



Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement and performance in a South African motor retail company

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DECLARATION

This study followed an article format as the selected structure. The researcher, Pieter Blom, assisted in conceptualising the approach and design of the study, conducted the literature review, collected the data, assisted with the data analysis and interpretation of statistical findings and was responsible for writing all chapters contained in this mini dissertation. Prof Leon Jackson functioned as supervisor and aided the conceptualisation and design of the study, assisted with the analysis and interpretation of the data and was the co-author of the article produced from the research.

I, Pieter Blom, declare herewith that “*Investigating relationships between Job satisfaction, commitment, engagement and performance in a South-African motor retail company*” is a product of my own work. This manuscript has not previously been submitted for examination to another university. All academic sources used in the study are included in-text and in each chapter’s separate reference list.

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“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11

ABSTRACT

Title: Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance in a South-African motor retail company

The South African Motor Retail Industry had many challenges, including pressure on the economy, competitive forces in the marketplace and high expectations placed on employees' performance to sell products, and provide quality service to customers. Subsequently, it is critical that to understand how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance interrelate, as these factors will contribute to better organisational outcomes and improved well-being for employees. This research sought to examine the relationships among job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance in a South African motor retail organisation. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was used to accomplish this objective, with a non-probability convenience sample of $n = 289$ participants. Measurement instruments included the condensed version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire; the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire; the condensed version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale; and a performance measure assessing both task and contextual performance. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to identify underlying constructs in the data. Correlation analyses were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant correlations among the variables. Mediation and Moderation Analyses were performed to determine if one variable mediated or moderated the relationship between other variables. Finally, regression analyses were conducted to identify the predictors of each of the dependent variables.

These findings demonstrated that there are positive and statistically significant associations between employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance (task and contextual). Notably, employee job satisfaction was significantly associated with improved employee performance and positively related to affective and normative commitment. Furthermore, employee work engagement was positively associated with improved employee performance. Partially supportive evidence for the mediating roles of organisational commitment (affective and normative) and work engagement in the association between job satisfaction and performance was also shown. Whereas limited mediation and no moderation effects were

demonstrated by continuance commitment. Overall, the variables examined here were collectively predictive of employee performance, with job satisfaction being the most significant variable.

The study's limitations include its cross-sectional design, the potential for self-report bias via the use of the same source of data, the potential reliance upon non-probability sampling techniques and the use of a single case study of a motor retailer that restricts generalisability and potential causality. It is recommended for the motor retail organisation to develop specific strategies for enhancing each of the above identified factors. It is furthermore also suggested that subsequent studies into this area could use longitudinal methodology in addition to utilising broader sampling techniques.

Keywords: Employee commitment, employee engagement, employee turnover, job satisfaction, motor retail South Africa, organisational commitment, work engagement

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HR	Human Resources
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
SA	South Africa
NWU	North-West University
(PTY) LTD	Proprietary Limited
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SET	Social Exchange Theory
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
IWPQ	Individual Work Performance Questionnaire
UWES	Work and well-being survey
MSQ	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire
OCQ	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire
IBM SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
PCC	Pearson's correlation coefficient
JSS	Job Satisfaction Survey
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
NCF	Not confirmed
JS	Job Satisfaction
OC	Organisational Commitment
EE	Employee Engagement
EP	Employee Performance

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

According to the Job Satisfaction – Employee Performance Hypothesis identified in this study, the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance is significant, with job satisfaction being a mediator for the impact of several work environment factors on performance results (Katebi *et al.*, 2022). As numerous researchers have noted, research supports the importance of job satisfaction in maximising employee productivity and an organisation's overall success (Djuli *et al.*, 2023; Hanum *et al.*, 2023; Hemsworth *et al.*, 2024).

Job satisfaction is an important mediating variable that exists between some aspects such as Employee Engagement and Commitment to the Organisation on the one hand, and its effect on Employee Performance (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881). Research has also shown that increased job satisfaction will improve commitment to the organisation, resulting in better performance (Hemsworth *et al.*, 2024:25). Research has shown the existence of a direct relationship between job satisfaction and Employee Performance, where it has been found that job satisfaction accounts for about 41.9% of the variance in performance in certain situations (Djuli *et al.*, 2023:191). There are various factors such as working conditions, motivation and effective application of technology that influence job satisfaction which collectively enhances performance (Hanum *et al.*, 2023:1; Hermawan *et al.*, 2024:2). While the hypothesis emphasises the positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance, it is essential to consider other variables. This suggests that a multifaceted approach is necessary for understanding employee dynamics in organisations.

This study will use a quantitative (numerical data and surveys) approach to determine the relationship between and the role of job satisfaction in the organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance of medium-sized motor retail companies. More specifically, this study will seek to determine the mediating role of affective organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.

1.2 Background to study

Organisational commitment refers to the psychological attachment an employee has to their organisation, influencing their willingness to contribute to its success (Harini. *et al.*, 2024:1). Studies show that strong organisational commitment results in enhanced employee performance, as committed employees are more likely to exert effort and remain with the organisation (Arisandi & Heryjanto, 2024:1043). Organisational commitment mediates the relationship between various factors, such as organisational culture and employee performance, indicating its central role in performance dynamics (Handayani *et al.*, 2025:8; Sinaga & Handayani, 2024:1).

Employee engagement encompasses the emotional and intellectual involvement of employees in their work, which is linked to higher motivation and productivity (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Engaged employees demonstrate better performance metrics, including increased profitability and customer satisfaction, as they are more invested in their roles (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Engagement also influences job satisfaction, which in turn mediates its effect on employee performance, highlighting the interconnectedness of these factors (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881). The proposed model supports the job satisfaction hypothesis, but the availability of the data creates also the opportunity to assess an alternative model. This alternative is to assess the mediating role of affective organisational commitment in the relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction, thereby separating the interconnectedness of these factors.

In May 2025, the sales of new vehicles in South Africa reached an impressive total of 45,308 units, with dealer sales comprising 40,062 units, or 88.4% (NADA, 2025). The Westvaal Motor Group played a significant role in this milestone by contributing 638 vehicles (Westvaal, 2025), which accounts for 1.6% of all dealer sales in the country.

The automotive sector is a crucial component of South Africa's GDP, with a total contribution of 4.3% as of 2022 (Statista, 2025). This includes 2.4% from vehicle and component manufacturing and 1.9% from the auto retail sector (Statista (2025), (NAAMSA, 2025). This further reinforces the important role the Westvaal Motor Group plays in the South African automotive retail market as well as the overall economy by contributing approximately 0.03% of the total national GDP (Westvaal, 2025).

Every region showed an increase in the unemployment rate during the 1st Quarter of 2024. All regions experienced an excess of unemployed persons over employed individuals, with the highest percentage of unemployment seen in Limpopo. The persistently high levels of unemployment and the resulting poverty continue to pose major threats to society, overall stability, and our democratic system (RMI, 2024:10).

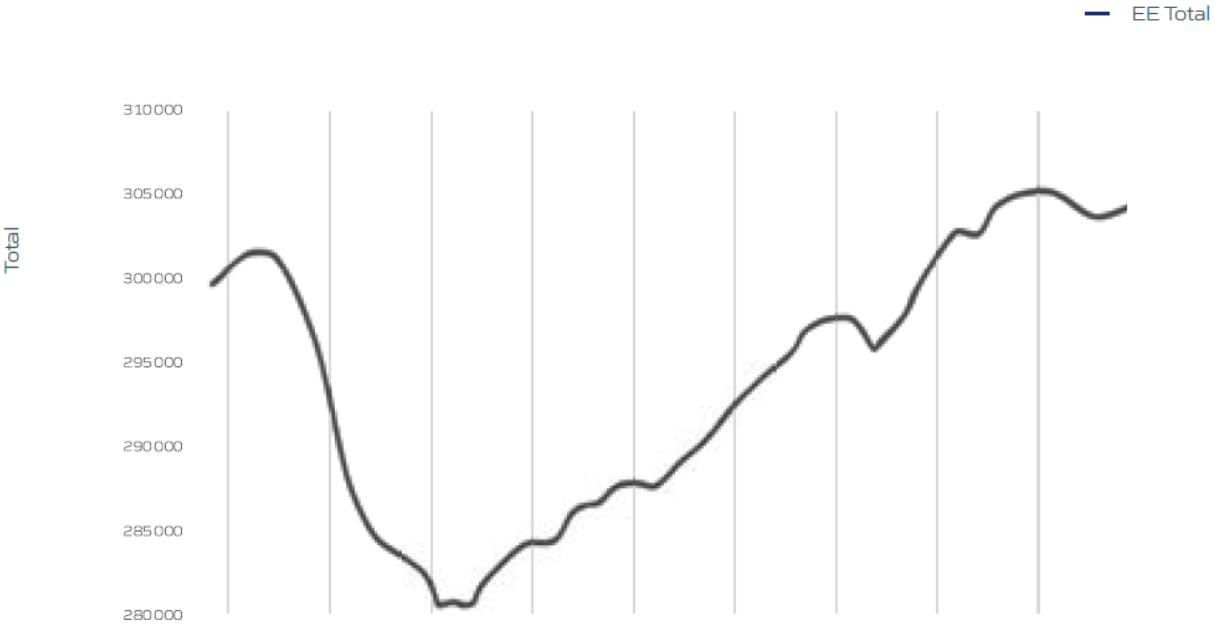


Figure 1: Automotive employment within the South African economy RMI (2024)

The chart shows a notable decline in employment around mid-2020 caused by COVID-19, followed by a steady recovery starting in March 2021. Since June 2024, the Motor Industry has not only bounced back but has also slightly surpassed its employment figures from before the pandemic. It stands out as a major source of job creation and provision within the South African economy (RMI, 2024:53).

1.3 Definitions and key terms

Table 1: Definitions and key terms in this study

Contractual workforce	Those who are contractually hired with little expectation of continued employment beyond the implicit or explicit nature of the job requirements are considered temporary or short-term employment (Kosanovich, 2018:1) cited in (Roberts & Douglas, 2020:6).
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Deductive principle	To generate hypotheses and propositions that can assist in the validity of arguments (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:32).
Employee retention	The motivation, encouragement and effort employers provide employees to remain at a specific company for the maximum time (Ariawan, 2022:273), (Subrata & Rizky, 2024:74).
Job satisfaction	An employee's subjective emotional reaction or attitude toward their work (Islam, 2024:8).
Epistemological assumption	The theory of knowledge flows logically from the theories that existed in explaining the nature of reality (Ontology) (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:31).
Inductive principle	Where evidence is gathered to develop knowledge as the basis for universal propositions (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:32).
Involuntary turnover	The company's decision to retrench or dismiss an employee (An, 2019:16).
Job enrichment:	The positive impact of day-to-day work activities on an employee's feelings and achievements. Job enrichment is a motivational strategy that provides interest and challenge to the work (Kavya, 2024:6516).
Long-term employment	Employees at a company over an extended period. The long-term employment length varies depending on the type of job, but it often ranges from five to 10 years with the same company (Indeed, 2024).
Ontological assumption	Developing theories that assist in explaining the nature of reality (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:29).
Objectivism	The view implies that companies exist independently from individuals who manage them or the researchers who study them (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:30).
Positivism	Applying natural science methods to study and understand reality objectively via the use of surveys or other instruments (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2021:32).
Work environment	A company's professional setting, which promotes safe conditions for carrying out day-to-day activities, enhances employee retention and job satisfaction (Kaplan, 2007:16).

1.4 Problem statement

Job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance are some of the biggest threats to sustainability within a company (Roodt, 2018:1). The relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance is multifaceted and interdependent. The interrelationship of all these factors can be seen as a cycle of positive reinforcement of both individual and organisational productivity. Job satisfaction is an important variable in terms of its direct impact on an employee's work performance. It has been found that employees that are satisfied in their employment are generally able to achieve higher levels of performance than those who are dissatisfied, based upon their greater level of motivation and commitment (Arisandi & Heryjanto, 2024:1059). Research also shows that job satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between organisational commitment and employee performance, showing that an increase in job satisfaction results in an increase in employee performance (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881).

Both job satisfaction and employee engagement influence organisational commitment positively. Harini *et al.* (2024:98) and Sathish and Krishna (2024:60) report that engaged workers are typically more committed and as such can improve their own performance. The relationship between engagement and commitment creates an work environment where employees have greater support for one another, resulting in less turnover and greater retention rates (Harini. *et al.*, 2024).

Engagement in the workplace is a solid indicator of an employee's performance. Employees who are engaged have a higher level of enthusiasm for their job and are more dedicated to it than those who are less engaged (Chahyono *et al.*, 2024:106; Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60) The findings show that when organisations help foster employee engagement they can improve the performance of each employee while at the same time contribute to the overall success of the organisation (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60).

Therefore, the main goal of this study is to thoroughly investigate the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. By understanding the dynamics involved in the relationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance and implementing effective strategies, companies in the motor retail sector in South Africa can mitigate the adverse effects thereof and improve overall performance.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa?
2. What is the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance and how does job satisfaction mediate this relationship?
3. To what extent does organisational commitment mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance?
4. To what extent does employee engagement mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance?
5. To what extent does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance?

1.6 Research aim and objectives

1.6.1 Research aim

The research aims to improve the understanding of how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement impact employee performance in the South African motor retail industry. It will explore whether new Sales personnel, who transfer their clients from previous dealerships, have a positive impact on performance. This study questions the commonly held belief that turnover mostly has negative consequences. Its results could either corroborate or contradict current theories on human capital and organisational behaviour, offering real-world evidence of the possible advantages of turnover in certain situations.

It is anticipated that this research will provide effective methods for using job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement to increase employee performance. If employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance are proven to be advantageous, companies can create and implement specific hiring and orientation processes that take advantage of new employees' current customer connections. This could result in better sales results and customer retention strategies.

Groups that will benefit from the study are employees and managers in the motor retail industry and academic fields such as human resource management, organisational behaviour, and business administration. The industry to benefit from the enhanced and efficient management practises is the motor retail industry in SA and more specifically the medium-sized companies such as Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd.

1.6.2 Research objectives

1.6.2.1 Primary objectives

The primary objective of the study is to measure the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa.

1.6.2.2 Secondary objectives

1. To determine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa.
2. To examine the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance.
3. To determine the mediating effect of organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
4. To determine the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
5. To determine the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance.

1.7 Research methodology

This research follows a two-phase approach to achieve the outlined objectives. Firstly, a literature review will be undertaken, focusing on existing studies related to job satisfaction, commitment, work engagement, and work performance, while referencing the previously identified relationships among these factors. Thereafter, an empirical investigation will be conducted to assess the occurrence of these variables and their interconnections within the context of the chosen motor retail company in South Africa.

1.8 Literature review

The literature review aims to enhance the understanding of key concepts such as job satisfaction, commitment, work engagement, and work performance by examining a variety of sources in leadership and organisational psychology. This includes textbooks on organisational behaviour; academic research related to the core concepts and reputable peer-reviewed journals. The focus will be placed on publications by experts in these fields of study and prioritising the most recent studies for relevance. Resources were accessed through platforms such as Google, Google Scholar, WorldCat and NWULIB.

1.9 Research paradigm

The study explores the paradigm and meta-theoretical assumption of the advantages or disadvantages of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance for short-term and long-term employment in a medium-sized motor retail company performance. An ontological assumption approach will be followed, with an objectivist perspective of the research, that the reality of business is that there will always be an element of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. To determine the impact of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance on companies, a quantitative approach will be used to analyse data extracted from the population. The study will employ an epistemological assumption with a positivist stance, incorporating deductive principles to examine job satisfaction, organisational commitment, engagement, and employee performance within a medium-sized motor company. Data will be gathered using surveys (Botma *et al.*, 2022:249-250), which will be completed by the participants. An objectivist regulatory assumption, together with the dominant *functionalist* framework, will be adopted, which describes the activities within companies and suggests changes that can improve company performance in this study of companies (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:36-37).

The first theory is the human capital theory. The concept of human capital, as proposed by Becker (2009:12), cited in Rafid (2023:4), suggests that individuals are more than just resources, they also represent capital that could generate returns. Any investments made to enhance the quality and quantity of this capital were considered investment activities. Typically, human capital is linked to an individual's skills and expertise within an

organisation. Human capital theory suggests that job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee work engagement, and performance have an impact on company performance and therefore are viewed as valuable assets within a company (Awu *et al.*, 2025). This implies that the loss of human capital may contribute to the loss of knowledge and skills (Alexander, 2020:10-11).

However, human capital theory encompasses not only what employees know and their skill sets, but also their capacity to effectively apply this knowledge to the benefit of the organisation, which significantly relies on the level of engagement they exhibit (Carlback *et al.*, 2024:294). This theory, which fundamentally relates to the economic role of humans within the economic system, encompasses several key principles (Swanson, 2001), (i) Investing in training results in greater learning, (ii) Enhanced learning boosts productivity and (iii) Increased productivity is reflected in higher wages and business profits. For organisations, human capital theory offers a fresh approach to employee management. Additionally, it can improve a company's ability to attract, engage and retain employees as wages, reputation and working conditions become more favourable (Carlback *et al.*, 2024:296).

The second theory is the Social Exchange Theory (SET) via a study of specific company dynamics influencing job satisfaction, organisational commitment, engagement, and employee performance. Cropanzano *et al.* (2017), cited in Ahmad *et al.* (2023:1), described social exchange theory (SET) as comprising three elements: (i) an action taken by one party towards another, (ii) a corresponding attitude or behaviour from the recipient in response and (iii) the outcome of the relationship formed as a result. Furthermore, SET is a significant framework for placing focus on the extent to which a person is willing to invest effort in maintaining and enhancing a social relationship by weighing the potential benefits against the costs (Zhang *et al.*, 2025:2). Blau (1964:91), cited in Saglam *et al.* (2022:2) also describes the SET as “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others”. SET, introduced by Homans (1958), cited in Kim *et al.* (2022:2), is a sociological framework that explains human behaviour and the nature of social relationships. According to this theory, individuals engage in the exchange of both tangible and intangible resources and rewards (Saglam *et al.*, 2022) .

1.10 Research method

The research method is defined as a series of steps or processes used to formulate laws and theories aimed at explaining, predicting, understanding and managing various phenomena (Hall *et al.*, 2023:989). The research will be based upon Positivist Research Philosophy (which uses Natural Science methods to examine Social Phenomena) so using Quantitative Methodology for the research is appropriate due to its ability to collect and analyse substantial amounts of data (Bryman *et al.*, 2021).

Medium-Sized Motor Retail Companies are the focus of the study. Medium-sized motor retailers represent an extremely competitive and dynamic environment that requires prominent levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. They specialise in selling both new and used vehicles across various brands and offer a variety of aftersales services including parts, repairs, vehicle maintenance and provide finance and insurance packages to customers. The study aims to measure the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance using numerical data and statistical analysis. A quantitative approach will allow for the collection of objectives and measurable data through surveys, ensuring the reliability of findings (Botma *et al.*, 2022). Using structured questionnaires (for example, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire) ensures standardised responses for statistical comparison.

The researcher will be conducting a non-experimental study that aims to answer the specific question of what impact employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee work engagement, and employee performance have on medium-sized motor retail companies. To determine the impact on companies, a quantitative approach will be used to analyse data. Creswell and Creswell (2023:22) introduce quantitative research as testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. The approach method best suited for the research problem is a deductive approach to inquiry, building in protection against bias and controlling alternative explanations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023:23).

The deductive approach involves evaluating a theory by developing hypotheses and designing a research strategy to test the proposed theory (Haque, 2022:1). Deductive

reasoning starts with a broad principle (such as the initiation, engagement, and performance framework) and then analyses specific observations (the dependent variables used in entrepreneurship studies) to determine whether they align with the general principle (for example, do all the dependent variables conform to the suggested framework) (Hall *et al.*, 2023:990). The study will follow a deductive approach, where existing theories (i.e., Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory) inform hypotheses that will then be evaluated using data. The study will formulate hypotheses and evaluate them through correlation and regression analysis. A deductive approach will ensure that the study is structured around proving or disproving the predefined hypotheses.

