scores (Field, 2013). The standard deviation is referred to as an estimation of the average variability (spread) of a set of data. Skewness is utilised to measure the symmetry of a frequency distribution, where the symmetrical distributions have a skewness of 0 (Field, 2013; Kim, 2013). Treiman (2014) further explains that a set of data is categorised as symmetrical if its centremost point lies in the middle of the distribution and the distribution of scores to the left and the right of the centremost point are mirror images of each other. Kim (2013) further highlights that a positive skewness value indicates that the tail on the right side of the distribution is longer than that on the left side, and that most of the values are clustered to the left of the mean. A negative skewness value in contrast indicates that the tail on the left side of the distribution is longer than that on the right side and that most of the values are clustered to the right of the mean (Kim, 2013). Researchers further explain that a reference of large divergence from normality is an absolute skewness value greater than 2 (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). Therefore, the skewness values must fall between -1 and 1 to be considered acceptable to prove a normal distribution (Howell, 2004).

Field (2013) affirms that kurtosis measures the degree to which scores cluster in the tails of a frequency distribution. The original kurtosis value is occasionally called kurtosis (proper), and a normal distribution is referred to as a bell-shaped distribution or a mesokurtic distribution (Mayers, 2013). A general tendency that is followed when utilising statistical packages such as SPSS, is to calculate the 'excess' kurtosis by subtracting 3 from the kurtosis (proper), where the excess kurtosis should be 0 for a normal distribution (Kim, 2013). Leptokurtic distribution is describes as the distribution with positive kurtosis, is pointy and has many scores in the tails (Field, 2013; Kim, 2013; Mayers, 2013). In contrast, platykurtic distribution can be described as the distribution with a negative kurtosis which is relatively thin in the tails and tends to be flatter (Field, 2013; Kim, 2013; Mayers, 2013). West et al. (1995) suggest a reference of substantial departure from normality as an absolute kurtosis (proper) value > 7. Field (2013) states that the further a value is from 0, the more likely it is that the data are not normally distributed. Researchers further indicate that the kurtosis values between -2 and 2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). Brown (2015) maintains that kurtosis values between -3 and 3 are considered acceptable for proving normal distribution.

5.1.2.1 *Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)*

Table 5.4 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the three subscales of the OCQ, as well as of the overall scale. The means of the three subscales ranged between 3.27 and 3.43. As shown in Table 5.4, the highest mean score was *M* = 3.43 (*SD* = .79) for the subscale normative commitment, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale affective commitment (*M* = 3.27; *SD* = .61). The skewness values show that the scores for all the subscales and the overall scale were positively skewed (bounded to the left). Skewness for the three subscales ranged between .04 and .14, thereby falling within the -1 and 1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Howell, 2016). Kurtosis values showed that both the subscales and the overall scale had a leptokurtic distribution (positive, left), with kurtosis values ranging between .18 and .50, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Brown, 2015).

Table 5.4

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: OCQ

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Affective Commitment	3.27	.61	.06	.50
Continuance Commitment	3.40	.70	.04	.41
Normative Commitment	3.43	.79	.05	.18
Overall OCQ scale	3.38	.61	.14	.45

5.1.2.2 *Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS)*

Table 5.5 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the four subscales of the CAAS, as well as of the overall scale. The means for the four subscales ranged between 3.99 and 4.10. As shown in Table 5.5, the highest mean score was *M* = 4.10 (SD = .65) for the subscale career confidence, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale career concern (*M* = 3.99; SD = .61). The skewness values show that the scores for all the subscales and the overall scale were negatively skewed (bounded to the right). Skewness for the four subscales ranged from .49 and .95, thereby falling within the -1 and 1 normality

range recommended for these coefficients (Howell, 2016). The kurtosis values showed that all subscales had a leptokurtic distribution (positive, left), as did the overall scale. Kurtosis values ranged between .78 and 2.05, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Brown, 2015).

Table 5.5

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: CAAS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Concern	3.99	.61	.49	.78
Career Control	4.05	.60	.60	.84
Career Curiosity	4.03	.63	.95	2.05
Career Confidence	4.10	.65	.94	2.0
Overall CAAS scale	**4.04**	**.53**	**.54**	**.84**

5.1.2.3 *Retention Factor Measurement Scale (RFMS)*

Table 5.6 summarises the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each of the six subscales of the RFMS as well as of the overall scale. The means of the six subscales ranged between 2.25 and 3.19. As shown in Table 5.6, the highest mean score was (M = 3.19; SD = .81) for the subscale training and development opportunities, while the lowest mean was obtained for the subscale work–life balance *(M* = 2.25; SD = 1.02). The skewness values show that the scores for all the subscales were negatively skewed (bounded to the right), while the overall scale was positively skewed (bounded to the left). Skewness for the six subscales ranged between .02 and .82, thereby falling within the -1 and 1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Howell, 2016). The kurtosis values showed that all subscales and the overall scale had a leptokurtic distribution (positive, left). The kurtosis values ranged between .01 and .19, thereby falling within the -3 and 3 normality range (Brown, 2015).

Table 5.6

Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness and Kurtosis: RFMS

Construct	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Compensation	3.00	.86	.09	.10
T&D opportunities	3.19	.81	.39	.04
Supervisor support	2.84	.80	.21	.01
Career opportunities	2.92	.76	.02	.19
Work-life balance	2.25	1.02	.82	.01
Overall RFMS scale	2.93	.57	.05	.26

In summary, with regard to the OCQ scale, normative commitment reported the highest mean (*M* = 3.43) and affective commitment reported the lowest mean (*M* =3.27). In terms of the CAAS scale, career confidence reported the highest mean (*M* = 4.10) and career concern the lowest mean (M = 3.99). Finally, in terms of the RFMS scale, training and development opportunities reported the highest mean (*M* = 3.19) and work-life balance reported the lowest mean *(M* = 2.25).

5.2 CORRELATIONS

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

The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (*r*) was used to calculate the direction of and strength between variables (Steyn, 2002). For the purpose of this study, a cut-off point of *r* ≥ .30 (small effect) at *p* ≤ .05 was used to determine the practical significance of the correlation coefficients.

5.2.1 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between OCQ and CAAS

This section reports on the bivariate correlations between the OCQ and the CAAS variables. As shown in Table 5.7, a number of significant relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.7

Bivariate Correlations between OCQ and CAAS

Variables	Gender	Age	Race	Marital status	Job level	Affective	Continuance	Normative	Overall OCQ	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Confidence	Overall CAAS
Affective	-.07	.27***	.23***	..23***	.12	-								
Continuance	-.07	..19**	.19**	.10	-.03	.39***	-							
Normative	-.05	.31***	.18**	.24***	.07	.67***	.46***	-						
Overall OCQ	-.05	.30***	.23***	.22***	.06	.79***	.68***	.93***	-					
Concern	.00	-.17**	.04	-.15*	-.06	.22*	.28***	.29***	.31***	-				
Control	-.00	-.15*	-.03	-.13	-.13*	.15*	.15*	.20***	.19**	.67***	-			
Curiosity	.02	-.08	-.04	-.12	-.09	.19**	.23***	.23***	.24***	.65***	.72***	-		
Confidence	.01	-.10	.05	-.09	-.01	.19**	.14*	.24***	.22***	.57***	.36***	.75***	-	
Overall CAAS	.00	-.13	.01	-.13	-.06	.23***	.22***	.29***	.28***	.81***	.86***	.91***	.84***	-

Notes: N = 224 *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$. $r \leq .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \geq .30 \leq .49$ (medium practical effect size), r $\geq .50$ (large practical effect size)

Several significant relationships were found between the OCQ and CAAS. Career Concern showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables.

- Affective commitment (r = .22; small practical effect size, $p \leq .05$).
- Continuance commitment (r = .28; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Normative commitment (r = .29; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall OCQ scale (r = .31; medium practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Career Control showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables.

- Affective commitment (r = .15; small practical effect size, $p \leq .05$).
- Continuance commitment (r = .15; small practical effect size, $p \leq .05$).
- Normative commitment (r = .20; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall OCQ scale (r = .19; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Career Curiosity showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables.

- Affective commitment (r = .19; small practical effect size, $p \leq .01$).
- Continuance commitment (r = .23; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Normative commitment (r = .23; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall OCQ scale (r = .24; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Career Confidence showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables.

- Affective commitment (r = .19; small practical effect size, $p \leq .01$).
- Continuance commitment (r = .14; small practical effect size, $p \leq .05$).
- Normative commitment (r = .24; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).
- Overall OCQ scale (r = .22; small practical effect size, $p \leq .001$).

Regarding the relationship between the OCQ and the CAAS variables, Table 5.7 shows that the associations were all significant and positive, ranging between $.14 \leq r \leq .31$ (small to medium practical effect, $.05 \leq p \leq .001$). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.7) showed a small to medium practical effect (highest value being .31), and this is well below the level of concern for multicollinearity ($r \geq .90$) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

5.2.2 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between the OCQ and RFMS

This section will report on the bivariate correlations between the OCQ and the RFMS variables. As shown in Table 5.8, a number of significant positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.8

Bivariate Correlations between OCQ and RFMS

Variables	Age	Gender	Race	Marital stat	Job level	Affective	Continuance	Normative	Overall OCQ	Compensation	T&D opp	Sup. supp	Career opp.	Work/Life	Overall RFMS
Affective	-.07	.27***	.23***	..23***	.12	-									
Continuance	-.07	..19**	.19**	.10	-.03	.40***	-								
Normative	-.05	.31***	.18**	.24***	.07	.67***	.46***	-							
Overall OCQ	-.05	.30***	.23***	.22***	.06	.79***	.68***	.93***	-						
Compensation	.17**	-.02	.03	.19**	.04	.35***	.00	.35***	.32***	-					
T&D opportunities	.08	-.06	-.03	.11	.11	.43***	.06	.39***	.37***	.38***	-				
Supervisor support	.09	-.01	.09	.13*	.14*	.29***	-.06	.16*	.13*	.36***	.27***	-			
Career opportunities	.07	-.08	-.01	.17**	.13*	.32***	.05	.24***	.25***	.48***	.49***	..55***	-		
Work-life balance	.05	.02	.19**	-.05	.14*	-.03	-.25***	-.11	-.15**	.03	.04	.26***	-.02	-	
Overall RFMS	.15*	-.04	.05	.18**	.15*	.41***	-.01	.34***	.31***	.81***	.66***	.67***	.71***	.24***	-

Notes: N = 224; *** $p \le .001$; ** $p \le .01$; * $p \le .05$. $r \le .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \ge .30 \le .49$ (medium practical effect size), r $\ge .50$ (large practical effect

Several significant relationships were found between the OCQ and the RFMS.

Affective commitment showed significant positive relationships with all the RFMS variables except the work/life balance variable.

- Compensation (r = .35; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- T&D opportunities (r = .43; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- Supervisor support (r = .29; small practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- Career opportunities (r = .32; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- Overall RFMS (r = .41; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)

Continuance commitment showed a significant negative relationship with only the work/life balance variable and with none of the other RFMS variables.

- Work-life balance (r = -.25; small practical effect size, p ≤ .001)

Normative commitment showed significant positive relationships with all the RFMS variables except the work-life balance variable.

- Compensation (r = .35; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- T&D opportunities (r = .39; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- Supervisor support (r = .16; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05)
- Career opportunities (r = .24; small practical effect size, p ≤ .001)
- Overall RFMS (r = .34; medium practical effect size, p ≤ .001)

Regarding the relationship between the OCQ and the RFMS variables, Table 5.8 shows that the associations were all significant and positive, ranging between .16 ≤ r ≤ .43 (small to medium practical effect), while a significant negative relationship was found between continuance commitment (OCQ) and work-life balance (RFMS). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.8) showed a small to medium practical effect (highest value being .43), which is well below the level of concern for multicollinearity (r ≥ .90) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

5.2.3 Reporting of the bivariate correlations between the CAAS and RFMS

This section will report on the bivariate correlations between the CAAS and the RFMS variables. As shown in Table 5.9, a number of significantly positive relationships were observed between these variables.

