

The role of perceived organisational support, diversity, engagement and burnout in the retention of employees

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- This mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.
- The first chapter in this dissertation presents the research proposal. Therefore, the first chapter is written in a different style than subsequent chapters.

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DECLARATION

I, Talita Serfontein, hereby declare that “The role of perceived organisational support, diversity, engagement and burnout in the retention of employees” is my own original work and that the opinions and views expressed in this work are those of the authors and relevant literature references shown in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Talita Serfontein', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

TALITA SERFONTEIN

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SUMMARY

Title: The role of perceived organisational support, diversity, engagement and burnout in the retention of employees

Key words: Diversity, burnout, talent retention, work engagement, organisational commitment, organisational support, turnover intention, workforce

The aim of this study was to identify how organisational support, diversity, burnout and work engagement influence organisational commitment and turnover intention, and if perceived organisational support and diversity act as moderators to influence the outcomes of these relationships. A cross-sectional survey design was used. Data ($N = 4,658$) was gathered from a survey data archive that contains responses to survey questions as well as the demographical data regarding the respondents that was completed during wellness audits. The South African Employee Health and Wellness Survey (SAEHWS[®]) was used during the gathering of the data (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006).

Statistical analysis was done by means of descriptive statistics and relationships were determined by means of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995). Regressions were used to predict the outcome variables of turnover intention and organisational commitment and the interaction effects were plotted, using organisational support and diversity as moderators on burnout as well as engagement. Burnout shows a strong inverse relationship with both organisational support and commitment. A strong direct relationship exists between burnout and turnover intention. On the other hand, a strong inverse relationship was found between turnover intention and organisational commitment. It was found that engagement relates positively to enhanced commitment and support, as well as decreased turnover intention. Diversity is a statistically significant predictor but does not moderate any relationship. It thus directly influences turnover intention as well as organisational commitment. However, diversity problems were also found to be positively linked with symptoms of burnout as well as an increased turnover intention. A strong inverse relationship exists between diversity problems and

work engagement. Organisational support was found to moderate the effect of burnout and engagement on both turnover intention and organisational commitment and seems to negate diversity problems.

As conclusion, recommendations for future research are made.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Die rol van waargenome organisatoriese ondersteuning, diversiteit, werksbetrokkenheid en uitbranding in die retensie van werknemers

Sleutelwoorde: Diversiteit, uitbranding, talentbehouding, werksbetrokkenheid, organisatoriese betrokkenheid, organisatoriese ondersteuning, omsetoogmerk, werksmag

Die doel van die studie was om te identifiseer hoe waargenome organisatoriese ondersteuning, diversiteit, uitbranding en werksbetrokkenheid organisatoriese betrokkenheid en omsetoogmerk beïnvloed en of organisatoriese ondersteuning en diversiteit as modereerders optree, ten einde die resultate te beïnvloed. 'n Dwarsdeursnee opname ontwerp is gebruik. Data ($N = 4,658$) is vanaf 'n data argief verkry waar die antwoorde vanaf vraelysopnames, asook demografiese data van die kandidate wat aan gesondheidsouditte deelgeneem het, gestoor word. Die "South African Employee Health and Wellness Survey (SAEHWS[®]) is gedurende die insameling van die data gebruik (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006).

Statistiese analise is deur middel van beskrywende statistiek gedoen en die Pearson produk moment korrelasie koëffisiënt is gebruik ten einde verhoudingbepaling te doen (Clark & Watson, 1995). Regressies is aangewend ten einde die uitkomste veranderlikes van werksomsetoogmerk en organisatoriese betrokkenheid te voorspel en die interaksie-effek is geplot met organisatoriese ondersteuning en diversiteit as moderatore op uitbranding asook omsetoogmerk. 'n Sterk direkte verhouding is tussen uitbranding en omsetoogmerk gevind. Aan die ander kant bestaan 'n sterk negatiewe verhouding tussen omsetoogmerk en organisatoriese ondersteuning. Dit is gevind dat werksbetrokkenheid 'n positiewe verhouding met organisatoriese betrokkenheid en ondersteuning het en dat 'n afname in omsetoogmerk te bespeur is. Diversiteit is 'n statistiese voorspeller, maar modereer nie enige verhoudings nie. Dit beïnvloed omsetoogmerk asook organisatoriese betrokkenheid direk. Aan die ander kant is diversiteit ook direk met simptome van uitbranding asook hoër omsetoogmerk verbind. 'n Sterk negatiewe verhouding bestaan

tussen diversiteit en organisatoriese betrokkenheid. Organisasie ondersteuning modereer beide die effek van uitbranding asook werksbetrokkenheid op beide omsetoogmerk en organisasie betrokkenheid en blyk diversiteitsprobleme te neutraliseer.

Voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing word ter afsluiting gemaak.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on the role of burnout, engagement, diversity and perceived organisational support in the retention of employees. For purposes of this study, retention is conceptualised as those factors that will influence employees to remain committed to, or as a negative alternative, to consider leaving, the organisation. Chapter 1 provides the problem statement, which states the motivation for the current research. It also provides a literature review, which will outline what previous research has found regarding the topic. Specific models applicable to the study will also be discussed, as will be the research objectives of the study. Information regarding the research methods used, the participants, measuring tool and statistical analysis is provided. The research article will be available in Chapter 2, whereas Chapter 3 will consist of conclusions based on the findings, as well as specific limitations and recommendations for future research.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1 Overview of the problem

It is almost two decades since the official end of Apartheid. Gone is the euphoria of the 1994 political changes that swept through South Africa like a refreshing breeze, purifying the putrid and filth of apartheid and its ravages. Almost two decades later, and post-apartheid South Africa has to face critical employee issues. What happened to the many promises made during 1994? Why does this country experience “brain drain” to the current extent? And how does the latter phenomenon influence the economy of South Africa? Perhaps even more so than the rest of the world, South Africa needs to critically assess issues of skills, talent retention and diversity as well as to ensure organisational support for its workforce.

The year 1994 saw the scrapping of formal Apartheid and discriminatory laws in South Africa and this was followed by the publication of the White Paper on Affirmative Action (AA).

According to this document “affirmative action in the employment environment is a specific program designed to halt the continuation of discriminatory policies and practices in the workplace and to overturn the imbalances that they created” (White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998, p. 9). The focus of AA has been primarily race and gender-based in South Africa.

The introduction of AA as described above, however, did not bring about the change and prosperity hoped for. In an arena where the bottom line is often the only measure of success, organisations could ill-afford to be less competitive due to the implementation of AA, and thus strategies such as head-hunting and window-dressing were used to satisfy legislative requirements. This, in turn, led to frustrated expectations as well as the widespread job distress still experienced by people (Horwitz, 1996). The arrival of the most recent worldwide recession further impacted negatively on the South African economy and thus also skills development. A major challenge still exists in the manner in which skills development of previously disadvantaged people takes place, while ensuring that organisations remain competitive in the national and global economy in the aftermath of the recession.

The changed status of the South African work and economic landscape also led to the migration of highly skilled and qualified people to greener pastures (Mbanjwa, 2009). This affected the broad economy of South Africa negatively, since it led to severe skill shortages, especially in specialist areas such as health and technical fields. The situation sketched above has led the government and key economic groups to implement specific initiatives to entice South African emigrants to return to the country. Initiatives include the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative - South Africa (ASGISA, 2006), (which aims to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014), as well as the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA, 2006), (which aims at addressing the scarce and critical skills needed to meet ASGISA's objectives).

South African organisations in general also had to transform to reflect the diverse general population (White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998). To achieve the required figures as stipulated in the White Paper on Affirmative Action, recruitment, selection, placement, training as well as advancement of employees from designated groups, in particular, remain some of the focus areas. In this context, white individuals may feel they do not have a positive future in

South African organisations, due to the perceived lack of organisational support, in favour of their black and coloured counterparts. This perception becomes visible in the high rate of resignations and emigration figures from this population group (Hartley, 2009; Hartley, 2010a), as well as the subsequent loss of scarce skills organisations are experiencing.

The situation sketched above, as well as the dynamic challenges South African organisations are facing on a daily basis, has led to the realisation that urgent action regarding the retention, motivation and morale of employees needs to be taken (Martin, 2005; Ployhart, 2006). In this study, retention of employees refers to those actions that must be taken as well as those factors that need to be in place in order to keep workers in the organisation for longer periods of time, while also ensuring their full engagement during their tenure at the organisation (Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Employees are committed to organisations due to the presence of specific conditions (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Warr, 2007). The continuous availability of these conditions leads to higher productivity as well as longer tenure at the organisation. Turnover intention and actual turnover are also the results of either the presence or absence of specific required circumstances. These must be identified in order to influence the retention of employees (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Based on this, retention can be conceptualised as consisting of both (low) turnover intention, and (high) organisational commitment.

In order to facilitate the above it is important to ensure that conditions prevail that contribute to work engagement in general, as well as the optimal functioning of employees (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Warr, 2007). The rationale for the above is simple: if highly skilled employees can be retained by the organisation, recruitment, selection and training costs will be reduced and this will lessen the burden on already stressed HR budgets. Experienced employees should also enable effective functioning across the different operational spheres. Engaged employees would furthermore deliver a high standard of work to the organisation and ultimately to the economy and the citizens of South Africa (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

To exacerbate the above, aspects such as continued pressure on organisations to perform better with fewer resources are reflected in the changing psychological contracts between employers and employees. Employees are expected to give more in terms of time, effort, skills and

flexibility, while career security is fast falling by the wayside (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Couple to this the issues of poor salaries (Hartley, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Kgosana, 2010; SAPA, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Quantrill, 2009), continuous political interference (du Toit, 2009; Gibson, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d; Heitman, 2009a, 2009b; SAPA, 2010c), poor management and lack of organisational support (Dlamini, 2010; Heitman, 2009a; Sisulu, 2010), and reasons for low morale and subsequent disengagement from work become easily understandable. The above has a direct influence on perceived organisational support (POS); thus influencing aspects such as absenteeism (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), organisational commitment and turnover intention, as well as actual turnover (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Mostert and Rothman (2006) indicate that as soon as stressors get out of hand, burnout becomes an issue and the employee will implement action to alleviate the effects of the stress. These actions can be either active, such as resignation, or passive, such as prolonged absenteeism (Campbell & Rothmann, 2005; Rothmann, 2003; Rothmann, van der Colff, & Rothmann, 2006).

Trained and skilled workers are in short supply. Organisations need to do all in their power to prevent the turnover of skilled workers. If the causes of turnover intention and eventual turnover can be identified at an early stage, preventative action can be implemented in order to curb the outflow of knowledgeable personnel. Incidentally, it was found that employees that are given the opportunity to take part in training and development initiatives are more committed to their work and less likely to leave the organisation (Pajo, Coetzer, & Guenole, 2010). From available research it is clear that workers that have positive work experiences are more inclined to be committed to their work, whereas those that experience negative work environments will be less likely to remain in the organisation (Hui, Wong, & Tjosvold, 2007). POS has been found to be a predictor of turnover intention, or, on the other hand, organisational commitment (Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010). Linked to the latter, Vandenberghe and Bentein (2009) found that affective commitment to supervisors also led to reduced turnover. Antón (2009) found that job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of turnover intention. Conflict, as well as role ambiguity, as the building blocks of job dissatisfaction, led to an ultimate decrease in workers' performance and this, in turn, led to the withdrawal of energy and ultimately, turnover.

With all of the above taken into consideration, it is proposed that an in-depth study be done among members of the South African workforce regarding how burnout and work engagement are associated with their organisational commitment and turnover intention, as well as the extent to which diversity and organisational support may moderate or influence these outcomes.

The aim of this study would thus be the following:

- To understand the current situation in South Africa regarding how employees are experiencing burnout, engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention.
- To understand how burnout, engagement, diversity and organisational support influence organisational commitment and turnover intention.
- To understand how diversity and organisational support moderates the relationship between burnout and engagement on the one hand, and turnover intention and organisational commitment on the other.

The secondary aim would be to recommend actions that may be implemented to retain talent and skills by fostering organisational commitment and preventing employee turnover, while still ensuring that diversity in the organisation is managed in accordance with legislative guidelines and political expectations.

The study, as described above, will be done within the theoretical framework of the Conservation of Resources model (COR, Hobfoll, 1998) as well as the Job Demands – Resources model (JD-R) (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The variables of burnout, engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention will be conceptualised from the literature below. The relationship among these variables will be conceptualised within the mentioned theoretical framework and models.

1.1.2 Literature review

1.1.2.1 Burnout

Burnout refers to “prolonged responses to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job” (Maslach, 1998, p. 68). To some extent, “burnout erodes engagement: energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness” (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 34). Studies completed by Maslach (1998) brought to light that burnout consists of three sub-constructs: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and diminished personal accomplishment. Excessive psychological demands lead to emotional exhaustion – a lack of energy and a feeling that one’s emotional resources are depleted. Depersonalisation is characterised by a high level of cynicism and uncaring attitudes and behaviours towards others and work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Constant devaluation of oneself and one’s accomplishments and feelings of incompetence are some of the signs of diminished personal accomplishment (Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In contrast to the study findings cited above, Korunka, Kubicek, Schaufeli, and Hoonakker (2009), and Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen and Christensen (2005), consider fatigue as the core dimension of burnout and question the tripartite syndrome consisting of exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness.

Rothmann (2005) advances that excessive job demands, specifically work overload, and a shortage or absence of resources, predict burnout. It also correlates positively with health problems and turnover intention. A lack of support from supervisors and colleagues as well as a lack of autonomy also leads to burnout. On the other hand, it was found that the availability of organisational support correlates negatively with exhaustion (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). Adequate organisational support can thus prevent burnout in employees. Lee and Ashforth (1996) indicate a strong correlation between exhaustion and work overload. The consequences of burnout include physical or psychological resignation (the person remains employed but does the bare minimum) (Seiler & Pearson, 1984). It furthermore leads to physical illness, staff turnover and prolonged absenteeism (Dobie et al., 2004; Leiter, Harvie, & Frizell, 1998; Maslach et al., 1996), as well as mental and physical health problems (Lee & Ashforth, 1990).

Scanty evidence currently exists with regard to the direct relationship between diversity and burnout. Poorly managed diversity in an organisation leads to an increase in conflict, misunderstanding (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), lower levels of personal contribution to the organisation (Kirchmeyer, 1993) and these, in turn, may lead to higher levels of turnover intention and actual turnover (Jackson, et al., 1991). It is thus hypothesized that burnout amongst organisational employees may be associated with increased diversity issues in the organisation. On the other hand, research has also shown that properly managed diversity issues lead to higher levels of improved decision-making, more flexibility, as well as an increase in innovation (de Dreu & West, 2001). In such instances, diversity would correlate negatively with burnout. Given that the position of diversity in the JD-R model is ambiguous, an important aim of this study is to investigate and clarify that position.

1.1.2.2 Work engagement

Work engagement is characterised by a high level of energy and strong identification with the work being done (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged people can personally identify with the work role and are thus able to express themselves through the tasks they do. During disengagement, on the other hand, people become distanced from the work role and are thus physically and emotionally uninvolved with the tasks expected of them.

The operational definition of work engagement was developed by Maslach and Leiter (1997), who expanded on Kahn's (1990) conceptual work. Their original argument postulated that job engagement and burnout were two opposite ends of a continuum. Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, and Bakker, (2002) argued, however, that engagement is an independent state of mind and should be seen as totally separate from burnout. They suggest that the presence of one concept (low burnout) does not necessarily include the other factor (high engagement).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 295) continued by defining job engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” and specified three unique dimensions of engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption. They also chose to measure the different constructs in a

unique manner. High levels of energy and mental resilience, the willingness to invest in one's work and continued persistence, even in the face of difficulty, construe vigour. The latter is seen as the opposite of exhaustion (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication, as Schaufeli et al. (2002) attest, refers to a sense of significance, inspiration, pride, challenge as well as enthusiasm. It is also the opposite of cynicism. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) identified absorption as a state of complete immersion in one's work, accompanied by focussed and complete attention, loss of the self in the task, and the individual furthermore experiences inner joy, absolute control and complete immersion in the task. A person who is absorbed in his work fully concentrates on the task at hand and the person has trouble detaching himself from his task. Time also tends to pass quickly. Although vigour and dedication have opposites on the continuum that describe burnout, absorption stands alone and is not coupled to reduced efficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Recent studies, however, suggest that vigour and dedication constitute the core dimensions of engagement (Gonzalez-Roma, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Lloret, 2006; Kim, Shin, & Swanger, 2009). Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) identified four required elements for engagement to take place in the work environment. These are (a) the availability of resources and clear goals, (b) feelings of worth and contribution to the organisation, (c) a sense of belonging and (d) the opportunity for growth and development.

