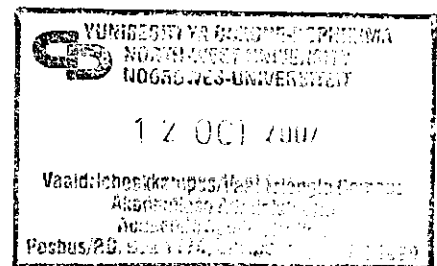


**JOB INSECURITY, AFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL  
COMMITMENT AND GENERAL HEALTH:  
THE ROLE OF WORK LOCUS OF CONTROL**

MAJ Cooks BA (Hons)

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
Magister Artium in Industrial Psychology in the School of Behavioural Sciences at the  
Vaal Triangle campus of the North-West University.

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## **REMARKS**

The reader is reminded of the following:

Referencing and editorial style, as prescribed by the Publication Manual (*5<sup>th</sup> edition*) of the American Psychological Association (APA), were followed in this dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the programme in Industrial Psychology at the North-West University.

The mini-dissertation is submitted as a research article.

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## SUMMARY

**Title** Job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, and general health: the role of work locus of control

**Key words** Job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, general health, work locus of control.

Due to constant changes and demands from external forces/markets, today's employees are subjected to continuous change in the workplace in order for organisations to stay competitive. Changes include restructuring, downsizing, technological changes and so forth, which result in employees feeling less secure in their jobs compared to employees a few decades ago. This insecurity is a reality in the lives of employees and leads to a whole range of emotions and reactions toward these changes.

The primary objectives of this research is to determine the nature of the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment, and also the nature of the relationship between job insecurity and the general health of employees in a specific petro-chemical organisation (N = 229). The final objective is to determine if work locus of control plays a mediating role in the above mentioned relationships. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. Constructs were measured using the following: the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ), the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) [where only the affective subscale was interpreted], the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), the Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) as well as a biographical questionnaire.

Results indicated that a practically significant relationship of medium effect exists between job insecurity (both dimensions) and work locus of control, and also a practically significant negative relationship between job insecurity (cognitive subscale) and affective organisational commitment and between affective organisational commitment with work locus of control. No other practically significant relationships were found, although the relationship between the variables did prove to be statistically significant.

Regression analysis confirmed that work locus of control fully mediate the relationship between affective job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and also between affective job insecurity with general health, whilst partial mediation by work locus of control was found between cognitive job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and cognitive job insecurity and general health. Conclusions and recommendations were made.

## OPSOMMING

**Titel** Werksonsekerheid, affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid en algemene gesondheid: die rol van werkslokus van beheer.

**Sleutelwoorde** Werksonsekerheid, affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid, algemene gesondheid, werkslokus van beheer.

Eksterne magte/markte plaas deurlopend druk op organisasies om kompetend te bly – dit lei daartoe dat werknemers onderwerp word aan voortdurende veranderinge. Hierdie veranderinge, wat herstrukturering, vermindering van personeel en tegnologiese veranderinge insluit, het tot gevolg dat werknemers nie langer werksekerheid ervaar nie. Hierdie werksonsekerheid lei weer tot 'n reeks emosies en reaksies teenoor verandering.

Die primêre doelwit met hierdie studie is om die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid, asook die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid en algemene gesondheid, binne 'n spesifieke petro-chemiese organisasie (N = 229) te toets. Daar is ook gepoog om vas te stel of werkslokus van beheer 'n mediërende invloed op bogenoemde verhoudings uitoefen. 'n Dwarsnecopname-ontwerp is tydens die navorsing gebruik. Konstrukte is gemeet deur gebruik te maak van die Werksonsekerheidsvraelys (JIQ), die Organisasoriese Betrokkenheidvraelys (OCQ) [waar die affektiewe subskaal gebruik is], die Algemene Gesondheidsvraelys (GHQ), die Werkslokus van Beheer Skaal (WLCS) asook 'n biografiese vraelys.

Alle veranderlikes was statisties beduidend, terwyl slegs 'n praktiese beduidenheid van medium effek tussen werksonsekerheid (altwee subskale) en werkslokus van beheer gevind is. 'n Negatiewe praktiese beduidenheid van medium effek is gevind tussen affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid met werkslokus van beheer en ook met die kognitiewe subskaal van werksonsekerheid. Regressie-analises bevestig 'n volle mediërende invloed van werkslokus van beheer op die verhouding tussen affektiewe werksonsekerheid met affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid en ook op die verhouding tussen affektiewe werksonsekerheid en algemene gesondheid. Gedeeltelike mediërende invloed van werkslokus van beheer op die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid (kognitiewe subskaal) en affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid, en ook op die verhouding tussen werksonsekerheid (kognitiewe subskaal) en algemene gesondheid is ook bevestig. Gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings is gemaak.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This article relates to job insecurity, affective organisational commitment and general health: the role of work locus of control.

### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

A persistent issue in the workplace has been that of change and the degree to which workers feel less secure in their jobs compared to workers a few decades ago (Blyton & Bacon, 2001). Organisations have to engage in downsizing and restructuring in order to remain competitive in harsh economic conditions and thus emphasise the fact that job insecurity is a reality (Labuschagne, Bosman, & Buitendach, 2005). According to Ashford, Lee, and Bobko (1989) this reality creates a lot of emotions such as anxiety, stress and concern specifically with regards to job insecurity in many employees who trust that they have good reason to feel this way.

Blyton and Bacon (2001) support this line of reasoning and state that the contemporary workplace no longer offers employees job security while factors such as competitive pressure, unpredictable markets, demanding shareholders, weaker trade unions and changing skill requirements contribute to the belief that the 'jobs for life' era has come to an end.

Thus, **job insecurity** relates to people in their work context who fear they may lose their jobs and become unemployed (De Witte, 1999). Job insecurity is defined by Lee, Colditz, Berkman and Kawachi (2003, p.24) as "an employee's perception of potential threat to continuity in one's current employment, which will lead to psychological stress due to uncertainty about the future". Sverke and Hellgren (2002) explain job insecurity in terms of an employee's negative reaction to changes concerning his/her job. These authors define job insecurity as an individual's expectations about continuity in a job situation, the overall concern about the future existence of the job and the perception of a potential threat to continuity in his/her current job (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001). Job insecurity can therefore be understood as a discrepancy between preferred and experienced security in an employment situation.

In line with the above statements, De Witte (2004) distinguishes between affective/emotional and cognitive job insecurity – cognitive insecurity refers to the perceived likelihood of job loss

and affective job insecurity refers to the fear of job loss. The author continues by saying that the presence of job insecurity has the potential of being more distressing to the individual than job loss. Job loss is already known and the individual has to come to terms with the loss and cope with its outcomes.

Taking the above definitions into consideration, the researcher regards job insecurity as an event in which individuals experience uncertainty and fear concerning their employment situation due to various changes faced by the organisation. This uncertainty then acts as a stressor, causing the employee to possibly experience feelings of anxiety and stress. Job insecurity is linked to the individual's cognitive attributions, which is the belief that they will lose their jobs; and affective attributions, which are the feelings that they will experience when losing continuity in their jobs.

This stressor is explained in Katz and Kahn's (1978) original model where stress is viewed as being part of a process originating in the interaction between individuals and their environment. The model indicates the variation between the individual's evaluation of the situation and their immediate reaction to the situation. Evaluation and reaction differ among individuals due to gender, age, personality and socialisation with important people and other groups in the environment. According to the attribution theory, life events will have different impacts upon a person depending upon what they perceive to be the cause of the event (their attributions). For example, a person may feel differently about becoming unemployed in times of a recession when many others are unemployed and their situation can be attributed to external factors beyond their control. These people may feel anger or frustration, while someone who attributed their unemployment to their own personal characteristics or efforts may feel a loss of self-esteem (Dockery, 2004). Given the negative emotions surrounding job insecurity, the researcher feels that it is therefore necessary to address these emotions where possible.

In these uncertain times, it is important to determine to what degree employees experience job insecurity and how it influences employees' level of **organisational commitment**. Organisational commitment is described by Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005, p.38) in that "there are decreased levels of organizational commitment, and an increased intention to leave the organization". This is in line with Perry (2004) who said that employees are beginning to change their view with regard to the organisations they are working for. The author explains that the bond between employees and organisations are growing weaker. Morales (2004, p.7) supports this statement when saying "that to say there is an institutionalized system of organization, is to say that members are able to find credibility and meaning in their organizational surrounding.

This does not require that they like the policies, rules and processes around them, only that these organizational events be meaningful for them. If this is not the case, the relationship will deteriorate”.