Table 5.9

Bivariate Correlations between CAAS and RFMS

Variables	Gender	Age	Race	Marital status	Job level	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Confidence	Overall CAAS	Compensation	T&D opportunities	Supervisor support	Career opportunities	Work/Life balance	Overall RFMS
Concern	.00	-.17**	.04	-.15*	-.06	-										
Control	-.00	-.15*	-.03	-.13	-.13*	.67***	-									
Curiosity	.02	-.08	-.04	-.12	-.09	.65***	.72***	-								
Confidence	.01	-.10	.05	-.09	-.01	.57***	.63***	.75***	-							
Overall CAAS	.00	-.13	.01	-.13	-.06	.81***	.86***	.91***	.85***	-						
Compensation	.17**	-.02	.03	.19**	.04	.13*	.16**	.09	.10	.14*	-					
T&D opportunities	.08	-.06	-.03	.11	.11	.12	.12	.16**	.18**	.18**	.38***	-				
Supervisor support	.09	-.01	.09	.13*	.14*	.07	.14*	.18**	.25***	.18**	.36***	.47***	-			
Career opportunities	.07	-.08	-.01	.17**	.13*	.10	.14*	.10	.12	.13	.48***	.49***	.55***	-		
Work-life balance	.05	.02	.19**	-.05	.14*	-.16**	-.10	-.11	-.08	-.11	.03	.04	.26***	-.02	-	
Overall RFMS	.15*	-.04	.05	.18**	.15*	.15*	.17**	.13*	.21**	.19**	.81***	.66***	.67***	.71***	.24***	-

Notes: N = 224; *** $p \le .001$; ** $p \le .01$; * $p \le .05$. $r \le .30$ (small practical effect size), $r \ge .30 \le .49$ (medium practical effect size), r $\ge .50$ (large practical effect size)

Significant relationships were only found between some of the CAAS and the RFMS variables. Career concern revealed positive relationships with:

- Compensation (r = .13; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05).
- Overall RFMS (r = .15; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05).

Career concern revealed a negative relationship with:

- Work-life balance (r = -.16; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).

Career control revealed positive relationships with:

- Compensation (r = .16; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).
- Supervisor support (r = .14; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05).
- Career opportunities (r = .14; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05).
- Overall RFMS (r = .17; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).

Career Curiosity revealed positive relationships with:

- T&D opportunities (r = .16; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).
- Supervisor support (r = .18; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).
- Overall RFMS (r = .13; small practical effect size, p ≤ .05).

Career Confidence revealed positive relationships with:

- T&D opportunities (r = .18; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).
- Supervisor support (r = .25; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).
- Overall RFMS (r = .21; small practical effect size, p ≤ .01).

Regarding the relationship between the CAAS and the RFMS variables, Table 5.9 shows that a number of associations were significant and positive, ranging between .13 ≤ r ≤ .25 (small practical effect, .05 ≤ p ≤ .001). It was anticipated that multicollinearity would not pose a problem, as the Pearson product-moment coefficients (see Table 5.9) showed a small practical effect (highest value being .25), which is well below the level of concern for multicollinearity (r ≥ .90) to be present (Hair et al., 2010).

The results of the bivariate correlation analyses provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

5.3 INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

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

5.3.1 Stepwise hierarchical regression analysis

This section is relevant to research aim 2, namely, to empirically investigate whether the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors. Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted using the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), as well as the overall organisational commitment construct and the overall career adaptability construct as the independent variables, and the retention factors construct as the dependent variable. Stepwise regression is a statistical technique that includes regression models in which the choice of predictive variables is made by an automatic procedure. A backward elimination procedure was applied which involves starting with all the variables and testing them one by one for statistical significance, and then deleting any that are not significant. **Table 5.10** summarises the results.

The results showed that the regression model was significant (F = 4.95; p = .000; R^2 = .16; ΔR^2 = .02; ΔF = 4.11; ΔFp = .04). The adjusted R^2 value of .16 indicated that the model predicted approximately 16% (small practical effect) of the variance in the dependent variable (retention factors). **Table 5.10** shows that only job level, organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly explain the variance of retention factors. Organisational commitment contributed the most towards explaining the variance in retention factors ($ß$ = .30; p ≤ .000), followed by job level ($ß$ = .14; p ≤ .05) and career adaptability ($ß$ = .14; p ≤ .05). The collinearity statistics indicated that the tolerance values were all close to 1 and the variance inflation factor (VIF) was less than 2.5 (implying little or no multicollinearity concerns).

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Table 5.10

Results of the Stepwise Regression Analysis: Demographic Variables and OCQ and CAAS Variables as Independent variables and RFMS as Dependent Variable

Model variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B.	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.22	.35		3.50	.001**		
Age	-.02	.05	-.05	-.51	.61	.45	2.23
Gender	.02	.07	.02	.21	.83	.96	1.04
Race	-.00	.04	.01	.13	.90	.90	1.13
Marital status	.05	.05	.07	.98	.33	.71	1.42
Job level	.06	.03	.14	2.10	.04*	.86	1.17
OCQ	.27	.10	.30	4.04	.000***	.74	1.36
CAAS	.15	.07	.14	2.02	.04*	.86	1.17

Notes: N = 383; *** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.

In conclusion, the results revealed that organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors. Furthermore, the results showed that job level was the only demographic variable that explained the variance of retention factors.

5.3.2 Tests for significant mean differences

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

One-way ANOVA and independent t-tests were conducted to test for significant mean difference regarding the variables of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. **Table 5.11** displays the results for the ANOVA scores relating to age.

Table 5.11

ANOVA Scores for Age (N = 224)

Variable	≤ 20 years Mean (SD)	21–30 years Mean (SD)	31–40 years Mean (SD)	41–50 years Mean (SD)	51–60 years Mean (SD)	≥ 60 years Mean (SD)	F	df	Sig
Affective	3.14 (.51)	3.12 (.59)	3.23 (.56)	3.40 (.62)	3.94 (.47)	3.18	6.77	223	.000***
Continuance	3.41 (.70)	3.25 (.72)	3.33 (.56)	3.66 (.73)	3.74 (.77)	3.75	2.92	223	.01**
Normative	3.18 (.54)	3.23 (.67)	3.36 (.83)	3.78 (.83)	4.08 (.83)	3.50	6.39	223	.000***
Overall OCQ	3.23 (.47)	3.21 (.50)	3.32 (.58)	3.65 (.67)	3.96 (.64)	3.53	7.76	223	.000***
Concern	4.06 (.47)	4.09 (.66)	3.99 (.57)	3.79 (.60)	3.91 (.50)	3.00	2.05	223	.07
Control	4.03 (.63)	4.13 (.60)	4.08 (.56)	3.86 (.64)	4.04 (.45)	3.50	1.34	223	.25
Curiosity	4.06 (.69)	4.06 (.62)	4.01 (.64)	3.95 (.66)	4.04 (.61)	3.50	.31	223	.91
Confidence	4.14 (.76)	4.14 (.65)	4.07 (.63)	3.98 (.68)	4.21 (.45)	3.67	.60	223	.71
Overall CAAS	4.07 (.50)	4.10 (.56)	4.04 (.53)	3.89 (.56)	4.05 (.39)	3.42	1.16	223	.33
Compensation	2.82 (.72)	2.95 (.85)	2.81 (.94)	3.15 (.86)	3.38 (.75)	3.00	1.75	223	.12
T&D opportunities	3.36 (.50)	3.09 (.88)	3.05 (.91)	3.28 (.64)	3.69 (.58)	3.00	2.34	223	.04*
Supervisor support	2.80 (.68)	2.71 (.85)	2.98 (.75)	2.90 (.79)	2.93 (.87)	3.20	.92	223	.47
Career opportunities	3.08 (.62)	2.81 (.75)	2.91 (.78)	2.92 (.86)	3.17 (.68)	3.00	.94	223	.46
Work-life balance	1.88 (.71)	2.26 (1.01)	2.49 (1.12)	2.26 (1.10)	1.93 (.86)	3.00	1.78	223	.12
Total retention factors	2.88 (.39)	2.88 (.59)	2.88 (.59)	3.02 (.55)	3.13 (.45)	3.03	.96	223	.44

The results of the ANOVA (Table 5.11) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between different age groups in all organisational commitment variables (affective commitment (F = 6.77, $p \leq .001$), continuance commitment (F = 2.92, $p \leq .001$), normative commitment (F = 6.39, $p \leq .001$) and overall commitment (F = 7.76, $p \leq .001$). Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference between different age groups and training and development opportunities (F = 2.34, $p \leq .05$). No standard deviation was computed for the age group ≥ 60 as there was only one respondent in this category.

Table 5.12 displays the results of the t-tests relating to gender.

Table 5.12

Independent t-test Scores for Gender (N = 224)

Variable	Male Mean (SD)	Female Mean (SD)	F	t	df	Sig
Affective commitment	3.32 (.58)	3.20 (.64)	2.78	1.48	220	.01**
Continuance commitment	3.44 (.64)	3.37 (.76)	6.51	.81	220	.01**
Normative commitment	3.46 (.74)	3.40 (.85)	1.90	.62	220	.17
Overall commitment	3.42 (.57)	3.34 (.65)	2.83	1.01	220	.10
Career concern	3.98 (.61)	4.00 (.61)	.08	-.21	220	.80
Career control	4.10 (.59)	4.10 (.61)	.07	.01	220	.79
Career curiosity	4.01 (.67)	4.04 (.60)	.24	-.37	220	.63
Career confidence	4.10 (.63)	4.10 (.70)	.24	.04	220	.62
Overall career adaptability	4.04 (.55)	4.05 (.52)	.00	-.16	220	.98
Compensation	2.99 (.89)	2.94 (.85)	.29	.37	220	.59

T&D opportunities	3.22	3.16	.07	.52	220	.79	
	(.82)	(.80)					
Supervisor support	2.84	2.85	2.45	-.16	220	.12	
	(.87)	(.73)					
Career opportunities	2.97	2.87	.95	.97	220	.33	
	(.80)	(.72)					
Work-life balance	2.21	2.30	3.36	-.66	220	.07	
	(.93)	(1.11)					
Total retention factors	3.93	2.92	.03	.20	220	.87	
	(.56)	(.55)					

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.12) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in affective commitment (F = 2.78, t (220) = 1.48, $p ≤ .01$), and continuance commitment (F = 6.51, t (220) = .81, $p ≤ .01$). No other statistically significant differences between males and females and the remaining variables were found.

Table 5.13 displays the results for the ANOVA test relating to race.

Table 5.13

ANOVA Scores for Race (N = 224)

Variable	African Mean (SD)	Coloured Mean (SD)	Indian Mean (SD)	White Mean (SD)	F	df	Sig
Affective	3.12	3.35	3.54	3.58	4.25	222	.006**
	(.62)	(.57)	(.76)	(.56)			
Continuance	3.25	3.53	3.44	3.55	3.11	222	.03*
	(.70)	(.65)	(.38)	(.94)			
Normative	3.31	3.48	3.79	3.77	2.18	222	.09
	(.70)	(.86)	(.84)	(.66)			
Overall OCQ	3.24	3.46	3.64	3.67	3.69	222	.01**
	(.56)	(.63)	(.65)	(.55)			
Concern	3.97	4.00	4.00	4.12	.23	222	.88
	(.59)	(.64)	(.63)	(.41)			
Control	4.08	4.03	3.78	4.12	.58	222	.63
	(.58)	(.60)	(.83)	(.51)			

Variable					F	df	Sig
Curiosity	4.07	4.01	3.56	4.15	1.49	222	.22
	(.61)	(.63)	(.62)	(.73)			
Confidence	4.06	4.14	4.11	4.18	.36	222	.78
	(.66)	(.63)	(.44)	(.64)			
Overall CAAS	4.04	4.05	3.86	4.14	.39	222	.76
	(.54)	(.52)	(.59)	(.48)			
Compensation	2.95	2.93	3.01	3.32	.78	222	.50
	(.85)	(.90)	(.19)	(.82)			
T&D opportunities	3.22	3.15	3.11	3.38	.37	222	.77
	(.76)	(.87)	(.61)	(.68)			
Supervisor support	2.74	2.94	2.93	2.83	1.00	222	.40
	(.79)	(.83)	(.68)	(.63)			
Career opportunities	2.92	2.95	2.78	2.81	.20	222	.89
	(.82)	(.71)	(.62)	(.77)			
Work-life balance	2.02	2.45	2.08	2.52	3.39	222	.01**
	(.94)	(1.01)	(.90)	(1.42)			
Total retention factors	2.87	2.97	2.88	3.07	.83	222	.48
	(.54)	(.58)	(.45)	(.52)			

The results of the ANOVA (Table 5.13) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between different race groups in affective commitment (F = 4.25, p ≤ .05), continuance commitment (F = 3.11, p ≤ .001), and overall commitment variables (F = 3.69, p ≤ .001). Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference between different race groups and work-life balance (F = 3.39, p ≤ .001). No other statistically significant differences between other race groups and the remaining variables were found.

Table 5.14 displays the results for the ANOVA test relating to marital status.

