

The relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa

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COMMENTS

The following should be noted:

- The guidelines followed for the editorial style of this mini-dissertation is specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (SAJIP). Furthermore, the referencing style used in this mini-dissertation follows the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (6th ed.) of the American Psychological Association (APA). These applications are according to the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of North-West University (Potchefstroom) to be used with the APA referencing style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- This mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article.
- Additionally, the first chapter is a revised version of the submitted and approved research proposal and is presented in the present tense.
- The chapters each contain separate reference lists.
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DECLARATION

I, **Alida du Plessis**, hereby confirm that this mini-dissertation titled “*The relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa*” is my own work. Likewise, the understandings and views expressed in the research article are those of the author, and the relevant literature references are suitably cited in the reference lists.

In addition, I further declare that the content of this research study was and will not be submitted for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.



Alida du Plessis
November 2020

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS AND DECLARATIONS

This research study was designed and executed by two researchers at North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. In the table below, the contributions of each researcher are indicated.

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Prof LT de Beer	Supervisor, co-conceptualiser, statistician, and critical reviewer of the overall research study.

Furthermore, with this statement, the author and co-authors declare and confirm their roles in this research study. This declaration also indicates that all authors are in agreement that the appropriate format was used for the submission of this mini-dissertation at North-West University. All authors are also in agreement that the contents of this research study and any modified versions thereof may be used and publicised by the authors in peer-reviewed academic journals and/or presented at academic conferences.



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3 November 2020

I, **Ms Cecilia van der Walt**, hereby declare that I took care of the editing of the mini-dissertation of **Ms AS du Plessis** titled *The relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa*.



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SUMMARY

Title: The relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa.

Keywords: Work-related rumination, affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, detachment, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, job satisfaction, structural equation modelling, South African employees.

One can argue that organisations are largely impacted by the unique trademarks and characteristics of the 21st century. Hence it has become increasingly important for organisations to understand and address the issues and influences of the modern, dynamic world of work. Work-related factors, on both a collective and individual level, may consequently have an impact on organisational success and longevity. The complex nature of modern working conditions influences employees in distinct ways and understanding how this happens may contribute to increased levels of employee well-being, improved functioning at work, and more positive organisational outcomes.

One of the modern-day challenges may result from the way people choose to engage mentally or emotionally after a typical day's work. Some employees may find it easy to leave work behind, detach themselves from work-related thoughts, and consequently unwind and recover from their day. Others may find themselves still thinking about work, but to a somewhat more functional extent, where thoughts are merely focused on improving their work or finding solutions. Some, however, display more dysfunctional habits and are prone to engage in a process of maladaptive ruminating. This refers to a dysfunctional process of continued negative scrutiny of issues a person has been confronted with at work. Choosing to engage in functional rumination, dysfunctional rumination or complete detachment may further have an impact on whether employees choose to remain silent, or to speak up at work, as a direct product of these ruminative states. The dynamics between these factors can also influence organisations positively or negatively, influencing outcomes such as job satisfaction or turnover intention.

A need has been identified to study the dynamics between the different ruminative forms, employee voice behaviour, and organisational outcomes – specifically within the South African context. In this current study, work-related rumination was studied within the three mentioned

distinctive forms, namely work-related rumination, problem-solving pondering, and detachment. Furthermore, employee voice and employee silence were also studied as two separate constructs, and the organisational outcomes of job satisfaction and turnover intention were also investigated. Therefore, the general objective of the study was to investigate the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction within a sample of South African employees

Data were collected from a sample of 322 general South African employees. All participants voluntarily took part in the study. A convenience sampling method and cross-sectional research approach were utilised. After data collection, the statistical modelling program of Mplus 8.4 was used to study both the direct and indirect relationships between the research constructs. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to describe the measurement or structural equation model and was based on all the items and how they relate to the specified factors. Furthermore, the model was shown to be valid, and structural paths based on the hypotheses were added to the model to create the structural model.

The results of the study showed the existence of potential negative and positive direct relationships between all the research constructs, except between affective rumination and employee voice and between employee voice and job satisfaction. Potential indirect relationships were also found in this study, specifically referring to how work-related rumination, through the functions of employee voice and silence, can result in changes to turnover intention levels across different organisations.

Based on the results of the study, the limitations of this research study were discussed. Lastly, recommendations were made for further practice and research.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Die verbande tussen werkverwante oorpeinsing, werknemerstem en -stilsweye, arbeidsomset-voorneme en werkstevredenheid in Suid-Afrika.

Sleutel terme: Werkverwante oorpeinsing, affektiewe oorpeinsing, oordenke van probleemoplossing, losmaking, werknemerstem, werknemerstilsweye, arbeidsomset, werkstevredenheid, strukturele modellering, Suid-Afrikaanse werknemers.

Daar kan van die beginsel uitgegaan word dat ondernemings grootliks deur die unieke handelsmerke en kenmerkende eienskappe van die 21ste eeu geraak word. Daarom het dit toenemend belangrik geword vir ondernemings om aandag te skenk aan probleme en invloede van die moderne en dinamiese werkswêreld, en om die uitdagings te verstaan en onder die loep te neem. Werkverwante faktore op beide groep- en individuele vlak kan 'n invloed op die sukses en lewensduur van 'n onderneming hê. Die ingewikkelde aard van hedendaagse werksomstandighede beïnvloed werknemers op verskillende wyses, en om te verstaan hoe dit gebeur, kan bydra tot verhoogde welstand van die werknemers, verbeterde funksionering by die werk en meer positiewe organisatoriese uitkomst.

Een van die moderne uitdagings lê opgesluit in die wyse waarop mense geestelik en emosioneel verkeer ná 'n gewone werksdag. Dit is vir sommige werknemers maklik om hulle ná 'n werksdag volkome af te sluit van hul werk, hulle aan enige werkverwante gedagtes te onttrek en sodoende ná die werksdag met sy uitdagings te ontspan en te herstel. Andere dink steeds aan hul werk ná kantoorure, maar daardie denke is meer gefokus op hoe hulle hul werk kan verbeter of probleme kan oplos. Dan is daar andere wat abnormale gewoontes beoefen en neig tot 'n proses van wanaangepaste oorpeinsing. Dit verwys na 'n disfunksionele proses van voortdurende nabetrugting oor kwessies waarmee die persoon by die werk gekonfronteer was. Die keuse tussen praktiese bepeinsing, onpraktiese oorpeinsing of totale losmaking en afsluiting het 'n besliste uitwerking op die keuses van werknemers om stil te bly of om hulle oor hul werksituasie uit te spreek en is 'n direkte gevolg van hul bepeinsingsvlak. Die dinamika tussen hierdie faktore kan die werksomgewing of organisasie positief of negatief beïnvloed. Dit beïnvloed uitkomst soos werkstevredenheid of arbeidsomsetvoorneme.

‘n Behoeftesidentifikasie om die dinamika tussen die verskillende vorme van oorpeinsing, werkersmening-gedrag en organisatoriese uitkomst te bestudeer, veral binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks. In hierdie studie is drie besondere vorme van werkverwante oorpeinsing bestudeer, naamlik affektiewe oorpeinsing, probleemoplossende oorpeinsing en losmaking. Verder is werknemerstem of -stilswee as twee verskillende vorme bestudeer. Die organisatoriese uitkomst van werkstevredenheid en arbeidsomset is ook ondersoek. Die algemene doel van die studie was om die verhouding tussen werkverwante oorpeinsing, werknemerstem, werknemerstilswee, arbeidsomset en werkstevredenheid in ‘n steekproef van Suid-Afrikaanse werknemers te ondersoek.

Data is ingesamel uit ‘n algemene steekproef van 322 Suid-Afrikaanse werknemers. Alle deelnemers het vrywilliglik aan die steekproef deelgeneem. ‘n Gerieflikheidssteekproef-metode en deursnee-benadering is gevolg. Na data-insameling is die statistiese modelleringsprogram Mplus 8.4 gebruik om die direkte sowel as die indirekte verband tussen die navorsingskonstrukte te bestudeer. Bevestigingsfaktor-analise is gebruik om die meet- of strukturele vergelykingsmodel te beskryf en is gebaseer op alle items en hoe dit verband hou met die gespesifiseerde faktore. Verder is getoon dat die model geldig is en dat die strukturele weë, gebaseer op hipoteses, bygevoeg is om die strukturele model te skep.

Die resultate van die studie het getoon dat direkte potensiële negatiewe en positiewe verwantskappe bestaan tussen al die navorsingskonstruksies behalwe tussen affektiewe oorpeinsing en werknemerstem, asook werknemerstem en werkstevredenheid. Potensiële indirekte verhoudings is ook in hierdie studie gevind wat spesifiek verwys na hoe werkverwante oorpeinsing, deur die funksies van werknemerstem en -stilswee, kan lei tot veranderinge in die vlakke van arbeidsomset-voorneme in verskillende organisasies.

Gegronde op die resultate van die studie is die beperkinge van hierdie navorsingstudie bespreek. Laastens is aanbevelings gemaak vir die praktyk en vir verdere navorsing.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In today's highly uncertain world, being confronted with thoughts related to workplace challenges, even when employees are away from their work, is a fairly regular occurrence. Some studies have indicated that many employees find it difficult to unwind, which results in prolonged thinking about work even after the end of the working day (Cropley, Zijlstra, Quartstret & Beck, 2016). This prolonged thinking is not purely reflection and can be referred to as rumination, which first found its roots in other fields, and recent studies focusing on work-related rumination in an organisational setting have risen in popularity (e.g. Deselms, 2016). Kosir, Tement, Licardo and Habe (2015) described rumination as a "maladaptive emotion regulation strategy" (p. 132), mainly resulting in a negative impact on individuals and their well-being. *Work-related* rumination can thus be used to describe this process in the workplace; i.e. ongoing thoughts about unpleasant factors a person was confronted with at work which cause a negative impact on recovery intention amongst affected individuals (Querstret & Cropley, 2012).

Studies have also focused on the impact of rumination on employee voice or employee silence at work (e.g. Madrid, Patterson & Leiva, 2015). Employee silence includes the concealing of key information, ideas or concerns from others in the organisation, whereas employee voice mainly refers to employees who decide to communicate information and ideas for the benefit of the workplace (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016; Madrid et al., 2015). Furthermore, the impact of work-related rumination, employee voice and employee silence towards organisational outcomes such as satisfaction of employees in their jobs (i.e. job satisfaction) and their intent to leave their job (i.e. turnover intention), within a South African workforce, have not yet been thoroughly studied. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention and job satisfaction. This chapter presents the problem statement and the general details of the research methodology.

1.1 Problem statement

According to Kosir et al. (2015) the response style theory describes rumination as a *maladaptive* version of typical self-reflection, and the impact that emotional strain (negativity) has on thoughts further contributes to distress levels. The result hereof includes a greater

likelihood for the range of unpleasant thoughts that were caused by this emotional strain (i.e. depressive mood) to be further used in comprehending the conditions that triggered the rumination process (Kosir et al., 2015). Furthermore, rumination also impacts social relationships, instrumental problem-solving, and behaviour. Studies have also shown that rumination can be associated with strain and that it also shares an evident connection with recovery (Cropley & Millward Purvis, 2003), which means that rumination is a type of link towards low recovery levels. When levels of strain with lesser intensity are experienced, rumination may result in further negative thoughts, decreasing self-efficacy and fostering a belief that seeking social support will not be beneficial to coping with negative emotions (Madrid et al., 2015). On the contrary, occasionally employees communicate about their personal or work-related problems regularly by expelling or voicing their frustrations through engaging in processes of so-called “venting” (Boren, 2014).

In recent years, many organisations have discovered an increased need to enable employees in voicing their opinions, to ultimately increase organisational performance, ensure productive behaviour and enable improvement initiatives (Akinwale, 2019; Madrid et al., 2015). Furthermore, organisations are confronted with employees who may decide to remain silent and not share their ideas or voice their concerns (Madrid et al., 2015), which has a detrimental effect on innovation and productivity. The history of employee voice and silence can be traced back over decades as the concept of employee voice was first introduced to organisational behaviour by Albert Hirschman in the early 1970s. Hirschman focused on exploring the role that employee voice played in turnover intention and behaviour within organisations (Brinsfield, 2014). With a focus on dynamic business climates, Hirschman aimed to shed light on the importance of employees voicing their opinions and not merely accepting that which could be addressed or changed for the better (Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014). In organisational behaviour literature, employee voice refers to “expression of the desire and choice of individual workers to communicate information and ideas to management for the benefit of the organisation” (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016, p. 3).

Later research on employee voice and silence conceptualised the phenomenon as two distinct constructs that lead to different outcomes for employees in the workplace. It was further argued that these two constructs are not necessarily contrasting or polar opposites to one another (Van Dyne, Soon & Botero, 2003). Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) also argued employee voice and silence to be considered independent constructs. However, more recent arguments support the

notion that this confusion of dimensionality exists due to a lack of insight into motivation and behaviour (Landau, 2017); hence research focusing on the impact of employee voice and employee silence remains relatively diverse and the body of literature continues to develop. Theoretical explanations on reasoning for the impact of employee voice towards organisational outcomes is also a domain that continues to remain largely unexplored (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). For the purpose of this study, Van Dyne, Soon and Botero's (2003) widely applied approach will be utilised, examining employee voice and silence as two separate but correlated constructs.

