



**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**THE EFFECT OF A SENSE OF COHERENCE ON ORGANISATIONAL  
COMMITMENT**

by

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Date : 07 September 2019

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment. The sub-dimensions of organisational commitment included affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, whereas comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness constitutes sense of coherence for the study.

The study is quantitative and a final sample comprised of one hundred and thirteen employees from construction companies based in Johannesburg. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized and the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument was established using Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, respectively. Hypotheses testing was part of the study. The cluster sampling method was adopted and employees were from all levels of the organisation. The study used pre-existing questionnaires. The Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ) was used in order to measure sense of coherence, and the organisational commitment questionnaire was utilized to measure commitment. The biographical questionnaire formed part of the study.

The results show significant relationships which surfaced amongst some of the constructs of the study. Additionally, significant correlations emerged with the biographical data. Furthermore, most of the hypotheses were partially accepted. Significant differences surfaced in the commitment levels of male and female employees regarding continuance commitment, including sense of coherence of male and female employees regarding meaningfulness. The results of the study add to the existing body of knowledge by showing how an individual's sense of coherence influences choices made. Employees are the core of any organisation and providing an environment that fosters a healthy sense of coherence can determine how an individual will react to stressful situations. Linking a sense of coherence to organisational commitment gives organisations an opportunity to create the type of commitment needed, that is affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

An employee is an important asset to an organisation. It is not only important to retain employees but also engage in meaningful relationships to promote healthy work environments. The results of the study and the valuable recommendations are graphically projected and when effectively implemented it has the potential to increase an individual's sense of coherence and improve the organisational commitment of employees.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

GRR	Generalized Resistance Resources
OC	Organisational Commitment
OCB	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour
SOC	Sense of Coherence

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

In today's work environment, employees are the driving force as they steer organisations to achieve performance and business results, amongst others. Other factors, such as, worker attitude and their feelings toward jobs are matters of concern as organisations are constantly reshaping in a world that is dictated by global competition. New strategies and structures, decentralisation, outsourcing, transformation, customer preferences and new management styles are the trends in organisations. As a result, a compelling need exists for committed and dedicated employees. This study explores two key areas, that is, organisational commitment and a sense of coherence. Organisational commitment is the link that employees have with their organisation and a sense of coherence shows how people cope in an effective manner resulting in the enhancement of health and improved wellbeing, amongst others.

Meyer and Allen (1991) highlight the three dimensions of organisational commitment, namely, affective, continuance and normative commitment. Abandoning the organisation, and a moral compulsion to stay with the organisation are points that are continuously raised. Affective commitment is the employees' emotional connection with the identification and engagement with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997), whereas continuance commitment is associated with factors, such as, the loss of benefits, the loss of seniority and the loss of allies. Normative commitment is the feeling of responsibility to remain employed by the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

On the other hand, a sense of coherence consists of three components which are comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility is the extent to which individuals recognise resources branching from the internal and external settings as methodical, calculable, and making sense and; manageability is an individual's ability to distinguish whether they possess personal and social assets to cope with the demands of the environment (Vogt, Jenny, & Bauer, 2013). In order to cope, an individual needs to be driven to resolve issues that bring about tension and be willing to exert effort to solve the problems and that the individual discovers meaning in being able to endure the circumstances (Griffiths, Ryan, & Foster, 2011). Meaningfulness is the extent to which an individual's life is coherent

and to which the challenges encountered are seen as worthwhile tasks (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, coherence is determined by using the salutogenic approach which places an emphasis on elements that encourage human health and well-being, instead of the characteristics that provoke disease. By using sense of coherence as a determinant, the study aims to show a better understanding into the dynamics of organisational commitment. The construction industry faces many stressors daily, making use of an employee's sense of coherence can help predict organisational commitment.

This study focuses on the nature of the relationship between organisational commitment and sense of coherence in the construction industry. This first chapter presents an overview, including objectives of the study, the background to the study and the problem statement, amongst others.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Individuals are instinctively inclined to seek meaning, to seek contentment which is a much-desired state in modern society. According to Steger, Oishi, and Kashdan (2009), this is merely a byproduct in the process of reaching the meaning of life. Van der Colff and Rothmann (2009) explain that sense of coherence is an important aspect in establishing a person's point on the health continuum. The foundation of salutogenesis is that an individual's state of being can be located on the health continuum, amidst a state of ease or total health and disease or complete absence of health (Makoge, Maat, Vaandrager, & Koelen, 2017). Thoits (2010) observed that individuals are continuously challenged by stressors in their lives, these vary from psychological (for example unanticipated retrenchment) to physical and biochemical (for example water pollution), and these stressors can move to an individual's position on the continuum.

The salutogenic pathway indicates that an individual successfully copes with stressors and move into the health end of the continuum (Lindström & Eriksson, 2010). Coping unsuccessfully with stressors will lead to a breakdown. This can be physical or mental and will move an individual to the disease point of the continuum or the pathogenic pathway (Makoge *et al.*, 2017). An individual's sense of coherence is embedded in his or her personality structure, culture and the historical period (Hochwälder, 2012). As important as it is to focus on the meaning of life, it is also imperative to carry out studies that will help in creating an

understanding of the prospective positive effect on personnel behaviour that can transpire when workers deal with and discover meaning in their lives (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008).

Few direct research studies have been associated with a sense of coherence and organisational commitment. This study was initiated to investigate the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment amongst employees in a construction company in Johannesburg.

### **1.3 Focus of the Study**

A sense of coherence refers to the generalized manner in which individuals use to evaluate the world around them, both cognitively and emotionally. The study proposes to use sense of coherence as a determinant of organisational commitment. Organisational commitment is an important trait that can be used to determine which employees are worth developing.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Organisations persistently face changes in their internal and structural environments, and therefore, have adapted to the changing world of work. These changes can occur through mergers, downsizing, transfers, changes in legislation and various other organisational change programs. These changes are partnered with extremely exorbitant costs, work disruptions and more importantly, consequences for employee wellness (Van Vuuren, Roberts-Lombard, & Van Tonder, 2012). Organisations need to strive to remain in the lead in industries, in order to remain competitive and ensure customer satisfaction. This impacts on the organisation and their employees (Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004).

Similarly, in the construction industry managers need to cope with environmental changes, the cost factor and delays in projects and it is imperative to observe employee wellness and organisational efficiency during change to maintain a productive organisation (Wong, Teo, & Cheung, 2010).

In developing self-sustaining individuals, employees need to withstand the forces of stressors and be able to cope. To reach an equilibrium from the current state to a desired state, the forces of stressors must be changed. This can be achieved by adding driving forces and removing restraining forces. An employee's sense of coherence (SOC) can either reduce reactions to a stressor or decrease the effects of job related stressors on the individual's affective outcome

(Morrison, 2008). The problem statement that relates to this study is: what is the nature of the relationship if any, between a sense of coherence and organisational commitment.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of research objectives is to explain how the researcher is trying to solve the problem (Munzhedzi, 2011). The primary objectives of the study:

- To determine the levels of sense of coherence and organisational commitment.
- To examine the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment.
- To determine the influence of the biographical characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification and tenure) on sense of coherence.
- To determine the influence of the biographical characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational qualification and tenure) on organisational commitment.
- To determine whether the sub-dimensions of a sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness) impact on organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment).

### **1.6 Research Questions**

- To what extent is the levels of sense of coherence and organisational commitment in a construction company?
- What is the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment?
- How does the biographical variables influence sense of coherence?
- How does the biographical variables influence organisational commitment?
- How does the sub-dimensions of sense of a coherence impact on organisational commitment?

## **1.7 Hypotheses of the Study**

The hypotheses of the study:

### **Hypothesis 1:**

There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness).

### **Hypothesis 2:**

There exists significant inter-correlations between the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment).

### **Hypothesis 3:**

The sub-dimensions of sense of coherence significantly inter-correlates with the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment.

### **Hypothesis 4:**

There is a significant difference in the level of a sense of coherence of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure) respectively.

### **Hypothesis 5:**

There is a significant difference in the level of organisational commitment of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure) respectively.

### **Hypothesis 6:**

The dimensions and sub-dimensions of a sense of coherence significantly account for the variance in determining the organisational commitment of employees.

### **Hypothesis 7:**

The dimensions and sub-dimensions of an organisational commitment significantly account for the variance in determining the sense of coherence of employees.

## **1.8 Significance and Contribution of the Study**

Due to globalisation and the increase in competition, organisations will need to retain their best employees. Organisational commitment is becoming a pivotal trait. If employees stay committed then an organisation will be able to perform at its peak and continue to strive to be the best in the industry. However, some organisations attract talent and fail to understand and accommodate this talent. To help organisations understand their employees and ensure that employees are committed, this study highlights the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment and provides recommendations. Few studies have been done that specifically investigate the nature of the relationship between organisational commitment and sense of coherence. This study aims to intentionally examine the relationship between these variables.

## **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

This study was restricted to the chosen organisation's employees only, thus preventing generalisation of the results. Another limitation is the sample, as respondents are from one organisation which can influence employee perceptions due to its practices and various other factors, such as, interpersonal relationships and fear of management.

The study was conducted in an organisation based in Johannesburg, making it difficult to verify results and interpretations with similar studies in other similar organisations. Therefore, the present results cannot be generalized to other populations in various provinces without further research. The study was conducted with employees in a private sector organisation and therefore does not offer generalizability for public sector employees. Furthermore, it is noted that the multiple regression R square is not very strong in the current study.

## 1.10 Summary Outline per Chapter

The study comprises of seven chapters that are chronologically compiled to reflect the manner in which the research unfolded:

**Chapter One:** This chapter provides an introduction and background to the problem statement, and it also explains the purpose and the objective of the study

**Chapter Two:** A review of the literature on different perspectives on organisational commitment will be provided. It will cover the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment, namely, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. It will look at the relationship between organisational commitment and organisational culture, job satisfaction and employee engagement.

**Chapter Three:** A sense of coherence and its sub-dimensions, comprehensibility, meaningfully and manageability are explored in this chapter. It reflects how sense of coherence is developed and how a strong sense of coherence impacts an individual's ability to make decisions.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter entails the research methodology used in this study. The researcher specifies the methodology followed when conducting the study to investigate the nature of the relationship, if any, between organisational commitment and sense of coherence. Both, descriptive and inferential statistics will be outlined.

**Chapter Five:** In this chapter, the presentations of results are displayed through descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Chapter Six:** The data deduced from the descriptive and inferential statistics are explored in this study. These results are compared and contrasted to the results of previous research.

**Chapter Seven:** The recommendations and conclusions of the study are projected in this chapter.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter provides a background to the study. Furthermore, this chapter included the problem statement, the main focus of the study, the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses. The limitations of the study were also identified, and a chapter summary of the preceding chapters were provided. The following chapter will provide a literature review on organisational commitment.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

#### 2.1 Introduction

Today's fast paced organisations are changing continuously and require committed employees as the focus on efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and to meet their aims and their strategic goals. The current economic climate is creating another perspective of organisational commitment. Markovits, Boer, and van Dick (2014) discovered that during the economic crisis, work environments are insecure, hence making individuals less committed to the organisation which is due to the unstable markets. High performing organisations require committed and dedicated employees. Organisational commitment is a challenging concept and it reflects on the work relevant behaviour of employees in an organisation. In addition, the association is with several variables, such as, change and employee attitudes toward the organisation, amongst others. Various situational factors also surface, and these include the work environment, interpersonal relationships with colleagues and management. It is the link with the organisation, the costs of leaving the organisation and the obligation to remain with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1987).

Organisational commitment is an essential factor in the success of any organisation, regardless of the size. This is greatly influenced by how individuals see the organisation and what sets the organisation apart from all possible employers. Maintaining a relationship with committed employees is crucial for a productive organisation. By investing resources in the recruitment of new employees, it becomes critical to maintain the relationship with them and keep them committed. Furthermore, organisational commitment can influence organisational effectiveness, employee perception of the employer and employee well-being.

A remarkable paradox was found in the modern-day workforce as it visualizes the importance for organisations to have committed employees in order to gain a competitive edge in their respective industries. However, organisations can possibly engage in downsizing and mergers, which can lead to a decrease in employee commitment (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). However, this paradox is not the only view of organisational commitment.

Today, it has become more common for employees to change careers, jobs and organisations several times than it was previously observed (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007). Therefore, it is not certain that individuals will remain with one organisation for their lifetime. This implies that organisations need to be more considerate towards the needs of employees in order to retain their skills. It has been widely published that it is more difficult to get younger individuals committed to the company (Nägele & Neuenschwander, 2014) as they are increasingly committed to their careers rather than the organisation. This poses a huge challenge for an organisation's Human Resource department and the organisation as a whole.

The chapter highlights the importance of organisational commitment, the benefits of organisational commitment and the consequences of not taking organisational commitment seriously.

## **2.2 The importance of Organisational Commitment**

It was established that organisational commitment is a requirement for individuals to accomplish roles, but this is insufficient (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Employees need to be willing to embark in initiatives that go beyond their job profiles, and as well as be depended upon to perform their required job functions (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Highly committed employees will make sacrifices for their organisation (Joo & Park, 2010).

Individuals that display a high level of commitment illustrate their preparedness to strive for success, which is anticipated and enables the organisation to deliver effective and efficient services (WeiBo, Kaur, & Jun, 2010). It is believed that there are a number of encouraging consequences when an organisation has committed employees (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008). It is less likely that highly committed employees are to resign or be absent (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008). In contrast, when employees have a low level of commitment, they are less inclined to be absent and do not care about retaining their jobs.

Employees that are reluctant to leave an organisation because of their positive attitude to their organisation demonstrates affective organisational commitment (Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2013). It was assumed that an employee's eagerness to contribute to the efficiency of the organisation is influenced by the type of commitment that an individual has (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This concept was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) by acknowledging that

employees who feel an affective connection to their organisation, are more likely to make attempts in improving the company than those who experience continuance or normative attachment. Tella, Ayeni, and Popoola (2007) concur with Meyer and Allen (1991) that the affective component of commitment has been found to be exceedingly consistent and the greatest predictor of positive organisational commitment.

### **2.3 Definition of Organisational Commitment**

The following definitions shed light on organisational commitment:

- Organisational commitment is an employee's psychological link to an organisation, including a belief in the company's mission and vision, employee engagement and job satisfaction (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). This view of a committed employee is attributed to the employee's approval of the company's vision, and their eagerness to exercise extra efforts on behalf of the organisation (Manetje & Martins, 2009).
- Commitment is described as a compulsion that bonds an individual to a path to a goal (Marescaux *et al.*, 2013). Organisational commitment is therefore the depth in which an employee identifies with and is involved in the organisation.
- Allen and Meyer (1990) used their three component model to show that organisational commitment comprises of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

From the above definitions, it is concluded that organisational commitment can be defined as the degree to which an employee is enthusiastic to sustain association with the organisation.

### **2.4 The development of organisational commitment**

Initially, organisational commitment was observed as a unilateral, established or attitudinal perspective embracing identification, involvement and loyalty (Amasi, 2017). Attitudinal perspectives refer to the psychological connection developed by employees relating to their establishment and how the employee engages with the organisation. Allen and Meyer (1990) called this aspect of commitment affective organisational commitment. An employee will recognise the magnitude to which personal standards and objectives are mirrored to that of the company and this leads to the understanding that there is a connection with the individual and

the organisation. Additionally, the “exchanged based definition”, explains that an individual will commit to the company as they cling to their jobs for the associated benefits, disregarding the stress of the job (Farooq, Payaud, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2014). On the other hand, these individuals will leave an organisation if they receive more desirable benefits. This behavioural perspective has been explained by Meyer and Allen (1997) as normative commitment.

The term “commitment” is defined as the worker’s attachment to a variety of organisational characteristics, which includes a manager, department or the organisation as a whole (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Meyer and Allen (1991) and Allen and Meyer (1990) outline commitment to an organisation as a psychological state that allows an individual to preserve their association with the organisation. Several experts share the belief that commitment to an organisation is multidimensional. This leads to the development of the three-component model for organisational commitment, that is affective commitment (the ambition to remain), continuance commitment (evasion of the apparent costs associated with leaving) and normative commitment (compulsion to stay associated with the organisation) (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 1984, 1991; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). There is evidence that each of the above components of organisational commitment determine work-related attitudes and behaviour (Kalyal, Berntson, Baraldi, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010). Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) supplemented the original three component model by Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1991) to make the model more relatable to a variety of workplace commitments. Hence, commitment was redefined as, “a force (mindset) that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002, p. 475).

Additionally, it was acknowledged that two forms of commitment are applicable to behaviour, mainly discretionary and focal behaviour, with the positive outcomes of these behaviours on the various components of commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Focal behaviour is job behaviour that is driven by job descriptions (Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams, & León-Cázares, 2016), and discretionary behaviour is defined as behaviour that surpasses formal job descriptions (Bottomley *et al.*, 2016). Focal behaviour uses key performance indicators to motivate the desired outcomes, whilst discretionary behaviour is based on the employee, using his or her thoughts to decide on what actions would be most suitable. Discretionary behaviour

differs from focal in that it involves the employee going above and beyond to further organisational interests (Elorza, Harris, Aritzeta, & Balluerka, 2016).