Table 5.14

ANOVA Scores for Marital Status (N = 224)

Variable	Single Mean (SD)	Married Mean (SD)	Widowed Mean (SD)	Separate Mean (SD)	Divorced Mean (SD)	F	df	Sig
Affective	3.12 (.57)	3.44 (.62)	3.04 (.50)	3.38 (.45)	3.57 (.48)	4.96	221	.001***

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Continu-ance	3.35 (.73)	3.46 (.67)	3.17 (.56)	3.63 (.55)	4.00 (.36)	1.46	221	.22
Normative	3.24 (.68)	3.62 (.88)	3.29 (.57)	3.63 (.88)	4.05 (.72)	4.08	221	.003 **
Overall OCQ	3.24 (.53)	3.53 (.66)	3.20 (.53)	3.56 (.65)	3.96 (.47)	4.74	221	.001 ***
Concern	4.08 (.63)	3.87 (.57)	3.56 (.40)	4.20 (.35)	4.30 (.45)	2.80	221	.03*
Control	4.10 (.59)	4.01 (.59)	3.53 (.65)	4.17 (.76)	4.00 (.61)	1.58	221	.18
Curiosity	4.09 (.59)	4.02 (.70)	3.36 (.46)	3.89 (.35)	3.67 (.94)	2.39	221	.05*
Confidence	4.13 (.68)	4.09 (.60)	3.75 (.29)	3.72 (1.27)	4.07 (.89)	.74	221	.57
Overall CAAS	4.10 (.53)	4.00 (.53)	3.55 (.36)	3.98 (.53)	4.01 (.67)	1.83	221	.13
Compensa-tion	2.82 (.85)	3.12 (.87)	3.15 (.24)	3.25 (.98)	2.95 (1.17)	1.67	221	.16
T&D opportuni-ties	3.11 (.80)	3.27 (.84)	3.14 (.43)	3.28 (.67)	3.47 (.90)	.66	221	.62
Supervisor support	2.73 (.85)	2.98 (.75)	3.27 (.27)	3.27 (.31)	2.36 (.48)	2.48	221	.05*
Career opportuni-ties	2.81 (.74)	2.99 (.77)	3.17 (.55)	3.72 (.75)	3.37 (1.05)	2.21	221	.07
Work-life balance	2.32 (1.05)	2.16 (.97)	2.50 (.84)	2.00 (1.00)	2.05 (1.30)	.52	221	.72
Total retention factors	2.84 (.57)	3.01 (.55)	3.12 (.11)	3.18 (.37)	2.98 (.76)	1.50	221	.20

The results of the ANOVA scores (Table 5.14) indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between marital status groups in affective commitment (F = 4.96, $p \leq$ .001), normative commitment (F = 4.08, $p \leq$ .01), and overall commitment (F = 4.74, $p \leq$ .001). Significant difference between marital group in career concern (F = 2.80, $p \leq$ .05) and career

curiosity (F = 2.39, $p ≤ .05$) also indicated statistically significant differences between marital status groups. Furthermore, there was also a statistically significant difference between marital status group and supervisor support (F = 2.48, $p ≤ .05$).

Table 5.15 displays the results for the t-tests relating to tenure.

Table 5.15

Independent t-test Scores for Tenure (N = 224)

Variable	0–5 yrs Mean (SD)	6–10 yrs Mean (SD)	11–15 yrs Mean (SD)	16–20 yrs Mean (SD)	21–30 yrs Mean (SD)	F	df	Sig
Affective	3.13 (.57)	3.20 (.56)	3.47 (.57)	3.53 (.68)	3.19 (.46)	7.20	223	.00
Continuance	3.27 (.70)	3.37 (.65)	3.71 (.63)	3.66 (.63)	3.65 (.89)	3.67	223	.006*
Normative	3.22 (.61)	3.34 (.87)	3.85 (.74)	3.70 (1.03)	4.20 (.52)	8.29	223	.00
Overall OCQ	3.21 (.48)	3.31 (.64)	3.72 (.57)	3.65 (.77)	3.99 (.44)	9.75	223	.00
Concern	4.04 (.64)	3.92 (.63)	3.99 (.57)	3.86 (.48)	4.08 (.40)	.69	223	.60
Control	4.07 (.58)	4.00 (.66)	4.12 (.56)	3.90 (.60)	4.21 (.44)	.78	223	.54
Curiosity	4.05 (.61)	3.96 (.61)	4.02 (.60)	3.90 (.86)	4.38 (.49)	1.24	223	.30
Confidence	4.10 (.68)	4.03 (.62)	4.07 (.66)	4.11 (.64)	4.48 (.41)	1.15	223	.33
Overall CAAS	4.06 (.53)	3.98 (.56)	4.05 (.53)	3.94 (.53)	4.29 (.35)	1.03	223	.39
Compensation	2.85 (.82)	2.95 (.90)	3.15 (.99)	3.20 (.86)	3.23 (.63)	1.51	223	.20
T&D opportunities	3.11 (.83)	3.11 (.78)	3.42 (.87)	3.25 (.74)	3.65 (.56)	1.93	223	.11
Supervisor support	2.74 (.80)	2.87 (.79)	3.04 (.81)	2.95 (.74)	3.13 (.92)	1.36	223	.25

Career opportunities	2.86 (.75)	2.87 (.76)	3.16 (.78)	2.98 (.75)	2.94 (.85)	.964	223	.43
Work-life balance	2.27 (.96)	2.14 (1.11)	2.21 (.91)	2.20 (.95)	2.80 (1.45)	.976	223	.42
Total retention factors	2.86 (.54)	2.88 (.55)	3.12 (.60)	3.02 (.55)	3.17 (.48)	2.10	223	.81

*0–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years and 21–30 years

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.15) indicate that there was only a statistically significant difference between tenure groups and continuance commitment ($F = 3.67$, $p \le .05$). No other statistically significant differences between other tenure groups and the remaining variables were found.

Table 5.16 displays the results for the t-tests relating to job level.

Table 5.16

Independent t-test Scores for Job Level (N = 224)

Variable	TO Mean (SD)	SA Mean (SD)	SUP Mean (SD)	MM Mean (SD)	TM Mean (SD)	F	df	Sig
Affective	3.13 (.60)	3.30 (.62)	3.36 (.45)	3.18 (.68)	3.39 (.58)	1.01	222	.41
Continuance	3.37 (.73)	3.47 (.72)	3.24 (.60)	3.55 (.72)	3.33 (.55)	.61	222	.69
Normative	3.31 (.70)	3.48 (.83)	3.31 (.83)	3.68 (1.21)	3.59 (.52)	.66	222	.65
Overall OCQ	3.28 (.58)	3.43 (.64)	3.30 (.53)	3.52 (.90)	3.48 (.42)	.66	222	.65
Concern	3.98 (.55)	4.03 (.67)	3.97 (.39)	4.00 (1.11)	3.86 (.31)	.35	222	.88
Control	4.10 (.57)	4.10 (.60)	3.86 (.54)	3.93 (.96)	3.81 (.66)	1.30	222	.28
Curiosity	4.08 (.60)	4.07 (.66)	3.77 (.50)	4.13 (.83)	3.83 (.71)	1.39	222	.23
Confidence	4.00 (.74)	4.14 (.66)	4.08 (.47)	4.03 (.86)	4.08 (.50)	.41	222	.84

Overall CAAS	4.04	4.08	3.92	4.03	3.90	.60	222	.70
	(.53)	(.56)	(.37)	(.86)	(.50)			
Compensation	2.91	2.99	2.89	3.12	2.98	.21	222	.96
	(.74)	(.90)	(.99)	(1.29)	(.67)			
T&D opportunities	3.16	3.16	3.18	2.97	3.58	.99	222	.42
	(.67)	(.89)	(.80)	(1.06)	(.63)			
Supervisor support	2.70	2.85	2.82	2.52	3.28	1.91	222	.09
	(.69)	(.88)	(.57)	(1.03)	(.58)			
Career opportunities	2.83	2.88	3.01	2.67	3.29	1.53	222	.18
	(.67)	(.80)	(.79)	(1.05)	(.44)			
Work-life balance	2.06	2.24	2.60	1.05	2.38	3.38	222	.006**
	(.94)	(1.00)	(1.10)	(.11)	(.65)			
Total retention factors	2.84	2.92	2.99	2.69	3.13	1.43	222	.22
	(.50)	(.57)	(.56)	(.80)	(.28)			

*TO = Till operator, SS = Sales Assistant, SUP = Supervisor, MM = Middle Management, TM = Top Management

The results of the independent t-tests (Table 5.16) indicate that the only statistically significant difference was found between job level groups and work-life balance ($F = 3.38$, $p \leq .01$). No other statistically significant differences between other job level groups and the remaining variables were found.

The results of the ANOVA and independent t-tests provided partial supportive evidence for the research hypothesis Ha3: Differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

1.4   SYNTHESIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

In this section the biographical profile of the sample is discussed in conjunction with the results of the tested research hypotheses.

5.4.1 Biographical profile of sample

Participants in the sample were predominantly single, coloured males aged between 18 and 40 years. This age group is represented by the emerging adulthood life stage (Arnett, 2000, 2015). The emerging adulthood stage is characterised by change and exploration of possibilities in individuals and has clear distinctions between adolescence and young

adulthood (Arnett, 2015). Most of the individuals in the sample worked as sales assistants and the majority of the participants had worked for only one other employer prior to joining the organisation. They had been in their current position for less than five years but with tenure of more than six years.

5.4.2 Sample profile: organisational commitment, adaptability and retention factors

In this section, the interpretation of the means will be discussed. **Table 5.17** shows the highest and lowest means of the three measuring instruments.

Table 5.17

Summary of Means of Measuring Instruments

	OCQ	CAAS	RFMS
Highest mean	Normative commitment (3.43)	Career confidence (4.10)	T& D opportunities (3.19)
Lowest mean	Affective commitment (3.27)	Career concern (3.99)	Work-life balance (2.25)

Overall, the results relating to OCQ indicated that participants scored high levels of commitment to the organisation. Organisational commitment has become the most important concept when researching and attempting to understand employees' behaviour in the workplace (Dorgham, 2012; Rafiee, Bahrami, & Montazer-Alfaraj, 2015). The high mean scores for normative commitment suggest that these employees display high levels of commitment to the organisation; however, they remain with the organisation only because they feel obligated to do so. Researchers agree that employees show strong feelings of normative commitment to staying because they feel obliged to do so in order to repay the investment the organisation has made in them (Bahrami, Barati, Ghoroghchian, Montazer-Alfaraj, & Ezzatabadi, 2016). High internal consistency reliabilities were obtained for normative commitment and the findings can therefore be interpreted with confidence.

Affective commitment can be referred to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014). The low mean scores obtained for the affective commitment variable suggest that the participants did not identify strongly with

the objectives and goals of the organisation and thus did not wish to remain with the organisation for very long. This is contrary to the norm, which indicates that affective commitment is essential for organisational commitment. Researchers assert that affective commitment is the essence of organisational commitment (Mercurio, 2015; Meyer et al., 2012). Affective commitment is the only variable where employees in general exhibit the highest level of commitment toward the organisation. Despite researchers confirming that this strong psychological attachment results in employees wanting to continue to work for the organisation, the findings of this study suggest the opposite (Rathi & Lee, 2014). In addition, such employees show low levels of attachment, identification with and involvement in the organisation and have no intention to stay for long with the organisation (Bahrami et al., 2016).

Regarding career adaptability, the high mean scores for career confidence suggest that the respondents recognised confidence as the most important variable entrenched in their career paths and future careers. High levels of career confidence increase flexibility and career commitment and reduce self-doubt about vocational career choices, resulting in increased career adaptability (Negru-Subtirica, Pop, & Crocetti, 2015). Research has shown that employees who have interpersonal coordination are more confident and secure, they have high self-regulation and pro-social orientation, they are more productive and engaging and they show higher levels of adaptability toward the organisation (Scrima, Di Stefano, Guarnaccia, & Lorito, 2015). Research findings further suggest that older employees experience a greater increase in career confidence over time (Zacher, 2014). High levels of career confidence are of the utmost importance in today's contemporary careers, which require employees to be adaptable, proactive and self-managed in order to cope with increased uncertainty (Blustein, 2006; Gubler, Arnold, & Coomb, 2013). The standard deviation of confidence is highest compared to the other variables, which indicates that most respondents were very confident about their future careers, while a few were less confident about exploring other possible vocational opportunities.

The low mean scores for career concern show that the employees did not display too much concern about their future nor did they show an interest in planning for upcoming or future career tasks and possible challenges that might lie ahead. Ismail (2015) confirms that these individuals are less concerned about their vocational future and are less prepared for any future career tasks and challenges that they might be facing in the future. Researchers indicate that career concerned employees are far more capable of finding better job opportunities and of transitioning successfully into new working environments than their less concerned colleagues, resulting in the securing of high quality employment (Klehe, Zikic, Van Vianen, Koen, & Buyken, 2012; Koen et al., 2012). It is therefore of the utmost importance that these

employees focus on career concern in order to develop the capabilities that will support them during any future career changes (Savickas et al., 2009).

