
**POSITIVE ORGANISATION: THE ROLE OF LEADER BEHAVIOUR IN
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION**

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Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister
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Triangle Campus, North-West University.

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To Whom It May Concern

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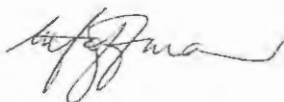
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engagement and retention**

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree *Magister Commercii*
in Industrial Psychology
in the School of Behavioural Sciences
at the North West University
Vaal Triangle Campus.

by

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REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well the editorial style complies with the requirements prescribed by the *Publications Manual*(5th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA).
- The use of APA style in all scientific documents is in line with the policy put in place for the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University as from January 1999.
- The mini dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article.
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SUMMARY

Title: Positive Organisation: the role of leader behaviour in employee engagement and retention.

Key words: Positive organisation, leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement, intention to leave.

Organisations are constantly undergoing major changes. These changes can have negative consequences on organisational functioning and employee well-being. It is therefore vital for organisations to focus on the elements of a healthy organisation so that a positive organisation can be built and the negative consequences avoided. A healthy organisation pays attention to six interrelated dimensions namely; organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and negative outcomes (like that of turnover, absenteeism, alcohol and substance abuse, self-reported health, and psychological health).

The objective of this study was to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave. A business unit consisting of managers, specialists, supervisors and administrative staff participated in this research. A cross-sectional design was used to attain the research objectives. The Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ), the Measures of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire (MRCAQ), Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), and Intention to Leave Scale (ILS) were administered for the study. The statistical analysis was carried out by utilising the SPSS program.

Exploratory factor analysis indicated a three factor structure for LEBQ, a two factor structure for MRCAQ, a four factor structure for MEQ, a three factor structure for UWES and since ILS only consists of two items a factor analysis was not necessary. All the scales showed acceptable reliabilities. The results showed that leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict engagement. Moderation effects showed that role clarity interacted with competence and meaning to affect employees' dedication, and role clarity interacted with the developing of employees (as a facet of leader empowering

behaviour) to affect absorption. Finally, a regression analysis showed that work engagement predicts employees intention to leave.

Once conclusions for the study were drawn, recommendations for the organisation as well as for future research were made.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to leave. In this chapter the problem statement is discussed and the objectives for the research are set out. Thereafter the research method is explained and, in conclusion, the division of chapters is given.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1 Overview of problem

The global business environment has forced organisations to reinvent themselves, embrace change, and increase the speed of innovation, change and adaptation (Malone, 2004; Marquardt, 2002). This environment forces organisations to undergo continuous change economically and socially (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006). Economically, South African organisations are under extreme stress as they need to perform financially by penetrating both local and international markets (Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003). Socially, organisations must succeed in achieving a healthy and effective existence and this means they need to invest in their human capital (Philips, 2005). According to Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2006) turnover costs South Africa several million rands a year through decreased productivity, increased accidents and quality problems.

Becoming a healthy, positive organisation is the most effective way in which to address these problems (Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, & McGrath, 2004). Organisations need to consider two types of resources in order to be healthy: those that support performance and those that support health (Burke & Cooper, 2009; Bryan & Joyce, 2007; Conley, 2007).

A healthy organisation is one that encompasses healthy employees (Burke & Cooper, 2009) and for this reason one of the outcomes of a positive or healthy organisation is the retention of talent (Davenport & Harris, 2007; Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008). Organisations are under pressure in what has been termed the “war for talent” (Burke

& Cooper, 2009). By focusing on the elements of a healthy organisation and applying the principles of positive psychology profound results can be achieved for talent management efforts. This is substantiated in the finding of Hughes and Rog (2008), who found that the best way to attract new employees and retain current talent is to create a positive work environment. Positive organisational behaviour focuses on optimising overall wellness for both the organisation and its employees, and increases the commitment of employees, thereby lowering the risk of losing talent (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

An essential part of talent management is the effective management of employee turnover and this has been a central issue for organisations over a long period of time (Ulrich et al., 2008). The reason for this would be the negative implications involved in turnover, such as high economic costs and the disruption of social and communication structures, which then decreases the cohesion and commitment of those employees who stay in the organisation (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009). With the continuous need for South African organisations to change, penetrate international markets, and retain talented staff, the role of a leader in an organisation becomes even more essential in ensuring organisational effectiveness. Employee turnover rests heavily on the manager's ability since employee satisfaction and commitment is driven by the manager (Kreisman, 2002). According to Mostert and Rathbone (2007), traditional aspects like productivity and financial profit, although still important, should not be a manager's sole concern; it is becoming increasingly necessary for management to improve the elements of the job so that employees feel energetic, dedicated and engaged in their work.

When employees understand the objectives that they are working towards it is a clear indication of the leader's ability in setting clear and predictable outcomes, and so essentially this affects the realisation of organisational success (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008). When employees receive clear instruction from their leader they exude confidence and engage more easily in their work (Nielsen et al., 2008).

A leader who is able to empower his or her employees creates benefits for both the organisation and the employees. Such a leader will have a positive-impact on labour retention in the organisation (Taplin & Winterton 2007). Empowerment improves the economic performance of an organisation and reduces role conflict and role ambiguity among employees (Greasley et al., 2008). According to Greasley et al. (2008), employees who feel

empowered experience greater job satisfaction, motivation and loyalty. Skill attainment can also be achieved through the active engagement of the employee (Liker & Meier, 2007). When leaders make work meaningful for employees, the employees experience their workplace as empowering and therefore experience increased levels of engagement (Greco, Laschinger, & Wong, 2006).

The issues experienced by organisations worldwide and especially within South Africa repeatedly point to the need to move towards becoming a healthy organisation. A healthy organisation empowers and engages its employees so that human capital is retained and turnover is avoided. This research aims to utilise the Wilson's Wellness Model (Wilson et al., 2004) for a positive organisation in order to identify the effect of leader empowering behaviours on employees' intention to leave an organisation, while also taking into account role clarity, psychological empowerment and work engagement.

There are many conceptualisations in the literature in terms of how a positive, healthy organisation should be defined and formulated. McHugh and Brotherton (2000) say that a learning organisation can be said to be healthy because it is able to be competitive, even in an ever-changing environment. According to Tarride, Zamorano, Varela, and González (2008), a healthy organisation is said to encompass good human relations, especially among executives and workers. In a healthy organisation an executive is more likely to act as a leader, rather than a boss (Tarride et al., 2008). Positive organisations encompass leaders that are aware of the importance of people and their vital role in an organisation's success (Burke & Cooper, 2009). Wilson et al. (2004) offer a model for a healthy organisation. The model theorizes that a healthy organisation consists of interrelated components, namely organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and employee health and well-being (Wilson et al., 2004). Below is a model of a healthy organisation as proposed by Wilson et al. (2004).

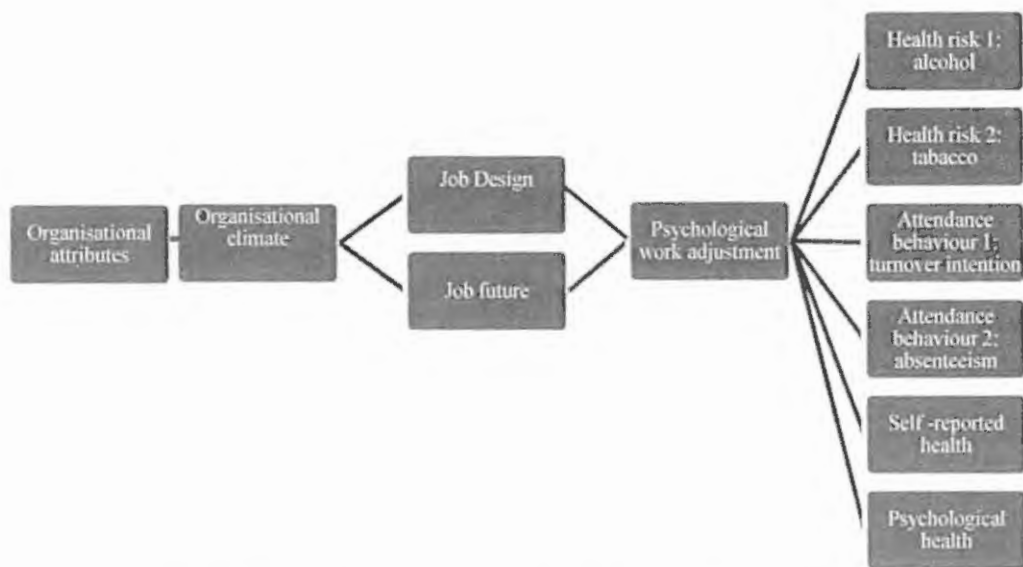


Figure 1. The model of a healthy organisation (adapted from Wilson et al., 2004).

The constructs of leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to leave will be defined and the existence of relationships between these constructs will be explored according to the literature.

Leaders have a powerful influence on employees' work behaviours (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). According to Greco et al. (2006), employees will be empowered if a leader enhances the meaningfulness of work, allows participation in decision-making, facilitates the accomplishment of tasks, communicates confidence in high performance and provides autonomy. Therefore, if leaders make employees feel that their work is meaningful, an increased sense of worth will initiate augmented efforts by employees. Leaders must then utilise the changes in employees in such a way that their talents improve organisational performance. Empowerment is defined in Ongori (2009) as the transfer of power from the employer to the employees. This definition emphasises the importance of a leader in the empowerment of employees. Empowerment is a set of actions and practices that rely on a leader's ability to give power, control and authority to employees (Niehoff, Moorman, Blakely, & Fuller, 2001). According to Niehoff et al. (2001) the leader should provide a positive emotional atmosphere, reward and encourage employees, express confidence, foster inventiveness and responsibility, and build on success. Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) identify six dimensions for leader empowering behaviour, namely the delegation of authority, the leader's ability to emphasise accountability, encouragement of self-directed decision-making, the leader's ability to share information, development of skills, and coaching to

promote innovation. A leader's ability to demonstrate these behaviours will influence how employees perceive the tasks presented to them by their leader (Wilson et al., 2004).

Role clarity refers to the degree to which the necessary information, required by an employee in order to complete a specific task successfully, is provided (Mukherjee & Malhotra, 2006). According to Foote, Seipel, Johnson, and Duffy (2005), role clarity can be defined as the extent to which employees feel that they encompass a comprehensive understanding of their fit and function within their work environment. The clarity of a role depends on the communication, understanding and acceptance of the task presented to the employee (Hong, Nahm, & Doll, 2004). Role clarity was conceptualised by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) by two concepts: role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict is a state of tension and uncertainty experienced by an individual as a result of inconsistent expectations (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2009). Role ambiguity is the uncertainty with regard to the expected behaviours to be performed by an employee (Forsyth, 2006).

Empowerment can be explained by two distinct perspectives. If an organisation has policies and structures in place to promote the decision-making power of employees with regard to their work, the organisation utilises structural empowerment (Matthews, Diaz, & Steven, 2002) like the leader empowering behaviours previously discussed. The second perspective of empowerment is psychological empowerment, which refers to the employees' perceptions and cognitions. When employees are offered flexibility and freedom to make work-related decisions they will respond with more creativity toward work tasks (Greasley et al., 2008). Psychological empowerment is defined by Spreitzer (1995) as a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions, namely meaning (involving the alignment of work roles and employee beliefs, values and behaviours), competence (employees' belief in capability), self-determination (employees' initiation and regulation of actions), and impact (employees' influencing ability). These four cognitions demonstrate an active direction towards work roles (Spreitzer, 1995). The empowered employee offers the organisation benefits such as increased productivity, ability to be responsive and adaptive to change, while benefits for employees are reduced conflict, role clarity, control over environment and higher levels of engagement (Greco et al., 2006).