Organisational commitment to an organisation entails two dimensions, affective and continuance (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Affective commitment was illustrated as positive feelings of identification with, and continuance commitment as the degree to which individuals feel committed to their organisation by the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Subsequently, Allen and Meyer (1990) supplemented affective and continuance commitment with the last dimension of normative commitment. Normative commitment is described as an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Thereafter, organisational commitment was defined by a three-dimensional concept, made up of the affective, continuance and normative dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The dominant characteristics in the three dimensions related to the fact that organisational commitment is an emotional status, which defines an individual's relationships with the company and the ramifications of the agreement to resume or terminate the association with the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

## **2.5 Organisational Commitment Perspectives**

### **2.5.1 The Attitudinal and Behavioural Perspectives**

There are two approaches that contribute to the diversity of organisational commitment concepts, namely the attitudinal approach and the behavioural approach. The attitudinal approach emphasizes the nature of the identification process that mutually binds individual and organisational goals and values, and the behavioural approach, in which the commitment is supported by the relationship between behaviours and cognitions that strengthen future behaviours (Ashnai, Henneberg, Naudé & Francescucci, 2016). Employees who are committed to the company as a result of the benefits are likely to remain employed rather than look for alternate job openings and the expenses associated with leaving (WeiBo *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.5.2 Psychological Perspectives**

The psychological approach revolves around the procedure of recognition and perseverance of an individual's momentum to reach organisational objectives. For this approach, companies

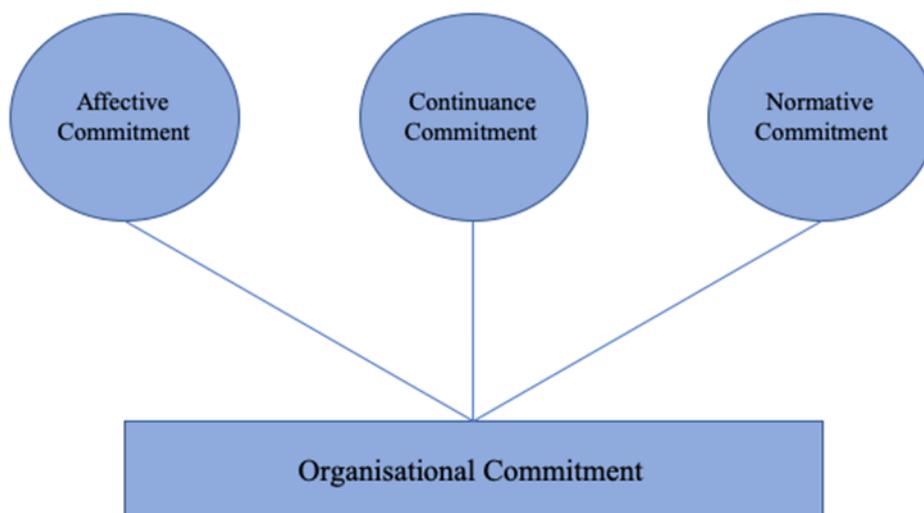
need to invest in its employees' feelings of commitment, obligation to the company and its ethical conduct (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 2013). This approach visualizes commitment as an attitude concerning the company and associates the identity of an individual to the company (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

## 2.6 Organisational Commitment Model

The three-dimensional model is used to visualize organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), with the first component being affective commitment, followed by the second which is continuance commitment and lastly, normative commitment (Figure 2.1). These components illustrate the various techniques that develop organisational commitment and the significance for employee behaviour. Details of the various components are indicated below:

**Figure 2.1**

**Three Component Organisational Commitment Model**



Adapted from Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1991). A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment. *Human resource management review*, 1(1), p. 68.

### **2.6.1 Affective Commitment**

This aspect of organisational commitment establishes the employee's emotional link to the company. An individual's emotional attachment to, recognition with and participation in the organisation is referred to as affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Employees that exhibit commitment on this basis, maintain a relationship with the company as they wish to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991). With affective commitment an employee remain with the organisation because he/she believes in the organisation's goals and values (Mowday *et al.*, 2013). This means that affective commitment is a job-related outlook with an affectionate mindset concerning the organisation (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008).

The effectiveness of commitment based on the affective component, is impacted by the degree to which employee requirements and anticipation, regarding the company is coordinated by their actual occurrence (Gong, Law, Chang & Xin, 2009). Meyer and Allen (1997) demonstrate that affective commitment is guided via elements, such as, job challenges, job description, goal transparency, support from management, fairness, evaluation, feedback and participation. Affective commitment involves identification and internalisation (Gong *et al.*, 2009). An employee's affective attachment is established on identification with the ambition to create a worthwhile partnership with the company, by internalizing these feelings, and by having consistent objectives and ethics held by employees and the company.

### **2.6.2 Continuance Commitment**

Continuance commitment is calculative in nature because an employee weighs the expense and dangers combined with terminating the relationship with the company (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This component refers to the understanding of the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1991) additionally explain that employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so. The contrast concerning the continuance component and affective component of commitment is that affective commitment implies that people stay with the company since they want to and not due to the expenses accompanied with terminating the relationship with the company. This may be seen as a compulsion.

Continuance commitment assumes that individuals develop commitment through positive external rewards acquired by effort bargaining without identifying with the company's objectives and principles. The influence of continuance commitment is determined by the apparent expenses associated with departing from the company (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). This implies that continuance commitment is at the strongest when there are few available alternatives and the stakes invested are high and employees may leave when alternatives are better.

Previous studies suggest that accrued investments and poor employment alternatives tend to force individuals to maintain their line of action and are responsible for these individuals being committed because they need to (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This indicates that employees remain with a company, as they are attracted by collective benefits which can be lost, such as, medical aid, pension or organisational specific rewards. The obligation to remain with the organisation is a "profit" association and the expiry of employment is "cost" related (Morris & Gilbert, 2017).

### **2.6.3 Normative Commitment**

The final component of organisational commitment is the feeling of obligation to continue with employment. Normative commitment becomes internalised when ideas of duty and obligation makes employees feel compelled to remain with the company (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). With regard to this dimension, employees feel that they should do so, or it is the right thing to do. They also feel it is morally right to remain employed, regardless of the prestige or the satisfaction associated with the years of service.

The intensity of normative commitment is dominated by the approval of business policies and the exchange relationship between the organisation and its employees (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). The compulsion is based on the social exchange theory. This implies that people receive rewards indebted by normative obligation to pay back the assistance in some way (Solinger, Van Olffen & Roe, 2008). This means that employees believe that they owe the company for providing resources to them, for instance, a skills upgrade. This moral obligation arises either through the process of socialization within the society or the organisation (Fullerton, 2014), indicating that an employee will feel obligated once he / she receives a benefit.

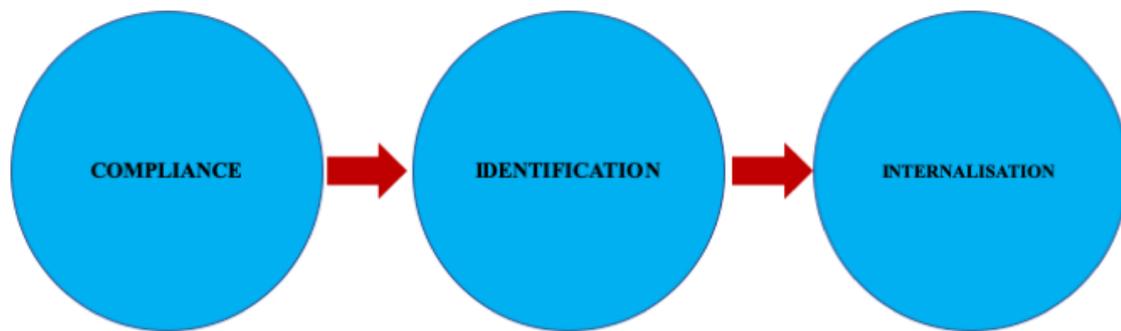
## 2.7 Achieving Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment can be fostered through the social influence theory, which occurs when an individual's emotions, opinions, or behaviours are affected by others (Kelman, 1958; Manetje & Martins, 2009). Social influence takes many forms and can be seen in conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, sales, and marketing. It was initially hypothesized that social influence can be situated in two categories based on motivation (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Razee, Whittaker, Jayasuriya, Yap & Brentnall, 2012). The initial category being that from birth an individual learns that the observations and judgements of others are dependable sources of evidence about reality (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Razee *et al.*, 2012). This reinforces the influential power of perceived experts. Normative influence will motivate behaviour that can achieve a greater social acceptance (Phan & Baird, 2015).

Individuals engage in behaviours of which others approve, in the hope that others will approve of them, too. We also move closer to achieving these affiliations-oriented goals when we abide by norms of social exchange with others, such as the norm of reciprocity (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This implies that employees will engage in behaviour that their colleagues approve of, thus confirming to the organisational culture and norms. Kelman's model (Kelman, 2017) of attitude change delivers useful insight into predicting significant effects founded on the strength of the influencing agent and providing a valuable structure. Kelman theorised that social influence "inducts" transformation over three phases: compliance, identification and internalisations (Kelman, 1958). Each phase shows the difference in motivation that leads to acceptance of the influencer, which then creates variations of behaviour and attitudinal change. This shows that if the nature and depth of the changes are known, meaningful assumptions can be made about attitudinal and behavioural changes and can be reflected in subsequent actions and reactions. This model can be adapted to foster organisational commitment, which is discussed below.

**Figure 2.2**

**Kelman's Social Influence Theory**



Adapted from Kelman, H. C. (1958). Compliance, identification, and internalization three processes of attitude change. *Journal of conflict resolution*, 2(1), p. 51-60.

**2.7.1 Compliance**

During the compliance phase, an employee will execute behaviour based on extrinsic rewards or punishment, and the employee will likely stop the behaviour if the stimuli is removed. The employee therefore accepts the influences around, in hope of achieving favourable responses and has not changed their underlying beliefs (Kelman, 1974, 2017). Furthermore, if the influence is externally attributed, the employee can easily trigger coping mechanisms to distance himself / herself from the inconsistent behaviour. Therefore, in the psychological principle of reactance, this refers to individuals that automatically reinforce a conflicting opinion when facing immense pressure to do something that decreases behavioural freedom (Brehm & Brehm, 2013). This insinuates that an individual has motivation to reject the compliance behaviour as soon as the situation permits.

Conversely, Kelman's idea of compliance does not consider the possibility of repetition to induce a prolonged compliance period reference. Behaviour that is replicated should decrease an individual's ability to discontinue use of the behaviour, which will lead to internalising some components of the behaviour (Toumbourou, Williams, Letcher, Sanson & Smart, 2011). The cognitive dissonance theory suggests that it is, "a motivational state that impels the individual to attempt to reduce and eliminate it. Because dissonance arises from inconsistent knowledge, it can be reduced by decreasing or eliminating the inconsistency" (Chapanis & Chapanis, 2017,

p. 1). A repetition in behaviour increases the frequency of behaviour-identity discrepancy signals, which will increase an individual's intrinsic motivation to reconcile.

### **2.7.2 Identification**

Identification occurs when the employee displays behaviour as it enables a desired social relationship or role identity. The influence during identification is self-acceptance. The employee wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or a group (Kelman, 1974, 2017). The yearning to belong generates the motivation to copy behaviour of that liked person or group, thus expecting acceptance and approval. Identification is more enduring when compared to compliance and it will continue as long as the individual values self-definition that is anchored in this relationship (Kelman, 2017). Interestingly, an individual's underlying belief do not have to change during identification. Kelman (2017) confirms that an individual understands that in performing this behaviour, he / she does not analyse and adopt the suggested underlying beliefs. Therefore, the influencer can secure durable efforts by leveraging the individual or group's most esteem traits and relationships.

### **2.7.3 Internalisation**

For internalisation to occur, an employee must accept the influence and perform the behaviour as now he / she believes in the intrinsic significance of doing so. An employee easily adopts the induced behaviour because it is congruent with his value system (Kelman, 1974). Internalisation is difficult and is very costly to attain as an individual only internalises information because he / she accepts the sources as credible and does not need additional evaluation (Abdullah & Zain, 2011). The reward for internalisation is new behaviour.

## **2.8 Factors Affecting Organisational Commitment**

The effective function of an organisation depends highly on the commitment of its employees. In an environment of growing competition and the constant implementation of new technology, an organisation needs to have well-qualified and reliable employees to maintain its position in the market (Tirelli & Goh, 2015). The effectiveness of employee productivity still remains the

major factors that can contribute to the progress of the organisation. Nowadays financial stimuli can hardly motivate employees to work more effectively and productively (Menges, Tussing, Wihler & Grant, 2017). In such instances, organisational commitment turns to be of a paramount importance since it is due to the high commitment of employees that they can create positive results, increase effectiveness and productivity, whereas low commitment leads, to poor results of organisational performance. To increase overall understanding of the organisational commitment, the relationship between organisational commitment and organisational culture, employee engagement and job satisfaction will be discussed.

### **2.8.1 Organisational Commitment and Organisational Culture**

Organisational culture impacts organisational commitment by determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation (Carlos Pinho, Paula Rodrigues & Dibb, 2014; Zain, Ishak & Ghani, 2009). Organisational culture is important in developing and maintaining commitment and intensity levels that often characterises a prosperous organisation (Lee & Kramer, 2016). The common values, such as team work, trust and ethics are a component of organisational culture that aids the generation of this identification and attachment to the organisation. Bolman and Deal (2017) remark that organisational culture builds high levels of commitment and performance. A gap often exists between the current culture and preferred culture. An organisational culture gap occurs when there is a discrepancy between the dominant, existing organisational culture form, and the preferred cultural state (Ahmad, Veerapandian & Ghee, 2011). With a study undertaken to evaluate the effect of the cultural gap on the commitment of an organisation's employees it was discovered that the culture gap has negative effects on employee commitment (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

There are various elements in culture, including the significance of symbols and rituals, which is a way of accomplishing organisational commitment (Ahmad *et al.*, 2011). Hendel and Kagan (2014) concur with these sentiments and believe that employees can be committed to their organisations due to the similarity among their own values and those of their organisations. In a study conducted by Joo and Park (2010) investigating organisational culture and organisational commitment, found that individuals that work in an organisation with an aggressive culture feel more committed. According to Ahmad *et al.* (2011) and Carlos Pinho *et al.* (2014), organisational culture impacts organisational commitment, and the appropriate culture will affect how effectively organisations engage with their customers.

## 2.8.2 Organisational Commitment and Employee Engagement

Engaged individuals are immersed in, and passionate about their job, and display behaviour that will grow the organisation's interest (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton, 2012). Employee engagement is a quantifiable amount of the individual's positive or negative emotional connection to their jobs, co-workers and the organisation that affects their readiness to develop skills and improve performance (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employee engagement is a part of employee retention. Although various organisations characterise engagement differently, there are some common ideas. These ideas contribute to commitment by classifying employees' satisfaction with their occupation and how proud they are to be associated with the organisation, the degree to which employees relish and have confidence in the tasks that they do and the awareness that the stakeholders appreciate their efforts. Engaged employees go the extra mile and render exceptional performance and are likely to commit to stay with the present organisation. A study conducted by Ramsay and Finney (2006) concluded that extremely engaged individuals are 1.3 times more inclined to be extraordinary achievers when compared with less engaged employees and are 5 times unlikely to freely leave the company.

Recently, engagement has grown into a topic of focus in the hope of retaining employees and as a means of evading costly replacement fees that result from employees freely leaving the organisation. Engagement is a measure of a person's emotional and intellectual commitment to the organisation and its accomplishments (Anitha, 2014). Engagement is viewed as a consequence of the employee's organisational encounters that are characterised by behaviours that are classified as say, stay and strive (Geldenhuis, Laba & Venter, 2014). An engaged employee speaks positively about the organisation (say), this leads to an employee associating his or her future with the organisation (stay) and finally, an engaged employee feels motivated to exert extra effort for the organisation (strive). Engagement and commitment can possibly convert into significant outcomes for the organisation. In order to reap the rewards of an engaged, committed labour force for organisations, it is important to stipulate direction to understand and measure employee engagement, and for creating and fulfilling successful engagement initiatives. An observation showed that common human resource processes such as, recruitment and workforce questionnaires can be helpful when trying to improve engagement (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014).

When a manager has a relationship with an employee, this results in a manager-employee relationship which is the “deal breaker” especially when trying to retain staff (Lockwood, 2005). An investigation by White (2006) demonstrated that staff members who show trust in their managers have a more enjoyable relationship with the organisation. Leading individuals to believe that they are using individual abilities for improving personal relationships and for the organisation effectiveness. An organisation must strive for a setting that advocates and aids the “natural” aspiration of its employees to consistently refine and grow their skills and knowledge. This should involve a well-defined career plans for employees, as it is essential to decrease employee turnover (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014).

### **2.8.3 Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction**

Various investigations regarding the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction have occurred (Eslami & Gharakhani, 2012). These studies have found that the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction has not been conclusive. The major part of the investigations have observed job satisfaction as the independent variable and organisational commitment as being dependent on a number of other factors (Saini, Pandey, Singh & Kalyanaram, 2017).

Job satisfaction is responsive to a particular job-related situation; and organisational commitment is a complete response to the organisation. Hence, organisational commitment is more reliable when compared to job satisfaction, as it develops over a period and takes longer to develop after one is satisfied with the job (Lambert, Minor, Wells & Hogan, 2016). Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) analysed the effects of job satisfaction and organisational commitment amongst workers and the conclusions were that job satisfaction levels would forecast commitment.

### **2.9 Antecedents of Organisational Commitment**

Organisational commitment is made up of three individual concepts that are different. Meyer and Allen (1997) proposed that different antecedents are involved in the development of the three types of organisational commitment. The antecedents are shown in Table 2.2 and the possible outcomes.

**Table 2.1**  
**Antecedents of Organisational Commitment**

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Antecedents</b>	<b>Possible Outcomes</b>
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	Personal Characteristics Work Experiences Organisational Structure	Turnover Intention and Turnover
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	Personal Characteristics Alternatives Investments	Attendance Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Performance
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	Personal Characteristics Socialization Experiences Organisational Investments	Employee Health and Well Being

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organisation: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 61(1), p. 38.

Organisational commitment is important to organisations, as it can be used to determine absenteeism, performance, turnover and many other job related behaviours. The antecedents shown in Table 2.1 can help in the development of organisational commitment by placing emphasis on the antecedents that can improve that particular sub-dimension of organisational commitment.

### **2.10 Outcomes of Organisational Commitment**

Like many organisational concepts, there are mixed consequences regarding organisational commitment (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Research has shown that there is a positive relationship between organisational commitment and desirable outcomes such as increased productivity, low turnover and absenteeism (Marescaux *et al.*, 2013). Whereas, other studies do not show a strong association between organisational commitment and outcomes (Han, Yin & Wang, 2016).