Becker (1960), (as cited in Morales, 2004) one of the first researchers in organisational commitment, proposes that commitment is primarily a function of individual behaviour; individuals become committed to the organisation through their actions and choices over time. Kanter (1968, p.7), (as cited in Morales, 2004) defines commitment as “the willingness of social actors to give their energy and loyalty to social systems, the attachment of personality systems to social relationships, which are seen as self-expressive”. The third definition, as per Etzioni (1961, p.7), (as cited in Morales, 2004), states that organisational commitment “is the focus on employee compliance with organizational objectives”. When employees have higher levels of commitment to organisational objectives, the organisation will have more authority or power over these same employees.

Organisational commitment can therefore be seen as the extent of an individual's sense of belonging to an organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) propose that there are three major types of organisational commitment:

- \* *Affective Commitment*: In this case, an individual strongly identifies with the goals of the organisation and desires to remain a part of the organisation. This is the ideal 'happy' state for an individual.
- \* *Continuance Commitment*: The individual will stay with an organisation because of a perception that it will be to his benefit because of the time/effort that he has invested in the organisation, e.g. he has learned a certain skill and believe that the time and effort he spend in obtaining this skills will pay off only if he stays with the organisation.
- \* *Normative Commitment*: The individual remains with an organisation because he believes he should.

According to Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993), common to these three types of commitment is the view that commitment is a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation and (b) has implication for the decision to continue or stop membership in the organisation.

Employees with a strong affective commitment remain with an organisation because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they believe they have to, and those with a strong normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to stay.

Looking at the above mentioned statements, job insecurity is a reality in the workplace which, when referring to Katz and Kahn's (1978) model, will lead to stress, thus making it important to determine the relationship between job insecurity and the physical well-being/**general health** of employees. De Witte (1999) reports that job insecurity first of all reduces the well-being of the individual, whilst Cotton and Hart (2003) suggests that stress in the work situation will lead to poor psychological as well as physical health. A study conducted on 600 employees in the UK found lower levels of psychological well-being amongst those who felt insecure about their jobs (De Witte, 1999). From this study, De Witte concludes that insecure employees experienced feelings of distress, anxiety and depression as well as an increase in the use of medical services. Lee et al. (2003, p.24) declare that there is "overwhelming evidence to suggest that job loss and unemployment is harmful to the health" of employees. According to the Organisational Health Framework, it is important for organisations to be concerned with the wellbeing of employees if it is linked to outcomes that affect organisational performance (Cotton & Hart, 2003).

Muhonen and Torkelson (2004, p.21) state that "stress can be viewed as a dynamic transactional process where individuals perceive that the demands in the environment exceed their capacity to deal with them". They explain how said stress can lead to different forms of strain, affecting well-being. How an individual will handle this stress is dependent on whether the individual believes that he himself controls the reinforcements through his behaviour or whether external forces will control his behaviour – otherwise known as internal or external **locus of control**.

From a theoretical perspective locus of control is conceptualised in Rotter's (1966) theories of social learning. According to this theory, reinforcement strengthens expectancy that a particular behaviour or event will be associated with a specific reinforcement. Rotter points out that individuals develop certain expectations about the results of their behaviour. The most well-known expectancy style is what is known as locus of control; more specifically the extent to which people perceive an internal or external point of control in their lives (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997). The opinion of De Vos, Buyens and Schalk, (2005) is that, according to Rotter's theory, employees with an internal locus of control will go to greater lengths to control their environment, will seek new information more actively and will use this information better.

Näswall et al. (2005) reported that there are only a few studies done to determine the role, if any, that locus of control plays with regard to wellbeing and job insecurity. Bosman and Buitendach (2005) explain that work locus of control can be described as the belief that employees have that there is a relationship between how they behave versus the results (whether it be reward or punishment). Work locus of control can also be divided into the two components being internal and external locus. With internal locus of control employees believe that they can influence the results through their personal effort, ability and initiative, whereas employees who have an external locus of control believe that forces outside of their control (e.g. other people, social structures, luck or fate) dictate the outcomes (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005).

In a study done by Spector, Cooper, Sanchez, O'Driscoll, and Sparks (2002), it was reported that people growing up in collectivistic countries (where personal control is sub-ordinate to what the government wants), as opposed to individualistic countries (where children are encouraged to think for themselves), had more of an external locus of control. People growing up in an individualistic environment is perceived by Spector et al. (2002) as having an advantage as they are challenged to have an internal locus of control.

Muhonen and Torkelson (2004) believe that work locus of control can change as a result of new learnings or new situations. If learnings can thus be learned, it can be unlearned which makes it worthwhile to determine whether **work locus of control** plays a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity with affective organisational commitment and also with general health. Baron and Kenny (1986, p.1176) define mediators as “a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion. Mediators explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance”.

In conclusion, it is clear that job insecurity and its impact on organisations and the workforce is a reality not only in this specific petro-chemical organisation, but throughout South Africa and also in a global context. Although a lot of research has been done concerning job insecurity, organisational commitment and general health, few if any studies have been done to determine if work locus of control is playing a mediating role in these relationships, therefore the researcher is of the opinion that it would be to the benefit of organisations and employees to determine if this is indeed the case. If work locus of control is a learned behaviour that is a result of factors such as autonomy, leadership and role stress, the researcher believes that employees with an

external locus of control can be coached, guided and mentored to change these beliefs and to ultimately have an internal locus of control where they can play a more active role in their future. Scott (2007, p.4) explains that it is possible to change from an external locus of control to an internal locus by: “Realize that you always have a choice to change your situation. Even if you don’t like the choices available at the moment, even if the only change you can make is in your attitude, you always have some choices”.

Industrial restructuring, downsizing, technological changes and global competition dramatically changed the nature of work, resulting in the stable, predictable and controlled environment that workers once knew to disappear to a great extent (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). The closing down of various gold mines in South Africa has a direct impact on the specific business unit of the petro-chemical organisation where the research was conducted. The demand from gold mines for a specific product, supplied by this business unit, has declined leading to a reduced supply. This reduced supply will, in the near future, most probably lead to the closing down of certain areas of this business unit – thus affecting the employee numbers. Transfers, redeployment and early pension are therefore a reality to all employees working in this business unit which ultimately may lead to retrenchments if all other avenues are exhausted.

The information obtained in this study can be of value when restructuring or downsizing occurs, or it can be used to implement interventions combating the emotions experienced when job insecurity is experienced.

Based on the above, the following research questions are identified:

- \* How are job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, general health and work locus of control conceptualised in theory?
- \* What is the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation?
- \* What is the relationship between job insecurity and general health of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation?
- \* Does work locus of control mediate the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment, and between job insecurity and general health?

## **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of this research is determining the relationship between job insecurity, affective organisational commitment and general health – and the mediating role of work locus of control in these relationships.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objective**

- \* To theoretically conceptualise job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, general health and work locus of control;
- \* To determine the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation;
- \* To determine the relationship between job insecurity and general health of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation;
- \* To determine if work locus of control mediates the relationship between job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, and between job insecurity and general health.

## **1.3 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF RESEARCH**

Mouton and Marais (1992) believe that a specific paradigm perspective, that includes both the intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources, directs all research.

### **1.3.1 Intellectual climate**

The intellectual climate refers to the variety of non-epistemological convictions that are authorised by a discipline in a specific period. They are convictions, values and assumptions that are not directly connected to the epistemological aims of the specific research practice (Mouton & Marais, 1992). Although these convictions are often not directly testable (or even meant to be testable), it does propose underlying testable judgements. In order to determine the intellectual climate of the research, the disciplinary relevance and meta-theoretical assumptions are discussed.

### **1.3.2 Discipline**

This research can be categorised within the limits of the behavioural sciences and more specifically Industrial Psychology. Industrial Psychology can be described as the study of human behaviour within an organisation with its primary function being to obtain a better understanding regarding the relationship between employees and their work thus improving the situation wherever and whenever possible (Louw & Edwards, 1998). Industrial Psychology attempts to apply psychological results and methods to aid workers and organisations (Wikipedia, 2007).

The sub-discipline of Industrial Psychology focused on in this research is Personnel Psychology. This sub-discipline focuses on “the study of the individual’s characteristics and on differences between people in order to judge, understand, explain and predict behaviour of one’s fellow human beings” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997, p.5).

### **1.3.3 Meta-theoretical assumptions**

Paradigms relevant to this research are, firstly, a literature review, which is done within the humanistic paradigm and, secondly, an empirical study which is done within the behaviouristic paradigm.