If high engagement is characterised by a high level of energy and a strong identification with the work (Kahn, 1990), it is a logical next step to assume that high engagement will lead to higher organisational commitment. Studies done by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) indicated that work engagement is negatively related to the intention to quit. Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) found that engaged employees are committed and satisfied with their work. Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2006) showed that age, marital and parental status, number of children, level of education, hours worked or part-time work, are not predictive of work engagement. The above confirms that it is rather the amount of job resources that relates to the level of work engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Hakanen, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2005; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found a positive relationship between social support at work, performance feedback, supervisory coaching and work engagement.

The relationship between engagement and diversity, on the other hand, is not as clear since conflicting results have been forthcoming from various studies (Roberge & Dick, 2010). Results obtained by de Dreu and West (2001) indicate that diversity can lead to better decision-making as well as higher levels of creativity and innovation. This, however, does not automatically lead to higher levels of engagement. Lower group commitment (Tsui, Egan, & o'Reilly, 1992), less communication (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), and more conflict and misunderstanding (Chatman & Flynn, 2001) has also been found to detract from work engagement, and these are the building blocks of turnover intention as well as actual turnover (Jackson et al., 1991). De Lange, De Witte, and Notelaers (2008) and Saks (2006) confirmed that low work engagement, poor job autonomy and poor resources are active predictors of actual turnover.

1.1.2.3 Diversity

Workforces across the world are becoming more diverse (Carvel, 2001; Morris, 2002), in order to remain competitive in the continuous globalisation that is taking place (McShane, 2006). Diversity refers to attributes that differ between individuals and that may lead to the perception that one person is different from another (van Knippenberg, de Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). These differences may refer to surface-level or deep-level differences between people (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). Surface-level differences refer to overtly visible characteristics such as gender, race and handicap. Deep-level differences are those covert characteristics such as beliefs, personality, as well as values. Pelled, Ledford and Mohrman (1999) emphasise that the context needs to be taken into consideration in order to categorise these characteristics.

Group diversity is defined by Nkomo and Cox (1996, p. 339) as “people with different group identities within the same social system”. Harrison and Sin (2005, p.196), on the other hand, define diversity within a group as “the collective amount of differences among members of a social unit”. From the above-mentioned definitions it is clear that group identity forms the basis for relationships within diverse workgroups and will thus influence the output of the group. Group diversity, including gender diversity, is ensured by means of affirmative action (AA) and

this involves the “remedial consideration of race, ethnicity, or sex as a factor ... in decision making” (Leiter & Leiter, 2002, p. 1).

Urciuoli (2009) points out that it is a well-known fact that diverse groups lead to better problem-solving. Green (2004) cites higher motivation, better problem-solving as well as less racial segregation in the workplace as positive attributes of diversity. De Dreu and West (2001) are in agreement with the latter due to the larger range of work-related knowledge that is available within a diverse group. However, various studies have also identified negative attributes of diverse groups. Lower group commitment (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992), distrust (Chatopadhyay, 1999), less communication (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), higher perceptions of organisational unfairness (Mor-Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998) and less personal contribution to the task at hand (Kirchmeyer, 1993) were negative aspects that were found on an individual and group level. Reduced cohesiveness (Harrison et al., 1998; Terborg, Castore, & DeNinno, 1976), increased turnover (Jackson et al., 1991), decreased cooperation as well as lower personal satisfaction (Chatman & Flynn, 2001), and more conflicts and misunderstandings are also associated with greater diversity (Chatman & Sparato, 2005).

It is clear from the research that very specific conditions must exist in order to ensure an increase in the performance of diverse groups. Pettigrew (1998) argue that four conditions are required to ensure the positive effects of diversity and intergroup contact, namely justice, common goals, cooperation within the group and equal group status within the situation. Further research has also identified moderating variables that could offer an explanation as to when diversity would lead to positive group performance. These variables include more time (Mohammed & Angell, 2004), openness to diversity (Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2004), collective versus individualistic values (Chatman & Sparato, 2005), task interdependence (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Pelled et al., 1999), organisational culture (Chatman, Polzer, Barsade, & Neale, 1998), organisational climate (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Bashdi, 2005) as well as task complexity (Jehn et al., 1999). From the above it is thus clear that diversity may be an important moderator between employee wellbeing (such as burnout and engagement), and individual-level organisational outcomes like turnover intention and organisational commitment.

1.1.2.4 Organisational support

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) contend that employees assign human-like characteristics, such as caring, protective or abusive, to organisations, according to how the organisation treats them. The employee furthermore also develops a set of beliefs with regard to how much his or her input is valued by the organisation, as well as how much the organisation cares for his/her well-being. The latter is known as organisational support. Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir (2008) explain that organisational support consists of supervisor support, fairness and organisational job conditions. Rothmann and Rothmann (2006) argue that organisational support additionally consists of the sub-dimensions of role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making, colleague support and supervisory relationships. For the purposes of this study, this comprehensive view is the one that will be used in both the conceptualisation and operationalization of organisational support. The discussion now turns to the noted components of organisational support.

Role clarity is a sub-dimension of organisational support (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). This refers to the employees' understanding of the tasks that need to be performed as well as at what level the task performance is required. It furthermore includes aspects such as the relevant policies and procedures that govern the task, lines of communication and reporting, personal requirements including skills, abilities and competencies, as well as where and when the individual is expected to perform (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). If the organisation is seen as just and fair, organisational support increases. Bray and Brawley (2002) state that success in interdependent team work is directly dependent on role clarity. High levels of role clarity furthermore leads to higher levels of sustained performance, whereas role ambiguity (the opposite of role clarity) leads to diminished effort, lower levels of persistence as well as ineffective performance (Bray & Brawley, 2002). Hardin, Fuller, and Valacich (2006), and Priyadarshini (2009) are in agreement with the latter, indicating that organisational productivity and success are closely linked to individual success, whereas the latter finds its core in the clear expectations of the task. Rothmann and Joubert (2007), on the other hand, report that role ambiguity is a major demand according to the JD-R and, in conjunction with the COR, indicate that burnout is likely to develop if resources are not adequate to meet the set demands. Taris,

Schreurs, and Schaufeli (1999) also reported a strong correlation between job stress and burnout. Role ambiguity, as the opposite of role clarity, was identified as a specific demand that could lead to burnout and diminished work involvement.

Closely linked to the above is job information. This refers to aspects such as results obtained, how the job fits in with the rest of the organisation, including subordinate and superior structures, what the reporting structures are as well as what level the job is situated on (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Whereas role clarity refers to what is expected from the individual, job information concentrates on the information pertaining to the post itself. Clear and accurate job information leads to higher levels of perceived organisational support since the individual is aware of how his specific post is influencing the rest of the organisation (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006).

Participative decision making (PDM) refers to decisions made jointly by superiors and subordinates (Locke & Schweiger, 1979). Behbahan (2012) stresses that participative decision making leads to better and more successful collaborative leadership in the organisation and conveys various potential benefits. Some of these include better quality of decisions being made, the enhancement of employee work life, increases in employee motivation and commitment, as well as higher overall work satisfaction. These factors have also been identified as potential influencers to ensure higher organisational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Rothmann, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Burke and Richardsen (1993) identified PDM as a job resource that enhanced the job environment. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) found higher levels of burnout amongst employees who do not enjoy PDM.

Colleague support is, as Rothmann and Rothmann (2006) explain, a further sub-dimension of organisational support. Aspects such as mutual trust, reliability during team and small-group work, as well as group cohesion, form part of this sub-dimension. As such, colleague support is identified as a job resource (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). A strong correlation exists between burnout and the absence of job resources, particularly social support that also includes colleague support (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007).

Supervisory relationships are also one of the sub-dimensions of organisational support, according to Rothmann and Rothmann (2006). Since supervisors are seen as acting on behalf of senior management, the relationships they have with subordinates are very important (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999). Current research has indicated that supervisory support correlates positively with organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003), and correlates negatively with absenteeism as well as turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Research indicates that high organisational support is associated with favourable outcomes for the organisation. Aspects such as job satisfaction and intent to remain at the organisation (Stamper & Johlke, 2003), organisational identification, loyalty and citizenship (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), organisational commitment (Shore & Wayne, 1993) as well as organisational trust (Chen, Aryee, & Lee, 2005), are all positively correlated with organisational support. Eisenberger et al. (1986), on the other hand, also found that high organisational support is correlated negatively with absenteeism while similar results were found for withdrawal (Allen, Shore, & Griffith, 2003). Keashly (in Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008) also found that organisational support attenuates the effects of emotional abuse and bullying. Organisational support furthermore leads to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). What is more, research findings also indicate that high organisational support could have a positive effect in preventing employees from developing burnout (Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007; Richardson, Burke, & Mikkelsen, 2004). Based on the above, organisational support is conceptualised as a moderator in this study.

1.1.2.5 Organisational commitment

The theory on organisational commitment holds that it remains a reciprocal process – if the organisation supports the individual by providing adequate job resources, the employee will respond by means of committed behaviour (Pazy & Ganzach, 2009; Zimmerman, 2008). The theory is supported by the positive links that are made with organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). It is furthermore implied that organisations should provide adequate resources such as fair treatment and safe job conditions, as well as supervisory

support. This will support social cohesion of the workforce and a positive attitude towards the organisation (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Demerouti et al. (2001) reported positive correlations between organisational commitment and engagement. Organisational commitment behaviour contributes positively to reaching organisational goals (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2006). The focus on behaviour distinguishes this concept from commitment as an attitude (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Diversity does not link to organisational commitment as clearly as it does to organisational support. Conflicting results have been obtained from various studies done in the field of diversity (Roberge & Van Dick, 2010). From the current research available, it is thus not clear whether diversity correlates positively or negatively with organisational commitment. Investigating this relationship presents a contribution from the envisaged study.

1.1.2.6 Turnover intention

Turnover intention refers to an employee's wish to leave the organisation or his/her present job (Liou & Cheng, 2010). Although turnover intention has not yet resulted in actual turnover, research indicates that it is an immediate predictor of the latter. Turnover itself differs from turnover intention and refers to the act of physically leaving the organisation (Liou & Cheng, 2010). It has been linked to emotional as well as physical withdrawal from the job and may prove to be very expensive for the company or organisation since it influences recruitment as well as placement costs (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). The loss of skills and expertise are only some of the losses the organisation may incur when an employee resigns from the organisation (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Research has found direct links between turnover intention and job performance. Hulin, Roznowski, and Hachiya (1985), in Hui, Wong, and Tjosvold (2007), point out that employees withdraw their energy from the work environment as a result of their intention to leave the organisation. If the employee is expecting the work relationship to come to an end soon, he/she will be more likely to refrain from further investment in the organisation in the form of high work performance. The withdrawal of high performance sabotages actual performance, resulting in lower overall effectiveness.

Regarding organisational support, Liou and Cheng (2010) found that a positive organisational climate may increase nurses' work commitment which will in turn prevent them from leaving the organisation. Other studies concur with the latter and it is widely accepted that organisational support correlates negatively with turnover intention as well as actual turnover (Hui et al., 2007; Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009). Vandenberghe and Bentein (2009) investigated the relationship between turnover and affective commitment to supervisors as well as turnover and the affective commitment to the organisation. Their findings indicate that affective commitment to both the supervisor and the organisation exercises independent influences on turnover intention and actual turnover. From their studies it is clear that affective commitment to the supervisor will be the determining factor regarding turnover intention and actual turnover.

Direct links have also been found between turnover intention and burnout. Burnout precedes physical or psychological resignation (the person remains employed but does the bare minimum) (Seiler & Pearson, 1984), and it furthermore leads to staff turnover and prolonged absenteeism (Dobie et al., 2004; Leiter, Harvie, & Frizell, 1998; Maslach et al., 1996). Whereas burnout leads to higher levels of turnover and turnover intention, work engagement, on the other hand, has the opposite effect. Studies indicate that high levels of work engagement correlate negatively with turnover and turnover intention (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). In opposition to the above, diversity was found to correlate positively with increased turnover (Jackson et al., 1991). This may be due to higher levels of communication breakdown (Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), more conflict and misunderstanding among diverse groups (Chatman & Sparato, 2005), lower group commitment (Tsui et al., 1992), distrust (Chatopadhyay, 1999), higher perception of organisational unfairness (Mor-Barak et al., 1998) and less personal contribution to the task at hand (Kirchmeyer, 1993). The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR, Hobfoll, 2002) can be applied to conceptualise these variables within a theoretical framework. This is where the focus will now be shifted to.

1.1.2.7 Conservation of Resources theory

The Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 2002) is a theoretical framework that can be used to create an understanding of employee wellbeing. This model is based on the understanding that employees will protect, keep and accumulate valued resources (Hobfoll, 2002). Resources can include objects and relationships, as well as aspects such as autonomy (Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009). The presence of these factors leads to well-being and resilience, whereas psychological distress and burnout result if these assets are lost. If loss of these resources occurs, the stress reaction is put in motion. Ultimately, the latter may result in turnover intention or turnover. On the other side of the continuum, if more of these resources are available, positive development, growth, resilience and work engagement will result.

COR defines *psychological stress* as a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain, following the investment of resources. Both perceived and actual loss, and lack of gain, is envisaged as sufficient for producing stress (Hobfoll, 1998, p. 516). Hobfoll (1998) identified four kinds of resources of which loss or gain would result in either stress or well-being. These are object resources which are physical in nature (*e.g.* house), conditions that are valued (*e.g.* marriage, seniority), and personal characteristics in the sense that these may resist stress reactions, and energies (*e.g.* time, money). The latter resources are valued due to their ability to aid in gaining other resources.