Employee silence has enjoyed slightly less empirical research than its counterpart (Landau, 2017). Morrison (2014) stated that when employees suppress their opinions or ideas a negative impact can be noted in morale and performance across organisations. Moreover, employee silence cannot be regarded as merely keeping quiet but as refraining from speaking about problems or being reluctant to voice opinions and ideas (Morrison, 2014). Withholding voicing of concerns can have an adverse impact on employees and a detrimental effect on growth and development in the workplace. Furthermore, choosing to remain silent can produce a prevalence of ongoing negativity in employees (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013). The latter could be explained by work-related ruminative thoughts. Madrid et al. (2015) investigated cognitive rumination and employee silence and found that when levels of low-stimulated negative core affect are present in employees, they tend to engage in cognitive rumination and ultimately choose to remain silent.

Madrid et al. (2015) hold that low-stimulated negative core affect refers to types of distress caused by negative experiences, where the strain causes feelings of negativity accompanied by low levels of energy usage (e.g. a certain person receives unpleasant information, which triggers feelings of disappointment, in turn leading to the onset of rumination and thereafter causing the person to become silent about their concerns). However, when this strain or core affect was highly activated (e.g. certain external circumstances cause threats, in turn leading to feelings of anxiety and a focus on the external world so as to cope with hazards), the opposite could also be true, and employees then did not engage in employee silence. With high activated negative strain, internal and complex cognitive processes such as rumination may be limited – a higher focus on the external world is noted – which triggers individuals to act, which therefore reduces the occurrence of employee silence (Madrid et al., 2015). The study of Madrid et al.

(2015) was the first of its kind and showed rumination to be positively related to voice behaviour.

For the purpose of the study, the model of Cropley and Zijlstra (2011) will be utilised for the conceptualisation of work-related rumination. They developed a conceptual framework to illustrate how employees experience rumination with regard to work. The framework is aimed at exploring three elements of work-related rumination, namely: i) affective rumination; ii) problem-solving pondering; and iii) detachment. These three constructs can be explained as follows: *Affective rumination* can be regarded as “the appearance of intrusive, pervasive, recurrent thoughts, about work, which is negative in affective terms” (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011, p. 10). In addition to affective rumination, *problem-solving pondering* can be explained as the process of extended thinking about work completed or about certain issues, and how to provide solutions or improvements to the problem (Syrek Weigelt, Peifer & Antoni, 2017). When comparing these two constructs, affective rumination is regarded as more negatively connoted with a higher probability of emotional strain. Problem-solving pondering, on the other hand, is more positive in nature; especially when pondering has been beneficial to solving the problem. The latter also has a lesser impact on recovery intention (Quarstret & Cropley, 2012). The third construct, labelled *detachment*, can be regarded as employees’ ability to distance themselves from their work environment. Detachment therefore is the ability to turn off work-related thoughts, leaving it behind and maintaining a more optimised work-life balance (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011).

Madrid et al. (2015) point out that when employees experience negative strain, rumination could increase the likelihood of employee silence to occur. Therefore, *affective rumination* can be expected to have a positive relationship with the silence of employees, and to be negatively connoted to the occurrence of employee voice. Furthermore, when employees are constantly exposed to high levels of problem-solving in the workplace, employee voice is more likely to occur (Madrid et al., 2015) and the experience of ongoing levels of *problem-solving pondering* due to these demands could consequently lead to employees choosing to voice their opinions. As previously stated, *detachment* from work-related thoughts is associated with employees being more likely to experience increased levels of work-life balance (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011); hence detachment will be associated with more positive outcomes (i.e. employee voice).

Job satisfaction can be defined as “an evaluative state that expresses contentment with and positive feelings about one’s job” (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 343). Therefore, job satisfaction is the general feeling of satisfaction with one’s work, coupled with the range of attitudes accompanying various facets thereof. Job satisfaction entails an affective as well as an evaluative dimension in which reflection exists (Coomber & Barriball, 2007). Various studies on job satisfaction have reported the existence of a positive relationship between voice behaviour and job satisfaction. The ability to regulate emotions and feelings has also shown to have a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes & Salovey, 2010). Regulation of emotions can further be seen to correlate with responses of a ruminative nature (Joormann & Gotlib, 2010). Voicing behaviour may lead to positive outcomes for organisations. Examples include improved leadership, correction of mistakes, innovation, improved work procedures and restricting unacceptable behaviour (Morrison, 2014). The opposite was also shown, as engaging in silence led to dissatisfied feelings, as well as organisation-wide mistakes (Edwards & Greenberg, 2009; Morrison, 2014). How work-related rumination affects job satisfaction through employee voice and silence, however, remains a field largely unknown. Research into job satisfaction and turnover intention further indicated that the intention to leave an organisation has shown to facilitate a strong negative relationship with job satisfaction (De Moura, Abrahams, Retter, Gunnarsdottir & Ando, 2009).

Turnover intention comprises three elements: thinking of leaving the job; searching for another job, and the employee’s level of intention to leave their job. Turnover has proven to add to organisational costs, and to disturbing daily work activities (Rahman & Nas, 2013). Interestingly, some earlier studies (e.g. Feuille & Delaney, 1992) have indicated that in some cases choosing to remain silent decreased turnover intention amongst employees while choosing to engage in voicing opinions had the opposite effect. Other early studies (e.g. Hirschman, 1970) also stated that employees were generally regarded to be faced with three decisions in the workplace: to voice their opinions, to remain silent or to resign (Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon & Wilkinson, 2011). However, recent studies have found that choosing to remain silent has a direct effect on turnover intention levels, resulting in larger numbers of employees intending to leave (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013).

Work-related rumination remains a relatively new field of research, especially in South Africa, and research, if any, focussing on the organisational and employee outcomes of work-related rumination is sparse (Deselms, 2016). Madrid et al. (2015) mentioned that few studies have

aimed at exploring work-related rumination and the potential indirect relationships that voice behaviour of employees play in the context of job satisfaction and turnover intention, and none within the South African context. Therefore, to expand knowledge in this area, this study aims to address this gap and add to the body of literature in this regard. Specifically, this study proposes to investigate the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention within a sample of South African employees.

1.2 Research questions

- How is work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention conceptualised in the literature?
- What are the direct relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention?
- What are the indirect relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention?
- What recommendations can be made for future research and practice?

1.3 Expected contribution of the study

1.3.1 Contribution to the organisation

By studying work-related rumination, employee voice and silence and the impact it has on turnover intention and job satisfaction of employees, organisations can gain insight into the potential importance of employees being able to voice their opinions about work-related concerns or ideas that follow them on an ongoing basis. Organisations can use this knowledge to gain an increased understanding of the potential impact of work-related rumination and employee voice and silence on an employee's intentions to leave the organisation, as well as their satisfaction within their jobs, which ultimately impact organisational productivity. Ultimately, this knowledge could then contribute to the creation of interventions to obviate the impact of work-related rumination and assist with the management of employee voice behaviour in organisations.

1.3.2 Contribution to Industrial Psychology literature

Work-related rumination is a relatively new field of study, and currently no known study has been dedicated to explaining the relationship between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention and job satisfaction in a single study. In South Africa, the study of work-related rumination and employee voice and silence remains completely undiscovered, and the aim of the research study is to add to the body of literature and to inform the gaps that exist.

1.4 Research objectives

The research objectives are divided into a general objective and specific objectives.

1.4.1 General objective

To determine the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention within the South African context.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To determine how rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention are conceptualised in the literature.
- To determine the direct relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention.
- To determine the indirect relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction and turnover intention.
- To make recommendations for future research and practice.

1.5 Research hypotheses

H1a: A negative relationship exists between affective rumination and employee voice.

H1b: A positive relationship exists between affective rumination and employee silence.

H2a: A positive relationship exists between problem-solving rumination and employee voice.

H2b: A negative relationship exists between problem-solving rumination and employee silence.

H3a: A positive relationship exists between detachment and employee voice.

H3b: A negative relationship exists between detachment and employee silence.

H4a: A positive relationship exists between employee voice and job satisfaction.

H4b: A negative relationship exists between employee silence and job satisfaction.

H5a: A negative relationship exists between employee voice and turnover intention.

H5b: A positive relationship exists between employee silence and turnover intention.

H6: A negative relationship exists between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

H7a: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and job satisfaction through employee voice.

H7b: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and job satisfaction through employee silence.

H8a: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and turnover intention through employee voice.

H8b: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and turnover intention through employee silence.

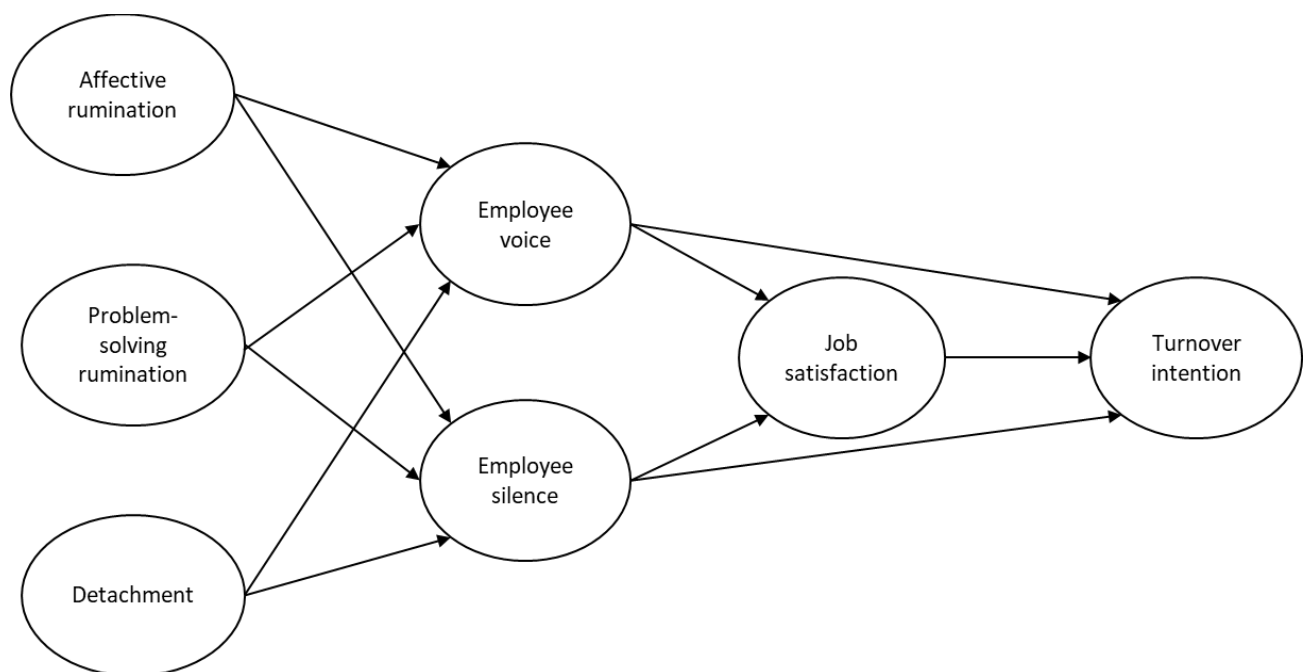


Figure 1. *The conceptual model.*

1.6 Research design

1.6.1 Research approach

For the purpose of this study a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach was utilised. Quantitative research was used to study identified constructs by making use of questionnaires or surveys (Struwig & Stead, 2013). This approach allowed the investigation of various factors, some of which were potentially identified to be associated with one another or to have a certain impact. Furthermore, it allowed the analysis of specific constructs and their relationship with stated research questions (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Data was obtained from the participants at a specific point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011).

1.6.2 Research method

For the purpose of this study two phases were applied, namely a literature review and an empirical study. Results obtained were presented in the form of a research article.

1.6.3 Literature review

An in-depth literature review was conducted regarding work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction. Articles in relation to the study were identified and attained from various search engines such as Google Scholar, EbscoHost (Academic search premier, business source premier, E-Journals, PsycARTICLES, and PsycINFO), Emerald Insight Journals, SAePublications, ScienceDirect and ResearchGate. Some of the main journals used for this study included inter alia: *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour*; *Journal of Applied Psychology*; *Journal of Management Studies*; *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*; *Journal of Work, Employment and Society*; *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*. Other sources identified as appropriate were also utilised to ensure and obtain a thorough literature study. Keywords such as employee voice, employee silence, work-related rumination, turnover intention, and job satisfaction were used.

1.6.4 Research participants

Non-probability sampling in the form of convenience sampling was used from approximately 300 participants. The possibility in the selection of a certain member of the population was unknown, and participants were chosen based on accessibility and agreeableness to participate (Struwig & Stead, 2013). The sample included participants who had differences in terms of factors such as their ethnic background, age and gender to ensure that the research sample was diverse. To be able to complete the questionnaire, participants had to be 18 years of age or above, employed and possess English language proficiency skills of grade 10 or above. Since there have been no known single studies concerning the relationships between the stated research constructs within South Africa, the purpose was not to focus on specific participants within certain industries or organisations, but rather to study the constructs within a general South African framework to determine whether such relationships do exist. Relationships were found to be present within the general South African workforce, and future studies may focus on a more specific industry or populations.

1.6.5 Measuring instruments

A *Biographical section* was used to gain information with regard to various participants' age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, and length of employment. Biographical information was merely used to describe the study population and not to compare.