#### **1.3.3.1 Literature review**

The literature review is done within the humanistic paradigm. According to Bergh and Theron (2004), the humanistic approach is not based on one single theory but is made up of various theories within the phenomenological, existential and self theories. Compared to other personality theories these are really not personality theories but rather idealistic ideas about how people exist and find meaning in life. The humanist paradigm is a school of thought which emphasises self-actualisation and a striving for the accomplishment of joy, love, positiveness, health and creativity.

This approach is against the view that individuals can evolve toward fully functioning or self-actualised people, or to live meaningfully without necessarily being enslaved by circumstances. Some of the main assumptions therein include the notions that humans are inherently good, have a free will and therefore not all behaviour is determined, and that individuals are unique and have an inherent drive to achieve their potential.

### **1.3.3.2 Empirical study**

The empirical study is done within the behaviouristic paradigm – defined by Grohol (2005, p.1) as “an approach to psychology based on the proposition that behaviour can be researched scientifically without recourse to inner mental states. It is a form of materialism, denying any independent significance for mind. Its significance for psychological treatment has been profound, making it one of the pillars of pharmacological therapy”.

One of the assumptions of behaviourist thought is that free will is illusory, and that all behaviour is determined by the environment, either through association or reinforcement (Grohol, 2005).

This behaviourist school of thought ran simultaneously with the psychoanalysis movement in psychology which was mainly influenced by: I.P. Pavlov, who investigated classical conditioning; J.B. Watson, who rejected introspective methods and strived to restrict psychology to experimental laboratory methods; and Skinner, who wanted to give ethical grounding to behaviourism, relating it to simplicity (Grohol, 2005).

In this research the behaviouristic paradigm is relevant to the training and interventions in interpersonal effectiveness.

### **1.3.4 Market of intellectual resources**

The market of intellectual resources refers to the assumption of epistemological status as scientific hypothesis, in other words, with their status as knowledge-claims (Mouton & Marais, 1992). It is furthermore divided into theoretical and methodological beliefs.

#### **1.3.4.1 Theoretical beliefs**

Theoretical beliefs can be described as all beliefs that produce testable results regarding social phenomena (Mouton & Marais, 1992). The following theoretical hypotheses serve as starting point for this research and are divided into conceptual definitions and models and theories.

##### **a. Conceptual definitions**

The relevant conceptual definitions are given below:

**Job Insecurity** relates, according to De Witte (1999), to people in their work context who fear they may lose their jobs and become unemployed. The author distinguishes between affective/emotional and cognitive job insecurity – where cognitive insecurity refers to the perceived likelihood of job loss and affective job insecurity refers to the fear of job loss. Lee, et al. (2003, p.24) define job insecurity shortly as “an employee’s perception of potential threat to continuity in one’s current employment, which will lead to psychological stress due to uncertainty about the future”. Therefore, job insecurity is a discrepancy between preferred and experienced security in an employment situation.

**Organisational commitment** can be described as the extent of an individual's sense of belonging to an organisation. Although Allen and Meyer (1990) propose three major types of organisational commitment, the focus during this research is only on affective organisational commitment which entails individuals who strongly identify with the goals of the organisation and desire to remain a part of the organisation. This is the ideal 'happy' state for an individual.

**General health**, according to De Witte (1999), is reduced by job insecurity, whilst Cotton and Hart (2003) suggests that stress in the work situation due to changes will lead to poor psychological as well as physical health. According to the Organisational Health Framework, it is important for organisations to be concerned with the wellbeing of employees if it is linked to outcomes that affect organisational performance (Cotton & Hart, 2003). Job insecure employees experience feelings of distress, anxiety and depression as well as an increase in the use of medical services (De Witte, 1999).

**Work locus of control** is explained by Bosman and Buitendach (2005) as employees’ beliefs that there is a relationship between how they behave versus results, whether it is reward or punishment. Locus of control can therefore be divided into two components; internal and external locus. With internal locus of control, employees believe that they can influence the results through personal effort, ability and initiative, whereas employees who have an external locus believe that forces outside of their control (e.g. other people, social structures, luck or fate) dictate the outcomes (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005).

## **b. Models and theories**

According to Mouton and Marais (1992), a model aims to show a simplified illustration of relationships between the main components of a process. It does not only classify phenomena,

but also tries to put in order the relationships among them. Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p.11) defines a theory as “a set of interrelated constructs of concepts, definitions and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena”.

#### **1.3.4.2 Methodological beliefs**

Methodological beliefs can be defined as beliefs that make judgements as to the nature and structure of science and scientific research (Mouton & Marais, 1992). This includes scientific-philosophical traditions and important methodological models (both qualitative and quantitative). A quantitative approach is followed to gather data on behavioural changes in participants. Measuring instruments used for this are: the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ), the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and the Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS). The data will be quantitatively interpreted by means of statistical analysis.

### **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method will consist of a literature review and an empirical study. The article option will be followed in this study.

#### **1.4.1 Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the objectives. Use was also made of a correlation design (as explained by Huysamen, 1993). This design was used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zachmeister (1997), this design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is both predictive and descriptive by nature.

#### **1.4.2 Study Population**

The total population of 360 in a specific business unit within the petro-chemical organisation was used. The population includes workers from different levels (i.e. ranging from semi-skilled

to professional level). The lowest skilled level employees have a level of literacy adequate enough to allow for valid completion of questionnaires.

### **1.4.3 Measuring battery**

The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) (De Witte, 2000), the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Allen & Meyer, 1990), the Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS) (Spector, 1988), and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) were used in this study.

- ***Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)***

The 11-items of the Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) of De Witte (2000) were used as a measure of job insecurity, summarising both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along a five-point scale, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 representing strong agreement. An example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be “I think that I will be able to continue working here”, whereas an example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be “I fear that I might lose my job”. The items of the JIQ measuring global job insecurity, are reported to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 and both scales (cognitive and affective) were shown to be highly reliable; the six items measuring cognitive job insecurity displayed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,90 whilst the five items measuring affective job insecurity displayed a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte (2000), the content of these two scales do not overlap, but nevertheless have a high underlying correlation ( $r = 0,76$ ).

In terms of South African research, Heymans (2002) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,81 for the JIQ whilst Viljoen, Bosman and Buitendach (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,82. Bosman, Rothmann and Buitendach (2005) reports alpha coefficients of 0,70 on the cognitive subscale and 0,72 on the affective job insecurity subscale.

- ***Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)***

The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) of Allen and Meyer (1990) consists of 18 questions and is answered using a 5 point scale varying from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. An example of a question relating to affective commitment would be “I would be very

happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation” while an example of continuance commitment would be “It would be very hard for me to leave the organisation right now, even if I wanted to”. Lastly, an example of normative commitment would be “My organisation deserves my loyalty”.

Questions determined outcomes on a total score for organisational commitment, as well as for three subscales (affective, continuance and normative). In the South African context, McDonald and Makin (2000) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,84, whilst Heymans (2002) reported a reliability coefficient of: total score = 0,80; affective scale = 0,69; continuance scale = 0,53 and normative scale = 0,74.

- ***Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS)***

The Work Locus of Control Scale of Spector (1988) consists of 16 items and was used to measure work locus of control within the work environment. Statements, varying from “A job is what you make of it” to “It takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee on most jobs”, has to be answered by participants making use of a 6-point scale (varying from 1 = disagree very much to 6 = agree very much). Botha and Pienaar (2006) report alpha coefficients of 0,73 for the internal locus of control subscale and 0,73 for the external locus of control subscale, whilst Bosman and Buitendach (2005) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,82.

- ***General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)***

The General Health Questionnaire of Goldberg and Hillier (1979) was used to measure psychological well-being. For the purpose of this study the twenty-eight-item version was used. Responses were given on a four-point scale. Four subscales measure the degree of somatic symptoms; anxiety and insomnia; social dysfunction and severe depression. An example of a question measuring somatic symptoms would be “Been getting any pains in your head?”, whereas an example of a question measuring anxiety/insomnia would be “Had difficulty in staying asleep once you are off?” A question measuring social dysfunction is “Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?”, whilst a question to measure severe depression would be “Felt that life isn’t worth living?”

A high value on the GHQ is indicative of a high level of psychological distress; whereas a low score implies a low level of psychological distress; in other words indicating a high level of

psychological well-being. Isaksson and Johansson (2000) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,86 for the GHQ.

In terms of South African research, Oosthuizen (2001) reported a reliability coefficient of 0,89 for the GHQ whilst Viljoen, Bosman and Buitendach, (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,71 (somatic symptoms), 0,79 (anxiety and insomnia), 0,74 (social dysfunction) and 0,80 for the severe depression subscale of the GHQ.

#### **1.4.4 Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS programme (SPSS Inc, 2003), making use of descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha and inter-item correlation coefficients, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis.

Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlation coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring items (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to describe the data.