1.1.2.8 The Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R)

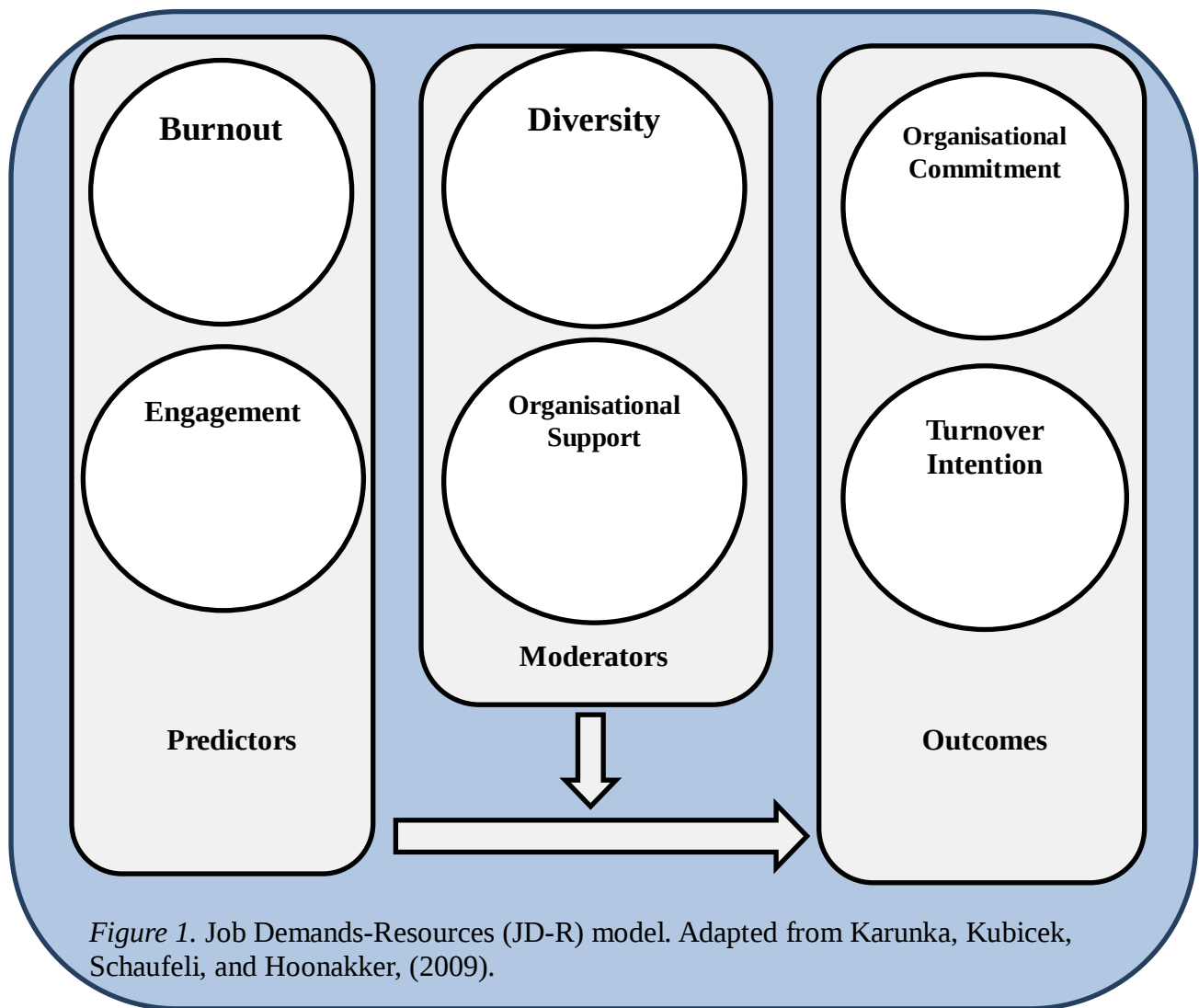
Whereas the COR model creates an understanding of work engagement and also suggests that burnout may develop when valued resources are lost, the Job Demands – Resources (JD-R) model creates an understanding of how working conditions can lead to either turnover or commitment to the organisation (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to this model, all working conditions may be divided into one of two categories, namely job demands or job resources. Job

demands refer to all aspects of work that require a continuous physical or psychological effort and thus also incur psychological cost for the individual. Burnout may be one such price that may be paid. This category is linked to the energetic process of mental and physical depletion of resources. Job resources, on the other hand, include all aspects that lead to the achievement of work goals, the reduction of job demands as well as those aspects that lead to the development and personal growth of individuals. This category is linked to the motivational process during which individuals are motivated (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Korunka et al. (2009) note that the motivational process assumes that a link exists between job resources and organisational outcomes by means of work engagement. The energetic process links job demands with health impairments by means of the mediating effect of burnout.

From the above it can be clearly deduced that burnout and work engagement have a powerful influence on all aspects of organisational commitment and turnover intention, as well as diversity and organisational support. Using the COR as well as the JD-R as foundational frameworks, the current study proposes that diversity and organisational support will act as moderators between the predictor variables (burnout and engagement) and the outcome variables (organisational commitment and turnover intention). Moderators affect the strength and/or direction of the relation between a predictor and an outcome variable by means of enhancing, reducing, or changing the influence of the predictor (Fairchild & McKinnon, 2009). Moderators and predictors are furthermore always independent variables and also function on the same level with regard to role as causal variables to outcome variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

If the predictor variables in the current study (Burnout, engagement, organisational support and diversity) are tested against the above, it becomes clear that they all function as independent variables. All of the above also function on the same level as causal variables of the outcome variables. However, the predictors in this study (burnout and engagement) are not causally antecedent to diversity and organisational support. In other words the latter may also influence levels of organisational commitment and turnover intention, without the added influence of burnout and engagement. The variables in this study will thus be moderators since they can function independently to lead to the expected outcomes, namely turnover intention and

organisational commitment. The latter is indicated by the model below, depicting that diversity and organisational support will act as moderators in the current study.



1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions emerge from the problem statement and literature review:

- How are burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment, and turnover intention conceptualised in the literature?

- What is the relationship between burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees?
- Can experiences of burnout, work engagement, diversity, and organisational support be used to predict organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees?
- Does diversity and organisational support moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement as predictors, and organisational commitment and turnover intention as outcomes?
- What recommendations can be made for South African organisations and future studies?

1.2.1 Expected contribution of the study

1.2.1.1 Individual contribution

- Employees can be made aware that they have the power to make a difference in the lives of others, especially in how people perceive their role as supervisor and colleague in the work environment.
- Supervisors can be made aware of the role they play in facilitating aspects such as work engagement, subordinate support and organisational commitment.
- A better understanding of the operation of diversity in organisations should help individual employees manage it better to also enhance organisational commitment and protect against turnover intention.

1.2.1.2 Contribution to the broader economy

- Training shortages can be identified in order to fill gaps.
- Aspects that hamper work commitment and foster turnover intention can be identified and rectified.
- Leaders and HR employees can be made aware of critical training shortages and implement actions to rectify the situation.

- Leaders can implement actions to ensure talent retention in the organisation.

1.2.1.3 Contribution to the literature

- Information regarding factors that influence organisational commitment and employee turnover in South African organisations would contribute to the existing literature.
- This study will assist in identifying shortcomings and in providing possible solutions to issues such as poor organisational commitment, high turnover intentions and negative perceptions regarding diversity as well as organisational support.
- Guidelines and interventions for managing commitment and turnover intention can be identified and implemented.
- This study will add and provide some guidance regarding the existing inconsistencies regarding the relationship between burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support, and the outcomes of organisational commitment and turnover intention.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate how organisational commitment and turnover intentions are influenced by organisational experiences of burnout and work engagement and whether diversity and organisational support moderate this relationship.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To determine how burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment, and turnover intention are conceptualised in the literature.
- To determine the relationships between burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support and organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees.

- To determine whether experiences of burnout, work engagement, diversity, and organisational support may be used to predict organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees.
- To determine whether organisational support and diversity moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement as predictors, and organisational commitment and turnover intention as outcomes.
- To make recommendations for South African organisations and future studies.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

1.4.1 Research approach

Against the above background it is proposed that the study be conducted within the quantitative paradigm. Field (2009, p.792) explains that the quantitative method infers “evidence for a theory through measurement of variables that produce numeric outcomes”. One of the major strengths of such a study is the fact that much information can be gained during a single intervention. The information gained can be manipulated to answer a variety of research questions. Most important is the fact that results can be used to make assumptions and also to plan for future interventions. A cross-sectional survey will be used.

1.4.2 Research method

Available data, in the form of a sample of 4,658 individually completed surveys from Afriforté (Pty) Ltd. will be used for the current research. The data will be analysed and the results will be reported in the form of a research article. Afriforté is the commercial arm of the WorkWell Research Unit in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus. The ultimate aim of Workwell is to support economic development and growth in South Africa. This is done through the creation of productive and safe working environments. In order to accomplish the above, much research is done in the sphere of work wellness. This research is analysed and practical tools that are culturally sensitive

and unbiased are developed from the data. These tools become very effective instruments in the hands of management to ensure further growth and development of healthy organisations.

1.4.3 Literature review

During the initial stages of the research a literature study will be done regarding burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, as well as organisational commitment and turnover intention. The following sources will be used to ensure a thorough literature study:

- Ebscohost
- ProQuest
- SACat
- Emerald
- Google Scholar
- SA ePublications
- Nexus search

1.4.4 Research participants

Data, regarding the respondents, is available from a survey data archive that contains responses to survey questions as well as demographic data obtained during wellness audits. A total of 6,129 respondents took part in the completion of the wellness audits and the response rate therefore is 76%. Various sectors from the South African work environment took part in these audits. An availability sample ($n = 4,658$), comprising participants from the nine provinces in South Africa and consisting of members of the eleven official language groups will be used. The different genders and marital statuses, age groups (between the ages of 20 and 60), the different race groups (African, White, Coloured and Indian) and a variety of educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary education) are represented. All data is kept on computer files and great care is taken to ensure the reliability and validity of all the data, especially because it is collected for research purposes. The data was gathered between 2009 and 2010.

When data from a survey data base is considered, the reasons for the original study must be known and evaluated against the current reasons for making use of the data set. The validity of the data set, the type of information collected and the age of the data set must also be known since social attitudes and processes may change over time and thus influence the validity of the outcomes of the research (Whitley, 2002). The aims of this research do form part of the general purpose for which the data was originally collected.

1.4.5 Measuring instrument(s)

The South African Employee Health and Wellness Survey (SAEHWS[®], Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006) will be used to measure the study variables. As indicated in the name, this instrument measures the health and wellness status of South African employees. The results are related to the organisational climate and then compared with a South African norm (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Although the SAEHWS[®] defines constructs such as engagement by means of different names than those used in current literature, i.e. *vitality* whereas Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) make use of the word *vigour*, and *work devotion* in the place of *dedication*, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirm that the constructs in this measurement instrument are equivalent to current academic literature. In this study, the dominant terms in the scientific literature will be used.

The validity of the factor structures of the SAEHWS[®] is equivalent for the different ethnic groups and organisations. Rothmann and Rothmann (2006) point out that the SAEHWS[®] is culturally sensitive with no bias against any group. Various organisations from different sectors, including Insurance, Engineering, Correctional Services, Technikons and Universities were compared and show a Tucker's Phi-coefficient of agreement in excess of 0.90 between factor structures (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). The predictive model which supports the SAEHWS[®] allows for prediction of employees at risk and thus provides data to pro-actively manage risks and to ensure the work-related well-being of employees and teams. Sub-dimensions of organisational support, according to the SAEHWS[®], consist of role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making, colleague support and supervisory relationships (Djurkovic et

al., 2008; Jahawar et al., 2007; Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). These are measured by a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). A seven-point rating scale, ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*) is used to measure work-related well-being and includes the following subscales: Exhaustion (e.g. “*I feel tired before I arrive at work*”) and Vitality (e.g. “*I am full of energy in my work*”). Turnover intention is measured by a six-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item would be: “*I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation*”. The full complement of the SAEHWS[®] subscales present with acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients at both the sub-scale and total score levels.

1.4.6 Research procedure

Since data was collected with the additional purpose of conducting research, the validity and reliability of the data have been proven to be acceptable. Data is available electronically and has been saved in a survey data archive. The data archive includes the respondents’ biographical data, as well as individual responses to the survey questions.

Approval to utilise the data for research purposes was granted by the general managers of the organisations. A description of the study, as well as the purpose thereof was provided to participants prior to administration of the self-administered, self-report questionnaires. Confidentiality of all responses was assured and confirmed prior to completion of the questionnaire. All respondents had to grant informed consent and were then provided with sufficient time to complete the questionnaire.

1.4.7 Statistical analysis

The SPSS programme (SPSS, 2011) will be used to carry out the statistical analysis.

- Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to explore and analyse the data.
- Cronbach’s alpha will be computed to assess the reliability of the constructs. The cut-off point that will be used for coefficient alpha is 0.70 (Clark & Watson, 1995).

- Relationships between the different variables will be tested by means of Pearson Product-moment correlations. Statistical significance is set at $p \leq 0.01$. The practical significance of correlation coefficients will be set at $r \geq 0.30$ (medium effect) and a large effect will be $r \geq 0.50$ (Cohen, 1988). These effect sizes will be used to measure the practical significance and impact of the various relationships between the different variables.
- Regressions will be analysed to determine whether the identified variables have an influence on organisational commitment and the turnover intention of employees, and whether the moderating effect of diversity and organisational support is supported.

1.4.8 Ethical considerations

All research must be fair and ethical in order to ensure success. Voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy, informed consent and the principle of doing no harm have been taken into consideration (Devous, 2002). The research proposal will also be submitted to the Faculty of Economic and Management Science's ethical committee for review and approval.

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, the reasons for the current research were discussed and a literature review was conducted to establish a firm foundation regarding previous research findings, as well as to finalise the relevant constructs. Research questions were formulated and turned into specific objectives. Thereafter the research method was explained, including the specific research design, the participants and the procedure to be used. The measuring tool that will be used was

discussed, as well as the statistical techniques that will be used to answer the above-mentioned research questions. An outline of the chapter division was also included.

The following chapter will consist of the research article that will include a detailed literature review, followed by the results obtained during the research. The latter will be discussed in detail in the article.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT, DIVERSITY, ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT IN THE RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to establish how burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support influence organisational commitment and turnover intention. Additionally, the study considered whether diversity and organisational support act as moderators between burnout and work engagement on the one hand, and organisational commitment and turnover intention on the other. Results indicate that burnout shows a strong inverse relationship both with organisational support and commitment, while a strong direct relationship exists with turnover intention. Engagement relates positively to organisational commitment and support, and negatively to turnover intention. Diversity was a statistically significant predictor of organisational commitment and turnover intention, but not a moderator between these variables and burnout or work engagement. Organisational support, additional to being a predictor of organisational commitment and turnover intention, also acted as a moderator in the relationship of burnout and work engagement to these variables.

Key words: Burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment, turnover intention, moderation.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die studie was om te bepaal hoe organisasie-betrokkenheid en die voorneme om te bedank deur uitbranding, werksbegeestering, diversiteit en organisasie-ondersteuning beïnvloed word. 'n Verdere oogmerk van die studie was om te bepaal of diversiteit en organisasie-ondersteuning as modereerders optree tussen uitbranding en werksbegeestering aan die een kant, en organisasie-betrokkenheid en die voorneme om te bedank aan die ander kant. Resultate dui aan dat uitbranding 'n sterk omgekeerde verhouding met sowel organisasie-ondersteuning en organisasie-betrokkenheid het. 'n Sterk, direkte verhouding bestaan tussen uitbranding en die voorneme om te bedank. Werksbegeestering is positief verwant aan verhoogde werksbetrokkenheid en -ondersteuning, en negatief aan die voorneme om te bedank. Diversiteit was 'n statisties beduidende voorspeller van organisasie-betrokkenheid en die voorneme om te bedank, maar het nie gefigureer as 'n modereerder tussen hierdie uitkomst en uitbranding en werksbegeestering nie. Bykomstig daartoe dat dit werksbetrokkenheid en die voorneme om te bedank voorspel het, het organisasie-ondersteuning ook ingetree as modereerder in die verhouding van uitbranding en werksbegeestering met hierdie veranderlikes.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa has reached an economically critical position: Trained and skilled personnel are in short supply, the results of the most recent economic recession are still being felt, and affirmative action policies in general have not achieved what they set out to do, namely to ensure an equal distribution of wealth among the diverse South African population. The latter has instead led to a general alienation of especially white workers (SAIRR, 2007; Van Aardt, 2006), that feel discriminated against and have subsequently resigned or emigrated to greener pastures, creating an ever growing void in the critical skills arena. The global village, as well as the post-modern era we are living in, has also taken its toll with more emphasis being placed on diversity issues, female leadership and technologically advanced mechanised work stations (Burger, Crous, & Roodt, 2013; Carvel, 2001; Doherty, Fink, Inglis, & Pastore, 2010; Loden & Rosener, 1991; McShane, 2006; Morris, 2002; Onyishi & Ogbodo, 2012; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Parumasur, 2012; Van Eeden, 2010). The remaining workforce is faced with ever-increasing stressors and this ultimately leads to burnout and widespread disengagement, negatively impacting general productivity (Horwitz, 1996; Van Eeden, 2010). Organisations need to take stock of current personnel practices, giving specific attention to aspects such as the retention, motivation and morale of all employees, since it is clear from research that these are the factors that have a positive impact on the availability of skills in the short term, the overall health of the economy in the long term, as well as worker commitment in general (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

Much research is available in the international arena regarding those aspects that impact general work-related wellness, especially since the latter becomes visible in either organisational commitment due to an engaged workforce or, on the other hand, lower productivity, due to higher stress levels, and higher levels of absenteeism and turnover intention that lead to actual turnover. It is clear from current research that these factors can and should be managed so as not to be detrimental to the organisation or the individual (Dlamini, 2010; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Hartley, 2010a; Hartley, 2010b; Heitman, 2009; Kgosana, 2010; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Sisulu, 2010; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). This situation also exists in South Africa. Organisations need to identify those factors that

lead to work commitment and overall work-related wellness, whilst, at the same time, identify those aspects that have a negative effect on worker output.