### **2.10.1 Consequences of Organisational Commitment**

There are various levels of organisational commitment that are associated with an employee (Reichers, 1985). An individual's level of organisational commitment is progressive from a low level, a moderate level and then continue to grow to a higher level of commitment (Reichers, 1985). Individuals displaying low levels of organisational commitment tend to be unproductive and loaf around at work. Table 1.2 shows the possible outcomes of low, moderate and high organisational commitment.

**Table 2.2**

**Levels of Organisational Commitment and their potential impacts**

	<b>Individual Employees</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Low Organisational Commitment</b>	Theoretically a constructive outcome of low organisational commitment is the opportunity for employees to express themselves freely, with innovation and uniqueness without confining to organisational norms. However, it can hamper career growth.	Low organisational commitment can lead to increased absenteeism, tardiness, workforce turnover, and poor quality of work.
<b>Moderate Organisational Commitment</b>	Employees feel a sense of belonging and safety, however they have doubts regarding advancement with the organisation.	When compared to low commitment, less absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, better quality of work, and an increase in job satisfaction.
<b>High Organisational Commitment</b>	Organisational commitment provides better opportunities for advancements and remuneration for exerting extra efforts, however employees become too involved in the organisation, leaving less room for personal growth and a poor work life balance	This can lead to high productivity, however a lack of ethical behaviour as employees will do anything to get the job done and reduced organisational flexibility.

Adapted from Manetje, O., & Martins, N. (2009). The relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment. *Southern African Business Review*, 13(1), p. 47.

## 2.11 Challenges for Organisational Commitment

Today's turbulent environment and the on-going economic struggles poses various obstacles in the achievement of organisational commitment (Bisseker, 2019). Interestingly, it has become more important for organisations to have committed employees, especially through these tough economic environments. Organisational commitment may save an organisation during a crisis, as it helps to position an organisation in the market. Companies with committed employees have a clear competitive advantage in talent strategy and business results that is difficult to imitate (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). This is not easy in the current environment. Economic hardships increased international competition, the rapid developments in technology and the influences on consumer preferences make work less predictable. These conditions can compel companies to downsize, outsource and reengineer jobs in order to be efficient (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). These conditions make it difficult for employers to show commitment to their employees. It is not easy for employees to remain committed to their employing organisations (Ruokolainen, 2011).

Employers need to ask if employees continue to identify with the organisation, how they are attached and the factors that affect that attachment (Hendel & Kagan, 2014). A study was conducted to determine the effects of Greece's economic crisis on employees' work-related attitudes including commitment (Markovits *et al.*, 2014). They collected two samples, one before the crisis (2004 – 2007) and the second during the middle of the crisis (2011 – 2012) (Markovits *et al.*, 2014). The results showed that these difficult conditions had impacted organisational commitment. Utilising Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organisational commitment, it was concluded that affective commitment was considerably lower in the second sample (Markovits *et al.*, 2014). This was the expected outcome as affective feelings at work would be negatively influenced during a crisis. However, there was no meaningful change on continuance commitment. Although employment opportunities were scarce, employees still felt the personal costs of leaving the current organisation are correlated to those before the recession. There was a decrease with normative commitment (Markovits *et al.*, 2014). This form of commitment is deeply rooted in and influenced by the socialization process, and the values and beliefs stemming from family, school and community environment (Markovits *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it was alarming to see the changes in organisational commitment as quickly as two years after the recession. It can be deduced that external environments have a profound influence on an employee's commitment to the organisation.

Organisations cannot promise life time employment and employees are more willing to move to other organisations during their careers, as employees have become more career oriented (Fernandez, Simo, Sallan & Enache, 2013). Individuals seek more emotionally satisfying lives by uncovering the full potential of their capacity regardless of organisational boundaries (Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson 2012). Another study looked at the effects of contemporary career context on commitment (Fernandez *et al.*, 2013). It was found that individuals now take more responsibility when shaping their own careers and development, looking for opportunities that promote continuous learning, including the psychological meaning of work. This indicates that individuals have become the architects of their own careers, rather than their employing organisations (Fernandez *et al.*, 2013).

## **2.12 Benefits of Organisational Commitment**

Committed employees bring various positive outcomes for the individual and the organisation. The first being that the individual has the potential to effect the individual's well-being (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Additionally, organisational commitment can increase an employee's job satisfaction (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Organisations can reap the rewards of committed employees. On a large scale, committed employees have the ability to influence an organisation's effectiveness and efficiency (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Individuals that are committed are unlikely to leave the organisation, thus reducing employee turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Shahid and Azhar (2013) highlight that employees often can make things work, without reliable systems and are instrumental in achieving higher productivity.

Another benefit of organisational commitment is that it should result in enriched relationships and greater performance of the organisation (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010). Studies have shown that affective organisational commitment does positively correlate with organisational performance (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan & Allen, 2005). In their study, Wright *et al.* (2005) used six 21 measures of performance. Those were workers compensation, quality, shrinkage, productivity, operating expenses and profitability. There was strong correlation between all of these measures of organisational performance and affective organisational commitment (Wright *et al.*, 2005). It was discovered that the consequences of organisational commitment to be related to job performance and withdrawal behaviour, such as intention to search for alternatives, intention to leave and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Therefore, not only employees will manage their work better but also, they are less likely to leave the organisation.

### **2.12.1 Organisational Commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

Organisational commitment is linked to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). OCB revolves around employees fulfilling their jobs above and beyond the call of duty (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). Spector and Fox (2010) asserts that OCB is voluntary and is directly associated to the employee's affective organisational commitment. The general denominator in all of the components of organisational commitment is an individual's link to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

There is evidence that organisational commitment is correlated to job satisfaction, which implies that higher commitment can facilitate higher productivity. Organisational citizenship is beneficial to the team and encourages even greater organisational functioning and efficiency. An employee who displays OCB shows an intention to help colleagues or the organisation (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). It refers to the voluntary actions that an individual does to help colleagues. Job satisfaction is a key influencer of OCB as satisfied individuals are likely to speak positively about the organisation and will go beyond the call of duty (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). Theories indicate that individuals that dislike their jobs will avoid them (Pavalache-Ilie, 2014). Thus, individuals may remove themselves temporarily or permanently from the workplace. These behaviours include turnover, absenteeism and sabotage.

The opposite of OCB are counterproductive behaviours. These include aggression towards colleagues, the employer, sabotage and theft from the organisation and, are related to frustration and dissatisfaction (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). Organisations need to have work environments that improve job satisfaction which will contribute to reducing counterproductive behaviours.

### **2.13 The Management of Organisational Commitment**

Organisations are constantly facing the challenges of supply and demand, and for survival it requires employees to be internally committed (Locke, Amengual & Mangla, 2009). Organisations need to manage employees to guarantee a stable environment. One needs to understand the underlying psychology of commitment so that we can think about how to design systems to develop such an attachment among employees (Tirelli & Goh, 2015).

Therefore, the management team need to nurture commitment first, before attempting to manage it.

Employees that experience positive feelings about the organisation will exhibit organisational commitment. This can lead to increased motivation and productivity. Managers can instill organisational commitment in employees by creating a desirable corporate culture, stimulating employees and rewarding both quality performance and loyalty.

Leaders within an organisation play an important role in increasing employee commitment (Haque, Fernando & Caputi, 2017). There are three possible approaches that may enhance organisational commitment, which are to focus on the employees need for fulfilment, their self-esteem and social support (Strauss, Griffin & Rafferty, 2009). Therefore, when an organisation trusts employees and treats them with respect, employees feel a sense of belonging, and the outcome is the employee responding with organisational commitment (Geldenhuys *et al.*, 2014).

- **Structure and job design**

Organisational commitment can be managed by providing a structure that shows a hierarchical limitation of reporting, supporting face to face contact and the direction of common objectives. A study conducted by Al-Qatawneh (2014) evaluated the importance of having organisational structure which leads to organisational commitment. The findings showed that formalisation and participation exhibits the largest correlation with organisational commitment, whilst employee demographics has no direct impact in both the private or public sectors. Additionally, job design aspects, specifically autonomy and feedback, was crucial when promoting positive job attitudes, such as, organisational commitment (Johari & Yahya, 2009).

- **Policies and Procedures**

Policies and procedures can be used as a tool to foster organisational commitment, provided they are just and fair (Birken *et al.*, 2015). It has been argued that organisational fairness is communicated through the development and enactment of specific policies and procedures that are fair (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Individual insights of human resource management strategies and procedures that promote growth of a specific component of commitment. Strategies that

are seen as fair tend to increase employee self-worth and lead to increased affective organisational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

## **2.14 Conclusion**

Organisational commitment has become essential for companies to survive. Management within organisations need to be educated on the importance of commitment and the need to encourage employees to stay with the organisation, and their role in developing a culture of commitment amongst employees. Fostering positive relationships with employees is imperative to encourage a progressive relationship that show employees that they are valued. Factors such as job satisfaction, employee engagement and organisational culture are influencers of commitment. Therefore, it is important for the management of an organisation to build up the factors that contribute to a strong sense of organisational commitment. The goal of any management team should be to build effective organisational commitment from employees, this will ultimately lead to the success of the organisation. This chapter highlighted the three components of organisational commitment, the importance of organisational commitment and how to manage organisational commitment in the workplace.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SENSE OF COHERENCE**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Maintaining excellent well-being is not only attributed to constructive biological aspects, but it is also attributed to a positive psychological surroundings. It is assumed that health is a consequence of encouraging life situations, and therefore a need arises to develop a methodical way to gain an understanding of good health and the various factors that determine good health. This will allow for interventions that can promote individuals on the health continuum.

Sense of coherence is a concept that focuses on what makes individuals healthy. Unlike many other related theories, sense of coherence does not predict behaviour based on situations. The theory of sense of coherence was developed to answer the question, that is, how do individuals cope with stress and remain healthy? Having a strong sense of coherence is known to be a coping resource so that a person can maintain good health. Salutogenesis and sense of coherence are based on factors, that is, comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness that promote health rather than factors that cause disease. Many authors refer to sense of coherence as a coping mechanism which moderates life stress by influencing a person's cognitive and emotional stimuli.

This chapter aims to provide a detailed understanding of sense of coherence, with a background into the salutogenic aspect and, it explores the constructs of sense of coherence. Furthermore, a critique of the concept is provided with a demonstration of how a sense of coherence can be used to deal with stress and ultimately, its importance to achieving organisational commitment.

#### **3.2 Background**

Sense of coherence is viewed as a universal concept that shows the magnitude to which an individual has a persistent, continuing and vibrant sense of determination that the internal and external environment is anticipated (Antonovsky, 1987). These individuals believe that situations will resolve themselves as well as can be rationally expected (Antonovsky, 1987). In addition, sense of coherence is a dynamic characteristic of one's individuality, which is formed throughout childhood and adolescence and holds a relatively stable dispositional

orientation (Antonovsky, 1987). This implies that an employee with a weak sense of coherence can experience stress and anxiety, whilst employees with a strong sense of coherence will show work engagement (Remes *et al.*, 2018).

Antonovsky (1993) proved that an individual's sense of coherence is an essential factor to one's health and wellbeing. In order for an individual to develop a strong sense of coherence and for them to cope by successfully, inherent prerequisites need to be fulfilled, these are categorised by the conceptualization of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987). Individuals evaluate situations distinctly, and these evaluations will affect the intensity of a stressor.

A pathogenic evaluation can trigger a cycle of stress, whereas a salutogenic evaluation can alleviate counterproductive feelings and afford the individual opportunities for coping appropriately with the situation (Walsh, 2014). An individual that has developed a solid sense of coherence is able to select a coping method that is appropriate to the situation at hand (Antonovsky, 1987). Antonovsky (1979) created the concept of sense of coherence to develop a greater understanding of why individuals tend persevere in stressful environments and others do not. Antonovsky (1979) discovered that individuals that had a lower sense of coherence experienced more disease and went on to develop physical and emotional health consequences as an outcome. It was discovered that individuals with a higher sense of coherence view stimuli from an optimistic perspective, managing them before they become stressful (Antonovsky (1979) as cited in Li *et al.* (2017)). These individuals are confident that situations will work out in a reasonable manner and trust that they have the necessary skills to manoeuvre challenges as they arise (Kukihara *et al.*, 2017).

Sense of coherence is accepted as a key coping resource whilst processing through emotions, managing with stress and dealing with difficult situations (Wethington, Glanz & Schwartz, 2015). General resistance resources (GRRs) help develop sense of coherence and behave as a buffer to decrease the impact of stressful situations (Antonovsky, 1996). The GRRs include emotions regarding financial security, social support and childhood experiences (Antonovsky, 1996). Psychology, social, cultural and historical events are expected to provide support and reinforcement that are resultant in a strong sense of coherence. Parents and child raising patterns can be viewed as psychological sources of such resources. Antonovsky (1987) explained that encounters of load balancing develop a sense of manageability. Load balance

refers to the extent to which individuals experience overload and underload in response to the stressor being confronted (Ke, Liu & Li, 2010).

### **3.3 The Salutogenic Paradigm**

Many individuals cope whilst being bombarded by various stressors in everyday living. The observation led to the development of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1987). This view placed emphasis on health, not disease. Salutogenesis is the field of study that focuses on the origins of health (McCuaig & Quennerstedt, 2018), and the reasons why individuals remain healthy despite the presence of stressors. Salutogenesis is described as the focus on the source of health, predominantly involving the maintenance and enhancement of wellness (Jain, Leka & Zwetsloot, 2018).

Salutogenesis is focused on effectively coping by examining resources that will reduce uncertainty of an outcome (Jain *et al.*, 2018). External elements must not interfere with an individual's performance, as the characteristics of a stressor is the manipulating variable on the outcome of a reaction. It is this reaction to the stressor is what will determine an individual's condition of health. The salutogenic approach studies how a living a healthy life, even though stressors are present, can lead to salutogenesis which can be used to an individual's benefit (Leischik *et al.*, 2016). Salutogenesis deals with the spectrum of health ease / disease and focuses on health rather than illness, by looking at individuals as a whole, and not illness (Wiitavaara, Bengs & Brulin, 2016).

Antonovsky (1987) characterised the key to salutogenesis which triggered various research studies into why certain individuals cope despite multiple stressors and others do not. Since then salutogenic thinking is related with an individual's ability to flourish when hardships occur, receive satisfaction and produce health (Modin, Östberg, Toivanen & Sundell, 2011). The salutogenic paradigm defines salutogenesis as a study of the strength people display in order to cope with stress and not give into illness (Antonovsky, 1987).

#### **3.3.1 The Salutogenic Model**

Salutogenesis focuses on wellness. The model shows that stressors are ever-present in daily living and individuals thrive and grow under these circumstances. Antonovsky (1996) believed

that individuals managed psychological health through GRRs. GRRs forms the basis to understanding salutogenesis and develop through life experiences (Eriksson, 2017). GRRs are defined as a “physical, biochemical, artifactual-material, cognitive, emotional, valuative, attitudinal, interpersonal-relational, macro sociocultural characteristic of an individual, primary group, subculture, society that is effective in avoiding/combating a wide variety of stressors” (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 105). Also, individuals with a generalised, pervasive orientation are linked to a strong sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987). The foundational property of GRRs is that it is primarily a resource, implying that possession of these resources make it possible for one to avoid stressors or reduce the impact of stressors. Ultimately, the availability of GRRs is a determining factor in an individual’s position and movement on the health ease / disease continuum.

### **3.4 Definition of Sense of Coherence**

Antonovsky’s (1987) definition provides clarity on a sense of coherence as a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that:

- The stimuli, deriving from ones internal and external environment in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable
- The resources are available for one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli
- These demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement.

The question why individuals why are healthy during hardships, whilst others are not plagued Antonovsky (1979) till he put forward the idea of a salutogenic approach has the origin of health, as opposed to the origin of disease. This theory is built on the belief that the human environment instigates stress. According to Dana, Kapuscinski and Donaldson (2012), the stressors accountable for this may be hereditary, biological, individual, financial or societal. This indicates that the natural state of a human being is one of disorder and disagreement, and not of constancy. Antonovsky (1996) was determined to make order out of chaos and he highlighted the significance of coping mechanisms when managing stress. The author pursued a concept that could distinguish the shared components of various global resistance resources. These include infant living conditions, social support, cultural stability, schooling and revenue, and that these may enlighten how individuals facilitate coping with difficulties and improving

health. Subsequently, he discovered these GRRs have life orientation in common, which was named as sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979; Sagy & Antonovsky, 2000).

Sense of coherence is a vibrant aspect of an individual's personality, which is formed throughout childhood and adolescence and is often viewed as a stable dispositional orientation (Woods, Lievens, De Fruyt & Wille, 2013). Sense of coherence is believed to be a concept that is constructed with universal meaning, that cuts across lines of gender, social class, religion and culture (Volanen, 2011). The definition of sense of coherence include the three dimensions that represent the concept, namely comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1987) .

### **3.4.1 The constructs of Sense of Coherence**

Sense of coherence is elaborated on by the three components that embody the concept, which are namely comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Idan, Braun-Lewensohn, Lindström & Margalit, 2017). These components are interconnected and cannot be studied in segregation (Zhang *et al.*, 2017). Together these components represent the cognitive, instrumental and motivational aspects of behaviour (Pienaar & De Witte, 2016).

- **Comprehensibility**

From a sense of coherence view, comprehensibility is described as “the extent to which one perceives the stimuli that confront one, deriving from the internal and external environments, as making cognitive sense, as information that is ordered, consistent, structured, and clear, rather than as noise – chaotic, disordered, random, accidental, inexplicable” (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 16). In order for comprehensibility to be strengthened, an individual needs to see the environment as ordered, consistent, structured and clear instead of chaotic. Comprehensibility does not mean desirability (Hoffmann, de Puisseau, Schmidt & Musch, 2017). The capability of an individual to make sense of external and internal stimuli does not mean that the stimuli is wanted, it implies that the individual has ability to order the stimuli coherently and they are able to explain the situation cognitively.