Work-related rumination was measured by making use of the work-related rumination questionnaire (WRRQ) developed by Cropley, Michalianou, Pravettoni and Millward (2012). This instrument consists of three subscales, namely: Affective rumination (e.g. "Are you annoyed by thinking about work-related issues when not at work?"), Problem-solving pondering (e.g. "I find thinking about work during my free time helps me to be creative"), and Detachment (e.g. "I am able to stop thinking about work-related issues in my free time") with five items respectively for each subscale. A 5-point Likert scale is used to answer the items and ranges from 1 (Very seldom/Never) to 5 (Very often/Always). According to Cropley et al. (2012), the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales are 0.90 (affective rumination), 0.81 (problem-solving pondering) and 0.88 (detachment).

Employee silence was measured by making use of a scale developed by Detert and Edmondson (2011) and it consists of four items (e.g. “I kept ideas for developing new products or services to myself”). The instrument is rated by using a frequency scale that ranges from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) and is intended to measure whether employees would choose to remain silent with regard to opinions, concerns or ideas within the organisation. According to Detert and Edmondson (2011), the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this measure is 0.74. However, more recent studies conducted by Madrid et al. (2015) showed a higher Cronbach alpha coefficient value of 0.93.

Employee voice was measured by making use of the scale utilised by Madrid et al. (2015). The scale comprises three items with a scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Individuals who engage in employee voice choose to speak up with regard to work-related ideas, issues or concerns. An example of an item from this scale is “I spoke up with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures”. Madrid et al. (2015) reported this instrument to have a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.79.

Job satisfaction was measured by means of a scale developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg and Sverke (1997). This instrument comprises 3 items with a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) and aims to uncover whether a person is satisfied with their job (e.g. “I enjoy being at my work”). Hellgren et al. (1997) found this scale to have a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.86, and within the South African context, Pienaar, Sieberhagen and Mostert (2007) reported to have found an alpha coefficient of 0.80.

Turnover intention was measured with a scale developed by Sjöberg and Sverke (2000). This scale comprises three items and consists of a 5-point Likert scale in which a high score on the scale would indicate a high intention to leave one’s job (e.g. “I feel I could leave this job”), while a low score would indicate the opposite. Sjöberg and Sverke (2000) stated that the scale has a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.83, and within a South African context a range between 0.74 and 0.79 was reported by Redelinghuys and Botha (2016).

1.6.6 Research procedure

After having received approval from the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) at North-West University for the proposed study, all data were

collected using an online questionnaire. Organisations were contacted to gain permission to advertise the research project in order to gather data from their employees for the purpose of answering the research objectives and questions stated in this research proposal. Organisations were chosen based on accessibility by means of an identified internal contact person for a specific organisation. The initial communication was arranged with management or an appropriate individual in charge of granting permission for involving participants. The research participants were engaged in a process of informed consent prior to the commencement of the questions/items; they were assured of the voluntary nature of the process and the confidential procedures that would be followed to assure anonymity of the final de-identified dataset.

Access to the data was limited to the researcher and study supervisor for analyses. All data were captured and consolidated on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for use in the statistical analysis.

1.6.7 Statistical analysis

Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2019) was used for the data analysis. First, confirmatory factor analysis was done to specify the measurement model based on all the items as they relate to the specific factors. The fit of this model as well as the magnitude of the factor loadings and correlations between factors was then considered. For the fit, the guidelines by Van de Schoot, Lugtig and Hox (2012) were followed: Comparative fit index (CFI; ≥ 0.90), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; ≥ 0.90) and Root mean square error of approximation was used (RMSEA; ≤ 0.08). Standardised factor loadings were considered acceptable at approximately 0.50 in the context of the overall model fit. For the correlations, the traditional effect sizes were used, which are 0.30 and above for a medium effect and 0.50 and above for a large effect (Cohen, 1992). Based on a CFA model the structural paths based on the hypotheses will be added to the model to constitute the structural model. Moreover, the indirect paths were specified with the MODEL INDIRECT function and 10,000 bootstrap replications requested to generate 95% confidence intervals for the indirect relationships.

1.6.8 Ethical considerations

For the purpose of this research study, several ethical principles were strictly adhered to. Participants joined the process voluntarily and were informed that they were free to decline or

remove themselves during any stage of the research process should they wish to do so (Struwig & Stead, 2013), without suffering any negative consequence. Participants were informed on how the survey data would be used. Informed consent was obtained prior to the assessment, and confidentiality was communicated and maintained to the extent of which is required for ethical and fair assessment procedures (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Furthermore, no personal information of employees was disclosed, and the data were de-identified. The researcher remained professional, respected the rights and dignity of others, and did not discriminate against or harm individuals in any manner (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Participants were informed of the research in advance to enable them to prepare themselves (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013).

Participants were not required to identify themselves by name on the questionnaire and individual results were not used in any reports or articles (Struwig & Stead, 2013) – only the total sample. The results of the online questionnaires were safely and securely stored where no external party without justifiable interest could access it. The supervisor had custody of it after collection.

1.7 Chapter division

The chapters in this mini-dissertation will be presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Research article

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter comprises a problem statement, research objectives, research hypotheses, the measuring instruments used, the research methods that were followed, as well as a brief overview of the chapters within this mini-dissertation.

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CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH ARTICLE

The relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa

Abstract

Orientation: How employees think about their work after the end of their working day has received renewed emphasis in recent years. Work-related rumination could affect the voice behaviour of employees, as some employees could prefer to speak up about ideas or concerns that bother them on an ongoing basis and other employees can choose to rather remain silent. This could further also impact certain organisational outcomes such as the satisfaction of employees in their job and their intention to leave the organisation.

Research purpose: To investigate the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction in South Africa.

Motivation for the study: By gaining an increased understanding of the relationships between the stated research constructs, it could aid organisations in managing and understanding their workforce, ultimately increasing sustainability, performance and productivity of the employees.

Research design, approach, and method: A cross-sectional research design was used by administering a survey among general South African employees ($n = 332$). Structural equation modelling methods were used for data analysis.

Main findings: The results showed evidence of the proposed direct relationships between the research constructs (work-related-rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention), except between affective rumination and employee voice, and employee voice and job satisfaction. Indirect relationships also showed how employee voice and silence played potential mediating roles in the relationships between work-related rumination and turnover intention.

Practical/managerial implications: Organisations should be aware of the dynamics between work-related rumination and employee voice and silence behaviour within their organisation, the functional outcomes if fostered correctly, and the interventions needed to prevent negative outcomes thereof (i.e. job dissatisfaction and turnover intention)

Contribution/value add: This study has indicated how work-related-rumination and employee voice and silence can impact employees and organisations negatively and positively.

Keywords: rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, job satisfaction, structural equation modelling.

Introduction

In today's world of work, job-related tasks and actions influence approximately over one-third of the time people spend awake. Work is thus a largely significant, core aspect of people's lives, unsurprisingly consuming thoughts even when individuals are away from the workplace (Cropley & Zijlstra 2011). This occurrence could be explained by the term *rumination*, which derives from the Latin phrase 'ruminare', meaning "turning over in the mind" (Cropley, Zijlstra, Querstret & Beck, 2016, p.1). Even though various conceptualisations for rumination have been developed, scholars mostly agree that the term explains certain reoccurring thoughts, with meditation, pondering and reflection over things that some people are confronted with (Cropley et al., 2016). Within the organisational context, the term *work-related rumination* is used to describe this process, explaining it as recurring thoughts or the mulling over work-related concerns and troubles. Work-related rumination has been said to affect up to 70% of employees at some point in time. Furthermore, studies have shown that the occurrence of work-related rumination is relatively common and can truly become an issue when it starts to impact employees negatively (Cropley et al., 2016).

Within the workplace, certain work-related demands and stressors can contribute to work-related rumination and are able to affect a range of different outcomes for employees (Kinnunen, Feldt, Sianoja, De Bloom, Korpela & Geurts, 2017). Some of the outcomes of ruminating-prone individuals include becoming more passive in nature, for example having increased negativity over a potential health concern and then remaining passive and not seeking help from a professional. Individuals who are prone to rumination would thus rather refrain from or delay speaking up about the potential concern and seeking help in this manner (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky, 2008). This study aims to expand to the workplace, suggesting that ruminating-prone employees can consequently delay speaking up about concerns or opinions in the workplace, whereas employees who do not experience negativity and dysfunctional ruminative thoughts may speak up more freely.

The notion of speaking up or remaining silent about ideas, concerns, or problems in the workplace prompts the concept of employee voice and silence. The study of employee voice and silence (i.e. voice behaviour) has paved one way for investigating the communicative relationship between members in the organisation (especially between supervisors and their subordinates), as organisations could gain a competitive advantage if employees speak up about

ideas that could enhance certain functions or outputs in the organisation (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009). Organisations are asking progressively more and more from employees in terms of ingenuity, employee voice, and embracement of accountability. This is the consequence of higher levels of factors such as strong competition, customer anticipation, and quality effort that showcases a dynamic, fast-changing world (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). To ensure a sustainable organisation, employees should be able to react to issues which they encounter from their surroundings and not be hesitant to speak up where necessary or take a stand for what they believe in (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). When viewing the current dynamic organisational climate, the modern world is faced with, aspects such as employee voice and silence may impact organisational success and longevity.

The impact of voice behaviour in organisations can therefore be seen as diverse and largely significant. Studies have found that employee voice behaviour can be linked to increases or decreases in turnover intention (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013). The prevalence of employee voice, as opposed to silence, can also be seen to impact the levels of satisfaction that employees experience within their jobs. Alfayad and Arif (2017) contend that when communication is open and employee voice occurs, it can increase the job satisfaction levels of employees.

Noting the importance of each of these organisational elements mentioned above, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between the organisational components of work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention within a South African sample of employees.

Literature Review

Work-related rumination

Within the 21st century, the world of work can be seen to have largely changed from the way it has been characterised in the past and various occupational adjustments have contributed to different “prices” that employees have to pay for their flexible ways of working (Pravettoni, Cropley, Leotta & Bagnara, 2007). These new and different conditions in which work is conducted also impacts the manner in which work-related rumination takes place, affecting the well-being-related states of employees in and across different fields in a variety of ways (for

example higher levels of stress, negative moods, and tension) (Pravettoni et al., 2007). Perhaps the most straightforward way to explain the term ‘work-related rumination’ is by referring to “consciously recurring thoughts about work-related issues in the absence of work demands to necessitate these thoughts” (Kunnen et al., 2017, p. 514).

Work-related rumination can be the consequence of different work-related conditions. For example, work-related stress can be seen as one of these contributors; enhanced levels of stress about getting tasks done in a certain time frame - especially if work obligations have not yet concluded by the time the working week has finished or when goals were not reached in the manner which was hoped or anticipated for (Kinnunen et al, 2017; Syrek & Antoni, 2014). Cropley and Zijlstra (2011) identified three elements of work-related rumination, namely affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, and detachment.

i) *Affective rumination*

Affective rumination can be regarded as a type of recurrent thinking - usually dysfunctional and rather negative in nature, focusing on symptoms that accompany anguish as well as different problem-induced emotions. Furthermore, affective rumination is characterised by repetitive thoughts that are not inherently focused on problem-solving (Kinnunen et al., 2017). During this type of rumination, recurring thoughts about distress are fuelled and are also focused on the secondary effects of the distress and outcomes thereof, causing people to refrain from engaging in active behaviour concerning their problems. Moreover, affective rumination increases negative thoughts, can lower solution-focused initiatives, affect key behavioural efforts, and alienate people by lowering levels of social support (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008).

As explained by Querstret, Cropley and Fife-Schaw (2017), affective rumination is more likely to be fuelled in a job or workplace with high *emotional* demands (e.g. high levels of conflict or ambiguity) than in a job that is more physically challenging in nature, as with the last-mentioned it can be easier to trace where the demands end and the process of recovery can begin. With emotional demands, however, the fine line can occasionally become rather blurred and it can be difficult to pinpoint when the stressful demands are no longer impacting the person. These work-related demands thus follow employees around in their free time if they engage in affective rumination (Querstret et al., 2017), and could consequently have a negative impact on the well-being or health of the said individual (Hamesch, Cropley & Lang, 2014).

According to Firoozabadi, Uitdewilligen and Zijlstra (2018) affective rumination causes continued stimulation as the individual anticipates that adverse results will occur if they try to find solutions or deal with certain circumstances, further also making these anticipations worse as time passes and decreasing the amount of control the person believes they have over the situation. Interestingly, studies have also highlighted that affective rumination - with accompanying emotions such as dissatisfaction and apprehension – does not always negatively impact instant decision-making or task-related responses but may have a long-term impact on a person's imminent duties over time. This is especially true when looking at functions such as decision-making in one's work (Kingshott & Naweed, 2018). Thus, it is evident that it is important to study affective rumination in organisations as it can have long-term effects on employees and how they function in their work and the organisation.

ii) *Problem-solving pondering*

According to Langan-Fox and Cooper (2011) most studies concerning work-related rumination have focused on the adverse elements thereof, looking at the manner in which the human mind continues to mull over work-related issues when an employee returns home, and how it then ultimately impacts how effectively they recover from job tasks. Hamesch et al. (2014) stated that studies have distinguished between dysfunctional and functional ruminative styles, where the last-mentioned shared more connection towards healthy processing abilities, a stimulated sense of mind, and positive reflection as a means of dealing with stressors.