Wishing to remain competitive in the global environment, productivity remains a critical issue for South Africa (McShane, 2006). The unique composition of the South African workforce has naturally led to the identification of diversity and perceived organisational support as critical factors that influence the organisational climate and productivity, determining the duration of the relationship between the organisation and the employee (Burger et al., 2013; Carvel, 2001; Morris, 2002; Onyishi & Ogbodo, 2012; Parumasur, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The availability of valued resources in the relationship between the organisation and employee is furthermore a determining factor in the type of relationship that will exist between the parties (De Lange, De Witte & Notelaers, 2008).

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) point out that burnout and engagement are indicators of employees' overall wellness. It is clear from available research that workers that are engaged and experience a good job-person fit will experience higher levels of engagement, productivity and overall well-being. Engaged workers show behaviour that leads to higher organisational commitment, positive growth and personal commitment to the organisation (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Eisenberger, et al., 1986; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). On the other end of the continuum, burnout leads to turnover intention and high levels of actual turnover (De Lange et al., 2008).

This study will specifically focus on the role of burnout, engagement, diversity and organisational support in the retention of employees. In this study the word retention is conceptualised as consisting of both low turnover intention, and high organisational commitment. These variables will consequently be explored in more depth.

Burnout

Burnout is characterised by chronic mental fatigue and a negative mind-set, physical exhaustion, feelings of pervasive ineffectiveness as well as poor motivation. It refers to “prolonged responses to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job” (Maslach, 1998, p. 68). To some extent, “burnout erodes engagement: energy turns into exhaustion, involvement turns into cynicism and efficacy turns into ineffectiveness” (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 34). Sudden avoidance of familiar tasks and circumstances takes place, as well as emotional withdrawal from social interaction (Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doorn, & Schaufeli, 2006; Maslach, 1998; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Studies completed by Maslach (1998) brought to light that burnout consists of three sub-constructs: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and diminished personal accomplishment. Excessive psychological demands lead to emotional exhaustion – a lack of energy and a feeling that one’s emotional resources are depleted. Depersonalisation is characterised by a high level of cynicism and uncaring attitudes and behaviours towards others and work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Constant devaluation of oneself and one’s accomplishments and feelings of incompetence are some of the signs of diminished personal accomplishment (Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Managers that suffer from burnout erode the general effectiveness of the organisation since dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours spread through the organisation by means of daily interactions (DuBrin, 1990). Some of the consequences of burnout include dissatisfaction with the job, low morale as well as absenteeism and poor service delivery to clients (Rothmann, 2003). Rothmann furthermore recommends that organisations should take a preventative approach towards burnout with interventions directed at the enhancement of employee coping skills or, alternatively, altering the work situation.

According to Rothmann and Rothmann (2006), excessive job demands, specifically work overload, and a shortage or absence of resources, predict burnout. It also correlates positively with health problems and turnover intentions. A lack of support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as a lack of autonomy also leads to burnout. The consequences of burnout include physical or psychological resignation (the person remains employed but does the bare minimum) (Seiler & Pearson, 1984-5). It furthermore leads to physical illness, staff turnover, prolonged

absenteeism (Leiter, Harvie, & Frizell, 1998; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) and mental and physical health problems (Lee & Ashforth, 1990).

Work engagement

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, p. 295) have defined job engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind”, and specified three unique dimensions of engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption. They also chose to measure the different constructs in a unique manner. Vigour consists of high levels of energy and mental flexibility, as well as the willingness to invest in one’s work with continued diligence, even in the face of difficulty. The latter is seen as the opposite of exhaustion (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Dedication, according to Schaufeli et al. (2002), refers to a sense of significance, inspiration, pride, challenge as well as enthusiasm. It is also the opposite of cynicism. Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) identified absorption as a state of being totally involved with the work to such an extent that the employee loses track of time and also experiences difficulty detaching from the work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). A person that is absorbed in his work fully concentrates on the task at hand and the person has trouble detaching himself from his task. Time also tends to pass quickly.

Although vigour and dedication have opposites on the continuum that describe burnout, absorption stands alone and is not coupled to reduced efficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engaged employees seek out opportunities to exercise control and to get feedback from supervisors and, above all, include their co-workers actively in support structures (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli 2009). Harter, Schmidt and Keyes (2003) identified four required elements for work engagement to take place. These are (a) the availability of resources and clear goals, (b) feelings of worth and contribution to the organisation, (c) a sense of belonging and (d) the opportunity for growth and development.

If high engagement is characterised by a high level of energy and a strong identification with the work (Kahn, 1990), it is a logical next step to assume that high engagement would lead to higher organisational commitment. Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris (2008) have proposed that

engagement is assumed to ensure positive outcomes for the individual in the form of development and growth, as well as for the organisation, visible as quality performance. Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2006), found that age, marital and parental status, number of children, level of education, hours worked or part-time work were not predictive of work engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007; Hakanen, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2005; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Ruokolainen, 2007). These findings lend even more weight and credibility to the research findings of De Lange et al. (2008), who confirmed that low work engagement, poor job autonomy and poor resources are active predictors of actual turnover. Work engagement predicts positive self-assessed health, work capability, dedication and job fulfilment, turnover intentions, absence and early retirement (Bakker, Demerouti, Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The relationship between work engagement and organisational support, including specifically required resources, has also been studied intensely. Findings indicate that available resources function as antecedents as well as outcomes of work engagement (Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also found a positive relationship between social support, performance feedback, supervisory coaching and work engagement.

Happy workers tend to be more engaged, and thus should be committed to the organisation for longer periods (Bakker, 2009). An engaged worker is emotionally in tune with the requirements of the client and the social environment, and also strives to identify and meet customers' requirements (Gorgievski, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2010; Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). A high level of energy, as well as a strong identification with the work being done, is characteristic of work engagement. It furthermore leads to higher commitment to the organisation (Bakker et al., 2008; Moliner, Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Peiro, & Cropazano, 2008). Engaged people can personally identify with the work role and are thus able to express themselves through their tasks. In turn, the latter directly impacts the organisational bottom line since engaged workers have a higher productivity yield (Harter et al., 2003). On the other hand, disengaged people become distanced from the work role and are thus physically and emotionally uninvolved with their tasks. This leads to work distress and eventually to turnover intention and, finally, the

decision to leave the organisation (Rothmann & Joubert, 2007). It is thus important to identify those aspects that lead to positive, committed and productive workers. It is known from available research that aspects such as burnout and work engagement, and diversity and perceived organisational support, directly impact organisational commitment and turnover intention (Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

Diversity

Group diversity is defined by Nkomo and Cox (1996, p. 339) as “people with different group identities within the same social system”. Harrison and Sin (2005, p. 196) also defined diversity within a group as “the collective amount of differences among members of a social unit”. Diversity refers to attributes that differ between individuals and that may lead to the perception that one person is different from another (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). These differences may be surface-level, such as gender, race and handicap, or deep-level differences, such as beliefs, personality, as well as values between people (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998). The global village and its operation, greater awareness of previous and on-going discrimination, as well as the post-modernist approach that is having an impact on the economic, social and demographic world, are some of the forces that are impacting and forcing organisations to diversify, also with regard to workforces (Carvel, 2001; Doherty et al., 2010; Loden & Rosener, 1991; McShane, 2006; Morris, 2002). From the above-mentioned definitions, it is clear that group identity forms the basis for relationships within diverse workgroups and would thus influence the output of the group.

Urciuoli (2009) points out that it is a well-known fact that diverse groups lead to better problem-solving. Green (2004) cites higher motivation, better problem-solving as well as less racial segregation in the workplace as positive attributes of diversity. De Dreu and West (2001) are in agreement with the above due to the larger range of work-related knowledge as well as skills available within a diverse group. However, various studies have also identified negative attributes of diverse groups. Lower group commitment (Mnguni, 2012; Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992), distrust (Chatopadhyay, 1999), less communication (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2012; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989), higher perceptions of organisational unfairness (Mor-Barak, Cherin,

& Berkman, 1998; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2012) and less personal contribution to the task at hand (Kirchmeyer, 1993) were negative aspects found at individual and group level. Reduced cohesiveness (Harrison, et al. 1998; Terborg, Castore, & DeNinno, 1976), increased turnover (Burger et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 1991), decreased cooperation as well as lower personal satisfaction (Chatman & Flynn, 2001) and more conflicts and misunderstandings are also associated with greater diversity (Chatman & Sparato, 2005).

It is clear from previous research that very specific conditions must exist in order to ensure an increase in the performance of diverse groups. The identification of these conditions is thus important to maximise the benefits of workplace diversity. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) postulated that, when a culture of diversity is established within the organisation, successful diversity is possible. Important characteristics of diversity include mutual respect as well as a people-oriented approach, not only in the employer-employee relationship but also between different employees (Green, 2004). Higher levels of engagement are also found where mutual respect and a people-centred approach exist between workers and this leads to higher organisational commitment among workers (De Dreu & West, 2001). On the other hand it was also found that disrespect among workers or between employer and employees ultimately lead to higher levels of turnover (Chatopadhyay, 1999; Jackson et al., 1991; Motsoaledi & Celliers, 2012; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). Several studies have found that culturally diverse work environments lead to higher levels of conflict as well as poor communication among workers (Chatman & Sparato, 2005; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). Where openness towards these factors can be established, cultural diversity often results in better problem-solving as well as better cooperation among team members (Green, 2004; Urciuoli, 2009).

Perceived organisational support

According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), employees assign human-like characteristics, such as caring, protective or abusive, to organisations, according to how the organisation treats them. The employee furthermore also develops a set of beliefs with regard to how much his or her input is valued by the organisation, as well as how much the organisation cares for his/her well-being. The latter is known as perceived organisational support, and, according to Djurkovic

et al., (2008), consists of supervisor support, fairness and organisational job conditions. Rothmann and Rothmann (2006) consider organisational support to consist of the sub-dimensions of supervisory relationships, role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making and colleague support. For purposes of this study, organisational support is conceptualised as consisting of these dimensions, which are discussed below.

Supervisory actions play a major role when employees look at organisational support, especially since supervisors are seen as acting on behalf of senior management (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; O'Driscoll & Randall, 1999). Pines and Aronson (1988) found evidence that good interpersonal relationships between nurses and their supervisors significantly impacted the prevention of burnout. Current research has indicated that organisational support correlates positively with organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003), and correlates negatively with absenteeism as well as turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Role clarity is a further sub-dimension of organisational support (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). This refers to the employee's understanding of the tasks that need to be performed as well as the level at which the task performance is required. It furthermore includes aspects such as the relevant policies and procedures that govern the task, lines of communication and reporting, personal requirements including skills, abilities and competencies, as well as where and when the individual is expected to perform (Roberge & Van Dick, 2010). According to Bray and Brawley (2002), success in interdependent team work is directly dependent on the latter. High levels of role clarity lead to higher levels of sustained performance, whilst the absence of role clarity leads to diminished effort, lower levels of persistence as well as ineffective performance (Bray & Brawley, 2002). Hardin, Fuller, and Valacich (2006) and Priyadarshini (2009), are in agreement with the latter, indicating that organisational productivity and success are closely linked to individual success, whilst the latter finds its core in the clear expectations of the task. Rothmann and Joubert (2007), on the other hand, report that role ambiguity is a major demand according to the JD-R and, in conjunction with the COR, indicate that burnout is likely to develop if resources are not adequate for meeting the set demands. Taris et al. (1999), also reported a strong

correlation between job stress and burnout. Role ambiguity, as the opposite of role clarity, was identified as a specific demand that could lead to burnout and diminished work involvement.

Closely linked to the above is job information. This refers to aspects such as results obtained, how the job fits in with the rest of the organisation, including subordinate and superior structures, what the reporting structures are as well as on what level the job is situated (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Whereas role clarity refers to what is expected from the individual, job information concentrates on the information pertaining to the post itself. Clear and accurate job information leads to higher levels of perceived organisational support since the individual is aware of how his specific post is influencing the rest of the organisation (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006).

Participative decision-making (PDM) refers to decisions made jointly by superiors and subordinates (Govender & Parumasur, 2010; Locke & Schweiger, 1979; Wheeler, 1993). Behbahan (2012) holds that PDM leads to better and more successful collaborative leadership in the organisation, and various potential benefits are forthcoming from this method of decision making. Some of these include better quality of decisions being made, the enhancement of employee work life, increases in employee motivation and commitment, as well as higher overall work satisfaction. These factors have all been identified as potential influencers to ensure higher organisational commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Rothmann, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). However, research conducted by Lam, Chen, and Schaubroeck (2002) found that only moderately positive relationships between PDM and the factors responsible for organisational commitment could be realised. These researchers furthermore found that the results of PDM on job performance were positive, but small. Burke and Richardsen (1993), on the other hand, identified PDM as a job resource that enhances the job environment. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) found higher levels of burnout among employees that do not enjoy PDM.

Research indicates that high organisational support is associated with favourable outcomes for the organisation. Aspects such as job satisfaction and intent to remain with the organisation (Stamper & Johlke, 2003), organisational identification, loyalty and citizenship (Rhoades &

Eisenberger, 2002), organisational commitment (Shore & Wayne, 1993) as well as organisational trust (Chen, Aryee, & Lee, 2005) and participation in decision-making (Rothmann, 2003), are all positively correlated with organisational support. Keashly (2001, in Djurkovic et al., 2008) also found that organisational support attenuates the effects of emotional abuse and bullying. Organisational support furthermore leads to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found a positive relationship between social support, performance feedback, supervisory coaching and work engagement. Hakanen et al. (2005) indicated that social climate, supervisory support and autonomy all are positively related. What is more, research findings have also indicated that high organisational support could have a positive effect in preventing employees from developing burnout (Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007; Richardsen, Burke, & Mikkelsen, 2004). Eisenberger et al. (1986) also found that high organisational support is negatively correlated to absenteeism, while similar results were found for withdrawal (Allen, Shore, & Griffith, 2003).

Employee experiences of burnout or work engagement will culminate in turnover intention or, on the other hand, organisational commitment (Bakker et al., 2003; Chatman & Sparato, 2005; De Lange et al., 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Above, the role of diversity and organisational support was also considered. Now the discussion turns to the two outcome variables of interest to this study, namely organisational commitment and turnover intention.

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment refers to a worker's attachment and commitment to the organisation (Antón, 2009). It is considered to be the worker's mental state that determines his/her desire or duty to remain in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Three types of organisational commitment have been identified, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1997; Wasti & Can, 2008). Meyer and Allen (1991) found evidence that high affective commitment will positively impact performance, and it is regarded as the most significant component. Research regarding the different forms of commitment also brought to light that a positive relation exists between affective commitment and lower levels of absenteeism. Affectively committed

employees tend to remain with the organisation longer, although this does not automatically relate to higher productivity. These employees also tend to be loyal, work harder, show better performance, have higher motivation levels, assume responsibility (Chow, 1990) and also display more positive organisational citizenship behaviour (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Demerouti et al. (2001) report a positive correlation between organisational commitment and engagement.

Armstrong-Stassen (2006) as well as Armstrong-Stassen and Cameron (2003) indicate that high stress levels due to a changing work situation can be mediated by a high level of affective commitment. These findings led researchers to realise and suggest the true value of high affectively committed employees to the organisation. Crupanzano, Rupp, and Byrne (2003) found that employees suffering from burnout show weak commitment to supervisors and the organisation, tend to withdraw from social interactions, and show poor performance.

Organisational commitment theory postulates that it is a reciprocal process and closely tied to organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Available research with regard to building affective commitment indicates that demographic variables, such as age and gender, do not exert any influence on commitment. Affective commitment is built and enhanced by realistic job previews for job candidates, training, adequate resources (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Casper, & Harris, 2008; Claes & Van de Ven, 2008; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), promotion and perceived fairness in promotion decisions (Guerrero, & Herrbach, 2009; Pazy & Ganzach, 2009; Zimmerman, 2008), as well as fair reward strategies (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Edwards, 1989). Liou and Cheng (2010) show that positive organisational climate has a positive effect on the increase of nurses' work commitment, and that this would prevent workers from premature resignation. The strongest predictor of organisational commitment at a South African tertiary education organisation was found to be trust (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006). Role ambiguity, conflict, work overload (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006), as well as job insecurity, real or perceived (Böckerman, 2004), negatively relate to organisational commitment.