1.11 Research design

The researcher will employ a meticulous descriptive correlation research design to thoroughly examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance (Botma *et al.*, 2022:140) in a medium-sized motor retail company, using surveys. Botma *et al.* (2022:140) states that this design specifically describes the relationship between independent and dependent variables, where relationships already exist between two or more variables.

Furthermore, Botma *et al.* (2022:141) also states that the correlation must not be mistaken for causation, implying that one variable did not cause the other variable. The research question implies that job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance did not affect performance in a medium-sized motor retail company. Descriptive correlation design is suitable for studying relationships between how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance influence performance at present and to account for changes in this relationship over time (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:205).

1.12 Demarcation / delimitation of study

1.12.1 Field of study

The field of study is industrial psychology, defined by Conte (2024:4) as the application of psychological principles, theory and research to the work setting. The topic of this study

is organisational behaviour as it assesses employee attitudes about job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance.

1.12.2 Sector/industry/business under investigation.

The word "sector" describes a wide segment of the economy, while "industry" pertains to a more specific group of organisations or businesses (Cetina, 2012). Although they are often used interchangeably to denote a set of companies with comparable structures or that function within the same economic area, "sector" typically indicates a larger, broader part of the economy, whereas "industry" is much more exact (Cetina, 2012:405). This study was conducted on employees of Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd in six of South Africa's nine provinces within the motor retail industry.

1.12.3 Geographical demarcation

Tang *et al.* (2022:1120), citing The Dictionary of Modern Geography by (Wetherick *et al.*, 2001), describes a geographical boundary as a line or zone that separates neighbouring geographical areas, typically located where there is the most significant change in geographical characteristics or features (Wetherick *et al.*, 2001:27). Geographical is furthermore defined as: "based on or derived from the physical features of an area on earth's surface" and the term demarcation is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as: "the efforts of fixing the boundary or limit of an area" (Merriam-Webster Inc., 2019). The study is limited to the motor retail industry in SA and targets specifically the medium-sized motor dealerships of Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd. Data will be collected from the dealerships in the following provinces: Mpumalanga, Western Cape, Limpopo, Gauteng, North-West and Free State.

1.13 Population and sampling

1.13.1 Population

The population of the study includes employees from medium-sized motor retail companies in South Africa, specifically the Westvaal Motor Group, which operates several dealerships across various regions. The study will focus on and target the dealerships in the group, including employees in Sales who were engaged in daily operational activities, as well as Support staff. The researcher assumes that these employees, given the

interaction with business processes and customers, are pivotal to understanding how job satisfaction impacts employee performance.

1.13.2 Sampling

1.13.2.1 Sampling technique

Convenience sampling will be used as it is the most common type of non-probability sampling. The method focuses on gaining information from participants (the sample) who are “convenient” for the researcher to access (Bryman *et al.*, 2021). This sample method does not require a random selection of participants based on any set of criteria (such as demographic factors), instead, the researcher can subjectively select people at random, who are willing to be approached and become part of the research (Botma *et al.*, 2022). This technique is ideal when large sample sizes are required and where time is of the essence (Creswell & Creswell, 2023:199).

The researcher will make use of the popular G*Power (G*Power, 2020) tool to calculate the sample size, using the t-test family to compare means (the average values the researcher intends to analyse in the study), with the assumption that job satisfaction might impact employee performance. The statistical test that will be used is the correlation: point biserial model with a priori type of power analysis. The “two-tailed” parameter will be selected with an effect size *p-value* ($p = 0.21$), Alpha (α) set at 0.05 for a 95% confidence level and Power ($1 - \beta$) of 0.95 (95%) for a high probability of detection if a correlation exists between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance in the population.

The screenshot displays the G*Power software interface. It is configured for a 't tests' family and 'Correlation: Point biserial model' statistical test. The power analysis is set to 'A priori: Compute required sample size - given alpha, power, and effect size'. The input parameters are: Tail(s) set to 'Two', Effect size |p| set to 0.21, alpha err prob set to 0.05, and Power (1 - beta err prob) set to 0.95. The output parameters are: Noncentrality parameter delta (3.6196971), Critical t (1.9684119), Df (282), Total sample size (284), and Actual power (0.9502599).

Input Parameters		Output Parameters	
Tail(s)	Two	Noncentrality parameter δ	3.6196971
Effect size $ p $	0.21	Critical t	1.9684119
α err prob	0.05	Df	282
Power ($1 - \beta$ err prob)	0.95	Total sample size	284
		Actual power	0.9502599

Figure 1: G*Power calculation results

1.13.2.2 Sampling size

The sample size needs to represent the diversity in the population to enable the researcher to generalise the findings to the whole population (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:210). The study will consider the homogeneity of the population as stated by Bryman *et al.* (2021:229), where the variation is less when the population is part of the same group of companies. The recommended minimum sample size will be 284 individuals, for the correlation research design to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance.

1.13.2.3 Inclusion criteria

- Sales representatives and Support office staff employed by the Westvaal Motor Group at their dealerships might limit the scope of the study and provide room for future studies.
- Employees who will be employed for at least 6 months between 2018 and 2025.
- Employees willing to participate in the study and who provides informed consent.

1.13.2.4 Exclusion criteria

- Employees not in the relevant Sales departments or Support departments.
- Recent hires (employees with the company for less than 6 months).
- Contractual employees.

1.14 Data collection

1.14.1 Data collection instruments

For the chosen descriptive correlation design, according to Bryman *et al.* (2021:237), the best-suited data collection method is questionnaires as the data-gathering instrument (Botma *et al.*, 2010:160). The advantages of a survey data collection method are that it is (i) Cost and time-efficient (ii) Relatively unlimited geographical coverage and (iii) Minimum data capturing required, thus limiting data capturing mistakes (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:240).

Table 2: Summary of utilised measuring instruments

Construct	Source	Instrument
Job satisfaction	Weiss <i>et al.</i> (1967a)	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)
Organisational commitment	Allen and Meyer (1993)	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)
Work engagement	Schaufeli <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Work and well-being survey (UWES)
Employee performance	Koopmans <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)

The following standardised questionnaires as measuring instruments will be used:

- *Job satisfaction*: The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short form, developed by (Weiss *et al.*, 1967a) will be used in this study to determine employee job satisfaction on two dimensions (i) intrinsic and (ii) extrinsic. The MSQ's developed by Weiss *et al.* (1977) job satisfaction scale which is based on a twenty-item, one-to-five-point Likert scale will be used in the study, where 1 = Very Dissatisfied and 5 = Very Satisfied. Reliability for the MSQ obtained from previous studies is calculated at 0.834 (Sahibzada *et al.*, 2022:7).
- *Organisational commitment*: The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) measuring the employee commitment to work organisations, developed by Allen and Meyer (1993); (Mowday *et al.*, 1979:224), will be used to determine employee organisational commitment on three dimensions: (i) Affective commitment, (ii) Continuance commitment and (iii) Normative commitment. The questionnaire is a twenty-four item one-to-five-point Likert-scale that is used in the study, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Accordingly, Cronbach's Alpha of greater than 0.7 will be considered to be an acceptable reliability coefficient of the scale obtained from previous studies by Agegnehu *et al.* (2022:102).
- *Work engagement scale* - Schaufeli *et al.* (2006) developed a brief seventeen-item work and well-being survey (UWES) designed to assess work engagement, which is a positive emotional state associated with fulfilment at work, marked by energy, commitment and concentration. The survey is based on a zero-to-six Likert scale,

where 0 = Never and 6 = Always (every day). The reliability test from the research of Sodha and Goswami (2023:28) revealed that Cronbach's Alpha values for both variables exceed 0.7, indicating that the survey is reliable and acceptable. This supports the validity of the instrument that will be used.

- *Employee performance*: A brief and general questionnaire designed to assess individual work performance is the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). This questionnaire is founded on a three-dimensional framework, encompassing task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive work behaviour as components of individual work performance Koopmans *et al.* (2013:90). The questionnaire consists of twenty-seven items one-to-six-point Likert-scale, where 1 = Disagree very much and 6 = Agree very much. Previous studies by Özkan *et al.* (2024:5) revealed that Cronbach's Alphas of three subscales (task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour) were 0.894, 0.875, and 0.796, respectively.
- A demographic section seeking biographical information about gender, race, age, position, education, and period of employment will be used to describe the sample.

1.14.2 Data collection / fieldwork

It is important to note that the researcher is employed within the Westvaal Motor Group, therefore having the dual role of employee and researcher. To recruit participants ethically and mitigate the potential risk of conflict of interest, the researcher's strategy is to engage with a gatekeeper in the form of HR to initiate contact with participants and oversee the research process. This will ensure transparency and enhance the credibility and integrity of the research. HR will publish an invitation to participate in the research project, in the form of a notice describing the nature of the study (topic, objective, and ethical considerations governing the study) on the company's internal communication systems. An email that contains a link to the consent form will be sent, allowing participants to only view the questionnaire when they have given their consent.

The researcher will send an application for approval to the Group CFO and HR Manager prior to commencing with the study in order to obtain permission to do the study at the Westvaal Motor Group. Once approval has been received by the Group CFO and HR Manager, the researcher will begin with the working title and research objectives of the study. The approval by the Group CFO and HR Manager will provide confirmation that

the study is supported by the organisation and will ensure that it is aligned with the company's interests and policies, thus eliminating the need for any additional formal approvals from other decision makers in the Westvaal Motor Group after completion of the ethics clearance process.

Ethical clearance will need to be applied for by the researcher to conduct this study through the Scientific Committee of the NWU Business School. Once ethical clearance has been obtained, the study will take place as per the approved ethical guidelines. In addition, the Group CFO and HR Manager (gatekeepers), will assist the researcher in gaining access to the participants and data and ensure that all the appropriate organisational policies and ethical practices are adhered to. This process will ensure that all research activities are conducted transparently and in alignment with the company's expectations.

The company HR Project Manager (mediator) will mediate between the researcher and the participants, communicating and addressing any concerns and questions.

Surveys will be distributed via the online Office 365 Forms platform to ensure a wide reach and ease of response. Responses will be monitored and collected from the platform, which ensures that anonymity and confidentiality are maintained. Bryman et al. (2021:246) confirm that closed-ended questions are a widespread type used in the Likert scale, and the study used a vertical format for the closed-ended questions.

1.14.3 Data coding and analysis

The statistical software suggested by Bryman *et al.* (2021:431) to be used in conducting statistical analysis is the IBM SPSS version 30 as this tool facilitates data coding, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression analyses and hypothesis testing. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients will be used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and the monodimensional of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995:316). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items of a scale, in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale (Roodt, 2018:9). Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics with an ordinal level of measurement and a median measure of central tendency. Due to the individual values being similar, the range might be small, the sample might homogeneous and the range

of distribution of values around the mean might be a standard deviation (Botma *et al.*, 2022:180-181).

The data which will be gathered for job satisfaction generated from the numerical rating scale (Likert 5) will be numerically coded for easy analysis and testing on a Pearson's correlation coefficient (PCC) to specify the relationships between the variables (Botma *et al.*, 2022:185). Measures of relationships are concerned with correlation, this does not imply or assume that one variable causes the other, but simply whether there is a relationship between the variables by the means of a correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient can vary from a magnitude of +1 (a perfect positive or direct relationship) to -1 (a perfect negative or inverse relationship). If the correlation coefficient is zero (0), it indicates that the two variables are uncorrelated (Botma *et al.*, 2022:189). The strength of the linear relationship decreases as the r value decreases. In terms of statistical significance, the value of the confidence interval will be set to 95% ($p < 0.05$) as effect size (Roodt, 2018:10), will be used to determine the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0.20 small-to-medium effect will be set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988:15). Correlation coefficient analysis will be performed to indicate whether two variables are related and to what degree they are related (Botma *et al.*, 2010:189), as correlation does not assume or imply that one variable causes the other, but simply whether there is a relationship between the variables.

1.15 Ethical considerations

Procedures: if the participants choose to participate and give consent, they are required to complete a structured survey that includes questions about their work experience, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and perceptions of their performance. The survey will take approximately 60 minutes (maximum 80 minutes) to complete, and responses will be recorded anonymously.

The principles of honesty, accountability, professional courtesy and fairness and good stewardship of data will be followed to ensure that the research is less risky and protects the rights of the participants. Walton (2018) cited in (Webber, 2020:59) states that when individuals are involved as participants in research, there are three main objectives in research ethics: (i) Ensure the protection of human participants, (ii) Ensure that research

is conducted in a manner that serves the interests of individuals, businesses and society as a whole and (iii) Ensure thoroughness, such as the process of informed consent (Walton, 2018).

To demonstrate non-maleficence, the principle of not harming, it is essential to protect both participants and their data (Knight, 2022). Although educational researchers recognise their ethical obligation to safeguard their participants from harm during research, this understanding does not guarantee that they can articulate the specific types of harm that may arise or how to identify and prevent such harm effectively (Buchanan & Warwick, 2021:1090).

1.15.1 Voluntary participation and withdrawal when feeling uncomfortable.

Participation in the research will be clearly stated as voluntary and not linked to any obligations or benefits (Budin-Ljøsne *et al.*, 2023:4). The study will not coerce the respondents to participate and those who want to withdraw from the study will be permitted to do so at any time (Vanhuvaone, 2023:39).

Before participants engage in the study, informed consent will be obtained via a comprehensive online consent form. This form includes details of the participant's rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences and that the study is completely voluntary.

All potential participants will have an opportunity to question the investigator(s) regarding the study, prior to signing an Informed Consent Form as a means of ensuring that the participants understand all aspects of participant involvement. This will enable them to make a truly voluntary decision about participating in the study and include information on how to reach the investigators with any further questions. All participants will be informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty or explanation.

1.15.2 Permission and informed consent

Before potential participants can engage in the study, a crucial step needs to take place. The participants are fully informed, are provided with a clear information-base of the purpose of the study and the terms and conditions under which they take part, which

gives critical information regarding anonymity, confidentiality and also the right to withdraw at any time, without penalty (Knight, 2022).

The principle of informed consent easily ensures that participants are fully aware of the research process in a language with which they are comfortable (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:165). Once all the information necessary has been provided and is clearly and fully comprehensible, the participant can provide his/her informed consent with confidence (Knight, 2022). Below is the structure which will be adopted to ensure that the important requirements regarding the ethical codes governing the process of consent are met.

The researcher will prepare an online consent form which will clearly outline the nature, purpose, methods, and any possible risks associated with the study. The consent form will be, as far as possible, in English to ensure that it is comprehensible for all participants. This document will also clearly state that participation is voluntary and that participants may withdraw at any time, as well as that their decision will not affect their employment.

The researcher will require an electronic consent form before enrolling any participant in the study. This form will be stored securely. No names or ID/staff numbers will be required. This will maintain confidentiality and assure participants that their data will be stored in encrypted digital files, accessible only to the research team.

1.15.3 Privacy of participants

Personal data must be protected or de-identified if they are being stored for later analysis (Knight, 2022).

Participants' personal information will be required in the demographic sections. No responses will be attributed to any individual and the findings from the survey will be supported with independent objectivity. Each participant will be provided with an explanation of the purpose and the goal of the study and it will indicate that the study complies with the Protection of Personal Information Act POPIA Act (2020) to ensure the protection of the participant's privacy.

No names of the participants or any names of their dealerships will be required in the study to ensure confidentiality. Participation will be strictly voluntary, and respondents may withdraw at any time. The questionnaire will be conducted online, in the comfort of

the participant's environment and time, thus keeping the identity of the participant unknown. No email address will be collected, and it will specifically be mentioned in the informed consent form, as well as below each section of the questionnaire.

1.15.4 Conflict of interest

Bryman *et al.* (2021:174) proposes that MBA students should transparently share the resources that facilitated their research when they conduct a project within a group of companies to which they are linked.

The researcher acknowledges a potential conflict of interest as he is employed by a company that is part of the Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd, but not directly by Westvaal Motor Group itself. To maintain objectivity and avoid any undue influence, the researcher will ensure that recruitment is conducted through an independent gatekeeper, such as the HR department, to oversee participant selection and ensure voluntary participation.

In addition to this, a mediator can assist in facilitating an exchange of communication between the Researcher and Participants to uphold ethical requirements. All responses will be kept confidential, as no personally identifiable information will be collected. The NWU Business School's Scientific Committee will obtain ethical approval for this study to ensure compliance with research integrity.

1.16 Contribution of the study

This study intends to be especially useful, both theoretically and practically, specifically in the South African motor retail industry. These potential uses of the findings of the study include:

- Theoretically, the study seeks to expand our current knowledge base about the relationships among job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. Through the evaluation of five different hypotheses (H1–H5) related to the inter-relationships among these constructs, the study will provide an empirical contribution to theory. The contribution will be the testing, development and providing support for or challenging the existing theories,

such as the Job Satisfaction – Employee Performance Hypothesis, Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

The study will also explore the role that organisational commitment and employee engagement play as mediators in the linkages between job satisfaction and employee performance and the extent to which job satisfaction mediates the relationship between affective organisational commitment and performance. In doing so, the study will contribute to developing the theoretical framework through which we understand the inter-relationship among these four constructs.

Through its focus on the South African motor retail sector, the study seeks to provide industry-specific knowledge in terms of industrial psychology, organisational behaviour, and human resources management. Industry-specific knowledge has particular relevance, due to the unique economic and social conditions in South Africa.

Practically, the findings of the study will provide information to assist medium-sized motor retailers (such as Westvaal Motor Group) to improve their workforce management practices. Companies that have a better understanding of how the construct of job satisfaction, commitment and engagement influences performance can develop targeted strategies to increase employee retention, motivation, and productivity.

Medium-sized motor retailers in South Africa will receive evidence-based advice to create a productive working environment and reduce employee turnover and ultimately result in successful organisational outcomes. Improved workplace practices for employees and managers in the motor retail industry will result in increased efficiency and competitiveness.

1.17 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study include the geographic and organisational scope of the research. The Westvaal Motor Group is a medium sized retailer of new vehicles located in six of the nine provinces of South Africa (Mpumalanga, Western Cape, Limpopo, Gauteng, North- West and Free State) and therefore the applicability of the results may

be limited to other geographic locations, to retailers of varying size and to other types of industries both within South Africa and beyond.

A descriptive correlation research design was used in this study. Although it is an appropriate method to use when investigating the relationship between two variables, it however does not enable a researcher to determine whether one variable cause another (Bryman *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the study is unable to confirm or deny whether job satisfaction, commitment or engagement directly affect employee performance.

Data were obtained from employees by means of questionnaires and therefore the responses may reflect a respondent's perception of his/her own experiences at work as opposed to actual experiences. Response biases may also result due to the type of questions asked in the questionnaire. An example of a response bias is social desirability bias where respondents provide answers that they believe the researcher wants to hear as opposed to answering honestly.

As the quantitative methods allow for a detailed statistical analysis of the data collected, there is potential for omission of more complex qualitative issues surrounding an individual's employment experience. Examples of these qualitative aspects include personal motivations, culture etc. These would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship(s) under investigation.

While the questionnaires used in this study have been previously validated and widely accepted (for example, MSQ, OCQ, UWES, IWPQ), the relevance of these questionnaires to the South African motor retail context may be diminished if cultural or industry specific factors influence employees' interpretation of or responses to the questionnaire items.

This study will be conducted over a specific period and data collection will take place in 2025. This timing may be affected by various temporal factors such as economic conditions, industry trends, or changes within the Westvaal Motor Group, which could constrain the relevance of the findings in future contexts. Focusing on medium-sized motor retail companies may overlook differences in organisational dynamics that exist between small, large, or international companies, thus potentially limiting the applicability of the findings across different company sizes or sectors.