Work engagement is defined as a positive, satisfying, work-related state of mind that is made up of vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker,

2002). Engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work (Burke & Cooper, 2009). Leiter and Maslach (1999) hold the view that engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy and that engagement is the opposite of burnout, which is characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness. According to Baskin (2007), an employee who is not engaged is more likely to leave the organisation.

Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008) found that turnover intention correlated directly with turnover. Turnover intention refers to the employees' tendency to leave the job they are occupying (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000) or even having thoughts about quitting their job (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). Bergiel et al. (2009) state that if employees are satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organisations, their intention to leave the organisation will be low; conversely, if they are experiencing dissatisfaction and non-commitment they will be likely to leave. An employees' intention to leave an organisation is considered to be an index of quitting (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2008). Employees quit because of biodemographic, organisational, job characteristic and labour market issues (Weisberg, 1994). Therefore, cognisance should be taken of employees' turnover intention so that high financial costs, loss of knowledgeable assets and lowered productivity do not occur (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008), as this will impede the health and effectiveness of an organisation.

According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2008), the positive organisation fosters engaged employees who are committed to the organisation and, as a result, have lower intentions to leave. The leaders within an organisation play a crucial role in designing a positive work environment that encourages the talent of the organisation to stay (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

Hong et al. (2004) found that certain leader behaviours can positively influence employees' perceived role clarity. Leaders that provide employees with appropriate guidance and instruction with regard to their tasks create less uncertainty (Hong et al., 2004). Nielsen et al. (2008) support this in their findings that a positive relationship exists between supervisory consideration and perceived role clarity. A considerate leader encourages employees to seek clarification on expectations placed upon them (Nielsen et al., 2008). Klidas, Van den Berg, and Wilderom (2006) found that employees who experience low role clarity are more likely to perceive a leader's behaviour as disempowering.

Psychological empowerment is directed by the six dimensions of leader empowering behaviour (Konczak et al., 2000). Leader empowering behaviour is correlated with greater feelings of empowerment (Greco et al., 2006). The style of leadership adopted has a significant impact on employees' perceived feelings of empowerment (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008). According to Greasley et al. (2006), the role of the leader in successfully empowering employees is monumental, and for this reason it is the sole responsibility of the leader to assess the employees' perceived feelings of empowerment. When a leader is able to empower employees successfully by involving them in decision-making and assigning responsibility, an empowered organisation will result (Malone, 2004).

Greco et al. (2006) found that when employees' expectations are clarified and the leaders are effective in using empowering behaviours, the levels of engagement are heightened.

When expectations are not clarified (low role clarity) employees are not engaged, as is evident in the expression of negative emotions like boredom and resentment (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). Increasing the clarity of expectations was found to increase positive emotions that led to engagement of employees (Russel, 2008). Steele and Fullagar (2009) state that employees who experience low levels of engagement are more likely to leave an organisation and that this is normally a result of poorly defined roles. When leaders make their expectations clear to employees, the employees perceive their work environment as predictable, and consequently experience higher levels of engagement (Konrad, 2006; Saks, 2006). The best way in which to engage an employee is to provide clarity in terms of the desired expectations of their roles, as role clarity is a strong predictor of dedication, a sub-construct of engagement (Coffman, 2002; Prieto, Salanova, Martinez, & Schaufeli, 2008).

Greco et al. (2006) found that nurses who experienced psychological empowerment were more engaged in their work. Empowered employees demonstrate characteristics of an engaged employee (Avey et al., 2008; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Greasley et al., 2008; Reynders, 2005). Psychological empowerment was found by Stander and Rothman (in press) to be a statistically significant predictor of employee engagement. Similar results were found by Reynders (2005) in a study done in a government institution, where higher levels of psychological empowerment led to increased levels of work engagement. Psychological empowerment is then sub-sequential to employee engagement (Avey et al., 2008).

In a study done in Indonesia on secondary school English teachers, Baskin (2007) found that work engagement was related to turnover; when teachers are engaged, they are less likely to quit. Nurses' intention to leave was studied by Karlowicz and Ternus (2007) and it was found that the lack of engagement was one of the most important issues contributing to intention to quit. This is in line with research done by Simpson (2009), who found that high turnover cognitions correlate directly with low levels of engagement. The most effective way in which to lower employees' intention to leave the organisation is to engage them in their work (Bhatnagar, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, a business unit within a petrochemical organisation was approached. An employee motivational climate survey and organisational analysis was conducted in the business unit during 2006. The results showed that there was a high intention to leave, low levels of organisational commitment, lack of communication and trust between employees and management, as well as a lack of role clarity. The organisational culture within the business unit was further assessed by external consultants, who then identified a number of areas that prevented optimal functioning (Stander, Scholtz, & Verster, 2006). The consultants found that some employees' experience of a leader led to a sense of job insecurity, while others were not clear on their leaders' expectations. Employees inside the business unit reported that they felt there were no career paths available to them. A lack of meaning and disconnection from the organisation was also reported. Collectively, employees stated that they were experiencing a decreased sense of belonging, lack of support, recognition and motivation from management owing to a perceived distance between them and the management team (Stander et al., 2006). This often causes them to move to another business unit or to leave.

The objective of this research is to perform a cross-sectional study within the business unit to investigate the reported problems in relation to employee intention to leave, role clarity and trust between managers and employees.

The following research questions can be formulated, based on the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

- How is leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave conceptualised in the literature?

-
- What are the relationships between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave within a business unit?
 - Does leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict work engagement?
 - Does role clarity moderate the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement?
 - Does work engagement predict intention to leave within a business unit?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following research objectives are set.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into general and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective of this research is to utilise the Wilson's Wellness Model (Wilson et al., 2004) as a framework in order to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research are:

- To conceptualise leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave from the literature.
- To study the relationships between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave in a business unit.
- To investigate whether leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict work engagement and intention to leave.
- To determine if role clarity moderates the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement.

- To determine if work engagement predicts intention to leave.

1.3 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

A paradigm refers to established research traditions in a particular discipline (Mouton & Marais, 1992). A paradigm is a model that alludes to the way the researcher views his or her material; for this reason it can be said that paradigms and their supporting theory direct the research (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2005). A certain paradigm perspective that includes the intellectual climate and the market of intellectual resources (Mouton & Marais, 1992) directs the research.

1.3.1 Intellectual climate

The intellectual climate refers to the meta-theoretical assumptions that are accepted as being valid within a discipline at a particular juncture. The assumptions act as postulates or presuppositions (Mouton & Marais, 1992). Since intellectual climate takes paradigms and assumptions into account, it can be said that it will direct the research.

1.3.2 Discipline

This research falls within the boundaries of the behavioural sciences, and more specifically, Industrial Psychology. Industrial Psychology is defined as “the study of all aspects of behaviour in the work setting” (Baron, 2001, p. 13). Industrial Psychology relates to pure psychology in that it also emphasises the scientific study of thinking and behaviour (Muchinsky, Kriek, & Schreuder, 2005).

The sub-disciplines of Industrial Psychology that are focused on in this research are personnel psychology, organisational psychology and vocational psychology. Personnel psychology is “concerned with individual differences in behaviour and job performance and with measuring and predicting such differences” (Cascio, 1998, p. 2). This sub-discipline is applicable to the research as it encompasses aspects like turnover intention and role clarity.

Organisational psychology is concerned with how an organisation can influence the behaviours and attitudes of people within them (Muchinsky et al., 2005). This sub-discipline

focuses on role-related behaviour, pressures that groups can impose on the individual employee, and patterns of communication within the organisation (Muchinsky et al., 2005). Organisational psychology is relevant to this research, as leader empowering behaviour can affect employee behaviours and attitudes (psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave). Role clarity also fits in here since it is role-related behaviour.

According to Muchinsky et al. (2005), vocational psychology can be described as the addressing of problems that employees experience at work. This is applicable to the research because the constructs (role clarity, psychological empowerment, and work engagement) all directly relate to how the employees experience their work. Turnover intention and leader empowering behaviour can also be an indicator of this. Psychometrics will be utilised in order to measure the constructs of interest.

1.3.3 Meta-theoretical assumptions

Within this study there are two paradigms that are relevant to this research. Firstly the literature review is done within the Behaviourism paradigm and Social Cognitive Learning Theory, and secondly, the empirical study is done within the Positivistic paradigm.

1.3.3.1 Literature Review

According to Santrock (2003), the Behaviourism paradigm is a theoretical orientation based on the premise that scientific psychology should study only observable behaviour. The following basic assumptions are relevant in this regard (Weiten, 2007):

- It rests on the idea of verifiability (scientific claims must be verified).
- Environmental determinism emphasises the importance of the individual's environment when studying behaviour.
- A relationship exists between stimuli and responses.

Social Cognitive Theory is a theory of Behaviourism which suggests that human behaviour is influenced by many cognitive factors as well as by reinforcement contingencies, and that human beings have an impressive capacity to regulate their own actions (Baron, 2001). This is relevant to the research as it investigates how the work environment (leader empowering

behaviours, role clarity, psychological empowerment and work engagement) can influence employees' behaviour (intention to leave).

1.3.3.2 Empirical Study

The Positivist Paradigm can be defined as an epistemology that seeks to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships (Lundin, 1996). It holds the assumption that observable and measurable information should be taken into account in research (Winberg, 1997). This applies to the research since the positive organisation and the principles of positive psychology direct the study. Furthermore, only observable and measurable information divulged through questionnaires will be taken into account. Once the data are analysed, the study aims to explain and predict relationships between the variables within the context of a positive model for organisational effectiveness.

1.3.4 Market of intellectual resources

The market of intellectual resources refers to that collection of beliefs that directly involves the epistemological status of scientific statements (Mouton & Marais, 1992). The two main types of epistemological beliefs are the theoretical beliefs and the methodological beliefs. Theoretical beliefs include all the theories, models, interpretations and research findings about the social world that are accepted by the scientific community as valid or plausible, while methodological beliefs refers to the assumptions about what good research should comprise of (Mouton & Marais, 1992).

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD

This research, pertaining to the specific objectives, consists of two phases, namely a literature review and an empirical study.

1.4.1 Phase 1: Literature Review

In phase 1 a complete review regarding leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave is conducted. The sources that will be consulted include:

- Journal articles
- Textbooks
- Internet

1.4.2 Phase 2: Empirical Study

The empirical study consists of the research design, participants, measuring battery and statistical analysis.

1.4.2.1 Research Design

The aim of the research design is to direct the study so that it is conducted in an appropriate manner (Muchinsky et al., 2005). A design is used to structure the research to show how all the major parts of the research project (participants, measuring battery and statistical analysis) work together to address the central research questions (Mouton & Marais, 1992).

The research can be classified as descriptive and explorative. Descriptive research presents a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting or relationship, and focuses on 'how' and 'why' questions (De Vos et al., 2005). De Vos et al. (2005) describe exploratory research as a method of gaining insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual and recommend that the utilisation of this design should arise as a result of limited information within a new area of interest.

The specific design that will be used is a cross-sectional survey design. This type of design involves a single person, group or event being studied on one occasion and is purposive rather than random (De Vos et al., 2005). This design is suitable as it will reflect the participants within the business unit in terms of the characteristics that are relevant to the study.

1.4.2.2 Participants

The total number of employees within the business unit of the petrochemical organisation is 240 ($N=240$) and for the purpose of this study all employees will be targeted. These employees comprise managers, specialists, supervisors and administrative staff.

1.4.2.3 Measuring Battery

The test battery that will be utilised for the purpose of this study consists of six standardised measures. The construct of leader empowering behaviour will be measured using the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) developed by Konczak et al. (2000). Role clarity will be measured by the Measures of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire (MRCAQ) developed by Rizzo et al. (1970). Psychological empowerment will be measured by making use of the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ) developed by Spreitzer (1995). Work engagement will be measured by means of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). Intention to leave will be measured by using the Intention to Leave Scale (ILS) which was developed by Firth et al. (2004).

The Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) was developed by Konczak et al. (2000) and is aimed at providing leaders with feedback regarding employees' behaviour that relates to employee empowerment. The original instrument consists of 17 items, and is scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A typical item is "My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures" (Konczak et al., 2000, p. 307). Two items were added from Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, and Drasgow, (2000) with the aim of increasing the number of items that demonstrated the "information sharing" dimension. These items are "My manager explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group" and "My manager explains company goals to my work group". A high score signifies high leadership empowering behaviour. In previous research (Konczak et al., 2000) the interfactor correlations ranged from 0,40 to 0,88 while a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,95 for reliability was found (Dwyer, 2001).

The Measures of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire (MRCAQ) was developed by Rizzo et al. (1970), and is aimed at identifying role conflict and role ambiguity within

complex organisations. The instrument consists of 30 items, 15 of which deal with role ambiguity (even numbers) and 15 with role conflict (odd numbers). The measure is scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*very false*) to 7 (*very true*). Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) found that the role ambiguity items of this measure should be renamed “role clarity”, and therefore for this study these 15 items will be utilised since role clarity is of interest. A typical item is “Explanation is clear of what has to be done” (Rizzo et al., 1970, p. 156), and a high score indicates low role ambiguity (or high role clarity). In previous research (Koustelios, Theodorakis & Goulimaris, 2004) the reliability was found to be adequate, with Cronbach alpha coefficients for this instrument ranging from 0,85 for role ambiguity and 0,86 for role conflict.

The Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (MEQ) was developed by Spreitzer (1995), and is aimed at measuring the participants’ psychological empowerment. The instrument consists of 12 items and is scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The measure has four sub-dimensions, namely meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Typical items within these sub-dimensions are, for: meaning: “The work I do is meaningful to me” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); for competence: “I have mastered the skills necessary for my job” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); self-determination: “I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my job” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); and for impact: “I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464). A high score indicates high levels of empowerment. Sauer (2003) found an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,92 and reported Cronbach alpha coefficients for the sub-scales of 0,92 for meaning, 0,89 for competence, 0,91 for self-determination and 0,84 for impact.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and is aimed at measuring the participants’ level of engagement in their work. The instrument consists of 17 items, and is scored on a 7-point frequency scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*daily*). The measure has three scales, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. A typical item for vigour is “At my work I feel bursting with energy” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 89). A typical item for dedication is “I am enthusiastic about my job” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 89). A typical item for absorption is “I feel happy when I am working intensely” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 90). A high score indicates high levels of engagement. The internal consistency of the measure ranges from a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,68 to 0,91 (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,78 for vigour, 0,89 for dedication and 0,78 for absorption were found by Storm and Rothman (2003).

The Intention to Leave Scale (ILS) was developed by Firth et al. (2004) and is aimed at measuring the strength of participants' intentions to leave. The instrument consists of two items and is scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very often*) to 5 (*rarely or never*). A typical item is "How often do you think of leaving your present job?" (Firth et al., 2004, p. 187). A high score reflects a low intention to leave. Firth et al. (2004) found a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,75, which is an adequate reliability score.

1.4.2.4 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis will be carried out by the SPSS 16 (2007) program. All statistical techniques will be utilised in order to obtain answers to the research questions.

An exploratory factor analysis will be performed to investigate the factor structure of all the measuring instruments. Descriptive statistics will then be employed so that means, skewness and kurtosis can be obtained. The reliability and validity of all instruments will be computed and indicated by reporting the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients.

Correlations will be calculated to determine the relationships between variables. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be calculated to identify the relationships between the variables. The statistical significance level will be set at a 95% confidence interval ($p \leq 0,05$). The cut-off point of 0,30 will also be used to determine practical significance of a medium effect (Steyn, 2005).

A multiple regression analysis will be conducted with the aim of determining the percentage of variance in dependent variables (Intention to Leave and Work Engagement) that could possibly be predicted by independent variables (Leader Empowering Behaviour, Role Clarity and Psychological Empowerment). A multiple regression analysis will be conducted to determine the possible mediating or moderating effect of role clarity on the other variables.

1.4.2.5 Ethical Considerations

The proposed study will be explained to all possible participants in a manner that avoids confusion, possible emotional harm, and clarifies the implications of involvement in the study. Informed consent will be guaranteed since participants will be selected as a result of their own voluntary offer. Furthermore, all information regarding the objectives of the study, the process to be followed, and the possible advantages and disadvantages will be divulged to participants. Questionnaires will be used and this offers participants confidentiality since responses will be kept anonymous. The researcher will undertake the proposed study in a way that is professional, with adequate supervision from an experienced researcher (De Vos et al., 2005).

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters in this mini-dissertation are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Research proposal and problem statement.

Chapter 2: Research article.

Chapter 3: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter challenges facing organisations internationally, in South Africa and within a chosen business unit were discussed in order to highlight the purpose of the proposed study. Thereafter a literature review was conducted on the constructs to be researched. These constructs were defined and the relationships between them were explored. Research questions were then formulated and from these, objectives for the study were set. The paradigm from which the research will be conducted was described together with the discipline and sub-discipline for which research is intended. The models and theories that are applicable to the study were investigated. The research method was explained by describing the research design, targeted participants, measuring battery to be used, and statistical analysis techniques to be used. An outline of the division of chapters in this mini-dissertation concluded the chapter.

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POSITIVE ORGANISATION: THE ROLE OF LEADER BEHAVIOUR IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave in a business unit. Specifically, the effect of leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment on work engagement and ultimately, on intention to leave, was examined. A cross-sectional survey design was used and an availability sample was taken ($N=179$). The Leader Empowering Behaviour questionnaire, the Measures of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire, the Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire, Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and the Intention to Leave Scale were administered. All the scales showed acceptable reliabilities. The results showed that leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict engagement. Moderation effects showed that role clarity interacted with competence to affect employees' dedication, while role clarity interacted with meaning to affect employees' dedication, and role clarity interacted with the developing of employees (as a facet of leader empowering behaviour) to affect absorption. Finally, a regression analysis showed that work engagement predicts employees intention to leave.

Globalisation, technology, the transforming world of work, increasing customer influence, increasing focus on knowledge and learning, the changing roles and expectations of workers, workplace mobility and continuous change are the forces that organisations have to face (Marquardt, 2002). The world has become more and more unstable and organisational change and renewal is a natural state (Malone, 2004; Sellgren, Ekvall, & Tomson, 2007). Globalisation has increased the workforce's mobility and employees are now placing higher expectations on their employers (Burke & Cooper, 2009). In order to be dominant in a global economy, organisations are forced to take an interest in more than mere profitability. These interests include the attraction, development and retention of talent (Boninelli & Meyer, 2004). The focus on talent is forcing organisations to adapt their business model in order to empower and engage their employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Becoming a healthy organisation that is continuously learning is the most effective way in which to address the forces placed upon organisations today (Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, & McGrath, 2004). To be successful, organisations need to focus on both performance and health (Conley, 2007). Organisations need to consider two types of resources in order to be healthy: those that support performance and those that support health (Burke & Cooper, 2009). According to Macky and Boxall (2008) employees' well-being plays a vital role in the organisation's success. A healthy organisation is highly competitive in the war for talent, because it is aware of the tendency towards the information age which results in a greater demand for quality leadership and talent retention so as to avoid high staff turnover (Burke & Cooper, 2009).

According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2008), the modern organisation places great emphasis on the management of human capital. The four D's approach (damage, disorder, disease and dysfunction) focuses very much on how to prevent poor performance, disengagement and low levels of empowerment (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). Positive psychology is a more modern and effective approach, as it focuses on human strengths (Luthans, 2002). A positive organisation focuses on the dynamics within the organisation that lead to the development of human strength, foster vitality and flourishing employees, make possible resilience and restoration, and cultivate extraordinary individual and organisational performance (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Positive organisational behaviour fosters engaged employees and this is the key to ensuring high performance and overall wellness for both the organisation

and its employees, while increasing the commitment of employees, thereby lowering the risk of losing talent (McHugh, 2001).

The main outcome of a healthy, positive organisation is the retention of talent (Davenport & Harris, 2007; Ulrich, Brockbank, Johnson, Sandholtz, & Younger, 2008). These organisations focus on their people with as much passion and enthusiasm as they do on new processes and products (Bryan & Joyce, 2007). Talent management and the effective management of employee turnover is a central issue that is managed in order to avoid negative implications, such as high economic costs and disrupted social and communicative structures (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009). An increase in profits, employees' happiness and productivity and customer satisfaction results from the retention of employees (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2000). The ability of a leader to empower his or her employees will have an impact on the organisation's labour retention (Kreisman, 2002; Taplin & Winterton, 2007).

According to Snyder and Lopez (2002), the leaders within an organisation play a vital role in designing a healthy work environment that encourages the talent of the organisation to stay. Furthermore, leadership behaviours have a strong influence on employee and organisational outcomes (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005). This places a demand on leaders to be able to manage these outcomes accordingly.

Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000) identified six dimensions for **leader empowering behaviour**, namely the delegation of authority, the leader's ability to emphasise accountability, encouragement of self-directed decision-making, the leader's ability to share information, development of skills, and coaching to promote innovation. A leader's ability to demonstrate these behaviours will influence how employees perceive the tasks presented to them by their leader (Wilson et al., 2004). According to Greco, Laschinger, and Wong (2006), employees will be empowered if a leader enhances the meaningfulness of work, allows participation in decision-making, facilitates the accomplishment of tasks, communicates confidence in high performance and provides autonomy. A leader that utilises empowerment creates benefits for both the organisation and the employees, as empowerment improves the economic performance of an organisation and reduces role conflict and role ambiguity among employees (Greasley et al., 2008).

Role clarity was conceptualised by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) by two concepts: role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict occurs when two or more conflicting job requirements arise, so that complying with one would make doing the other more difficult (Rizzo et al., 1970; Teh, Ooi, & Yong, 2008). Role ambiguity refers to the lack of clarity and predictability of the outcomes of one's behaviour (Rizzo et al., 1970; Slatten, 2008). Employees who feel empowered report low levels of role conflict and ambiguity (therefore higher levels of role clarity) in their roles because they are able to control their own environment (Greasley et al., 2008).

Psychological empowerment is a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: *meaning*, which refers to the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to one's own ideals or standards; *competence*, which is an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill; *self-determination*, which indicates the individual's sense of choice in initiating and regulating action; and *impact*, which is the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 1995). This motivational approach stresses psychological enabling as the main reason for an individual's feelings of empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Menon, 2001; Spreitzer, 1995). Organisations which empower employees through greater meaning, competence, self-determination and impact in their work experience positive outcomes (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Employees who are empowered offer the benefit of responding more quickly to environmental changes and stakeholder demands in comparison with their disempowered counterparts (Carson & King, 2005). According to Greasley et al. (2008), organisations with higher levels of empowerment have demonstrated improvements in various economic performance areas, global competition, the constantly changing business environment and the ability to deal with pressures to improve efficiency and performance. When employees experience empowerment they also demonstrate higher levels of engagement (Greco et al., 2006).

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Vigour, which is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, refers to the drive to persevere (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and challenge, therefore the employees' allegiance to their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, so that time passes quickly and one has difficulty detaching oneself from work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). According to Townsend and Gebhardt (2008), organisations must thrive on the brainpower of their employees, and the best way in which to do this is to engage them. Engaged employees are aware of the organisational context and work with others to improve performance within their roles for the benefit of the organisation (Devi, 2009). When employees are engaged, they become less likely to leave the organisation as they become more concerned about how to meet customer needs. Baskin (2007) reports similar findings stating that an employee who is not engaged is more likely to leave the organisation.