This means that misfortune, catastrophe and illness can still arise, but the individual experiencing this will be able to explain the situation rationally and see it in context. It is the

understanding that an individual has with regards to the internal and external stimuli which forms the foundation of future expectations about the same stimuli. Also, it allows an individual to first comprehend his or her disposition before attempting to master manageability and meaningfulness (Rębak, 2017).

- **Manageability**

Manageability is the, “extent to which one perceives that resources are at one’s disposal which are adequate to meet the demands posed by the stimuli that bombarded one” (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 17). The emphasis for this component is placed on an individual’s cognitive capabilities. The key to manageability is finding a balance between overload and underload of stimuli (Slootjes, Keuzenkamp & Saharso, 2017). Encounters in the form of external and internal stimuli become bearable when there is acknowledgement that the stimuli are balanced even though they are challenging. This means that manageability rotates around an individual’s perception of reality and that the resources needed to handle a situation can be attained. These resources can be already under the individual’s control or they may be with legitimate others. The main outcome of this component is that the individual does not feel threatened by unwanted situations in life (Li *et al.*, 2017).

- **Meaningfulness**

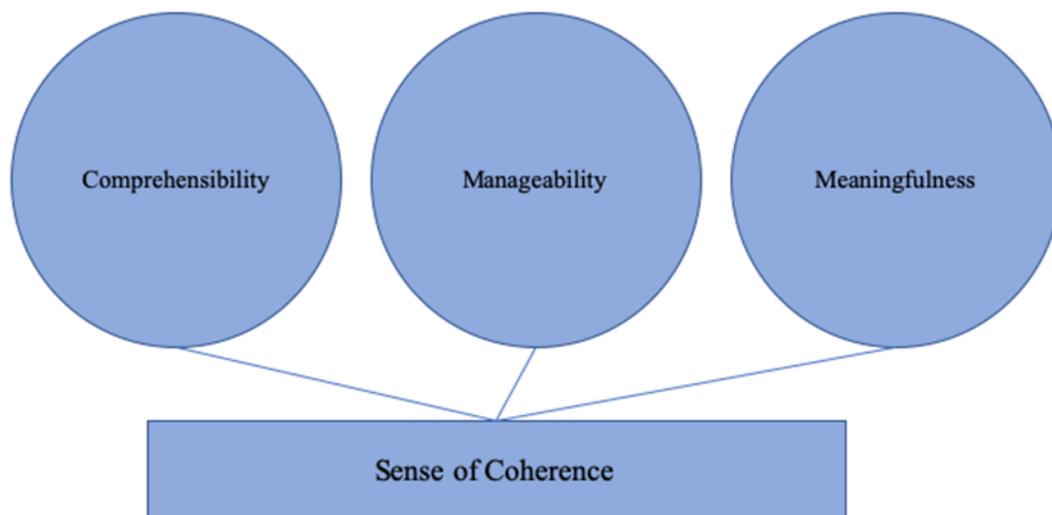
The meaningfulness component of sense of coherence, is described as the “extent to which one feels that life makes sense emotionally, that at least some of the problems and demands posed by living are worth investing energy in, are worthy of commitment and engagement, are challenges that are welcome rather than burdens that one would much rather do without” (Antonovsky, 1987, p. 18). This component refers to the motivational element of sense of coherence as it involves aspects of life that are important to individuals (Remes *et al.*, 2018). This component has an emotional meaning and that differentiates it from the previous two dimensions. To find a situation meaningful, an individual requires a clear desire to solve the challenges, and a willingness to invest energy to get through stressful encounters that cause distress (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009).

### 3.4.2 Interrelationship amongst the three components

The three components of sense of coherence are independent concepts that work interdependently to produce a logical view of sense of coherence. The relationship between the three sub-dimensions of sense of coherence are shown below in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

**The relationship between the three components of sense of coherence**



Adapted from Antonovsky, A. (1993). The structure and properties of the sense of coherence scale. *Social science & medicine*, 36(6), p. 726.

Comprehensibility has a strong relationship with manageability. This implies that in order for an individual to manage the situation, they need to understand it. Living in surroundings that are chaotic and uncertain make it difficult for individuals to think they can manage. However, it must not be taken for granted that if an individual comprehends the situation that he or she will cope with the situation (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009). When individuals understand that their ability to cope with situations are limited, it will push forward an urgency of change and this change will rely on the meaningfulness of the change (Vastamäki, 2009).

The three components are interdependent but not equal. Therefore, an increased level of comprehensibility, coupled with a low sense of manageability and high levels of meaningfulness creates a situation for the individual to move towards being high on all

components (Foureur, Besley, Burton, Yu & Crisp, 2013). Subsequently, high comprehensibility and low manageability, as well as low meaningfulness will lead to a low on all components (Foureur *et al.*, 2013).

### **3.5 The concept of a work-related sense of coherence**

Sense of coherence is expressed as the perceived comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness of an individual's present work situation (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). These are influenced by personal characteristics, the demands of the job and resources available at the workplace (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). The components of work sense of coherence align with the constructs of sense of coherence (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). Comprehensibility, as a work sense of coherence component, is defined as the degree to which an employee sees the workplace as structured, consistent and clear (Vogt, Jenny, Füllemann & Inauen, 2012). The idea that the workplace is understandable and predictable facilitates coping and the adaption process (Griffiths *et al.*, 2011). This results in the perception that the work environment makes cognitive sense, employees will perceive the stimuli in a positive manner and this will allow the individual to be flexible when the work environment changes (Bauer, Vogt, Inauen & Jenny, 2015). Additionally, Read and Laschinger (2015) state that a workplace is influenced by consistency in life experiences and in particular, the first years of employment. When the work environment is comprehensible, the employee will want to manage it.

Manageability, as a work sense of coherence component indicates the extent to which an employee sees the available resources as sufficient to deal with demands arising from the workplace (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). When an employee sees that the resources provided are adequate, an employee with a high work sense of coherence is more likely to use these resources to mitigate problems in a way that promotes health (Wahlbeck, 2015). Manageability suggests that an employee has the ability to cope with work stress through the use of resources (Adèle Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Workers that score high on work sense of coherence are expected to find the work environment as comprising of new challenges and manageable (Muller & Rothmann, 2009).

The work sense of coherence component, meaningfulness is characterised by the degree to which a scenario is seen as worthy of commitment and engagement (Vogt *et al.*, 2013). Meaningfulness is synonymous with words such as rewarding, significant and profound. If an

employee finds the work situation as meaningful, he or she will be motivated to commit to the situation which mirrors a positive response to the situation (Herzberg, 2017). When meaningfulness is displayed, the employee will be able to emotionally identify with the work situation and will full obligated to rectify the situation (Herzberg, 2010). Work sense of coherence is believed to be more interactional than sense of coherence, as it is more dynamic and sensitive to changes (Vogt *et al.*, 2013).

### **3.6 Characteristics of sense of coherence**

GRRs are known to play significant roles in the development of successful develop of coping strategies (Super, Wagemakers, Picavet, Verkooijen & Koelen, 2015). GRRs help shape life experiences, influence steadiness, contribute to outcomes and continuously work to preserve balance. All of the experience relates to the components of sense of coherence, manageability, comprehensibility and meaningfulness.

The important GRRs include childhood living conditions, education, wealth, personality, coping strategies, work related factors and social support (Remes *et al.*, 2018). This implies that the more GRRs an individual possesses, the stronger the sense of coherence. Sense of coherence is strongly correlated with measures of somatic and psychological wellbeing (Kukihara *et al.*, 2017) and it reveals the quality of an individual through internal resources, substituting difficulty and uncertainty with adaptive coping (Rohani, Abedi, Sundberg & Langius-Eklöf, 2015). It maintains personal balance and health regardless of stress complications and pressure (Calvo & Morrison, 2016). This means that an individual sees the situation as less stressful, less troublesome and see external problems as worthy challenges (Antonovsky, 1987). In doing so, an individual sees the environmental stimuli as adequately structured to enable them to anticipate situations and they are able to use the resources that are required to meet the demands they are faced with.

Therefore, sense of coherence is a collective result of GRRs that maintain smooth control and the balance of daily activities and the individual should be capable of changing into a higher gear when faced with increased stress or when there are threats detected. People with increased sense of coherence should be better suited to deal with setbacks, threats and challenges when compared to individuals with a lower level of sense of coherence.

### **3.7 Factors relating to an individual's sense of coherence**

It has been discovered that there are various demographical characteristics, such as gender and age are linked to sense of coherence. A study conducted by Adèle Bezuidenhout and Cilliers (2010) uncovered that female workers score less on the manageability component of sense of coherence. This implies that females in the work environment see their environment as not having enough resources to meet stress (Adèle Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Research involving depression, gender had accounted for a significant variation in sense of coherence, and with male employees displaying higher levels of sense of coherence when compared to female employees (Sairenchi *et al.*, 2011). However, Barnard (2013) could not find a significant difference amongst male and females in terms of sense of coherence. Harry and Coetzee (2013) hypothesised the older individuals should have a high sense of coherence than their younger selves as a result of personality developments over time.

A study uncovered that high educational levels were found to be associated with a high sense of coherence (Billings & Hashem, 2010). In a separate study conducted by Narainsamy and Van Der Westhuizen (2013), there were no significant relationship between sense of coherence and educational levels. In terms of marital status, a variety of studies yielded the same results, that marital status has a positive relationship with the level of sense of coherence (Barnard, 2013). A dual income and being married were found to act as GRR's that strengthen sense of coherence whilst single individuals tend to have a low sense of coherence, they are also on a lower income bracket (Barnard, 2013).

### **3.8 The Impact of Sense of Coherence on Employees**

Individuals with a strong sense of coherence are not only related to increased job satisfaction but it is associated with positive experiences involving how individuals perceive and perform at work (Idan *et al.*, 2017). A developed sense of coherence has the following impact on individuals (Strumfer (1990) cited in Viviers (2014)):

- The capacity to make cognitive sense at work and see it as structured.
- Workers see their workplace as an experience that is bearable and it is a situation that they can cope with, that comprising of challenges which can be met by using personal resources and resources that are available to them.

- The capability to emotionally make sense of work demands as welcomed obstacles that are worthy of engaging and investing their energy in.

A satisfactory work environment that promotes high job control, social support, career progression and so forth improves a sense of coherence (Simosi, Rousseau, & Daskalaki, 2015) and therefore is encouraging to the development of sense of coherence. This approach to work will lead to the improvement in job performance, effectiveness, acknowledgement, compensation and career progression, which eventually becomes a work-related GRR that will supplement an individual's sense of coherence (Rohani *et al.*, 2015). The consequence of the above lies in promoting occupational health and employee wellbeing and this makes sense of coherence difficult to ignore in the work environment.

Additionally, a strong sense of coherence is linked directly to the successful maintenance of personal balance and health despite difficult events (Pyrzczak, 2016). On a broader scale, this adaptive capability filters through community participation, religious involvement and economic and political behaviour (Vogt, Hakanen, Jenny & Bauer, 2016).

### **3.9 Benefits of work-related sense of coherence**

There are benefits for both the employer and the employee. Employers will benefit by providing jobs and resources that promote work sense of coherence of employees (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010). Employees that develop high levels of work sense of coherence are expected to view their work environments as understandable, supportive, rewarding, manageable and worthy of commitment, which can lead to healthy, productive and motivated employees (Vogt *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, high levels of work sense of coherence can create a more productive workforce, increasing profits, customer satisfaction, less employee turnover (Haque *et al.*, 2017). A high level of work engagement is predicted with high levels of work sense of coherence as employees will have the disposition to experience work characteristics in a positive manner (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009). Employees that develop a strong work sense of coherence, see the work environment as worthy of commitment and are responsive to changes with the organisation and their jobs (Bauer, 2009). A high level of work sense of coherence may result in employees' positively appraising themselves, increased participation in decision making and the ability to constructively apply resources available in the workplace (Vogt *et al.*, 2016).

Work sense of coherence mirrors the level of work stresses that the employee faces and whether the resources available are adequate to deal with the demands (Vogt *et al.*, 2016). It was found that the comprehensibility component of work sense of coherence increases mediating variables between the mental health and health climates of employees (Zweber, 2014). The study conducted by Zweber (2014) confirmed the importance of work sense of coherence for an employee's ability to deal with workplace demands.

### **3.10 The stability of Sense of Coherence**

An important characteristic of sense of coherence, is that in theory it has a fairly stable dispositional orientation (Leary & Baumeister, 2017). The theory claims that an individual's sense of coherence is developed from infancy to roughly around the age of 30. It is at this stage, that it is presumed that an individual's sense of coherence is relatively stable, as individuals would have made their choices regarding life commitments, such as marriage, profession, lifestyle and have reputable social roles (Antonovsky, 1987). This implies that a steady set of life experiences foster sense of coherence. However, Antonovsky (1987) highlighted that sense of coherence is not permanent. The author emphasised the dynamic nature of sense of coherence, and acknowledged that some modifications may occur throughout the course of one's life and it is reliant on GRRs, for example the death of a parent can undermine a weakened sense of coherence. Furthermore, a serious illness can endanger the level of sense of coherence by triggering work disability (Super *et al.*, 2015). Antonovsky believed that sense of coherence is a flexible and adaptive dispositional orientation that enables positive coping with traumatic life situations, it is meaningful and valuable exploring its constancy in such situations.

### **3.11 Sense of Coherence and Employee well-being**

Antonovsky (1987) hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between sense of coherence and wellbeing, however it would not be a clear direct link. If a high sense of coherence is linked to good health, and good health positively influences wellbeing, then sense of coherence and wellbeing will be linked indirectly. Studies suggest disagreement as to the exact role that sense of coherence plays in terms of wellbeing. On one hand, sense of coherence

has been used as a stress buffer to help individuals deal with situations, and on the other sense of coherence is used by individuals to develop and maintain health (Antonovsky, 1996).

Additionally, many GRRs related to a strong sense of coherence are related to wellbeing. There are global constructs of contentment, life satisfaction, morale, positive and negative affect that are more likely to depend on inherent potential in objective circumstances, however on the other side, the way one feels about their life and this directly relates to sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987). Consider the death of a loved one, it is a difficult, traumatic experience, it is predicted that in these situations that individuals with strong sense of coherence and weak sense of coherence will feel the same things, however, the individuals with a higher sense of coherence will handle it to the best of their ability, despite the situation and life will still be manageable and bearable (Adèle Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010).

An individual with a high sense of coherence may be protected against depression (Anyfantakis *et al.*, 2015), therefore sense of coherence can be useful when identifying individuals who may need help through psychological interventions. High levels of sense of coherence boost life satisfaction and has been associated with reduced exhaustion, alienation and distress (Reinelt *et al.*, 2015). It is possible that serious health problems can reduce sense of coherence levels (Anyfantakis *et al.*, 2015). Unsurprisingly, individuals with serious health issues score lower on meaningfulness, and their sense of manageability is interrupted by high levels of pain (Pakarinen *et al.*, 2017). Antonovsky's (1993) research shows that an individual's sense of coherence stayed stable as long as there were no radical and enduring changes on their life situation.

### **3.11.1 Sense of Coherence as a tool for coping**

Developing a strong sense of coherence is thought to be a key coping resource for upholding good health. A sense of coherence is a global understanding that individuals assume that situations will work out, that life is comprehensible, controllable and meaningful and specifies a general direction to life (Kleiveland, Natvig, & Jepsen, 2015). This implies that sense of coherence mirrors the quality of one's life in the form of internal resources, and precedes an adaptive coping with difficulty and uncertainty (Antonovsky, 1987). Therefore, sense of coherence appears to refer to an active and dynamic disposition which encourages adaptive

coping (Pisula & Kossakowska, 2010). Coping is the effort an individual makes to manage situations that are potentially harmful or stressful (Gould & Raposo, 2013).

Identifying a situation as a non-stressor and the capability to describe stressors as inappropriate is credited to GRRs that inspire confidence in people that bear a strong sense of coherence. Therefore, individuals trust that situations will resolve themselves, and what appears to be problematic will transform into a life lesson. The tension will evaporate and cause no damage to health, which will lead to a neutral or even foster health. It decreases the likelihood that tension will be altered into harmful stress. An increased sense of coherence is related to healthy actions. Individuals that develop a strong sense of coherence participates in adaptive health behaviours frequently in comparison to individuals with a weak sense of coherence, with all factors being equivalent (Antonovsky, 1987).

### **3.12 Sense of Coherence and Organisational Commitment**

Sense of coherence allows employees to cognitively comprehend the stresses in the workplace, to be self-assured when embracing trials in an emotionally mature manner, and to efficiently assemble resources and support to cope with these stresses (Pienaar & De Witte, 2016). When an employee relishes this kind of self-confidence and control, he or she will experience increased levels of mental resilience and liveliness and sees work as satisfying, stimulating, inspirational and appealing. This category of work enjoyment flows into the psychological relationship that employees have with their employing organisation, showing their commitment and intention to willingly continue with the organisation (Adèle Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010). Encounters that are categorised as unpredictable will lead to a low sense of coherence, resulting in the ability to cope, resulting in a breakdown of health (Slootjes *et al.*, 2017).

### **3.13 Outcomes of Sense of Coherence**

Modifying behaviour is directed by the factor that individuals can account for the behaviour (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015), however having sufficient resources does not guarantee that the individual will move to a more healthy state. Hence, regardless of the good attitudes, beliefs or intentions, people may not perform the required behaviours to move to a more healthy state (van Woerkum & Bouwman, 2012).

Therefore, it is important to monitor employees when adequate resources are available to ensure that resources are not being wasted.

Workers with a low level of sense of coherence may experience difficulty when structuring their views to be clear, comprehensible and logical (Compas *et al.*, 2014). These individuals see life as uncontrollable and observe that there is an absence in resources to meet the stresses, and they get the impression that life does not make sense at an emotional level. Employees with a high sense of coherence will be able to see situations clearly, with the relevant resources and find meaningfulness in the work they are carrying out.