1.18 Outline of the dissertation

This study consists of five chapters in total and also includes additional appendices. The chapters and their content are outlined below:

Chapter 1: Introduction and research methodology

The introduction chapter needs to impress our peers, allow them to understand the research idea more easily, remove barriers and demonstrate respect for the readers (Feld *et al.*, 2024:379). This chapter will be formed by the proposal and introduce the study for the readers to better understand the research problem that the researcher is aiming to resolve. Within this chapter, the reader will be able to clearly understand the following matters: (i) What the researcher is writing about and why it is important from both practical and theoretical perspectives, (ii) The research approach, (iii) Research objectives and questions and (iv) The contributions the researcher want to make. The introduction will be concluded with a brief overview of the structure of the report, allowing for the reader to follow the argument, as they will have a general sense of how the argument will unfold (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:189-190).

In this chapter the following will be outlined: (i) Research approach and design, concerning the philosophical approach, (ii) Approach to sampling and participant identification, (iii) How access to data and participants was achieved, (iv) Procedures for data collection, (v) The data collection instrument, in this study the questionnaire, (vi) Problems of non-responses and (vii) How the data was analysed (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:190).

Chapter 2: Literature review and empirical study

This chapter contextualises the research question and provides the basis for the justification of the research question and the complete mini dissertation. The literature section will integrate the entire research by incorporating the main theories, ideas, debates and research findings into a coherent argument (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:190). The literature review section will analyse the content of academic books, articles and other sources that are relevant to the particular field of study. This prior research should be

listed, described, condensed, and impartially assessed and should furthermore acknowledge the efforts of previous researchers providing the reader confidence in the reliability of the work presented.

The fundamental purpose of this chapter is to clarify, (i) What the findings indicate? (ii) Why is it important? and (iii) Why should the readers care. In this chapter discussions around the identified hypothesis, and whether the evidence that was collected confirms or contradicts them, will be evaluated. In the case where hypotheses have not been confirmed in the findings, one needs to explore, interrogate or even speculate about some possible reasons for, and the implications of, their rejection (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:195-196).

Chapter 3: Conclusion and recommendations

The conclusion chapter is more than just a summary, it should briefly summarise the initial argument by relating the findings to the research question in the opening paragraph, concluding on the significance of what the research achieved. This chapter will ensure that the findings address the research question and suggest the implications for business and management related to the topic (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:196). Within this chapter, the study's limitations will be identified and areas for further research will be suggested, describing the newly identified knowledge that has been added to the field of study.

1.19 Timeframe

Considering this study is in partial fulfilment of the Master of Business Administration degree, the submission date of 28 November 2025 was set by the NWU Business School and Higher Degrees Administration of the NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Therefore, all the research was planned with this date in mind and details are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Research project period

	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sep 25	Oct 25	Nov 25
Complete research proposal	█										
Apply for ethical clearance		█									
Literature review			█	█							
Create measuring instruments				█							
Pilot testing of measuring instruments				█							
Complete empirical research methodology.					█						
Data collection						█	█				
Data analysis							█	█			
Complete research findings and results								█			
Write conclusion and recommendations								█			
Complete first draft								█			
Complete second draft									█		
Complete final draft										█	
Submit research project											█

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CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND EMPIRICAL STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This study supports the Job Satisfaction – Employee Performance Hypothesis, which asserts that job satisfaction has an important influence on employee performance and acts as a mediator between many distinct aspects of the work environment and employee performance outcomes (Katebi *et al.*, 2022). In addition to supporting the Job Satisfaction – Employee Performance Hypothesis, this study found that numerous studies provide empirical support for the importance of job satisfaction in increasing employees' ability to effectively perform their jobs and in enhancing the overall success of organisations (Djuli *et al.*, 2023; Hanum *et al.*, 2023; Hemsworth *et al.*, 2024).

Job satisfaction is a key mediating variable between factors such as employee engagement and organisational commitment and employee performance (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881). Moreover, research indicates that when job satisfaction is increased, organisational commitment increases which results in better performance outcomes (Hemsworth *et al.*, 2024:25). Studies have also found a direct relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, with findings from some studies demonstrating that job satisfaction accounts for approximately 41.9% of performance variance (Djuli *et al.*, 2023:191).

In addition, studies demonstrate that there are several factors that influence job satisfaction. These factors include work environment, motivation, and the appropriate use of technology, all of which contribute to better performance (Hanum *et al.*, 2023:1; Hermawan *et al.*, 2024:2). It is worth noting that while the hypothesis examines the positive relationship between job satisfaction and performance, it is equally important to recognise that there may be other variables too. This suggests that a multifaceted approach is necessary for understanding employee dynamics in organisations.

This study used a quantitative (numerical data and surveys) approach to determine the relationship between and the role of job satisfaction in organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance of medium-sized motor retail companies. More specifically, this study sought to determine the mediating role of

affective organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.

2.2 Background to study

Organisational commitment refers to the psychological attachment an employee has to their organisation, influencing their willingness to contribute to its success (Harini. *et al.*, 2024:1). Studies show that strong organisational commitment results in enhanced employee performance, as committed employees are more likely to exert effort and remain with the organisation (Arisandi & Heryjanto, 2024:1043). Organisational commitment mediates the relationship between various factors, such as organisational culture and employee performance, indicating its central role in performance dynamics Handayani *et al.*, 2025:8; Sinaga & Handayani, 2024:1).

Employee engagement encompasses the emotional and intellectual involvement of employees in their work, which is linked to higher motivation and productivity (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Engaged employees demonstrate better performance metrics, including increased profitability and customer satisfaction, as they are more invested in their roles (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Engagement also influences job satisfaction, which in turn mediates its effect on employee performance, highlighting the interconnectedness of these factors (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881). The proposed model supports the job satisfaction hypothesis, but the availability of the data also creates the opportunity to test an alternative model namely, to test the mediating role of effective organisational commitment in the relationship between employee performance and job satisfaction (to separate the interconnectedness of these factors).

In May 2025, the sales of new vehicles in South Africa reached an impressive total of 45,308 units, with dealer sales comprising 40,062 units, or 88.4% (NADA, 2025). The Westvaal Motor Group played a significant role by contributing 638 vehicles (Westvaal, 2025), which accounts for 1.6% of all dealer sales in the country.

The automotive sector is a crucial component of South Africa's GDP, with a total contribution of 4.3% as of 2022. This includes 2.4% from vehicle and component manufacturing and 1.9% from the auto retail sector Statista (2025), (NAAMSA, 2025). The Westvaal Motor Group's .03 percent contribution to the total Gross Domestic Product

for South Africa in terms of auto retail also emphasises the role it plays as an important part of this industry, as well as the economy.

All nine provinces experienced increases in unemployment statistics during the first quarter of 2024. Across all nine provinces, there were more people unemployed than employed at the end of the quarter, with the largest increase being seen in the Limpopo province. These persistent high levels of unemployment, and the resultant poverty, create long-term challenges to the social structure and the stability of society and democracy itself (RMI, 2024:10).

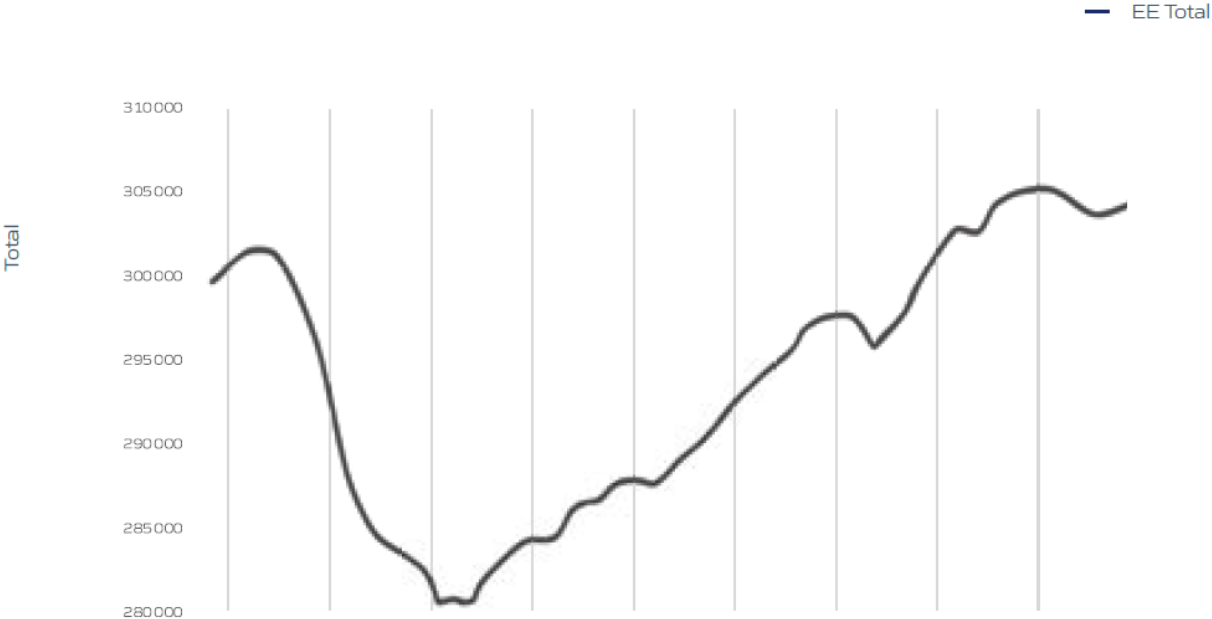


Figure 2: Automotive employment within the South African economy RMI (2024).

There was an obvious downturn in employment at approximately mid-2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Employment levels however began to recover steadily thereafter with a significant increase starting in March 2021. By June 2024, employment figures for the Motor Industry have not only recovered to pre-pandemic levels but are now actually slightly above those same levels. The Motor Industry is also noted to be one of the leading sectors to provide jobs and contribute to the overall economic activity in South Africa (RMI, 2024:53).

2.3 Problem statement

Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment, Employee Engagement and Employee Performance are key contributors to Sustainability in Organisations (Roodt, 2018:1). There are interdependencies between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. As such research has shown that these factors all impact each other in an ongoing cycle, and as a result, have positive effects on employee productivity and ultimately organisational success. In addition, job satisfaction is a major driver of employee performance. Employees who are satisfied at work are motivated and committed to performing well (Arisandi & Heryjanto, 2024:1059). Furthermore, job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between organisational commitment and employee performance (Agustianingsih & Maharani, 2024:4881), indicating that when employees are more satisfied, they will achieve better performance.

Both job satisfaction and employee engagement contribute to a positive influence on organisational commitment. When employees are engaged, it increases their level of commitment, which in turn will increase their performance (Harini *et al.*, 2024:98; Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). The interaction between employee engagement and organisational commitment creates a workplace environment that supports and encourages employee productivity, and subsequently reduces turnover rates while increasing retention (Harini. *et al.*, 2024).

Employee engagement is the most significant predictor of employee performance as engaged employees display a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to their work (Chahyono *et al.*, 2024:106; Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Therefore, when employee engagement is encouraged, it improves not only the performance of individual employees, but also the overall success of the organisation (Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60).

Therefore, the main goal of this study was to thoroughly investigate the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. By understanding the dynamics involved in the relationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance and implementing effective strategies, companies in the motor retail sector in South Africa can mitigate the adverse effects thereof and improve overall performance.

2.4 Literature review

2.4.1 Job satisfaction

Definition

Islam (2024:8) defines job satisfaction as an employee's personal feeling and attitude toward his or her job and that it reflects how content a worker is with his or her role, considering factors such as salary, organisational culture, job stability and opportunities for career growth. Job satisfaction is also defined by Quesada-Puga *et al.* (2024:2) as the positive and pleasant attitudes and emotions that employees have toward their working environment. Furthermore, it can be defined as a sense of employee achievements and successes and it is generally believed that it is directly related to productivity and work performance, as well as personal well-being (Dziuba *et al.*, 2020:19).

Conceptualisation

Spector (1994) developed the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) focussing on the following dimensions (i) Pay, (ii) Promotion, (iii) Supervision, (iv) Fringe benefits, (v) Contingent rewards, (vi) Operating procedures, (vii) Coworkers, (viii) Nature of work and (ix) Communication. The short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss *et al.*, 1967a) was created to assess both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Intrinsic examples include compensation and other benefits, development, responsibility, achievements and the work environment self (Chagadama, 2022:10; Paudel *et al.*, 2024:86). Monetary compensation can generate commitment, but extrinsic non-monetary tactics, such as job enrichment and stability, are mediated by satisfaction levels (Mahmood *et al.*, 2019:421).

Correlates

Research suggests that job satisfaction is positively related to employee commitment (Dziuba *et al.* 2020:19; Mahmood Aziz *et al.* 2021:59; Quesada-Puga *et al.* 2024:6), organisational performance (Chagadama 2022:10; Islam 2024:22; Mahmood *et al.* 2019:421; Paudel *et al.* 2024:86), work engagement (Dziuba *et al.* 2020:19; Islam 2024:22; Mahmood *et al.* 2019:421), and organisational commitment (Mahmood Aziz *et al.* 2021:59; Quesada-Puga *et al.* 2024:6; Weiss *et al.* 1967). Findings in literature also suggest that a negative relationship exists between job satisfaction and burnout (Karaferis *et al.* 2022:3; World Health Organization 2019; Wu *et al.* 2021:4), job stress

(Islam 2024:22; Newman *et al.* 2017:17; Wu *et al.* 2021:4), intention to quit (Chagadama 2022:10; Karaferis *et al.* 2022:2-3; Mahmood Aziz *et al.* 2021:59), employee morale (Dziuba *et al.* 2020:19; Paudel *et al.* 2024:86; Quesada-Puga *et al.* 2024:6) and workplace satisfaction (Islam 2024:22; Mahmood *et al.* 2019:421; Weiss *et al.* 1967).

2.4.2 Organisational commitment and engagement

Definition

Organisational commitment is categorised as “the employee’s sense of responsibility to remain within the work environment” (Khuwaja *et al.*, 2020:5). De Nobile and Bilgin (2022:2) define organisational commitment as the extent to which an individual identifies with, and is engaged in an organisation, as demonstrated by their willingness to remain with the organisation, dedicated effort to it and support to its objectives. Mwiiya *et al.* (2024:29) define organisational commitment as a binding force between the individual and the organisation that is characterised by the desire of the employee to remain a member of the organisation, to adopt the values and goals of the organisation in return for certain benefits such as support or recognition.

Conceptualisation

There are three types of organisational commitment among employees (Allen & Meyer, 1993:50-52), as follows: (i) Affective commitment is an employee's emotional attachment to the organisation and represents a basis for the employee's loyalty and engagement to the organisation. (ii) Continuance commitment is an employee's recognition of the possible negative consequences of leaving the organisation, which reinforces the employee's commitment. (iii) Normative commitment is an employee's obligation or responsibility toward the organisation based on a sense of duty or obligation to the organisation. In combination, these commitments will foster a successful and thriving organization (Mahmood Aziz *et al.*, 2021:56). Employee participation in the decision-making process has been demonstrated through research to improve both work performance and overall productivity (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:4; Dziuba *et al.*, 2020:21), provide a more positive and efficient work environment (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:4; Dziuba *et al.*, 2020:21) and reduce employee absenteeism and employee turnover (Dziuba *et al.*, 2020:21).

Correlates

Research suggests that organisational commitment is related to job satisfaction (Shepherd and Mathews (2000:566), cited in Dziuba *et al.* (2020:21)), burnout (Beyer 2019:37; Dinc *et al.* 2020:443), and intention to quit (Beyer 2019:37; Mwiiya *et al.* 2024:32). Findings in literature also suggest that a relationship exists between organisational commitment and organisational performance (Mwiiya *et al.*, 2024:32), emotional fatigue (Dinc *et al.*, 2020:443), and depersonalisation (Dinc *et al.*, 2020:443). Additionally, studies indicate that organisational commitment is positively associated with employee productivity (Bin & Shmailan 2015:4; Dziuba *et al.* 2020:21) and negatively correlated with absenteeism and turnover (Bin & Shmailan 2015:4; Dziuba *et al.* 2020:21).

2.4.3 Employee work engagement

Definition

Employee involvement refers to how engaged employees are on both a cognitive and emotional level with their job and workplace. Job involvement, according to Saks (2006:602), referenced by Supriyanto *et al.* (2021:268), involves an employee assessing their job habits and includes both ability and emotional aspects that greatly contribute to employee performance and thus to career success (Supriyanto *et al.*, 2021:268). Employee Engagement is defined as employees' motivation, and commitment towards their job and workplace, and can be measured and managed to increase employee satisfaction and productivity (Gallup, 2025). According to LIU (2021:95) employee participation and accountability have a direct impact on individual performance quality.

Conceptualization

Employee engagement is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct, consisting of cognitive, affective and behavioural parts. Kahn (1990:694) in Wylegala (2020:38), indicated employee engagement in a role performance context as the physical, cognitive and emotional "self" expression in the performance of work roles. Welch (2011:335), defines engagement in this context as being measured in terms of absorption, dedication and vigour, being affected by psychological conditions such as meaningfulness, safety and availability. Schaufeli *et al.* (2002:74) further defines engagement as a positive, fulfilling state of mind related to work, which is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Saks (2006:602) indicates two forms of engagement being: (i) job engagement relevant to individuals' performance and (ii) organizational engagement reflecting an individual's psychological presence as a member of an organisation (Bin &

Shmailan, 2015:4). Organisations can stimulate engagement status by means of recognition, personal training, flexible working arrangements and diversity (Islam, 2024:67).

Correlates

Findings in literature also suggest that a relationship exists between employee engagement and turnover intention (Meyer, 2012:15), burnout (Jonker & Joubert 2009:36; Meyer 2012:15), and organisational effectiveness (Cavallone & Palumbo 2022 Mwiiya *et al.* 2024:26). Additionally, studies indicate that employee engagement is positively associated with business performance (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:4) and negatively correlated with absenteeism and poor service quality (Beukes 2019:18; Jonker & Joubert 2009:36). Engaged employees are more likely to become organisational ambassadors, contributing to a competitive edge and improved customer service (Bin & Shmailan 2015:4; Islam 2024:32).

2.4.4 Employee performance

Definition

Employee performance refers to the level of achievement or results obtained by an individual in carrying out their duties following the standards set by the organisation or superior, as well as their ability to demonstrate specific skills (Saputra *et al.*, 2024:748). Performance can be viewed as both a process and a result of work. Employee performance includes both the way work is done to produce an expected outcome and the resulting performance which also reflects the quality of work. Others have argued that performance is based on employee behaviour and is associated with achieving organisational objectives as evidenced through task completion (Zhang, 2024:125). When employees are productive and involved, their service to the customer will be enhanced as well as their contribution toward the continued success of the organisation (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:3).

Conceptualization

Performance by employees is important because it defines how well each employee fulfils the work they have been assigned. A method, that clearly outlines measurable expectations of the employees for them to understand the level of quality required from them, must be developed collaboratively. Employee performance is also very important

to the overall performance and success of the company (Seran *et al.*, 2021:26) which is based on the contributions made by each employee (Saputra *et al.*, 2024:741-742). There are many different ways to measure the performance of employees including but not limited to performance reviews, achieving objectives/targets and contributing to the accomplishment of company-wide objectives. It is influenced by multiple factors at both individual and organisational levels. On an individual level, factors such as personal capabilities, personality traits, mental capacity, experience, self-efficacy, and individual differences play a role. On an organisational level, factors such as work environment, organisational fairness, leadership styles, and organisational culture are significant (Zhang, 2024:126). Measuring performance requires clear criteria or standards of success established by the organisation, as without these benchmarks, assessing performance becomes impossible (Seran *et al.*, 2021:742).

Correlates

Research suggests that employee performance is related to organisational strategy (Zhang, 2024:125), employee retention (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:3), and employee work engagement (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:3). Findings in literature also suggest that a relationship exists between employee performance and job satisfaction, as well as organisational commitment Gallup (2024), cited in Bin and Shmailan (2015:3). Additionally, studies indicate that employee performance is negatively correlated with counterproductive work behaviour, which can undermine organisational success. Stressful work environments and negative leadership attitudes can exacerbate this behaviour, while fostering a positive workplace culture can enhance performance and reduce counterproductive actions. Employee performance is a key driver of organisational success, with engaged and high-performing employees contributing significantly to achieving strategic goals and maintaining a competitive edge.