Weisberg (1994) states that an employee's **intention to leave** is considered a critical signal of quitting. Intention to leave is the strength of an individual's viewpoint that he or she does not want to stay with his or her employer (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008). Intention to leave refers to the ultimate cognitive stage in the decision-making process of an employee, where quitting and searching for alternative employment occurs actively (Park & Kim, 2009). According to Park and Kim (2009), an employee's intentions to leave an organisation consist of both thoughts and statements, but these intentions can differ from the employee's actual behaviour. Intention to quit has been found to be a strong predictor of actual turnover and may be the most important antecedent of turnover (Kahumuza & Schlechter, 2008; Park & Kim, 2009). According to Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2006), turnover costs South Africa several millions of rands a year through decreased productivity, increased accidents and quality problems. Taplin and Winterton (2007) found that organisations with a low record of turnover encompassed leaders who perceived turnover as a costly expense and so took a pro-active approach in dealing with the problem. Turnover is an outcome that a positive, healthy organisation avoids since it is disruptive and consequently costly (Grobler et al., 2006).

Relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave.

According to Mardanov, Heischmidt, and Henson (2008), employee behaviour depends on the relationship between an employee and the leader, as experienced by the employee. Every employee within an organisation should have a specified set of roles and these allow the leaders of an organisation to hold the employee accountable for performance (Rizzo et al.,

1970). Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) found that when a leader offers clarity in terms of these roles, a positive relationship results. **Leader empowering behaviours** influence employees' perceived **role clarity** in a positive way (Hong, Nahm, & Doll, 2004; Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, & Brenner, 2008). Leaders who provide guidance in terms of the tasks presented to employees create less uncertainty (Hong et al., 2004). Nielsen et al. (2008) support this in their findings that a positive relationship exists between supervisory consideration and perceived role clarity. Klidas, Van den Berg, and Wilderom (2006) found that employees who indicated disempowerment due to leadership behaviours were experiencing low role clarity.

Psychological empowerment is directed by the six dimensions of **leader empowering behaviour** (Konczak et al., 2000). Leader empowering behaviour is correlated with greater feelings of empowerment (Greco et al., 2006). According to Avey, Hughes, Norman, and Luthans, (2008) leadership style and psychological empowerment are significantly related to feelings of empowerment. Sauer (2003) found that leader empowering behaviour is significantly correlated to the degree of psychological empowerment that employees experience. There are two aspects of empowerment: empowerment as behaviour of a supervisor who empowers his or her subordinates and the psychological state of a subordinate resulting from his or her supervisor's ability to empower (Avey et al., 2008). For the empowerment of employees to be successful, it is necessary to investigate the role of the leader since he or she has a substantial impact on the employee's perception of empowerment. It is the leader's responsibility to assess the employee's perceived feelings of empowerment (Greasley et al., 2004). An empowered organisation is one in which a leader encourages employees by involving them in decision-making and assigning responsibility to them (Malone, 2004).

When leaders are effective in using empowering behaviours, employees are aware of the expectations placed upon them (role clarity) and they feel confident (empowered) in achieving them; consequently employees experience higher levels of engagement (Greco et al., 2006).

Role clarity has been found to play a role in employee **engagement** (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Russel, 2008; Saks, 2006; Steele & Fullagar, 2009). When expectations are not clarified employees are not engaged, as is evident in the expression of negative emotions like

boredom and resentment (Harter et al., 2002). Increasing clarity of expectations was found to increase positive emotions that led to engagement of employees (Russel, 2008). When roles are not clearly defined, the likelihood of an employee's intentions to leave that job will increase because of the lack of role engagement (Steele & Fullagar, 2009). Employees who perceive their environments as predictable and consistent are more engaged in their work (Saks, 2006). According to Konrad (2006), the more transparent managers are in terms of the organisation's operations, the more engaged employees will be. Coffman (2002) endorses this, stating that the best way in which to engage a workforce is through offering employees clarity in terms of the desired expectations of their roles. This is confirmed in the findings of Prieto, Salanova, Martinez, and Schaufeli (2008) that role stress predicts engagement, with role ambiguity or clarity being a strong predictor of dedication, a sub-construct of work engagement.

Greco et al. (2008) found that nurses who experienced **psychological empowerment** were more **engaged** in their work. Empowered employees demonstrate the characteristics of an engaged employee (Avey et al., 2008; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Greasley et al., 2008; Reynders, 2005). Avey et al. (2008) found that empowerment is sub-sequential to engagement. This is substantiated in the findings of Stander and Rothmann (in press) who found that psychological empowerment was a statistically significant predictor of employee engagement. Competence and meaning are two sub-scales that encompass psychological empowerment and have been found to lead to work engagement. When employees experience meaning in their work they experience engagement (Luthans & Peterson, 2001; May & Harter, 2004). Engaged employees view themselves as competent in dealing with their job demands; they have positive self-efficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Reynders (2005) found in her study of employees in a government institution, that higher levels of psychological empowerment encompass increased levels of work engagement.

Employee engagement is related to attitudes, intentions and behaviours of employees (Saks, 2006). **Engagement** can be utilised as a tool to reduce employees' **intentions to leave** the organisation (Baskin, 2007). According to Bhatnagar (2007), employee engagement is the most effective way in which to retain talent. Nurses' intention to leave was studied by Karlowicz and Ternus (2007) and it was found that the lack of engagement was one of the most important issues contributing to intention to quit. Simpson (2009) found very similar results in her research with nurses, where higher turnover cognitions correlated directly with

low work engagement levels. According to Saks (2006), employees who are more engaged are more trusting of their employer and therefore report more positive attitudes and intentions towards the organisation. It was also found that job and organisation engagement predicted an employee's intention to quit (Saks, 2006).

Previous research provides a solid foundation for the assumptions of this study. The assumption is that leader empowering behaviour is able to impact on role clarity and empowerment, which will affect employees' work engagement and essentially increase or decrease employees' intentions to leave an organisation. There was no evidence in the literature exploring the possible mediating or moderating effects of role clarity, therefore the research will attempt to explore this. Based on the review of the literature, the hypothesised conceptual model of this study is graphically depicted in Figure 1 below:

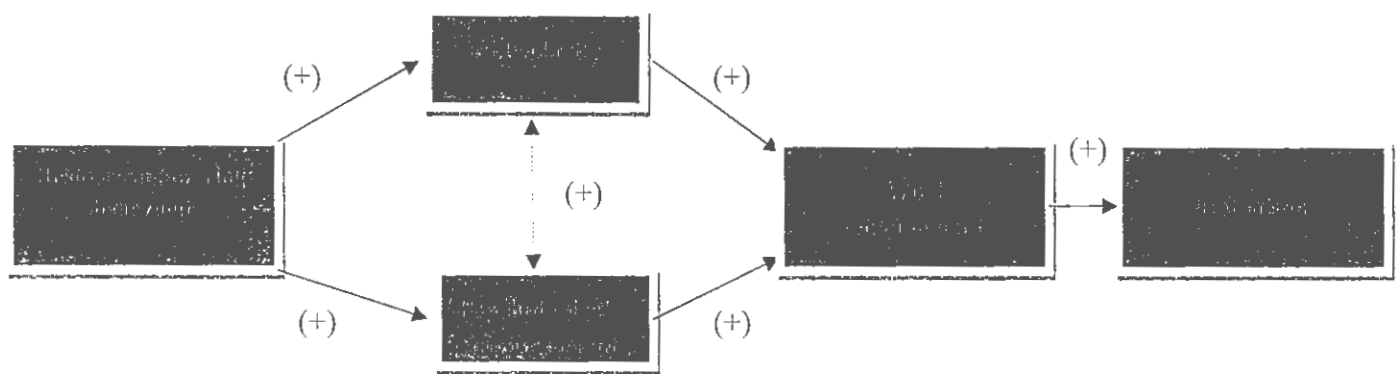


Figure 1: The hypothesised relationship between constructs

The business unit has experienced problematic organisational dynamics, as identified by two motivational climate surveys. The surveys revealed poor communication between management and employees, a lack of role clarity and low levels of organisational commitment. These factors have contributed to poor customer focus and difficulty in attaining organisational objectives. Although the business unit has put talent management initiatives in place, there is a high intention to leave and consequently an increase in employee turnover. Employees report a lack of support, recognition and motivation by management. Employees describe their work as monotonous and say that opportunities for development and involvement in decision-making are underprovided. These problems emphasise the need for investigation of leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to leave.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the existence of relationships between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to stay.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the discussion above, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Practically and statistically significant relationships exist between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to stay within the business unit.
- H2: Leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict employee engagement within the business unit.
- H3: Role clarity moderates the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement within the business unit.
- H4: Work engagement predicts intention to leave within the business unit.

METHOD

Research design

The objectives set out for this research will be achieved through a survey design. The specific design is a cross-sectional design since a sample is drawn from a population at the same time (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997).

Participants

After permission was granted from the business unit, an availability sample was selected. This business unit consisted of 240 employees holding various positions such as managers, specialists, supervisors and administrative staff. Of the total questionnaires distributed 179 were returned. Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of these participants.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (N=179)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	108	60,3
	Female	71	39,7
Race	African	94	52,5
	White	76	42,5
	Indian	3	1,7
	Coloured	1	0,6
	Other	1	0,6
	Missing values	4	2,2
Age	24 years and younger	30	16,8
	25-35 years	85	47,5
	36-45 years	33	18,4
	46-55 years	24	13,4
	56 years and older	7	3,9
Qualification	Up to grade 11	3	1,7
	Grade 12	89	49,7
	Diploma	63	35,2
	Degree	13	7,3
	Degree +	10	5,6
	Missing values	1	0,6
Service	Less than 1 year	32	17,9
	2-5 years	53	29,6
	6-10 years	31	17,3
	11-20 years	33	18,4
	More than 20 years	30	16,8
Category	Management	14	7,8
	Specialist	26	14,5
	Non-management	137	76,5
	Missing values	2	1,1

The study population consisted of 60,3% male participants, while 39,7% were female. Furthermore, the sample comprised African (52,5%), White (42,5%), Indian (1,7%) and Coloured (0,6%) participants, of whom 7,8% were managers, 14,5% were specialists and 76,5% were non-management personnel. The ages of the participants ranged from 24 years and younger (16,8%) to 56 years and older (3,9%), with a majority of participants (47,5%) in the age group of 25 to 35 years.

Measuring battery

The following measuring instruments were used for the purpose of empirical study:

The *Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire* (LEBQ) was developed by Konczak et al. (2000) and is aimed at providing leaders with feedback with regard to employees' behaviour that relates to employee empowerment. The original instrument consists of 17 items, and is scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A typical item is "My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures" (Konczak et al., 2000, p. 307) and a high score signifies high leadership empowering behaviour. Two items were added from Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, and Drasgow (2000) with the aim of increasing the number of items that demonstrated the "information sharing" dimension. These items are "My manager explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group" and "My manager explains company goals to my work group". In previous research (Konczak et al., 2000) the interfactor correlations ranged from 0,40 to 0,88 while a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,95 for reliability was found (Dwyer, 2001). Maré (2007) found an Cronbach alpha coefficient ranging from 0,57 to 0,78 in a large sample within a gold mining industry in South Africa. Maré (2007) found a one factor structure for LEBQ. The one factor structure was also found by Stander (2007) in a study done within selected organisations. Tjeku (2006) and Dwyer (2001) found that a three factor model was best in a study done within a steel manufacturing organisation. For the purpose of this study a simple principal components analysis was carried out on leader empowering behaviour items (as measured by the LEBQ). An analysis of the Eigenvalues ($>1,00$) and scree plot indicated that three factors could be extracted, which explained 69,7% of the total variance. These were named Development, Accountability and Authority.