The more adaptive or functional ruminative style can be explained by the concept *problem-solving pondering*. Here the focus is away from the purely negative and can be explained as a type of thinking distinguished by extended mental studying of specific issues or through ruminating over finished work to uncover ways in which one can improve it (Langan-Fox & Cooper, 2011). Compared to affective rumination, the difference is that it does not involve the same emotional patterns and this type of ruminative thinking is focused more on thoughts aimed at preparing and identifying those steps that are needed to resolve an issue, ultimately having less of a negative impact on the well-being of the individual than in the case of affective rumination (Hamesch et al., 2014; Langan-Fox & Cooper, 2011). As previously mentioned, affective rumination may cause negative anticipations about the outcomes of finding solutions and managing circumstances. With problem-solving pondering, on the other hand, employees believe they have control and can solve the work-related problem by viewing it from optimistic

or constructive result anticipation (i.e. being positive about what can be expected from the consequences of this pondering) (Firoozabadi et al., 2018).

iii) *Detachment*

Eshun (2000) stated that when certain individuals mule over issues and engage in processes of rumination, others might find it rather unpleasant to be confronted with such an individual, as they view them as unable to detach, and alienation may occur (Eshun, 2000). This notion presents the third form of work-related rumination, namely detachment. Detachment can be explained as the manner in which individuals realise that they no longer are in their working situation, in turn leading to an improved work-life interface, less exhaustion, improved health, and more control over areas in the individual's life that helps maintain higher levels of well-being (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011). In the late nineties, Etzion, Eden and Lapidot (1998) were first to introduce the concept, defining it as "the individual's sense of being away from the work situation" (p. 579). Here the individual ensures they are psychologically remote (detached) from any job-connoted thoughts during their time away from the workplace (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017).

Detachment has been shown to have a positive impact on an individual's long-term health outcomes (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). The contrary also seems to be true, as lacking psychological detachment from your work can negatively impact health, resulting in higher levels of burnout amongst employees and increased levels of fatigue (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005).

Employee voice

Over the last 20 years, scholars have presented different conceptualisations or descriptions of the term 'employee voice' (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Despite differences found within these definitions, they do pose for a number of shared meanings, namely: i) employee voice is described to be verbal in nature, carried from those who are identified as the message's source (the origin or source of the communication) towards those who receive it; ii) employee voice is a voluntary process and people choose to take part in it or not (these decisions can be triggered by organisational or situational factors); and iii) employee voice is intended to be upbuilding and not negatively connoted, with a purpose of betterment and constructive change

and not simply a form of negative ranting (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). Pyman, Cooper, Teicher and Holland (2006) stated that it is the manner in which concerns are brought under attention, the communication of interests, and involvements or contributions in organisational processes of choices and outcomes.

Hirshman (1970) was the first to conceptualise the term employee voice and explained it as “any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs” (p. 30), explaining that when the opportunity for voice is given it can help to sustain overall levels of advancements. When turnover intentions are below par, it could oblige the dissatisfied to do something, ultimately contributing to the influencing power of employee voice (Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). Van Dyne, Soon and Botero (2003) were some of the first scholars to highlight the importance of seeing employee voice and silence as distinguishable concepts, which should not merely be studied as complete opposites on a spectrum.

Organisations have also started seeing their employees as pools filled with functional ideas and contributions that can help the organisation gain a competitive edge in the market. Organisations may therefore be routing for employee voice contributions even if resistance from some are prevalent (Takeuchi, Chen & Cheung, 2012). According to Wilkinson and Fay (2011), some of the benefits of employee voice could include more positive attitudes and actions, a loyal workforce, greater commitment, increased performance, higher productivity as a result of less absent employees, better group functioning, as well as the opportunity to make use of employees’ unique and varied voice contributions for better management initiatives.

Research thus indicates that employee voice can impact organisations in a variety of ways, and if it is handled effectively it could have beneficial outcomes both for employers and their employees.

Employee silence

Research has shown that oftentimes when employees willingly decide to rather keep certain fears or ideas – especially those with a noted likelihood of being key to divulge – to themselves and not carry it over to those who may be capable of doing something about it, it can significantly impact the performance of these employees in their organisation (Morrison, See & Pan, 2015).

Deciding to conceal key information can be referred to as employee silence, and as with the case of employee voice, employee silence also has a body of research on what it entails and how it is formed. Beheshtifar, Borhani and Moghadam (2012) explain that employee silence can come in different forms, namely: i) employees can keep silent due to being inertly disconnected, with withholding initiatives concerning acceptance (acquiescent silence); ii) employees can also be silent due to anxiety of what engaging in employee voice may lead to, and in so doing, try to protect themselves (defensive/quiescent silence); or iii) employees can choose to remain silent due to care of other people (pro-social), meaning that by becoming aware and weighing up various options, the person abstains from employee voice (Van Dyne, Soon & Botero, 2003). Scholars even went further by proposing a fourth type of silence, namely that of opportunistic silence, which can be described as a type of silence characterised by employees retaining important information for their own benefit, while also simultaneously violating others by embracing the negative consequences that it could cause them (Knoll & Van Dick, 2012).

For the purpose of this study, employee voice and employee silence will not be viewed from the perspective of one specific form, but rather in the more general sense of these two respective terms. Madrid, Patterson, and Leiva (2015) also followed a similar approach when employee voice and employee silence were studied – investigating the impact of negative core affect and work-related rumination on these constructs. Furthermore, both employee voice and silence will serve as potential mediating constructs in the study of the outcome variables in this research, namely job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the balance between those things that an employee longs for from their work and those things that people observe their work to truly bring them – that is the existing variance between what they receive and what they believe they are entitled to receive from their work (Lund, 2003; Singh & Onahring, 2019). Moreover, job satisfaction largely looks towards the overall, nonspecific attitude employees have about their job, including what they believe about their job and the feelings or emotions that their job roles evoke within them (Long & Thean, 2011; Vroom, 1964). Spector (1997) more directly described job satisfaction as the extent to which employees enjoy or loathe their jobs, accompanied by the varied range of psychological and social issues of modern working conditions (Singh & Onahring, 2019).

According to Long and Thean (2011), a substantial amount of research has been conducted on the years concerning job satisfaction, with the emergence of various theories as a result thereof. Over the decades, many scholars have defined job satisfaction, with popular definitions dating as far back as the 1930s, when Hoppok and Spiegler described job satisfaction as the combination of environmental, physiological and psychological aspects of work that prompt workers into disclosing whether or not they are content with their work (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Job satisfaction can be seen to significantly impact organisations, with influences such as employees who abscond (levels of absenteeism), work performance and productivity, turnover levels of employees, as well as negative psychological effects accompanied by it if perceived job dissatisfaction is linked to it (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). Job satisfaction also has a large effect on motivating factors (intrinsic and extrinsic) for increased performance (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Later research on employee voice and silence conceptualised the phenomena as two distinct constructs that lead to different outcomes for employees in the workplace. It was further argued that these two constructs are not necessarily contrasting or polar opposites of one another (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Hence it is evident from research that job satisfaction remains an important construct for organisations to study. For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction will be studied as an outcome variable of work-related rumination, directly as well as through the occurrence of employee voice and silence. The relationship between turnover intention and job satisfaction will also be studied.

Turnover intention

The times we live in have been marked by the age of globalisation, where turnover is a continuous issue across different organisational formats and their various functional departments (Yin-Fah, Foon, Chee-Leong & Osman, 2010). Furthermore, the result of high turnover levels has become an area of increased concern for the management of employees, with financial implications imbedded in the processes found when replacing employees who leave, also including the impact that it has on other employees who are now required to stand in for the functions of those who have left and the perceived capability of these employees to do so (Yin-Fah et al., 2010). The parting of key employees can therefore largely impact

organisational success due to the inherent training and development costs of replacing employees. Organisations should therefore attempt to minimise the impact of employee turnover by aiming to truly grasp the antecedents of employees' intentions to leave as a further attempt to ultimately intervene to reduce these intentions and thereby eventual *actual* turnover (Lai, Lu, Lin & Lee 2019).

Turnover intention is the intent of an employee to obtain another occupation, which is typically a type of mindful and conscious motivation (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Humayra & Mahendra, 2019). It therefore relates to the thoughts that employees have about leaving their jobs (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004). Research regarding turnover intention is rich and varied, explained as being either voluntary (often viewed as dysfunctional with loss of key employees), or involuntary (often leads to functional outcomes with loss of employees that are not seen to provide substantial value) (Long & Thean, 2011). Furthermore, turnover intention can be viewed as resulting from different aspects, including the personal and internal factors of the employee; the nature of the employee's specific job; as well as aspects and influences of the specific organisation for whom the employee is working (Humayra & Mahendra, 2019).

Scholars have explored various causes of turnover intention, including factors such as attitudes, job satisfaction, leadership, and personal relationships in the workplace (Lai et al., 2019). While it is known that various factors may impact the turnover intention of employees, this study will specifically be focusing on the antecedents of employee voice and silence and work-related rumination.

The relationship between work-related rumination and employee voice and silence

Studies concerning the direct relationship between work-related rumination in its various forms on employee voice behaviours remain scarce. Kish-Gephart, Detert, Trevino and Edmondson (2009) states that research regarding employee silence mostly supports the suggestion that strong feelings (such as fear) remain a large driver of employee silence in organisations. Some of these perceived silence-related fears include gaining an unpleasant label or reputation, being dismissed due to speaking up, losing out on current or future key job promotions, or damaging one's social resources. Furthermore, silence is typically described as an action of intent – driven by mindfulness or conscious thinking – working through a process of careful consideration and review of the perceived problem before likely engaging in silence (also likely as a result of

prevailing antecedent factors such as fear) (Kish-Gephart et al., 2009). This provides scholars with a glimpse of the individual's contemplation process; mulling over an issue before engaging in a conscious act of employee voice or silence.

Madrid et al. (2015) investigated the occurrence of voice behaviour in less intense negative states (e.g. negative feelings evoked during unpleasant revelations), which together with the subsequent process of rumination – a more intense internal contemplating process which steps away from active participation in addressing issues – increases the likelihood of engaging in employee silence. Furthermore, the study also showed that the same was not true for employee voice, and that negative affect and rumination (i.e. affective rumination) did not lead to employees choosing to speak up. However, a more recent study by Tahir and Khan (2019) showed that adverse work-related circumstances (e.g. supervisory styles) can lead to increased rumination, and consequently employee voice. The hypotheses of the current study will include the following with regard to affective rumination:

Hypothesis 1a: A negative relationship exists between affective rumination and employee voice.

Hypothesis 1b: A positive relationship exists between affective rumination and employee silence.

Recent studies have, however, shown that certain employment conditions (i.e. negative supervisory methods and climates) can activate work-related rumination and the consequential voice behaviour of employees (Tahir & Kahn, 2019). A study conducted by Tahir and Kahn (2019) regarding this phenomenon also acknowledged how this occurrence can be fostered by employees responding to the specific situation, utilising means of “intervention”. Here it is important to note that for employee voice to occur, the preceding condition is said to be that of a problem, opportunity, or any matter that is perceived as being of importance or applicable to convey (Morrison, 2014). When Madrid et al. (2015) investigated the effect of higher problem-solving expectations of employees, when problem-solving demands trigger and lead to certain thoughts, consciousness is gained regarding possible challenges or factors that may be decreasing performance, ultimately resulting in employees seeking to engage in employee voice to share their thoughts. If work-related rumination has been found to prompt employee voice in certain conditions as means of intervening, and higher problem-solving demands have

shown to activate employee voice, the current study adopts the following with regard to workplace rumination's increased problem-solving pondering:

Hypothesis 2a: A positive relationship exists between problem-solving pondering and employee voice.

Hypothesis 2b: A negative relationship exists between problem-solving pondering and employee silence.

Most studies concerning detachment and employee voice have studied detachment from an adverse point of view. Previous studies have found that employees who are detached from their work will have a decreased likelihood to embark on finding and consulting with individuals who have the ability to change certain concerns or factors in the workplace. Furthermore, when employees are still actively working for the organisation become detached, voluntary actions to increase organisational performance will decrease, such as engaging in employee voice (Burriss, Detert & Chiaburu, 2008). Certain forms of employee silence (i.e. acquiescent silence) also showcase how certain employees choose to remain silent due to disengagement from issues at the workplace. These employees therefore disregard the value of speaking up to change unpleasant factors at work (Dedahanov & Rhee, 2015). However, in this study detachment is not viewed from a negative perspective as stated above and does not refer to a dysfunctional sense of detachment or disengagement when an employee is in the workplace.

Detachment in this study refers to the ability to detach oneself from work-related issues or responsibilities during the non-working hours and refers mainly to a process of psychological or mental distancing, as opposed to merely being physically remote from the workplace (Sonnentag & Krueger, 2006). Furthermore, in contrast to people who engage in ruminative states after work (i.e. high ruminators), detachment (i.e. low ruminating) is associated with more positive outcomes for an individual, such as an increase in mood, less negativity, decreased tiredness, and less trouble with sleeping (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011; Demerouti, Bakker, Sonnentag & Fullagar, 2012). Positive moods have in turn also shown to lead to improved functional outcomes by choosing to capitalise on one's social resources over time (Demerouti et al., 2012). Similarly, studies have also mentioned how certain emotions (e.g. fear) are more likely to initiate silence, and negative emotions have shown to decrease employee voice through factors such as avoidance behaviour, protection of the status quo, and as an attempt to not make things worse (Morrison, 2014; Zhang, Hu & Wang, 2020). Taking into consideration

all information acquired regarding work-related rumination, the study proposes the following with regard to the effect of detachment at work on employee voice and silence:

Hypothesis 3a: A positive relationship exists between detachment and employee voice.