2.4.5 Relationship between the variables under investigation

Job satisfaction & commitment

It is essential to analyse job satisfaction because research suggests that job satisfaction is positively related to affective commitment (Aflah *et al.* 2021:1003; Ampofo 2020:254).

Job satisfaction & engagement

Organisational engagement has been shown to have a positive correlation with job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), job performance and overall organisational performance, while it is negatively associated with leaving the job (Saks *et al.*, 2022:20). The meta-analytic review conducted by Yildiz and Yildiz (2022:3076) provided evidence of a significant positive relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction & performance

The connection between job satisfaction and job performance has been quantified at 0.339, boasting a confidence level of 99% (Katebi *et al.*, 2022:35). According to Cohen (1992b:155-157), cited in (Hartika *et al.* 2023:9; Katebi *et al.* 2022:35), this relationship is not only medium but also significant and positive. Job satisfaction and organisational loyalty in an employee can be associated with improved employee performance (Hartika *et al.*, 2023:12). Job satisfaction was shown to positively influence performance as indicated in the research by Subagja and Safrianto (2020:118), who were referenced by Hartika *et al.* (2023).

Commitment & engagement

Employee engagement is significantly influenced by employee organisational commitment (Singh *et al.*, 2024:5). Employees who view their employment roles as meaningful and aligned to their personal and career goals will have a commitment to their role that extends beyond transactional interactions and demonstrates a greater degree of job engagement. Furthermore, as employees develop an elevated level of organisational commitment based on trust, shared values, and job satisfaction, they display a greater degree of job engagement at work and contribute to the success of the organisations. Research done by Kibaroglu *et al.* (2022:140) found that affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment affect job engagement.

Commitment & performance

Research done by Roy *et al.* (2023:218) revealed that stress-based job performance has a significant positive impact on job commitment. However, long-term work stress may create burnout and even affect employees' commitment to their jobs (Griffin *et al.*, 2023), cited in (Roy *et al.*, 2023:218). The results of a meta-analysis study performed by Naqvi

et al. (2024:168) showed that the relationship between commitment and job performance was at a 95% confidence level with a moderate and positive effect.

Engagement & performance

Employee work engagement is a vital measure of organisational well-being, as it greatly affects performance, job satisfaction, intentions to quit, overall success and the profitability of the company (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:111). Furthermore, the association between work engagement and job performance seems to generally be a positive one, evidenced via several empirical studies (Bakker & Bal 2010; Christian *et al.* 2011; Halbesleben & Wheeler 2008). Furthermore, the findings from Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023:118) support that all the dimensions of work engagement correlate positively with job performance. Additionally, the results of the correlation analysis performed by Yao *et al.* (2022:5) showed that there were significant positive correlations between work engagement and job performance.

The mediating role of organisational commitment and engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance

Research by Carmeli and Freund (2003) found that job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between work commitment and performance. This study is aimed at determining the mediating role of organisational commitment and engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.

2.5 Research questions

1. What is the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa?
2. What is the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance and how does job satisfaction mediate this relationship?
3. To what extent does organisational commitment mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance?
4. To what extent does employee engagement mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance?

5. To what extent does job satisfaction mediate the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance?

2.6 Research aim and objectives

2.6.1 Research aim

The research aims to improve the understanding of how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement impact employee performance in the South African motor retail industry. It will explore whether new Sales personnel, who transfer their clients from previous dealerships, have a positive impact on performance. This study questions the commonly held belief that turnover mostly has negative consequences. Its results could either corroborate or contradict current theories on human capital and organisational behaviour, offering real-world evidence of the possible advantages of turnover in certain situations.

I anticipate that this research will provide effective methods for using job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement to increase employee performance. If employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance are proven to be advantageous, companies can create specific hiring and orientation processes that take advantage of new employees' current customer connections. This could result in better sales results and customer retention strategies.

Groups that will benefit from the study are employees and managers in the motor retail industry and academic fields such as human resource management, organisational behaviour, and business administration. The industry to benefit from the enhanced and efficient management practises is the motor retail industry in SA and more specifically the medium-sized companies such as Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd.

2.6.2 Research objectives

2.6.2.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of the study is to measure the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa.

2.6.2.2 Secondary objectives

1. To determine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa.
2. To examine the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance.
3. To determine the mediating effect of organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
4. To determine the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
5. To determine the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance.

2.7 Contribution of the study

The study aims to make several significant contributions to both academic and practical domains, particularly within the South African motor retail industry. These contributions are outlined as follows:

- In a general sense, the goal of this study is to increase our understanding of how four key areas of study, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance, are related to each other. The study will evaluate five specific hypotheses (H1-H5) to provide empirical evidence supporting or contradicting three well-established theoretical frameworks, the Job Satisfaction - Employee Performance Hypothesis, Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating effects of organisational commitment and employee engagement on job satisfaction and employee performance. Additionally, the study will investigate how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance. Overall, the study will add clarity to the theoretical models by identifying relationships among the variables.

This study focuses on the South African motor retail industry to provide relevant, contextual information to understand industrial psychology, organisational behaviour, and human resource management within the unique economic and cultural environments of South Africa.

- From an operational standpoint, the findings will provide insights into ways how medium-sized motor retail businesses (Westvaal Motor Group) may be able to enhance their workforce management.

The study will also enable organisations to develop targeted programs to increase employee retention, motivation, and productivity by providing a better understanding of how factors such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement impact employee performance.

The research will provide data-driven recommendations to medium-sized companies operating in South Africa's motor retail industry to build a positive working environment, minimise employee turnover and contribute to organisational success. Both employees and managers in the motor retail industry are expected to benefit from the study, with the potential for the entire industry to experience increased efficiencies and competitiveness.

2.8 Research methodology

2.8.1 Research paradigm

The study explored the paradigm and meta-theoretical assumption of the advantages or disadvantages of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance for short-term and long-term employment in a medium-sized motor retail company performance. An ontological assumption approach was followed, with an objectivist perspective of the research, that the reality of business is that there will always be an element of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. To determine the impact of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance on companies, a quantitative approach was used to analyse data from equal-size companies' performances in the same period. Using an epistemological assumption with a positivist stance, this study examines job satisfaction, organisational commitment,

organisational engagement, and employee performance in a medium-sized motor company using deductive principles. Data was gathered using surveys (Botma *et al.*, 2022:249-250), completed by the participants. An objectivist regulatory assumption was adopted, which described the activities within companies and suggesting changes that would improve company performance, together with the dominant *functionalist* framework, was used in this study of companies (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:36-37).

The first theory is the human capital theory. The concept of human capital, as proposed by Becker (2009:12), cited in Rafid (2023:4), suggests that individuals are more than just resources, they also represent capital that could generate returns. Any investments made to enhance the quality and quantity of this capital were considered investment activities. Typically, human capital is linked to an individual's skills and expertise within an organisation. Human capital theory suggests that job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee work engagement, and performance have an impact on company performance and therefore are viewed as valuable assets within a company. This implies that the loss of human capital contributes to the loss of knowledge and skills (Alexander, 2020:10-11). Becker (1965) states: "Human capital analysis starts with the assumption that individuals decide on their education, training, medical care and other additions to knowledge and health by weighing the benefits and costs. Benefits include cultural and other non-monetary gains along with improvement in earnings and work conditions, while costs usually depend mainly on the foregone value of the time spent on this investment."

However, human capital theory encompasses not only what employees know and their skill sets, but also their capacity to effectively apply this knowledge to the benefit of the organisation, which significantly relies on the level of engagement they exhibit (Carlbäck *et al.*, 2024:294). This theory, which fundamentally relates to the economic role of humans within the economic system, encompasses several key principles (Swanson, 2001), (i) Investing in training results in greater learning, (ii) Enhanced learning boosts productivity and (iii) Increased productivity is reflected in higher wages and business profits. For organisations, human capital theory offers a fresh approach to employee management. Additionally, it can improve a company's ability to attract, engage and retain employees as wages, reputation and working conditions become more favourable (Carlbäck *et al.*, 2024:296).

The second theory is the Social Exchange Theory (SET) via a study of specific company dynamics influencing job satisfaction, organisational commitment, engagement, and employee performance. SET is the golden standard for understanding workplace behaviour. Cropanzano *et al.* (2017), cited in Ahmad *et al.* (2023:1), described the social exchange theory (SET) as comprising three elements: (i) an action taken by one party towards another, (ii) a corresponding attitude or behaviour from the recipient in response and (iii) the outcome of the relationship formed as a result. Furthermore, SET is a significant framework for placing focus on the extent to which a person is willing to invest effort in maintaining and enhancing a social relationship by weighing the potential benefits against the costs (Zhang *et al.*, 2025:2). Blau (1964:91) also described the SET as “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others” (Saglam *et al.*, 2022:2). SET, introduced by Homans (1958), cited in Kim *et al.* (2022:2), is a sociological framework that explains human behaviour and the nature of social relationships. According to this theory, individuals engage in the exchange of both tangible and intangible resources and rewards (Blau, 1964).

2.8.2 Research method

The research method was defined as a series of steps or processes used to formulate laws and theories aimed at explaining, predicting, understanding and managing various phenomena (Hall *et al.*, 2023:989). The research was underpinned by a positivistic approach which sought to apply the methodology of the natural sciences to studies in the field of social phenomena. A quantitative methodology lends itself well to this approach, as this will provide an opportunity for large-scale data findings.

This quantitative research was confined to medium-sized motor retail companies in South Africa. These were representative of an industry characterised by competition and dynamism, where aspects of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance were considered. Medium-sized motor retail companies specialise in new and used vehicles, offering a wide range of vehicle brands alongside aftersales services such as parts, repairs, vehicle maintenance and finance and insurance packages. The study aimed to measure the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, employee performance using numerical data and statistical analysis. A quantitative approach allowed for the

determination of objectives and the collection of measurable data through surveys ensured the reliability of findings. The use of structured questionnaires (for example, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire) ensured standardised responses for performing statistical comparisons.

The researcher conducted a non-experimental study that aimed to answer the specific question of what impact employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee work engagement, and employee performance have on medium-sized motor retail companies. To determine the impact on companies, a quantitative approach was used to analyse data from equal-sized branches from the same company's performances in the same period. Creswell and Creswell (2023:22) introduce quantitative research as testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. The approach method best suited for the research problem is a deductive approach to inquiry, building in protection against bias and controlling alternative explanations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023:23). The deductive approach involves evaluating a theory by developing hypotheses and designing a research strategy to test the proposed theory (Haque, 2022:1). Deductive reasoning starts with a broad principle (such as the initiation, engagement, and performance framework) and then analyses specific observations (the dependent variables used in entrepreneurship studies) to determine whether they align with the general principle (i.e., do all the dependent variables conform to the suggested framework) (Hall *et al.*, 2023:990). The study followed a deductive approach, where existing theories (for example, Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory) shaped the hypotheses that were then evaluated using data. The study formulated hypotheses and evaluated them through correlation and regression analysis. A deductive approach ensured that the study was structured around proving or disproving the predefined hypotheses.

2.8.3 Research design

The researcher employed a meticulous descriptive correlation research design to thoroughly examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance (Botma *et al.*, 2022:140) in a medium-sized motor retail company, using surveys. Botma *et al.* (2022:140) states that this design specifically describes the relationship between independent and dependent variables where the relationships already exist between two or more variables.

Furthermore, Botma *et al.* (2022:141) also indicates that the correlation must not be mistaken for causation, implying that one variable did not cause the other variable. The research question implies that job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance did not affect performance in a medium-sized motor retail company. Descriptive correlation design is suitable for studying relationships into how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance influence performance at present and to account for changes in this relationship over time (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:205).

2.9 Demarcation / delimitation of study

2.9.1 Field of study

The field of study is industrial psychology, defined by Conte (2024:4) as the application of psychological principles, theory and research to the work setting. The topic of this study is organisational behaviour as it assesses employee attitudes about job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance.

2.9.2 Sector/industry/business under investigation.

The word "sector" describes a wide segment of the economy, while "industry" pertains to a more specific group of organisations or businesses. Although they are often used interchangeably to denote a set of companies with comparable structures or that function within the same economic area, "sector" typically indicates a larger, broader part of the economy, whereas "industry" is much more exact (Cetina, 2012:405). This study was conducted on employees of Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd in six of South Africa's nine provinces.

2.9.3 Geographical demarcation

Tang *et al.* (2022:1120), citing The Dictionary of Modern Geography by (Witherick *et al.*, 2001), describes a geographical boundary as a line or zone that separates neighbouring geographical areas, typically located where there is the most significant change in geographical characteristics or features (Witherick *et al.*, 2001:27). Geographical is

furthermore defined as: “based on or derived from the physical features of an area on earth’s surface” and the term demarcation is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as: “the efforts of fixing the boundary or limit of an area” (Merriam-Webster Inc., 2019). The study is limited to the motor retail industry in SA and specifically targets the medium-sized motor dealerships of Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd. Data were collected from the dealerships in the following provinces: Mpumalanga, Western Cape, Limpopo, Gauteng, North-West and Free State.

2.10 Population and sampling

2.10.1 Population

The population of the study comprised employees from medium-sized motor retail companies in South Africa, specifically the Westvaal Motor Group, which operates several dealerships across various regions. The study focused on, and targeted the dealerships in the group, including employees in Sales who were engaged in daily operational activities, as well as Support staff. It was assumed that these employees, given the interaction with business processes and customers, were pivotal to understanding how employee turnover impacted the performance of the company.

2.10.2 Sampling

2.10.2.1 Sampling technique

Convenience sampling was used as it is the most common type of non-probability sampling, which focuses on gaining information from participants (the sample) who are “convenient” for the researcher to access. This sample method does not require a random selection of participants based on any set of criteria (for instance demographic factors). Researchers can instead individually select people at random, who are willing to be approached and become part of the research. This technique is suitable when large sample sizes are required and where time is of the essence (Creswell & Creswell, 2023:199).

The researcher made use of the popular G*Power (G*Power, 2020) tool to calculate the sample size, using the t-tests family to compare means (the average values the researcher intend to analyse in the study), with the assumption that turnover might impact

performance. The statistical test used is the correlation: point biserial model with a priori type of power analysis. The “two-tailed” parameter was selected with an effect size p -value ($p = 0.21$), Alpha (α) set at 0.05 for a 95% confidence level and Power ($1 - \beta$) of 0.95 (95%) for a high likelihood of detection if a relationship exists between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance in the population

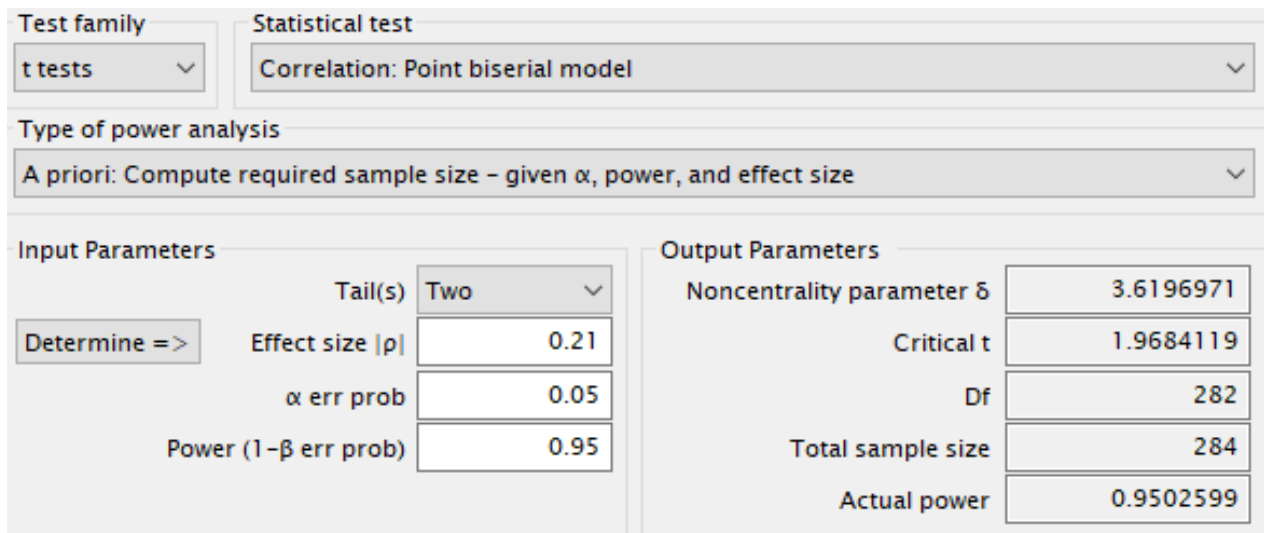


Figure 1: G*Power calculation results

2.10.2.2 Sampling size

The sample size needs to represent the diversity in the population to enable the researcher to generalise the findings to the whole population (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:210). The study considered the homogeneity of the population as stated by Bryman *et al.* (2021:229) where the variation is less when the population is part of the same group of companies. The sample size was calculated at 284 individuals, with another 43 individuals considering a potential dropout of 15%. In total, it amounts to 327 individuals for the correlation research design to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, employee performance, and company performance.

2.10.2.3 Inclusion criteria

- Sales representatives and Support office staff employed by the Westvaal Motor Group at their dealerships limit the scope of the study and provide room for future studies.

- Employees who are currently employed for at least 6 months between 2018 and 2024.
- Employees willing to participate in the study and who provided informed consent.

2.10.2.4 Exclusion criteria

- Employees not in the relevant Sales departments or Support departments.
- Recent hires (employees with the company for less than 6 months).
- Contractual employees.

DATA COLLECTION

2.11 Data collection instruments

For the chosen descriptive correlation design, according to Bryman et al. (2021:237), the best-suited data collection method is questionnaires as the data-gathering instrument (Botma et al., 2010:160). The advantages of a survey data collection method are that it is (i) Cost and time-efficient (ii) Relatively unlimited geographical coverage and (iii) Minimum data capturing required, thus limiting data capturing mistakes (Bryman et al., 2021:240).

The following standardised questionnaires as measuring instruments will be used:

- *Job satisfaction*: The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) Short form, developed by (Weiss *et al.*, 1967a) was used in this study to determine employee job satisfaction on two dimensions (i) Intrinsic and (ii) Extrinsic. The MSQ's, developed by Weiss *et al.* (1977), job satisfaction scale based on a twenty-item, one-to-five-point Likert scale was used in the study, where 1 = Very Dissatisfied and 5 = Very Satisfied. Reliability for the MSQ obtained from previous studies was calculated at 0.834 (Sahibzada *et al.*, 2022:7)

Table 4: Summary of utilised measuring instruments

Construct	Source	Instrument
Job satisfaction	Weiss <i>et al.</i> (1967a)	Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)
Organisational commitment	Allen and Meyer (1993)	Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)
Work engagement	Schaufeli <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Work and well-being survey (UWES)
Employee performance	Koopmans <i>et al.</i> (2013)	Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)

- *Organisational commitment*: The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) measuring the employee commitment to work organisations, developed by Allen and Meyer (1993); (Mowday *et al.*, 1979:224) was used to determine employee organisational commitment on three dimensions: (i) Affective commitment, (ii) Continuance commitment and (iii) Normative commitment. The questionnaire is a twenty-four item one-to-five-point Likert-scale that was used in the study, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Accordingly, Cronbach's Alpha of greater than 0.7 was considered to be an acceptable reliability coefficient of the scale obtained from previous studies by Agegnehu *et al.* (2022:102).
- *Work engagement scale* - Schaufeli *et al.* (2006) developed a brief seventeen-item work and well-being survey (UWES) designed to assess work engagement, which is a positive emotional state associated with fulfilment at work, marked by energy, commitment and concentration. The survey is based on a zero to 6 Likert scale, where 0 = Never and 6 = Always (every day). The reliability test from the research of Sodha and Goswami (2023:28) revealed that Cronbach's Alpha values for both variables exceed 0.7, indicating that the survey is reliable and acceptable. This supports the validity of the instrument used.
- *Employee performance*: A brief and general questionnaire designed to assess individual work performance is the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). This questionnaire is founded on a three-dimensional framework, encompassing task performance, contextual performance and counterproductive

work behaviour as components of individual work performance Koopmans *et al.* (2013:90). The questionnaire consists of twenty-seven items on a one-to six-point Likert-scale, where 1 = Disagree very much and 6 = Agree very much. Previous studies by Özkan *et al.* (2024:5) revealed that Cronbach's Alphas of three subscales (task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour) were 0.894, 0.875, and 0.796, respectively.