The *Measures of Role Conflict and Ambiguity Questionnaire* (MRCAQ) was developed by Rizzo et al. (1970), and is aimed at identifying role conflict and role ambiguity within complex organisations. The original instrument consists of 30 items, 15 of which deal with role ambiguity (even numbers) and 15 with role conflict (odd numbers). The measure is scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*very false*) to 7 (*very true*). Mukherjee and Malhotra (2006) found that the role ambiguity items of this measure should be renamed "role clarity" and this is substantiated in other research (Beehr, Glazer, Fischer, Linton, & Hansen, 2009; Bray & Brawley, 2002) and therefore, for this study these items were utilised since role

clarity is of interest. A typical item is “explanation is clear of what has to be done” (Rizzo et al., 1970, p. 156), and a high score indicates high role clarity (or low role ambiguity). In previous research (Koustelios, Theodorakis, & Goulimaris, 2004) the reliability was found to be adequate with Cronbach alpha coefficients for this instrument ranging from 0,85 for role ambiguity and 0,86 for role conflict. In Mukherjee and Malhotra’s (2006) study conducted on 342 call centre employees, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,85 was obtained. A simple principal components analysis was carried out on Role clarity items (as measured by the MRCAQ). An analysis of the Eigenvalues ($>1,00$) and scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted, which explained 44,95% of the total variance. Since this study is focusing on role clarity, only the items loading on this factor were utilised.

The *Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire* (MEQ) was developed by Spreitzer (1995), and is aimed at measuring the participants’ psychological empowerment. The instrument consists of 12 items and is scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The measure has four sub-dimensions, namely Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact. Typical items within these sub-dimensions are, for: Meaning: “The work I do is meaningful to me” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); for Competence: “I have mastered the skills necessary for my job” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); for Self-determination: “I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my job” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464); and Impact: “I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department” (Spreitzer, 1995, p. 1464). A high score indicates high levels of empowerment. Regarding internal consistency Stander and Rothmann (2009) reported the following alpha coefficients: Meaning: $\alpha = 0,89$; Competence: $\alpha = 0,81$; Self-determination: $\alpha = 0,85$; Impact: $\alpha = 0,86$. Stander and Rothmann (2009) found a four-factor structure for the MEQ, which is in line with previous research (Spreitzer, 1995). Confirmatory factor analyses on MEQ which were conducted with AMOS for the purposes of this study showed that a four-factor model of psychological empowerment (consisting of Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) fitted the data best ($\chi^2/df = 3,13$; CFI $> 0,90$; RMSEA $< 0,08$).

The *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) was developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) and is aimed at measuring the participants’ work engagement. The instrument consists of 17 items, and is scored on a 7-point frequency scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*daily*). The measure has three scales, namely Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. A typical item for Vigour is “At my work I feel bursting with energy” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 89). A typical

item for Dedication is "I am enthusiastic about my job" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 89). A typical item for Absorption is "I feel happy when I am working intensely" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 90). A high score indicates high levels of engagement. The internal consistency of the measure ranges from a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,68 to 0,91 (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0,78 for vigour, 0,89 for dedication and 0,78 for absorption were found by Storm and Rothman (2003). Research in various countries including South Africa showed that the fit of the hypothesised three-factor structure to the data was superior to that of alternative factor models (Seppälä et al., 2008; Storm & Rothmann, 2003). Confirmatory factor analyses on the UWES which were conducted with AMOS for the purposes of this study showed that a three-factor model of work engagement (consisting of Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption) fitted the data best ($\chi^2/df = 3,53$; CFI > 0,90; RMSEA < 0,08).

The *Intention to Leave Scale* (ILS) was developed by Firth, Mellor, Moore, and Loquet (2004) and is aimed at measuring the strength of participants' intentions to leave. The instrument consists of two items and is scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very often*) to 5 (*rarely or never*). A typical item is "How often do you think of leaving your present job?" (Firth et al., 2004, p. 187). A high score reflects a low intention to leave. Firth et al. (2004) found a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,75, which is an adequate reliability score. The ILS consists of only two items and therefore a factor analysis investigating the loadings of items was not necessary.

Statistical analysis

In order to answer the research questions the SPSS programme (SPSS Inc, 2007) and Amos program (Arbuckle, 2006) were used.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed for this study, to investigate the factor structure of the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) and Measures of Role Clarity and Ambiguity Questionnaire (MRCAQ). Initially a principal components analysis was conducted on the constructs so that the eigenvalues and scree plot could be investigated and so the correct number of factors could be extracted. Thereafter a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was performed in order to determine factor loadings. For the LEBQ, an analysis of the Eigenvalues (>1, 00) and scree plot indicated that three factors

could be extracted, which explained 69,7% of the total variance. These were named Development, Accountability and Authority. For the MRCAQ an analysis of the Eigenvalues ($>1,00$) and scree plot indicated that two factors could be extracted, which explained 44,95% of the total variance. Since this study is focusing on role clarity, only the items loading on this factor were utilised. For the Structural equation modelling, as implemented in AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006), was used to test the factorial models of the MEQ and the UWES, by using the maximum likelihood analyses. The following indexes produced by AMOS were used in this study: the Chi-square statistic, which is the test of absolute fit of the model, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Root-Means-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The MEQ in this study showed that a four-factor model of psychological empowerment (consisting of Meaning, Competence, Self-determination, and Impact) fitted the data best ($\chi^2/df = 3,13$; CFI $> 0,90$; RMSEA $< 0,08$) while the UWES in this study showed that a three-factor model of work engagement (consisting of Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption) fitted the data best ($\chi^2/df = 3,53$; CFI $> 0,90$; RMSEA $< 0,08$). The ILS consists of only one factor and therefore a factor analysis was not necessary for investigating its factor structure.

Descriptive statistics (including means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the distribution of scores. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationships between the variables. The significance was set at $p < 0,05$. Effect sizes were used to assess the practical significance of the correlation coefficients (Steyn, 2005). A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect) was set for practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988).

A canonical correlation was used to determine the relationships between the constructs. The goal of canonical correlation is to analyse the relationship between two sets of variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted with the variables in their continuous form. In the first step, the scales of the LEBQ were entered into the regression equation. In the second step the role ambiguity items of the MRCAQ were entered, while in the third step the scales of the MEQ were entered.

To investigate the moderating effects of role clarity, the predictors (i.e. leadership empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment) and moderator (i.e. role clarity) were entered into a hierarchical multiple regression equation (with work engagement as dependent variable), followed by their interaction in the second step. The interaction term is

represented by the product of two main effects (Aiken & West, 1991). Also, in line with the procedure suggested by these authors, the independent variables and the moderator were centred before testing for the significance of the interaction term. To centre a variable, scores are put into deviation score form by subtracting the sample mean from all individuals' scores on the variable, thus producing a revised sample mean of zero.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and correlation coefficients for all of the constructs which were measured are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the Cronbach alpha coefficients for leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, engagement, and intention to leave are all acceptable according to Foxcroft and Roodt (2005) who state that a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,65 or higher is acceptable. The researcher is aware that caution should be taken in terms of reporting the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the intention to leave scale since it only has two items, however it was decided to report it for the readers interest.

Table 2 further illustrates correlations between leader empowering behaviour (comprising of Development, Accountability and Authority), Role clarity, psychological empowerment (encompassing of four constructs namely, Competence, Meaning, Impact and Self-determination), work engagement (consisting of Vigour, Dedication and Absorption), and Intention to Leave.

Development is positively related to Role clarity, Impact and Self-determination (practically significant, large effect). Further inspection of Table 2 indicates that Development also correlated positively with Meaning, Vigour, Dedication, Absorption and Intention to Leave (practically significant, medium effect). Accountability correlated positively with Competence and Self-determination (practically significant, medium effect), while Authority is positively related to Self-determination (practically significant, large effect). Authority correlated positively with Role clarity, Meaning, Impact, and Intention to Leave (practically significant, medium effect). Maré (2007) found that leadership empowering behaviour correlated with intention to leave while Sauer (2003) and Dwyer (2001) found a relationship between leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients, and Correlation Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments

Item	Mean	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Development	4,76	1,43	0,94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Accountability	5,68	1,15	0,81	0,41***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Authority	4,94	1,45	0,90	0,77***+	0,41***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Role clarity	5,13	1,04	0,76	0,51***+	0,15*	0,36***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Competence	6,11	0,91	0,77	0,22**	0,30***	0,19*	0,36***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Meaning	5,72	1,12	0,89	0,36***	0,17*	0,34***	0,50***+	0,55***+	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Impact	4,83	1,43	0,82	0,51***+	0,16*	0,49***	0,43***	0,25**	0,58***+	-	-	-	-	-
8. Self-determination	5,35	1,28	0,81	0,51***+	0,36***	0,58***+	0,41***	0,36***	0,44***	0,60***+	-	-	-	-
9. Vigour	4,50	1,17	0,81	0,37***	0,16*	0,29**	0,32***	0,27**	0,62***+	0,46***	0,33***	-	-	-
10. Dedication	4,58	1,44	0,90	0,42***	0,07	0,27**	0,47***	0,20**	0,69***+	0,58***+	0,33***	0,80***+	-	-
11. Absorption	4,30	1,22	0,79	0,34***	0,12	0,23**	0,24**	0,16*	0,55***+	0,42***	0,26**	0,76***+	0,71***+	-
12. Intention to leave	3,16	1,25	0,73	0,40***	0,10	0,30***	0,36***	0,15*	0,49***	0,34***	0,27**	0,46***	0,53***+	0,34***

** Statistically significant $p < 0,01$ * Statistically significant $p < 0,05$ + Correlation is practically significant $r > 0,30$ (medium effect)++ Correlation is practically significant $r > 0,50$ (large effect)

Role clarity related positively to Competence, Impact, Self-determination, Vigour, Dedication and Intention to Leave (practically significant, medium effect). Role clarity also correlated with Meaning (practically significant, large effect). Nielsen et al. (2008) also found a correlation between role clarity and psychological empowerment while Addae, Parboteeah, and Velinor (2008) found a relationship between role clarity and intention to leave.

Meaning correlated positively with Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption (practically significant, large effect). Meaning also related positively to Intention to Leave (practically significant, medium effect). Impact related positively with Dedication (practically significant, large effect); and with Vigour, Absorption and Intention to Leave (all practically significant, medium effect). Self-determination correlated positively with Vigour and Dedication (both practically significant, medium effect). Reynders (2005) found in her research within a government organisation that psychological empowerment and engagement are related.

Vigour and Absorption are positively related to Intention to Leave (practically significant, medium effect). Dedication relates positively with Intention to Leave (practically significant, large effect). Simpson (2009) found very similar results in her research with nurses, where intention to leave correlated directly with work engagement levels.

Next, a canonical correlation analysis was done to analyse the relationship between two sets of variables namely the leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment set with the work engagement and intention to leave set. The results are illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Canonical Correlations between Leader Empowering Behaviour, Role Clarity and Psychological Empowerment Set and the Work Engagement and Intention to Leave Set

	First canonical variate		Second canonical variate	
	Correlation	Coefficient	Correlation	Coefficient
Leader empowerment behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment set				
Development	-0,57	-0,20	-0,23	-0,20
Accountability	-0,10	-0,20	-0,50	-0,20
Authority	-0,38	-0,39	-0,40	-0,39
Role Clarity	-0,59	0,80	0,32	0,80
Competence	-0,24	-0,34	-0,45	-0,34
Meaning	-0,88	-0,53	-0,29	-0,53
Impact	-0,72	0,63	0,12	0,63
Self-determination	-0,43	-0,22	-0,28	-0,22
Percent of variance	0,30		0,12	
Redundancy	0,19		0,01	
Work engagement and intention to leave set				
Vigour	-0,79	0,09	-0,50	-1,35
Dedication	-0,98	-0,81	0,08	1,57
Absorption	-0,75	-0,16	-0,35	-0,33
Intention to leave	-0,68	-0,24	-0,23	-0,34
Percent of variance	0,41		0,01	
Redundancy	0,65		0,11	
Canonical correlation	0,80		0,35	

The first statistically significant canonical correlation was 0,80 [$F(32, 617, 46) = 7,60, p < 0.0001$]. The second statically significant canonical correlation was 0,35 [$F(21, 482, 96) = 1.71, p < 0,02$]. The two sets of the first canonical variate shared 64% of the variance, while the two sets of the second canonical variate shared 12,25% of the variance

With a cut-off correlation of 0,30 the variables in the Leader Empowering Behaviour, Role Clarity, and Psychological Empowerment Set that were correlated with the first canonical variate were Development (-0,57), Authority (-0,38), Role Clarity (-0,59), Meaning (-0,88), Impact (-0,72), and Self-determination (-0,43). Among the Work Engagement and Intention to Leave set, Vigour (-0,79), Dedication (-0,98), and Absorption (-0,75) correlated with the first canonical variate. The variables in the Leader Empowering Behaviour, Role Clarity and Psychological Empowerment Set that correlated with the second canonical variate was Accountability (-0,50), Authority (-0,40), Role Clarity (0,32) and Competence (-0,45). Among the Work Engagement Set Vigour (-0,50), and Absorption (-0,35) correlated with the second canonical variate. Therefore leader empowering behaviour (Development, Accountability and Authority), Role Clarity and psychological empowerment (Competence, Meaning, Impact and Self-determination) are strongly related to the three categories of work engagement (Vigour, Dedication and Absorption) and Intention to Leave.