Training and development opportunities are a key retention factor (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). Regarding retention factors, the high mean score obtained for training and development opportunities suggests that the employees in this study are extremely focused on their development and career growth. Training and development opportunities is a critical retention factor used by organisations to enhance specific skills and to improve performance issues and which helps to empower and motivate employees (Coetzee et al., 2014). Training and development opportunities lead to an increase in employee commitment to the organisation and in turn enhance employee retention (Brum, 2007). Martin (2016) agrees that training and development opportunities enhance employee retention. It is interesting to note that with regard to training and development in the organisation, supervisors' play a pivotal role, as they provide employees with the opportunity to develop and strengthen new skills and support them to acquire additional training or education in order to focus on their personal goals and future careers (Çakmak-Otluoğlu, 2012). It is therefore imperative that organisations provide employees with training and development opportunities (Ledimo & Martins, 2014).

The low mean score obtained for work-life balance suggests that the employees in this study are extremely dissatisfied with the balance between work and family life, which could influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Work-life balance has become an increasingly important retention factor for employees (George, 2015). It has subsequently been identified as a multidimensional construct that focuses on the physical, psychological, social and environmental dimensions of employees in order to prioritise between work and personal life (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). Organisational practices that prioritise family support relate positively to organisational commitment and further enhance employee retention (Wayne, Casper, Matthews, & Allen, 2013). Researchers highlight the fact that flexible employment options (including parental leave and on-site childcare facilities) will further enhance employee retention (Timms, Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Siu, Sit & Lo, 2015).

5.4.3 Research aim 1

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

5.4.3.1 Interpretation of correlations between the OCQ and the CAAS

According to the results (see Table 5.7), participants showed significant positive relationships between organisational commitment and career adaptability. Research has found that highly committed employees have proactive personalities, are goal orientated and are more optimistic regarding their future careers (Tolentino et al., 2014b). Normative commitment can be described as employees' feelings of moral obligation toward the organisation (Bahrami et al., 2016). The high normative commitment scores might imply that the participants feel morally obliged to stay with the organisation in order to repay any investment that the organisation has made in them, for example training or resources (Ezirim et al., 2012). These moral obligations also reflect meeting the expectations that were set by other employees in the organisation (Obeidat & Abdallah, 2014). Participants with high normative commitment displayed high levels of organisational commitment. These findings suggest that participants with higher normative commitment are likely to stay with the organisation for longer.

Researchers assert that affective commitment has always been identified as the essence of organisational commitment (Mercurio, 2015; Meyer et al., 2012). Affective commitment has been known to build strong connections and attachments with employees (Martin, 2016). The high scores on affective commitment suggest that the participants in this study displayed high levels of association and commitment to the organisation. Affective commitment refers to the psychological connection between employees and the organisation (Meyer & Allen, as cited in Ledimo & Martins, 2014). The participants also showed high scores on continuance commitment which implies that they may only be committed to the organisation based on the costs associated with leaving and the limited alternative employment opportunities available in the labour market (Ledimo & Martins, 2014).

These findings suggest that the participants in this study display high levels of organisational commitment and will tend to remain with the organisation for longer.

Organisational commitment has shown significant positive correlations with all the CAAS variables. The research findings suggest that participants displayed high levels of career concern. The career concern variable also showed a significant positive relationship with all the organisational commitment variables. Savickas (2013b) believes that in order for employees to feel concerned about their future career they require self-awareness, involvement and preparation. It is important for employees to be concerned, to demonstrate planful attitudes, to feel optimistic and to be future orientated about their careers (Hartung, 2013). It is therefore important for career counsellors to focus on assisting employees with

career-related decisions because most employees require support and assistance in planning and managing future careers (Maree, 2015). More importantly, employees need to be armed with coping skills and helped to find ways to deal with career concern and career uncertainty as well as career changes (Maree, 2015). This may assist employees to cope with and adapt to changing work tasks and work roles, as well as accepting and embracing multi-tasking and job rotation (Spurk et al., 2016). Participants with high levels of career control showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables. Career control can be described as the extent to which employees are future orientated and prepared for upcoming career tasks and challenges (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Ismail (2015) suggest that these participants recognise career control as the most important variable entrenched in their career goals and career path.

Participants with high levels of career curiosity showed significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables. Thus, the findings suggest that participants showed high levels of career curiosity. Savickas (2013) believes that career curiosity denotes inquisitiveness about and exploration of one's place within the organisation and that it will assist employees to learn more about themselves and possible future career opportunities (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015). It is thus important to note that, as organisations become smaller, jobs are becoming more flexible, employees must become more curious in order to remain adaptable in the competitive working world (Hashim, Sabri, Malek, & Mustapha, 2015). The findings of the current study further suggest that the participants showed high levels of career confidence, showing significant positive relationships with all the OCQ variables. Savickas and Porfeli (2012) found that employees with high levels of career confidence take charge of their careers, believe in solving problems and are able to overcome obstacles in order to reach their career goals. Such employees anticipate new career tasks and take full responsibility for their careers (Zacher, Ambiel, & Noronha, 2015). Employees that are highly career confident are more willing and able to invest their physical, emotional and cognitive energy into their careers (Guo et al., 2014; Savickas, 2013).

Employees who exhibit high levels of organisational commitment respond to the organisation with positive feelings (Ng, 2015). Committed employees are more adaptable have a stronger sense of responsibility and are perceived to be less of a financial liability to the organisation (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015). It can be concluded that highly career adaptable employees have stronger feelings for, connection to and association with the organisation (and are therefore more committed to it) and are likely to stay longer (Ferreira, 2012). The results of this research therefore seem to be in line with several other studies that also found positive correlations between organisational commitment and career adaptability.

5.4.3.2 Interpretation of correlations between the OCQ and the RFMS

According to the results (Table 5.8), significant positive relationships were found between organisational commitment and retention factors. Ledimo and Martins (2014) postulate that organisational commitment is based on the core principle that skilled and talented employees are more motivated and committed to the organisation, which is essential for employee retention. The results showed a significant and positive relationship between all the organisational commitment variables and retention factors. Organisational commitment has also contributed most toward explaining the variance in retention factors. Committed employees have greater loyalty and higher productivity and are willing to accept more responsibilities, resulting in the achievement of overall organisational objectives and goals (Mensah & Adjei, 2015). Research findings confirm that organisational commitment relates positively to retention factors (Bianchi, 2015; Welty Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014).

It is evident that participants with high levels of organisational commitment display high satisfaction with retention factors. Meyer and Allen (1997) found that employees with higher levels of organisational commitment have a greater sense of belonging; they identify more with the organisation which increases their desire to pursue the values, objectives and goals of the organisation, and they are willing to remain a part of the organisation for a long time.

The findings of this study suggest that the participants showed higher levels of affective, continuance and normative commitment and were willing to remain with the organisation. Affective commitment has a positive effect on employees in that they care more and dedicate themselves to the organisation (Klein & Park, 2015). Employees with high levels of affective commitment are emotionally more attached to the organisation, are thus more willing to pursue the organisational objectives and goals and want to continue to work for the organisation (Rathi & Lee, 2014). Normative committed employees have a moral obligation to remain members of the organisation (Hagberg & Kullgren, 2016). Continuance committed employees remain with the organisation because of the high compensation they earn as a result of the tenure with that specific organisation (Lumley et al., 2011). Continuance commitment can be further enhanced by organisations making concerted efforts to educate employees on the organisation's objectives, goals, policies and procedures (Coetzee et al., 2014).

In terms of retention factors, participants scored high on their overall commitment to the organisation. Researchers have found that employees who develop positive perceptions of retention factors (salary, performance appraisals, training and development opportunities and

career opportunities, work-life balance) will remain with their current organisation for as long as possible (Abdulkareem et al., 2015).

These findings showed that all the OCQ variables correlate highly with training and development opportunities. In turn, training and development opportunities are positively correlated to organisational commitment (Suma & Lesha, 2013). The research results suggest that the participants foresee available training and development opportunities within their current organisation and are therefore less likely to leave (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). Consequently, organisations are now focusing on enhancing training and development opportunities in order to reduce the attrition rate and to retain skilled and talented employees (Rathi & Lee, 2014).

These findings further showed that the RFMS variable, work-life balance, has significantly negative relationships with all the OCQ variables. The research findings revealed that even though most of the participants have shown high levels of commitment to the organisation, they also reported the highest dissatisfaction with work-life balance. Pauw (2011) confirms that retention factors have a direct impact on employees' connection and commitment to the organisation and have a direct influence on their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. Jain and Nair (2016) describe work-family conflict as inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. Research further suggests that when employees are putting in longer hours at the cost of their families, work-life conflict increases, thus negatively affecting their family life (Jain & Nair, 2016). Organisations that invest in work-life balance have shown lower levels of employee dissatisfaction and lower intentions to leave the organisation (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011).

Retention factors affect organisational commitment and employees' intention to stay with or to leave the organisation (Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2013). The findings of this study suggest that organisations should seriously reconsider their retention factors in order to retain their skilled and talented employees. The results of this study thus confirm that more committed employees are more likely to remain with an organisation, consequently displaying higher retention ratios. It is thus evident that retention factors influence an employee's commitment to the organisation.

5.4.3.3 Interpretation of correlations between the CAAS and the RFMS

According to the results (Table 5.9), participants displayed significant positive relationships between career adaptability and retention factors. Career adaptability is the most important

construct that has been identified for surviving and succeeding in the current global economy (Uy, Chan, Sam, Ho, & Chernyshenko, 2015). Employees with high levels of career adaptability are more flexible and have more skills to adapt to and cope with altered working conditions and changes in the work environment. Research evidence from studies conducted affirms that career adaptability is strongly associated with employee retention and strongly influences actual turnover (Chan & Mai, 2015; Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Career adaptability refers to individuals' capacity to tolerate uncertainty during their career development process (Loh et al., 2016). The findings suggest that participants high in career concern show positive relationships with compensation and the overall RFMS, while on the other hand having negative relationships with work-life balance. The research findings suggest that high levels of career concern are experienced together with positive work-home balance and that the lower the work-home balance, the lower the career concern (Oosthuizen, Coetzee, & Munro, 2016). As a result of high levels of negative work-life balance, employees express lower levels of retention and an increase in actual turnover (Oosthuizen et al., 2016).

The findings suggest that participants showed high levels of career control with retention factor variables. This suggests that participants high in career control display positive relationships with compensation, supervisor support, career opportunities and overall RFMS. Compensation can be described as a fixed amount of money that is paid to employees by the organisation in return for quality work performed (Heathfield, 2014). Researchers confirm that compensation is one of the most important retention factors and has a significant influence on employees' decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation (Kim, 2005; Ovadje, 2009; Sattar & Ahmad, 2014; Shahzad, Bashir, & Ramay, 2008). Several studies have shown that organisations are now applying rigorous methods to their financial incentive schemes (cash bonuses and overall compensation packages) in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees (Springer, Swain, & Rodrigues, 2016). In the position as representatives of the organisation, supervisors play a pivotal role, as they directly influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (Hassan et al., 2013; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). Döckel (2003) describes career opportunities as employees' satisfaction with career development support, internal career opportunities and promotions for further growth and advancement within the organisation. Career opportunities are an essential retention factor in enhancing career adaptability (Bessick & Naiker, 2013). Van Dyk et al. (2013) agree that employees' overall satisfaction with career opportunities significantly influences their overall career adaptability and their decision to stay with or leave the organisation.

The findings further suggest that participants showed high levels of career curiosity with retention factor variables. Participants with high levels of career curiosity showed positive relationships with training and development opportunities, supervisor support and overall RFMS. Research has shown that career curiosity (career exploration) serves as an important link between the outcome variables career adaptability and retention factors (Chai et al., 2015). Therefore, employees to develop career adaptability need to gain insight into their own characteristics and understand the complexity of the working environment by exploring numerous experiences (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In terms of training and development opportunities, career curiosity is a crucial process in employees, as it relates to important career decision-making (Cheung & Arnold, 2014) and leads to various short and long-term career outcomes (Cheung & Jin, 2016).

The findings then suggest that participants displayed high correlations between career confidence and retention factor variables. Participants with high levels of career confidence showed positive relationships with training and development opportunities, supervisor support and overall RFMS. Training and development opportunities is a mutually beneficial concept, because it generates important outcomes for both the employee and the organisation, and builds employees' self-confidence over time (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). Organisations that focus on providing employees with training and development opportunities develop and enhance career confidence, which in turn reduces employee turnover (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). Research findings also indicate that supervisor support has direct correlations with career confidence (Zacher, 2015). Researchers are of the opinion that organisations should focus less on employees' personality traits and internal motivation and focus rather on developing the skills needed for employees to facilitate and enhance career confidence (Wilder, Collier, & Barnes, 2014).

Career adaptable attitudes are the most suitable coping trait for the present uncertain career situation (Gubler et al., 2014). The findings propose that organisations should align retention factors to employees' career adaptability, which in turn will influence their decision to stay with the organisation.

5.4.4 Research aim 2

The results provided supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.