- A demographic section seeking biographical information about gender, race, age, position, education, and period of employment was used to describe the sample.

2.11.1 Data collection / fieldwork

It is important to note that the researcher is employed within the Westvaal Motor Group, therefore having the dual role of employee and researcher. To recruit participants ethically and mitigate the potential risk of conflict of interest, the researcher's strategy was to engage with a gatekeeper in the form of HR to initiate contact with participants and oversee the research process. This ensured transparency and enhanced the credibility and integrity of the research. HR published an invitation to participate in the research project, in the form of a notice describing the nature of the study (topic, objective, and ethical considerations governing the study) on the company's bulletin board. The notice contained a link to the consent form. Participants only had access to the questionnaire when consent was granted.

Prior to the commencement of this study an Approval Letter Request to conduct the study within the Westvaal Motor Group was submitted to both the Group CFO and HR Manager. Both the Group CFO and HR Manager have granted approval to start the study using the working title and the research objectives as previously agreed upon. This approval confirmed the organisation's commitment to this study and established a commonality between the study's purpose and goals with those of the company. Therefore, the researcher did not require further formal approval from other decision-makers within the Westvaal Motor Group after completing the ethical clearance process.

Ethical clearance was sought by the researcher to conduct this study through the NWU Business School's Scientific Committee. Ethical clearance was obtained, and the study continued in accordance with the approved ethical guidelines. Both the Group CFO and HR Manager (Gatekeepers) provided access to both the participants and data and

assisted in maintaining compliance with organisational policy and ethics. This process provided transparency to all research activities and aligned them with what the company expected.

The company HR project manager (mediator) mediated between the researcher and the participants, communicating and addressing any concerns and questions.

Surveys were distributed via the online Office 365 Forms platform to ensure wide reach and ease of response. Responses were monitored and collected from the platform, which ensured that anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Bryman et al. (2021:246) confirm that close-ended questions are a widespread type used in the Likert scale, and the study used a vertical format for the close-ended questions.

2.11.2 Data coding and analysis

The statistical software suggested by Bryman *et al.* (2021:431) to be used in conducting statistical analysis was IBM SPSS version 30 and Jamovi, as these tools facilitated data coding, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression analyses and hypothesis testing. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and un-dimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995:316). Coefficient alpha contains important information regarding the proportion of variance of the items on a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale (Roodt, 2018:9). Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with an ordinal level of measurement and a median measure of central tendency. Due to the individual values being similar, the range was small, the sample was homogeneous and the range of distribution of values around the mean was a standard deviation (Botma *et al.*, 2022:180-181).

The data gathered for job satisfaction generated on the numerical rating scale (Likert 5) was numerically coded for easy analysis and tested on a Pearson's correlation coefficient (PCC) (r) to specify the relationships between the variables (Botma *et al.*, 2022:185). Measures of relationships are concerned with correlation, this does not imply or assume that one variable causes the other, but simply whether there is a relationship between the variables by the means of a correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient can vary

from a magnitude of +1 (a perfect positive or direct relationship) to -1 (a perfect negative or inverse relationship). If the correlation coefficient is zero (0), it indicates that the two variables are uncorrelated (Botma *et al.*, 2022:189). The strength of the linear relationship decreases as the r value decreases. In terms of statistical significance, the value of the confidence interval was set to 95% ($p < 0.05$) as effect size. Steyn (1999) cited in (Roodt, 2018:10), was used to determine the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0.30 – 0.49 for medium and 0.5 and more for large effects was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients (Cohen, 1988:15). Correlation coefficient analysis was performed to indicate whether two variables are related and to what degree they were related (Botma *et al.*, 2010:189). Correlation does not assume or imply that one variable causes the other, but simply whether there is a relationship between the variables.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are outlined in Table 6. The study included 289 employees from the Westvaal Motor Group, a medium-sized motor retail company located in South Africa, with key features of the sample that included gender, age, job title, tenure/years with the organisation, current department in the organisation and highest qualifications.

The sample has a slight female majority - 54.3% (n=157), men 45.3% (n=131) and an exceedingly small fraction (0.3%, n=1) identified as "Other." This gender mix is somewhat uncharacteristic of the traditionally male-dominated motor retail industry and may indicate improvements in gender diversity.

The majority of survey respondents were in the middle age category, as 52.6% (n = 152) were aged between 38 and 53 years, and 31.5% (n = 91) were between 22 and 37 years old. Only 3.1% (n=9) are aged 16-21, while 11.8% (n=34) are aged 54-65, and 1.0% (n=3) are 66 years or older. A sizeable percentage of the surveyed workforce consists of experienced, mid-career professionals.

Table 5: Demographic profile of respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Count (n)</i>	<i>% of the Total</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>
Gender	Male	131	45.3%	45.3%
	Female	157	54.3%	99.7%
	Other	1	0.3%	100%
		289		
Age	16 – 21 yrs.	9	3.1%	3.1%
	22 – 37 yrs.	91	31.5%	34.6%
	38 – 53 yrs.	152	52.6%	87.2%
	54 – 65 yrs.	34	11.8%	99.0%
	66 yrs. and older	3	1.0%	100%
		289		
Job title	Sales consultant	74	25.6%	25.6%
	Middle management	73	25.3%	50.9%
	Senior management	39	13.5%	64.4%
	Supervisor	8	2.8%	67.1%
	Administrator	95	32.9%	100%
		289		
Tenure/years with organisation	0 – 3 yrs.	146	50.5%	50.5%
	4 – 10 yrs.	80	27.7%	78.2%
	11 – 15 yrs.	30	10.4%	88.6%
	16 – 20 yrs.	26	9.0%	97.6%
	20 yrs. and longer	7	2.4%	100%
		289		
Current department in the organisation	Sales - new	52	18.0%	18.0%
	Sales - used	38	13.1%	31.1%
	Admin/finance	115	39.8%	70.9%
	Sales - parts	33	11.4%	82.4%
	Sales - services	51	17.6%	100%
		289		
Highest qualifications	Matric	7	2.4%	2.4%
	Certificate	40	13.8%	16.3%
	Diploma	30	10.4%	26.6%
	Degree	69	12.5%	39.1%
	Post-degree	1	0.3%	39.4%
	Other	26	9.0%	48.4%
	No degree	149	51.6%	100%
		289		

There are many different job classifications among the respondents, as Sales consultants represent 25.6% (n = 74), middle management represents 25.3% (n = 73), and the largest classification, Administrators, account for 32.9% (n = 95) of all respondents. Senior management accounted for 13.5% (n = 39), and supervisors represented 2.8% (n = 8) of

all respondents. This distribution of classifications clearly identifies an emphasis on operational and administrative roles, which are typical within a motor retail environment. Half of the participants have a relatively limited tenure; 50.5% (n = 146) are in their first 3 years at the organisation. Employees with mid-range tenure (4-10 years) make up 27.7% (n=80), while 10.4% (n=30) have served 11-15 years, 9.0% (n=26) for 16-20 years and 2.4% (n=7) for 20 years or more. This represents moderate levels of employee turnover and a substantial proportion of new employees.

The largest departmental responses received were the Administration/ Finance department, comprising 39.8% (n=115), followed by Sales-services at 17.6% (n=51), Sales-new at 18.0% (n=52), Sales-used at 13.1% (n=38) and Sales-parts at 11.4% (n=33). This highlights the importance that the company places on administrative support to assist the operational and sales functions.

A significant percentage of workers do not have a degree - 51.6% (n = 149) indicated they did not obtain a degree. Graduated employees made up 23.9% (n = 69); diploma-holding employees made up 10.4% (n = 30); certificate-holding employees made up 13.8% (n = 40), matriculated employees made up 2.4% (n = 7), post-degree-holding employees made up 0.3% (n = 1) and employees holding other credentials made up 9% (n = 26). The results are indicative of a workforce that is primarily comprised of individuals who possess practical skills rather than advanced education, as is typical of many employees in the retail industry.

The demographic characteristics of these employees may also affect employee satisfaction/engagement and subsequently, their decision to remain in the same position, as the retail industry has historically had a high rate of employee turnover. The study was conducted ethically; all responses were anonymous allowing the participants to more likely provide accurate information about themselves and their experiences at work.

2.12 Results

The results of the study will be divided into four sections as described below. It starts with the results of the exploratory factor analysis and the descriptive statistics of the measuring instrument used, as well as the correlations identified among the study variables. It

continues by revealing the findings from the regression analysis and the section concludes with the results from the mediation and moderation analysis.

2.12.1 Exploratory factor analysis and descriptive statistics

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using a simple principal component analysis on the items of the individual scales [the shortened job satisfaction scale (MSQ); (eigenvalue = 8.90; variance explained = 44.6%; KMO = .93, intrinsic job satisfaction; (eigenvalue = 4.05; variance explained = 50.6%; KMO = .89) and extrinsic job satisfaction; (eigenvalue = 6.04; variance explained = 50.4%; KMO = .91)]. Organisational commitment scale (OCQ) for affective commitment; (eigenvalue = 3.90; variance explained = 48.7%; KMO = .86), continuous commitment; ((eigenvalue = 2.40; variance explained = 34.3%; KMO = .67), normative commitment; (eigenvalue = 2.30; variance explained = 37.1%; KMO = .79) and Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES9); (eigenvalue = 7.51; variance explained = 44.2%; KMO = .91).

The analysis also considered the subscales of work engagement [vigour; (eigenvalue = 3.12; variance explained = 51.9%; KMO = .78), dedication; (eigenvalue = 2.84; variance explained = 56.8%; KMO = .80) and absorption; (eigenvalue = 2.84; variance explained = 47.4%; KMO = .81)]. The results confirm that job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement were unidimensional constructs.

Finally, the analysis considered the subscales of employee performance scale (IWPQ) [task performance; (eigenvalue = 3.40; variance explained = 57.1%; KMO = .87), contextual performance; (eigenvalue = 6.57; variance explained = 54.7%; KMO = .90) and counterproductive work behaviour; (eigenvalue = 3.72; variance explained = 46.5%; KMO = .85)] as unidimensional constructs respectively.

An observation of Table 7 indicates that Cronbach's Alpha of all scales falls within the acceptable range of 0.70 and above (Drost, 2011:114), as required for data to be usable in research of a similar nature. The mean scores above the mid-point for each of the study variables indicate a prevalence of these variables in the experiences of the respondents.

Table 6: Factor analysis of all scales and descriptive statistics

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Eigen value</i>	<i>Variance explained</i>	<i>KMO</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
<i>Job satisfaction</i>	8.90	44.6	.93	.93	3.72	0.65	-.50	.52
<i>Intrinsic job satisfaction</i>	4.05	50.6	.89	.86	3.87	0.64	-.66	.74
<i>Extrinsic job satisfaction</i>	6.04	50.4	.91	.91	3.61	0.72	-.49	.33
<i>Affective commitment</i>	3.90	48.7	.86	.84	3.44	0.72	-.38	.05
<i>Continuous commitment</i>	2.40	34.3	.67	.73	3.43	0.56	-.34	1.03
<i>Normative commitment</i>	2.30	37.1	.79	.67	3.63	0.59	-.36	.84
<i>Engagement</i>	7.51	44.2	.91	.91	4.58	0.74	-.48	.00
<i>Vigour</i>	3.12	51.9	.78	.81	4.53	0.89	-.31	-.28
<i>Dedication</i>	2.84	56.8	.80	.77	4.70	0.89	-.63	-.12
<i>Absorption</i>	2.84	47.4	.81	.77	4.52	0.83	-.39	-.20
<i>Task performance</i>	3.40	57.1	.87	.87	5.01	0.76	-.67	-.08
<i>Contextual performance</i>	6.57	54.7	.90	.92	5.02	0.73	-.61	-.43

Table 7 also confirms that the data extracted from the measuring instruments of the study were normally distributed, given the guidelines of 2.00 for skewness and 4.00 for kurtosis (Finch & West, 1997:454).

Continuing from the factor analysis, we investigated the correlations between the different variables under investigation in this study. The correlation table (Table 8) presents Pearson correlation coefficients among variables related to job satisfaction (including its intrinsic and extrinsic subdimensions), organisational commitment (affective, continuous and normative), work engagement (overall and its subdimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption) and employee performance (task performance and contextual performance) in a sample of 289 participants. All reported correlations are statistically significant at $p < .05$ or better (indicated by * for $p < .05$, ** for $p < .01$, or *** for $p < .001$), with practical significance interpreted as medium (0.30–0.49) or large (≥ 0.50) effects. Correlations with small effects are statistically significant in some cases, but were omitted from the narrative to emphasise practically meaningful relationships, aligning with the practical significance guidelines of Steyn (2002:12).

Table 7: Correlation coefficients (n=289) between job satisfaction, commitment, work engagement, and employee performance

<i>Variable</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>1. Job satisfaction</i>	-											
<i>2. Intrinsic job satisfaction</i>	.90***	-										
<i>3. Extrinsic job satisfaction</i>	.97***	.75***	-									
<i>4. Affective commitment</i>	.66***	.57***	.64***	-								
<i>5. Continuous commitment</i>	.14*	.09	.16**	.22***	-							
<i>6. Normative commitment</i>	.44***	.43***	.40***	.60***	.37***	-						
<i>7. Engagement</i>	.56***	.58***	.49***	.53***	.15**	.48***	-					
<i>8. Vigour</i>	.56***	.55***	.51***	.54***	.18**	.47***	.93***	-				
<i>9. Dedication</i>	.61***	.63***	.53***	.54***	.11	.45***	.90***	.78***	-			
<i>10. Absorption</i>	.38***	.44***	.31***	.39***	.13*	.41***	.91***	.76***	.72***	-		
<i>11. Task performance</i>	.30***	.34***	.25***	.29***	.13*	.29***	.58***	.57***	.52***	.51***	-	
<i>12. Contextual performance</i>	.25***	.31***	.19**	.33***	.06	.31***	.56***	.54***	.49***	.49***	.68***	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The practical significance of the results was interpreted as 0.30-0.49 (medium effect) and 0.50 and over (large effect). (Steyn, 2002:12)

The results from Table 8 indicate a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and commitment (as represented by its subconstructs, with affective commitment at $r = .66$; $p < 0.001$; large effect, and normative commitment at $r = .44$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect) and between job satisfaction and work engagement ($r = .56$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) as unidimensional constructs. Job satisfaction also has a practically significant relationship with all of the subconstructs of work engagement, namely vigour ($r = .56$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), dedication ($r = .61$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and absorption ($r = .38$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect).

Commitment (through its subconstructs) was also found to have practically significant relationships with work engagement, particularly affective commitment ($r = .53$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and normative commitment ($r = .48$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect).

There is a strong practical significance between work engagement and all three subconstructs ($r = .93, .90$ & $.91$; $p < 0.001$; large effect sizes for vigour, dedication and absorption, respectively), indicating the interrelated nature of the relationship between

the constructs as an unidimensional construct within the overall framework of work engagement. Vigour seems significantly related to the subconstructs of dedication ($r = .78$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and absorption ($r = .76$; $p < 0.001$; large effect). Dedication was found to be significantly related to absorption ($r = .72$; $p < 0.001$; large effect).

Work engagement has significant relationships with employee performance measures, including task performance ($r = .58$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and contextual performance ($r = .56$; $p < 0.001$; large effect).

Job satisfaction's subconstructs (intrinsic and extrinsic) indicate strong internal relationships with the overall construct ($r = .90$ and $.97$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and similar patterns with other variables, including intrinsic job satisfaction with affective commitment ($r = .57$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), normative commitment ($r = .43$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), work engagement ($r = .58$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), vigour ($r = .55$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), dedication ($r = .63$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), absorption ($r = .44$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), task performance ($r = .34$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect) and contextual performance ($r = .31$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), as well as extrinsic job satisfaction with affective commitment ($r = .64$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), normative commitment ($r = .40$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), work engagement ($r = .49$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), vigour ($r = .51$; $p < 0.001$; large effect) and dedication ($r = .53$; $p < 0.001$; large effect).

In addition, affective commitment indicates medium to large effects with normative commitment ($r = .60$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), vigour ($r = .54$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), dedication ($r = .54$; $p < 0.001$; large effect), absorption ($r = .39$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect) and contextual performance ($r = .33$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect). Normative commitment has medium effects with dedication ($r = .45$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect), absorption ($r = .41$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect) and contextual performance ($r = .31$; $p < 0.001$; medium effect). Task performance shows a large effect on contextual performance ($r = .68$; $p < 0.001$; large effect).

In summary, the table above illustrates a significant interconnectivity among positive attitudes and behaviours, as increased job satisfaction and normative commitment were shown to be positively associated with higher levels of work engagement and overall better performance outcomes, creating a supportive performance environment. These

trends are consistent with theories in organisational psychology that highlight how satisfaction and commitment promote engagement, which, in turn, influences performance (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2289; Nabhan & Munajat, 2023:10).

2.12.2 Regression analysis

The research aimed to determine the predictive significance of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement on two dependent variables: task performance and contextual performance. A hierarchical linear regression analysis was utilised, with job satisfaction (both intrinsic and extrinsic) included in Step 1, organisational commitment (comprising affective, continuance and normative dimensions) in Step 2 and employee engagement (encompassing vigour, dedication, and absorption) in Step 3. The analysis was conducted separately for task performance and contextual performance, and the findings from the regression analysis are detailed in Table 9 below.

Table 9 indicates that a combination of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee engagement accounted for 35.5% of the variance in task performance, reflecting a large practical significance. Among these, vigour ($\beta = .41 / t = 4.447$) was the only statistically significant predictor of task performance. Initially, job satisfaction alone (Step 1) accounted for 11.6% of the variance (medium practical significance), with intrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = .34 / t = 4.101$) identified as the sole significant predictor. When organisational commitment was added in Step 2, the explained variance increased by 2.9% to 14.5% (medium practical significance), but no new significant predictors emerged. Lastly, the inclusion of employee engagement in Step 3 increased the explained variance by 21% to 35.5% (large practical significance), with vigour again being recognised as the significant predictor.

Furthermore, Table 9 indicates that a combination of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee engagement explained 33.9% of the variance in contextual performance, which is considered to have large practical significance. In this analysis, extrinsic job satisfaction showed a negative relationship ($\beta = -.24 / t = -2.886$), while vigour demonstrated a positive association ($\beta = .32 / t = 4.136$), both of which were statistically significant predictors of contextual performance. In Step 1, job satisfaction alone accounted for 9.6% of the variance (medium practical significance), with intrinsic job satisfaction ($\beta = .31 / t = 4.351$) identified as the sole significant predictor. In Step 2, introducing organisational commitment increased the explained variance by 6.5% to a

total of 16.1% (medium practical significance). Here, extrinsic job satisfaction (negative, $\beta = -.21 / t = -2.352$) and normative commitment ($\beta = .16 / t = 2.179$) were significant predictors. Finally, in Step 3, adding employee engagement raised the explained variance by 17.8% to 33.9% (large practical significance), with vigour emerging as the primary positive predictor, while extrinsic job satisfaction continued to show a negative effect.