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to specify the relationship between variables. The level of statistical significance will be set at  $p < 0,01$ . Effect sizes were used to assess the practical significance of relationships in this study. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Cohen, 1988), was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analysis was carried out to determine if work locus of control acts as a mediator in the relationship between job insecurity with that of affective organisational commitment and general health. A correlation can be better understood by determining  $R^2$  (Cohen, 1988), where the square of the correlation coefficient indicates the proportion of variance in any two variables – which is predicted by variance in the other to test for mediation.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 2 deals with the relationship between job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, general health and the mediating role of work locus of control of employees in a petro-chemical organisation between job insecurity and affective commitment as well as on job

insecurity and general health. Chapter 3 provides conclusions regarding research objectives, discuss the limitations of this research, and makes recommendations for the organisation as well as for future research.

## **1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 provided a discussion of the problem statement and various research objectives. An explanation regarding the measuring instruments and research method was given, followed by a brief overview of the chapters to follow.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# **JOB INSECURITY, AFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND GENERAL HEALTH: THE ROLE OF WORK LOCUS OF CONTROL.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The primary objective of this research was to examine the relationship between job insecurity (cognitive and affective), affective organisational commitment, general health and the mediating role of work locus of control. The measuring instruments that were used were the JIQ, the OCQ, the GHQ, and the WLCS. A cross-sectional survey design was conducted amongst 360 employees at a petro-chemical organisation, with 229 responses received. Results were statistically significant, whilst the only practical significant relationship of medium effect found was between both job insecurity dimensions and work locus of control, as well as negative practically significant relationships of medium effect between affective organisational commitment with work locus and also with the cognitive job insecurity subscale. Work locus of control was found to be a partial mediator between cognitive job insecurity with affective organisational commitment as well as between cognitive job insecurity with general health, whilst work locus of control was found to be a full mediator between affective job insecurity with affective organisational commitment as well as between affective job insecurity with general health.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die hoofdoelstelling van hierdie navorsing was om die verband tussen werksonsekerheid (kognitief en affektief), affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid, algemene gesondheid met werkslokus van beheer as mediërende faktor te bestudeer. Die meetinstrumente wat gebruik was, is die JIQ, die OCQ, die WLCS en die GHQ. 'n Dwarsneeopname-ontwerp was gebruik. Deelnemers in die navorsing was 360 werknemers van 'n petro-chemiese organisasie met 'n responskoers van 229. Alle resultate was statisties beduidend, terwyl daar slegs 'n praktiese beduidenheid van medium effek tussen werksonsekerheid (altwee subskale) en werkslokus van beheer gevind. 'n Negatiewe praktiese beduidenheid van medium effek is gevind tussen affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid met werkslokus van beheer en ook met die kognitiewe subskaal van werksonsekerheid. 'n Volle mediërende invloed van werkslokus van beheer is gevind op die verhouding tussen affektiewe werksonsekerheid met affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid en ook met algemene gesondheid. Gedeeltelike mediërende invloed van werkslokus van beheer is gevind by die verhouding tussen kognitiewe werksonsekerheid en affektiewe organisatoriese betrokkenheid, en ook met algemene gesondheid.

The past decades have witnessed a strong and intense pressure for organisational change globally. Reasons for these changes include new information technology and intensified global competition (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001). According to these authors, said changes resulted in organisations having to engage in downsizing and restructuring in order to remain competitive in the harsh conditions which in turn lead to job insecurity becoming and remaining a reality for most employees. De Witte (2005, p.1) agrees when stating that the fact that job insecurity is so wide-spread “is hardly surprising as job insecurity became a sizeable social phenomenon caused by fundamental changes in the economic system”. Ashford, Lee and Bobko (1989) believe that job insecurity has a wider impact on employees because it creates a lot of emotions such as anxiety, stress and concern in these employees. De Witte (2005) also notes that job insecurity leads to a decrease in workers well-being, which is substantiated by a study conducted by the University of Cambridge in which it is revealed that a significant correlation exists between job insecurity and poor health. This study showed that people do not adjust to job insecurity, but on the contrary, physical and mental well-being continues to deteriorate the longer employees remain in a state of insecurity ([www.laboreducator.org](http://www.laboreducator.org)). Job insecurity can according to Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) influence employees’ sense of belonging to an organisation when they state that organisational commitment has the potential to predict organisational outcomes such as performance, turnover, absenteeism, tenure and organisational goals. Uncommitted people working for an organisation would surely not enhance profit, wellbeing and strengths in their organisation.

**Job insecurity** “does not necessarily lead to unemployment, thus the job-insecure population may be considerably larger than the number of employees who actually loses their jobs” (De Witte, 2005, p.2). For the purpose of this research two dimensions of job insecurity are distinguished being affective/emotional and cognitive, where cognitive job insecurity refers to the perceived likelihood of job loss and affective job insecurity refers to the fear of job loss (De Witte, 2004). Job insecurity can therefore be seen as a discrepancy between preferred and experienced security in an employment situation (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001).

Taking the above definitions into consideration, the researcher regards job insecurity as a belief individuals hold when they experience uncertainty and fear concerning their employment situation. This insecurity they experience is attributed to the individual's cognitive attributions, which are the belief that they will lose their jobs; and/or affective attributions, which are the

feelings that they experience when losing continuity in their jobs. This uncertainty then acts as a stressor, causing the employee to possibly experience feelings of anxiety and stress.

This stressor is explained in Katz and Kahn's (1978) original model where stress is viewed as being part of a process originating in the interaction between the individual and their environment. The model indicates the variation between the individual's evaluation of the situation and their immediate reaction to the situation. Evaluation and reaction differ among individuals due to gender, age, personality and their socialisation with important people and other groups in the environment. According to the attribution theory, life events will have different impacts upon a person depending upon what they perceive to be the cause of the event (their attributions). For example, a person may feel differently about becoming unemployed in times of a recession when many others are unemployed and their situation can be attributed to external factors beyond their control. These people may feel anger or frustration, whilst someone who attributed their unemployment to their own personal characteristics or efforts may feel a loss of self-esteem (Dockery, 2004). Given the negative emotions surrounding job insecurity, the researcher feels that it is therefore necessary to address these emotions from surfacing where possible.

As stated previously, job insecurity is to a large extent a reality worldwide, therefore making it worthwhile to determine whether these uncertain circumstances in which people are working, has an effect on **organisational commitment**. Perry (2004) states that employees are beginning to change their view with regard to the organisations they are working for, and reported that the bond between employees and organisations are growing weaker. Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005, p.38) supports this when expressing that: "there is decreased levels of organizational commitment, and an increased intention to leave the organization".

Organisational commitment can be seen as the extent of an individual's sense of belonging to an organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) propose that there are three major types of organisational commitment being affective, continuance and normative commitment. For the purpose of this research the relationship if any, between affective organisational commitment with both dimensions of job insecurity (affective and cognitive) will be determined. Affective organisational commitment is defined by Allen and Meyer (1990) as a situation where the individual strongly identifies with the goals of the organisation and desires to remain a part of the organisation. This is the ideal 'happy' state for an individual.

If employees are constantly experiencing feelings of job insecurity which may according to Katz and Kahn's model, lead to stress, it is also important to determine the relationship between job insecurity and the physical well-being/**general health** of employees. Lee, Colditz, Berkman and Kawachi (2003, p.24) declare that there is "overwhelming evidence to suggest that job loss and unemployment is harmful to the health of employees", whilst Cotton and Hart (2003) suggests that stress in the work situation will lead to poor psychological as well as physical health. According to the Organisational Health Framework, it is important for organisations to be concerned with the wellbeing of employees if it is linked to outcomes that affect organisational performance (Cotton & Hart, 2003). Furthermore a finding by Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfield and Smith (1998, p.156) is that "job insecurity or anticipation of job loss is a health risk for a wide range of conditions, including impaired self-related health, physical symptomatology, lowered quality of sleep, heightened rate of sickness absence and ischemic heart disease".

Muhonen and Torkelson (2004, p.21) believe that "stress can be viewed as a dynamic transactional process where individuals perceive that the demands in the environment exceed their capacity to deal with them", which will have an impact on their well-being. Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005) report that there are only a few studies done to determine the role, if any, that **locus of control** plays with regard to wellbeing and job insecurity. How an individual will handle this stress is dependent on whether the individual has an internal or external locus of control. With internal locus of control the believe is that a person can influence outcomes positively because of their personal effort, ability and initiative whereas a person who has an external locus believe that forces outside of their control e.g. other people, social structures, luck or fate dictates the outcomes (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005).