5.4.4.1 Interpretation of stepwise hierarchical regression analysis (demographic variables, organisational commitment and career adaptability as the independent variables) and retention factors (as the dependent variable).

The results of this study revealed that demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explained retention factors. The findings are in line with Rutherford, Boles, Hamwi, Madupalli, and Rutherford (2009), who also found that retention factors are significantly predicted by demographic variables, organisational commitment and career adaptability.

Demographic variables play an important role in the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability and explained the variance of retention factors (Kwon & Banks, 2004; Zacher, 2014). Research indicates that demographic factors (e.g. age, gender and marital status) have been found to be significantly related to organisational commitment (Azeem, 2010). In terms of the research results, only one demographic variable, job level, has been shown to be a significant and positive explaining the variance of retention factors. Researchers confirm that job levels are significant predictors of employees' retention by the organisation (Uthaman, Chua, & Ang, 2016). It is therefore important that organisations focus on creating instrumental relationships with staff level employees in particular, and understand the different demographics involved in order to attract and retain them (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2014).

High levels of organisational commitment and career adaptability increase employees' dedication and their motivation to excel in their roles, which will increase their intention to stay with the organisation (Sri, Krishna, & Farmanulla, 2016). It is imperative for organisations to start developing and enhancing employees' commitment and adaptability in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees.

5.4.5 Research aim 3

The results provided partial supportive evidence for research hypothesis Ha3: Differences do exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

5.4.5.1 Interpretation of test for mean differences

The present study explored broad trends in the significant differences between the relevant demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) in terms of their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

5.4.5.1.1 Interpretation of test for mean differences: age

The research findings showed a statistically significant difference between all the different age groups and the organisational commitment variables. This is in line with the findings of Innanen, Tolvanen, and Salmela-Aro (2014), who found that younger employees are more likely to be involved in and be more committed to the organisation. However, more recent research confirms that the older the employee, the greater commitment that is demonstrated (Mensah & Adjei, 2015). Researchers agree that older employees show lower intentions to leave the organisation, as they experience finding new jobs more difficult and thus demonstrate greater commitment to the organisation (Chalwa & Sondhi, 2011; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Spector, 2008). Armstrong (2012), on the other hand, found a negative relationship between all age groups and organisational commitment.

The findings of this research showed no relationship between age and the career adaptability variables. Researchers however believe that, for organisations to attract and retain skilled and talented employees, employees of all ages in the organisation need to develop and enhance their career adaptability (Ledimo & Martins, 2014).

Age was found to display a significant difference with only one retention factor (training and development opportunities). Training and development opportunities is a key retention factor as it involves the personal and professional development for all employees at any age (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). According to Uthaman et al. (2016), older employees are more skilled, more productive, have a wealth of experience, are more loyal and dedicated, take less sick leave and are less likely to consider leaving the organisation. Researchers strongly believe that employees of all ages who are dissatisfied with retention factors will leave the organisation, resulting in the organisation losing critical knowledge, competent, skills and talent (Tray, Othman, Siong, & Lim, 2013). It is fundamental for organisations to develop and implement training and development programmes in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees (Ledimo & Martins, 2014), as employees are less likely to leave the organisation when they believe that the organisation offers them training and development opportunities (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). Organisations should thus focus on all retention factors

(compensation, job characteristics, supervisor support, training and development opportunities, career opportunities and work-life balance) in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees (Tray et al., 2013).

5.4.5.1.2 Interpretation of test for mean differences: gender

Researchers state that gender, as one of the central demographic variables, has been widely researched across work-life balance studies (Jain & Nair, 2016). The findings of the current study show a statistically significant difference between the different gender groups and affective and continuance commitment. Other research findings confirm that gender influences participants' affective and continuance commitment (Mitonga-Monga, 2015).

No significant difference was found between gender, career adaptability and retention factors. Kanwar et al. (2012), however, found that men and women experience different psychosocial realities, therefore differ significantly in terms of their career adaptability and retention factors. Rathi and Lee (2014) indicate that women with clear career goals have high aspirations and are thus more likely to have the internal motivation to master tasks and outperform their peers; in addition they are highly adaptable and not committed to one specific organisation.

5.4.5.1.3 Interpretation of test for mean differences: race

The research findings suggest a significant difference between race, commitment and retention factors. More specifically, the research found a statistically significant difference between the different race groups and affective commitment, continuance commitment and overall organisational commitment. It therefore seems that participants from different races differ with regard to their commitment to the organisation.

No other statistically significant differences between race groups and career adaptability were found. More recent findings confirm that there is no relationship between the different race groups and career adaptability (Coetzee et al., 2015, Rosier et al., 2012). In their study, Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) did, however, find that the African race group displayed higher levels of career adaptability than white participants (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015).

The current research findings further show a statistically significant difference between the different race groups and work-life balance. Many researchers have concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between race group and work-life balance (Cooper, Lawson, & Price, 1986; Deitinger et al., 2009; Nahar, Hossain, Rahman, & Bairagi, 2013;

Thorsteinsson, Brown, & Richards, 2014; Turk, Davas, Tanik, & Montgomery, 2013; Xiang, Coleman, Johannsson, & Bates, 2014).

5.4.5.1.4 Interpretation of test for mean differences: marital status

The research findings suggest a significant and positive relationship between marital status groups and organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. More specifically, the findings suggest a significant and positive relationship between marital status groups, affective commitment, normative commitment and overall commitment. The research findings further suggest a significant and positive relationship between marital status groups, career concern and career curiosity. Furthermore, research findings also found a significant and positive relationship between marital status group and supervisor support.

In their research, Kanwar et al. (2012) state that married females with family responsibilities have conflicting roles and mobility constraints, which lead to lower organisational commitment and higher intentions to leave the organisation. Taber and Blankemeyer (2015) note that married individuals with high levels of career curiosity develop and maintain good relationships with other individuals and focus on networking with others in order to extract advice in support of future success (Taber & Blankemeyer, 2015).

Coetzee and Pauw (2013) found that employees are more likely to remain with the organisation if they have positive relationships with their immediate supervisors and managers, and if they feel that their contributions are recognised and valued by their supervisors and managers.

5.4.5.1.5 Interpretation of test for mean differences: tenure

The findings of the current study suggest a significant positive relationship between tenure group and organisational commitment. More specifically, a significant positive relationship was found between tenure and continuance commitment. The longer the employee spends in the organisation, the higher the level of his/her organisational commitment (Mensah & Adjeh, 2015).

The findings of the current study further suggest that no significant positive relationship exists between tenure group, career adaptability and retention factors.

5.4.5.1.6 Interpretation of test for mean differences: job level

The research findings suggest no statistically significant difference between job level and organisational commitment or career adaptability but a statistically significant difference was found between job level and work-life balance. These findings are, however, in contrast to the results of Ferreira et al. (2013), who found that differences do exist between job levels and career adaptability. Ferreira et al. (2013) also found differences in job levels and retention factors. Therefore, in order to nurture organisational commitment and career adaptability organisations should implement training and development opportunities as well as coaching and mentoring opportunities for all the job levels.

5.5 SUMMARY OF DECISIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 5.18 presents an overview of the research hypotheses that were formulated for the purposes of this research study, the statistical procedures that were performed to test the research hypotheses and the final decisions reached.

Table 5.18

Summary of Decisions Regarding the Research Hypotheses

Aim	Research hypothesis	Supportive evidence
1	H01: There is no statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.	Not Supported
	Ha1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.	Supported
2	H02: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability do not significantly and positively predict their retention factors.	Not Supported
	Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predict their retention factors.	Supported
3	H03: Differences do not exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).	Not Supported
	Ha3: Differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).	Partial supportive evidence

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics relevant to the study in order to integrate the findings of the literature review with the findings of the empirical research study that was conducted. Chapter 5 thus addressed the following research aims of the study:

Research aim 1: To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Research aim 2: To empirically investigate whether the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predict retention factors.

Research aim 3: To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

Thus, the empirical research aims of the study were achieved. Chapter 6 will conclude the empirical study by addressing the following research aim:

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

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

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

6.1.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review

The general aim was to determine whether a significant theoretical relationship exists between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, and whether demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) influence an employees' decision to stay with or to leave an organisation. The general aims were achieved by addressing and achieving the specific aims of the research.

Conclusions were drawn for each of the specific aims regarding the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

6.1.1.1 *Research aim 1: To conceptualise and explain the three constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, in terms of the theoretical models in the literature.*

The first aim, namely, to conceptualise and explain the three constructs, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, in terms of the theoretical models in the literature was achieved in Chapters 2 and 3.

(a) Conclusions relating to organisational commitment

Organisational commitment focuses strongly on employees' commitment to their current organisation (Bahrami et al., 2016). Organisations require employees who are adaptable, loyal and highly committed to the organisation in order for organisations to perform successfully in the current competitive global environment (Coetzee & Botha, 2012). In conceptualising organisational commitment for this study, Meyer and Allen's (1997) definition of organisational commitment was applied; that is, organisational commitment is a psychological bond between

an employee and his or her organisation that makes it less likely for an employee to leave the organisation voluntarily. Organisational commitment is a process whereby individuals create positive relationships with the organisation and are involved in and willing to invest themselves in the organisation in order to contribute positively to its objectives and goals (Mowday et al., 2013). Mahal (2012) describes organisational commitment as the loyalty of employees towards the organisation, their willingness to exert themselves on behalf of the organisation, the extent to which their values and goals are aligned to those of the organisation and a strong desire to maintain membership with the organisation. Meyer et al. (2015) further posit that organisational commitment can be perceived as a sense of belonging to, involvement in and an emotional attachment to the organisation. Organisational commitment is the extent to which employees experience a sense of oneness with the organisation that influences their level of commitment to remain with the organisation (Coombs, 2009).

For the purpose of this study, Meyer and Allen's (1997) three-component model of organisational commitment (affective, continuance and normative commitment) was used. According to Meyer and Allen (1997), (1) affective commitment refers to the psychological state that reveals individuals' level of emotional attachment towards the organisation, (2) continuance commitment refers to the pre-existing condition leading to the development of the commitment, and (3) normative commitment refers to employees displaying the behaviours that are expected of them.

Researchers confirm that organisations are experiencing challenges in retaining skilled and talented employees as a result of low levels of commitment (Erasmus, Grobler, & Van Niekerk, 2015). By contrast, highly committed employees are willing to remain with the organisation for as long as possible (Njuki & Moronge, 2016).

Individuals' organisational commitment differs as a result of certain demographic variables. The key variables found in the literature include:

- Age (Adeleke, 2003; Badu, 2001; Kanwar et al., 2012; Perryer et al., 2010; Riketta, 2005; Suman & Srivastava, 2012; Tuzun, 2010)
- Gender (Jain & Nair, 2016; Mensah & Adjeh, 2015)
- Race (Lumley et al., 2011; Sehunoe et al., 2015)
- Marital status (Van Dyk et al., 2013)
- Tenure (Suman & Srivastava, 2012; Van Dyk et al., 2013)
- Job level (Suman & Srivastava, 2012; Van Dyk et al., 2013).

(b) Conclusions relating to career adaptability

Savickas (1997) described career adaptability as the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changing work and working conditions. Career adaptability has recently been referred to as the professional duties, traumas, events, situations and transitions that individuals find themselves having to deal with, as well as the psychosocial strategies needed to cope and adapt (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Career adaptabilities can be described as universal adaptive resources and strategies that individuals apply in the process of career construction when faced with critical situations (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) four global dimensions of career adaptability were used to characterise career adaptability. Career adaptability represents the coping approaches and problems-solving skills that individuals may use to integrate their self-concepts into career roles (Nota, Ginevra, Santilli, & Soresi, 2014).

These four dimensions of career adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) are: (1) career concern (the extent to which employees are future orientated and prepared for upcoming career tasks and challenges), (2) career control (the individual's capacity to be aware of and positively orientated to and plan for a vocational future), (3) career curiosity (the extent to which employees take personal responsibility for influencing their developmental and working environment by showing effort, self-discipline and persistence), and (4) career confidence (the extent to which employees are future orientated and prepared for upcoming career tasks and challenges).

Career adaptability is an important quality as it helps employees to deal with ambiguous job roles and career uncertainty (Chong & Leong, 2015). Employees who have high levels of the global dimensions of planning, exploration, decision-making and confidence have greater career adaptability (Hirschi, 2009).