Table 8: Regression analysis

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Task performance</i>	<i>Task performance</i>	<i>Task performance</i>	<i>Contextual performance</i>	<i>Contextual performance</i>	<i>Contextual performance</i>
	<i>Stand β</i>	<i>Stand β</i>	<i>Stand β</i>	<i>Stand β</i>	<i>Stand β</i>	<i>Stand β</i>
<i>Intrinsic job satisfaction</i>	.34**	.29**	.07	.37**	.27**	.07
<i>Extrinsic job satisfaction</i>	-.00	-.08	-.10	-.08	-.21	-.24
<i>Affective commitment</i>		.08	-.05		.22**	.10
<i>Continuous commitment</i>		.05	.04		-.04	-.05
<i>Normative commitment</i>		.12	.01		.16	.06
<i>Vigour</i>			.41**			.38**
<i>Dedication</i>			.15			.13
<i>Absorption</i>			.09			.08
<i>R</i>	.34	.38	.60	.31	.40	.58
<i>R</i>²	.12	.15	.36	.10	.16	.34
<i>F</i>²	.13	.17	.55	.11	.19	.51
<i>Effect size</i>	Small effect	Medium effect	Large effect	Small effect	Medium effect	Large effect

Note f^2 parameters set for practical significance: if $f^2 < 0.15$ small effect, if $0.15 \leq f^2 \leq 0.5$ medium effect; if $f^2 > 0.5$ large effect; * $p < .01$, ** $p < .0$ (Cohen, 1992a)

The relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee engagement accounted for 34% (indicating high practical importance) of the variance in contextual performance. Specifically, extrinsic job satisfaction had a negative impact, while vigour emerged as a statistically significant predictor.

2.12.3 Mediation and moderation analysis

Bootstrap confidence intervals were used to evaluate the mediation effects of indirect influences, with the presence of zero in the intervals indicating no significant indirect effects (referred to as NCF, or "not confirmed"). As illustrated in Table 10, the mediating roles of organisational commitment and employee engagement differed across various performance metrics.

The indirect effect of work engagement via job satisfaction as a mediator on task performance was not significant ($p = .56$, 95% BC CI: $-.08$ to $.04$, NCF), nor was it significant for contextual performance ($p = .13$, 95% BC CI: $-.11$ to $.01$, NCF). In contrast, the indirect effect of job satisfaction via work engagement as a mediator was significant for both task performance ($p < .001$, 95% BC CI: $.29$ to $.49$, CF for "confirmed") and contextual performance ($p < .001$, 95% BC CI: $.28$ to $.48$, CF), indicating that work engagement indeed mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and both aspects of performance.

For organisational commitment, the indirect effect of job satisfaction via affective commitment was found to be significant for task performance ($p = .001$, 95% BC CI: $.00$ to $.22$, CF) and contextual performance ($p < .001$, 95% BC CI: $.10$ to $.32$, CF). The indirect effect via normative commitment was also significant for task performance ($p = .004$, 95% BC CI: $.03$ to $.17$, CF) and contextual performance ($p < .001$, 95% BC CI: $.06$ to $.19$, CF).

However, the indirect effect of job satisfaction via continuous commitment was insignificant for task performance ($p = .200$, 95% BC CI: $-.01$ to $.01$, NCF), and contextual performance ($p = .017$, 95% BC CI: $-.02$ to $.22$, NCF). These results imply that affective and normative commitments, along with work engagement, serve as significant mediators in the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, especially contextual performance, while continuous commitment has a limited mediating effect.

Table 9: Mediation analysis - Indirect effects

<i>Mediator</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Bootstrapping CI</i>	
			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
<i>Indirect effects of work engagement via job satisfaction (JS) as a mediator on</i>				
1. Task performance (<i>p</i> =.56) NCF	-.02	.03	-.08	.04
2. Contextual performance (<i>p</i> =.13) NCF	-.05	.03	-.11	.01
<i>Indirect effects of job satisfaction via work engagement (WE) as a mediator on</i>				
1. Task performance (<i>p</i> <.001) CF	.35	.05	.29	.49
2. Contextual performance (<i>p</i> <.001) CF	.38	.05	.28	.48
<i>Indirect effects of job satisfaction via affective commitment (AC) as a mediator on</i>				
1. Task performance (<i>p</i> =.001) CF	.12	.06	.00	.22
2. Contextual performance (<i>p</i> <.001) CF	.21	.06	.10	.32
<i>Indirect effects of job satisfaction via normative commitment (NC) as a mediator on</i>				
1. Task performance (<i>p</i> =.004) CF	.10	.03	.03	.17
2. Contextual performance (<i>p</i> <.001) CF	.12	.03	.06	.19
<i>Indirect effects of job satisfaction via continuous commitment (CC) as a mediator on</i>				
1. Task performance (<i>p</i> =.200) NCF	.01	.01	-.01	.01
2. Contextual performance (<i>p</i> <.017) NCF	.12	.05	-.02	.22

Note NCF – Not Confirmed and CF = Confirmed

Continuing to the moderation section, the focus was on the potential moderating influences of organisational commitment and employee engagement on the connection between job satisfaction and employee performance, along with its individual elements. To assess moderation effects, the significance and confidence intervals of the interaction effects (Job Satisfaction x Organisational Commitment ÷ Employee Engagement) were analysed. According to the findings presented in Table 10, the moderating effects of organisational commitment and employee engagement were not supported in three of the four models, as indicated by the insignificant results and the presence of zero within the confidence intervals. Only for contextual performance, a moderating effect was observed.

Table 10: Moderation analysis - Interaction effects

<i>Moderator</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Bootstrapping CI</i>	
			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
<i>Interaction effects of job satisfaction (JS) * Continuous Commitment (CC) as moderator</i>				
1. Task performance ($p=.265$) NCF	.12	.11	-.09	.33
<i>Interaction effects of job satisfaction (JS) * Continuous Commitment (CC) as moderator</i>				
2. Contextual performance ($p=.034$) CF	.22	.11	.02	.43
<i>Different conditions of the moderator</i>				
	.29	.06	.16	.41
1. Average ($p<.001$) CF	.35	.05	.29	.49
2. Low (-1SD) ($p=.056$) NCF	.16	.08	-.00	.33
2. High (+1SD) ($p<.001$) CF	.41	.09	.23	.59
<i>Interaction effects of Work engagement (WE) * Task performance (TP) as moderator</i>				
1. Job satisfaction ($p=.95$) NCF	-.00	.05	-.09	.10
<i>Interaction effects of Work engagement (WE) * Contextual performance (CP) as moderator</i>				
1. Job satisfaction ($p=.95$) NCF	.02	.05	-.08	.11

The study evaluated how organisational commitment and employee engagement might influence the link between job satisfaction and employee performance by analysing the significance and confidence intervals of their interaction effects. According to Table 10, the impact of continuous commitment on task performance was not statistically significant ($p = .265$, 95% BC CI: -.09 to .33, NCF), but it was significant for contextual performance ($p = .034$, 95% BC CI: .02 to .43, CF).

Further investigation under varying levels of continuous commitment showed significant moderation effects: at average levels ($p < .001$, 95% BC CI: .29 to .49, CF) and high

levels (+1 SD, $p < .001$, 95% BC CI: .23 to .59, CF), but not at low levels (-1 SD, $p = .056$, 95% BC CI: -.00 to .33, NCF). This indicates that continuous commitment plays a moderating role in the relationship between job satisfaction and contextual performance, with stronger effects observed at average and elevated levels of commitment.

On the other hand, work engagement did not significantly moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and performance, as shown by the non-significant interaction effects for both task performance ($p = .95$, 95% BC CI: -.09 to .10, NCF) and contextual performance ($p = .95$, 95% BC CI: -.08 to .11, NCF). This suggests that work engagement does not have a meaningful impact on the job satisfaction-performance relationship in this context.

2.13 Discussion of results

The results of this study shed light on the complex connections between Job Satisfaction (JS), Organisational Commitment (OC), Employee Engagement (EE), and Employee Performance (EP) within a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa. Based on the Job Satisfaction - Employee Performance Hypothesis, which suggests that JS has a significant impact on EP by mediating the effects of workplace dynamics such as OC and EE on performance outcomes, the findings showed mixed results. While positive relationships were confirmed, the hypothesis received only partial support, whereas mediations were significant but not universally applicable. In addition, the strength of direct effects also varied. The next part of this discussion will assess all five secondary objectives through statistical evidence, test hypotheses and use relevant data on the Motor Retail Industry.

The first secondary objective investigated the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance. The study found positive and statistically significant relationships between all four factors, supporting the concept that they function as interrelated drivers of employee performance. In terms of the practical correlations, job satisfaction was shown to have strong practical relationships with employee engagement, vigour, and dedication. Job satisfaction was shown to have moderate correlations with affective organisational commitment, normative organisational commitment, task performance, and contextual performance. Findings from the literature in general show that employees who report being satisfied with their jobs are typically more committed to their organisations, and

therefore, engage in more employee behaviour and perform at a higher level (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:1): meta $r = .37$ for employee engagement – employee performance; Djuli *et al.* (2023:186); $R^2 = .419$ for job satisfaction – employee performance; Sahibzada *et al.* (2022:10); job satisfaction – employee performance through pay and supervision). Therefore, it is likely that the automotive retail industry in South Africa has similar relationships between aspects of job satisfaction (for example, compensation and supervision) and aspects of organisational commitment (for example, pressure) that assist employees in managing the stress and pressure associated with working in a high-stress Sales environment and promote an engaged workforce. However, economic uncertainty may impact this relationship.

The second secondary objectives examined the roles of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediator. Findings indicated that organisational commitment and employee engagement jointly account for variance in employee performance; further, job satisfaction was found to be a partial mediator in these relationships. Results from the hierarchical regression analysis showed that sub-dimensions of employee engagement particularly vigour, are significant predictors of both task performance and contextual performance. The model explained 36% of the variance in task performance and 34% in contextual performance. Additionally, results from the mediation analysis indicated significant indirect effects of job satisfaction via employee engagement on both task performance and contextual performance, thereby providing partial support for the hypothesis. This is in line with previously published research by (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025:1; Nabhan & Munajat, 2023:1; Singh *et al.*, 2023:1) that have shown that organisational commitment/employee engagement has a positive effect on employee performance. However, the evidence of partial mediation and non-significant indirect effects of employee engagement via job satisfaction on employee performance ($ab = -0.02$ for task performance; $ab = -0.05$ for contextual performance) indicates that the hypothesis may over-emphasise the role of job satisfaction in the Motor Retail environment, where direct effects of organisational commitment and employee engagement (for example, loyalty affecting sales persistence, but remain strong despite economic pressures.

The third secondary objective was to examine if organisational commitment is a mediator of the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance we found partial mediation effects. For task performance and contextual performance, affective

organisational commitment was a mediator, while normative organisational commitment was a mediator for both task performance and contextual performance, where continuous organisational commitment did not have a statistically significant mediation effect for task performance. The most prominent mediator from these results was affective organisational commitment, which had the strongest association with job satisfaction.

These findings are consistent with our hypotheses since job satisfaction can increase an employee's affective attachment to their organisation which, in turn, will enhance employee performance particularly in high turnover rate industries, such as motor retail. The findings indicated that the higher an employee's level of commitment to the organisation was, the lower their rates of absenteeism were (Mangundjaya & Merdiaty, 2024:1); $R^2 = .205$ for job satisfaction – organisational commitment, (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285; Putra *et al.*, 2023:371), in terms of how positive affective organisational commitment impacts productivity. However, the partial mediation and the lack of statistical significance of continuous organisational commitment suggest that the hypotheses do not provide a complete explanation for all possible direct job satisfaction – employee performance relationships that occur within environments of high levels of job-related stressors (Ekhsan, 2019:1).

The fourth secondary objective was to investigate whether employee engagement mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement, indicating a considerable partial mediation by employee engagement. Overall, the total mediation effects were $ab = 0.35$ for task performance and $ab = 0.38$ for contextual performance, with both vigour and dedication having a statistically significant contribution from job satisfaction. However, there was no statistical evidence to indicate that a reverse mediation analysis (employee engagement influencing job satisfaction and then employee performance) would be effective for either task performance or contextual performance. As such, these findings supported the hypothesis, indicating that job satisfaction can foster increased involvement in service-related activities (for example, Ahyat and Hamdi (2024:1); $R^2 = 0.532$ for employee engagement productivity; Yao *et al.* (2022:1), in an inverted U fashion relating to work engagement and employee performance; Salsabila and Sary (2024:347), where 65.1% of employee performance is explained by engagement and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the implication of partial mediation and potentially inverted U relationships (Yao *et al.*, 2022:1) suggests that while the hypothesis should take into consideration the possible benefits of employee

engagement in a South African motor retail context, it also should take into account burnout risks that are likely influenced by the South African motor retail context's limited economic capacity to allow employees to benefit maximally from employee engagement.

The fifth secondary objective involved determining whether job satisfaction mediated the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance. Mediation through job satisfaction was identified indirectly via job satisfaction and reverse relationships, as well as via correlations. There were correlations of $r = 0.66$ between affective organisational commitment and job satisfaction and $r = 0.29$ between affective organisational commitment and task performance, therefore, the indirect effects from affective organisational commitment to employee performance were estimated at $ab = 0.12$ for task performance and $ab = 0.21$ for contextual performance. The results clearly supported the hypothesis as suggested by (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285; Mangundjaya & Merdiaty, 2024:1; Tambunan *et al.*, 2025:553), demonstrating that the influence of affective organisational commitment on employee performance occurs through job satisfaction. Thus, the study demonstrated how the fulfilment of employee needs in the motor retail industry can result in enhanced performance, provided employees are emotionally committed to their jobs and have an overall positive job satisfaction and receive rewards.

Overall, this research supports, to an extent, the job satisfaction - employee performance hypothesis that job satisfaction has a significant mediating effect on employee performance in the South African motor retail industry. The hypothesis was proven in relation to mediation, however, it requires enhancement in order to account for both direct and context effects in addition to its moderating effects, since only very few moderations were found (for example, job satisfaction & continuous organisational commitment have a statistically significant interaction only with contextual performance, $ab = 0.22$).

2.14 Theoretical contributions

The current study has considerably enhanced the theoretical understanding of the job satisfaction – employee performance hypothesis, as it has provided an empirical context for this hypothesis based on the South African motor retail sector, a sector that is largely unexamined in the global Human Resource Management (HRM) literature. The results of this study have built upon the work of Allen and Meyer (1993:1), who developed their three-component (affective, continuance and normative) model of organisational

commitment. The results have specifically indicated job satisfaction to be a mediator of organisational commitment in achieving employee performance across all five objectives of the study. A significant relationship was also found between job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment/employee engagement and therefore has demonstrated that affective commitment is the primary route to employee performance, where task performance is one of the most important routes to affective commitment. The results of this study are also influenced by South Africa's collectivistic culture which may increase the effect of affective organisational commitment. Therefore, the results of this study address the criticism of Western-based HRM studies that often do not consider the economic volatility of many emerging markets and developing countries.

The study builds on Schaufeli *et al.* (2002:71) JD-R framework to show that job satisfaction can be seen as an employee's own personal resource, which in turn will enhance the elements of employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption with job satisfaction and dedication) and subsequently improve employee performance. The research provides additional support from indirect effects via employee engagement for task performance, developing the previous framework for high-pressure retail environments, and supported by meta-analytic results by Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023:111) for employee engagement – employee performance and contextual studies by Ahyat and Hamdi (2024:748) for employee engagement productivity and Yao *et al.* (2022:1) for employee engagement – employee performance (inverted U). It also specifically considers South African operational issues (such as operational stressors) that may positively impact the resources related to work stress, thus affecting employee performance (Roy *et al.*, 2023:203).

Objectives 3 to 4 illustrate the sequential relationships (job satisfaction → organisational commitment / employee engagement → employee performance) via the partial mediation effect of the variables. In the case of affective organisational commitment, it appears to be the mediator variable in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance for task performance and similarly normative organisational commitment is also the mediator variable. However, there was no significant mediation through continuous organisational commitment for task performance, consistent with the research of Singh *et al.* (2023:1282), who reported a 14% mediation via job satisfaction (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023:1; Putra *et al.*, 2023:371), who discuss the mixed mediation effects of organisational commitment in relation to employee performance.

It provides an insight into how continuance may have a negative impact on motivation in unstable environments, as noted by Gimeno *et al.* (2025:2285), who indicate that continuance has a negative impact on employee engagement. The significant mediation effect found in objective 5, which indicates that job satisfaction affects affective organisational commitment and employee performance, (as illustrated by the reverse paths and correlations with affective organisational commitment) illustrates the importance of job satisfaction in creating a transformation of employee commitment to improved performance. This is consistent with Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959) as it demonstrates how hygiene factors (pay and supervision etc.) can support motivators such as commitment in environments of high employee turnover and demonstrates the mediation role of job satisfaction on employee performance via pay, as indicated by Sahibzada *et al.* (2022:8) .

Tambunan *et al.* (2025:553) and Djuli *et al.* (2023:186) have demonstrated that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between motivation and employee performance. In addition, there was a small amount of evidence of moderation effects (such as the interaction between job satisfaction and continuous organisational commitment was only found to be statistically significant for contextual performance), which adds further complexity to the curvilinear dynamics of job satisfaction (Yao *et al.*, 2022:1). This also suggests the existence of specific moderators of job satisfaction (for example, economic fluctuations or stress (Roy *et al.*, 2023:203-204) with acute stress having an adverse impact on commitment.

This research contributes to the development of HRM theory in emerging markets by providing an element of context that is typically absent from wider studies (Salsabila & Sary, 2024:347) where employee engagement and job satisfaction explain 65.1% of employee performance and the research by Na-Nan *et al.* (2020:1), who found that job satisfaction and organisational commitment mediate the appraisal of organisational citizenship behaviour. Overall, this study provides a new contribution to the current literature by developing a model that can be used in unstructured industries, while identifying the mediation effect of job satisfaction in culturally diverse environments.

2.15 Practical recommendations

Study results support practical advice for South Africa's motor retail managers about typical challenges experienced by employees within the South African motor retail,

including elevated levels of employee turnover and increased pressure to meet sales targets. Managers may develop targeted HR interventions to increase employee performance (via improving the relationships identified as being positive for job satisfaction with both employee engagement and affective organisational commitment, as well as the strong relationship found between intrinsic job satisfaction and task performance. The recommendations for HR intervention are structured around five strategic objectives. These objectives aim to address the complex mediation influences observed in the relationships studied. For example, employee engagement indirectly affects task performance, while job satisfaction moderates the relationship between continuous organisational commitment and contextual performance. Results also highlight potential ethical considerations for organisations wishing to implement these types of HR interventions.

To promote positive relationships among job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance, it is important that management regularly evaluate job satisfaction through established instruments such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire as indicated in the factor analysis in this research paper. This evaluation may help discover deficiencies in both intrinsic factors, such as occasions for advancement, and extrinsic factors such as supervisory techniques. The use of anonymous questionnaires may help to generate confidence, as the correlation indicates. Practical efforts may include comparisons of benchmarks with industries similar to the one under study, such as the establishment of pay equity programs which should improve the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

JS can be used in performance management at the organisation level. The organisation could implement mentorship programs to improve employee engagement, while also implementing job satisfaction as an intermediary, due to the high positive correlation to task and contextual performance. The organisation could also conduct weekly meetings to support affective organisational commitment as a result of the transformative leader's process of communication as described in (Firdaus *et al.*, 2025:12-13; Nabhan & Munajat, 2023:1; Singh *et al.*, 2023:1282). To apply to a Motor Retailer would imply providing role specific training to Sales employees to increase productivity by 20-30% through this job satisfaction mediated channels.

Management can develop both affective and normative organisational commitment to improve the partial mediations of the impact of affective organisational commitment on

task performance of employees. HR, together with company management, could implement a "Employee of the Month" award-type recognition program that is tied to normative obligations toward job satisfaction to reduce employee turnover and increase employee loyalty (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285; Mangundjaya & Merdiaty, 2024:1) which in turn will increase employee performance. However, the company needs to be cautious using continuous organisational commitment as it has shown no significant mediating effect on task engagement performance and could potentially result in decreased motivation, due to cost sensitivity of the retail environment.