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is defined as an employee's wish to resign from the job or to leave the organisation permanently and is, as such, the opposite of organisational commitment. Research has found that work experiences, such as poor performance assessment (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2009), role ambiguity, job insecurity and work conflict (Antón, 2009) influence turnover intention (Hui, Wong, & Tjosvold, 2007). Turnover intention and turnover hold serious implications for the organisation, including financial consequences (Lambert, & Paoline, 2010), and loss of experience and critical skills (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). It has also been linked with physical as well as emotional withdrawal from the organisation (Antón, 2009). The less emotional commitment an employee feels, the larger the chance of him/her resigning from the organisation (Antón, 2009; Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010; Wasti & Can, 2002).

Glugston (2000), as well as Hui, Wong, and Tjosvold, (2007), found that turnover intention is partially mediated by organisational commitment and is related negatively to organisational support. It has consistently been found that there is a strong inverse relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention and actual turnover (Antón, 2009). From the research above it is clear that aspects such as organisational support must be managed to ensure reduced turnover intention (Hui et al., 2007), as well as to enhance employees' commitment. Research indicates that the level of affective commitment determines and predicts turnover intention and turnover (Antón, 2009; Glugston, 2000).

Theoretical positioning

The Conservation of Resources (COR) model proposes that burnout develops when resources are not adequate to meet the demands of the job (Hobfoll, 2002). This model is based on the understanding that employees will protect, keep and accumulate valued resources (Hobfoll, 2002; Hobfoll & Schumm, 2009; Weigl et al., 2010). COR theory defines psychological stress as a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources. Both perceived and actual loss and lack of gain are envisaged as sufficient for producing stress

(Hobfoll, 1998, p. 516). Hobfoll (1998) identified four kinds of resources of which loss or gain would result in either stress or well-being. These are object resources which are physical in nature (*i.e.* house), conditions that are valued (*i.e.* marriage, seniority), and personal characteristics in the sense that these may resist stress reactions, and energies (*i.e.* time, money). The latter resources are valued due to their ability to aid in gaining other resources.

With the above as point of departure, it is proposed that burnout develops when resources are not adequate to meet the demands of the job. The presence of these resources leads to well-being and resilience, while psychological distress and burnout result if these assets are lost, culminating in a stress reaction. On the other end of the continuum, when more of these resources are available, positive development, growth, resilience and work engagement will result. A central belief of the COR theory is that reciprocal processes exist during which resources are either progressively gained or depleted. These processes are known as positive gain-spirals or negative loss-spirals. For purposes of this study, burnout and engagement are seen as the starting points of a process that culminates in either organisational commitment or turnover intention.

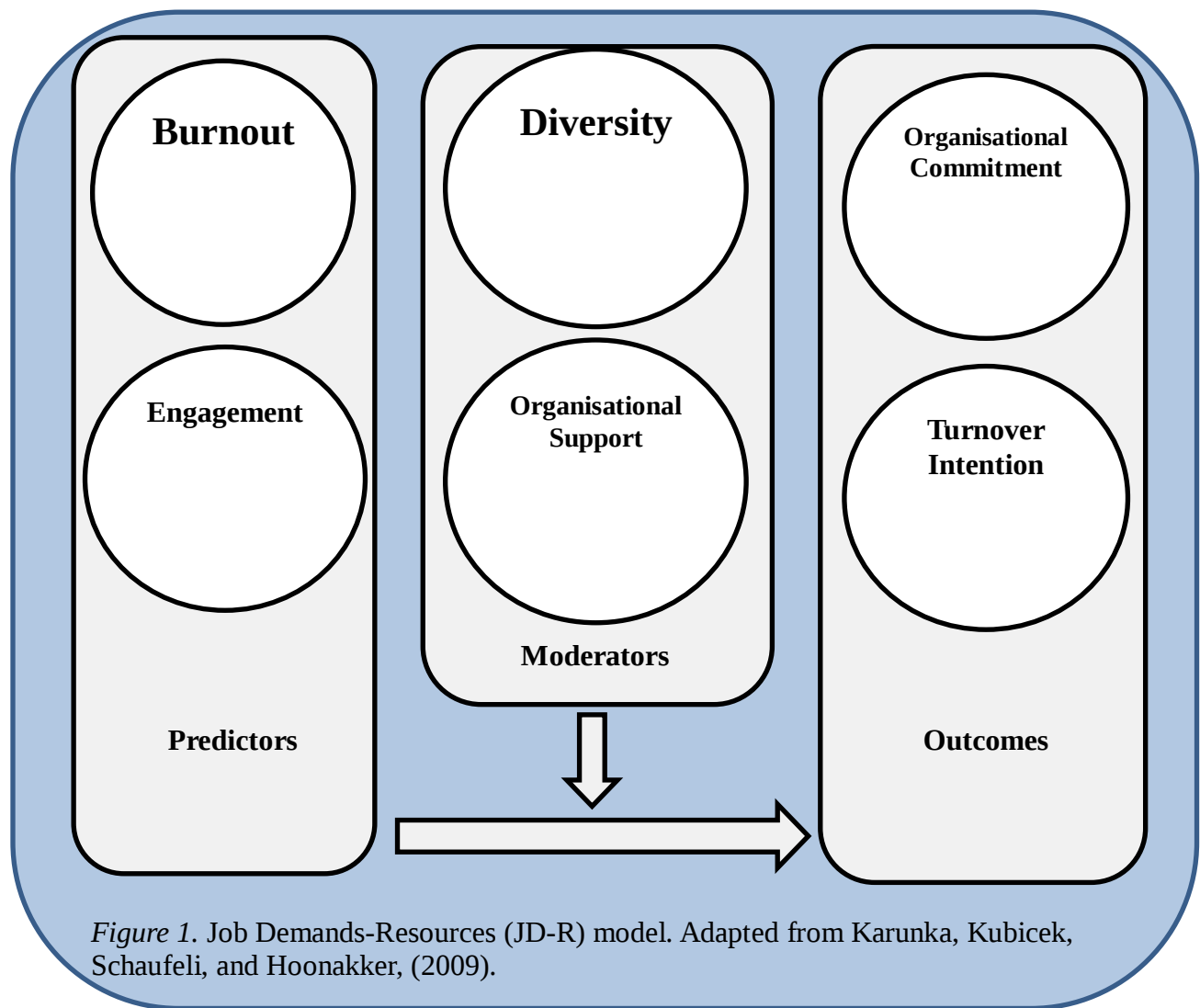
Whereas the COR model creates an understanding of work engagement and also suggests that burnout may develop when valued resources are lost, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model creates an understanding of how working conditions can lead to either turnover or commitment to the organisation (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to this model, all working conditions may be divided into one of two categories, namely job demands or job resources. Job demands refer to all aspects of work that require a continuous physical or psychological effort and thus also incur psychological cost for the individual. Burnout may be one such price that may be paid. This category is linked to the energetic process of mental and physical depletion of resources. Job resources, on the other hand, include all aspects that lead to the achievement of work goals, the reduction of job demands as well as those aspects that lead to the development and personal growth of individuals. This category is linked to the motivational process during which individuals are motivated (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to Korunka, Kubicek, Schaufeli, and Hoonakker (2009), the motivational process assumes that a link exists between job resources and organisational outcomes by means of work engagement. The energetic process links job demands with health impairments by means of the mediating effect of burnout.

From the above it can be clearly deduced that burnout and work engagement have a powerful influence on all aspects of organisational commitment and turnover intention, as well as diversity and organisational support. Using the COR as well as the JD-R as foundational frameworks, the current study proposes that diversity and social support will act as moderators between the predictor variables (burnout and engagement) and the outcome variables (organisational commitment, turnover intention). Where issues of diversity are present and employees already experience burnout, they should be more inclined towards turnover intention and show less organisational commitment. Likewise, where employees experience engagement in an environment characterised by high levels of organisational support, it could be expected that they should show less turnover intention and higher levels of organisational commitment.

Research purpose

This study aims at identifying the role of burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support with regard to organisational commitment and turnover intention. Conceptually, the research model for the current investigation can now be illustrated as seen below:

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Based on the above, the following research questions emerge:

Research questions

- What is the relationship between burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees?

- Can experiences of burnout, work engagement, diversity, and organisational support be used to predict organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees?
- Does diversity and organisational support moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement as predictors, and organisational commitment and turnover intention as outcomes?
- What recommendations can be made for the organisation and future study?

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was used (Whitley, 2002). This design looks at the characteristics of a sample or “slice” from the population at any given time. If the sample is selected properly, the composition of the population will be reflected in the sample and data can thus be applied to the entire population under scrutiny. The available sample is, however, one of convenience, which imposes some limitations on the application of the results to the greater South African working population. Due to the descriptive nature of the design, the sample can be used to identify relationships as well as associations between factors, a further aim of the current study. Further advantages of the design include the fact that it is a relatively inexpensive method of gathering data; and secondary data may also be used, as is the case with the current study. Excellent control over the data is possible, including data from sub-groups within the study. The completeness of key data can be ascertained whereas this would not be possible in a retrospective study. Data gathering is furthermore much less time consuming than, for example, during a longitudinal study. A possible disadvantage of the use of the specific design is the fact that it does not provide data regarding causal relationships (Thisted, 2006). The cross-sectional survey design furthermore requires a large sample to be available in order to apply the results to the entire population. The current study makes use of a substantial sample ($N = 4,658$).

Participants

Data was gathered from a survey data archive that contains responses to survey questions, as well as the demographic data regarding the respondents that was completed during wellness audits. A total of 6,129 respondents took part in the completion of the wellness audits, representing the current sample as having a response rate of 76%. All data is kept on computer files and great care is taken to ensure the reliability and validity of all the data, specifically since it is collected for research purposes. The data was gathered between 2009 and 2010.

Table 1 indicates the composition of the sample in terms of different biographical groups. The sample ($N = 4,658$) included all major language groups, with Afrikaans ($n = 1,383$) and English ($n = 2,133$) as the most prevalent. The sample was also mostly female. Workers in the age group 30 – 39 made up more than a third of the sample (36,0%). Almost 54% of the sample held up to a Grade 12 qualification level. From the sample, 45,4% of the respondents were married and 74,1% working in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Participants (N = 4,658)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Language</i>		
Afrikaans	1383	29,7
English	2133	45,8
Sepedi	168	3,6
Sesotho	163	3,5
Setswana	247	5,3
Siswati	20	0,4
Tshivenda	34	0,7
IsiZulu	277	5,9
IsiNdebele	24	0,5
IsiXhosa	145	3,1
Xitsonga	46	1,0
Other	18	0,4
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	1655	35,5
Female	3003	64,5
<i>Age (years)</i>		
Younger than 20	4	0,1
20 – 29	1360	29,2
30 – 39	1679	36,0
40 – 49	976	21,0
50 – 59	522	11,2
Older than 60	117	2,5
<i>Marital status</i>		
Single	1819	39,1
Engaged	227	4,9
Married	2115	45,4
Divorced	425	9,1
Widow	63	1,4
Widower	9	0,2

Table 1 continued

Characteristics of the Participants (N = 4,658)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Education		
Grade 12 or below	2755	59,1
3-Year Degree / Diploma	1122	24,1
4-Year Degree / Diploma	499	10,7
5 to 7 Year Degree	130	2,8
Master's Degree	143	3,1
Doctoral Degree	9	0,2
Province		
Gauteng	3451	74,1
Mpumalanga	119	2,6
North West Province	68	1,5
Limpopo	35	0,8
Free State	95	2,0
Northern Cape	20	0,4
Western Cape	442	9,5
Eastern Cape	111	2,4
KwaZulu-Natal	317	6,8

Measuring Instruments

The *South African Employee Health and Wellness Survey* (SAEHWS[®], Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006) was used to gather data on the variables of interest to the study. The SAEHWS[®] measures the health and wellness status of employees. These responses are related to the organisational climate and then compared with a South African norm. The validity of the factor structures of the SAEHWS[®] is equal for different organisations and ethnic groups, and it is therefore culturally sensitive with no bias against any cultural group. It is supported by a predictive model, which allows for employee risk prediction and the proactive management of risks and work-related wellbeing of employees, teams and areas of operations. The internal consistencies are also well above the cut-off point of 0,70 (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Scales for burnout, engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention are included

in the measure and were used in this research. Descriptive statistics and internal consistencies (Cronbach coefficient alphas) for this study are indicated in the results section (Table 2).

The SAEHWS[®] conceptualises burnout as consisting of two dimensions, namely exhaustion and mental distance. The latter is characterised by a high level of cynicism and uncaring attitudes and behaviours towards the self, others and work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Constant devaluation of oneself and one's accomplishments and feelings of incompetence are some of the signs of mental distance (Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Excessive psychological demands lead to emotional exhaustion – a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are depleted. Both these dimensions were used and examples of items include: “I feel tired before I arrive at work” (*exhaustion*), and “I am uncertain whether my work is important” (*mental distance*). Engagement consists of two sub-dimensions, namely vitality and work devotion. Items belonging to these sub-dimensions include the following: “I feel energetic in my job” (*vitality*), and “I am passionate about my job” (*work devotion*). Although the SAEHWS[®] defines constructs such as engagement by means of different names than those used in current literature, i.e. *vitality* whereas Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) make use of the word *vigour*, and *work devotion* in the place of *dedication*, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirm that the constructs in this measurement instrument are equivalent to current academic literature (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). In this study, the dominant terms in the scientific literature are used.

Sub-dimensions of organisational support consist of role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making, colleague support and supervisory relationships (Djurkovic et al., 2008; Jahawar et al., 2007; Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). These are measured by a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). An example of an item under the sub-dimension labelled *role clarity* is: “Do you know exactly what your responsibilities are?” The sub-dimension *job information* included an item: “Do you receive sufficient information on the results of your work?” *Participation in decision-making* included the item: “Can you participate in decisions about the nature of your work?” whilst *supervisory relations* include an item: “Do you get on well with your direct supervisors?”

Diversity is likewise measured by a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). An example of an item includes: “Do employees from different racial/ethnic groups show prejudice towards each other at work?”

Organisational commitment is measured by the commitment scale. An example of an item belonging to this scale includes the following: “*I am personally very committed to this organisation.*” It is measured by a six-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Turnover intention is measured by a six-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item would be: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organisation”.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was carried out with the aid of the SPSS programme (SPSS, 2011). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse and describe the data. Considering the formulated aims and research questions, it was decided to consider variables only in terms of total score (i.e. *Total* burnout, and not sub-dimensions thereof). This approach was deemed acceptable, as the total score also represents the dimension in totality, and facilitates the interpretation of the results against the theoretical positioning outlined above. The reliability of the constructs in the study was tested by means of the Cronbach alpha coefficient (Clark & Watson, 1995). Relationships between the different variables are described by means of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0,01$, whilst the practical significance of correlation coefficients was set at $r \geq 0,30$ (medium effect) and a large effect at $r \geq 0,50$ (Cohen, 1988). These effect sizes are of importance when the practical significance and impact of the various relationships between the different variables are taken into consideration (Steyn, 1999). Cut-off points of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) and 0,50 (large effect) were set to determine the practical significance of correlation coefficients. Regressions were used to predict the outcome variables of turnover intention and organisational commitment. The impact of the interaction

terms for work engagement and burnout with diversity and organisational support was constructed by following the procedure as described by Aiken and West (1991). Variables are centred whilst still keeping the standard deviations intact. The product terms of these centred variables, used as variables themselves in the final step of the regression, account for shared variance and this represents their moderating effect.