Individuals' career adaptability differs as a result of certain demographic variables. The key variables found in the literature include:

- Age (Han & Rojewski, 2015; Heckhausen et al., 2010; Verbruggen et al., 2013)
- Gender (Careless & Arnup, 2010; Han & Rojewski, 2015; Havenga, 2011)
- Race (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015)
- Marital status (Holth et al., 2016; Kuo & Riley, 2016; Neck, 2015)
- Tenure (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Rostami et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli; 2012)

- Job level (Brown et al., 2012)

(c) Conclusion relating to retention factors

Cascio (2003) describes retention factors as initiatives taken by management to keep employees from leaving the organisation. They include: (1) rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively; (2) ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and management; and (3) maintaining a safe, healthy working environment. Shekhawat and Sandhu (2016) define employee retention factors as the ability of the organisation to attract and retain skilled and talented employees by focusing on different retention factors, strategies and practices. Retention factors are further defined as an organisation's efforts to create working environments that encourage employees to remain a member of the organisation for as long as possible (Sandhay & Kumar, 2014).

George (2015) indicates that there are numerous retention factors that influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation. For the purpose of this study, Döckel's (2003) six critical retention factors for the retention of employees were used, namely: (1) **compensation** (which includes both monetary and non-monetary rewards by the organisation, in return for the work employees do), (2) **job characteristics** (elements such as skills variety, job autonomy, challenging work, solving interesting work-related problems, flexibility and freedom to structure own work), (3) **training and development opportunities** (provided to employees by the organisation as an essential investment in employee development and growth), (4) **supervisor support** (supervisory behaviour that sustains employees' innovation and includes the recognition and feedback that supervisors give to employees), (5) **career opportunities** (opportunities that are internal [promotions] or involve moving into different positions in the organisation, as well as external (career opportunities outside of the organisation), and (6) **work-life balance** (the balance between one's personal life and one's work schedule with minimum conflict between the multiple roles involved).

Many organisations are struggling to attract and retain key skilled and talented employees (Mitchell et al., 2001; Obeidat & Abdallah, 2014). Therefore, in view of the current international skills shortages, many employment sectors are now improving their retention factors in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees (Echols, 2016).

Individuals' retention factors differ as a result of certain demographic variables. The key variables found in the literature include:

- Age (Chalwa & Shondi, 2011; Ertas, 2015; Stoltz, 2014)
- Gender (Tebele, 2013; Watanabe & Falci, 2016)

- Race (Döckel, 2003; Martin & Coetzee, 2007; Van Dyk, 2011)
- Marital status (Hassan, Hassan, Khan, & Naseem, 2011)
- Tenure (Mohlala et al., 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012)
- Job level (Van Dyk et al., 2013).

6.1.1.2 *Research aim 2: To identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models of these constructs.*

The second aim, namely, to identify and explain the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of theoretical models of these constructs, was achieved in Chapters 2 and 3.

Sub-aim 2.1: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability from a theoretical perspective.

Researchers state that career adaptability is essential for fostering individuals' commitment to the organisation (Tolentino et al., 2014b). Career adaptability is regarded as an important psychosocial career meta-capacity as it has a significant and positive influence on employees' commitment to the organisational (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2013; Mayer, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Van Vianen, Klehe, Koen, & Dries, 2012).

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) confirm that career adaptability exerts a strong influence on career and work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Researchers suggest that if employees are given training, development and growth opportunities, they have a better chance of developing and demonstrating their full potential, which in turn will enhance their organisational commitment and career adaptability (Takawira et al., 2014).

Career adaptability has been identified as the central element in individuals' vocational development and advancement (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015). More recent research findings suggest that career development and advancement opportunities are very limited in organisations owing to economic constraints (Kim et al., 2016). Coetzee and Harry (2014) suggest that it is imperative for organisations not to cut back on career development and advancement opportunities, as these influence employees' commitment and enhance their career adaptability.

Research studies have also shown that organisational commitment predicts career adaptability with time (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015). In addition, it has been shown that career adaptability constructs, career control and career confidence are significantly correlated with strong intention to leave the organisation, however career concern and career curiosity are not significantly correlated (Omar & Noordin, 2013). Organisational commitment should thus be considered to attempting to improve employees' career adaptability (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

Career adaptability and organisational commitment are deemed essential to remaining marketable in the contemporary labour market (Bezuidenhout, 2011; Botha, 2014; Coetzee, 2014; Potgieter, 2012; 2014). Lambert et al. (2015) posit that employees with high levels of organisational commitment and career adaptability have very little intention to leave the organisation, resulting in lower actual turnover and increased employee retention.

Sub-aim 2.2: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Organisations in South Africa are faced with huge challenges related to retaining highly skilled and talented employees (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). It has been found that retention factors play a significant role in employees' commitment to the organisation (Chiu & Ng, 2013; Judeh, 2011; Rutherford et al., 2009) and thus organisations are under immense pressure to revise and subsequently improve their current retention strategies and practices to retain those employees with skills and talent (Erasmus et al., 2015).

Organisational commitment is a highly influential and effective mechanism for connecting and linking individuals to the organisation (Kuo, 2013). Employees who are dissatisfied with their current retention factors will leave the organisation and take their knowledge, skills and talent with them to the competitor (Tnay et al., 2013). The findings of various research studies concur that retention factors have a significant impact on organisational commitment (Ojakaa, Olango, & Jarvis, 2014) and on employees' decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation (Ojakaa et al., 2014). Tnay et al. (2013) strongly believe that satisfaction with pay and supervisor support could help to increase employees' motivation and organisational commitment and decrease turnover intentions. Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990) argue that employees who feel appreciated by their supervisors are more conscious and aware of their responsibilities, are more involved in the organisation and increase their levels of organisational commitment. Researchers have also found that job characteristics have a significant negative relationship with organisational commitment (Suman & Srvastava,

2012). Loyalty and commitment on the part of employees will only be displayed when they are completely satisfied with the retention factors, including good working conditions, having benefits and fair pay, training and development opportunities, job security and proper work-life balance with flexible working hours (Hassan et al., 2011). Training and development opportunities and career opportunities are strong predictors of employees' affective commitment and directly influence employees' decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation (Coetzee et al., 2014). Researchers further state that even though strong work-family conflict may exist, employees are however not ready to leave the organisation (Aslam, Shumaila, Azhar, & Sadaqat, 2011).

Sub-aim 2.3: To conceptualise the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors from a theoretical perspective.

Research shows that organisations that foresee ongoing changes need to ensure that they attract and retain employees that are able to adapt to and cope with these changes (Morin et al., 2016). Career adaptability can be described as the resilience resource, providing individuals with the capacity to adapt and cope with greater ease to uncertainty and deal more effectively with stress in the working environment (Harry & Coetzee, 2013). Employees with high levels of career adaptability are more flexible, are highly adaptable and are able to cope more easily to career demands in order to stay focused on their careers regardless of obstacles they may face (Šverko & Babarović, 2016).

Savickas (2013b) is certain that for career development and employee retention, career adaptability is an important construct for understanding the management of predictable tasks. More recent evidence from a number of studies acknowledges that career adaptability is strongly associated with retention factors (Chan & Mai, 2015; Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). Coetzee and Harry's (2014) research results show that career adaptability can be promoted by increasing retention factors. Further research suggests that retention factors consist of specific characteristics that assist in achieving career adaptability (Hamtiaux et al., 2013).

Career adaptability is believed to be a positive human resilience resource in that it protects employees against the negative effects of adverse traumatic events and situations relating to their career environment (Hirschi, 2012; Louw, Mayer, & Baxter, 2012; Mayer, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Researchers suggest that when employees are given training and development opportunities and career opportunities for growth, they have a better chance to develop and demonstrate their full potential, which will enhance their career adaptability (Takawira et al., 2014).

Sub-aim 2.4: To conceptualise the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors by means of an integrated theoretical model.

The three concepts, organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, have been studied from both an individual and an organisational perspective, as have their implications for retention strategies and practices (Chiu & Ng, 2013; Coetzee, Schreuder, & Tladinyane, 2007; Folami & Bline, 2012; Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshalk, 2009; Kanye & Crous, 2007; Lumley et al., 2011; Obi-Nwosu et al., 2013). Human resource practitioners and managers should be concerned and aware about employees' commitment to the organisation, as well as their current and future career goals and plans, and should ensure that specific retention factors (training and development opportunities, career opportunities and growth and work-life balance policies) are implemented in order to retain their skilled and talented employees (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). Organisations should also invest in coaching and mentoring programmes to ensure that employees' career goals and plans are executed (Crumpton, 2014).

There are several retention factors that facilitate employees' decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation (Hassan et al., 2011). Khan (2010) found that money is the main reason why employees leave one organisation for another. Therefore compensation and reward strategies must be included in the retention of all skilled and talented employees (Mbugua et al., 2015). Other research findings indicate that supervisor support plays a vital role in the organisation (Hassan et al., 2013). On the other hand, job characteristics have been found to have no significant relationship with organisational commitment and career adaptability (Suman & Srivastava, 2012). Therefore, retaining skilled and talented employees requires a commitment that can only be achieved by concentrating on retention factors, which may include better compensation and an improved working environment (Islam, Sai fur, Unguku Norulkamar, & Ahmed, 2013).

Researchers posit that if organisations develop the necessary skills within their employees, it will facilitate and enhance organisational commitment and career adaptability. Organisations should thus concentrate less on employees' personality traits and internal motivation and more on skills development (Wilder et al., 2014).

Based on the literature, it can therefore be concluded that there are significant and positive relationships between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

6.1.1.3 *Research aim 3: To conceptualise the effect of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

The third aim, namely, to conceptualise the effect of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, was achieved in Chapters 2 and 3.

On the basis of the literature review, it can be concluded that theoretical relationships exist between the different biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Organisations should not treat employees as a means to an end; human resource practitioners and human resource managers need to be aware of employees' demographic characteristics as they strongly influence employees' decisions to stay with or to leave the organisation (Westermann-Behaylo et al., 2014).

Age

In the current study, participants' age is relevant as the participants form part of a typical generationally diverse organisational context (Oosthuizen et al., 2014). Middle-aged and older employees in the study displayed negative attitudes toward the career development opportunities and experiences that are required in order to become more adaptable because these opportunities and experiences have come at unexpected times in their lives (Rostami, Abedi, Bahnhan, & Savickas, 2012). Harry and Coetzee (2013) conclude that in organisations younger employees are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of career adaptability than those in older age categories. Younger individuals also place more emphasis on rewards and work-life balance, which will allow them to have more flexible lifestyles (Snelgar, Renard, & Venter, 2013).

Gender

Gender is a significant predictor of career adaptability (Harry & Coetzee, 2013). Females are often at a disadvantage, resulting in a low percentage of females in senior positions in organisations (Festing, Kornau, & Schäft, 2015). Therefore, organisations should encourage more women to participate in organisational talent and career management processes and initiatives (Böhmer & Schinnenburg, 2016).

Race

In the current study, the participants' race was relevant against the backdrop of today's racially diverse organisational context (Oosthuizen et al., 2014). Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) highlight that black employees show higher levels of career adaptability than white employees.

Marital status

Afiouni's (2014) research study found that gender stereotypes shape individuals' conceptualisations of career success and that family and work domains are interdependent. In addition, the study found that workplace flexibility allows married women to fulfil their childcare responsibilities, thus encouraging married female employees to concentrate on their careers (Afiouni, 2014). However, a lack of child care services has been found to hold serious disadvantages for career development and promotional opportunities of married career women (Ochsenfeld, 2012).

Tenure

Tenure has a direct impact on training and development opportunities, as well as career development and growth opportunities (Brown et al., 2012; Rossier et al., 2012). Lambert et al. (2015) highlight that as tenure increases employees are less likely to leave the organisation.

Job level

Stoltz (2014) found that job level is a strong predictor of training and development opportunities, specifically staff level groups. Therefore organisations need to focus on training and development opportunities as well as career opportunities as these directly influence employees' organisational commitment and career adaptability.

6.1.1.4 *Research aim 4: To identify the implications for retention strategies and practices in South African retail organisations.*

The fourth aim, namely, to identify the implications for retention strategies and practices in South African retail organisations, was achieved in Chapters 2 and 3.

The literature review elaborated on the way in which retention strategies and practices are influenced by the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. It not only focused on the reasons why employees leave the organisation but also on the factors that influence their decision to stay with the organisation. By understanding the reasons why employees leave and the factors that influence employee

retention, human resource practitioners and managers can contribute to reducing the impact of skills and talent shortages on economic growth and job creation in South Africa (Rasool & Botha, 2011). Organisations are now realising that attracting and retaining skilled and talented employees is a huge challenge for South African organisations in particular (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). In a study conducted in both public and private sector organisations in South Africa, Shakeel and But (2015) found training and development opportunities to be an important motivational variable for employee retention. Other researchers agree that training and development opportunities have strong relationships with employee retention (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Hassan et al. (2013) state that career opportunities also have a direct impact on employee retention. Skills and talent attrition has serious implications for the South African retail industry, affecting store operations and resulting in immense financial losses for retail organisations (Kaur & Vijay, 2016).