Hypothesis 3b: A negative relationship exists between detachment and employee silence.

The relationship between employee voice and silence and job satisfaction

Employee silence has been linked to a variety of different outcomes for employers, including hinderance to organisational development, incorporation and transformation (Demirtas, 2018). Furthermore, employee silence has also been linked to decreased levels of job satisfaction due to aspects such the damaging of trust and commitment between employees and their workplace (Demirtas, 2018). Demirtas (2018) stresses the importance of organisations and employers to actively attempt to comprehend what employees convey through their voice behaviour, as well as their chosen forms of response to these occurrences. The manner in which management responds in return could determine the voice behaviour of employees.

According to Kim, Knutson and Choi (2016) employee voice is mainly intended to have a positive intent for organisations, suggesting enhancements for employee and organisational operations and processes. Positive discussions regarding solutions with the sharing of opinions and emotions to enhance aspects at work are often the result. Furthermore, satisfaction at work could thus be the result of employee voice being positively welcomed and fostered by organisations (Kim et al., 2016). Studies have also shown how the contrary can also be found; a study by Knoll and Van Dick (2013) indicated how the four forms of employee silence were negatively correlated to job satisfaction, further stating that by refraining from disclosing one's opinion or sharing information can lead to decreased satisfaction, regardless of the inherent reasons for remaining silent.

The study proposes the following with regard to the relationships between employee voice and silence and job satisfaction:

Hypothesis 4a: A positive relationship exists between employee voice and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b: A negative relationship exists between employee silence and job satisfaction.

The relationship between employee voice and silence and turnover intention

Over the years scholars have been proposing a number of different theories or interpretations regarding the process of employee voice, exit and loyalty since Hirschman developed this framework in the 1970s. Barry (1974) was one of the first to start questioning Hirschman's theory, stating that employee voice could probably lead to exit if everything serves to remain unchanged after the occurrence of the voice, or it could lead to exit due to negative consequences caused by engaging in employee voice (McClellan, Burris & Detert, 2013). In a study conducted by Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon and Wilkinson (2011) it is indicated how earlier studies supported these notions, stating that when employee voice occurred, the result could often come down to negative costs to those who chose to engage in the process. Furthermore, higher turnover was found to be resulting from employee voice than from silence, further stating that silence may be the safer route to take for some employees as voice often leads to negative consequences such as the damaging of reputations, being regularly exposed to sanctions, as well as non-acceptance in the organisation (Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon & Wilkinson, 2011).

McClellan et al. (2013) proposed that the relationship between employee voice and turnover intention could possibly come down to leadership or management styles used in the organisation. Other similar studies also propose the same notion, stating that under the presence of sound leadership, employee voice could lead to positive outcomes, and that turnover intention levels will be lowered (Lam, Loi, Chan & Liu, 2016). Studies by Wilkinson and Fay (2011) also support the idea that upon organisational provisions for employee voice, there may be a decreased likelihood of these employees leaving the organisation. The impact of employee voice on turnover intention is divided if one is to consider previous research and studies and is influenced by various organisational or managerial factors. For the purpose of this paper it may be important to consider the realm under which employee voice is viewed; i.e. that with a more positively connected intention of improvement and contribution – the speaking up of opinions, recommendations, and ideas. Here it may also be important to consider what the impact is of remaining silent about these contributions.

When considering employee silence, studies regarding turnover intention has also shown that relationships between these two constructs exist, both direct and indirect, and employee silence has been found to be positively connected to increased turnover intention levels (Elçi, Karabay, Alpkın & Şener, 2014). Studies have also shown how different forms of employee silence – including opportunistic, acquiescent, quiescent, and prosocial silence – have been related to increased levels of turnover intention in organisations (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013).

The study therefore decides to take the following approaches to the relationship between voice, silence and turnover intention:

Hypothesis 5a: A negative relationship exists between employee voice and turnover intention.

Hypothesis 5b: A positive relationship exists between employee silence and turnover intention.

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention

Over the years many studies have been conducted by scholars to determine how job satisfaction and turnover intention are connected (Long & Thean, 2011). Amah (2009) argues that the correlation that exists between job satisfaction and turnover levels in organisations have contributed to an improved grasp of how turnover and the workplace are connected. Furthermore, scholars have become increasingly curious about this relationship, as satisfaction at work has been related to a higher intent to remain at the organisation, ultimately leading to enhanced productivity and a greater competitive edge over other organisations. Studies have also shown how a negative relationship exists between these two constructs – satisfaction and turnover – which is rather moderate in nature with noted differences that can be found between studies (Amah, 2009).

Job satisfaction can therefore be seen to have an impact on whether employees choose to remain at the organisation or seek work elsewhere, and dissatisfied employees can be typically seen as those who will choose the latter of the two options (Aydogdu & Asikgil, 2011). This study aims to determine the direct relationship that exists between job satisfaction and turnover intention, and therefore proposes the following relationship:

Hypothesis 6: A negative relationship exists between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

The indirect relationship between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, turnover intention and job satisfaction

This study largely aims to explore the direct relationships between the stated research constructs. However, it also aims to explore some of the potential indirect relationships that may exist, for example when affective rumination occurs, turnover intention will decrease if employees choose to speak up and voice their ruminative concerns. The following relationships have been proposed to exist and are indirectly mediated by employee voice and silence:

Hypothesis 7a: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and job satisfaction through employee voice.

Hypothesis 7b: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and job satisfaction through employee silence

Hypothesis 8a: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and turnover intention through employee voice.

Hypothesis 8b: An indirect relationship exists between workplace rumination and turnover intention through employee silence.

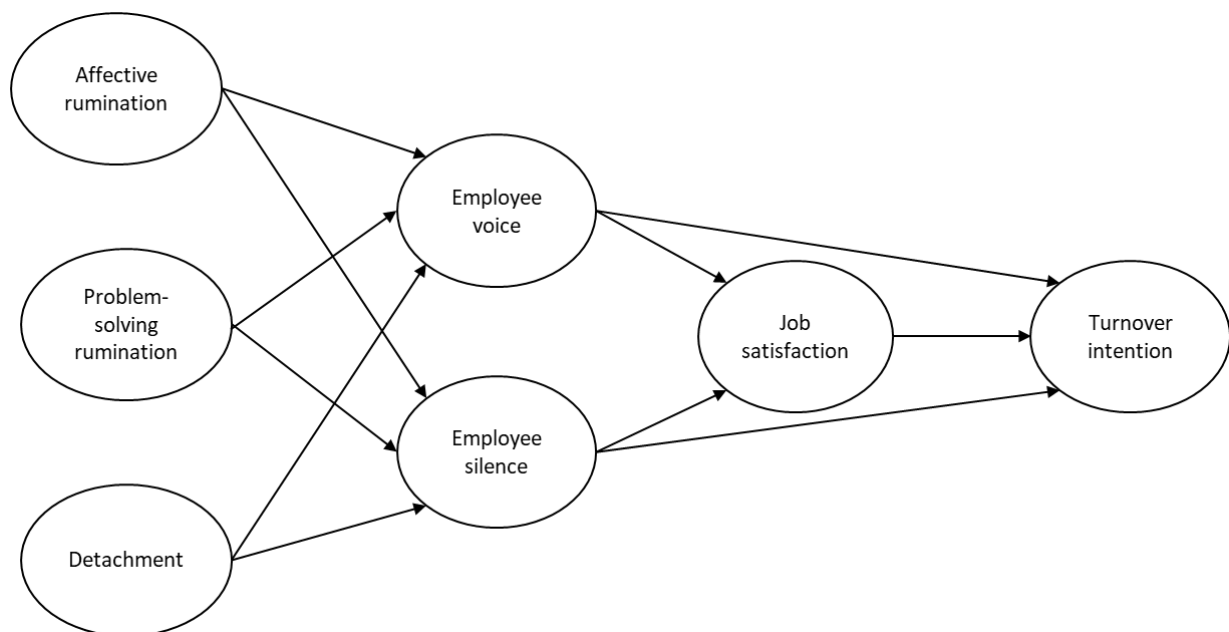


Figure 2. *The research model.*

Research design

Research approach

For the purpose of this study a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach was followed. Quantitative research was used to study all identified constructs by making use of a quantitative questionnaire (Struwig & Stead, 2013). This approach allowed the investigation of various factors, some of which were identified to potentially be associated with one another and to have a certain impact. Furthermore, it allowed for the analysis of specific constructs and their relationship with the stated research questions (McCuske & Gunyadin, 2015). Data were obtained from the identified sample group within one single period of time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011).

Research method

For the purpose of this study two phases were applied – a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained are presented in the form of a research article.

Research participants

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the participants for this study.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (n = 332)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	158	47.59
	Male	174	52.41
Ethnicity	African	81	24.40
	Asian	3	0.90
	Coloured	34	10.24
	Indian	26	7.83
	White	182	54.82
	Prefer not to say	5	1.51
	Other	1	0.30
Education	Secondary schooling	69	20.78
	Graduate	157	47.52
	Honours graduate	43	12.95

	Master's graduate	45	13.55
	Unclassified	4	1.21
Sector	Agriculture	5	1.51
	Communications	5	1.51
	Education	38	11.45
	Financial	48	14.46
	Government	44	13.25
	Information Technology	19	5.72
	Manufacturing	33	9.94
	Mining	14	4.22
	Services	23	6.93
	Tourism	3	0.90
	Wholesale and retail	16	4.82
	Other	79	23.80
	Missing	5	1.51

The mean age of the participants was 48.01 years ($SD = 10.13$). Other characteristics of the sample group can also be found in Table 1. Most of the participants were male employees ($n = 174$; 52.41%) and the group consisted mostly of white ($n = 182$; 54.82%) and black ($n = 81$; 24.40%) participants. Most of the participants were within other sectors that were not explicitly identified in this study ($n = 79$; 23.80%), followed by the financial ($n = 48$; 14.46%) and government sector ($n = 44$; 13.25%). Lastly, the education of most participants that formed part of this study was identified as graduates ($n = 157$; 47.52%).

Measuring instruments

The *Biographical section* was used to gain information with regard to various participants' age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, and sector of employment. Biographical information was merely used to describe the study population.

Work-related rumination was measured by making use of the work-related rumination questionnaire (WRRQ) developed by Cropley, Michalianou, Pravettoni and Millward (2012). This instrument consists of three subscales, namely: Affective rumination (e.g. "Are you annoyed by thinking about work-related issues when not at work?"), Problem-solving pondering (e.g. "I find thinking about work during my free time helps me to be creative"), and Detachment (e.g. "I am able to stop thinking about work-related issues in my free time") with

five items respectively for each subscale. A 5-point Likert scale is used to answer the items and ranges from 1 (Very seldom/Never) to 5 (Very often/Always). According to Cropley et al. (2012), the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales are 0.90 (affective rumination), 0.81 (problem-solving pondering) and 0.88 (detachment).

Employee voice was measured by making use of the scale utilised by Madrid et al. (2015). The scale comprises three items with a scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Individuals who engage in employee voice, choose to speak up with regard to work-related ideas, issues, or concerns. An example of an item from this scale is "I spoke up with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures". Madrid et al. (2015) state that this instrument has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79.

Employee silence was measured by utilising a scale developed by Detert and Edmondson (2011) and it consists of four items (e.g. "I kept ideas for developing new products or services to myself"). The instrument is rated by using a frequency scale that ranges from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) and was intended to measure whether employees would choose to remain silent with regard to opinions, concerns or ideas within the organisation. Detert and Edmondson (2011) found the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this measure to be 0.74. However, more recent studies conducted by Madrid et al. (2015) showed a higher Cronbach alpha coefficient value of 0.93.

Job satisfaction was measured by means of a scale developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg and Sverke (1997). This instrument comprises 3 items with a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) and aims to uncover whether a person is satisfied with their job (e.g. "I enjoy being at my work"). Hellgren et al. (1997) found this scale to have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86 and within the South African context. Pienaar, Sieberhagen and Mostert (2007) reported to have found an alpha coefficient of 0.80.

Turnover intention was measured with a scale developed by Sjöberg and Sverke (2000). This scale comprises three items and consists of a 5-point Likert scale on which a high score on the scale would indicate a high intention to leave one's job (e.g. "I feel I could leave this job"), while a low score would indicate the opposite. Sjöberg and Sverke (2000) stated that the scale has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83 and, within a South African context, a range was found between 0.74 and 0.79 (Redelinghuys & Botha, 2016).

Research procedure

Approval was received from the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) at North-West University for the proposed study (NWU-00810-19-A4), and various organisations were contacted across different industries within South Africa. Organisations were contacted to gain approval to conduct the proposed study and were chosen based on availability and accessibility. An online questionnaire was used to collect the data. All booklets were therefore distributed electronically, as this was the most appropriate manner for identified organisations to participate. The data was captured on Microsoft Excel, from where it was examined, after which statistical analysis followed.