RESULTS

Table 2 reports on the descriptive statistics that include the means, standard deviations, skewness as well as kurtosis of the relevant scales. The alpha coefficients of the scales are also indicated.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the Variables (N = 4,658)

Item	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Burnout	23.65	10.74	0.15	-0.39	0.88
Engagement	41.11	11.45	-0.57	-0.04	0.91
Diversity	6.46	3.53	0.28	0.01	0.75
Organisational support	43.87	9.85	-0.29	-0.60	0.93
Organisational commitment	20.98	5.70	-0.57	-0.24	0.85
Turnover intention	6.48	4.23	0.77	0.51	0.81

Inspection of the table indicates acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients for all the scales, with all the alpha coefficients higher than the guideline of $\alpha \geq 0,70$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Regarding skewness and kurtosis, the results indicate a normal distribution ranging between ± 1 . From these results it may be deduced that the measuring instrument has acceptable levels of internal consistency and may thus be accepted as trustworthy for this sample.

Table 3 reports on the correlations between the different scales.

Table 3

Pearson Correlations between the Variables

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
1. Burnout					
2. Engagement	-0.67 ⁺⁺				
3. Diversity	0.26 ^{**}	-0.26 ^{**}			
4. Organisational support	-0.47 ⁺	0.53 ⁺⁺	-0.38 ⁺		
5. Organisational commitment	-0.46 ⁺	0.57 ⁺⁺	-0.29 ^{**}	0.47 ⁺	
6. Turnover intention	0.43 ⁺	-0.55 ⁺⁺	0.27 ^{**}	-0.43 ⁺	-0.83 ⁺⁺

^{**}Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

⁺Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,30$ (medium effect)

⁺⁺Correlation is practically significant $r \geq 0,50$ (large effect)

Table 3 indicates that Burnout is statistically and practically significantly and negatively correlated with Engagement (large effect) as well as with Organisational Support and Organisational Commitment (both with medium effect). It furthermore correlates positively with Diversity (practically significant, small effect) as well as with Turnover intention (practically significant, medium effect). Engagement is negatively related to Diversity (practically significant, small effect) and Turnover intention (practically significant, large effect), and positively related to both Organisational support and Organisational commitment (both practically significant with large effect). Diversity correlates positively with Turnover intention (practically significant, small effect) and negatively with Organisational support (medium effect) and Organisational commitment (small effect). Organisational support correlates positively with Organisational commitment, but negatively with Turnover intention (both practically significant, medium effect). Organisational commitment correlates negatively with Turnover intention (practically significant, large effect).

Table 4 represents the results of the regression analysis predicting organisational commitment.

Table 4

Regression Analysis investigating the Moderating effect of Diversity and Organisational support, with Organisational Commitment as Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	23.43	1.37		17.07	0.00	5.50	0.05	0.04
	Gender	-0.31	0.51	-0.03	-0.60	0.55			
	Age	1.01	0.27	0.19	3.80	0.00*			
	Race	0.09	0.25	0.02	0.36	0.72			
	Qualification	-0.52	0.21	-0.12	-2.47	0.01*			
2	(Constant)	20.49	1.14		18.04	0.00	102.45	0.38	0.37
	Gender	0.51	0.42	0.05	1.20	0.23			
	Age	0.70	0.22	0.13	3.22	0.00*			
	Race	0.17	0.21	0.03	0.81	0.42			
	Qualification	-0.16	0.18	-0.04	-0.93	0.35			
	Burnout	-0.03	0.03	-0.06	-1.10	0.28			
3	Engagement	0.29	0.03	0.54	9.96	0.00*	11.61	0.41	0.40
	Constant	20.40	1.11		18.44	0.00*			
	Gender	0.57	0.41	0.05	1.37	0.17			
	Age	0.65	0.22	0.12	3.02	0.00*			
	Race	0.11	0.20	0.02	0.55	0.58			
	Qualification	-0.11	0.17	-0.03	-0.65	0.52			
	Burnout	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.18	0.86			
	Engagement	0.25	0.03	0.47	8.45	0.00*			
4	Diversity	-0.17	0.07	-0.11	-2.57	0.01*	2.50	0.43	0.41
	Organisational support	0.08	0.03	0.15	3.13	0.00*			
	(Constant)	20.37	1.11		18.34	0.00			
	Gender	0.62	0.41	0.06	1.51	0.13			
	Age	0.66	0.21	0.12	3.09	0.00*			
	Race	0.15	0.20	0.03	0.74	0.46			
	Qualification	-0.12	0.17	-0.03	-0.71	0.48			
	Burnout	-0.02	0.03	-0.04	-0.75	0.46			
	Engagement	0.23	0.03	0.43	7.53	0.00*			
	Diversity	-0.18	0.07	-0.11	-2.50	0.01*			
	Organisational support	0.08	0.03	0.15	2.98	0.00*			
	Diversity x Burnout	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.14	0.89			
	Diversity x Engagement	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.10	0.92			
	Support x Burnout	-0.01	0.00	-0.13	-2.40	0.02*			
	Support x Engagement	-0.01	0.00	-0.13	-2.50	0.01*			

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 4 reports on the results of the regression analysis that investigated the moderating effect of diversity and organisational support with organisational commitment as the dependent variable. Age is seen to be a statistically significant predictor of organisational commitment in all the steps. In Step 1, where biographical variables were entered, qualification was identified as a statistically significant additional predictor of organisational commitment. The biographical variables explained 5.3% of the variance in organisational commitment. In Step 2 the predictor variables were entered and engagement was, together with age, identified as statistically significant predictors of organisational commitment. The variance explained increased to 37.7%. Step 3 included the predictor variables. During this step, age, engagement, diversity and organisational support were identified as statistically significant predictors, explaining 41.2% of the variance in organisational commitment. Step 4 introduced the interaction terms, resulting in explained variance of 42.6% for the model. It was seen that age, engagement, diversity, organisational support, and the interaction terms of burnout and engagement with organisational support were statistically significant predictors of organisational commitment. Diversity, however, did not moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement. The interaction effect of organisational support with burnout as independent variable, and organisational commitment as dependent variable, is graphically depicted below.

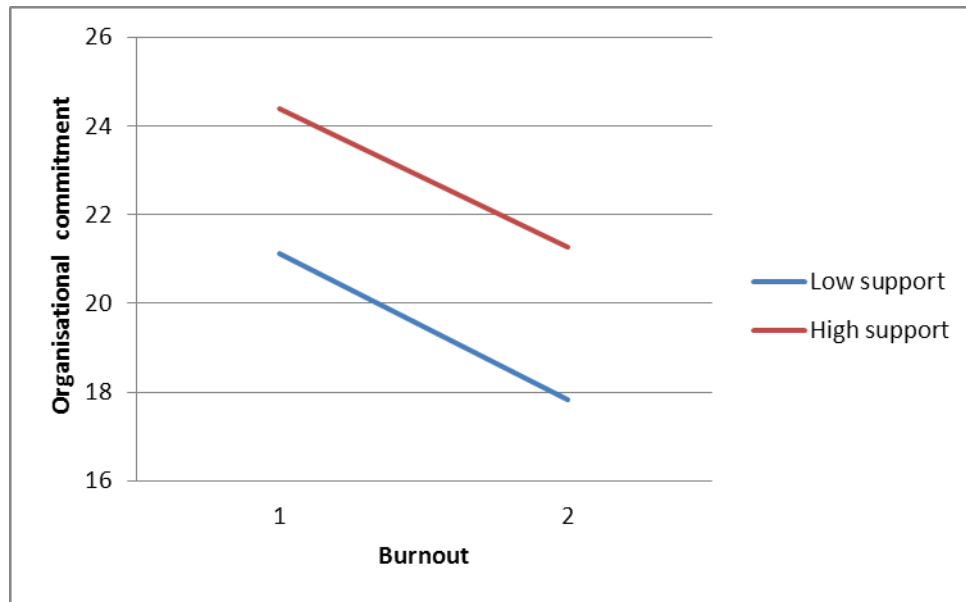


Figure 2. The moderating effect of organisational support with organisational commitment as dependent variable and burnout as independent variable.

Figure 2 indicates that organisational support moderates organisational commitment results with burnout as independent variable. During conditions of low burnout, it can be seen that those employees that enjoy high levels of organisational support, measure higher on organisational commitment when compared with employees that have low levels of organisational support. When one moves to high levels of burnout, the same relationship holds. There is a near-parallel relationship in terms of organisational commitment between employees with high and low organisational support, but employees that experience high levels of organisational support, always evidence higher levels of organisational commitment, regardless of levels of burnout.

Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effect of organisational support between organisational commitment and engagement.

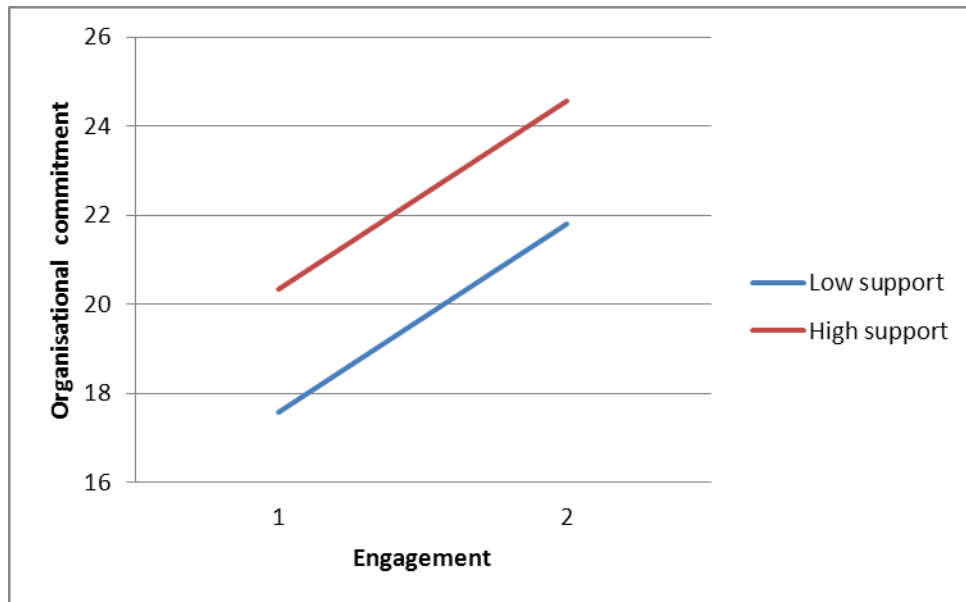


Figure 3. The moderating effect of organisational support with organisational commitment as dependent variable and engagement as independent variable.

Figure 3 graphically depicts the relationship between engagement and organisational commitment, with organisational support as moderator. Organisational support moderates organisational commitment results with engagement as the predictor variable. During conditions of low engagement, it can be seen that those employees that enjoy high levels of organisational support, measure higher on organisational commitment when compared with employees that experience low levels of organisational support. When one moves to high levels of engagement, the same relationship holds. There is an increase in terms of organisational commitment between employees with low and high engagement levels, but employees that experience higher levels of organisational support always experience higher levels of organisational commitment, regardless of their levels of engagement.

Table 5 below reports on the regression results with turnover intention as the outcome variable. Biographical variables, burnout, engagement, diversity and organisational support, as well as the interaction effects between the independent variables are used as predictors in this regression.

Table 5

Regression Analysis investigating the Moderating effect of Diversity and Organisational Support, with Turnover Intention as Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
		B	Std. Error	Beta					
1	(Constant)	3.60	1.23		3.51	0.00	2.34	0.02	0.01
	Gender	0.40	0.38	0.05	1.04	0.30			
	Age	-0.32	0.20	-0.08	-1.60	0.11			
	Race	0.24	0.19	0.06	1.28	0.20			
	Qualification	0.34	0.16	0.11	2.15	0.03*			
2	(Constant)	5.64	0.88		6.44	0.00	82.80	0.31	0.30
	Gender	-0.17	0.33	-0.02	-0.52	0.60			
	Age	-0.10	0.17	-0.03	-0.61	0.55			
	Race	0.19	0.16	0.05	1.20	0.24			
	Qualification	0.10	0.14	0.03	0.67	0.50			
	Burnout	0.02	0.02	0.06	1.03	0.30			
	Engagement	-0.20	0.02	-0.51	-8.92	0.00*			
3	Constant	5.70	0.90		6.63	0.00	9.02	0.34	0.33
	Gender	-0.21	0.32	-0.03	-0.65	0.52			
	Age	-0.10	0.17	-0.02	-0.40	0.69			
	Race	0.23	0.16	0.06	1.44	0.15			
	Qualification	0.10	0.13	0.02	0.41	0.68			
	Burnout	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.22	0.82			
	Engagement	-0.18	0.02	-0.44	-7.53	0.00*			
	Diversity	0.12	0.05	0.12	2.27	0.02*			
	Organisational support	-0.06	0.02	-0.14	-2.75	0.01*			
4	(Constant)	5.80	0.90		6.71	0.00	2.89	0.36	0.34
	Gender	-0.30	0.32	-0.04	-0.86	0.39			
	Age	-0.08	0.17	-0.02	-0.48	0.64			
	Race	0.20	0.16	0.05	1.29	0.20			
	Qualification	0.06	0.13	0.02	0.46	0.65			
	Burnout	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.80	0.43			
	Engagement	-0.15	0.02	-0.40	-6.58	0.00*			
	Diversity	0.12	0.05	0.12	2.27	0.02*			
	Organisational support	-0.05	0.02	-0.13	-2.46	0.01*			
	Diversity x Burnout	-0.00	0.01	-0.01	-0.11	0.91			
	Diversity x Engagement	-0.00	0.01	-0.02	-0.24	0.81			
	Support x Burnout	0.01	0.00	0.15	2.70	0.01*			
	Support x Engagement	0.01	0.00	0.13	2.28	0.02*			

$p \leq 0.05$

In Step 1, control variables were entered and it can be seen that only qualification was a statistically significant predictor of turnover intention. Gender, age, race and qualification, however, only explained 2% of the variance in turnover intention. In Step 2 the predictor variables were inserted. By adding burnout and engagement, it is seen that the model now explains 31% of the variance. However, only engagement proved statistically significant. Step 3 added the moderator variables and indicates that engagement, diversity and organisational support are statistically significant predictors of turnover. In this step, the variables explained 34% of the variance in turnover intention. In the final step of the regression analysis, the interaction terms were added and results indicate that engagement remains statistically significant. Diversity, organisational support, as well as the interaction of organisational support with burnout, and organisational support with engagement, are also indicated as being statistically significant predictors. Considering all variables explained 36% of the variance in turnover intention. This indicates that both burnout and engagement are moderated in their relationship to turnover intention by organisational support. The interaction effect of organisational support between burnout and turnover intention is graphically depicted below in Figure 4.

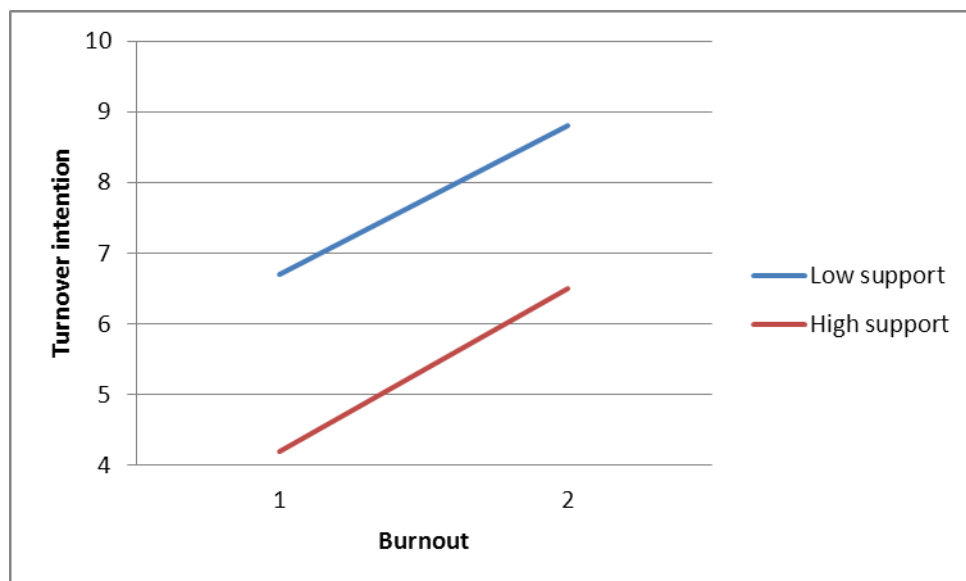


Figure 4. The moderating effect of organisational support with turnover intention as the dependent variable and burnout as independent variable.