Organisational values and beliefs are non-monetary elements that have a major influence on employees' connection with the organisation and their decision to stay with the organisation or leave (Singh et al., 2011). Supervisor support also has a significant impact on affective commitment and is one of the most important determining factors for employees' retention (Ahsan, Fie, Foong, & Alam, 2013). Therefore, training and development opportunities must be an integral part of human resource management if organisational commitment it to be achieved within the retail sector (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). Organisations should support employees by providing them with motivational job demands, job autonomy, supervisor support and career mentoring (Zacher, 2016). However, as the contemporary workplace evolves more emphasis is being placed on employees as agents, where they need to seek career opportunities beyond the boundary of a single employer (Alfiouni, 2014).

The literature review provided valuable information pertaining to the various theoretical models and frameworks relating to organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, including the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the empirical study. This enabled the researcher to select and use instruments that have generally acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability. The literature review pointed out important factors to consider when developing retention strategies and practices, and provided valuable insight on recommendations made by other researchers, which may be considered possible solutions for some of the retention-related concerns highlighted by the literature review. However, some of the findings were inconsistent and should thus be compared with the findings of the empirical study.

6.1.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical study

To establish the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, the research was designed to carry out the following four principle tasks:

1. To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ho1 and Ha1.

2. To empirically investigate whether the biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively predict retention factors. This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ho2 and Ha2.

3. To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level). This was achieved by empirically testing research hypotheses Ho3 and Ha3.

4. To formulate conclusions and recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management and suggest further research strategies based on the findings. This task was addressed in this chapter.

The statistical results provided partial supportive evidence for the research hypotheses and were reported in Chapter 5. The findings in terms of each of the research aims that merit discussion will be presented as conclusions in the following section.

6.1.2.1 *Research aim 1: To empirically investigate the statistical nature of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.*

Owing to the fact that limited empirical studies have been conducted on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in the retail sector in the Western Cape that are relevant to this study, it is necessary to be cautious about over-interpreting the current findings with reference to the practical implications without any further research.

The results displayed supportive evidence for Ha1: There is a statistically significant and positive relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors as manifested in the sample of respondents.

Consequently, the conclusions relating to research aim 1 have been broken down into three parts, as follows:

(a) To empirically investigate the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability.

The results found significant and positive relationships between organisational commitment and career adaptability. Employees who are highly committed towards the organisation are more adaptable. Martin (2016) found that committed employees demonstrate strong and positive connections to the organisation. Empirical research results show that career adaptability is an important contemporary vocational developmental task that influences employees' attitudes toward the organisation (Hall, 2013; Savickas, 2013a). Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017) found that organisational commitment has a positive relationship with career adaptability.

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The results suggest that participants remain with the organisation when they feel emotionally associated with the organisation (affective commitment), when they assess the cost involved should they leave the organisation (continuance) and when they feel a sense of obligation toward the organisation (normative). Career adaptability will increase as employee's affective, continuance and normative commitment. These findings are supported by Njuki and Moronge (2016), who found that organisations are only able to attain their objectives through their employees; it is therefore imperative that committed employees are carefully nurtured and developed by the organisation. Ferreira (2012) also found that strongly connected and committed employees are more adaptable, show stronger feelings of fit with the organisation and feel a strong sense of responsibility toward the organisation.

Employees who display high levels of career concern (feeling concerned about one's future career, being future-orientated), career control (feeling optimistic about one's career and demonstrating a planful attitude about one's future), career curiosity (showing inquisitiveness and exploring future career opportunities) and career confidence (self-awareness). Organisations expect their employees to be able to adapt to rapidly changing situations, have greater self-confidence and thus become adaptable. Employees with high levels of career

adaptability are more flexible and have more adaptability skills to cope with changing working conditions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Šverko and Babarović (2016) emphasise that when employees are serious about pursuing careers they need to display strong commitment to career construction, and in turn their career adaptability will be enhanced. Highly committed and career adaptable employees must align their personal needs with the needs and demands of the organisation (Rudolph et al., 2017).

(b) To empirically investigate the relationship between organisational commitment and retention factors.

The results found significant and positive relationships between organisational commitment and retention factors, except for work-life balance. Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that employees with high levels of organisational commitment have a greater sense of belonging and they identify more closely with the organisation; they are therefore more willing to remain part of the organisation. Researchers' state that career development opportunities as a retention factor has the strongest impact on organisational commitment (Mehta et al., 2014). Organisations are thus applying rigorous retention factors in order to retain their committed, skilled and talented employees (Springer et al., 2016).

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Based on the findings it can be concluded that committed employees are satisfied with the overall retention factors but not satisfied with their work–life balance.

More specifically, participants showed negative relationships between normative commitment and work-life balance. Work-life balance reveals the conflict that exists between the personal and professional lives of employees (Springer et al., 2016). Researchers highlight that work-life balance, especially where it involves scheduling and shift practices, has a huge influence on employees' commitment to the organisation (Messing, Tissot, Couture, & Bernstein, 2014). A strong focus is therefore required on implementing and managing work-life balance strategies and practices in order to attract and retain skilled and talented employees (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, as cited in Hagberg & Kullgren, 2016).

In today's highly competitive environment, employees leave their organisations as a result of dissatisfaction with retention factors, thus organisations have an obligation to retain their skilled and talented employees (Shakeel & But, 2015). Therefore, if organisations wish to remain competitive and if they are to retain their skilled and talented employees, it is essential to concentrate on these factors (Shakeel & But, 2015).

These findings propose that employees' satisfaction with retention factors will influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation.

(c) To empirically investigate the relationship between career adaptability and retention factors.

Researchers found that employees with greater career adaptability are more flexible, curious, open and enthusiastic (Šverko & Babarović, 2016). The results of the current study found significant and positive relationships between career adaptability and retention factors. More specifically, the career dimensions suggested a significant positive relationship with training and development opportunities and a negative relationship with work-life balance. Organisations are now realising the importance of employee training and development opportunities for the success of the modern organisation (Long & Perumal, 2014). Training and development practices are developed to assist and support employees to achieve their career meta-capacities, helping them to improve and manage their career adaptability and retention factors (Coetzee, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2014; Tones et al., 2010).

According to the empirical results of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The findings suggest that career-concerned employees are affected by work-life balance. Karavardar (2014) established that employees who are concerned about their careers focus on training and development opportunities and professional growth within the organisation. It was found that employees who are satisfied with training and development opportunities and career growth and progress will remain for as long as possible in the organisation (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016).

Researchers also found work-life balance in the organisation to be one of the main concerns that influence employees' decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (Damiani, Federico, Pinnarelli, Sammarco, & Ricciardi, 2006; Marinaccio et al., 2013).

As a result of globalisation, a rapidly changing environment and skills shortages, the retention of skilled and talented employees is of great concern to the retail sector (Oosthuizen et al., 2016). Organisations need to address the four career adaptability dimensions of Savickas and Porfeli (2012), as they are essential for influencing employees' decision to stay with the organisation (Perera & McIlveen, 2014). Šverko and Babarović (2016) point out that it is important for employees to plan ahead, to explore more and to be persistent in order to enhance their career adaptability. However, career adaptability is strongly influenced by the

organisational retention factors, namely, compensation, job characteristics, training and development opportunities, supervisor support, career opportunities and work-life balance, which influence their decision to stay with or to leave the organisation (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015).

6.1.2.2 Research aim 2: *To empirically investigate whether the biographical variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors.*

The results displayed positive evidence for Ha2: Individuals' demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of their retention factors.

On the basis of the stepwise hierarchical regression analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

The results found that organisational commitment and career adaptability significantly and positively explain the variance of retention factors. Karavardar (2014) claims that retention factors have a direct impact on organisational commitment; therefore the greater the satisfaction with retention factors, the greater the organisational commitment. In many organisations employees' dissatisfaction with retention factors is a serious problem; therefore organisations should focus on specific retention strategies and practices to enhance commitment (Long & Perumal, 2014). It can be concluded from the findings that the employees in the current study have a strong connection with the organisation and are satisfied with the retention factors, thus they will stay with the organisation for longer.

The current study found career adaptability to significantly and positively predict retention factors. Career adaptability provides employees with an operational framework for understanding the way in which they view their career future, and therefore enables and supports career development (Esterhuizen, 2013). Researchers have found that in current times, career adaptability is a fundamental construct in employees' career development and overall career success (Creed et al., 2009). It can be therefore concluded that the participants revealed higher levels of confidence and are therefore more adaptable; thus they will have strong intentions to stay with the organisation.

The study found job level to be the only demographic variable that predicts retention factors. Job level is determined in terms of its challenges and complexity. Stoltz's (2014) research findings suggest that the higher the job level, the more challenging and more complex the job

becomes. The results of this study may indicate that the more complex tasks are, the more employees feel valued and the more committed they are to their job, thus having a positive influence an employee's retention. It can also be concluded that staff level employees display greater satisfaction with training and development opportunities and greater dissatisfaction with work-life balance than managerial and supervisory levels.

6.1.2.3 Research aim 3: *To empirically investigate whether differences exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).*

The results displayed partial supportive evidence for Ha3: Differences do exist in organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

On the basis of the ANOVAS and t-tests, the following conclusions were drawn:

6.1.2.3.1 *Employees from different age groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The results found statistical and positive differences between age groups in all the organisational commitment variables. In addition, a statistically significant difference was found between age groups and training and development opportunities.

Empirical studies have found that age is positively related to employee commitment (Hagberg & Kullgren, 2016), with older employees' showing greater organisational commitment than younger employees (Rudolph et al., 2017). Training and development opportunities is a key retention factor and is critical for the personal and professional development of employees at any age (Njuki & Moronge, 2016). To improve talent retention, organisations should provide all age groups with equal training and development opportunities (Vance & McNulty, 2014).

6.1.2.3.2 *Employees from different gender groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The results found a statistical and positive difference between males and females in terms of affective commitment and continuance commitment. The results further found no statistically significant difference between gender groups and the remaining variables.

Male participants appeared to be more committed to the organisation that their female counterparts (Latif, 2010). Research has found that women have higher levels of career adaptability than men (Ferreira, 2012; Havenga, 2011). Coetzee and Botha (2012) meanwhile suggest that gender does not influence employees' loyalty and commitment towards the organisation.

6.1.2.3.3 *Employees from different race groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The study found a statistically significance difference between race groups in the continuance commitment and overall commitment variables. The results also demonstrate a statistically significance difference between race groups and work-life balance.

Research findings indicate that African and coloured employees feel more challenged to balance work-life and home-life (Mooney, 2010). These employees have more family responsibilities and work longer hours and therefore appear to carry more pressure with regard to work-life balance (Messing et al., 2014). Research studies have also highlighted that as these employees progress in their lives, they tend to give more attention to balancing their work and family lives (Jain & Nair, 2016).

6.1.2.3.4 *Employees from different marital status groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The results show a statistically significance difference between marital status groups in affective and normative commitment and the overall commitment variables, a statistically significance difference between marital status groups and career concern and career curiosity, as well as a statistically significant difference between marital status groups and supervisor support.

Coetzee and Botha (2012) suggest that marital status does not influence employees' loyalty and commitment towards the organisation. Van Dyk et al. (2013), however, found that divorced participants experience lower levels of emotional attachment to the organisation than single or married participants. Married participants experience higher levels of emotional attachment to the organisation than single or divorced participants and seem to perceive a higher levels of sacrifice (what they have to give up) should they decide to leave the organisation (Van Dyk et al., 2013). Married participants have a stronger preference for a secure and stable working environment (Lumley, 2009) because they generally have greater family commitments and financial responsibilities (Martin & Roodt, 2008).

6.1.2.3.5 *Employees from different tenure groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

According to the empirical results, the following conclusions can be drawn:
The results found a statistically significant difference between tenure groups in terms of affective and normative commitment and overall commitment variables. However, no statistical significance difference was found between tenure groups and the rest of the variables.

Jain and Nair (2016) consider tenure to be an important demographic factor in terms of influencing employees' commitment to the organisation. Rubel and Kee (2015) posit that employees' commitment is enhanced by length of service - the longer they work for the organisation the more committed they become.

6.1.2.3.6 *Employees from different job-level groups tend to differ significantly regarding their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.*

The results found no statistically significant difference between job level groups (management/lower level staff and independent contractors) in any of the three variables.

6.1.3 Conclusions relating to the central hypothesis
The central hypothesis (Chapter 1) states that a relationship exists between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, with retention factors predicting organisational commitment and career adaptability. The hypothesis further states that differences exist in the organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors of individuals in terms of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level).

The literature review and empirical study provided supportive evidence for the central hypothesis.

6.1.4 Conclusions relating to contributions to the field of human resource management

Human resource managers and practitioners have been concerned about employees' psychological connection to the organisation for a long time (Ferreira et al., 2010). The findings in the literature review and the empirical study provided insights into the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

The literature review shed light on the various concepts and theoretical models that promote organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. It also explained the way in which employees' organisational commitment and career adaptability are influenced by retention factors.