From a theoretical perspective, locus of control is conceptualised in Rotter's theory (1966) of social learning. According to this theory a reinforcement strengthens an expectancy that a particular behaviour or event will be associated with a specific reinforcement. Rotter points out those individuals develop certain expectations about the results of their behaviour. The most well-known expectancy style is what is known as locus of control, more specifically the extent to which people perceive an internal or external point of control in their lives (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 1997). According to De Vos, et al. (2005) when taking Rotter's theory into consideration, employees with an internal locus of control will go to greater lengths to control their environment, will seek new information more actively and use this information better. In a study done by Spector, Cooper, Sanchez, O'Driscoll, and Sparks (2002) it was reported that

people growing up in individualistic countries (where children are encouraged to think for themselves) rather than a collectivistic country (where personal control is sub-ordinate to what the government demands), the latter had much more of an external locus of control than the first. For people growing up in an individualistic environment, it is according to the authors perceived to have poor judgement when one has an external locus of control.

The focus of this study is on work locus of control which is explained by Bosman and Buitendach (2005) as the belief that employees have that there is a relationship between how they behave vs the results, whether it being reward or punishment. Spector (1988) developed the Work Locus of Control Scale which focused on constructs such as general locus of control, social desirability, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, autonomy, perceived influence, leadership and role stress. The believe that Spector (1988) held after compiling this scale is that employees with internal work locus of control will perform better in a work situation as they believe in themselves and their abilities and will therefore experience higher levels of job security. Locus of control especially in the workplace has been linked successfully to employee well-being (Spector, et al, 2002). According to Muhonen and Torkelson (2004) work locus of control can change as a result of new learnings or new situations. If this is indeed the case, it would be value adding to determine whether **work locus of control** plays a mediating role in the abovementioned relationships as the results could assist management to determine what interventions to introduce when job insecurity is experienced. Baron and Kenny, (1986, p.1176) explains mediators in general as “a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion. Mediators explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance”.

In summary it is clear that job insecurity and its impact on organisations and the workforce is a reality not only in the above mentioned petro-chemical organisation, but in the South African context as well as globally. Research has been done around job insecurity, affective organisational commitment and general health, but few if any research could be found where the mediating role of work locus of control was determined with respect to affective organisational commitment and general health, therefore leading to the objective of this research which was to determine the relationship between job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, and general health with work locus of control as a mediator.

If work locus of control is indeed a learned behaviour that is a result of factors such as autonomy, leadership, and role stress, the researcher believes that employees with an external

locus of control can be coached, guided and mentored to change these beliefs and to ultimately have an internal locus of control. Scott (2007, p.4) explains that it is possible to change from an external locus of control to an internal locus by: “Realize that you always have a choice to change your situation. Even if you don’t like the choices available at the moment, even if the only change you can make is in your attitude, you always have some choices”.

Industrial restructuring, downsizing, technological change and global competition dramatically changed the nature of work, resulting in the once stable, predictable and controlled environment that workers once knew to disappear to a great extent. (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Combine this with the closing down of various gold mines in South Africa, which resulted in a decline in the demand of a specific product that the business unit of the petro-chemical organisation where the research was conducted supplies, and a clear picture rises of the uncertainty around job security that these employees are experiencing. Possibilities facing these employees are probable closing down of certain areas of this business unit affecting employee numbers, transfers, redeployment or early pension or even worse that if these possibilities are no longer an option, ultimately retrenchments will become a reality.

The information obtained in this study can be of value when downsizing in the form of early pension, retrenchments or transfers occur, or to implement interventions to combat the emotions experienced during these difficult times.

**Based on the above, the following hypothesis are identified:**

- ☞ How are job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, general health and work locus of control conceptualised in theory?
- ☞ What is the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation;
- ☞ What is the relationship between job insecurity and general health of employees in a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation;
- ☞ Does work locus of control mediate the relationship between job insecurity (affective and cognitive), affective organisational commitment, and general health?

## **AIM OF THE STUDY**

The general objective of this research is to determine the relationship between job insecurity (affective and cognitive), affective organisational commitment, general health and whether work locus of control plays a mediating role in these relationships at a specific business unit of a petro-chemical organisation.

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used to reach the objectives. Use was also made of a correlation design (Huysamen, 1993). This design was used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zachmeister, (1997), this design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive by nature.

### **Study population**

The total population of 360 employees of a specific business unit of the petro-chemical organisation was used whilst 229 participants completed the questionnaires.

The population includes workers from different levels, i.e. ranging from semi-skilled employees to professional employees. The aim was to include participants from all the different sections e.g. Marketing, Process, Engineering/Maintenance, Financial, and Human Resources of the business unit to get as complete a picture as possible. The lowest skilled level employees have a level of literacy adequate to allow for valid completion of questionnaires. Biographical information such as age, qualifications, gender, marital status, home language and tenure was also shared by the participants.

The aim of the research was explained to all the participants during arranged sessions with all, as well as the fact that participation was voluntary. Enough time was given to all the participants to complete and return the questionnaires.

The biographical characteristics of the study population are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Compilation of the Study Population (n = 229)*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger than 25	43	18,8
	26 –44 years	114	49,8
	45+ years	72	31,4
	Total	229	
Qualifications	Up to Gr 12	141	61,5
	Diploma/s	54	23,5
	Degree/s	34	14,8
	Total	229	
Gender	Male	173	75,6
	Female	56	24,4
	Total	229	
Marital status	Single	100	43,7
	Married	129	56,3
	Total	229	
Home language	Afrikaans	116	50,7
	English	40	17,5
	Other	73	31,9
	Total	229	
Tenure	Less than 2 years	54	23,5
	3 – 14 years	90	39,3
	15– 24 years	43	18,7
	More than 25 years	42	18,3
	Total	229	

Employees in the age group 26 – 44 years represented 49,8% of the study population, whilst 18,8% fell in the younger than 25 years age group. Results indicated that 61,5% had a secondary qualification (Grade 12 and below) whilst only 14,8% indicated that they had degrees. With respect to gender, 75% were male, and 56,3% of the participants indicated that they were married. Afrikaans-speaking participants represented 50,7% of the study population, 17,5% were English-speaking and 31,9% fell in the “other” category with regard to language. With regard to the tenure of the participants, 39,3% fell in the 3 – 14 years of service category.

### Measuring battery

The Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ) (De Witte, 2000), the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Allen and Meyer, 1990), the Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS)

(Spector, 1988) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) were used in this study.

- ***Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)***

The 11 items of the *Job Insecurity Questionnaire (JIQ)* of De Witte, (2000), was used as a measure of job insecurity, summarising both the cognitive and affective dimensions of job insecurity and are arranged along a five-point scale, with one being "*strongly disagree*" and five representing strong agreement. An example of a question relating to cognitive job insecurity would be, "I think that I will be able to continue working here", whereas an example of a question relating to affective job insecurity would be, "I fear that I might lose my job". The items of the JIQ, measuring global job insecurity are reported to have a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 and both scales (cognitive and affective) were shown to be highly reliable, with the six items measuring cognitive job insecurity, displaying a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,90; and the five items of the affective job insecurity having a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 (De Witte, 2000). According to De Witte (2000) the content of these two scales do not overlap, but nevertheless have a high underlying correlation ( $r = 0,76$ ). In terms of South African research, Heymans (2002) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,81 for the JII whilst Viljoen, Bosman and Buitendach (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,82. Bosman, Rothmann and Buitendach report alpha coefficients of 0,70 for the cognitive subscale and 0,72 for the affective job insecurity subscale.

- ***Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)***

The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) of Allen and Meyer (1990) consists of 18 questions and was answered using a 5 point scale varying from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. An example of a question relating to affective commitment would be, "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation", an example of continuance commitment is, "It would be very hard for me to leave the organisation right now, even if I wanted to" and an example of normative commitment would be, "My organisation deserves my loyalty". Questions determined outcomes for a total score for organizational commitment as well as for the three subscales namely: Affective, Continuance and Normative. For the purpose of this research only the affective scale was used. Heymans (2002) in a South African study reported a reliability coefficient of 0,69 for said scale.

- ***Work Locus of Control Scale (WLCS)***

The Work Locus of Control Scale (Spector, 1988) consists of 16 items and was used to measure locus of control within the work environment. Questions vary from: “A job is what you make of it” to, “It takes a lot of luck to be an outstanding employee on most jobs”, which participants must answer making use of a 6-point scale varying from 1 = disagree very much to 6 = agree very much. Botha and Pienaar (2006) report alpha coefficients of 0,73 for the internal locus of control subscale and 0,73 for the external locus of control subscale, whilst Bosman and Buitendach (2005) reported an alpha coefficient of 0,82.