It is clear from Figure 4 that organisational support moderates turnover intention results (dependent variable) with burnout as predictor variable. At conditions of low burnout, it can be seen that those employees that enjoy high levels of organisational support measure lower on turnover intention, when compared with employees that have low levels of organisational support. When one moves to high levels of burnout, the same relationship holds. There is an increase in terms of turnover intention between employees with high and low organisational support, but employees that experience low levels of organisational support, always show higher levels of turnover intention, regardless of their experienced levels of burnout.

The figure below graphically demonstrates the moderating effect of organisational support between engagement and turnover intention.

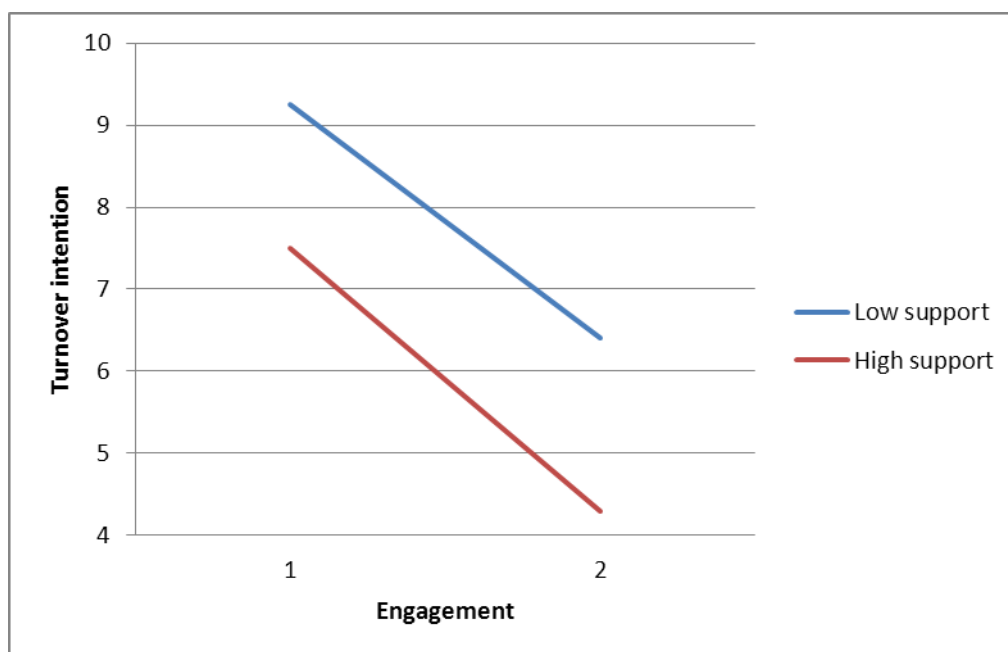


Figure 5. The moderating effect of organisational support with turnover intention as the dependent variable and engagement as independent variable.

Figure 5 illustrates that organisational support moderates turnover intention results with engagement as predictor variable. During low levels of engagement, it can be seen that those members that enjoy high levels of organisational support measure lower on turnover intention when compared with employees that have low levels of organisational support. When one moves

to high levels of engagement, the same relationship holds. There is a decrease in terms of turnover intention between employees with high and low organisational support, but employees that experience lower levels of organisational support, always experience higher levels of turnover intention, regardless of their levels of engagement.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to establish how burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support influence organisational commitment and turnover intention, and to establish whether diversity and organisational support act as moderators to influence the relation of burnout and work engagement to organisational commitment and turnover intention.

It was found that burnout shows an inverse relationship with engagement, as well as with both organisational support and commitment, in line with previous research findings (Antón, 2009; Dawley et al., 2010; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Pines & Aronson, 1988). A direct relationship with diversity and turnover intention is evidenced in these results as well (Leiter et al., 1998; Maslach et al., 1996; Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). In line with previous research, these results thus suggest that burnout relates to negative effects on important individual and organisational outcomes, and contributes to employees' intentions to leave the organisation. The positive relation between diversity and burnout is also of interest, suggesting that burnout contributes to perceptions of diversity issues, or concomitantly that diversity issues intensify the burnout experience (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman & Sparato, 2005; Chatopadhyay, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Tsui et al., 1992; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989).

Conversely, it was found that engagement relates positively with organisational support as well as with organisational commitment, and negatively with turnover intention and diversity. These relationships suggest that engagement may contribute to perceptions of the organisation as being supportive, fostering organisational commitment and reducing the intention to quit. However, results may also suggest that diversity problems detract from employee engagement, or conversely, that low levels of work engagement exacerbate the experience of diversity issues. These findings echo those of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), which also show engagement to

relate positively to organisational support, and negatively to turnover intention. In the organisational environment, this relates to a negative impact on general engagement and commitment levels, and these are direct indicators of overall employee job satisfaction, turnover intentions, absenteeism and early retirement (Bakker et al., 2003; Hakanen, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

An inverse relationship was found to exist between diversity and organisational support, as well as organisational commitment, which echo previous findings (Harrison et al., 1998; Jackson et al., 1991; Kirchmeyer, 1993) regarding the consequences of a negative experience of diversity. A positive relationship was also found between diversity and turnover intention. Jackson et al. (1991) recorded similar findings.

During the present study, diversity turned out to be a significant predictor of both organisational commitment and turnover intention, in line with findings of previous researchers (Burger et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 1991). Organisational commitment refers to a worker's attachment and commitment to the organisation (Antón, 2009). It is considered to be the worker's mental state that determines his/her desire or duty to remain in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It was seen that age, engagement, diversity, organisational support, and the interaction terms of burnout and engagement with organisational support were significant predictors of organisational commitment. This finding concurs with that of Demerouti et al. (2001). However, the findings with regard to the demographic variable of age are in opposition to those of Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2006), Casper and Harris (2008) as well as Claes and Ven de Ven (2008).

Diversity, on the other hand, was not found to moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement and the outcome variables of organisational commitment and turnover intention. A direct relationship, however, was found to exist between diversity and turnover intention and organisational commitment (in line with the findings of Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman & Sparato, 2005). It is clear from previous research, and supported by this research, that very specific conditions must exist in order to ensure an increase in the performance of diverse groups. Organisational support was previously identified as a determining factor in this relationship (De Dreu & West, 2001; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Green, 2004; Motsoaledi &

Celliers, 2012; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010). In practical terms the latter implies that organisational support is the critical factor that determines whether an employee is going to remain committed to the organisation, and not develop turnover intentions, at both high and low levels of burnout and engagement. High levels of organisational support result in higher levels of organisational commitment (Liou & Cheng, 2010). Employers must thus relook the level of organisational support available to employees, since this study confirms previous findings regarding the positive results of increased organisational commitment amongst employees when high levels of organisational support are readily available (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Liou & Cheng, 2010).

The significance of engagement in the work environment was again confirmed in the results reported here, as done by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), as well as others that investigated the relationship (Chatman & Sparato, 2005; De Lange et al., 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engagement, diversity, organisational support, as well as the interaction of organisational support with burnout, and organisational support with engagement, were all indicated as being significant predictors of employees' turnover intention. These results concur with those of Shore and Wayne (1993), Stamper and Johlke (2003) and Eisenberger et al. (1986). The indication is that both burnout and engagement are moderated in their relationship to turnover intention by organisational support. In practice this means that the level of organisational support is the critical factor that will determine whether the employee will remain loyal to the organisation or search for greener pastures. Even when a factor such as high burnout is present, it is clear that the level of organisational support is critical in the eventual outcome. These findings concur with those of Jawahar et al. (2007) and Richardsen et al. (2004), who found that high levels of organisational support may even prevent the experience of burnout symptoms.

Organisational support acted as moderator of burnout and engagement with organisational commitment, in line with Stamper and Johlke (2003) and Van den Broeck et al. (2008), and it also moderated the relationship between burnout and engagement and turnover intention (Dawley et al., 2010; Pines & Aronson, 1988). These results, once again, concur with the research findings of Djurkovic et al. (2008), of Shore and Wayne (1993) and of Stamper and

Johlke (2003) in illustrating organisational support as a critical variable in managing employee attitudinal and work-related outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

From the above discussion it is clear that engaged employees tend to be more committed and also show lower turnover intention, while the inverse is true for those employees that experience burnout. Thus, if impacting the profit margin positively by realising savings in the HR as well as training environment is a goal, it is essential to effectively manage those variables that impact on burnout and engagement.

In the results reported above employee engagement, diversity and organisational support were mostly responsible for the variance in turnover intention. The interaction variables also indicate that organisational support impacts the influence of burnout and work engagement on turnover intention. Organisational commitment, on the other hand, is impacted by the age of the employee, engagement levels, diversity problems experienced as well as the available organisational support in the organisation. Once again, the interaction between organisational support and burnout as well as engagement, proved to be significant.

It is clear from the above that organisations should ensure that effective organisational support structures are in place. An effective support structure will include supervisor support, perceived fair treatment and adequate organisational job conditions and resources, as well as sought-after rewards (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Rothmann, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This, as well as other research, indicates that effective organisational support structures not only positively impact burnout and engagement levels, but also negates the effects of diversity problems that may exist within the organisation (Jawahar et al., 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). Although not identified as a moderator in this study, diversity problems clearly impact organisational and employee outcomes. This variable will be managed effectively by ensuring that an adequate organisational support structure exists, including open and clear communication channels. Since an effective organisational support structure includes aspects such as mutual respect, a people-oriented approach, as well as openness about conflict,

communication and ambiguity, existing diversity problems can be identified and solved amicably (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). It will culminate in employees that are committed to the organisation.

The study suffered from specific limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, the research design was cross sectional in nature and thus could not make use of the benefits normally derived from longitudinal studies. Secondly, only a self-report questionnaire was used to obtain the data. This implies that the subjectivity on the side of the respondent is reflected in the data, in for example response sets or mono-method bias, even though the data was carefully checked for the former. Thirdly, whilst exploring the development of turnover intention and work engagement as well as the influence of diversity, organisational support, burnout and engagement on these variables, it became apparent through the study of the literature, that aspects such as organisational justice and fairness also impact the level of burnout and work engagement experienced. These variables did not form part of the study and could thus influence the final results obtained through the research.

Although the data was available on sub-dimensions of variables (for example role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making, colleague support and supervisory relationships as constituting organisational support), it was decided to conduct the analyses at the level of total scores. Although this approach still allowed the researcher to answer the research questions, future analyses may find it interesting to investigate the operation and inter-relations of specific sub-dimensions. The limitations, as mentioned above, were treated in a sensitive manner and did not detract from the results and recommendations being made, based on this study's findings.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give attention to specific conclusions, recommendations as well as limitations that were identified as applying to this study.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the study was to identify the role of burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support with regard to organisational commitment and turnover intention. The discussion below will address each sub-objective independently.

The first objective was to conceptualise from the literature, burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention.

Burnout is characterised by chronic mental fatigue and a negative mind-set, physical exhaustion, feelings of pervasive ineffectiveness as well as poor motivation. Sudden avoidance of familiar tasks and circumstances takes place, as well as emotional withdrawal from social interaction (Langelaan, Bakker, Van Doorn, & Schaufeli, 2006; Maslach, 1998; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Managers that suffer from burnout erode the general effectiveness of the organisation since dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours spread through the organisation by means of daily interactions (DuBrin, 1990). Some of the consequences of burnout include dissatisfaction with the job, low morale as well as absenteeism and poor service delivery to clients (Rothmann, 2003). Rothmann furthermore recommends that organisations take a preventative approach towards burnout with interventions directed at the enhancement of employee coping skills or, alternatively, altering the work situation.

The South African Employee Health and Wellness Survey (SAEHWS[®], Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006), applied in this research, conceptualises burnout as consisting of two dimensions, namely exhaustion and mental distance. The latter is characterised by a high level of cynicism and uncaring attitudes and behaviours towards the self, others

and work (Leiter & Maslach, 2001). Constant devaluation of oneself and one's accomplishments and feelings of incompetence are some of the other signs of mental distance (Halbesleben, 2006; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Excessive psychological demands lead to emotional exhaustion – a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are depleted.

Work engagement is defined as 'a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind' (Schaufeli, & Bakker, 2004, p. 295), and three unique dimensions of engagement are specified, namely vigour, dedication, and absorption. High levels of energy and mental resilience, the willingness to invest in one's work and continued persistence even in the face of difficulty, construe vigour, and it is seen as the opposite of exhaustion (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Schaufeli et al. (2002) define dedication as a sense of significance, inspiration, pride, challenge as well as enthusiasm. It is also the opposite of cynicism. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) identified absorption as a state of complete immersion in one's work, accompanied by focussed and complete attention, loss of the self in the task, and the individual furthermore experiences inner joy, absolute control and complete immersion in the task. A person who is absorbed in his work fully concentrates on the task at hand and the person has trouble detaching himself from his task. Time also tends to pass quickly. Although vigour and dedication have opposites on the continuum that describe burnout, absorption stands alone and is not coupled to reduced efficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Engaged employees seek out opportunities to exercise control and to get feedback from supervisors and, above all, include their co-workers actively in support structures (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Although the SAEHWS[®] defines constructs such as engagement by means of different names than those used in current literature, i.e. *vitality* whereas Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) make use of the word *vigour*, and *work devotion* in the place of *dedication*, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses confirm that the constructs in this measurement instrument are equivalent to current academic literature (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006).

Diversity refers to the attributes that differ amongst individuals and that may lead to the perception that one person is different from another (Harrison & Sin, 2005; Nkomo & Cox, 1996; Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004; Williams &

O'Reilly, 1998). Differences occur on all levels and include aspects such as gender, race, beliefs, personality and values (Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998).

Organisational support is the perception that is held by an individual regarding his/her treatment by the organisation, as well as how much his/her input is valued and how much the organisation cares for his/her well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Three forms of favourable treatment exist, namely supervisor support, perceived fairness and organisational job conditions, and rewards (Djurkovic, McCormack, & Casimir, 2008). According to Rothmann and Rothmann (2006), organisational support additionally consists of the sub-dimensions of role clarity, job information, participation in decision making, colleague support and supervisory relationships. Supervisory actions play a major role in this perception, especially since supervisors are seen as acting on behalf of senior management (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009). Role clarity refers to the employee's understanding of the tasks that need to be completed as well as at what level the task performance is required, including aspects such as knowledge of relevant policies and procedures (Roberge & Van Dick, 2010; Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Job information refers to aspects such as how the job fits in with the rest of the organisation, how reporting structures work, as well as on what level the job is situated (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Decisions made jointly by superiors and subordinates are known as participative decision making, often leading to better quality of decision making, enhancement of the employee's work life, an increase in employee motivation and commitment, as well as overall higher work satisfaction (Behbahan, 2012; Govender & Parumasur, 2010; Locke & Schweiger, 1979; Wheeler, 1993). Colleague support refers to the manner in which colleagues support each other in the work environment on a daily basis (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Organisational commitment refers to a worker's attachment and commitment to the organisation (Antón, 2009). It is considered to be the worker's mental state that determines his/her desire or duty to remain in the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Three types of organisational commitment have been identified, namely affective, continuance and normative commitment (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1997; Wasti & Can, 2008).

Evidence exists that high affective commitment will positively impact performance and, as such, it is also regarded as the most significant dimension (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affectively committed subordinates tend to remain longer in the organisation, and also tend to work harder, be loyal, show better performance, have higher motivation levels, assume responsibility (Chow, 1990) and also display more positive organisational citizenship behaviour (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Demerouti et al. (2001) report a positive correlation between organisational commitment and engagement.

Turnover intention is defined as an employee's wish to resign from the job or to leave the organisation permanently. Work experiences, such as poor performance assessment (Brown, Hyatt, & Benson, 2009), role ambiguity, job insecurity and work conflict (Antón, 2009) influence turnover intention (Hui, Wong, & Tjosvold, 2007).

The second objective strove to identify from the literature and in a sample of South African employees, the relationships that exist between burnout, work engagement, diversity, organisational support, organisational commitment and turnover intention.