The findings of the empirical study make a novel contribution to the relationship dynamics of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. The understanding of the findings adds to an extensive perspective in terms of which employees explain their organisational commitment and career adaptability retention factors. Organisations' career development practices should be developed to assist and support individuals to achieve career meta-capacities that will help them to improve and manage their career adaptability and retention factors (Coetzee, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Stauffer et al., 2014; Tones et al., 2010).

Furthermore, these findings can be used by human resource practitioners and human resource managers to enhance the organisational commitment and career adaptability of employees, which in turn will improve their retention factors, thus motivating them to remain with the organisation for longer. Organisations should focus on becoming employers of choice, paying special attention to developing clear career paths and career opportunities (Tladinyane et al., 2013). Human resource practitioners and human resource managers need to understand the importance of assisting and supporting employees to develop their meta-capacities during all the different stages of career development and career progression, as this will increase employees' commitment to the organisation (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013). Long and Perumal (2014) point out that human resource practitioners and human resource managers should also attempt to identify and understand the reasons why employees decide to leave the organisation. Human resource practitioners and human resource managers

should assess the satisfaction of all employees with the retention factors as this will help to improve such strategies and practices (Coetzee & Pauw, 2013).

6.2 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the literature review and the empirical study are discussed in this section.

6.2.1 Limitations of the literature review

The following limitations were encountered in the literature review:
The limitations of the literature review include the lack of research in both the South African context and abroad on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Although there is a broad research base on the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability, organisational commitment and retention factors, and career adaptability and retention factors, no study has focused specifically on the relationship between these three variables. It can therefore be concluded that the exploratory research on the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors was limited to the research literature on these three constructs that is currently available.

Only three variables (organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors) were used in the study, and it therefore cannot give an all-encompassing indication of the factors or variables that may potentially impact on retention strategies and practices.

The study made use of a limited number of paradigms (humanistic and positivist) in the discipline of human resource management.

6.2.2 Limitations of the empirical study

The findings of the empirical study have limited generalisability and practicability. These limitations are a result of the research design, which included the use of a non-probability sample that was relatively small. A larger sample in the retail sector, and across different industries, with a more balanced distribution of demographic variables (age, race, gender, marital status, tenure and job level) could produce a broader distribution of scores. Furthermore, given the exploratory nature of the research design, this study was unable to yield any statement on causation. The observed association between the variables were therefore interpreted rather than established.

The psychometric properties of the OCQ, CAAS and RFMS are viewed as a limitation in the current study. The OCQ (Meyer & Allen, 1997), the CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) and the RFMS (Döckel, 2003) were dependent on the respondents' self-awareness and personal perceptions, which could have potentially affected the validity of the results. It should also be noted that the lower Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the study (particularly for the OCQ subscales) could have been related to the understanding of the questions. With English being a second language for most of the participants, certain terms and words may have been more difficult for the participants to understand.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the results of the study show potential for analysing the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, as well as the differences between the demographic groups' experiences of these constructs. This study could be used as a basis for understanding these relationships and differences in order to inform the formulation of retention strategies and practices.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions and limitations of this study, recommendations for human resource practitioners and human resource management and further research in the field are given below.

6.3.1 Recommendations for retention strategies and practices

The findings on this study confirm the existence of significant positive relationships between permanent customer service employees' organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. This provides a useful framework for retention strategies and practice in retail organisations. Organisations could use the results of the study to design specific interventions aimed at retaining skilled, talented and valuable employees. A primary implication is that at a group level, organisational commitment and career adaptability are important antecedents of employee retention.

6.3.2 Recommendations for the field of human resource management and retention strategies

The literature review relating to organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors could potentially provide a useful framework for designing retention strategies and practices that could influence both the individual and the organisation. The empirical study

confirmed that significant relationships do exist between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

The human resource management function in organisations are often required to fulfil the role of retention managers, guiding the individuals to make informed and appropriate decisions when considering resigning and leaving the organisation. He/she also plays a role in guiding the organisation to develop human resource strategies and implementing practices for increasing organisational commitment and career adaptability, thus increasing employee retention. Human resource management plays a vital role in ensuring that the different human resource functions (recruitment, selection, compensation, training, etc.) are integrated in order to retain employees (Da Silva & Shinyashiki, 2014). Therefore, understanding the link between organisational commitment (work preference) and career adaptability and what binds the organisation (retention factors) will enable the human resource practitioners and human resource managers to design and implement more appropriate retention strategies and practices, thereby enabling the organisation to retain skilled, talented and valuable employees. Human resource managers should reassess the human resource practices, then reposition and align them for integration with the retention strategies and practices.

Human resource managers and practitioners should use the RFMS in employee retention strategy development and when implementing practices to assist employees with their retention related needs in order to empower them with the insight to make informed retention decisions. They could also assist organisations through the OCQ and the CAAS and the retention factor measurement scale to gain more insight into what type of employee would do well in their organisation (in terms of a match between the needs and values of the individual and the needs and values of the organisation), what keeps employees bound to the organisation and how to increase employee retention by introducing appropriate retention factors strategies and practices.

Different strategies for improving employee retention are emerging in many employment sectors (Echols, 2016), and it has been found that having extremely strong human resource practices are a competitive advantage (Mohamed, Nor, & Dahalan, 2014). Top management and the human resource department should be encouraged to put in extensive time, effort and financial resources to find better ways to retain skilled, talented and valuable employees. Organisations and human resource management must recognise that in order to grow and achieve a competitive advantage, they must attract and retain motivated, skilled and talented employees (Gallardo-Gallardo & Thunnisen, 2016).

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Furthermore, when developing attractive compensation packages human resource managers and practitioners should focus on including the family health care that is currently absent (Ojakaa et al., 2014). To enhance employees' affective and normative commitment organisations should develop and implement fair and transparent remuneration and reward practices (Coetzee et al., 2014). These compensation packages should be reviewed on a regular basis in order to address the rapidly changing needs and circumstances of employees (Ojakaa et al., 2014). Career discussions should become part of formal performance discussions, as they will help employees to identify their strengths and developing areas in terms of the psychosocial attributes that are required for developing and sustaining their careers (Potgieter, 2012; 2014). Organisational career management practices should focus on increasing employees' self-awareness of their career adaptability skills as it will enhance employees' commitment to the organisation (Ndzube, 2013). Organisational career management practices should also take into consideration the differences observed in the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) (Oosthuizen et al., 2014).

The main aim of this study was to identify the implications of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors and to make recommendations for human resource managers and human resource practitioners, as well as career counsellors, on how best to assist retail employees to improve their intention of remaining with the organisation.

The empirical study confirmed the significant relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. The results of the empirical study further provided evidence of the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Human resource managers, human resource practitioners and career counsellors should therefore engage in interventions that will assist employees to enhance their organisational commitment and career adaptability skills and attributes in order to enhance their retention factors. Human resource management, direct line managers and supervisors need to investigate their employees' low levels or lack of commitment towards the organisation, especially when developing and retention strategies and practices (Coetzee & Botha, 2012).

Individuals with high career adaptability are sought after by employers, as they respond to transitions better than those individuals with low career adaptability. Career development interventions should concentrate on supporting employees in formulating their meta-capacities in order to increase their confidence and self-efficacy in demonstrating their abilities and skills

to manage their careers (Del Corso, 2013). Career adaptability resources can be enhanced through the facilitation of career interventions such as time perspective workshops, for example, (1) promoting future orientation and planfulness (career concern), (2) decision-making training (career control), (3) information-seeking activities (career curiosity), and (4) self-efficacy enhancement (career confidence) (Savickas, 2013; Tolentino et al., 2014b).

As the results of this study show, by enhancing employees' organisational commitment, their career adaptability will improve, thus encouraging them to remain with the organisation for longer.

6.3.3 Recommendations for further research

The current study provided insight into the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. The research results will contribute valuable new insight to the body of knowledge relating to the retention of retail employees in the South African organisational context. To enhance external validity, further research should focus on acquiring a larger, more representative sample. The sample should be expanded in terms of the representation of different age, gender, races, marital status, tenure and job level groups, which would provide a better representation of different levels of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

There is also a need for more research to be conducted on organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors in the South African context. Further studies would be beneficial for human resource management in that they would offer direction to permanent customer service employees when developing retention strategies and practices.

Different career and life stages influence the relationship between an employee's organisational commitment and career adaptability. Future longitudinal research would contribute much in analysing the shift in levels of organisational commitment and career adaptability, as the career self-concept evolves over time (Coetzee et al., 2015).

Further research efforts should focus on obtaining a larger representative sample across various occupational groups with the retail sector. The broader sample should be more balanced in terms of the representation of individuals from; in particular, different age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level groups. Different models should also be used to investigate the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. Valuable insight might be obtained through the inclusion of additional

variables, such as organisational values and culture, as well as diversity, which were not measured in this study. This is of particular importance in the multinational organisations. Further longitudinal studies should be carried out to test the consistency of the relationship that exists between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. In view of the fact that employees' satisfaction with retention factors evolves as commitment towards the organisation and career adaptability circumstances change, longitudinal studies could be of benefit to future research.

6.4 INTEGRATION OF THE RESEARCH

This research study investigated the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors within the retail sector in the Western Cape. The research results have established that the organisational commitment and career adaptability of retail employees are significantly positively enhanced by retention factors. The results further confirmed that retention factors are predictors of the relationship between organisational commitment and career adaptability. The results suggest that these relationships between these three variables may be useful in the design of (1) fair compensation packages, (2) improved job characteristics, (3) employee-supervisor relationships, (4) training management systems, (5) learning and development programmes, and (6) work-life balance programmes in order to implement retention strategies and practices.

Researchers have noted with great concern that the loss of skilled, talented and valuable employees has serious implications for organisations and may harm customer service and organisational functioning and ultimately organisational profit (Bothma & Roodt, 2012, 2013). Employers have come to recognise that organisational commitment and the ability to adapt to and cope with new work demands are vital human capital resources and thus it is essential that employees who have these qualities are retained, thus sustaining competitive advantage (Coetzee, 2012; Coetzee et al., 2015; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Ramos, Ng, Sung, & Loke, 2013).

According to Creed, DeJordy, and Lock (2010), career adaptability in employees involves: (1) lifelong learning of new skills and procedures, (2) transferring of skills within and between contexts, (3) viewing new situations as opportunities rather than obstacles, (4) dealing effectively with any uncertainty faced, and (5) being self-aware and reflecting on one's own actions. Tolentino et al. (2014b) then suggest that adaptive readiness within individuals enhances their willingness to develop crucial career capacities and skills (career control, career concern, career curiosity and career confidence) in the form of career adaptability.

Career adaptability has therefore become a fundamental component of the career development process as it enables proactive career behaviour and aids successful career adjustments (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Tolentino et al. 2014b). Studies have further shown that career adaptability strengthens employees' commitment and their retention by the organisation (Coetzee & Harry, 2014).

The literature review implied but did not confirm the existence of a relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. The changing working world is now characterised by a transferral of the responsibility for career development from the employer to the employee, resulting in greater flexibility and adaptability in employees that was previously not the case. The constantly evolving 21st-century world of work compels employees to become active agents in their own development and career progress (Botha, 2014). Furthermore, the retail industry has been known to experience extremely high employee turnover rates as a result of the physical environmental working conditions experienced by employees in this industry. As a result, the retail industry has not been successful in attracting and retaining skilled and talented employees. It is thus incumbent on both human resource managers and practitioners to nurture, develop and promote organisational commitment and career adaptability skills, thereby enhancing employee retention.

The statistical study provided statistically positive support for the central hypothesis. The study found significant positive relationships between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors. However, the study found only partial statistical evidence between demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level), organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

It can be concluded that key positions need to be filled with skilled and talented employees who have clearly defined sets of knowledge and competencies that are important for achieving overall organisational objectives and goals (Sparrow, Scullion, & Tarique, 2014). In conclusion, the findings of this research study provide some initial insights into the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

Accordingly, the results of this study may prove to be useful and valuable to human resource managers, human resource practitioners, career counsellors and employees in the retail industry who wish to improve their organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention. In this section, recommendations were also made for further research.

6.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the conclusions of the research study in terms of the theoretical and empirical objectives. Possible limitations of the study in terms of both the theoretical and empirical stages of the study were discussed. In addition, recommendations were made for further research investigating the relationship between organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors, as well as the influence of the demographic variables (age, gender, race, marital status, tenure and job level) on these constructs. To sum up, the chapter integrated the research conducted in this study with relevant published research, emphasising the extent to which the results of the study provided support for the relationship between the constructs of organisational commitment, career adaptability and retention factors.

With this, research aim 4 (To formulate conclusions and recommendations for further research in the field of human resource management and suggest further research strategies based on the findings) has been attained.

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