Statistical analysis

Mplus 8.4 was used for data analysis (Muthén & Muthén, 2019). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to specify the measurement model based on all the items as they relate to the specific factors. Specifically, a second-order model was tested for rumination and a first-order model. The fit of this model as well as the magnitude of the factor loadings and correlations between factors were considered. For the fit, the guidelines by Van de Schoot, Lugtig and Hox (2012) were followed: Comparative fit index (CFI; ≥ 0.90), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; ≥ 0.90), and Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; ≤ 0.08). Factor loadings were considered to be acceptable at approximately 0.50 in the context of the overall model fit. For the correlations, the traditional effect sizes were considered, i.e. 0.30 and above for a medium effect and 0.50 and above for a large effect (Cohen, 1992). The CFA model was found to be valid, and the structural paths based on the hypotheses were added to the model to constitute the structural model. Moreover, the indirect paths were specified with the MODEL INDIRECT function and 10,000 bootstrap replications were requested to generate 95% confidence intervals for the indirect relationships.

Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance was provided by a North-West University Faculty Research Committee to proceed with this study (Reference number: NWU-00810-19-A4). All facets of this study were conducted ethically. Participants joined the process completely voluntarily and were informed that they were free to decline or remove themselves during any stage of the research process if

they would wish to do so, without suffering any negative consequence. Participants were also informed about how the data would be used. Informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality ensured. No personal information of employees was disclosed in this process. No discrimination took place and no harm was done, as the process was conducted professionally, respecting the rights and dignity of all participants and organisations involved. Participants were not required to identify themselves by name on the questionnaire and individual results were not interpreted, but only those of the total sample. Online questionnaires were used, whereafter the results were safely and securely stored. The supervisor had custody of the data after collection.

Results

The measurement models

Two measurement models were tested for use in this study: a first-order model in which rumination is conceptualised as three separate factors, and a second-order model in which rumination is a higher-order factor, indicated by the three first-order factors. Table 2 below provides the fit statistics for the estimated model.

Table 2

Fit statistics of the measurement models

Description	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC	BIC
First-order model	776.49	328	0.92	0.91	0.06	0.07	23414.10	23817.44
Second-order model	1000.60	337	0.88	0.87	0.08	0.18	23620.20	23989.30

Notes: χ^2 = Chi-square; *df* = Degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardised Root Mean Residual; $p < .001$

As reflected in Table 2, the first-order model with the work-related rumination factors specified as separate fitted the data best ($\chi^2 = 776.49$; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.06; SRMR = 0.07). Therefore, this model was used, and the remaining results are presented with this model as the foundation. The factor loadings for the model are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Standardised loadings for the latent factors

Factor	Item	Loading	SE	<i>p</i>	AVE	CR
Affective (Rumination)	affect1	0.82	0.02	0.001	0.68	0.92
	affect2	0.82	0.02	0.001		
	affect3	0.82	0.02	0.001		
	affect4	0.85	0.02	0.001		
	affect5	0.83	0.02	0.001		
Problem-solving (Rumination)	solve1	0.73	0.03	0.001	0.50	0.83
	solve2	0.80	0.03	0.001		
	solve3	0.71	0.03	0.001		
	solve4	0.59	0.04	0.001		
	solve5	0.69	0.04	0.001		
Detachment (Rumination)	detach2	0.58	0.04	0.001	0.53	0.85
	detach1	-0.68	0.04	0.001		
	detach3	0.77	0.03	0.001		
	detach4	0.78	0.03	0.001		
	detach5	0.83	0.02	0.001		
Employee voice	voice1	0.79	0.03	0.001	0.61	0.82
	voice2	0.76	0.03	0.001		
	voice3	0.79	0.03	0.001		
Employee silence	silence1	0.55	0.04	0.001	0.55	0.83
	silence2	0.63	0.04	0.001		
	silence3	0.87	0.03	0.001		
	silence4	0.87	0.03	0.001		
Job satisfaction	jobsat1	0.84	0.02	0.001	0.78	0.92
	jobsat2	0.90	0.01	0.001		
	jobsat3	0.91	0.01	0.001		
Turnover intention	turn1	0.79	0.03	0.001	0.63	0.84
	turn2	0.71	0.03	0.001		
	turn3	0.88	0.02	0.001		

Notes: S.E. = Standard error; All *p*-values < 0.001; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliability

Table 3 reflects that all the factor loadings in the model were significant ($p < 0.001$), that most of the factor loadings were 0.70 or above, and that no factor loadings were below 0.50 (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). Furthermore, all the AVE's were above 0.50 indicating convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014) and the composite reliability for the latent factors were

all above 0.80 – indicating excellent internal consistency. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was also calculated and is presented in the correlation matrix below – see Table 4.

Table 4

Reliabilities and correlation matrix for the latent variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Affective rumination	(0.92)						
2. Problem-solving	0.38 ^{*a}	(0.83)					
3. Detachment	0.55 ^{*b}	0.56 ^{*b}	(0.84)				
4. Employee voice	-0.13 [*]	0.17 [*]	-0.17 [*]	(0.85)			
5. Employee silence	0.32 ^{*a}	-0.09	0.21 [*]	-0.49 ^{*a}	(0.82)		
6. Job satisfaction	-0.56 ^{*b}	0.02	-0.24 [*]	0.15 [*]	-0.27 [*]	(0.91)	
7. Turnover intention	0.58 ^{*b}	0.04	0.22	-0.02	0.29	-0.79 ^{*b}	(0.83)

Notes: Cronbach’s reliability coefficients in brackets on the diagonal; * = correlations statistically significant $p < 0.05$; a = Medium effect size; b = Large effect size

It is reported in Table 4 that the correlation between the first-order factors of rumination were all statistically significant with medium and large effect sizes. Specifically, affective rumination had a positive correlation with problem-solving rumination ($r = 0.38$; medium effect) and detachment ($r = 0.55$; large effect). Problem-solving rumination and detachment were also positively correlated ($r = 0.56$; large effect). Furthermore, employee voice and employee silence were negatively correlated ($r = -0.49$; medium effect). Affective rumination was the only rumination component that had a relationship with job satisfaction ($r = -0.56$; large effect) and turnover intention ($r = 0.58$; large effect) that had an effect size. The largest correlation was between job satisfaction and turnover intention ($r = -0.79$; large effect).

The structural model

The research model with the hypothesised paths added also fitted the data ($\chi^2 = 816.23$; CFI = 0.91; TLI = 0.90; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.07). Table 5 and Figure 3 below present the resulting path estimates.

Table 5

Path results for the structural model

Structural path	B	SE	p
Affective rumination → Employee voice	-0.08	0.08	0.306
Affective rumination → Employee silence	0.36*	0.07	0.001
Problem-solving rumination → Employee voice	0.40*	0.08	0.001
Problem-solving rumination → Employee silence	-0.34*	0.08	0.001
Detachment → Employee voice	0.35*	0.09	0.001
Detachment → Employee silence	-0.21*	0.09	0.001
Employee voice → Job satisfaction	0.01	0.08	0.942
Employee silence → Job satisfaction	-0.30*	0.07	0.001
Employee voice → Turnover intention	0.19*	0.06	0.001
Employee silence → Turnover intention	0.18*	0.06	0.001
Job satisfaction → Turnover intention	-0.77*	0.03	0.001

Notes: β = Standardised beta coefficient; SE = Standard error; p = Two-tailed statistical significance; * = Significant

As can be inferred from Table 5, results from the path of the structural model showed that affective rumination did not have a statistically significant relationship with employee voice ($\beta = -0.08$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = 0.306$; rejecting H1a), but did have a statistically significant relationship with employee silence ($\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H1b). Problem-solving rumination had a statistically significant relationship with employee voice ($\beta = 0.40$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H2a) and employee silence ($\beta = -0.34$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H2b). Similarly, detachment had a statistically significant relationship with employee voice ($\beta = 0.35$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H3a) and employee silence ($\beta = -0.21$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H3b). Furthermore, employee voice did not have a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.01$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = 0.942$; rejecting H4a), but employee silence had a negative relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.30$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H4b). Interestingly, both employee voice ($\beta = 0.19$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$; rejecting H5a) and employee silence ($\beta = 0.18$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H5b) had a positive relationship with turnover intention – it was initially hypothesised that employee voice would have a negative relationship. Moreover, job satisfaction had a strong negative relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = -0.77$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$; supporting H6).

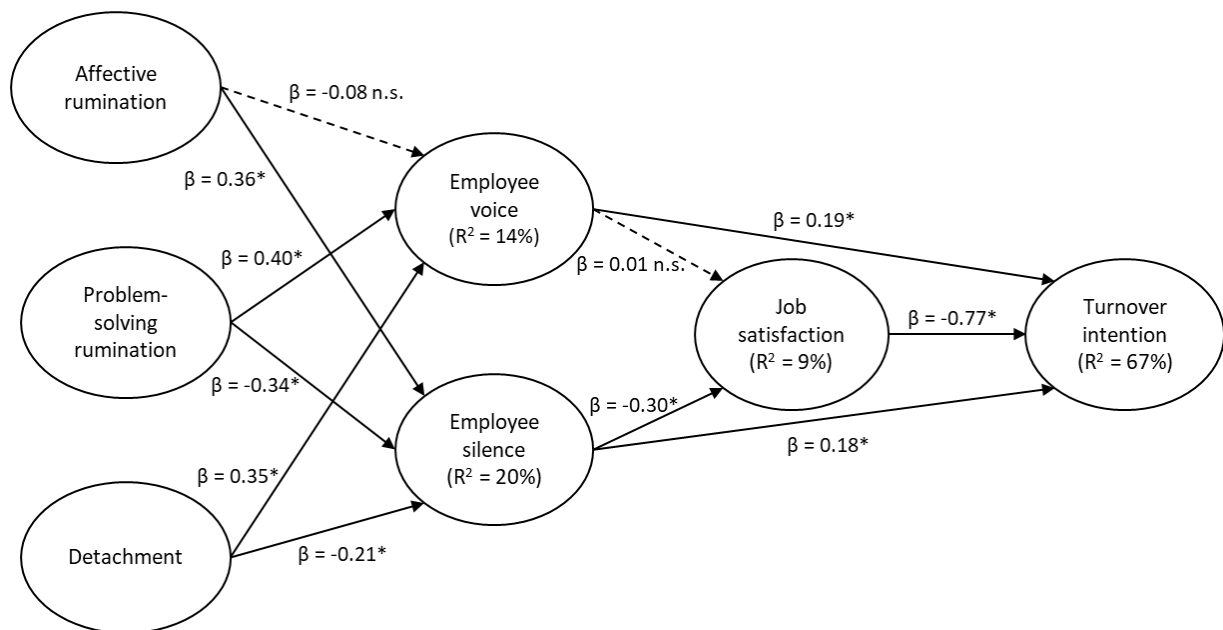


Figure 3. The structural model with the results of the direct paths.

Indirect relationships

Table 6 below provides the estimates of all the indirect effects in the model and the accompanying confidence intervals.

Table 6

Indirect paths for the structural model

Indirect path	Estimate	L 95% CI	U 95% CI
Affective rumination → Employee voice → Job satisfaction	0.01	-0.01	0.03
Affective rumination → Employee silence → Job satisfaction	-0.01	-0.06	0.04
Problem-solving rumination → Employee voice → Job satisfaction	-0.01	-0.08	0.05
Problem-solving rumination → Employee silence → Job satisfaction	0.01	-0.06	0.08
Detachment → Employee voice → Job satisfaction	-0.01	-0.07	0.05
Detachment → Employee silence → Job satisfaction	0.01	-0.04	0.07
Affective rumination → Employee voice → Turnover	-0.01	-0.07	0.02
Affective rumination → Employee silence → Turnover	0.04*	0.01	0.10
Problem-solving rumination → Employee voice → Turnover	0.07*	0.02	0.15
Problem-solving rumination → Employee silence → Turnover	-0.05*	-0.12	-0.01
Detachment → Employee voice → Turnover	0.06*	0.02	0.15
Detachment → Employee silence → Turnover	-0.03*	-0.10	-0.01

Notes: * = Does not include zero; L 95% CI = Lower 95% confidence interval; U 95% CI = Upper 95% confidence interval

As reflected in Table 6, all the indirect relationships from work-related rumination to job satisfaction, through employee voice and silence, included zero – rejecting H7a and H7b. However, H8a was partially supported as affective rumination did not have a relationship through employee voice to turnover intention, but problem-solving rumination (Estimate = 0.07; 95% CI[0.02, 0.15]) and detachment (Estimate = 0.06; 95% CI[0.02, 0.15]) did. H8b was supported as all the components of rumination had a negative relationship with turnover intention through employee silence, e.g. problem-solving rumination (Estimate = -0.05; 95% CI[-0.12, -0.01]).

Discussion

Outline of the results

This research study aimed to investigate the relationships that exist between work-related rumination (affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, detachment), employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The study has been the first of its kind to incorporate all the above-mentioned constructs within a single study in the South African context. The study has largely aimed to add to the body of literature, to contribute towards establishing empirical data, and to showcase the relationships that exist between the stated research constructs, namely work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

According to the results obtained in the study, affective rumination did not have a statistically significant relationship with employee voice (rejecting H1a). Affective rumination did, however, show to have a positive significant relationship with employee silence (supporting H1b), supporting the notion that if employees engage in affective rumination – negative work-related, recurring, and persistent thoughts (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011) – it increases the likelihood for them to engage in an active decision to refrain from speaking up about important issues, contributions or related information, which is not caused by failure to have anything noteworthy to speak on or which happens without purposeful intent like merely lacking a presence of mind (Brinsfield, 2013). The results obtained support previous research studies that have also found affective rumination to be positively related to employee silence outcomes (Madrid et al., 2015). Furthermore, it reminds and stresses the importance of studying and viewing employee voice and silence as two separate constructs, even if strongly connected,

which could have different outcomes and should not merely be inferred as opposites (Van Dyne et al., 2003). This study showed how the presence of a significant relationship between affective rumination and employee silence did not guarantee a significant relationship with employee voice.