Based on the above analysis hypothesis 1: *“Practically and statistically significant relationships exist between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, employee engagement and intention to stay within the business unit”* can be accepted.

Table 4 summarises the regression analysis with leader empowering behaviour (as measured by the LEBQ), role clarity (as measured by the MRCAQ), and psychological empowerment (as measured by the MEQ) as independent variables, and Vigour, Dedication and Absorption (as measured by the UWES) as the dependent variables.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analyses with Leader Empowering Behaviour, Role Clarity, and Psychological Empowerment as Independent Variables, and Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption as Dependent Variable

Independent Variable	Vigour					Dedication					Absorption				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	ΔR^2
Step 1				9,24*	0,14*				14,04*	0,19*				7,60*	0,12*
(Constant)	4,50	0,08	0,00			4,59	0,10	0,00			4,30	0,09	0,00		
Development	0,29	0,09	0,00*			0,54	0,11	0,00*			0,34	0,10	0,00*		
Accountability	0,01	0,08	0,86			-0,14	0,10	0,15			-0,03	0,08	0,76		
Authority	0,01	0,09	0,89			-0,10	0,11	0,37			-0,06	0,09	0,53		
Step 2				8,19*	0,02*				16,29*	0,08*				5,95*	0,01*
(Constant)	4,50	0,08	0,00			4,59	0,09	0,00*			4,30	0,09	0,00*		
Development	0,21	0,10	0,04*			0,35	0,11	0,00*			0,30	0,10	0,01*		
Accountability	0,03	0,08	0,75			-0,11	0,09	0,23			-0,02	0,08	0,81		
Authority	0,02	0,09	0,81			-0,08	0,10	0,46			-0,06	0,09	0,56		
Role Clarity	0,19	0,09	0,04*			0,45	0,11	0,00*			0,10	0,10	0,32		
Step 3				16,06*	0,27*				33,48*	0,34*				13,15*	0,26*
(Constant)	4,50	0,07	0,00			4,59	0,07	0,00			4,30	0,07	0,00		
Development	0,20	0,08	0,02*			0,30	0,08	0,00*			0,28	0,09	0,00*		
Accountability	0,03	0,07	0,63			-0,03	0,07	0,66			0,02	0,08	0,82		
Authority	-0,09	0,08	0,26			-0,23	0,08	0,00*			-0,17	0,09	0,05*		
Role Clarity	-0,09	0,09	0,28			0,12	0,09	0,15			-0,17	0,09	0,07		
Competence	-0,14	0,10	0,15			-0,39	0,10	0,00*			0,26	0,10	0,01*		
Meaning	0,64	0,09	0,00*			0,83	0,09	0,00*			0,66	0,10	0,00*		
Impact	0,08	0,07	0,27			0,23	0,07	0,00*			0,10	0,08	0,19		
Self-determination	0,00	0,08	0,96			-0,05	0,08	0,50			-0,01	0,08	0,95		

* $p < 0,05$

Leader empowering behaviour and work engagement. Table 4 reports *B* the unstandardised coefficient, therefore β (Beta) will be reported in text to support the results in the table above. First, multiple regression analyses with Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption (as measured by the UWES) as dependent variables, and the three dimensions of leader empowering behaviour (as measured by LEBQ) as independent variables showed statistically significant *F*-values for Vigour [$F(3, 175) = 9,24, p < 0,0001, R^2 = 0,14$], Dedication [$F(3, 175) = 14,04, p < 0,0001, R^2 = 0,19$], and Absorption [$F(3, 175) = 7,60, p < 0,0001, R^2 = 0,12$]. Regarding Vigour, one variable, namely Development made a statistical significant contribution to the regression model ($\beta = 0,35, t = 3,18, p < 0,01$). Development was also the only variable which made a statistical significant contribution to the regression model for Dedication ($\beta = 0,54, t = 5,06, p < 0,01$) and Absorption ($\beta = 0,40, t = 3,57, p < 0,01$).

Leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and work engagement. Second, multiple regression analyses with Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption (as measured by the UWES) as dependent variables, and the three dimensions of leader empowering behaviour (as measured by LEBQ), and Role Clarity (as measured by the MRCAQ) as independent variables showed statistically significant F-values for Vigour [$F(4, 174) = 8,19, p = 0,00, \Delta R^2 = 0,02$], Dedication [$F(4, 174) = 16,29, p = 0,00, \Delta R^2 = 0,08$], and Absorption [$F(4, 174) = 5,95, p = 0,00, \Delta R^2 = 0,01$]. Regarding Vigour, two variables, namely Development ($\beta = 0,25, t = 2,09, p < 0,05$) and Role Clarity ($\beta = 0,17, t = 2,12, p < 0,05$) made statistically significant contributions to the regression model. Development ($\beta = 0,35, t = 3,12, p < 0,01$) and Role Clarity ($\beta = 0,33, t = 4,33, p < 0,01$) made a statistically significant contributions to the regression model for Dedication. For Absorption, Development was also the only variable which made a statistical significant contribution to the regression model ($\beta = 0,35, t = 2,87, p < 0,01$).

Leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment and work engagement. Third, multiple regression analyses with Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption (as measured by the UWES) as dependent variables, and the three dimensions of leader empowering behaviour (as measured by LEBQ), Role Clarity (as measured by the MRCAQ), and the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (as measured by the MEQ) as independent variables showed statistically significant F-values for Vigour [$F(8, 170) = 13,17, p < 0,0001, \Delta R^2 = 0,27$], Dedication [$F(8, 170) = 33,48, p < 0,0001, \Delta R^2 = 0,34$], and Absorption [$F(8, 170) = 13,15, p < 0,0001, \Delta R^2 = 0,26$]. Regarding Vigour, two variables, namely Development ($\beta = 0,24, t = 2,36, p < 0,05$) and Meaning ($\beta = 0,61, t = 7,16, p < 0,01$) made statistically significant contributions to the regression model. Development ($\beta = 0,30, t = 3,54, p < 0,01$), Authority ($\beta = -0,23, t = -2,90, p < 0,01$), Competence ($\beta = -0,24, t = -4,03, p < 0,01$), Meaning ($\beta = 0,64, t = 9,08, p < 0,01$), and Impact ($\beta = 0,23, t = 3,32, p < 0,01$) made statistically significant contributions to the regression model for Dedication. For Absorption, Development ($\beta = 0,33, t = 3,10, p < 0,01$) Authority ($\beta = -0,17, t = -2,00, p < 0,05$), Competence ($\beta = 0,26, t = -2,47, p < 0,01$) and Meaning ($\beta = 0,61, t = 6,84, p < 0,01$) were the only variables which made statistically significant contributions to the regression model.

The multiple regression analysis shows that leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predicts a large percentage of the variance in engagement. More specifically, leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment explains 43% of the variance in Vigour, 61% of the variance in Dedication, and 38% of the variance in Absorption.

Based on the above statistical analysis hypothesis 2: "*Leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict employee engagement within the business unit*" can be accepted.

Moderation effects of role clarity. The moderation effects of role clarity on the relationship between leadership empowering behaviour as (measured by the LEBQ) and psychological empowerment (as measured by the MEQ) and Work Engagement (Dedication and Absorption) were tested with hierarchical regression procedures. In an attempt to test the possibility of interaction effects, the centred predictors and moderators were entered first into the regression equation followed by their interactions in the second step to predict facets of work engagement. The results of the hierarchical regressions are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Interaction of Leader Empowering Behaviour, Psychological Empowerment and Role Clarity on Work Engagement

Independent Variable	Vigour					Dedication					Absorption				
	B	SE	p	F	ΔR^2	B	SE	p	F	ΔR^2	B	SE	p	F	ΔR^2
Step 1				16,06*	0,27*				33,48*	0,34*				13,15*	0,26*
(Constant)	4,50	0,07	0,00			4,59	0,07	0,00			4,30	0,07	0,00		
Development	0,20	0,08	0,02*			0,30	0,08	0,00*			0,28	0,09	0,00*		
Accountability	0,03	0,07	0,63			-0,03	0,07	0,66			0,02	0,08	0,82		
Authority	-0,09	0,08	0,26			-0,23	0,08	0,00*			-0,17	0,09	0,05*		
Role Clarity	-0,09	0,09	0,28			0,12	0,09	0,15			-0,17	0,09	0,07		
Competence	-0,14	0,10	0,15			-0,39	0,10	0,00*			0,26	0,10	0,01*		
Meaning	0,64	0,09	0,00*			0,83	0,09	0,00*			0,66	0,10	0,00*		
Impact	0,08	0,07	0,27			0,23	0,07	0,00*			0,10	0,08	0,19		
Self-determination	0,00	0,08	0,96			-0,05	0,08	0,50			-0,01	0,08	0,95		
Step 2				9,33*	0,03*				19,60*	0,03*				8,25*	0,05*
(Constant)	4,48	0,08	0,00			4,63	0,08	0,00			4,37	0,09	0,00		
Development	0,15	0,09	0,09			0,23	0,09	0,01*			0,26	0,09	0,01*		
Accountability	0,06	0,07	0,38			-0,03	0,07	0,72			0,08	0,08	0,29		
Authority	-0,09	0,08	0,28			-0,22	0,08	0,01*			-0,21	0,09	0,02*		
Role Clarity	-0,05	0,09	0,59			0,13	0,09	0,13			-0,15	0,09	0,11		
Competence	-0,27	0,12	0,01*			-0,49	0,11	0,00*			-0,38	0,11	0,00*		
Meaning	0,70	0,10	0,00*			0,94	0,10	0,00*			0,75	0,10	0,00*		
Impact	0,11	0,07	0,13			0,22	0,07	0,00*			0,11	0,08	0,15		
Self-determination	0,01	0,08	0,87			-0,05	0,08	0,50			-0,01	0,09	0,94		
Development × Role Clarity	0,00	0,08	0,96			-0,07	0,08	0,41			-0,18	0,09	0,04*		
Accountability × Role Clarity	-0,10	0,07	0,15			0,06	0,07	0,38			-0,12	0,07	0,10		
Authority × Role Clarity	0,01	0,08	0,95			-0,00	0,08	0,97			0,09	0,09	0,29		
Competence × Role Clarity	-0,17	0,09	0,07			-0,21	0,09	0,03*			-0,10	0,10	0,31		
Meaning × Role Clarity	0,11	0,08	0,18			0,20	0,08	0,02*			0,06	0,09	0,48		
Impact × Role Clarity	0,05	0,07	0,52			-0,05	0,07	0,53			-0,06	0,08	0,43		
Self determination × Role Clarity	-0,01	0,08	0,94			-0,02	0,08	0,76			0,14	0,09	0,11		

* $p < 0,05$

Table 5 shows that the interaction terms among leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment, and role clarity to predict Dedication and Absorption yielded statistically significant effects [$F_{\text{Dedication}}(15, 163) = 19,60, \Delta R^2 = 0,03, p < 0,05$ and $F_{\text{Absorption}}(15, 163) = 8,25, \Delta R^2 = 0,05, p < 0,05$]. Although small, the significant interaction effects were plotted as indicated by Figures 2, 3 and 4.