### **3.14 Criticism of the theory**

Antonovsky's sense of coherence theory has been greatly criticized. Lindström and Eriksson (2010) explained that the criticism is multifaceted:

- The idea of sense of coherence is psychometrically ambiguous as it is not a reliable predictor of mental health traits.
- The concept is riddled with emotions which makes results subjective.
- It contains disagreements in theory as sense of coherence is based on an individual's continuous movement on the health spectrum.
- As an individual is constantly faced with new and existing stressors, the theory lacks stability long term and it is unsatisfactory in predicting the status of health.

However, the allegation concerning validity of measuring sense of coherence is the most derailing (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005). However, reliability seems to be internally consistent. This leads to the important question of whether or not the sense of coherence scale measures sense of coherence and does it actually exist.

Consider the relationship between sense of coherence and depression, it provokes issues of meaningfulness in studying concepts like sense of coherence as an individual element of mental health and the inclusion of the concept in defining mental health. It was recommended that sense of coherence, distress and desolation be a part of the same scientific discussion. This is based on the hypothesis that this research will have a positive influence on the treatment of these ailments (Konttinen, Haukkala, & Uutela, 2008).

### **3.15 Conclusion**

Sense of coherence is built on three distinct yet interrelated concepts, namely comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. These components together form an individual's global orientation towards life in general. The three components are interrelated, and all of them are needed for successful coping. An individual that has developed a high sense of coherence score is more able than a person with a low sense of coherence score to maintain good health in spite of experiencing stress. Sense of coherence is regarded as a fairly stable dispositional orientation of personality.

Sense of coherence is seen to arise from internal and external GRRs, such as wealth, ego strength, cultural stability, and social encouragement. Thus, having adequate GRRs and being able to use them properly facilitates successful coping with stressors. Some maintain that people in the highest social positions, unlike those in the lowest social positions, enjoy the optimum conditions for developing a strong sense of coherence. Despite the hypothesized stable nature of sense of coherence in adulthood, major life events, for instance radical changes in working conditions, unemployment, or divorce, may affect an individual's general resistance resources and thus substantially change the strength of sense of coherence, even in older individuals.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research design and the methodology which underpins the empirical study. It begins with the research problem followed by the research objectives. It proceeds to describe the research design employed in the study relating to the target population and the sampling technique adopted to extract the sample size, the data collection methods and the justification for the choice thereof, data quality control, data analysis and an explanation of how ethical considerations are addressed. It will provide solutions to the research questions. Hypotheses testing formed part of the study. The study makes use of pre-existing questionnaires. Results obtained from the questionnaire will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Epistemology and positivism which are accommodated toward the end of this chapter are important components of research.

#### **4.2 Focus of the Study**

As mentioned in Chapter one, the aim of this study is to assess the effect a sense of coherence has on organisational commitment. A sense of coherence refers to the generalized manner in which individuals use to evaluate the world around them, both cognitively and emotionally. Organisational commitment is an important trait that organisations can use to determine which employees are worth developing. The study was conducted in a construction company.

#### **4.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study has five research objectives:

- ✓ To determine the levels of sense of coherence and organisational commitment.
- ✓ To examine the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment.
- ✓ To determine the influence of the biographical characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, tenure) on sense of coherence.

- ✓ To determine the influence of the biographical characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, tenure) on organisational commitment.
- ✓ To determine whether the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability, meaningfulness) and; the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) influence the key dimensions of the study.

#### **4.4 Hypotheses**

The hypotheses of the study are:

- There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness).
- There exists significant inter-correlations between the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment).
- The sub-dimensions of sense of coherence significantly inter-correlates with the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment.
- There is a significant difference in the level of a sense of coherence of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure) respectively.
- There is a significant difference in the level of organisational commitment of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure) respectively.
- The dimensions and sub-dimensions of a sense of coherence significantly account for the variance in determining the organisational commitment of employees.
- The dimensions and sub-dimensions of an organisational commitment significantly account for the variance in determining the sense of coherence of employees.

#### **4.5 Sampling Technique**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), population is a whole group of individuals, procedures, situations or things that the researcher wants to investigate. In addition, the group in the population should have similar or more characteristics in common (Salaria, 2012). A

population is made up of elements, hence a component is a single unit of the population. For this study, the target population comprises of employees from a BBBEE level 2 construction company, that focuses on civils and bulk earthworks. The population is 160 employees which consists of all employees.

A sample is a paramount component of the study as it determines the quality of the findings. Salaria (2012) discloses that a sample group or things are selected from a greater population with the purpose of providing beneficial statistics about the population collectively. In addition, sampling refers to the art of selecting a subset of people from the total population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). Singh and Masuku (2014) further suggest that sampling has two benefits in research. Firstly, it facilities the study and secondly, it reduces the cost associated with the study.

Nonprobability is a sampling technique that does not involve random selection, whereas probability sampling makes use of random selection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This study demands the application of a probability sampling technique. The aim is to be able to generalise the results with the organisations across regions. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), probability is a sampling method. The sample size for the current population will be 113 as shown in the population to sample size table by Sekaran and Bougie (2016).

**Table 4.1****Sample size for a given population size**

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	180	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10 000	370
150	108	750	254	15 000	375
160	113	800	260	20 000	377
170	118	850	265	30 000	379
180	123	900	269	40 000	380
190	127	950	274	50 000	381
200	132	1000	278	75 000	382
210	136	1100	285	1 000 000	384

Source: Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research Methods for Business: A skill-building approach*. (7<sup>th</sup> edn.). United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, p. 263-264.

**4.6 Description of Sample**

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), probability is a sampling method. The aim is to be able to generalise the results with the organisations across regions. The description of the sample size follows in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2****Descriptive Statistics: Composition of Sample based on biographical data.**

<b>Biographical Variable</b>	<b>No. of Employees</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
20-30 years	40	35.4
31-40 years	38	33.6
41-50 years	22	19.5
51-60 years	11	9.7
+ 60 years	2	1.8
<b>Gender</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
Male	63	55.8
Female	50	44.2
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
Single	49	43.4
Married	54	47.8
Divorced	8	7.1
Widowed	2	1.8
<b>Educational Qualifications</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
Matriculation	34	30.1
Diploma	46	40.7
Degree	23	20.4
Postgraduate	10	8.8
<b>Tenure</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
0-5 years	66	58.4
6-10 years	29	25.7
11-15 years	6	5.3
16-20 years	5	4.4
21+ years	7	6.2

Table 4.2 indicates that the majority of the respondents were 20-30 years of age, followed by 31-40 years, 41-50 years, 51-60 years and lastly over 60 years. With regard to gender, there were more male employees (55.8%) than females (44.2%). In terms of marital status, majority of the employees (47.8%) are married, 43.4% are single, 7.1% divorced, and 1.8% being widowed. With regard to educational qualification, 40.7% of employees had Diploma Certificates, followed by Matriculation (30.1%), Degrees (20.4%) and lastly, postgraduate (8.8%). The majority of respondents have a tenure of 0-5 years (58.4%), followed by those that worked in the organisation for 6-10 years (25.7%), proceed by those that have a tenure of 11-15 years (5.3%), which is followed by those who have a tenure of 16-20 years, concluding with those who have worked over 21 years (6.2%). Using the biographical statistics from Table 4.2 graphical representations are used to depict the composition of the sample (Figure 4.1 to 4.5).

**Figure 4.1**  
**Composition of Sample based on Gender**

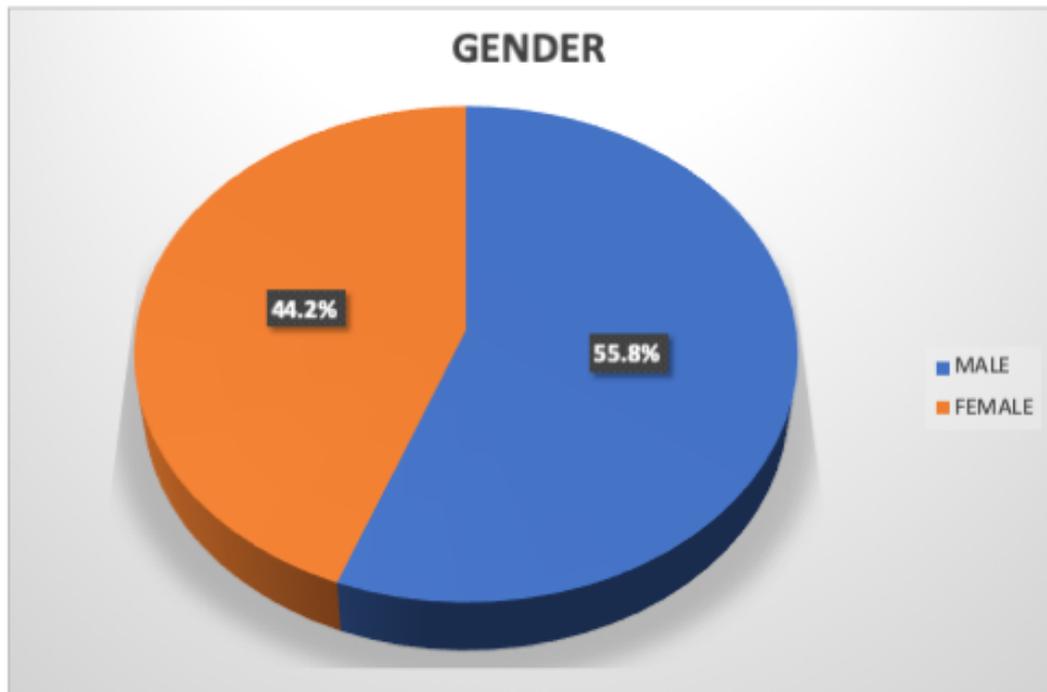


Figure 4.1 shows the gender composition of the respondents in this research. From Figure 4.1, it is evident that the majority of the employees were male in the organisation.

**Figure 4.2**

**Composition of Sample based on Age**

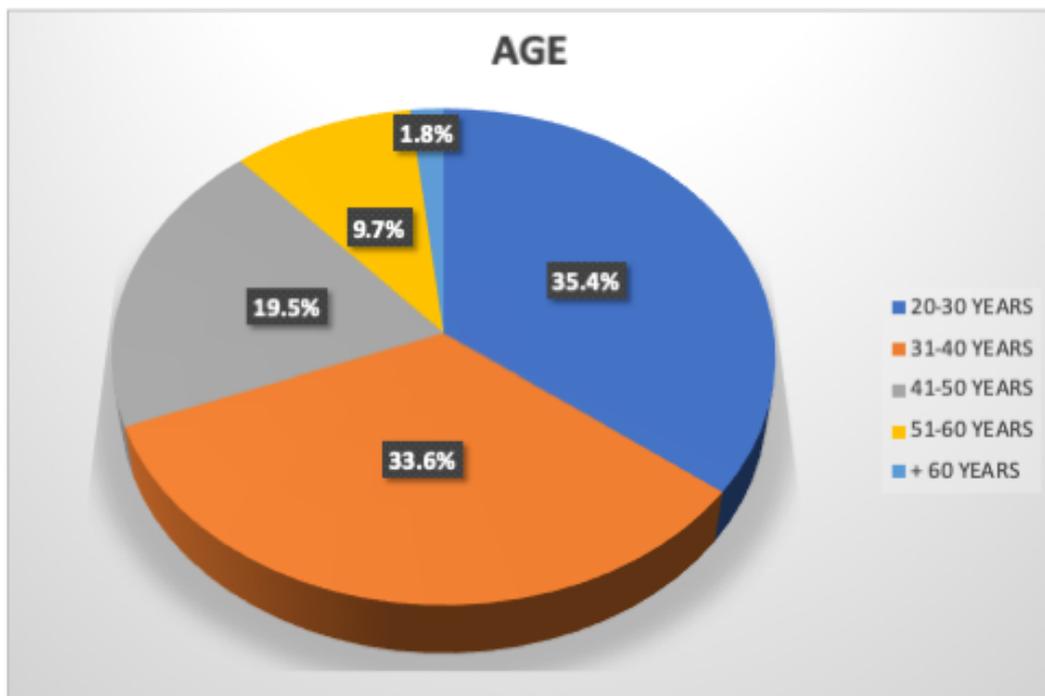


Figure 4.2 depicts the ages of the respondents for this study. Figure 4.2 shows that 35.4% of respondents were between the ages of 20-30 years, 33.6% were between the ages of 31-40 years, 19.5% were between the ages of 41-50 years, 9.7% were between the ages of 51-60 years and 1.8% were above the age of 60. Hence, the majority of the employees in this organisation were between 20-30 years of age (35.4%).

**Figure 4.3**

**Composition of Sample based on Marital Status**

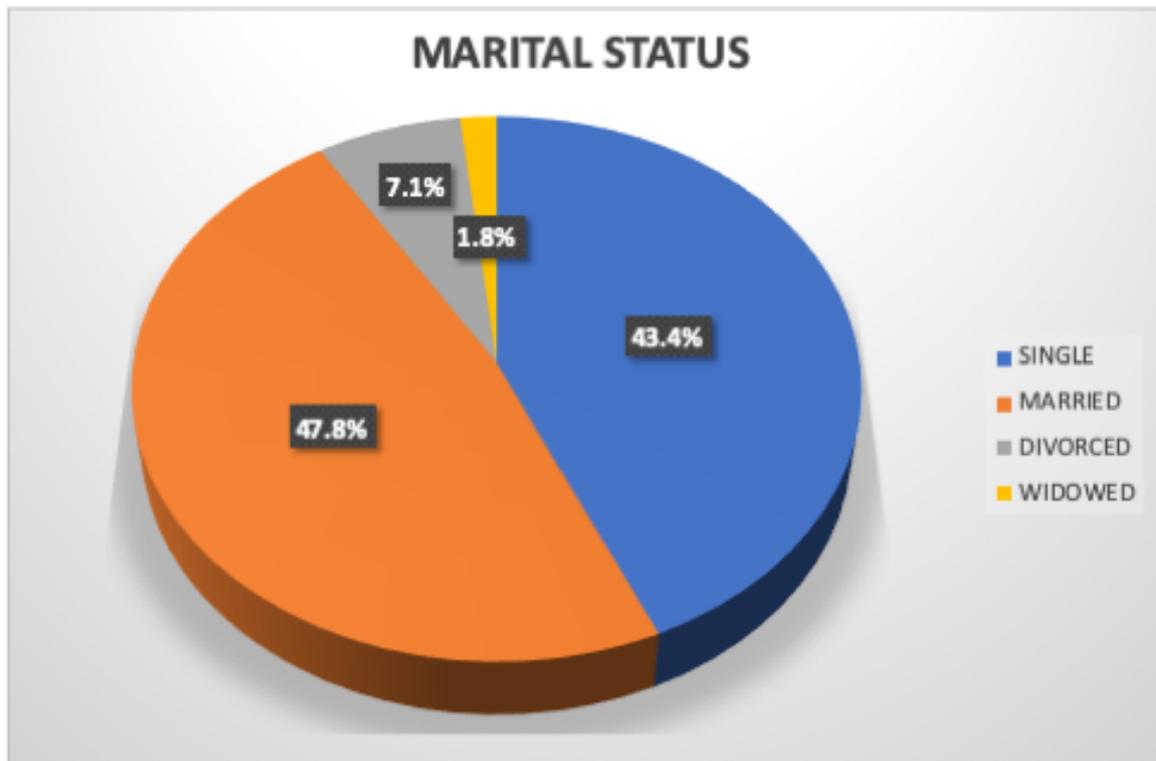


Figure 4.3 displays the marital status of the participants. Figure 4.3 shows that 43.4% are single, 47.8% are married, 7.1% are divorced and 1.8% are widowed. Hence, the majority of the employees were married (47.8%).

**Figure 4.4**

**Composition of Sample based on Educational Qualification**

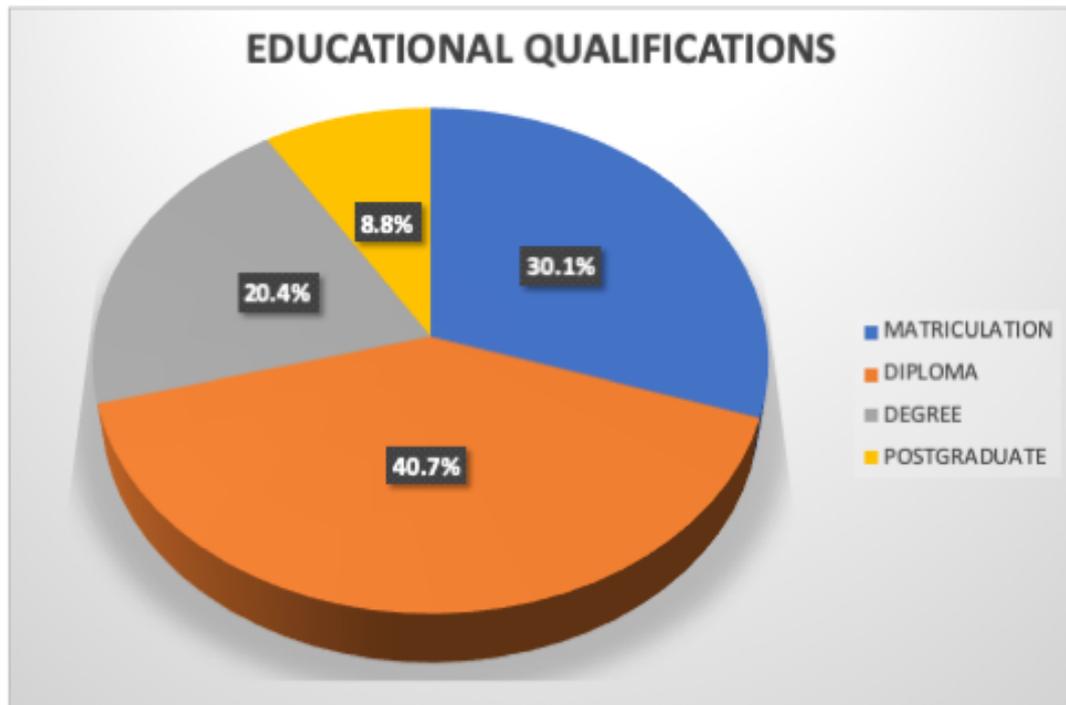


Figure 4.4 shows the educational qualifications of the respondents. Figure 4.4 shows that 40.7% hold diplomas, 20.4% have degrees, only 8.8% have postgraduate qualifications and 30.1% have matriculation. Clearly, the majority of the employees have diplomas (40.7%).