Problem-solving pondering had a positive significant relationship with employee voice (supporting H2a). When employees engage in problem-solving pondering – described as a more positive ruminative form in which the mind ponders to investigate issues and ruminates over tasks completed, aiming to find ways to continue enhancing these tasks (Langan-Fox & Cooper, 2011) – it will likely increase an employee’s likelihood to voice work-related information to contribute to the workplace (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016). Interestingly, in this case, the opposite also seemed to be true for employee silence (supporting H2b), and a negative significant relationship showed that employees who engaged in problem-solving pondering were not likely to engage in employee silence. This supports Madrid et al.’s (2015) notions that upon (functionally) high levels of problem-solving demands, employee voice would likely occur and not employee silence.

Detachment, an ability to detach, and therefore not engage in ruminating processes, is typically associated with more positive well-being or other functional outcomes (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011). In this study it was also found that employees who are able to detach after a day’s work have an increased likelihood to engage in employee voice at work (supporting H3a). Moreover, employees who find it difficult to detach from work and turn their thoughts away from work-related matters are more likely to engage in employee silence at work (supporting H3b).

Employee voice did not have a significant relationship with job satisfaction (rejecting H4a). This can be seen to contrast notions accepted in this study, stating that job satisfaction could result from employee voice, which is positively welcomed and fostered in organisations (Kim et al., 2016; Alfayad & Arif, 2017). In this study it may be indicative of a lack of openness to voice which is experienced in an organisation. Previous studies that found positive relationships between employee voice and job satisfaction speculated that open communication, boldness to speak up, positive relationships with management, co-workers who are readily available, interested to share ideas, and choose to listen without prejudice or judgment, are among some of the key contributing factors (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). The type of voice being used may also have an impact on the relationship with satisfaction, and defensive

(feeling obligated to defend oneself) or acquiescent voice (not engaged, bad self-esteem, lacks the belief that it will impact on outcomes), may not typically be expected to be related to positive, work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017).

Employee silence, however, has been found to have a significant relationship with job satisfaction (supporting H4b). Employee silence has been seen to negatively influence job satisfaction, supporting previous research conducted by Knoll and Van Dick (2013) that has shown how various forms of employee silence, namely acquiescent, quiescent, prosocial, and opportunistic, all seem to be negatively related to job satisfaction, regardless of the underlying intent or reason behind the silence. It is also further speculated that not having the power to change factors in the workplace, a factor mostly found within acquiescent silence, can show to have the strongest impact on the perceived decrease in job satisfaction (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013).

Employee voice was shown to have a positive significant relationship with turnover intention (rejecting H5a), and not a negative relationship as was initially proposed. As previously mentioned, the influence of employee voice on turnover intention may largely be determined by organisational factors such as positive leadership or managerial approaches adopted in organisations, for which lower turnover intention levels can then be expected. Furthermore, if organisations provide more support and opportunity for employee voice, employees may be less intent to leave (Lam et al., 2016; McClean et al., 2013; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). In this study, the influence of employee voice on turnover intention may support notions that employee voice could cause employees to become more intent to leave due to the adverse effects that voicing has in their organisations (Donaghey et al., 2011).

The relationship between employee silence and turnover intention showed to have a positive significant relationship (supporting H5b). As was initially expected, employee silence did lead to higher turnover intention levels, and regardless of the form of employee silence, a universal inclination to search for better employment conditions than to engage in silence can be a dominant factor (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013). Turnover intention and job satisfaction showed a strong negative relationship (supporting H6), as was initially proposed by this study. It is thus apparent that higher levels of job satisfaction will lead to lower levels of turnover intention, and vice versa (Amah, 2009).

Lastly, indirect relationships were also studied, as a means of gathering a more in-depth picture of the research constructs, utilising bootstrapping. Employee voice and silence did not show to have a complementary mediating effect in the relationship between work-related rumination and job satisfaction (rejecting H7a and H7b). Previous research indicated how rumination and problem-solving demands had a mediating effect on silence, resulting from certain antecedent factors such as negative distress (Madrid et al., 2015). This study thus went further, not focusing on the antecedents of work-related rumination, but rather on possible work-related outcomes of rumination in its distinctive forms, through the mediating role of employee voice and silence. As such, in this study work-related rumination was seen as the antecedent within the indirect relationships, and through the mediating role of employee silence and voice, influence was shown towards turnover intention. H8a was partially supported, as problem-solving pondering and detachment seemed to influence turnover intention, through the mediating effect of employee voice, but not affective rumination. H8b was supported as all components of work-related rumination had a relationship with turnover intention, through the mediating role of employee silence.

Practical implications

This study has added to the body of literature and provided more information regarding work-related rumination (affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, detachment), employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. This study also assists in uncovering how the above-mentioned constructs are interrelated, as well as in informing organisations on how work-related rumination and employee voice and silence influence employees' perceived levels of job satisfaction and their intention to leave or remain within the organisation.

This study aims to shed light on the presence of work-related rumination in organisations, assisting organisations in becoming aware of the consequences thereof, in an attempt to foster healthier working conditions which dismantle a culture where rumination is a common norm; thus to focus on increasing the general well-being of the workforce (Blanco-Encomienda, García-Cantero & Latorre-Medina, 2020). This study investigates the processes accompanying employees' tendency to focus repetitive energy on negative thoughts as opposed to active conduct (Madrid et al., 2015). The impact that general negativity in the workplace has on voice

behaviour is fuelled by rumination, and dysfunctional and passive mindsets become the norm (Madrid et al., 2015) This study, however, also expands further by not only focusing on the processes and relationships between rumination and employee voice and silence but also further aims to shed light on the outcomes of these constructs and their relationships in organisation, namely in the form of typical job satisfaction and turnover intention levels.

This study aims to ensure an increased understanding of the processes related to winding down when away from the workplace, as increased work-related rumination has long been associated with lower mental functioning skills, and negative strain or well-being outcomes for employees (Cropley et al., 2012; Quarstret & Cropley, 2012). Organisations can aim to intervene in reducing work-related negative states that trigger affective rumination and consequential silence (Madrid et al., 2015). Certain organisational factors can therefore be addressed to ensure the fostering of healthy and supportive organisational cultures or climates.

Lastly, organisations should also be attentive to how employee voice and silence are approached within their workplace. Choosing to opt for employee voice or silence on an individual or a collective level can have a wide range of different outcomes for employees and their organisation. Furthermore, many factors can influence the occurrence of voice and silence, and organisations should ensure that a workplace is nurtured that encourages positive employee voice and eliminates negative influencing factors such as the fear of losing one's job or suffering reputational damage (Morrison, 2014). Organisational factors that can encourage employee voice as opposed to silence should therefore be of important focus for organisations to uncover and address. Furthermore, the relationships that have been shown to exist directly, as well as indirectly, in this study between work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, and outcomes such as perceived job satisfaction and turnover levels should also remain a driving force for organisations to understand, be attentive to, and intervene where needed.

For a more extended discussion of the practical implications see Chapter 3 to follow.

Limitations and directions for future research

The first limitation of this study may be that it was conducted within a general sample group, and as such did not focus on a specific sector, industry, or group. Furthermore, convenience

sampling was used and limitations in using this method can be found in variability and bias of estimates, and generalisation of the data collected towards other populations or groups (i.e. external validity) cannot be done (Struwig & Stead, 2013). A direction for future research can be to replicate the study within a specific sector or industry in the South African context, or within other populations. Future research could also consider focusing on specific criteria (for example specifically focusing on health-care workers, or blue-collar workers within an identified industry). Another limitation is the issue of social desirability, meaning that the respondents may provide only acceptable or desirable answers due to a fear of producing a certain undesirable image or representation of themselves or their organisations (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013), consequently not being entirely honest with themselves or the researcher about aspects such as intention to leave.

To the researchers' knowledge, no prior research concerning work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction within a single study has been conducted in South Africa, and this study can aspire future research to expand and build on what this study has delivered. This study has specifically focused on work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction and their proposed relationships with one another in a broader sense. Future research can aim to provide a more comprehensive depiction of these respective constructs and their relations with each other by focusing on specific forms of employee voice and silence (for example acquiescent voice and silence). Certain contextual elements that can influence the experience of the stated research constructs and their relations with one another were also not thoroughly investigated and limits the study. This includes differences within organisational climates and cultures and subjective differences found within approaches and relationships between employees, co-workers, managers, and leaders.

More focus can be placed on uncovering the individual and organisational factors that cause, contribute to, and influence the occurrence of work-related rumination, employee voice, and employee silence. Lastly, other possible outcomes of work-related rumination, employee voice, and employee silence should also be investigated, specifically focusing on positive outcomes of problem-focused rumination, detachment, and employee voice, as well as negative physical and psychological consequences of affective rumination and employee silence, in an attempt to build on or intervene where needed.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate relationships that exist between work-related rumination (consisting of affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, and detachment), employee voice, employee silence, turnover intention, and job satisfaction. Significant relationships were found to exist between all the constructs, except affective rumination and employee voice, and employee voice and job satisfaction. Certain indirect relationships were also found to be supported in the study, and within this study it has been shown how work-related rumination, through the effect of employee voice and silence, can result in changes in turnover intention. Organisations need to be aware of the negative effects that affective rumination and employee silence can cause for organisational functioning, satisfaction, turnover, longevity, and overall employee well-being. It is also important to consider the potential benefits that functional ruminative forms (problem-solving pondering and detachment) and employee voice can have if fostered correctly, and how it can contribute to a more satisfied workforce who are less intent to leave.

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CHAPTER 3
CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations related to this study. The conclusions represent the results of the study and its connection with the stated research objectives. Limitations include any potential considerations that could influence the study and are of importance to highlight, with the aim to increase and ensure transparency. Recommendations are proposed to organisations to provide potential insight into how they can improve and foster their workplace in a response to work-related rumination, employee voice and silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Furthermore, it can also provide future researchers with a basis on which they can further investigate the relationships and factors related to work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

3.1 Conclusions

This study focused on addressing the gaps that exist in the literature relating to work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention, and with specific reference to the South African context. The study aimed to provide evidence for general and specific objectives. Furthermore, the specific objectives were utilised to facilitate thorough investigation into stated constructs and to be able to achieve the general objective of this study. These objectives are discussed below:

The first specific objective of the study was to determine how rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention are conceptualised in the literature. To achieve this objective an in-depth literature study and review were conducted. *Work-related rumination* was described as the process in which people mule over issues originating from their workplace, even if those work-related factors that cause the thoughts are no longer present. This process is not a by-product of a person's subconscious but is done rather deliberately (Kinnunen, Feldt, Sianoja, De Bloom, Korpela & Geurts, 2017). *Work-related rumination* consisted of three forms, namely affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, and detachment (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011).

Affective rumination was conceptualised as a dysfunctional type of recurrent thinking, which focuses on negative symptoms, effects, and emotions relating to the issue that constitutes these

thoughts, without intent to solve problems or engage in active behaviour concerning the issue (Kinnunen et al., 2017; Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky, 2008). *Problem-solving pondering* was conceptualised as a more functional ruminative style whereby thoughts are created from a mind that continues to study certain factors and ruminates over manners in which one can continue to refine and develop completed work, tasks, or projects (Hamesch, Cropley & Lang, 2014; Langan-Fox & Cooper, 2011). *Detachment* referred to a person's ability to comprehend that they are away from their work by psychologically liberating their mind from thoughts connected to their work and workplace (Etzion, Eden & Lapidot, 1998; Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017).

In this study, *Employee voice* was conceptualised as a voluntary process of verbal messaging, which is correspondence that is sent from one source to another, which is not intended to be negative in nature but is rather focused on contributing and bringing awareness, sharing thoughts, and adding value to various organisational matters (Alfayad & Arif, 2017). *Employee silence* was conceptualised as refraining from sharing important information or perceived threats and ideas by voicing it to persons who can bring about desired relief or change (Morrison, See & Pan, 2015).

Job satisfaction was conceptualised as the perceived discrepancy that develops between what employees truly attain from their work and what they feel they should be attaining. Moreover, it also looks at overall beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about work, and consequently amounts to how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the job (Long & Thean, 2011; Singh & Onahring, 2019; Spector, 1997; Vroom, 1964). Lastly, *turnover intention* was conceptualised as the deliberate intent or motivation to attain another work, embedded in thoughts and intentions of permanently parting ways with the organisation (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004; Humayra & Mahendra, 2019; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

The second specific objective of the study was to determine the direct relationship between work-related rumination (in its three distinct forms – affective rumination, problem-solving pondering, and detachment), employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. According to the results obtained, direct relationships were found to exist between all the stated research constructs, except between affective rumination and employee voice, and employee voice and job satisfaction. All forms of work-related rumination had significant relationships with one another of ranging effect sizes. Affective rumination was positively

related to problem-solving rumination ($r = 0.38$; medium effect) and detachment ($r = 0.55$; large effect). Furthermore, problem-solving rumination and detachment were also positively related ($r = 0.56$; large effect). The above-mentioned relationships have proven to show the interactive, three-factor nature of work-related rumination (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011). Furthermore, employee voice and silence were also negatively connected ($r = -0.49$; medium effect) and provides insight into Van Dyne, Son and Botero's (2003) notion stating that employee voice and employee silence do not have an antipolar nature, and should be seen as separate, yet interrelated constructs.