- ***The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)***

The General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) was used to measure psychological well-being. For the purpose of this study the twenty-eight-item version was used. Responses were given on a four-point scale. Four subscales measure the degree of somatic symptoms; anxiety and insomnia; social dysfunction and severe depression. An example of a question measuring somatic symptoms would be: “Been getting any pains in your head?”, whereas an example of a question measuring anxiety/insomnia would be: “Had difficulty in staying asleep once you are off?” A question measuring social dysfunction is: “Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?”, whilst a question to measure severe depression would be: “Felt that life isn’t worth living?”

A high value on the GHQ is indicative of a high level of psychological distress; where as a low score implies a low level of psychological distress, in other words indicating a high level of psychological well-being. Isaksson and Johansson (2000) reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,86 for the GHQ. In terms of South African research, Oosthuizen (2001) reported a reliability coefficient of 0,89 for the GHQ whilst Viljoen, Bosman and Buitendach (2005) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,71 (somatic symptoms), 0,79 (anxiety and insomnia), 0,74 (social dysfunction) and 0,80 for the severe depression subscale of the GHQ.

#### **1.4.4 Statistical Analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS programme (SPSS Inc, 2003), making use of descriptive statistics, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, means, inter-item correlation coefficients, Pearson product moment correlation coefficients, and multiple regression analysis.

Cronbach alpha coefficients and inter-item correlation coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring items (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g.

means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to specify the relationship between variables. The level of statistical significance was set at  $p < 0,01$ . Effect sizes were used to assess the practical significance of relationships in this study. A cut-off point of 0,30 which represent a medium effect (Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analyses were carried out to examine the potential mediating effect of work locus of control in the relationship between job insecurity (affective and cognitive) and affective organisational commitment and general health.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients and Inter-Item Correlation Coefficients for Employees Working at a petro-chemical organisation.*

Test and subscales	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Inter-item r	$\alpha$
JIQ Cognitive job insecurity	229	2,34	0,73	0,15	-0,11	0,41	0,80
JIQ Affective job insecurity	229	2,54	0,79	-0,11	-0,41	0,41	0,77
OCQ Affective Organisational Commitment	229	3,33	0,68	-0,29	-0,06	0,30	0,72
WLCS Work Locus of Control	229	3,01	0,85	0,65	2,72*	0,25	0,83
GHQ – Somatic Symptoms	229	1,10	1,68	1,76*	2,50*	0,37	0,80
GHQ – Anxiety and Insomnia	229	0,82	1,46	1,91*	2,96*	0,33	0,77
GHQ – Social Dysfunction	229	0,86	1,44	2,11*	4,31*	0,31	0,75
GHQ – Severe Depression	229	0,37	1,12	3,81*	15,63*	0,47	0,85

\*High Skewness and Kurtosis

As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the JIQ in this study were 0,80 (cognitive) and 0,77 (affective) respectively; which compares reasonably favourably with De Witte's (2000) reported alpha coefficient of 0,90 for the cognitive scale and 0,85 for the affective scale. The results on the WLCS produced an alpha coefficient of 0,83 comparing satisfactorily to Bosman and Buitendach (2005)'s alpha coefficient of 0,82. Respective Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the GHQ measured at 0,80 (somatic symptoms); 0,77 (anxiety and insomnia); 0,75 (social dysfunction) and 0,85 (severe depression), comparing well with a study done by Viljoen, Buitendach and Bosman (2005) who obtained alpha coefficients of 0,71 (Somatic symptoms), 0,79 (anxiety and insomnia), 0,74 (social dysfunction) and 0,80 (severe depression). For the affective organisational commitment scale a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0,72 was

obtained which is in line with a South African study done by Heymans (2002), who reported an alpha reliability coefficient of 0,69 for the affective organisational commitment scale. All of the inter-item correlation coefficients were acceptable (Clark & Watson, 1995), varying between 0,15 and 0,50.

Stuart and Ord (1994, p.3) explains skewness as “something that is out of line or distorted on one side. When referring to the shape of frequency or probability distributions, “skewness” refers to asymmetry of the distribution. A distribution with an asymmetric tail extending out to the right is referred to as “positively skewed” or “skewed to the right,” while a distribution with an asymmetric tail extending out to the left is referred to as “negatively skewed” or “skewed to the left” and kurtosis as “a measure of how flat the top of a symmetric distribution is when compared to a normal distribution of the same variance”.

When taking these definitions into consideration, scores on all the dimensions of the JIQ and the Affective Organisational Commitment seem to be distributed normally (skewness and kurtosis were smaller than one). Although the skewness for the WLCS falls within the guidelines of smaller than one, kurtosis was reported to be higher. High skewness and kurtosis for all four subscales of the GHQ was found. This does, however, coincide with a study done by Snoer (2005) who also reported fairly high results for said subscales varying from 1,12 (skewness) and 1,22 (kurtosis) for subscale one, to 2,55 (skewness) and 6,50 (kurtosis) for the severe depression subscale.

The JIQ, WLCS, OCQ and GHQ have been used in various international and South African studies (as mentioned above), and have consistently presented with good psychometric properties. Due to the fact that results obtained during this research coincides with previous research and because validity of the constructs does not form part of the research objectives, factor analyses is not reported individually in this article. MANOVA was conducted to determine whether the various demographic groups vary in terms of their job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, work locus of control and general health levels, but no significant differences were found, therefore it is not reported or discussed in this study.

Correlation coefficients were done between the different constructs to determine whether practically significant relationships of either medium or large effect do exist as well as to determine whether the constructs are statistically significant.

Table 3

*Correlation Coefficients between Job Insecurity, Affective Organisational Commitment, General Health and Work Locus of Control*

	OC_Aff	GH_SS	GH_A/I	GH_SD	GH_SDep	WLOC	JI_Cog	JI_Aff
OC_Aff	1							
GH_SS	-0,23*	1						
GH_A/I	-0,0*	0,55*++	1					
GH_SD	-0,25*	0,45*+	0,55*++	1				
GH_SDep	-0,13*	0,37*+	0,60*++	0,59*++	1			
WLOC	-0,36*+	0,14*	0,16*	0,14*	0,19*	1		
JI_Cog	-0,35*+	0,14*	0,27*	0,26*	0,17*	0,46*+	1	
JI_Aff	-0,15*	0,01*	0,22*	0,12*	0,13*	0,36*+	0,78*++	1

\* Statistically significant  $p \leq 0,01$

+ Correlations are practically significantly  $r \geq 0,30$  (medium effect)

++ Correlations are practically significantly  $r \geq 0,50$  (large effect)

Although all of the correlations between the variables were statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), some were of medium and some of large practical significance. From Table 3 it is evident that practically significant negative correlations of medium effect were obtained between affective organisational commitment with work locus of control, as well as between affective commitment and cognitive job insecurity. Work locus of control demonstrated a practically significant positive correlation of medium effect with both the job insecurity subscales. Statistically significant correlations were obtained between both job insecurity subscales and all general health dimensions, as well as between work locus of control and the four general health dimensions. None of these relationships were however practically significant.

Next, regression analyses were done to determine whether job insecurity (affective and cognitive) predicts affective organisational commitment as well as general health and if work locus of control mediates said relationships. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), beta coefficients of different regression analyses must be compared to determine mediation. The following figure illustrates the mediation process as explained by Kenny (2006).

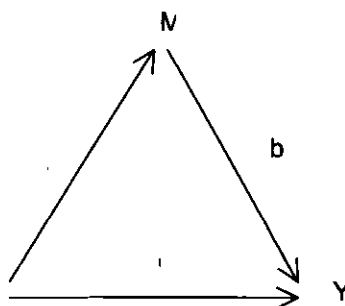


Figure 1: A schematic illustration of how a mediating relationship is determined.

The effect of X on Y may be mediated by the M. The effect that X has on Y is called the direct effect whilst the effect M has is known as the intervening effect. Full mediation is where the X variable no longer affects Y after M has been controlled, resulting in path “c” being zero. Partial mediation is where the path from X to Y is reduced, but not zero. In Step 1 Y is used as the criterion variable with X as the predictor during the regression analysis. This is done to determine whether there is a correlation between the initial variable (X) and the outcome (Y), and to establish the “c” path. In Step 2 M is used as the criterion variable with X still as the predictor. This is done to establish the “a” path and to determine the correlation between the initial variable (X) and the mediator (M). It is now necessary to treat the mediator as if it is an outcome variable. Step 3 is done to show that the mediator (M) affects the outcome variable (Y). Y is the criterion variable with X and M as the predictors (b on the figure). It is not sufficient just to correlate the mediator with the outcome as the mediator and the outcome variable may be correlated as they are both caused by X. Therefore X must be controlled to determine the effect that the mediator may have on the outcome (Kenny, 2006).