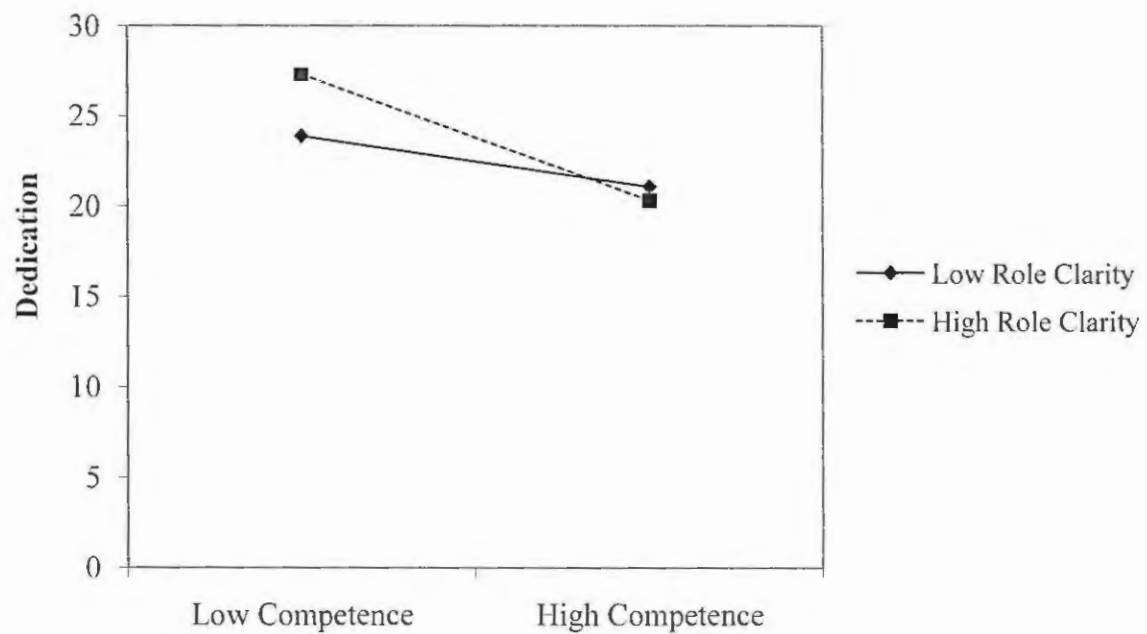


Figure 1. Interaction between Competence and Role Clarity with Dedication as dependent variable

Figure 1 shows that at a high level of Role Clarity (compared with a low level), high Competence was associated with a lower level of Dedication.

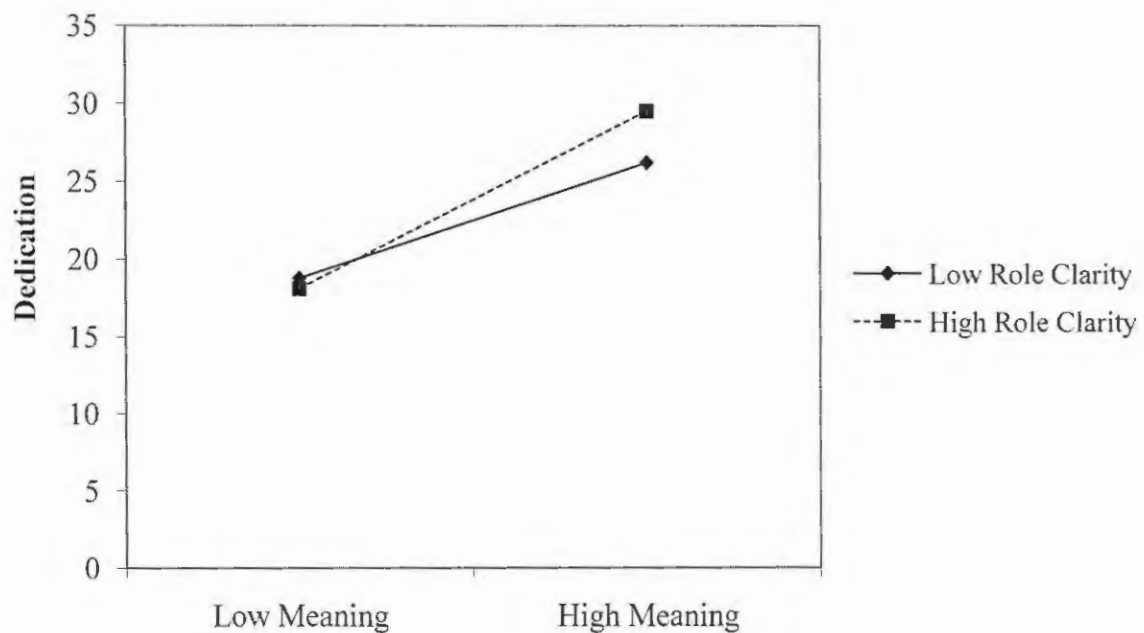


Figure 2. Interaction between Meaning and Role Clarity with Dedication as dependent variable

Figure 2 shows that at a high level of Role Clarity (compared with a low level), high Meaning had a stronger effect on Dedication.

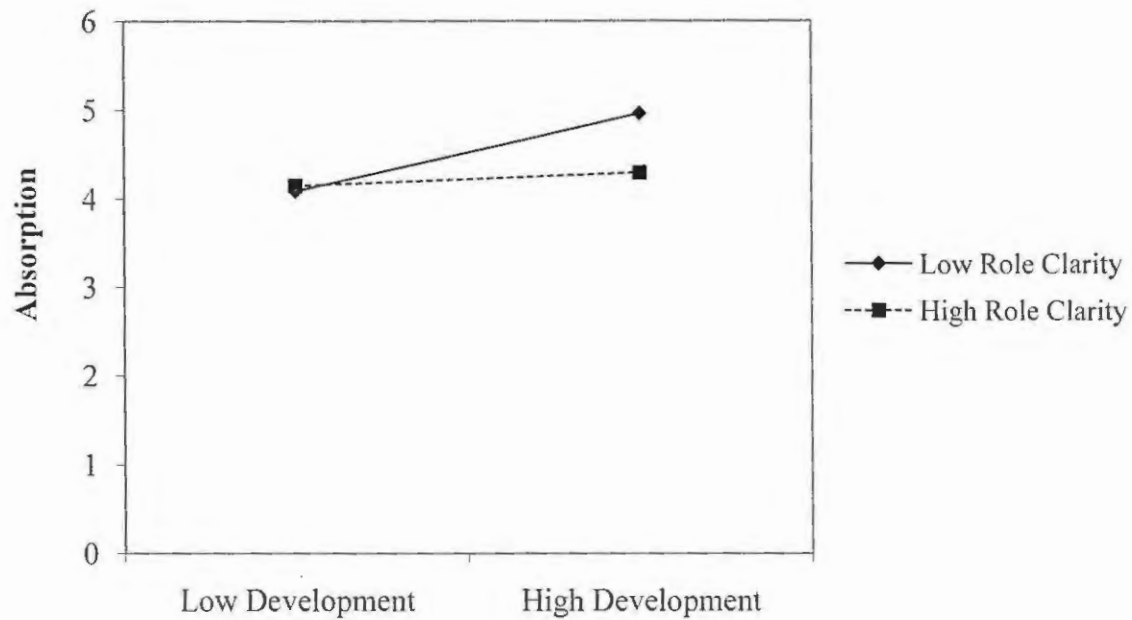


Figure 3. Interaction between Development and Role Clarity with Absorption as dependent variable

Figure 3 shows that at a low level of Role Clarity (compared with a high level), high Development had a stronger effect on Absorption.

Therefore, hypothesis 3: *“Role clarity moderates the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement within the business unit”* is also accepted based on the statistical evidence presented above.

Finally, a regression analysis was computed to determine if engagement and its three subscales predict intention to leave. The results are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Regression Analysis with Intention to Leave as Dependent Variable

Independent variable		B	SE	p	F	R ²
1	(Constant)	0,98	0,33	0,00	24,25*	0,29
	Vigour	0,18	0,13	0,15		
	Dedication	0,43	0,10	0,00*		
	Absorption	-0,14	0,11	0,18		

* $p < 0,05$

Table 6 summarises the regression analysis with work engagement as a predictor of Intention to Leave. The regression analysis produced a statistically significant model ($F(3, 175) = 24,25$; $p = 0,00$), accounting for approximately 29% of the variance. More specifically, it seems that Dedication ($\beta = 0,43$, $t = 4,51$, $p = 0,00$) predicts Intention to Leave.

Based on the statistical evidence presented above hypothesis 4: “*Work engagement predicts intention to leave within the business unit*” can be accepted.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave among a sample of employees within a business unit. The results showed statistically significant relationships between all the variables.

The analyses showed that a leader is able to influence many aspects of the work environment. The correlations table indicated that higher levels of development led to higher role clarity. This implies that when a leader focuses on the development of an employee, the employee becomes more aware of the expectations that are placed upon him or her. Higher levels of development relate to higher levels of impact; therefore, an empowering leader ensures that employees feel they can influence their work (Nielsen et al., 2008). Furthermore, higher levels of authority correlated with higher levels of self-determination, indicating that when a leader delegates authority appropriately, employees will experience autonomy in determining

how to fulfil the expectations placed upon them. Therefore it is clear that leader empowering behaviour has a strong relationship with role clarity and psychological empowerment.

High levels of meaning correlated with high levels of vigour, dedication and absorption. Therefore, when employees experience their work as meaningful they will concurrently experience higher levels of energy in doing their work, be more enthusiastic in completing work-related tasks, and demonstrate high levels of focus in their work. High levels of impact are related to elevated levels of dedication, which indicates that when employees feel they have control over their work environment they will react with increased eagerness in doing their work. This is supported in the findings of Stander and Rothmann (in press) who found a strong relationship between psychological empowerment and engagement.

When employees experience high levels of dedication they will be less likely to have intentions of leaving. Employees who are enthusiastic about their work are more likely to have positive emotions about their work environment, and as a result will be less likely to think about leaving their organisation. Hence, the more engaged an employee is the less likely he or she will be to have cognitions of leaving, this is substantiated in previous research (Simpson, 2009).

The canonical analysis showed that leader empowering behaviour (Development, Accountability and Authority), Role Clarity and psychological empowerment (Competence, Meaning, Impact and Self-determination) are strongly related to the three categories of work engagement (Vigour, Dedication and Absorption) and Intention to Leave.

The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that vigour was predicted by development, role clarity and meaning. Therefore when leaders provide employees with frequent opportunities to develop their skills and ensure that expectations are clearly stated, and when employees experience their work as meaningful, they will respond with positive affective responses like physical strength, emotional energy and cognitive liveliness. Rothmann and Jordaan (2006) found similar results in their research within a higher education institution.

Dedication, according to the multiple regression analysis, was predicted by development, role clarity, authority, competence, meaning and impact. This implies that when a leader is

perceived as supportive, when information is shared and when authority is appropriately delegated, employees will derive a sense of significance from their work. Furthermore, when employees feel competent in their work, experience this work as meaningful and feel they have the ability to influence their work environment, the result will be employees who feel proud, enthusiastic and inspired. These findings are corroborated in previous research (Greco et al., 2006).

The multiple regression analysis also showed that absorption was predicted by development, authority, competence and meaning. Employees who are totally immersed in their work are led by managers who make development a priority and share their authority (Quesada, González, & Kent, 2008). Employees who believe in their capabilities and who experience alignment of their work roles, beliefs, values and behaviours are more likely to be immersed in their work.