Affective rumination showed to have a positive significant relationship with employee silence, providing insight on why certain employees remain silent and refrain from contributing to their workplace by disclosing key information, and how this process is exacerbated by negative moods and rumination (Madrid, Patterson & Leiva, 2015). Affective rumination, however, did not have a significant relationship with employee voice. Other organisational boundary factors could act as possible reasoning for a non-significant relationship. Previous studies have found that employees could start to speak out as a result of affective rumination triggered by abusive relationships with supervisors or management (Tahir & Khan, 2019). Perhaps more complex factors are needed to facilitate a relationship between affective rumination and employee voice. These factors could therefore possibly not have fallen within the parameters of this study.

Problem-solving pondering, a more functional ruminative style, showed to have a significant and positive relationship with employee voice, and a negative significant relationship with employee silence. The type of voice formed can perhaps be an improvement-based voice, which is prosocial in nature, aimed at contributing and is not formed out of negativity (Lam, 2009). Perhaps another important contributor towards these relationships can be found when looking at typical problem-solving demand levels. Madrid et al. (2015) explained how higher levels of problem-solving demands can trigger a cognitive, evaluative process, bringing aspects such as accountability under one's attention, from where specific thoughts are formed explicitly focused on providing contributions and uncovering issues that hamper performance. The result would be that employees choose to engage in employee voice and interactions in the workplace. Interestingly, even if high levels of perceived negativity prevail, under conditions where higher levels of stress and problem-solving demands are formed, certain processes and activations will be at work in influencing a decreased level of employee silence (Madrid et al., 2015).

Detachment showed to have a positive significant relationship with employee voice, and a negative relationship with employee silence. This may be indicative of the possible positive impact that detachment has for employees and organisations (Cropley & Zijlstra, 2011). The results of this study indicated that increased levels of detachment will lead to higher levels of employee voice, and employees may therefore opt to voice their opinions and concerns in the workplace. Similarly, if employees are detached, they will be less likely to withhold information and keep their concerns to themselves.

Employee voice showed to have no significant relationship with job satisfaction. This can be due to a lack of positive reception of voice in organisations (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Kim, Knutson & Choi, 2016) and a lack of positive boundary conditions to contribute in this relationship, such as functional and positive organisational communication and relationships, which also further exacerbates feelings of freedom and confidence to speak up. Furthermore, employee voice can be formed as part of a defensive response, or in the absence of optimistic and engaged attitudes, and therefore may not impact positive outcomes such as satisfaction (Alfayad & Arif, 2017).

Employee silence, however, showed to have a negative significant relationship with job satisfaction. This may be indicative of the negative state that employee silence likely produces, and no matter what the cause or form of the employee silence is, engaging herein can lead to employees feeling dissatisfied with their job (Knoll & Van Dick, 2013) and can influence beliefs, feelings, and attitudes related to the job. Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of studying silence as it decreases job satisfaction levels, which further impacts communication negatively and creates adverse consequences, ultimately hampering organisational performance (Alfayad & Arif, 2017)

Employee voice and employee silence both showed a positive, significant relationship with turnover intention. Employees who keep silent about work-related issues, regardless of the reasoning behind the proposed silence (i.e. the form of employee silence), may typically be more intent to leave and seek employment elsewhere, than to continue engaging in silence (Knol & Van Dick, 2013). Previous studies that have found a positive relationship between employee silence and turnover intention has also highlighted the importance of management to encourage functional communication channels, eliminate dysfunctional climates and foster positive climates and cultures that encourage voice, as not addressing these factors can

contribute to negativity in employees and encourage their intent to seek employment elsewhere (Elçi, Karabay, Alpkın & Şener, 2014).

The relationship between employee voice and turnover intention may be more complex to understand. In this study, it was initially proposed that employee voice will have a negative relationship with turnover intention. Engaging in employee silence is typically seen as a rather negative occurrence, and employee voice which is identified as its counter partner (Elçi et al., 2014), includes popular conceptualisations that have suggested it to be generally more of a positive and improvement-based nature (Alfayad & Arif, 2017; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011). Therefore, negative consequences of employee voice are not always easy to pinpoint, but problems such as reputational damage, dismissal, and emotional strain have been mentioned among possible side-effects of employee voice (Lassalle, 2020), which may also in turn influence turnover intention.

Perhaps another important element to consider may be an employee's loyalty towards their organisation. Some of the earliest research on voice by Albert Hirschman (1970) stated that upon perceived dissatisfaction, loyal employees will likely voice opinions but not leave (Saunders, 1992). As response to this theory, insight may be needed into possible mediating factors such as loyalty in employee voice and intent to leave. Other factors found in leadership, management, communication channels, comfort levels, support, and access to functional employee voice systems or mechanisms may also influence the relationship between employee voice and turnover intention (Demirtas & Akdoğan, 2015; Lam, Loi, Chan & Liu, 2016; Lee & Whitford, 2008; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011).

Lastly, job satisfaction had a strong negative relationship with employee silence, as was also initially proposed ($r = -0.79$; large effect) and showed to have the strongest relationship in the study. Decreased levels of job satisfaction lead to many negative results for organisations, from which high levels of turnover intention can be expected. Turnover intention ultimately leads to employees leaving and as such, there is a direct, as well as indirect, price to pay if organisations do not investigate the factors dissatisfying the workforce and increasing their intent to leave (Ali, 2008).

The third objective of the study was to determine the indirect relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

Indirect relationships showed how i) employee voice and silence had a mediating effect between work-related rumination and job satisfaction; ii) employee voice had a mediating effect between problem-solving pondering and turnover intention as well as between detachment and turnover intention, and iii) employee silence showed a mediating effect between work-related rumination and turnover intention.

The final objective was to make recommendations for future research and practice. This was done in Chapter 2 through the limitations and recommendations provided, as well as in the parts to follow below.

3.2 Limitations

The first limitation of this study is that it was conducted within a general, cross-sectional, sample of South African workers, using a convenience sampling method, and causality, and external validity cannot be assured as the sample was not representative of the total South African workforce (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Furthermore, specific participants within an industry or sector were not targeted, and more general results of South African workers cannot necessarily accurately infer towards more specific samples and sectors.

Another possible limitation of this study can be that employees may be afraid to depict certain undesirable images of themselves and their organisations (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013) and may therefore not be entirely honest with themselves or the researcher. Engaging in employee silence is seen as a deliberate act of confining information to oneself (Morrison, 2014) and therefore may also raise concerns about whether certain employees are entirely open or whether they will continue to conceal key information when completing the questionnaires.

Furthermore, certain factors that have been stated to potentially affect the relationships between work-related rumination, employee voice, employee silence, job satisfaction, and turnover intention have not been explicitly studied in this study. Therefore, the role of aspects such as communication mechanisms, communication channels, confidence to voice, loyalty, organisational climates, cultures, leadership, and management styles in predicting direct or indirect relationships have not been investigated. Lastly, employee voice was viewed from a more general perspective of being positively connoted. However, results in this study indicated

a seemingly non-significant relationship with job satisfaction, and a positive relationship with turnover intention, which has raised questions regarding the complex and possible negative side of employee voice which this study has not attempted to explore.

Despite the limitations that have been mentioned, this study has still managed to contribute to literature, organisations, as well as future research.

3.3 Recommendations

3.3.1 Recommendations for practice

This study has provided insight for organisations into the relationship between work-related rumination, employee voice, and employee silence and their effect on turnover intention and job satisfaction. Organisations may need to increase their understanding of these constructs and the effect they have on one another, as it can have detrimental effects on the workplace. Work-related rumination, employee silence, and the perceived negativity that influences and accompanies these states have been seen to impact well-being, health, productivity, performance, and other functional behaviours of employees at work (Cropley, Zijlstra, Querstret & Beck, 2016; Elçi et al., 2014; Madrid et al., 2015). Employees who display low levels of satisfaction tend to behave more dysfunctionally and have decreased levels of well-being, which in turn damages optimal organisational functioning. Additionally, dissatisfied employees are more inclined to leave, and expenses involved in the process of replacing these employees, and other subsidiary implications such as decreased employee morale and damaging of social resources, are among the factors that impact organisations negatively (Ali, 2008; Saeed, Waseem, Sikander & Rizwan, 2014).

When considering the above-mentioned impact on organisations, it is recommended that organisations within South African industries become attentive to factors within their organisational environments that contribute to these constructs and their direct or indirect relationships, both negatively and positively. Organisations should aim to intervene with negative effects of dysfunctional work-related rumination, such as the provision of employee wellness and assistance programs in the workplace, where trained professionals offer counselling or coaching that focuses on interventions such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

(CBT) or other positive psychology approaches such as mindfulness, meditation or relaxation techniques (Cropley et al., 2016; Vandevala, Pavey, Chelidoni, Chang, Creagh-Brown & Cox, 2017). More preventative measures can also be taken to combat work-related rumination, and here specific focus should be placed on eliminating negativity that fuels affective rumination, such as being invested in career growth and development initiatives and ensuring that proper career guidance is provided.

Furthermore, training and awareness campaigns and workshops regarding work-related rumination (Madrid et al., 2015), as well as employee voice and silence, can be provided. It is crucial for employees and managers to gain awareness and education on how these factors influence their workplace. An important aspect that these workshops or training campaigns can focus on is the adverse effects of employee silence, and affective rumination on organisational and health outcomes. Another focus can also be to educate workers on how to safely use problem-solving pondering if they are prone to engage herein, and also to make suggestions and action plans to effectively detach themselves from work after the working day. The positive and negative side of employee voice should also be an area that all managers, leaders, and employees should familiarise themselves with. Managers and employees should become aware of the challenges and benefits of different forms of employee voice, such as prosocial and prohibitive, and how they can change or contribute to their working conditions to capitalise on the positive and reduce the negative.

The way employee voice and silence are received in organisations, and the negative secondary factors that play a role in whether or not employees voice their opinions should be identified and addressed. Furthermore, organisations can also encourage the act of positive employee voice as opposed to silence by focusing on how management and leadership approaches, communication channels, workplace relations, work climates, organisational cultures, status, and support initiatives should be addressed within their organisations to contribute towards enabling this goal (Ali, 2008; Lam et al., 2016; McClean, Burris & Detert, 2013; Morrison, 2014; Wilkinson & Fay, 2011).

Training, coaching, or mentoring programs for leaders and managers should be considered, specifically focusing on reducing maladaptive leadership styles that can contribute to negative states of affective rumination (i.e. leaders encouraging high-stress environments), employee silence, and voice (i.e. leaders provoking anger, fear, and lack of confidence). Where a negative

contribution of communication channels towards affective rumination, employee voice, and silence is perceived, organisational development initiatives can also be considered, such as revising or developing formal communication channels and organisational structures. Workplace relations should also be an important focus, and team-building initiatives, and social or informal gatherings can be encouraged to help build more comfortable and functional relationships between co-workers and management, from where improved employee voice and decreased employee silence can be encouraged. Lastly, organisations can also consider conducting workplace climate and culture surveys (for example the widely used OHFB Workplace Analytics System, Organisational Culture Inventory, Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument), to uncover their unique culture and climate conditions, with interventions focusing on improvement and reducing undesirable states.

When considering all factors mentioned in this research study, it should be clear to organisations that they have to start seeing the importance of identifying and intervening with those elements in their work environment that contribute to dysfunctional states (i.e. affective rumination, employee silence, turnover intention) and those factors in their work environment that can contribute towards more functional and effective states or outcomes (i.e. problem-solving pondering, detachment, employee voice, job satisfaction) should be capitalised and nurtured. Doing so may ultimately contribute towards increased overall organisational functioning, performance, longevity, satisfaction and productivity.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Replicating the study will be important to ensure that results can be used in other contexts, and to eliminate possible biases that may have influenced this research study or sample group (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Therefore, the first recommendation would be to replicate the study within a larger sample of employees, so as to make transferability possible (i.e. to generalise results beyond the sample group of the research study). Furthermore, future research can focus on specific sectors or sample groups when replicating the study. This may contribute towards establishing a more detailed and comprehensive picture of how these factors impact different sample groups, industries, or sectors, as opposed to only a broader depiction of the South African workforce. The need for longitudinal studies to accurately determine cause and effect relationships should also be mentioned, as this study merely represents results obtained within a single point in time.

Future research should also aim to include additional factors within the work environment as part of the study and questionnaire (e.g. leadership styles, communication channels, culture) as this may contribute to a better understanding of how relationships between the research constructs are influenced by other organisational factors. Furthermore, it may be needed to not only study employee voice and employee silence within a broader, general approach, and future research can aim at gaining insight into different forms of employee voice and silence and how they influence the relationships between the research constructs in this study in their respective ways. Future research should also aim to investigate the shadow side of employee voice, as possible adverse organisational factors may play a role in whether employee voice is constructive or destructive in its use. The need to understand the factors influencing employee voice and silence in the workplace and the outcome of opting to engage in silence versus voice is a field that continues to require extensive study.

Lastly, future research may also investigate other possible consequences of functional rumination (problem-solving pondering and detachment) and dysfunctional rumination (affective rumination) and how they are influenced and caused in the workplace. The need for studies on treatment and interventions for employees who engage in dysfunctional ruminative states should also be mentioned, as well as how functional rumination can be used safely and to the benefit of employees and organisations.

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