To improve employee engagement, initiatives should concentrate on the significant indirect impact incidental to the performance of tasks by providing digital skills training with the aim of enthusiasm and commitment to job satisfaction through the utilisation of customer relationship management (CRM) tools for Sales teams to counter the potential adverse effects of excessive workload (Ahyat & Hamdi, 2024:748; Salsabila & Sary, 2024:347; Yao *et al.*, 2022). This would facilitate the improvement of the service department's effectiveness by employing engagement applications that may assist in attenuating burnout in high-intensity job situations in the retail market.

Job satisfaction is the way in which the company can improve the emotional connection to employees through an enhancement of job satisfaction to improve affective organisational commitment as indicated by a correlation between affective organisational commitment and employee performance (which has a weak relationship), flexible work options and wellness programs that reduce the negative impact of stress on employee commitment as cited by Gimeno *et al.* (2025:2285) related to job satisfaction & affective organisational commitment, (Mangundjaya & Merdiaty, 2024:1; Tambunan *et al.*, 2025:553). For example, improving employee flexibility in work hours in a motor retail company would be one way to improve employee retention while decreasing the negative effects of stress on employee commitment, as referenced in Roy *et al.* (2023:203).

The proposed suggestions contribute to the formulation of an integrated HRM strategy, which utilises ethical practices, including confidential surveys to assess progress toward reducing employee turnover (Ekhsan, 2019:48), thereby increasing competitive advantage in South Africa's volatile motor retail sector. Implementing these recommendations may yield a 15-25% increase in employee performance metrics via mediating mechanisms.

2.16 Limitations of the study

As with most other empirical studies, there are certain limitations to conducting this study on “investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, employee engagement and performance in a South African motor retail company.” The study has identified some significant relationships among the variables studied (with an especially significant relationship existing between affective organisational commitment and task engagement) and how employee engagement and organisational commitment function as mediators for each relationship among the variables.

This research is restricted to an individual organisation, the Westvaal Motor Group, which acts as a medium-sized business within a specific market (motor retail) and geographically (within six of South Africa's nine provinces). Therefore, limiting the scope for which this research can be applied to organisations with different characteristics, for example, larger or smaller motor retail businesses, from a range of sectors, or operating on an international scale. Potential differences between medium-sized companies (that have their own distinct organisational dynamics) compared to other types of firms, such as small, large or multinationals, are thus ignored when researching how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance interact at varying scales.

While the empirical data indicate a major limitation within this study - the sample size was 289 employees and this is consistent with other references where large correlations were found between job satisfaction and affective organisational commitment. However, the regression results for job satisfaction, commitment and engagement explained 15-29% of the variability in both task and contextual performance. These results may have been impacted by South Africa's economic/cultural contexts, such as the high unemployment rate and the culture being collectivist in nature, which may have strengthened the relationship of affective organisational commitment to performance. For example, Putra *et al.* (2023:377), note similar concerns when referring to their own research on civil servants in a single district in Indonesia, and state they are aware of the limitations regarding generalisability because of the narrow scope of their population. Similarly, Mangundjaya and Merdiaty (2024:11), noted that the research was limited to a single banking institution and therefore may not apply outside of that particular industry/sector.

Ampofo (2020:260) identified additional methodological limitations caused by using a non-random sample in an industry specific hospitality setting that may have affected its applicability as to other settings, similar to the high-pressure Sales environments commonly seen in the motor retail sector. In order to rectify this for subsequent studies, a larger sample that encompasses a number of various motor retail businesses or comparative studies between multiple types of industries may be useful to increase external validity. This is consistent with the findings from Mangundjaya and Merdiaty (2024:11) who had a large sample size and were aware of possible organisational cultural bias.

A descriptive correlational investigation design was used in this research, which enables the identification of correlations but cannot demonstrate causal linkages. Therefore, this research cannot definitively conclude that job satisfaction, commitment or employee engagement cause enhanced performance to occur. It rather concludes that potential causal paths were identified through mediated pathways, indicating potential unidirectional influences that may also be bidirectional or influenced by unmeasured variables (such as leadership style or macroeconomic conditions). The time period for data collection for this research study (2025) will also create additional challenges in terms of the impact of other temporal factors on the outcomes, as indicated in Roy *et al.* (2023:218) regarding the effects of COVID-19-related stressors on commitment and performance trends. One major conclusion from the results is that although the findings support prior research by Gimeno *et al.* (2025), conducting longitudinal or experimental studies would likely clarify the directional relationship between the variables of interest.

The study was based on a number of self-reporting questionnaires, for example the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), all of which have been well-recognised in literature. However, this does not imply that each one will apply equally well to the South African Motor Retail Industry and therefore the tools employed may reflect an understanding shaped by culture or specific sectors. Furthermore, there is potential for bias within this methodology, for example social desirability, where respondents answer questions with reference to how they believe others expect them to respond to the question. Common Method Variance is another form of bias, where responses from multiple variables may correlate due to the method of survey administration, rather than the actual relationship between the

variables, and therefore may provide inflated correlation coefficients, or obscure existing correlations. Thus, it has been demonstrated that the use of self-reported survey data can create response biases (Kock *et al.*, 2021:3).

Quantitative methods enable a detailed statistical evaluation (e.g., PLS-SEM to evaluate mediating effects), however, they can neglect other components of employees' experiences, for example, their individual motivation and the cultural context in which they work. Therefore, the incorporation of qualitative elements into the study will likely result in an even greater understanding of the relationship being studied. For instance, as demonstrated in this study, affective organisational commitment is a strong predictor of productivity, however, according to Sathish and Krishna (2024:62), qualitative data, (via interviews), can illustrate how employees' well-being acts as a mediator in these relationships, a dimension of the relationship that this study does not evaluate.

Similarly, studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as Na-Nan *et al.* (2020), which investigated the mediating effects of job satisfaction and organisational commitment on the relationship between employee performance appraisal challenges and employee organisational citizenship behaviour used self-reporting and had similar limitations, therefore, multi-sourced data would be required to confirm the results (Na-Nan *et al.*, 2020:14-15).

2.17 Recommendations for future research

The results of this research indicate some possible ways for future research through certain variables, which may include some researcher variables that influence the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance, as well as the relationship of those variables to organisational commitment and employee engagement. For example, work-life balance is said to moderate the effect of job satisfaction on performance when employee involvement is high (Putra *et al.*, 2023:377). Other variables, which include work motivation, psychological capital and transformational leadership mediate that relationship (Saeed Mohamed Ali & Dr. Alisha, 2024:594; Tambunan *et al.*, 2025:569; Yao *et al.*, 2022:6). If the scope of the research was widened to include these mediators and moderators, it may give better understanding as to what mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee satisfaction. As this research did not sufficiently provide the mediating role of organisational commitment and employee engagement, as shown by previous research in Singh *et al.* (2023:1282) and

Ampofo (2020:260), future research may endeavour to replicate this research to discover the nature of the relationship.

Future research could enhance the generalisability of these findings by especially addressing certain limitations, such as using a probability sampling method that raises the probability of obtaining a representative sample from the population and therefore, reducing sampling bias (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:211). This could include extending the study population so that all motor retail companies in South Africa could be studied or making comparative studies across different industrial sectors. Furthermore, a second limitation, namely non-response variance, could be minimised by improving participation rates. This could, for example, be achieved by offering incentives (Smith *et al.*, 2019:11). Here ethics needs to be borne in mind with respect to the use of incentives in academic research.

Future investigation can address another possible constraint as it pertains to drawing causal conclusions. As such, it is suggested that any forthcoming longitudinal studies will enable researchers to assess and verify over time whether the elements of this study persist (Cohen *et al.*, 2002:113) and therefore, examine longitudinally how the relationships among organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance linked to job satisfaction occur.

In addition, future studies should also consider the demographic characteristics of the subjects in the study sample and provide translations of assessment scales for respondents in multiple languages. By providing respondents with the opportunity to complete the assessment scales in multiple languages, they would be able to reduce the common method bias associated with completing assessments written in the exclusive use of the English language.

2.18 Summary

This research includes a combination of empirical and theoretical data that supports the idea that employee job satisfaction can contribute to better organisational outcomes for a South African motor retail organisation. The data collected during this research demonstrated that employees who were satisfied with their jobs had higher levels of emotional commitment and engagement and therefore contributed positively to both their task performance and work environment. However, the low R-squared value also indicated that additional variables (for example, cultural and/or economic) specific to South Africa might have affected the relationship between job satisfaction and the above-mentioned outcomes. Therefore, it is apparent that custom-tailored interventions in smaller organisations (where there may not be sufficient resources to implement larger-scale Human Resource programs) should focus on utilising job satisfaction to achieve long-term performance enhancements. Overall, the results provide a new and relevant contribution to previous research through providing localised data related to an underrepresented retail segment and reinforce the applicability of global theories in localised environments.

2.19 References

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CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final part of this chapter will provide conclusions to both the literature review and empirical studies that were conducted as part of the study objectives. The chapter will address the study's theoretical insights and contributions in conclusion, and then it will cover the study's limitations. In addition, the chapter provides a number of recommendations for a South African motor retail company regarding the results of the study and possible areas of future research.

3.1 Conclusion

3.1.1 Conclusion based on theoretical findings

This study's primary focus was on exploring the relationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance at a motor retail business within South Africa. A thorough review of the extant literature was conducted to identify and define the concepts for this study, resulting in several theoretical implications.

Job satisfaction pertains to an individual's positive emotional response to his or her job, encompassing areas of work environment, wages/compensation, coworker relations, etc. (Quesada-Puga *et al.*, 2024:1; Weiss *et al.*, 1967b). Job satisfaction has been recognised as a multi-faceted construct affecting the behaviours and attitudes of employees toward their workplace, thus positively impacting the performance of the organisation (Mahmood Aziz *et al.*, 2021:59). This study used the theoretical model presented in the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire to develop the conceptualisation of job satisfaction. The existing literature indicates that job satisfaction is composed of two separate dimensions, namely intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction including achievement, recognition, responsibilities, and total work conditions.

Various stakeholders, particularly employees and the organisation, can gain advantages from elevated job satisfaction (Roy *et al.* (2023:218); Naqvi *et al.* (2024:168)). Research highlights that one of the main advantages of job satisfaction is its role in decreasing turnover intentions (Beyer (2019:37); Mwiiya *et al.* (2024:25-26)) and its association with positive outcomes for both employees and the organisation, such as increased organisational commitment (Griffin *et al.*, 2023:3), enhanced work engagement (Yao *et*

al., 2022:5) and improved employee performance (Gimeno *et al.* (2025:2285); Corbeanu and Iliescu (2023:118).

While there has been less focus on the weaknesses, low job satisfaction can have significant negative effects that need to be considered in employee management. Research indicates that low job satisfaction may contribute to burnout (Quesada-Puga *et al.*, 2024:6), increased absenteeism (Beyer, 2019:27) and a higher likelihood of employees intending to leave their jobs (Mwiiya *et al.*, 2024:32).

Organisational commitment, as outlined by Allen and Meyer (1993:50), is described as the psychological bond that an employee develops with their organisation, which affects their choice to stay. Some view organisational commitment as one dimension, but for others, such as (Allen & Meyer, 1993:50) it consists of three types of commitment: affective, normative and continuance commitment. This study will use the Allen and Meyer model to provide an overview of organisational commitment. Affective commitment describes a sense of loyalty or emotional bond to an organisation, whereas normative commitment refers to an obligation or a sense of duty to stay in an organisation. Continuance commitment is when an individual feels that they cannot afford to leave an organisation due to the potential loss of benefits and/or financial costs. Research into organisational commitment indicates that employees who commit to their organisations tend to have a number of positive results as an outcome, including longer tenure and improved job performance (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:3). These studies have identified that employee organisational commitment has a strong link to greater levels of job satisfaction (Mahmood Aziz *et al.*, 2021:62), higher levels of work engagement (Christian *et al.*, 2011:11; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008) and a stronger contribution from employees at work. Additionally, these benefits of employee organisational commitment are not solely to the individual, but can have numerous benefits to the employing organisation including reduced employee turnover rates (Roy *et al.*, 2023:207-208). Having a high level of continuance commitment may however have its drawbacks, such as the normative feeling of being in company service and the reduced ability to innovate (Allen & Meyer, 1993).

Work engagement, according to Schaufeli *et al.* (2002:74), is a positive, fulfilling, work-related, motivational (mental) state that consists of three dimensions: vigour, dedication and absorption. The current study follows the theoretical framework of Schaufeli *et al.* to investigate work engagement. The literature shows that work engagement is related to various positive outcomes for employees, and their well-being (Chahyono *et al.*,

2024:106; Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). Work engagement has been positively related to job satisfaction (Islam, 2024:67), organisational commitment (Mahmood Aziz *et al.*, 2021:62) and work performance (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:118). The positive effects of work engagement extend not only to the individual but also to organisations and customers (Bin & Shmailan, 2015:3). While engagement can improve job satisfaction, work engagement and organisational commitment, it also has some potential negative effects, such as impacting one's work-life balance and resulting in burnout (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002:86).

Employee performance represents the extent to which an employee accomplishes what they are required to do and achieve their goals while performing their responsibilities. In addition to the fundamental aspects of an employee's job that are commonly referred to as "task performance", employee performance also includes additional behaviours beyond those required to complete their basic job tasks (widely referred to as "contextual performance") (Griffin *et al.*, 2023). Research into employee performance has shown a positive relationship between job satisfaction (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285), organisational commitment (Roy *et al.*, 2023:218) and work engagement (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:118-119). When researching the relationships between employee performance and job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement, there are many notable associations found within prior research studies. For example, job satisfaction is typically positively related to organisational commitment when employees experience positive outcomes from their work (Naqvi *et al.*, 2024:168). Organisational commitment is positively correlated with work engagement, therefore, when employees exhibit increased organisational commitment, they also demonstrate increased energy and involvement at work (Christian *et al.*, 2011:14). There have been documented examples of how job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement can impact employee performance in various settings (Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285; Yao *et al.*, 2022:5).

3.1.2 Theoretical contributions

This research serves as a theoretical contribution by underlining the importance of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and work engagement in increasing employee performance, particularly in the South African motor retail sector. The reliable and unambiguous measurement tools are however of utmost importance for these constructs to be used. The study has confirmed the validity of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire short form (Weiss *et al.*, 1977), the Organisational Commitment

Questionnaire (Allen & Meyer, 1993) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (short form) in a South African motor retail organisation context. These findings support the recognition of the scales as effective, compact instruments for assessing these constructs on an international scale thereby facilitating the advancement of organisational behaviour theory (Schaufeli *et al.* (2002:73); Allen and Meyer (1993)). Demonstrating the relevance of these scales in a new context enhances their generalisability across various settings and furthermore builds on prior studies to quantitatively explore the relationships between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance, specifically in the motor retail industry. It enriches the existing literature by investigating the mediating effects of organisational commitment and work engagement on the link between job satisfaction and employee performance within the South African context.

3.1.3 Conclusions based on empirical findings

The primary aim of this research was to explore the connections between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance within a South African motor retail company. The study analysed responses from 289 questionnaires to identify any direct relationships among the variables and to assess the mediating and moderating effects of organisational commitment and work engagement on the link between job satisfaction and employee performance. Results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement and both task-based and contextual employee performance. In addition, results confirm the multi-dimensional aspects of organisational commitment (normative, affective and continuance) and provide further support for work engagement being a unidimensional construct as identified by other researchers (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:118; Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285).

The first objective of this study was to determine if there is an association between employee job satisfaction and employee performance. The findings of the research revealed a highly positive connection, which shows that when employees' job satisfaction is high, they also have high levels of both task and contextual performance, as has been found in previous research (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023:118; Gimeno *et al.*, 2025:2285). Therefore, it appears that an employee's level of satisfaction at work will be positively related to his/her overall performance.

The second objective was to determine how employees' job satisfaction is connected to their organisational commitment in the motor retail sector. Job satisfaction has been found to be strongly associated with employees' levels of organisational commitment, especially in relation to affective and normative commitment, which implies employees have an emotional connection to their workplace and feel a sense of obligation to the workplace. These findings support prior studies that have shown a similar relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Naqvi *et al.*, 2024:168; Roy *et al.*, 2023:218). The findings from this study suggest that by creating job satisfaction via fair pay and a supportive work environment, organisations may enhance employee commitment to their organisation.

The objective for assessing the impact of job engagement on employee performance found a statistically significant correlation between job engagement and performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which have found that both vigour and dedication are positively related to performance (Chahyono *et al.*, 2024:106; Sathish & Krishna, 2024:60). The higher employees' level of vigour, dedication, and absorption, the greater their ability to complete tasks and make contextual contributions as an indicator of employee productivity.

In addition to examining job satisfaction as an antecedent of employee performance, the study also addressed the fourth objective, which evaluated whether the organisational commitment mediates the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. Findings revealed some support for the concept of mediation by way of the affective and normative aspects of commitment for the relationship between job satisfaction and both task and contextual performance, as was reported in previous research (Singh *et al.*, 2023; Tambunan *et al.*, 2025:553). Findings however indicated that there was no evidence supporting the concept of mediation by continuous commitment for task performance.

Results demonstrated a full mediation by work engagement for the associations between job satisfaction and both task and contextual performance, consistent with the work of Djuli *et al.* (2023:186) and Sahibzada *et al.* (2022:8). Results showed no evidence of reverse mediation, that is, no evidence that the relationships between work engagement and job satisfaction or work engagement and performance are statistically different from one another. The results also provided little to no support for the moderation objectives,

as none of the statistical analyses examining the moderation of job satisfaction by organisational commitment and work engagement showed significance.

Finally, the research has sought to determine if a combination of factors including job satisfaction, organisational commitment and work engagement would demonstrate significant predictive capacity for improved employee performance. The research found that all three variables were important predictors and that job satisfaction was the most powerful predictor. Thus, the research suggests that an employee who is satisfied will be more committed and engaged at work and therefore produce better performance. The research also indicates how these factors interrelate, thereby demonstrating how they can be used to enhance production in the motor retail sector.

3.2 Limitations

Like many empirical studies, this research project also has several constraints.

The first constraint of the study's cross-sectional design prevents researchers from making causal inferences about the results (Cohen *et al.*, 2002:174). For instance, job satisfaction could be an independent variable of a performance level and result in commitment and engagement. However, as there are established positive relationships between these variables, it is more likely that the causal direction will follow the conceptual framework depicted in this study.

In addition, due to reliance on a single data source that was provided through self-administered surveys, the potential for standard method variance exists. This is due to "common method variance being a form of common method bias that arises when the same method is used to measure multiple constructs" (Kock *et al.*, 2021:1). Two avenues of vulnerability to standard method variance exist in this research. First, the self-administered design potentially exposes the research to respondent-related biases that are based on the participant's individual characteristics. As noted by Baumgartner and Steenkamp (2001:144) some participants will respond differently to survey questions depending on their personality traits. Second, measurement-related bias has the potential to add to the systematic errors in the variances in the data. Respondents may interpret the scale incorrectly because they are responding in a second language (English), or at least a secondary language for many of the respondents in the sample. Measures were taken to address the measurement-related biases. Shorter scales were used in the survey

to reduce the fatigue that typically comes with longer surveys. Also, in the data analysis portion of the project, the researcher evaluated the relevancy and suitability of the scales used in the survey through the use of expert-developed instrumentation that is well established for its reliability and validity. However, even though measures were taken to assess the relevance and suitability of the scales, assessing all the research variables simultaneously may still result in some amount of common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003:885).

Also, due to a sampling methodology that was used within this study, it is possible that the results of the study do not represent the views of the total population. The use of a non-probability sampling technique also produced a form of sampling bias, which implies that all potential participants did not have the same opportunity to be sampled in order to participate in the study (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:211). Therefore, there is a possibility that the study's sample does not represent the larger population, and as such, caution must be taken by researchers to generalise the study's findings (Cohen *et al.*, 2002:182).