Table 4

*Regression Analysis – Cognitive Job Insecurity and Work Locus of Control: Affective Organisational Commitment.*

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Cognitive job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,35	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,13			squares	Square	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,12	Regression	1	13,39	13,39	
	Residual	227	93,25	0,41	
	<i>F</i> = 32,60 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
Model 2: Cognitive job insecurity and work locus of control					
<b>Cognitive job insecurity</b>	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<b>Work locus of control</b>			squares	Square	
<i>R</i> : 0,42	Regression	2	18,82	9,41	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,18	Residual	226	87,81	0,39	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,17	<i>F</i> = 24,23 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Cognitive job insecurity	-0,33	0,06	-0,35	-5,71	0,000
Cognitive job insecurity	-0,22	0,06	-0,24	-3,52	0,001
Work locus of control	-0,20	0,05	-0,25	-3,74	0,000

From Table 4, it is evident that although the regression coefficient of cognitive job insecurity remains statistically significant upon inclusion of work locus of control, the standardised regression coefficient (beta) of cognitive job insecurity decreases when controlling for work locus of control. Based upon Kenny's (2006) third step, which states that perfect mediation would be applicable when the independent variable does not predict the dependent variable when controlling for the mediator, perfect mediation does not apply in this case. However, given the reduction in the standardised regression coefficient (beta) of cognitive job insecurity from -0,35 to -0,24 upon inclusion of work locus of control, it does appear as though proof does exist for a partially mediating effect of work locus of control on the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment. Cognitive job insecurity predicted 12% of the variance in affective organisational commitment, which increased to 17% when combined with work locus of control.

Table 5

*Regression Analysis – Affective Job Insecurity and Work Locus of Control: Affective Organisational Commitment.*

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Affective job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,15	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,02			squares	Square	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,02	Regression	1	2,36	2,36	
	Residual	227	104,28	0,46	
	<i>F</i> = 32,60 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
Model 2: Affective job insecurity and work locus of control					
<b>Affective job insecurity</b>	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<b>Work locus of control</b>			squares	Square	
<i>R</i> : 0,36	Regression	2	14,06	7,03	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,13	Residual	226	92,57	0,41	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,12	<i>F</i> = 17,17 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Affective job insecurity	-0,13	0,06	-0,15	-2,27	0,024
Affective job insecurity	-0,02	0,06	-0,02	-0,34	0,732
Work locus of control	-0,28	0,05	-0,35	-5,35	0,000

From Table 5, it is evident that regression coefficient of affective job insecurity becomes statistically insignificant upon inclusion of work locus of control. When taking Kenny's (2006)

third criterion into consideration, it states that perfect mediation would be applicable when the independent variable does not predict the dependent variable when controlling for the mediator, meaning in this case that perfect mediation does apply.

Table 6

*Regression Analysis – Cognitive Job Insecurity and Work Locus of Control: General Health.*

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Cognitive job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,26	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,07			squares	Square	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,06	Regression	1	20,33	20,33	
	Residual	227	276,67	1,22	
	<i>F</i> = 16,68 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
Model 2: Cognitive job insecurity and work locus of control					
<b>Cognitive job insecurity</b>	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<b>Work locus of control</b>			squares	Square	
<i>R</i> : 0,28	Regression	2	22,40	11,20	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,08	Residual	226	274,63	1,22	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,07	<i>F</i> = 9,22 <i>p</i> = 0,000				
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Cognitive job insecurity	0,41	0,10	0,26	4,08	0,000
Cognitive job insecurity	0,34	0,11	0,22	3,05	0,003
Work locus of control	0,13	0,10	0,10	1,30	0,194

From Table 6, it is evident that the regression coefficient of cognitive job insecurity remains statistically significant upon inclusion of work locus of control. The standardised regression coefficient (beta) of cognitive job insecurity decreases when controlling for work locus of control. Kenny's (2006) third principle, which states that perfect mediation would be applicable when the independent variable does not predict the dependent variable when controlling for the mediator, perfect mediation does not apply in this case. However, given the reduction in the standardised regression coefficient (beta) of cognitive job insecurity from 0,26 to 0,22 upon inclusion of work locus of control, it does appear as though proof does exist for a partially mediating effect of work locus of control on the relationship between job insecurity and general health. Cognitive job insecurity predicted 7% of the variance in general health, which increased to 8% when combined with work locus of control.

Table 7

*Regression Analysis – Affective Job Insecurity and Work Locus of Control: General Health.*

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE					
Model 1: Affective job insecurity					
<i>R</i> : 0,15	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,02			squares	Square	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,02	Regression	1	6,21	6,21	
	Residual	227	290,81	1,28	
	<i>F</i> = 4,85 <i>p</i> = 0,029				
Model 2: Affective job insecurity and work locus of control					
<b>Affective job insecurity</b>	Source of variation	<i>Df</i>	Sum of	Mean	
<b>Work locus of control</b>			squares	Square	
<i>R</i> : 0,21	Regression	2	13,08	6,54	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,04	Residual	226	283,95	1,26	
Adjusted <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> : 0,04	<i>F</i> = 5,20 <i>p</i> = 0,006				
VARIABLES IN THE EQUATION					
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	B	SEB	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Affective job insecurity	0,21	0,09	0,15	2,20	0,029
Affective job insecurity	0,12	0,10	0,092	1,25	0,214
Work locus of control	0,22	0,09	0,16	2,34	0,020

From Table 7, it is evident that regression coefficient of affective job insecurity becomes statistically insignificant upon inclusion of work locus of control. Based upon Kenny's (2006) third condition, which states that perfect mediation would be applicable when the independent variable does not predict the dependent variable when controlling for the mediator, perfect mediation does apply in this case.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to determine whether a relationship does exist between job insecurity (affective and cognitive) and affective organisational commitment and also between job insecurity (both subscales) and general health. The final aim was to determine whether work locus of control mediates the above mentioned relationships.

Regarding the validity and the reliability of the measuring instruments, all the instruments have been used extensively in South African studies and therefore have been proven to have validity.

Inter-item correlations for job insecurity (both subscales), affective organisational commitment, general health and work locus of control were adequate, whilst the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for all the measurement instruments also proved to be reliable, corresponding to findings in previous studies.

Biographical data was analysed by conducting a MANOVA analyses, to determine whether the various demographic groups vary in terms of their job insecurity, affective organisational commitment, work locus of control and general health levels, but no significant differences were found, therefore it was not reported or discussed in this study.

Whilst all of the correlations between the variables were statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), some were of medium practical significance. Practically significant negative correlations of medium effect were obtained between affective organisational commitment with work locus of control, as well as between affective organisational commitment and cognitive job insecurity. Work locus of control demonstrated a practically significant positive correlation of medium effect with both the job insecurity subscales.

Multiple regression analyses were done to determine the mediating role that work locus of control plays with respect to the relationship between job insecurity (cognitive and affective) and affective organisational commitment as well as the relationship between job insecurity (both dimensions) and general health. Partial mediation was found between cognitive job insecurity and affective organisational commitment as well as between cognitive job insecurity and general health, whilst work locus of control was found to fully mediate the relationship between affective job insecurity and affective organisational commitment as well as between affective job insecurity and general health.

## **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several limitations can be reported regarding this study. In this research, the sample was not representative of gender, reason being that the majority of the study population in this specific business unit, is males. Random sampling across various business units could have been a more appropriate sampling method to ensure better representation from both genders.

Although the job insecurity levels in this business unit are not extreme, it is still important to look at possible interventions to reduce the levels. Managers and employees should become

aware of what job insecurity is and how it could affect all aspects of well-being. Good communication strategies at all levels of the organisation can limit the experience of job insecurity. More research is needed on the causes of job insecurity

More studies can be conducted to determine what factors can mediate the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and job insecurity and general health to be able to introduce the most effective interventions to combat beliefs and emotions employees may be experiencing.

Although no relationship was found in this research between job insecurity and general health, Work Life balance is always an important phenomena to focus on especially in today's demanding lifestyles, therefore the researcher believes that general health is a concern that needs to be addressed by the organisation by means of various interventions and training programmes to address health related issues in the workplace.

Data was gathered quantitatively. It may be possible that due to the fact that English is not the first language of most of the participants, questions could have been miss-interpreted. Therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that a qualitative manner of gathering information, can be more accurate and thorough.