**Figure 4.5**

**Composition of Sample based on Tenure**

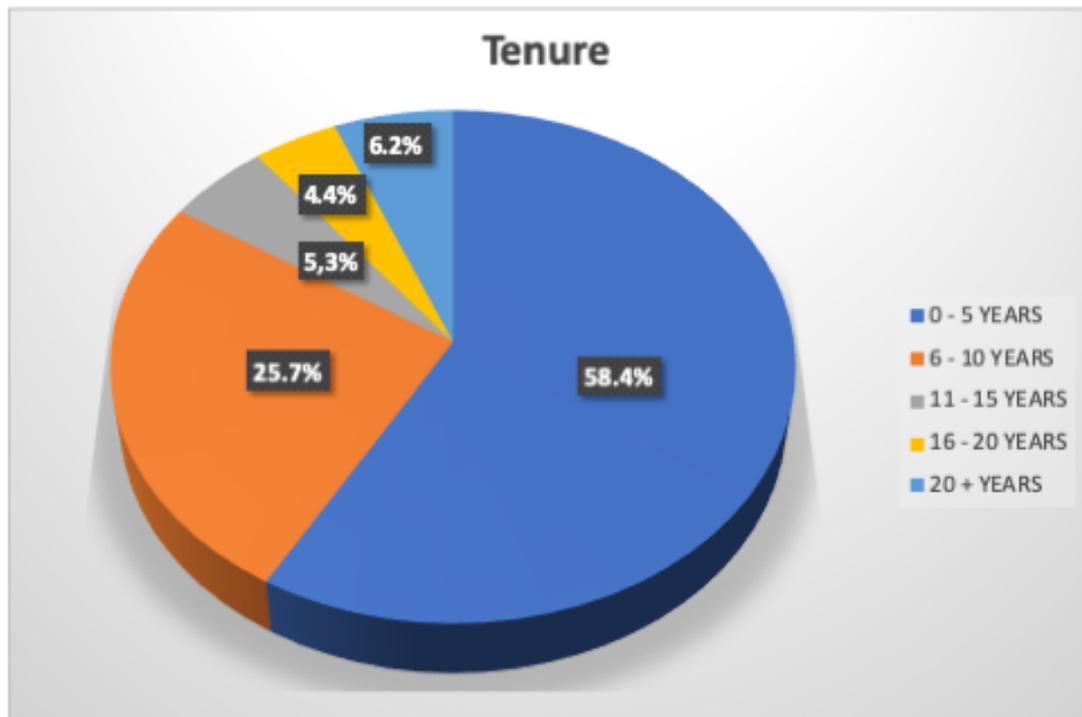


Figure 4.5 displays the tenure of the respondents. The majority of respondents have a tenure of 0-5 years (58.4%), followed by 25.7% that have a tenure of 6-10 years, 5.3% that have a tenure of 11-15 years, 4.4% that have a tenure of 16-20 years and 6.2% that have a tenure of 21 years and over. Hence, the majority of employees were of 0 – 5 years (58.4%).

**4.7 Data Collection**

Data collection is a vital measure of every research or study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), data collection refers to collecting and measuring data on variables of interest, in a systematic fashion that will assist researchers in answering the research questions. There are a number of methods to collect data in research. A qualitative study involves observations, case studies and focus group discussion, and quantitative studies use questionnaires or surveys. This study is quantitative in nature and questionnaires will be utilised. Once the sampling technique has been decided on, it is crucial for the researcher to determine how the data will be collected. Data collection is a fundamental measure of every research or study. Bernard (2017) contends that there are several methods of collecting data in research.

Questionnaires are a common method for collecting data, which includes a sequence of research questions designed and administered to respondents to elicit information (Brace, 2018). The three types of questionnaires are structured questionnaires, semi-structured questionnaire and unstructured questionnaires. The current study utilizes a structured questionnaire which is simple and easy to complete. The data was collected anonymously as there were no names on the questionnaire. Hard copies of the questionnaire and informed consent was handed to participants, whilst the researcher was available to answer any queries. The informed consent was detached from the questionnaire before the analysis.

## **4.8 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is an appropriate way of accumulating beneficial comparable statistics from many individuals (Nigel, Fox & Hunn, 2009). However, questionnaires can only produce useable and significant consequences if the questions are clear and accurate as well as if the questions are asked dependably across all respondents.

### **4.8.1 Nature and Purpose of the Questionnaire**

According to Bryman (2017), a questionnaire is a measurement tool in research and the main determination is to operationalise the operator's information request into an arrangement which permits a statistical capacity.

The structure of the questionnaire needs to consider the statistical requirements of the data users (Brace, 2018). In order to produce results that are valid and reliable, the phrasing, arrangement and outline of the questionnaire has to accommodate the diversity of the participating population. Krosnick (2018) states that questions maybe organised into various categories based on the layout of answers required, that is, open and closed questions. Typically, questions are categorised as open or closed based on the independence allowed when responding to the question or statement. Furthermore, open questions permit respondents to give answers in their own words rather than requiring them to select a response from a given list (Popping, 2015). The responses from an open ended question can be compared to information the researcher already knows.

According to Weller *et al.* (2018), open questions tend to be more difficult than closed questions to ask and answer, as the participant or interviewer has to write a response. In order to process the response, one needs to design a coding frame to categorise various responses. These responses can differ in detail and accuracy. Open questions can be problematic due to poor handwriting (Rosenthal, 2016) and it may increase costs and time for data entry activities (Lewis, 2015). In contrast, closed questions offer participants with various likely answers to select from. All potential answers are stipulated with closed questions. Closed questions tend to be cheaper, simpler to develop and easier to respond to (provided that the answers are applicable to respondents).

#### **4.8.2 Construction of the Questionnaire**

For the current study, data will be collected using pre-existing questionnaires. The study makes use of Antonovsky's 13 scale (Antonovsky, 1993) and the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ) (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Antonovsky's 13 scale questionnaire will be used to measure an employee's sense of coherence. The questionnaire comprises of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness items. The questionnaire items are recorded on a six-point itemised rating scale, varying from 1 to 6 (never, very rarely, rarely, occasionally, very frequently and always). The OLQ developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) will be utilised to measure respondents organisational commitment. The questionnaire comprises of 24 items, and the responses are recorded on a seven-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 to 7 (strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly agree, moderately agree and strongly agree). The questionnaire measures organisational commitment in different subsections that is, the affective, continuance and normative.

The biographical information will be used to gather demographic characteristics of the respondents. These include gender, age, marital status, educational level and tenure.

### **4.8.3 Administration of the Questionnaire**

Permission has been granted by the target organisation to conduct the study. The questionnaires were personally administered at the organisation. The questionnaires with an attached informed consent form were printed and handed to the employees in the various sites. The distribution of questionnaires took place over a period of two weeks. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher, with a representative of the organisation present. The questionnaire was completed voluntarily.

### **4.9 Pilot Testing**

A pilot study describes a mini version of the full-scale study, and it determines the feasibility of the study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2010). Pilot studies are critical elements as it points out shortfalls and insight into the study. For the current study, 15 questionnaires were distributed to all levels of employees for the pilot study. It was understood by all employees. There were no changes made to the questionnaire. The pre-testing phase was followed by the main distribution.

### **4.10 Analysis of Data: Qualitative and Quantitative**

In a qualitative study, there are such instruments such as observations, case studies and focus group discussion, and quantitative studies use questionnaires or surveys. This study is quantitative in nature and a questionnaire will be utilized. Data will be analysed using descriptive (means, standard deviations, minimum values, maximum values, critical range) and inferential (correlations, t-tests, multiple regression) statistics.

#### **4.10.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Nassaji (2015) describes descriptive statistics as the numbers, tables, charts, and graphs used to identify, organise, summarise, and present raw data. Descriptive statistics are used to show quantitative descriptions in a practicable form. For organisational commitment, 8 statements relate to affective commitment, 8 statements relate to continuance commitment and 8 statements normative commitment. For sense of coherence, 5 statements relate to

comprehensibility, 4 statements relate to manageability and 4 statements relate to meaningfulness

Descriptive statistics are frequently used to study:

- ✓ Central tendency (location) of data, that is, mean, median and mode.
- ✓ Dispersion (variability) of data, that is, how spread out the data is as depicted by the variance and its square root, the standard deviation.

- **Measures of Central Tendency**

A measure of central tendency is an individual value that tries to illustrate a set of data by recognising the central position within that set of data (Salkind, 2016). Measures of central tendencies are often referred to as summary statistics. The mean, median and mode are all suitable measures of central tendency, but under dissimilar circumstances, some measures become more applicable to use than others (Pope & Stanistreet, 2017).

The mean is the average, which is calculated by adding the numbers and dividing it by the number of numbers (Salkind, 2016). The median is the middle value of a list which is in numerical order from smallest to largest (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The mode refers to the value that occurs most often (Pyrzczak, 2016). If no values in the list are repeated, then there is no mode for the list.

- **Measures of Dispersion or Variability**

Measures of central tendency is insufficient in accurately explaining data. Numerous data records can have the same averages but can be completely unique. In order to describe data accurately, one must determine the extent of variability. This can be calculated by the measures of dispersion. Range and standard deviation are the three frequently used measures of dispersion. The range refers to difference amongst the largest and the smallest observation in the data (Hinton, 2014). The most common measure of dispersion is standard deviation. It is a measure of the array of data about the mean. Standard deviation is the square root of the sum of squared deviation from the mean divided by the number of observations (Wan, Wang, Liu & Tong, 2014).

#### 4.10.2 Inferential Statistics

According to Schroeder, Sjoquist and Stephan (2016), inferential statistics are used to test the hypotheses about the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Inferential statistics is the sub-division of statistics that includes drawing conclusions about a population found on information delimited in a sample taken from that population. Inference refers to drawing conclusions and testing hypotheses about a population based on the evidence collected in a sample (Walliman & Appleton, 2009). It is important to ascertain if the variable in the sample deviates somewhat from the population; if it does, one needs to determine if the difference is statistically significant or insignificant. Cooper and Schindler (2008) state that a variance is statistically significant if there is a good reason to believe that the difference does not represent random sampling fluctuations. One method of testing for statistical significance is the development of hypotheses.

- **T-test**

A t-test is an analysis that drives further than just reciting the numbers given by data from a sample but pursues to draw deductions about these numbers between populations. Hinton (2014) states that the t-test evaluates the transformation amongst the two means resulting from the changed group scores. T-tests indicates to the researcher if the transformation amongst two means is greater than would be predictable by chance (that is statistically significant).

- **Multiple Regression**

Cohen, West and Aiken (2014) states that multiple regression permits one to examine how numerous independent variables are associated with a dependent variable. Once the researcher has recognised how these multiple variables relate to his/her dependent variable, statistics about all of the independent variables may be taken and used to create much additional powerful and precise estimates about why results are the way they are. This concluding process is known as multiple regression (Keith, 2014). According to Cohen *et al.*, 2014 the expectations and situations for the multiple regression model sound approximately the same as for simple regression, but with additional variables in the model.

## **4.11 Statistical Analysis of the Questionnaire**

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire (validity and reliability) will be statistically assessed.

### **4.11.1 Validity**

Validity is the degree to which the research conclusions are sound (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 2014). This involves internal and external validity, measurement and interpretation and statistical validity. For this study, validity will be ensured by:

- Effective planning and structure of the research design guarantee validity of the research findings. This was done by creating an appropriate research method.
- Confirming that the instruments used for the study are valid, appropriate and applicable. This was done using factor analysis
- Ensuring that the measuring instruments are accurate and suitable.
- Conducting accurate data analysis by using recommended software.

### **4.11.2 Reliability**

Reliability is defined as the extent to which research findings are repeatable (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 2014). This must be valid to the independent and dependent variables (measurement reliability) and to the results of the study. Reliability is also the application of a valid measuring instrument to diverse groups under various conditions (Salaria, 2012). The reliability of the observation is influenced by the research, the participant, the measuring instrument and the environment in which the study is conducted (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). To improve the reliability of this study, the following control procedures will be implemented:

- Anonymity: Respondents will be asked not to identify themselves.
- Intention: A letter explaining the intention of the study and how the findings will be utilised will accompany each questionnaire.
- Reliability of the measuring instrument: The two pre-existing questionnaires that will be utilised will comply with strict validity and reliability requirements.
- Measuring instrument replication: The instruments used for this study, have been successfully used in earlier studies.

### **4.11.3 Epistemology**

Epistemology is the study of knowledge acquisition (Piaget, 2013). It includes an awareness of aspects of reality, and it seeks to discover what is known and how it is known (Christensen, 2019). Epistemology illustrates why our minds relate to reality and whether relationships are valid or invalid. It helps to distinguish the truth and falsehood when knowledge is obtained.

- **Positivism**

Positivism reflects the opinion that factual information gathered through observation, including measurement is trustworthy (Bryman & Bell, 2015). When positivist research is carried out, a researcher is restricted to data collection and interpretation in an objective manner (Silverman, 2015). Positivism leads to research conclusions that are observable and quantifiable. This research style depends on quantifiable findings that can lead to statistical analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Positivism research does not allow for human interests within the study. In positivism, the aim of social research is to uncover laws that govern human behaviour (Silverman, 2015). An individual's sense of coherence can be likened to a "law" that governs how he/she will respond to stressors in a work environment through the components of sense of coherence.

### **4.12 Ethical Considerations**

The data collection was undertaken after Ethical Clearance Approval from the Research and Higher Degrees Ethics Committee of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. A gatekeeper's letter was obtained from the target organisation. When undertaking the study, informed consent was obtained from all participants after they have been briefed on the study and its purpose. The study will ensure the anonymity by providing consent forms first before handing respondents the questionnaire. Confidentiality will be ensured as no individual responses will be reported, instead, results will be aggregated. The data collected will be kept for five (5) years before being destroyed.

### **4.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has set the scope of the methods applied to gather the data for this study. Research methodology is a crucial aspect in a research study as it ensures the data collected and results gained are valid and accurate for further use and, understanding on the topic being investigated. This chapter also discussed the data analyses techniques employed to generate the results that will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the empirical analysis which were obtained after the research design and the methodology which underpins this study. The data was collected from all employees at a construction organisation, based in Johannesburg. The data was captured on Microsoft Excel (using the Office 365) and processed using SPSS version 25.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago Illinois, USA). Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. The results generated are presented using both tabular and graphical representations.

#### **5.2 Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, including graphs were utilized to describe the composition of the sample of respondents. The mean, variance, standard deviation, minimum value and maximum values are measures that were utilized. A 7-point Likert scale was utilized to collect data regarding organisational commitment (strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, neither disagree or agree, slightly agree, moderately agree and strongly agree) and, a 6-point itemised rating scale was utilized to collect data for the sense of coherence (never, very rarely, rarely, occasionally, very frequently and always). The sub-dimensions of organisational commitment include affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. The sub-dimensions of sense of coherence are meaningfulness, manageability and comprehensibility. The greater the mean score values, the greater the level of commitment in this organisation. The results were processed using descriptive statistics (Table 5.1).

## 5.2.1 Descriptive Statistics: Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence

**Table 5.1**

### **Descriptive Statistics: Dimensions & Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence**

Dimension	Mean	95% Confidence Interval		Variance	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound				
<b>Organisational Commitment</b>							
Affective commitment	3.10	3.85	4.13	0.62	0.784	1.13	6.13
Continuance Commitment	4.22	4.02	4.43	1.20	1.097	1.00	6.50
Normative Commitment	3.77	3.60	3.94	0.83	0.907	1.88	6.25
<b>Sense of Coherence</b>							
Comprehensibility	3.55	3.39	3.70	0.68	0.826	2.00	5.40
Manageability	3.43	3.24	3.62	1.06	1.029	1.25	6.25
Meaningfulness	3.13	2.97	3.29	0.75	0.866	1.25	5.50

Table 5.1 indicates that the dimensions of organisational commitment are at varying degrees. Based on the mean analysis, the attainment of the dimensions of organisational commitment are as follows in descending order:

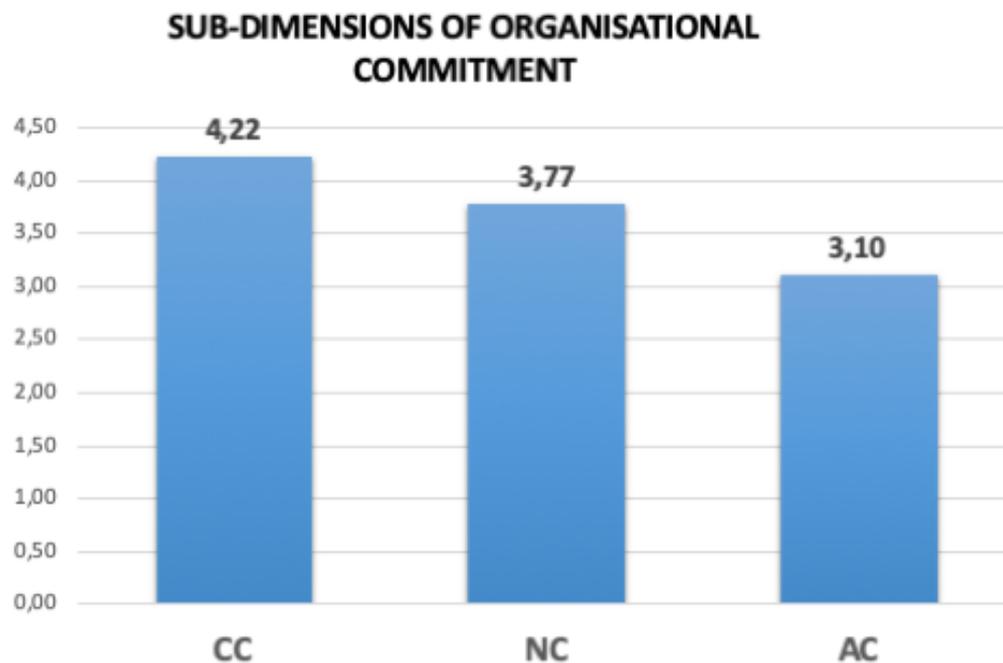
- Continuance Commitment (mean = 4.22)
- Normative Commitment (mean = 3.77)
- Affective Commitment (mean = 3.10)

The indication is that for each of the sub-dimensions, there is room for improvement as evidenced when the mean score value is compared against a maximum attainable score of five (5). The mean scores vary between continuance commitment and affective commitment. The

respondents scored the highest for continuance commitment (Mean = 4.22) and, the lowest for affective commitment (Mean = 3.10). Therefore, continuance commitment shows that staying with the organisation is a necessity as well as a desire. The mean score for affective commitment indicates that respondents do not feel a strong sense of belonging and a strong emotional attachment to this organisation. However, normative commitment is fairly high. The mean score for the key sub-dimensions of organisational commitment are depicted in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1**

**Descriptive Statistics: Key Dimensions of Organisational Commitment**



**Key for Figure 5.1:**

CC - Continuance Commitment

NC - Normative Commitment

AC - Affective Commitment

Frequency analyses were computed to obtain greater insight into organisational commitment. With regard to affective commitment, 12.4% moderately agree and a further 18.6% strongly agree that they would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with this organisation. Furthermore, 23.0% moderately disagree and a further 28.3% strongly disagree that they do

not feel a strong sense of belonging to their organisation. Also, they do not feel emotionally attached and they do not feel like a part of the family in this organisation.