Finally, although 289 is a sufficiently large sample size for this study, it may reduce the generalisability of findings because the study was conducted at one motor retail company, which may result in missed or ignored variance from other firms. Therefore, using a larger sample with multiple organisations, and potentially extending the study to several sectors, will make the data collected more representative. Ethical considerations should be considered prior to soliciting a particular industry for participation in the research.

3.3 Recommendations

3.3.1 Recommendations for the motor retail company

The current state of the South African Motor Retail Sector has shown a clear indication of the need for an appropriate strategy to improve job satisfaction, organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance. Performance-based Motor Retail Companies require their employees to be satisfied, dedicated and engaged at work to increase sales and ensure customer retention. The importance of developing strategic plans to address these areas cannot be overemphasised.

The research in this study provides evidence that job satisfaction is positively associated with organisational commitment, work engagement, and employee performance. As such, it also provides evidence of potential actions that motor retailers could take to

improve these relationships. The research demonstrates that organisations need to develop an awareness of the importance of job satisfaction in order to create a positive outcome for their employees and therefore, HR professionals need to identify people at recruitment whose characteristics will enable them to be highly satisfied. This can be achieved by integrating the key factors of job satisfaction into the organisation's mission statement/overall values and conducting psychometric assessment tests when recruiting new staff members, which would allow you to assess whether the candidate has the attributes that are linked to job satisfaction. Additionally, developing training programs based on the improvement of skills and providing recognition for employees will result in creating a workplace where employees have strong organisational commitment, work engagement, and overall performance.

It is further important for performance evaluations and rewards in a motor retail company to be based on and to be associated with higher levels of employee engagement and commitment and to promote the desired behaviours through methods like 360-degree assessments and engagement surveys to evaluate those, as mentioned above.

Managers and leaders need to consider what will have an influence for their staff by ensuring clarity around what is expected from each role and providing employees with ongoing feedback and support. Employee interests must take precedence over the objectives of administration. Managers and leaders must actively listen to employees' needs and respond appropriately, as well as provide employees with an opportunity to exercise some degree of autonomy within their role.

Understanding the positive impacts of organisational commitment and employee engagement on employees' performance, senior managers will have to invest time, effort and money into those activities, processes, systems, and policies which can encourage greater commitment and engagement from employees. When employees believe that the organisational procedures are designed for their own benefit, they will be more inclined to feel committed to the organisation. Senior manager should therefore take an employee-focused view when developing new policies or processes and consider initiatives such as job security, performance-related incentives, education/training and other benefits that can develop an engaged and committed workforce.

Ultimately, in addition to restructuring a work environment to foster interactivity between employees and their supervisors, there are two other ways to increase employee

engagement through employee/manager relations. Firstly, when you encourage interpersonal activity, (for example, team building) and create opportunities for employee/manager communication and appreciation of each employee's contributions, it will improve employee engagement at both levels. Secondly, when you allow employees to interact with one another on a regular basis as they perform their job duties, it creates better working relationships among all employees and increases employee engagement at both levels.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

In addition to organisational commitment and work engagement, other dimensions were identified as factors that affect the connection between job satisfaction and employee performance, based on the results of this study and the study's known limitations. Examples include: In retail contexts, an employees' pay satisfaction is found to mediate between job satisfaction and performance (Tambunan *et al.*, 2025:553), whereas leadership styles and organisational cultures can moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance (Djuli *et al.*, 2023:186). Investigating additional mediators and moderators with a broader research focus may help to gain more insight into which of these dimensions affect the connections between these variables. Additionally, because this study provided partial support for mediation but no support for moderation, it is possible that future studies replicating this study will be able to produce a more consistent body of evidence regarding these relationships.

Future studies could expand on these findings and improve their overall generalisability, in addition to enhancing the likelihood of obtaining an accurate representation of the population with the use of a probability sampling method as a way to reduce potential sampling bias (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:211) and by increasing the number of motor retail companies represented in the study's population to possibly include multiple companies and/or organisations in order to mitigate sampling bias. Future studies could also increase the response rate by encouraging participation with incentives (Smith *et al.*, 2019:11) to provide a more representative sample of the population. However, when providing incentives for research participation, researchers should be aware of any ethical implications.

Future research may wish to address another limitation, which is the potential for making causal connections in the results. Future researchers are encouraged to use a

longitudinal design to assess how long the elements of this study will be present in the organisation over time (Bryman *et al.*, 2021:109-110) and to determine whether the relational relationships among organisational commitment and work engagement as a result of job satisfaction and their connection to employee performance persist.

Additional future studies could also include demographics of the participants used within this research as well as translations of assessments into additional languages to assess the study variables. Using multiple language translations for the assessments will allow the researchers to eliminate potential common method bias from only using the assessments in English.

3.4 Summary

The objective of this study was to establish the inter-relationship between employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance at a South African Motor Retail Company. The results confirmed the statistical and practical significance of the relationships between employee job satisfaction and employee performance through employee organisational commitment and employee engagement. The moderating effect of employee organisational commitment and employee engagement on employee job satisfaction and employee performance was however not found. The findings also revealed that an amalgamation of employee job satisfaction, employee organisational commitment and employee engagement are critical to the foundations of employee performance. Furthermore, that employee job satisfaction is the strongest indicator of employee performance and therefore higher levels of employee job satisfaction can result in enhanced employee commitment and employee engagement and subsequently, higher levels of employee effort in performance related activities. The findings also highlight the interrelatedness of employee job satisfaction, employee organisational commitment and employee engagement in the workplace and provide the opportunity to use such interrelationships to enhance employee performance in the motor retail sector.

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ANNEXURE A: DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Job satisfaction questionnaire (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire – Short Form)

Please indicate the extent to how satisfied you feel about the aspect of your job, using the scale below:

1 – Very Dissatisfied | 2 - Dissatisfied | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Satisfied | 5 – Very Satisfied

On my present job, this is how I feel about...

1	Being able to keep busy all the time.
2	The chance to work alone on the job.
3	The chance to do different things from time to time.
4	The chance to be “somebody” in the community.
5	The way my boss handles his/her workers.
6	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions.
7	Being able to do things that do not go against my conscience.
8	The way my job provides for steady employment.
9	The chance to do things for other people.
10	The chance to tell people what to do.
11	The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.
12	The way company policies are put into practice.
13	My pay and the amount of work I do.
14	The chances of advancement on this job.
15	The freedom to use my own judgement.
16	The chance to try my own methods of doing the job.
17	The working conditions.
18	The way my co-workers get along with each other.

19	The praise I get for doing a good job.
20	The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.

Organisational commitment scale (Allen & Meyer)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the scale below:

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Strongly Agree

Affective commitment scale items

1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.
2	I enjoy discussing about my organisation with people outside it.
3	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.
4	I think I could easily become as attached to another organisation as I am to this one.
5	I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation.
6	I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation.
7	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
8	I do not feel a 'strong' sense of belonging to my organisation.

Continuance commitment scale items

1	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.
2	It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.
3	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organisation now.
4	It would not be too costly for me to leave my organisation now.
5	Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
6	I feel that I have very few options to consider leaving this organisation.
7	One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
8	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organisation may not match the overall benefits I have here.

Normative commitment scale items

1	I think that people these days move from company to company too often.
2	I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organisation.
3	Jumping from organisation to organisation does not seem at all unethical to me.
4	One of the major reasons I continue to work in this organisation is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore I feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.
5	If I get another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my organisation.
6	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organisation.
7	Things were better in the days when people stayed in one organisation for most of their careers.
8	I do not think that to be a 'company man' or 'company woman' is sensible anymore.

Work engagement (UWES – Schaufeli)

Please indicate the extent to which you experience the following at work using the scale below:

1 - Never | 2 - Rarely | 3 - Sometimes | 4 - Often | 5 - Very Often | 6 - Always

1	At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.
3	Time flies when I am working.
4	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
5	I am enthusiastic about my job.
6	When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
7	My job inspires me.
8	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
9	I feel happy when I am working intensely.
10	I am proud of the work that I do.
11	I am immersed in my work.
12	I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
13	To me, my job is challenging.
14	I get carried away when I am working.
15	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
16	It is difficult to detach myself from my job.
17	At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

Work performance questionnaire (Koopmans)

Please indicate the extent to which you experience the following at work using the scale below:

1 - Never | 2 - Rarely | 3 - Sometimes | 4 - Often | 5 - Very Often | 6 – Always

Task performance scale

In the past 3 months...

1	I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time.
2	My planning was optimal.
3	I kept in mind the results that I had to achieve in my work.
4	I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work.
5	I knew how to set the right priorities.
6	I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort.
7	Collaboration with others was very productive.

Contextual performance scale

In the past 3 months...

1	I took on extra responsibilities.
2	I started new tasks myself when my old ones were finished.
3	I took on challenging work tasks, when available.
4	I worked at keeping my job knowledge up to date.
5	I worked at keeping my job skills up to date.
6	I came up with creative solutions to new problems.
7	I kept looking for new challenges in my job.
8	I did more than was expected of me.
9	I actively participated in work meetings.

10	I actively looked for ways to improve my performance at work.
11	I grasped opportunities when they presented themselves.
12	I knew how to solve difficult solutions and setbacks quickly.

Counterproductive work behaviour scale

In the past 3 months...

1	I complained about unimportant matters at work.
2	I made problems greater than they were at work.
3	I focussed on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects.
4	I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.
5	I spoke with people from outside the organisation about the negative aspects of my work.
6	I did less than was expected of me.
7	I managed to get off from a work task easily.
8	I sometimes did nothing, while I should have been working.

88 questions

ANNEXURE B: INFORMED CONSENT



NWU Business School
North-West University
Private Bag x6001
Potchefstroom, 2520

<http://commerce.nwu.ac.za/business-school>

DEAR PARTICIPANT

INFORMED CONSENT TO COMPLETE SURVEY

You are invited to take part in a research study that forms part of a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to say no to participating, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the North-West University and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study.

Title of the project: Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance in a South-African motor retail company

Institution: NWU Business School

Ethics Reference Number: NWU-00619-25-A4

Names and contact details of project staff.

	Supervisor	Researcher
Title, name & surname	Prof. Leon Jackson	Pieter Blom
Full Names	Leon	Pieter Francois
Function in Project	Principle Investigator	Researcher
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Potchefstroom Campus: (+27) 18 299 1406

Mahikeng Campus: (+27) 18 389 2095

Vanderbijlpark Campus: (+27) 16 910 3011

What is this research study all about?

You are invited to participate in a research study which determines the relationship between, and the role of job satisfaction in organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance of medium-sized motor retail companies.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any stage without any consequences. This research has been approved by the appropriate research ethics committee and adheres to ethical guidelines for human research participants.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study aims to improve the understanding of how job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement impact employee performance in the South African motor retail industry. By understanding this relationship, the research seeks to provide insights into workforce management strategies that could optimise performance and profitability.

Procedures

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a structured survey that includes questions about your work experience, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and perceptions of company performance. The survey consists of 88 questions and will take approximately 60 minutes (maximum 80 minutes) to complete. All responses will be recorded anonymously.

Potential Risks and Discomforts

There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation. Your responses will be confidential, and no personally identifiable information will be collected.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study will be completely anonymous. No identifying information will be collected, and all data will be securely stored. The information will be used strictly for academic purposes and reported in an aggregated format to prevent identification of individual participants.

Right to withdraw

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline participation or withdraw at any time and do not need to provide a reason for doing so. There will be no penalties or negative consequences if you choose not to participate or decide to withdraw from the study at any point.

Use of biographical information

In addition to the main survey, a demographic section will seek non-identifiable information about gender, race, age, position, education, and period of employment. This information will be used solely to describe the sample and conduct comparative analyses while maintaining participant anonymity.

Questions About the Research

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you are welcome to contact the research team via the following contact methods:

- Pieter Blom
 - 082 851 2232
 - 21117020@mynwu.ac.za
- Prof. LTB Jackson (Supervisor)
 - 082 840 1135
 - Leon.jackson@nwu.ac.za

What will be expected of you?

You will be expected to:

- Complete the survey, which should take approximately 60 minutes (maximum 80 minutes) of your time.
- Respond to the questions in an open and honest manner.

Please note that your responses are completely anonymous and no personally identifiable data will be collected.

Participant Consent

By proceeding with the survey, you confirm that:

- You are 18 years or older;
- You have read and understood the purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations of this study;
- You voluntarily agree to participate;
- You understand that your responses will be anonymous and used for academic research purposes only.

DECLARATION

Declaration by participant

By selecting the option below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: *Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance in a South-African motor retail company.*

Participation in this study is **anonymous**. No signatures or personal identifiers are required. By continuing with the survey, you indicate your consent to participate in this research.

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that as I have completed the study anonymously it will not be possible to remove any information I have provided, as you will not be able to identify me in any way.
3. I understand that individuals from the University may look at anonymous research data collected during the study, to ensure that the study is conducted appropriately.
4. I agree that my anonymous information can be shared with individuals from the project team detailed above.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Yes	No
1	2

Should you have any questions or require additional information, feel free to reach out to me at 21117020@mynwu.ac.za or +27 (0)82 851 2232.

Alternatively, you can contact my esteemed supervisor, Professor Leon Jackson, at leon.jackson@nwu.ac.za or +27 (0)82 840 1135.

Start typing here.

ANNEXURE C: LETTER REQUESTING APPROVAL FROM WESTVAAL

Pieter Blom

50 Balule Street, The Rest Nature Estate

Nelspruit, 1200 pieterb@simplify.za.com

082 851 2232 7

February 2025

To:

Westvaal Motor Group

Cnr. N12 & Platan Ave

Klerksdorp, 2570

RE: Request for permission to conduct research at Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd

Dear, Jannie Prinsloo and Suzette Maass

I am writing to formally request permission to conduct my research study within Westvaal Motor Group.

My study is titled:

“Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement and performance in a South-African motor retail company.” Research Objectives:

The primary objective of this study is to measure the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance in a medium sized motor retail company in South Africa. The study aims to:

1. Determine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement, and employee performance.
2. Examine the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating factor.
3. Identify the mediating effect of organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
4. Identify the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
5. Identify the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance.

Ethical Considerations:

This research will strictly adhere to ethical guidelines and principles to protect all participants, including:

- Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of all participating employees.
- Obtaining informed consent from all respondents before participation.
- Using collected data solely for academic purposes while maintaining strict data security.
- Allowing participants the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Research Process:

The study will involve employees completing an anonymous online survey that will take approximately 60 minutes (Maximum 80 minutes). No personally identifiable information will be collected, and all responses will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Participation in the study will be entirely voluntary. The research will be conducted in a manner that aligns with Westvaal Motor Group's operational policies and ethical standards.

Researcher and Supervisor Contact Details:

- **Researcher:** Pieter Blom, Email: 21117020@mynwu.ac.za, Phone: 082 851 2232
- **Research Supervisor:** Prof. Leon Jackson, Email: leon.jackson@nwu.ac.za, Phone: 082 840 1135

Your approval for this research will be highly valuable in contributing to academic knowledge and providing insights that may assist in workforce planning and employee retention strategies within Westvaal Motor Group and the broader motor retail industry.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Pieter Blom
Master of Business Administration Candidate North-West
University

ANNEXURE D: WESTVAAL APPROVAL LETTER



WESTVAAL
MOTOR GROUP

Westvaal Motor Group
Cnr N12 & Platan Ave
Klerksdorp 2570
7 February 2025

To:
Pieter Blom
pieterb@simplify.za.com

Subject: Approval to conduct research within Westvaal Motor Group

Dear Pieter Blom,
Westvaal Motor Group hereby grants you permission to conduct research on our company for your study titled:

Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement and performance in a South-African motor retail company.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To determine the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement and employee performance in a medium-sized motor retail company in South Africa.
2. To examine the role of organisational commitment and employee engagement as predictors of employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediating factor.
3. To determine the mediating effect of organisational commitment in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
4. To determine the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.
5. To determine the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the relationship between affective organisational commitment and employee performance.

We acknowledge that the research will be conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and principles to ensure the protection of all participants. These include:

- Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of all employees participating in the study.
- Obtaining informed consent from all respondents before participation.
- Using the collected data strictly for academic purposes and maintaining data security.
- Allowing participants the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

We understand that the research findings may provide valuable insights for workforce planning and employee retention strategies within the motor retail sector.


For any inquiries regarding this research, please contact:

- **Researcher:** Pieter Blom, Email: 21117020@myrwu.ac.za or Phone: 082 851 2232
- **Research Supervisor:** Prof. Leon Jackson, Email: leon.jackson@rwu.ac.za, Phone: 082 840 1135

We look forward to the successful completion of your study and the potential contributions it may bring to our company and the broader motor retail industry.

Sincerely,


Janine Prinsloo
Chief Financial Officer
Westvaal Motor Group
013 757 5017


Suzette Maass
Group HR Manager
Westvaal Motor Group
013 757 5077

Westvaal Motor Group,
cnr N12 & Platan Ave, Klerksdorp, 2570
PO Box 6136, Flamwood, Klerksdorp, 2572
T/ 018 406 5800
www.westvaal.co.za

Westvaal Motor Group (Pty) Ltd
Reg No: 2022/669067/07
VAT No: 4810315368
FSP-53842

ANNEXURE E: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER FOR THE STUDY



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
 South Africa 2520
 Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
 Fax: 018 299-4910
 Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>
Senate Committee for Research Ethics
 Tel: 018 299-484
 Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

31 March 2025

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **North-West University Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on 31 March 2025, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-REC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title:	Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement and performance in a South-African motor retail company.																																													
Study leader/Supervisor (Principal investigator/Researcher):	Prof. L.T.B. Jackson	University no.:	11209858																																											
Student:	P.F. Blom	University no.:	21117020																																											
Ethics number:	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Institution</td> <td colspan="5">Study number</td> <td colspan="3">Year</td> <td colspan="2">Status</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="15">Status: S = Submission; R = Re-submission; P = Provisional authorisation; A = Authorisation</td> </tr> </table>			N	W	U	-	0	0	6	1	9	-	2	5	-	A	4	Institution			Study number					Year			Status		Status: S = Submission; R = Re-submission; P = Provisional authorisation; A = Authorisation														
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Institution			Study number					Year			Status																																			
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-submission; P = Provisional authorisation; A = Authorisation																																														
Application type:	Single study - Postgraduate research	Risk level:	Low/minimal risk																																											
Commencement date:	3/31/25																																													
Expiry date:	3/31/26																																													
<i>Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</i>																																														

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

None.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:*
 - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
 - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:*
 - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
 - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
 - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
 - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *EMS-REC can be contacted for further information or any report templates through the secretariat. Botlanyana Maluleka (Botlanyana.Maluleka@nwu.ac.za / +27 18 2852436) or the chair Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout (Diana.Viljoen@nwu.ac.za / +27 16 9103403).*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Diana
Viljoen-
Bezuidenhout

Digitally signed by Prof
Diana Viljoen-
Bezuidenhout
Date: 2025.04.02
11:52:43 +02'00'

Prof Diana Viljoen-Bezuidenhout

Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

ANNEXURE F: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



CERTIFICATE: LANGUAGE EDITING

Herein, confirmation that the following document was edited:

MBA

Investigating relationships between job satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and performance in a South African motor retail company

P F Blom

Student number: 21117020

orcid.org/0009-0006-2141-8141

The following was edited according to the NWU requirements, subject to Harvard Guidelines:

Spelling; grammar, layout, alignment, flow, referencing, and similarity

(Academic review to confirm flow and context only)

Final changes and application of editing remain the responsibility of the student

W. Smith

Registered Psychometrist
HPCSA: PMT0097012
Editors' Guild Reg: SMI027

R du Plessis

Ethical Editing Advisor
Editors' Guild Reg: DUP002

www.psychmetrica.co.za; 083 390 4091 ; psychmetrica@gmail.com