With reference to the interaction effects, the following was found. Firstly, role clarity interacted with competence to affect employees' dedication. When role clarity is high, employees with a low competence experience higher levels of dedication. In other words, employees who experienced a low level of competence were more dedicated when role clarity was high. So role clarity is less of an issue for employees who feel competent, especially as far as their dedication is concerned. Secondly, role clarity interacted with meaning to affect employees' dedication. Employees who experienced a high level of meaning were more dedicated when they experienced high role clarity. Finally, role clarity interacted with the developing of employees (as a facet of leader empowering behaviour) to affect absorption. Employees who experienced low role clarity were more absorbed in their work when they experienced that their leaders developed them.

Lastly, a regression analysis showed that dedication (a sub-construct of engagement) is able to predict an employee's intention to leave. Therefore, when employees feel inspired by their work and experience their work as challenging they will be less likely to have thoughts of leaving the organisation or their current position (Karlowski & Ternus, 2007).

In conclusion, the research found statistically significant relationships between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave. It was also made evident that development and meaningful work plays an

extremely important role in the retention of talent. The retention of talent is a vital element in creating a positive organisation (Davenport & Harris, 2007; Ulrich et al., 2008). This research is extremely beneficial in highlighting the importance of employee development and empowerment in creating a positive organisation and, consequently, ensuring the retention of talent.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide conclusions for the study according to the general and specific objectives that were set. The limitations of this study will also be discussed and then recommendations for the organisation and for future research will be offered.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The general objective of this study was to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave. Based on the results found in chapter two, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The first objective was to conceptualise from literature, leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave.

Leader empowering behaviour is described by six sub-scales, namely the delegation of authority, the ability to emphasise accountability, the encouragement of self-directed decision-making, the ability to share information, the development of skills, and the coaching and promotion of innovation (Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000). Leader empowering behaviour enhances the meaningfulness of work, allows participation in decision-making, facilitates the accomplishment of tasks, communicates confidence in high performance and provides autonomy (Greco, Laschinger & Wong, 2006).

Role clarity has been conceptualised, for the purpose of this research, as the absence of role ambiguity. Role ambiguity refers to the clarity or predictability of the outcomes or responses of one's behaviour (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Role clarity refers to the employees' degree of understanding in terms of the roles and responsibilities presented to them (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker & Brenner, 2008).

Psychological empowerment refers to the employees' experience of meaning, competence, impact and self-determination in their work (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees experience

psychological empowerment when they perceive that they have control over their work lives (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). According to Stander and Rothman (in press), psychological empowerment is not a fixed personality attribute but is comprised rather of cognitions that are shaped by the work environment.

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002). Vigour, which is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, refers to the drive to persevere (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm and challenge, and therefore to employees' allegiance to their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated on and happily engrossed in one's work, so that time passes quickly and one has difficulty detaching oneself from work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Intention to leave, according to the views of Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008), refers to the strength of an individual's stance with regard to his or her desire to stay with a current employer. Intention to leave refers to the ultimate cognitive stage in the decision-making process of an employee, where quitting and searching for alternative employment occurs actively (Park & Kim, 2009). Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009) state that if employees are satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organisations, their intention to leave the organisation will be low; conversely, if they are experiencing dissatisfaction and non-commitment they will be likely to leave.

The relationships between all the constructs were also investigated according to the literature. Leader empowering behaviour improves levels of role clarity (Hong, Nahm, & Doll, 2004) and has a positive impact on psychological empowerment (Greco et al., 2006). Role clarity and psychological empowerment, in turn, are associated with high levels of work engagement (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008; Russel, 2008). Finally, high levels of work engagement were found to lower employees intentions of leaving (Simpson, 2009).

The positive and healthy organisation was the foundation upon which this research was built. A positive organisation fosters engaged employees and makes overall wellness, for the organisation and its employees, a priority (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). The Wilson's

Wellness Model (Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson & McGrath, 2004) directs this research as it focuses on the positive aspects within an organisation, with the aim of achieving wellness for both the employee and the organisation. According to Wilson et al. (2004), work characteristics influence work adjustment factors that ultimately affect employee health and well-being. The constructs in this study (leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave) involve the work environment and are specifically aimed at creating a healthy organisation which contributes to overall wellness and, ultimately, the achievement of a positive organisation.

A factor analysis was done on the LEBQ and the MRCAQ. The items of the LEBQ loaded on three factors that were labelled Development, Accountability and Authority. The MRCAQ consisted of a two-factor structure, the items loading together, relating to role clarity were used for the study. Structural equation modelling was used to explore factorial models of the MEQ and the UWES. It was found that a four-factor structure had the best fit for the MEQ while a three-factor structure was best for the UWES.

The second objective was to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment, work engagement and intention to leave.

The statistical analyses encompassed correlations which found statistically significant relationships between all the variables. Practically significant relationships with a large effect were found. Development related strongly with Role clarity, Impact and Self-determination. Authority correlated positively with Self-determination. Role clarity related to Meaning while Meaning correlated strongly with Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. Impact related to Dedication while Dedication correlated with Intention to Leave. The canonical analysis showed that leader empowering behaviour (Development, Accountability and Authority), Role clarity and psychological empowerment (Competence, Meaning, Impact and Self-determination) are strongly related to the three categories of work engagement (Vigour, Dedication and Absorption) and Intention to Leave. The second objective has therefore been reached since there are definite relationships between all the variables.

The third objective was to determine whether leader empowering behaviour, role clarity and psychological empowerment predict work engagement.

The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that Vigour was predicted by Development, Role clarity and Meaning. Dedication, according to the multiple regression analysis, was predicted by Development, Role clarity, Authority, Competence, Meaning and Impact. The multiple regression analysis also showed that Absorption was predicted by Development, Authority, Competence and Meaning. It can then be concluded that the third objective was reached.

The fourth objective was to determine the moderating effects of role clarity on the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and work engagement.

Role clarity interacted with Competence to affect employees' Dedication. Role clarity interacted with Meaning to affect employees' Dedication. Role clarity interacted with Developing employees (as facet of leader empowering behaviour) to affect Absorption. Therefore Role clarity has moderating effects on the relationship between Leader Empowering Behaviour, Psychological Empowerment and Work Engagement and so the fourth objective has been reached.

The fifth objective was to determine whether work engagement predicts intention to leave.

Work engagement encompasses Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. These three constructs practically significantly predict intention to leave. More specifically, Dedication was able to predict Intention to Leave (explaining 29% of the variance) and therefore it can be said that work engagement can be used to limit the intentions of employees leaving. The fifth objective has been reached.

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

The following limitations have been noted in terms of this study. The research design was cross-sectional and this limits the determination of cause-and-effect relationships; also, the participants' opinions, attitudes and feelings are representative at only one point in time.

The sampling technique involved targeting an entire business unit. However only 179 questionnaires were returned. Although a larger sample would have been more beneficial, the sample size of 179 is a reasonable and representative sample size.

The measures that were administered were in English and this may have been a limitation in the way in which items were understood by participants who were not English-speaking. Furthermore, these measures were self-report measures and this may lead to “method variance” or “nuisance”. The test battery utilised in this study was lengthy and this may have caused participants to give the most convenient answer instead of the needed consideration.

Not all the possible variables could be explored and therefore this limits the investigation of all the possible contributing factors that play a role in developing a positive and healthy organisation.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the limitations that exist, the research findings have important repercussions for the organisation and for future research.

3.3.1 Recommendations for the Organisation

Organisations which want to be market leaders need to recognise the importance of focusing on overall wellness for both the organisation and its employees. The interest in applying positive psychology principles to the workplace is proving to be extremely beneficial, resulting in lower absenteeism, lower turnover, decreased stress levels, and diminished alcohol and tobacco usage (Wilson et al., 2004). It is recommended that interventions focusing on the aspects promoting overall wellness be implemented in the business unit. Therefore, it is essential that the business unit understand the elements encompassed by a healthy organisation.

If the business unit wishes to benefit in terms of building a positive organisation and, consequently, talent retention, it should adopt empowerment behaviour in its management style. According to Nedd (2006), a leader has the strongest impact on an employee's intention to stay. Therefore the importance of leader behaviour in talent retention is vital. Development

was found to be one of the most important aspects of leader empowering behaviour relating to retention (i.e. lower intentions of leaving). This is substantiated in previous research that found professional development to be the most important aspect leading to the retention of employees (Loeb & Darling-Hammond, 2005; Rosser & Townsend, 2006). Taplin and Winterton (2007) found that a proactive approach to avoiding the costs involved in employee turnover is best, and that serious investment in training may be the answer for many organisations. Stander and Rothmann (2009) reiterate this by identifying the development of employees as a key competence for managers. They point out that in order to be a good people developer, managers should be coached and developed to delegate authority, hold employees accountable for outcomes, lead by example, encourage subordinates, show concern for others' feelings, allow participative decision-making, share information, and coach and mentor people. It is therefore advisable that the business unit apply leader empowering behaviour practically. The following can act as a guide:

- Delegation of authority: leaders within the business unit must create an environment that encourages employees to be involved in decision-making.
- Accountability: it is the leaders' responsibility to ensure that all employees within the business unit are held accountable for the work they are assigned to, for performance and results, and for customer satisfaction.
- Self-directed decision-making: leaders within the business unit must allow the employees to utilise their skills in formulating solutions independently, thereby allowing them to make decisions that affect their work.
- Information sharing: employees within the business unit must be given all the necessary information by the leader so that they are able to ensure high quality work performance within their assigned roles.
- Skill development: leaders must make continuous learning, skills development and employee problem-solving a priority within the business unit.

It is also important to ensure that the employees' roles are clarified through the provision of the necessary information regarding expectations placed upon them. The extent to which information is successfully received and understood is also important. Tasks must be communicated to employees in such a way that their fit and function within the organisation is comprehensively understood. Leaders must ensure that employees have clear career paths,

detailed job models, and a structured process to consult when clarification of expectations is needed.

Interventions employed within the business unit should also take engagement into account as engagement contributes to the enhancement of work-life and promotes the well-being of employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Through the utilisation of engagement, employees will become happier in their work environment and be less likely to think of leaving. Wildermuth and Pauken (2008) state that the first step that leaders need to take in engaging employees is to ensure that they themselves are engaged. Adopting this approach will ensure that employees are enthusiastic, energetic and focused on their work, which will essentially contribute to organisational success. Engaged employees promise higher productivity, improved customer satisfaction, increased profits and good safety records (Saks, 2006). The role of meaningful work is extremely important with regard to engagement efforts. The business unit should conduct stay-in interviews, group discussions and meetings in order to establish whether employees experience their work as meaningful. Interventions can also focus on increasing the meaningfulness of work in order to increase the engagement of employees within the business unit (Dychtwald & Morison, 2006)

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

The following recommendations resulting from the study can be made for future research. Firstly, the research design utilised was cross-sectional and this limits the ability to determine cause-and-effect relationships; therefore, longitudinal studies should be employed to establish the causal relationships among the variables.

To enhance external validity, the sample size of 179 should be expanded, both to reach a larger sample size as well as to obtain the involvement of more organisations. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the LEBQ, MRCAQ, MEQ, UWES and ILS for other industries should be explored. It would also be advantageous if these questionnaires were to be translated into other applicable languages so that misinterpretations and language bias are minimised. In order to recognise the issues of cultural appropriateness, bias and equivalence studies can be conducted. The language proficiency of all participants should be established prior to administration of instruments.

This scientific value of this study could be improved through the utilisation of more appropriate randomised sampling methods. It would be beneficial to investigate the effect of leader empowering behaviour, role clarity, psychological empowerment and work engagement on absenteeism, general health, and employee wellness (e.g. alcohol and substance abuse, and stress).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, conclusions regarding the theoretical and empirical objectives were drawn. The limitations of the research were discussed and, thereafter, recommendations were made for the business unit and then for future research.

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