With regard to continuance commitment, 22.1% moderately agree and 19.5% strongly agree that leaving this organisation will require considerable personal sacrifice. Additionally, 9.7% moderately disagree that there are far too few options to consider leaving this organisation and a further 14.2% strongly disagree with this sentiment.

With regard to normative commitment, 11.5% of the respondents moderately agree that individuals move from organisation to organisation far too often and a further 25.7% strongly agree with this statement. Furthermore, 23.9% moderately disagree that things are better when individuals remained with one organisation for most of their careers. In addition, 14.2% moderately agree that they were taught to believe the value of remaining loyal to one organisation, and a further 18.6% strongly agree.

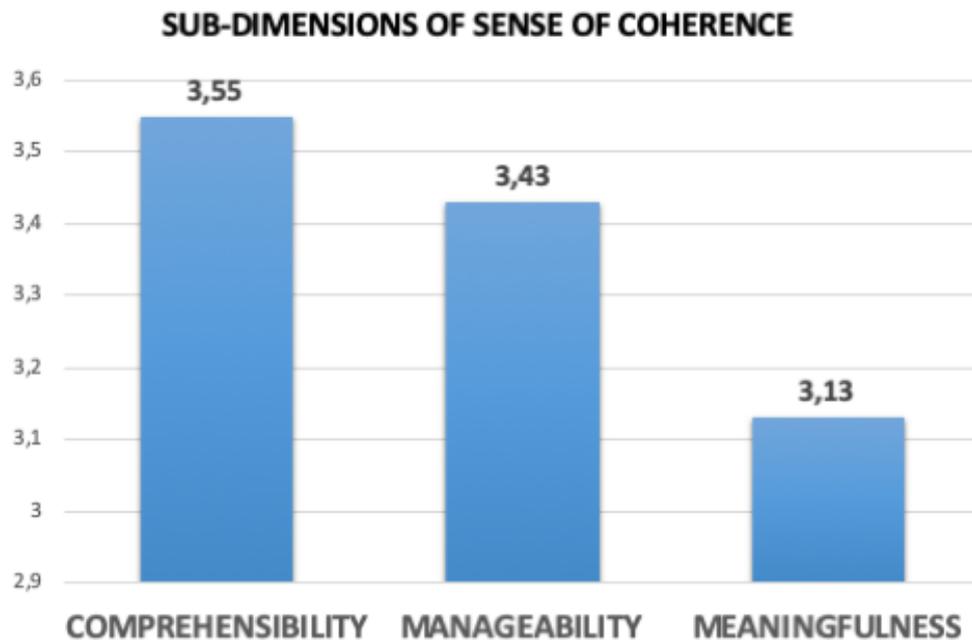
Table 5.1 indicates that the components of sense of coherence are occurring at varying degrees. Based on the mean analysis, the attainment of the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence are as follows in descending order :

- Comprehensibility (mean = 3.55)
- Manageability (mean = 3.43)
- Meaningfulness (mean = 3.13)

Evidently, there is room for improvement for each dimension as evidenced when the mean score value is compared against a maximum attainable score of five (5). The analysis of the sense of coherence sub-dimensions indicate that the mean scores varies between comprehensibility and meaningfulness. Therefore, with comprehensibility the respondents in this organisation scored the highest (Mean = 3.55) and, the lowest on meaningfulness (Mean = 3.13). Therefore, with comprehensibility the respondents clearly show confidence and feel that they can manage in a situation. The mean score for meaningfulness shows that there is little meaning in things that respondents do in their lives. However, manageability is fairly high. The mean score of the key sub-dimensions of sense of coherence are depicted in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2**

**Descriptive Statistics: Key Dimensions of Sense of Coherence**



Frequency analyses were computed to obtain greater insight into sense of coherence. With regard to comprehensibility, 37.2% of the respondents are very frequently surprised by the behaviour of the people they knew well, and a further 6.2% are always surprised by the behaviour of the people they knew well. In addition, 27.4% very rarely have mixed feelings and 8.8% never have mixed feelings.

With regard to manageability, 21.2% of the respondents very frequently feel that they were disappointed by the people they counted on, and a further 8.8% always feel like they were disappointed by the people they counted on. Additionally, 27.4% very rarely feel like losers and 5.3% never feel like losers.

With regard to meaningfulness, 9.7% of the respondents very frequently feel that there is little meaning in the things they do daily and 8.0% always feel this way. Additionally, 21,2% very rarely feel that they do not care about what is going on around them and a further, 15.9% never feel like they do not care about what is going on around them.

### 5.3 Inferential Statistics

Inferential Statistics were computed for the dimensions of organisational commitment and sense of coherence to draw conclusions on the hypotheses of the study. Inferential statistics are used, namely correlations, Kruskal-Wallis, factor analysis, multiple regression and Cronbach's Co-efficient alpha.

#### Hypothesis One

There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment (affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment).

**Table 5.2**

**Correlations: Sub-dimensions of organisational commitment**

Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment	Spearman's rho			
	r	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Affective Commitment	r	1.000	0.368**	0.175
	p	0.000	0.000	0.064
Continuance Commitment	r	0.368**	1.000	0.336**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
Normative Commitment	r	0.175	0.336**	1.000
	p	0.064	0.000	0.000

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.2 reflects that some of the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment intercorrelate with each other in terms of the following significant relationships:

- Affective commitment correlates significantly with continuance commitment at the 1% level of significance.
- Normative commitment correlates significantly with continuance commitment at the 1% level of significance.

Therefore Hypothesis 1 may be partially accepted.

## Hypothesis Two

There exists significant inter-correlations amongst the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness).

**Table 5.3**

**Correlations : Sub-dimensions of sense of coherence**

Sub – dimensions of Sense of Coherence	Spearman's rho			
	r	Comprehensibility	Manageability	Meaningfulness
Comprehensibility	r	1.000	0.546**	0.469**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
Manageability	r	0.546**	1.000	0.486**
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
Meaningfulness	r	0.469**	0.486**	1.000
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.3 reflects that some of the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence intercorrelates with each other in terms of the following significant relationships:

- Comprehensibility correlates significantly with manageability at the 1% level of significance.
- Comprehensibility correlates significantly with meaningfulness at the 1% level of significance.
- Manageability correlates significantly with meaningfulness at the 1% level of significance.

Therefore hypothesis 2 may be partially accepted.

### Hypothesis Three

The sub-dimensions of sense of coherence significantly correlates with the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment.

**Table 5.4**

**Correlations: Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of organisational commitment and sense of coherence**

Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment		Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence		
		Comprehensibility	Manageability	Meaningfulness
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	r	0.132	-0.066	0.034
	p	0.163	0.490	0.724
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	r	0.302**	0.054	0.225*
	p	0.001	0.571	0.016
<b>Normative Commitments</b>	r	0.031	-0.150	-0.030
	p	0.745	0.112	0.751

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.4 reflects that only some of the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment and sense of coherence correlate. Hence, hypothesis 3 may be partially accepted in terms of the following significant relationships:

- Continuance commitment correlates significantly with comprehensibility at the 1% level of significance.
- Continuance commitment correlates significantly with meaningfulness at the 5% level of significance.

**Table 5.5**

**Correlations Spearman's rho: Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence**

		<b>Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Sense of Coherence</b>
<b>Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>r/h</b>	1.000	0.129
<b>Sense of Coherence</b>	<b>r/h</b>	0.129	1.000

Table 5.5 indicates that there is no significant relationship between organisational commitment and sense of coherence. Hence, hypothesis 3 is not confirmed.

**Hypothesis Four**

There is a significant difference in the level of organisational commitment of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, tenure, highest educational qualification) respectively.

**Table 5.6**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment based on age**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	3.577	4	0.466
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	2.700	4	0.609
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	10.765	4	0.029*

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.6 evidently indicates that there is a significant difference in the commitment levels of employees varying in age regarding normative commitment at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted. Hence, hypothesis 4 may be partially accepted in terms of age. In order to assess exactly where these significant differences lie in terms of normative commitment mean analysis were conducted (Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7****Mean Analysis: Normative commitment based on age**

	Age	Mean	Std deviation	N	p
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	20-30 years	66.11	0.198	40	0.003
	31-40 years	46.49	0.232	38	0.022
	41-50 years	49.86	0.297	22	0.889
	51-60 years	71.14	0.633	11	0.933
	+ 60 years	75.25	0.634	2	0.307

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Normative commitment is a feeling of obligation to remain with the organisation. From Table 5.7, based on the mean rank values, it is clear that older employees in this organisation (mean rank = 75.25) are more committed to their organisation than employees amongst the 31 and 40 age groups (mean rank = 46.49) and including those who are in 41 to 50 age groups (mean rank = 49.86). The indication is that the level of normative commitment of employees increases based on age of employees in this organisation.

**Table 5.8****Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment based on marital status**

Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	p
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	2.688	3	0.442
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	2.043	3	0.564
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	0.445	3	0.931

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.8, it is evident that there is no significant difference in the dimension and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment and marital status.

**Table 5.9**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment based on educational qualification levels**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	5.615	3	0.132
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	0.263	3	0.967
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	1.581	3	0.664

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.9, it is evident that there is no significant relationship between the dimension and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment and educational qualification levels.

**Table 5.10**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment based on tenure**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	6.070	4	0.194
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	1.919	4	0.751
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	10.820	4	0.029*

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.10 evidently indicates that there is a significant difference in the commitment levels of employees varying in tenure at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted. Hence, hypothesis 4 maybe partially accepted in terms of tenure. In order to assess exactly where these significant differences lie in terms of normative commitment and tenure mean analysis were conducted (Table 5.11).

**Table 5.11****Mean Analysis: Normative commitment based on tenure**

	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	0-5 years	59.09	0.347	66	0.074
	6-10 years	46.50	0.194	29	0.074
	11-15 years	42.08	0.372	6	0.148
	16-20 years	66.10	0.405	5	0.821
	21+ years	87.07	0.347	7	0.016

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.11 and based on the mean rank values, it is clear that employees that enjoy a longer tenure in this organisation (mean rank = 87.07) are more committed to their organisation than employees who have been employed for a period of 11 – 15 years (mean rank = 42.08) and, a period of 6 -10 years (mean rank = 46.50).

**Table 5.12****Mann-Whitney Test: Sub-dimensions of organisational commitment based on gender**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	1553.5	-0.125	0.901
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	1163.0	-2.385	0.017*
<b>Normative Commitment</b>	1492.0	-0.481	0.631

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.12 indicates that there exists a significant difference in the commitment levels of male and female employees regarding continuance commitment at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted. Hence, hypothesis 4 may be partially accepted in terms of gender. In order to assess exactly where these significant differences lie in terms of continuance commitment, mean analyses were conducted (Table 5.12).

**Table 5.13****Mean Analysis: Continuance commitment based on gender**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>	Male	50.46	63	3179.0
	Female	65.24	50	3262.0

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.13, based on mean rank values, it is evident that at present, staying with the organisational is a necessity for female employees. The females in the sample for the study are fully aware of factors, such as, costs which is linked to a person leaving, the employment of the organisation and, therefore it is necessary to stay with the organisation.

**Hypothesis Five**

There is a significant difference in the level of a sense of coherence of employees varying in biographical profiles (age, gender, marital status, tenure, highest educational qualification) respectively.

**Table 5.14****Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence based on age**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	8.153	4	0.086
<b>Manageability</b>	2.195	4	0.700
<b>Meaningfulness</b>	4.581	4	0.333

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.14, it is evident that there is no significant difference in the dimension and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence and age.

**Table 5.15**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence based on marital status**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	3.485	3	0.323
<b>Manageability</b>	0.814	3	0.846
<b>Meaningfulness</b>	0.376	3	0.945

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.15 it is evident that there is no significant difference in the dimension and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence and marital status.

**Table 5.16**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence based on educational qualification levels**

<b>Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence</b>	<b>Kruskal-Wallis H</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Comprehensibility</b>	3.803	3	0.284
<b>Manageability</b>	2.764	3	0.429
<b>Meaningfulness</b>	2.076	3	0.557

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.16 it is evident that there is no significant difference in the dimension and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence and educational qualification levels.

**Table 5.17**

**Kruskal-Wallis: Dimensions and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence based on tenure**

Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	p
Comprehensibility	2.815	4	0.589
Manageability	4.398	4	0.355
Meaningfulness	5.308	4	0.257

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.17 it is evident that there is no significant difference in the dimension and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence and tenure.

**Table 5.18**

**Mann-Whitney Test: Sub-dimensions of sense of coherence based on gender**

Sub-dimensions of Sense of Coherence	Mann-Whitney U	Z	p
Comprehensibility	1411.0	-0,953	0.341
Manageability	1348.0	-1.317	0.188
Meaningfulness	1000.0	-3.343	0.001*

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.18 indicates that there exists a significant difference in the sense of coherence levels of male and female employees regarding meaningfulness, at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be partial accepted in terms of gender. In order to assess exactly where these significant differences lie in terms of meaningfulness, mean analyses were conducted (Table 5.19).

**Table 5.19**

### Mean Analysis: Meaningfulness based on gender

	Gender	Mean	N	Sum of Ranks
<b>Meaningfulness</b>	Male	47.87	63	3016.0
	Female	68.50	50	3425.0

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

From Table 5.19, based on mean rank values, it is evident that the level of meaningfulness is higher with females in this organisation as they care about what is going on and, there is meaning in what they do.

### Hypothesis 6

The dimensions and sub-dimensions of a sense of coherence significantly account for the variance in determining the organisational commitment of employees.

**Table 5.20**

### Multiple Regression: The effect of sense of coherence on organisational Commitment factors

Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.186		0.134	0.126	0.72126
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
1 (Constant)	2.861	0.271		10.546	0.000
Continuance Commitment	0.124	0.062	0.186	1.990	0.049
Excluded Variables					
Affective Commitment	-0.118	-1.167	0.246	-0.111	0.841
Normative Commitment	-0.153	-1.515	0.133	-0.143	0.842

Table 5.20 indicates that 13% of the variance in organisational commitment is due to the effect of sense of coherence factors. Table 5.20 also indicates that one dimension of organisational commitment significantly account for the variance at the 5% level of significance and, this factor is continuance commitment. The Beta value in Table 5.20 indicates that continuance commitment (Beta = 0.186) has a fairly low impact on organisational commitment. Hence, Hypothesis 6 may be partially accepted. It is noted that continuance commitment has a small increasing influence on sense of coherence. However, caution is expressed with regard to the low R square value especially when used for the purpose of prediction.

### Hypothesis 7

The dimensions and sub-dimensions of an organisational commitment significantly account for the variance in determining the sense of coherence of employees.

**Table 5.21**

**Multiple Regression: The effect of organisational commitment factors on sense of coherence**

Model	R		R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.200		0.140	0.132	0.69409
2	0.296		0.087	0.071	0.67989
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	p
1 (Constant)	3.394	0.289		11.745	0.000
Comprehensibility	0.171	0.079	0.200	2.155	0.033
2 (Constant)	3.589	0.295		12.182	0.000
Comprehensibility	0.286	0.091	0.335	3.125	0.002
Manageability	0.175	0.073	-0.255	2.384	0.019
Excluded Variables					
Sense of Coherence	0.048	0.161	0.873	0.015	0.096
Meaningfulness	0.017	0.161	0.873	0.015	0.719

Table 5.21 indicates that 13.2% of the variance in organisational is due to the effect of sense of coherence factors. Table 5.21 also indicates that two sub-dimensions of sense of coherence significantly account for the variance at the 5% level of significance and, these factors include comprehensibility and manageability. The Beta values in Table 5.21 indicate that

comprehensibility (Beta = 0.335) has a higher impact on sense of coherence than manageability (Beta = 0.255). Hence, hypothesis 7 is accepted. It is also noted that comprehensibility has a small increasing effect on organisational commitment, while manageability has a small decreasing effect on organisational commitment. However, caution is expressed with regards to the low R square value especially when used for the purpose of prediction.

#### 5.4 Statistical Analysis of the questionnaire: Organisational Commitment

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire has been statistically determined using factor analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, respectively.