Research findings indicate that burnout is predicted by excessive job demands, specifically work overload and a shortage or absence of resources, as well as a lack of support from supervisors and colleagues (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). It correlates positively with health problems, physical illness, prolonged absenteeism and turnover intentions (Lee & Ashforth, 1990; Leiter, Harvie, & Frizell, 1998; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). In line with previous research, these results thus suggest that burnout relates to negative effects on important individual and organisational outcomes, and contributes to employees' intentions to leave the organisation. The positive relation between diversity and burnout is also of interest, suggesting that burnout contributes to perceptions of diversity issues, or concomitantly that diversity issues intensify the burnout experience (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman & Sparato, 2005; Chatopadhyay, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Tsui et al., 1992; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). A strong inverse relationship exists between burnout and organisational commitment as well as with work engagement (Antón, 2009; Dawley et al., 2010; Pines & Aronson, 1988).

Conversely, high engagement, characterised by high levels of energy and a strong identification with the work (Kahn, 1990), leads to higher organisational commitment as well as organisational support, and negatively with turnover intention and diversity. These relationships suggest that engagement may contribute to perceptions of the organisation as being supportive, and fostering organisational commitment and reducing the intention to quit. However, results may also suggest that diversity problems detract from employee engagement, or conversely, that low levels of work engagement exacerbate the experience of diversity issues. These findings echo those of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), which also show engagement to relate positively to organisational support, and negatively to turnover intention. In the organisational environment, this relates to a negative impact on general engagement and commitment levels, and these are direct indicators of overall employee job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, absenteeism and early retirement (Bakker et al., 2003; Hakanen, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, and Taris (2008) as well as De Lange, De Witte, and Notelaers (2008) found that low work engagement, poor job autonomy and poor resources are active predictors of actual turnover. The level of work engagement predicts self-assessed health, work ability, commitment and job satisfaction, turnover intentions, absenteeism and early retirement (Bakker, Demerouti, Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Hakanen, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Findings regarding the relationship between work engagement and organisational support, including specifically required resources, indicate that a reciprocal relationship exists between these factors: Available resources function as antecedents as well as outcomes of work engagement (Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Research findings furthermore indicate that diversity directly influences perceptions of organisational support (McShane, 2006; Mor-Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998), burnout levels experienced by employees, work engagement levels (Kirchmeyer, 1993; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli 2009) as well as turnover intention (Antón, 2009; Hui, Wong, & Tjosvold, 2007; Jackson et al., 1991) and organisational commitment (Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009; Wasti & Can, 2008; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) postulate that, when a culture of diversity is established within the organisation, successful diversity is

possible. Characteristics of such a culture include mutual respect, a people-oriented approach as well as openness towards conflict, communication and ambiguity.

Organisational support, and specifically supervisory actions, have a direct influence on employee commitment (Dawley, Houghton, & Bucklew, 2010; Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen et al., 2006; Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009). Evidence exists that organisational support significantly impacts the prevention of burnout (Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007; Richardson, Burke, & Mikkelsen, 2004). Research furthermore indicates that organisational support positively correlates with organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Shore & Wayne, 1993; Stamper & Johlke, 2003), and negatively correlates with absenteeism as well as turnover intention (Dawley et al., 2010; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). A positive perception of organisational support amongst employees will lead to higher work commitment and lower turnover intention. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found a positive relationship between social support, performance feedback, supervisory coaching and work engagement.

High levels of organisational commitment impact performance, as well as absenteeism levels and turnover intention (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Demerouti et al. (2001) reported a positive correlation between organisational commitment and engagement. Crupanzano, Rupp and Byrne (2003) concurred with the above and found that employees suffering from burnout show weak commitment to supervisors and the organisation, they tend to withdraw from social interactions and show poor performance. Organisational commitment is supported and enhanced by organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Role ambiguity, conflict, work overload (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006), as well as job insecurity, real or perceived, negatively relate to organisational commitment (Böckerman, 2004).

Turnover intention is defined as an employee's wish to resign from the job or to leave the organisation permanently and is, as such, the opposite of organisational commitment (Antón, 2009; Brown et al., 2009). This study indicates that turnover intention shows a practically significant relationship with burnout. As such, these findings concur with those of Rothmann and Rothmann (2006), who also found that

burnout predicts turnover intention. Findings from this study indicate a strong inverse and practically significant relationship between turnover intention and engagement. According to the findings of De Lange et al. (2008), a statistically significant relationship exists between turnover intention and diversity problems. Jackson et al. (1991) reported similar findings regarding the relationship between turnover intention and diversity problems. It has consistently been found that there is a strong inverse relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention and actual turnover (Antón, 2009; Glugston, 2000; Hui et al., 2007).

In this research, a large inverse and practically significant relationship was found between turnover intention and organisational commitment. This means that the higher the organisational commitment, the lower the turnover intention will be. These results echo those of previous researchers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2006; Chow, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). It was found that burnout shows a strong inverse relationship with both organisational support and commitment. These findings correlate with previous research findings (Antón, 2009; Dawley et al., 2010; Pines & Aronson, 1988). A strong direct relationship with turnover intention exists as well (Leiter et al., 1998; Maslach et al., 1996; Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). In line with previous research, this result suggests that burnout has negative effects on important organisational outcomes and contributes to employees' intentions to leave the organisation. Results also indicate that burnout is exacerbated by variables such as diversity problems (Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman & Sparato, 2005; Chatopadhyay, 1999; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Tsui et al., 1992; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989).

The third objective of this particular study was to determine whether experiences of burnout, work engagement, diversity and organisational support, can be used to predict organisational commitment and turnover intention in a sample of South African employees.

It was seen that age, engagement, diversity, organisational support, and the interaction terms of burnout and engagement with organisational support were statistically significant predictors of organisational commitment. Diversity turned out to be a significant predictor of both organisational commitment and turnover intentions, and

it was found that it directly influences turnover intention as well as organisational commitment, in line with previous researchers (Burger et al., 2013; Chatman & Flynn, 2001; Chatman & Sparato, 2005; Jackson et al., 1991). Diversity was not found to moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement and the outcome variables of organisational commitment and turnover intention. It is clear from previous research (De Dreu & West, 2001; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Green, 2004; Motsoaledi & Celliers, 2012; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010) that very specific conditions must exist in order to ensure an increase in the performance of diverse groups.

Organisational support moderates organisational commitment results with burnout and engagement as the predictor variables (Liou & Cheng, 2010). The regression results, with turnover intention as dependent variable, indicated that engagement, diversity, organisational support, as well as the interaction of organisational support with burnout and work engagement are statistically significant predictors. This indicates that both burnout and engagement are moderated in their relationship to turnover intention by organisational support.

The fourth objective of this research was to determine whether diversity and organisational support moderate the relationship between burnout and engagement as predictors, and organisational commitment and turnover intention as outcomes.

The regression results indicated that, during conditions of low burnout, those employees that enjoy high levels of organisational support, measure higher on organisational commitment when compared with employees that have low levels of organisational support. When one moves to high levels of burnout, the same relationship holds. Employees that experience high levels of organisational support always evidence higher levels of organisational commitment, regardless of levels of burnout. These findings are in line with previous findings (Antón, 2009; Dawley et al., 2010; Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Pines & Aronson, 1988). In terms of the moderating effect demonstrated between engagement and organisational commitment, it was seen that, during conditions of low engagement, those employees that enjoy high levels of organisational support measure higher on organisational commitment when compared with employees that

experience low levels of organisational support. During high levels of engagement the same relationship holds. Employees that experience higher levels of organisational support always experience higher levels of organisational commitment, regardless of the level of engagement. These findings concur with those of Schaufeli and Bakker (2004).

Considering all variables, 36% of the variance in turnover intention was explained. Regression analysis indicates that engagement remains a statistically significant factor. Diversity, organisational support as well as the interaction of organisational support with burnout, and organisational support with engagement are also indicated as being statistically significant predictors. The indication is that both burnout and engagement are moderated in their relationship to turnover intention by organisational support. In practice this means that the level of organisational support is the critical factor that will determine whether the employee will remain loyal to the organisation or search for greener pastures. Even when a factor such as high burnout is present, it is clear that the level of organisational support is critical in the eventual outcome. These findings concur with those of Jawahar et al. (2007), and Richardsen et al. (2004), who found that high levels of organisational support may even prevent the experience of burnout symptoms.

Findings reported here support those of Stamper and Johlke (2003) and Van den Broeck et al. (2008). Organisational support acted as moderator of burnout and engagement with organisational commitment, and it also moderated the relationship between burnout and engagement and turnover intention (Dawley et al., 2010; Pines & Aronson, 1988). These results, once again, concur with the research findings of Djurkovic et al. (2008) as well as with those of Shore and Wayne (1993), and Stamper and Johlke (2003) in illustrating organisational support as a critical variable in managing employee attitudinal and work-related outcomes.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

This study has specific limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, the research design was cross-sectional in nature and although this type of research design holds specific advantages, it also does not allow for establishing longitudinal causality

between constructs. This has a limiting effect on the understanding of how variables such as burnout and engagement develop over time. It also limits understanding of exactly how organisational support and diversity variables influence employees over time. Longitudinal studies will definitely advance current knowledge on the above-mentioned aspects.

Secondly, only a self-report questionnaire was used to obtain the data. As self-report questionnaires often measure a candidate's perceptions regarding the constructs and not the constructs themselves; the results may be regarded as subjective and thus be deferred in favour of objectively obtained results. However, according to current literature on the subject, no differentiation exists between symptoms as perceived by the individual but not confirmed, and those symptoms confirmed as existing risk factors. It is assumed that the presence and experience of perceived symptoms, made visible in whatever manner, have the ability to worsen with time and thus need to be investigated since these symptoms will influence the individual sooner or later (Maslach, 1998; Rothmann, 2003). The use of a single means of data-gathering also introduces the issue of common method variance; triangulation of data from different sources, for example interviews with employees and supervisors as well as survey data, could have given a clearer perspective on how variables operate.

Thirdly, although data was available on sub-dimensions of variables (for example role clarity, job information, participation in decision-making, colleague support and supervisory relationships as constituting organisational support), it was decided to conduct the analyses at the level of total scores. Although this approach still allowed the researcher to answer the research questions, future analysers may find it interesting to investigate the operation and inter-relations of specific sub-dimensions.

Fourthly, whilst exploring the development of organisational commitment as well as turnover intention and the influence of burnout, engagement, diversity and organisational support on these variables, it became apparent during the literature research that aspects such as organisational justice and fairness also impact these variables (Dawley et al., 2010; Guerrero & Herrbach, 2009; Zimmerman, 2008). This study did not take into consideration the impact of organisational justice and fairness, but it may be assumed that when employees perceive the organisation to be just and

fair regarding its actions towards its employees, it would positively influence work engagement. On the other hand, if the organisation was perceived to be unfair and unjust, workers may experience stress and anxiety and it would become visible in higher turnover intention amongst employees (Pazy & Ganzach, 2010; Semmer, Tschan, Meier, Facchin, & Jacobshagen, 2010). It is thus suggested that future research aim at identifying the relationship that exists between perceived organisational justice and fairness on the one hand, and subsequent organisational commitment and turnover intention on the other.

Specific strengths also form part of the study. Firstly, a large representative sample of South African employees took part in the study and findings can thus be made applicable to a wide economic sphere in the South African context. Secondly, the study aimed at providing answers to current gaps in the literature, especially with regard to the role played by burnout and engagement levels as well as diversity and organisational support on aspects such as organisational commitment and turnover intention. The moderating role of diversity and organisational support, seen in the light of on-going transformation, was also put under the spotlight.

The results as indicated in this study have specific implications for organisations, individuals, as well as researchers that wish to further study these phenomena. The discussion now turns to these.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The fifth objective of the study was to determine what recommendations can be made for the organisation as well as for future research. The results regarding the studied phenomena can assist individuals as well as organisations in focusing employee wellness interventions properly. These recommendations follow below.

3.3.1 Recommendations for organisations

To ensure the highest possible return on the investment made in employees, it is crucial to ensure that employees not only remain with the organisation, but also remain highly productive within the work domain. It is thus essential to effectively

manage those variables that impact on organisational commitment as well as on turnover intention. The results clearly indicate that higher levels of engagement result in higher levels of organisational commitment and lower levels of turnover intention. Organisational support, too, is a significant predictor of organisational commitment or, on the other hand, turnover intention. The latter, in turn, leads to lower productivity and higher recruiting and selection costs for the organisation (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Liou & Cheng, 2010; Nadiri, & Tanova, 2010). By ensuring optimal organisational support, the organisation will not only increase productivity levels, but also ensure lower turnover, thus realising savings for the company. Optimal organisational support includes aspects such as justness and fairness (Dawley et al., 2010), adequate supervisor support (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen et al., 2006; Vandenberghe & Bentein, 2009) as well as the availability of adequate job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Rothmann, 2003). Supervisors need special training to function effectively on behalf of senior management, including training in the so-called soft skills, e.g. communication, empathy and listening skills, to name but a few. Poor organisational support as well as transformational issues that are handled in a less than optimal manner can have far-reaching and often devastating effects, not only for the individual, but also for the organisation as well as the overall economy of South Africa.

Previous studies support the current findings regarding poorly managed diversity issues and poor organisational support being associated with burnout, which, in turn, lead to increased absenteeism and turnover and a loss in productivity. Organisations have a direct responsibility to ensure optimal work environments that are beneficial to overall employee well-being. The results of this study may serve as encouragement to organisations to ensure efficient transformation programmes that include effective diversity programmes, as well as to take the time to identify those organisational support structures that will lift the organisation from mere average to employer of choice. This may be done by ensuring firstly that effective organisational support structures are in place. An adequate support structure will include effective supervisor support, fair treatment and adequate organisational job conditions and resources, as well as sought-after rewards (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Rothmann, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The current as well as previous research indicates that effective organisational support structures not only positively impact

burnout and engagement levels, but also negates the effects of diversity problems that may exist within the organisation (Jawahar et al., 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004).

Secondly, diversity problems clearly impact organisational and employee engagement as well as organisational outcomes such as turnover intention. This variable may be managed effectively by ensuring that an adequate organisational support structure exists that will include open and clear communication channels. If an effective organisational transformation structure includes aspects such as mutual respect, a people-oriented approach, as well as openness towards conflict, communication and ambiguity, existing diversity problems can be identified and solved amicably (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). Diversity training, celebrating the differences that exist but also concentrating on “common-ground issues” is a further possibility that could be implemented in order to cultivate better understanding amongst individuals of different groups. This should culminate in employees that are committed to the organisation and share a common goal, namely that of a successful organisation.

Age, another factor that, during the research, was identified as a statistically significant variable in organisational commitment, should thus be managed by means of clear career paths as well as adequate HR planning. This will ensure that employees remain committed to the organisation, and they can be identified and trained in advance to take over when natural attrition, such as employees going on pension, takes place. Other employees, the so-called “young and upcoming,” who tend to jump between organisations in an effort to gain experience, remain mobile and better their individual incomes, should be managed in an open and transparent manner. This could be done in a variety of ways, namely to, once again, establish clear career paths as well as making visible mutual expectations during career planning meetings. The availability of this information should lead to better planning on the side of the organisation as well as the individual, since the future would be clear for both parties regarding organisational as well as personal expectations. HR would also be placed in a much better position to ensure adequate planning for the specific post or individual.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Further research, especially in the South African context, is encouraged since the individual and the organisation, as well as the overall economy stand to benefit from an increased awareness regarding the effective management of diversity issues as well as effective organisational support structure and procedures. The research design was cross-sectional in nature and did not allow for longitudinal measurement of constructs. This aspect limits the understanding of how variables such as burnout and engagement develop over time. It also limits understanding of exactly how organisational support and diversity variables influence employees over time. Longitudinal studies would definitely advance current knowledge on the above-mentioned aspects. The use of techniques such as interviews with employees and supervisors as well as the use of survey data from self-report questionnaires will prevent subjective deductions and will give a clearer perspective on how the different variables operate. Based on the literature review, it is also suggested that future research include the identification of the relationship that exists between perceived organisational justice and fairness and subsequent turnover intention and organisational engagement.

Future research may also consider the relationship and predictive ability of sub-dimensions of scales, since the focus of this research remained at the level of total scores.

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