A further restriction of this study could have been that use was made of only one business unit. Results within this business unit may possibly differ from the other business units as a result of business unit specific culture.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions with respect to the literature study as well as the empirical research will be made. The limitations of the research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the specific organisation and also for future research.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

##### 3.1.1 Conclusions regarding the specific theoretical objectives

In line with the first theoretical objective, **job insecurity** was defined as the cognitive and affective perception an individual holds with regard to the continuity of his or her existing job situation and the uncertainty of what to expect from perceived changes (Sverke & Hellgren, 2001). This reasoning is substantiated by De Witte, (2004) when he described job insecurity as having two dimensions being affective/emotional and cognitive, where cognitive job insecurity refers to the perceived likelihood of job loss and affective job insecurity refers to the fear of job loss (De Witte, 2004). Job insecurity can therefore be conceptualised as a subjective perception employees' hold, which could lead to feelings of uncertainty about the future and doubts with respect to continuity of their careers.

**Organisational commitment** is described as the extent of an individual's sense of belonging to an organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) propose that there are three major types of organisational commitment being normative, affective and continuance. The focus during this research was on affective commitment which means that an individual strongly identifies with the goals of the organisation and desires to remain a part of the organisation. This is the ideal 'happy' state for an individual. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993), agrees when defining affective organisational commitment as a psychological state that (a) characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation and (b) has

implication for the decision to continue or stop membership in the organisation. Affective organisational commitment can therefore be seen as an individual's desire to remain with an organisation because they identify with the values of said organisation.

Bosman and Buitendach (2005) state that **work locus of control** can be described as an employee's belief in the correlation between how they behave and the results of these actions, whether it manifests as reward or punishment. Locus of control can therefore be divided into two components; internal and external locus. With internal locus of control, employees believe that they can influence results through personal effort, ability and initiative, whereas employees who have an external locus believe that forces outside of their control (e.g. other people, social structures, luck or fate) dictate outcomes (De Vos, Buyens, & Schalk, 2005). The belief of Muhonen and Torkelson (2004) was that locus of control is a learned behaviour which can change and not an attribute, therefore if behaviour can be learned it can also be unlearned. In the light of the last statement work locus of control would then be expected to play a mediating role in the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and also between job insecurity and general health.

Finally, psychological well-being was conceptualised, according to Goldberg and Hillier (1979), as the **general health** an individual experience with regard to somatic symptoms, anxiety and sleeplessness, social dysfunction and severe depression. De Witte (1999) supports this by saying that job insecure employees experienced feelings of distress, anxiety and depression, as well as an increase in the use of medical services. The Organisational Health Framework expressed that it is important for organisations to be concerned with the wellbeing of employees if it is linked to outcomes that affect organisational performance (Cotton & Hart, 2003). A study conducted on 600 employees in the UK found lower levels of psychological well-being amongst those who felt insecure about their jobs (De Witte, 1999). From this study, De Witte concludes that insecure employees experienced feelings of distress, anxiety and depression as well as an increase in the use of medical services.

### **3.1.2. Conclusions regarding the specific empirical objectives**

The second objective, namely the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment, proved to be partially true as a practically significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between affective organisational commitment and the cognitive job insecurity subscale, whilst no practically significant relationship was found between affective organisational commitment and the affective job insecurity subscale. The results were, however, statistically significant.

The third objective, of establishing a relationship between job insecurity and general health, was not proved to be true in this study. Although the results were statistically significant, no practically significant correlations were found between the two subscales of job insecurity with the four subscales of general health (somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression).

The fourth objective was partially proved to be true as regression analyses confirmed that work locus of control, partially mediated the relationship between cognitive job insecurity and affective organisational commitment as well as between cognitive job insecurity and general health, whilst work locus of control was found to fully mediate the relationship between affective job insecurity and affective organisational commitment as well as between affective job insecurity and general health.

## **3.2 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Several limitations can be reported regarding this study. In this research, the sample was not representative of gender, reason being that the majority of the study population in this specific business unit, is males. Random sampling across various business units could have been a more appropriate sampling method to ensure better representation of gender groups.

Although the job insecurity levels in this business unit are not extreme, it is still important to look at possible interventions to reduce the levels. Managers and employees should become aware of what job insecurity is and how it could affect all aspects of well-being. Good communication strategies as per Appelbaum and Donia (as cited in Labuschagne, 2005) at all levels of the organisation can limit the experience of job insecurity. More research is needed on the causes of job insecurity

More studies can be conducted to determine what factors can mediate the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and job insecurity and general health to be able to introduce the most effective interventions to combat beliefs and emotions employees may be experiencing.

Although no relationship was found in this research between job insecurity and general health, informal communication in the form of monthly memos distributed by the HR Department of this business unit, indicates that health is indeed a concern as statistics showed an increase in absenteeism, the use of chronic medication and an increase in calls logged at the Employee Assistance Programme. The Employee Assistance Programme is a panel of counsellors that is available to assist with psychological concerns as well as financial queries. Based on this information, the researcher believes that general health is a concern that needs to be addressed by the organisation by means of various interventions and training programmes to address health related issues in the workplace.

Data was gathered quantitatively. It may be possible that due to the fact that English is not the first language of most of the participants, questions could have been misinterpreted. Therefore, the researcher believes that a qualitative manner of gathering information can be more accurate and thorough. Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2000) state the following advantages with respect to qualitative research:

- \* That the researcher attempts to gain first-hand, holistic understanding by gaining information in this manner;

- \* Interviews and/or observations can be use to gather more in-depth information as the process continues and
- \* The researcher can ensure that the participants fully understand the questions which will ensure accurate feedback.

A further restriction of this study could have been that use was made of only one business unit. Results within this business unit may possibly differ from the other business units as a result of the internal culture in this specific business unit.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation**

Although the job insecurity levels of this petro-chemical organisation are not extreme it is still important to look at possible interventions to further reduce the levels. Managers and employees should become aware of what job insecurity is and how it could affect all aspects of well-being. Stead and Watson (1999), suggests that employees can make use of career counsellors that can identify, interpret and assist employees who experiences job insecurity with alternative options to explore. Appelbaum and Donia (as cited in Labuschagne, 2005) explains that good communication strategies at all levels of the organisation can limit the experience of job insecurity. Communication can be done via various mediums e.g. workshops with affected employees, formal communication sessions, informal memorandums, posters, e-mails, etc. The medium that is chosen needs to be considered very carefully always taking into consideration the different emotions present.

Cotton and Hart (2003) suggest that stress in the work situation due to changes will lead to poor psychological as well as physical health. It is therefore recommended that the organisation stress the importance of Work Life balance and introduce initiatives, e.g. health days where employees can undergo various tests (blood pressure, blood sugar

levels, etc.). Feedback must also be given to the employees with respect to their results and interventions, such as stress handling workshops, how to deal with depression, etc. need to be introduced.

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) began 40 years ago when employers first started to realise that employees suffers from personal problems which may affect the workplace. Although employers have no right to interfere in the personal lives of the employees, they do have the right to set performance standards and to establish sanctions if these standards are not met. EAP can therefore assist to identify problems early, to follow-up on identified problems and to monitor progress (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert, & Hatfield, 2002). The importance of these Employee Assistance Programme and all their service offerings (psychological, financial, debt counselling, etc.) must constantly be promoted amongst all employees.

The participants in this research did not lean strongly towards an internal or external work locus of control, therefore the organisation may find it worthwhile to invest in developing a strong internal locus of control in the workforce. As noted by Labuschagne (2005), a person with an internal locus of control is able to distinguish between causes and consequences as a result of his/her own behaviour. By stimulating an internal locus of control, it might have an influence on how job insecurity is experienced and dealt with.

### **3.3.2 Recommendations for future research**

The sample size could be extended to various organisations in order to include different organisational cultures.

Although work locus of control partially mediated the relationship between cognitive job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and also between cognitive job insecurity and general health, and work locus of control fully mediated the relationship between affective job insecurity and affective organisational commitment as well as between affective job insecurity and general health, the researcher could not find any

other studies where work locus of control was used as a mediator with regards to these constructs. It may be worthwhile to test these constructs again in another organisation to substantiate or contradict these findings.

More studies can be conducted to determine what factors can mediate the relationship between job insecurity and affective organisational commitment and job insecurity and general health to be able to introduce the most effective interventions to combat beliefs and emotions employees may be experiencing.

Data was gathered quantitatively. Depending on future study populations, it may be more effective to make use of qualitative methods in gathering data to ensure that participants fully understand the questions and give the most accurate responses.

The timing (when questionnaires are distributed) is important. In this case the questionnaires were handed out during the festive season (December) when most of the employees had a strenuous, long year of work behind them. Furthermore, suicide and depression rates are reportedly high during this period, which could have an impact on general health questionnaires.

### **3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter conclusions regarding the theoretical and empirical objectives were made. The limitations of the research were emphasised and recommendations were made for the organisation in which the research took place, as well as for future research.

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