##### 5.4.1 Validity of the Questionnaires

**Table 5.22**

**Factor Analysis: Validity of instrument measuring Organisational Commitment**

	Component		
	1	2	3
B1	0.605	0.514	0.035
B2	0.230	0.667	0.175
B3	0.320	0.580	0.128
B4	-0.075	-0.253	0.621
B5	-0.151	-0.820	0.157
B6	-0.266	-0.680	0.166
B7	0.287	0.589	0.170
B8	-0.203	-0.758	0.144
B9	0.073	0.241	-0.189
B10	0.172	0.127	0.734
B11	0.151	0.100	0.749
B12	-0.187	0.331	0.048
B13	0.424	0.170	0.438
B14	-0.121	0.114	0.602
B15	-0.029	-0.134	0.816
B16	0.577	0.245	0.378
B17	0.596	0.100	-0.204
B18	-0.575	0.030	0.322
B19	-0.214	0.442	0.153
B20	0.692	0.265	0.293
B21	0.682	0.164	0.063
B22	0.714	0.155	0.000
B23	0.711	0.006	0.127
B24	-0.292	-0.027	0.239
<b>Eigen Value</b>	<b>4.141</b>	<b>3.807</b>	<b>3.369</b>
<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>17.25</b>	<b>15.86</b>	<b>14.07</b>

Table 5.22 indicates that 8 items load significantly on Factor 1 and account for 17.25% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on organisational commitment. Six items relate to normative commitment, one item relates to continuance commitment and, one item relates to affective commitment. Since the highest average weighting relates to normative commitment, Factor 1 will be labelled as normative commitment.

Table 5.22 indicates that 9 items load significantly on Factor 2 and account for 15.86% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on organisational commitment. Six items relate to affective commitment, two items relate to continuance commitment and, one item to normative commitment. Since the highest average weighting relates to affective commitment, Factor 2 will be labelled likewise.

Table 5.22 indicates that 7 items load significantly on Factor 3 and account for 14.07% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on organisational commitment. Five items relate to continuance commitment, one to affective commitment and one to normative commitment. Since the highest average weighting relates to continuance commitment, Factor 3 will be labelled as likewise.

**Table 5.23**

**Factor Analysis: Validity of instruments measuring Sense of Coherence**

	Component		
	1	2	3
C1	-0.004	0.724	0.288
C2	0.549	0.447	0.139
C3	0.705	0.303	0.295
C4	0.363	0.683	0.219
C5	0.217	0.194	0.532
C6	0.089	0.801	-0.270
C7	0.389	0.631	-0.074
C8	0.635	0.324	0.000
C9	0.756	0.165	-0.259
C10	0.663	0.093	0.004
C11	0.504	0.005	-0.327
C12	0.166	0.092	-0.777
C13	0.732	0.087	0.406
<b>Eigen Value</b>	<b>3.368</b>	<b>2.516</b>	<b>1.541</b>
<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>25.91</b>	<b>19.37</b>	<b>11.85</b>

Table 5.23 indicates that 7 items load significantly on Factor 1 and account for 25.91% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on sense of coherence. Three items relate to meaningfulness, two to manageability and two to comprehensibility. Since the highest average weighting relates to comprehensibility, Factor 1 will be labelled as meaningfulness.

Table 5.23 indicates 4 items load significantly on Factor 2 and account for 19.37% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on sense of coherence. Two items relate to comprehensibility and two items relate to manageability. Since the highest average weighting relates to manageability, Factor 2 will be labelled likewise.

Table 5.23 indicates 2 items load significantly on Factor 3 and account for 11.85% of the variance in determining employee perceptions on sense of coherence. One item relates to comprehensibility and one item relates to meaningfulness. Since the highest average weighting relates to meaningfulness, Factor 2 will be labelled likewise.

#### 5.4.2 Reliability of the Questionnaires

The reliability of the questionnaire has been statistically determined using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha respectively. The overall reliability of the questionnaires were assessed (Table 5.24 and Table 5.25).

**Table 5.24**

#### **Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha: Organisational Commitment and its sub-dimensions**

<b>Reliability of Organisational Commitment</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha</b>
Affective Commitment	8	0.155
Continuance Commitment	8	0.654
Normative Commitment	8	0.511
Organisational Commitment	24	0.692

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.24 shows that affective commitment has a low level of reliability as shown by the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (0.155), whereas continuance commitment has a high level of reliability as Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is equal to 0.654. Lastly, normative commitment has an average level of reliability as Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is equal to 0.511. The overall reliability indicates that items in the organisational commitment questionnaire has internal consistency and is reliable.

**Table 5.25**

**Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha: Sense of Coherence and its sub-dimensions**

Reliability of Sense of Coherence	Number of items	Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha
Comprehensibility	5	0.765
Manageability	4	0.768
Meaningfulness	4	0.464
Sense of Coherence	13	0.824

\*\*p value < 0.01

\* p value < 0.05

Table 5.25 shows that meaningfulness has the lowest level of reliability as shown by the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (0.464), whereas comprehensibility and manageability have high levels of reliability as Cronbach's Coefficient Alphas are equal to 0.765 and 0.768 respectively. The overall reliability indicates that items in the sense of coherence questionnaire has internal consistency and is reliable.

**5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presents and interprets the results. Both, tabular and graphical representations are indicated. Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the biographical data. Sense of coherence and organisational commitment were compared on the basis of gender, age, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure. The data was further interpreted using inferential statistics. The hypotheses that were formulated for the study were addressed and partially accepted. However, the results are meaningless until they are compared and contrasted with the findings of other researchers. This will be undertaken in Chapter 6.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 5 offered an insight into the findings of this study. This chapter offers a discussion of the results obtained based on the analysis and interpretation of the data presented in chapter five. The discussions will compare and contrast the results of the current study to those of previous findings. This will reflect meaning to the results of the current study.

#### **6.2 Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment**

The focus is on the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment, that is, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

##### **6.2.1 Continuance Commitment**

In the study, when assessing employees' commitment levels, it was found that the highest score was for continuance commitment (Mean = 4.22). This implies that employees may have some dependence on the organisation which may be financial and, they feel like part of the family. They have a sense of pride to work there and to be associated with it. This is an indication on how employees' value the costs associated with leaving the organisation (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). In a study by Morris and Gilbert (2017), it was found that continuance commitment scores were underpinned by the perception that there are few alternatives for jobs, thus making the cost of leaving the organisation much higher. In their study, Gong *et al.* (2009) deduced that continuance commitment is negatively related to organisational performance.

Further investigation reveals that continuance commitment shares a negative relationship with employee well-being (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Therefore, organisations should avoid building continuance commitment with employees, doing this intentionally may address issues of retention, through bonus (Dockel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). In addition, Weng, McElroy, Morrow and Liu (2010) found that career growth factors, such as promotion and remuneration were related to continuance commitment.

### **6.2.2 Normative Commitment**

When assessing employees' commitment levels, it was found that employees' normative commitment was high (Mean = 3.77). This implies that employees feel morally obliged to remain with the organisation. There are many factors that influence this commitment, it may be fostered through training and the benefits that accompany the job. This refers to the employee's attachment to an organisation due to feelings of obligation, loyalty and duty (McInerney, Ganotice, King, Morin & Marsh, 2015). Normative commitment is dependent on employee job and work relations and indirect remuneration (Weidmann & Konishi, 2017). Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) suggested that there may be greater benefits for employees and employers when normative commitment is experienced as a moral duty. Research conducted by Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011), emphasize that normative commitment and employee engagement have a strong positive relationship. This is explained by employees who are physically, cognitively and emotionally involved in their role would feel obligated to remain with the organisation.

### **6.2.3 Affective Commitment**

In the study, when assessing employees' commitment levels, it was found that employees' affective commitment (Mean = 3.10) was fairly high. This implies that employees desire to stay with the organisation and their emotional attachment and, therefore their affective allegiance is fairly high. Affective commitment indicates the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with an organisation (Meyer, 2015). Affective commitment was discovered to be more predictive of major organisational outcomes such as, turnover and absenteeism (Mercurio, 2015). Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) concluded that ethical behaviour influences affective commitment. Research by Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet (2011) indicated that affective commitment mediates the suggested relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty. Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers and De Lange (2010) emphasize that affective commitment and job satisfaction strengthen with age. Further investigation showed that affective commitment and promotions and performance management and weaken in older ages (Kooij *et al.*, 2010). The study also revealed employee perceptions regarding human resource practices that encourage high commitment, leading to affective commitment and job satisfaction (Kooij *et al.*, 2010).

### **6.3 Sub-dimensions of sense of coherence**

The focus of this study is on a sense of coherence, identified by three sub-dimensions, comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness.

#### **6.3.1 Comprehensibility**

In the study, when assessing employees' sense of coherence levels, it was found that employees' comprehensibility (Mean = 3.55) was high. This indicates that employees understand their roles and feel that they are treated fairly. This signifies an employee's ability to understand structured environmental demands (Naftali *et al.*, 2019). Comprehensibility can be changed through interventions as social relations play a crucial role in shaping comprehensibility (Vastamäki, 2009). Moerane (2009) explains that employees that understood work demands and saw them as manageable and meaningful did not have better performance in comparison to employees with a weak sense of coherence.

#### **6.3.2 Manageability**

In the study, when assessing employees' sense of coherence levels, it was found that employees manageability (Mean = 3.43) was fair. This means that employees feel fairly treated most of the times and often feel in control of their feelings. This indicates the level of understanding an employee has regarding the resources at his or her disposal to reach demands (Naftali *et al.*, 2019). The study by Dębska, Pasek and Wilczek-Rużyczka (2017) found that the longer the tenure of an individual, the lower the manageability of the individual. Research by Super *et al.* (2015) proved that manageability of situations is increased when it is likely to offer opportunities for coping with emotions. Vogt *et al.* (2016), add that if an employee views an environment as well resourced, it strengthens the employee's view of manageability. The study also supports that an individual's sense of coherence is not a fixed personality trait, as it is shaped through experiences, both inside and outside the working life (Vogt *et al.*, 2016).

### **6.3.3 Meaningfulness**

When assessing employees' sense of coherence level, it was found that employees' meaningfulness (Mean = 3.13) was poor when compared to the maximum of 5. This implies that employees are not emotionally attached to the situation of the workplace, employees carried out tasks that are required and not enthusiastically. This depicts an employee's ability to recognize that the demands are worth the resources invested to deal with them (Naftali *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, meaningfulness evaluates whether situations are worthy of commitment, pose a challenge and hold a positive expectation for life (McCuaig & Quennerstedt, 2018). Adèle Bezuidenhout and Cilliers (2011) deduced that meaningfulness plays an important role in moderating burnout levels in employees. In a study conducted by De Villiers (2009) it was established that the relationship between meaningfulness and dedication is related to an individual's motivation for pursuing a certain course of action. Employee engagement in decision making will improve the feeling of membership and influence meaningfulness (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009).

## **6.4 Relationship between the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the study**

The hypotheses for the study were tested, the results were generated, and comparisons and contrasts were made with other scholars.

### **6.4.1 The Relationship between Organisational Commitment and the Sub-dimensions**

The significant relationships between the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment (affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment) are reflected below.

- *Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment*

The current study shows that affective commitment correlates significantly with continuance commitment at the 1% level of significance. In a study conducted by Lumley, Coetzee, Tladinyane, and Ferreira (2011), it was found that there is a significant difference between affective commitment and continuance commitment. The respondents viewed their continuance commitment to be more than affective commitment in nature. Aust (2010), found

that there are positive correlations between affective commitment and continuance commitment. Similarly, Ramakhula-Mabona (2014) found significant correlations between affective commitment and continuance commitment.

- ***Affective Commitment and Normative Commitment***

In this study, there were no significant correlation between affective commitment and normative commitment. However, in a study conducted by Somers (2009) found that individuals who are affective commitment and normative commitment dominant employees were less likely to leave an organisation. Lumley *et al.* (2011) revealed that there are significant differences between normative commitment and affective commitment. Respondents viewed their commitment to be more of the normative commitment than affective commitment in nature. Transformational leadership practices were found to have an indirect effect on an employee's turnover intentions through affective and normative commitment (Ennis, Gong & Okpozo, 2018).

- ***Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment***

In the current study, normative commitment correlates significantly with continuance commitment at the 1% level of significance. In their study, Ledimo and Martins (2014), found that there were significant differences with the respondents perceiving their commitment to be more normative than continuance. This indicates that employees have high normative and continuance commitment, indicating that employees have a high sense of obligation toward their organisation as their values are met (Lumley *et al.*, 2011). Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) explain that the relationship between normative commitment and continuance commitment is modest and the outcome of each concept is generally different. Continuance commitment is primarily focused on the economic costs involved when leaving an organisation, however, employees can incur social costs when they stray from the "right thing to do". This social costs can be implicated in the development of normative commitment (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010).

## 6.4.2 The Relationship between Sense of Coherence and the Sub-dimensions

The significant relationships between the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence are discussed below.

- *Comprehensibility and Manageability*

In the current study, comprehensibility correlates significantly with manageability at the 1% level of significance. In a study conducted by Horn (2014) found that comprehensibility correlates with manageability significantly, whereas Coetzee (2009) indicated that it was difficult to determine whether comprehensibility and manageability are significantly correlated. Adèle Bezuidenhout and Cilliers (2010) made a discovery that comprehensibility and manageability cannot be used as a tool in predicting the occurrence of burnout, whereas meaningfulness can. Comprehensibility has a strong relationship with manageability, this implies that in order for an individual to manage the situation, they need to understand it first. Living in surroundings that are chaotic and uncertain makes it difficult for individuals to think they can manage.

- *Comprehensibility and Meaningfulness*

In the current study, comprehensibility correlates significantly with meaningfulness at the 1% level of significance. Horn (2014) discovered that comprehensibility correlates with meaningfulness significantly, whereas Coetzee (2009) revealed that comprehensibility and meaningfulness significantly correlate with each other. Bergman, Malm, Ljungquist, Berterö and Karlsson (2012) displayed that comprehensibility was the most important sub-dimension of sense of coherence and that meaningfulness increases when comprehensibility increases. Randall (2007) found a moderate relationship between comprehensibility and meaningfulness. With a study by Saravia, Iberico and Yearwood (2014), it was found that comprehensibility and meaningfulness were strongly related to each other. In order to understand the relationship between comprehensibility and meaningfulness, an individual needs to understand the logical sequence of events and how worthy it is of commitment. Individuals with a strong sense of coherence tend to accept failures through comprehensibility and meaningfulness as they put

negative events into perspective and seeing things as a part of a larger picture (Muller & Rothmann, 2009).

- ***Meaningfulness and Manageability***

In the current study, manageability correlates significantly with meaningfulness at the 1% level of significance. Horn (2014), found that manageability significantly correlates with meaningfulness, whereas Coetzee (2009) showed that manageability does not significantly correlates with meaningfulness. Meaningfulness is the emotional component of sense of coherence, it provides the motivation in situations and seeks out new resources in managing the stressor. Therefore meaningfulness can be seen as the tool that ensures the manageability of the stressor. A strong sense of coherence enables individuals to view themselves as capable of shaping life, as events are manageable and see events as challenges and not threats, as the experience is meaningful (Muller & Rothmann, 2009). However, a study conducted by Bergman *et al.* (2012) showed that meaningfulness and manageability do not explain changes in sense of coherence over time.

### **6.4.3 Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence**

In this study, it is evident that continuance commitment correlates significantly with comprehensibility at the 1% level of significance and continuance commitment correlates with meaningfulness significantly at the 5% level of significance. Pillay (2008) found that higher levels of comprehensibility are associated with lower levels of continuance commitment. This indicates that employees that understand their work situation are fully aware of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. In a study conducted by Buisson-Narsai (2005), it was found that there is a negative correlation between continuance commitment and comprehensibility and meaningfulness. This indicates that employees will not remain with the organisation merely because of the costs involved in leaving the organisation. Additionally Pillay (2008), found that comprehensibility holds a negative significant correlation to continue commitment. This implies that employees that scored high on perceiving their world as consistent and organised are able to make cognitive sense of the environment identified less with the cost associated with leaving their employer. Aust (2010) showed that there is no significant relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment.

## 6.5 Biographical Variables

### 6.5.1 Organisational Commitment

The impact of the biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, tenure, highest educational level) on the dimension and sub-dimensions of organisational commitment were assessed.

- *Normative Commitment and Age*

The study shows that there is a significant difference with normative commitment and age at the 5% level of significance. Upon further investigation, it was found that the level of normative commitment of employees increased based on age. Buisson-Narsai (2005) conducted a study that revealed a positive correlation between continuance commitment and age, which showed that the older the respondents, the higher the score of continuance commitment. On the contrary, Motazed, Hassankhani and Ebrahimi (2012), found that there were no significant relationship between affective commitment and age. Dick's (2011) findings were contrary to the current study's finding, as the indication is that age was a critical factor in affective commitment and that young individuals displayed low levels of affective commitment.

- *Continuance Commitment and Gender*

The current study shows that there is a significant difference in the commitment levels of male and female employees regarding continuance commitment at the 5% level of significance. Exploration of this significance showed that staying with the organisation was a necessity for female employees. Contrary to the current study, a study conducted by Motazed *et al.* (2012) showed no significance toward gender on all three sub-dimensions of organisational commitment. Furthermore, a study by Dalgic (2014) displayed an inconsistent relationship between organisational commitment and gender.

- ***Normative Commitment and Tenure***

In the study, it is evident that there is a significant difference in the normative commitment levels and tenure at the 5% level of significance. A study conducted by Guay *et al.* (2016), indicated that tenure can inflate the level of organisational commitment in a study, as employees that have a longer tenure feel more secure in their jobs. Mensah and Adjei (2015) found that the longer an employee remains employed with an organisation, the higher the level of normative commitment, whereas Mguqulwa (2009) found that there were no significant differences between normative commitment and tenure.

### **6.5.2 Sense of Coherence**

The impact of the biographical variables (age, gender, marital status, tenure, highest educational level) on the dimension and sub-dimensions of sense of coherence were assessed.

- ***Meaningfulness and Gender***

The current study showed that there exists a significant difference in the sense of coherence levels of male and female employees regarding meaningfulness at the 5% level of significance. Upon further investigation, females were found to have a higher sense of coherence. In a study conducted by Pillay (2008), it was evident that males have a higher level of comprehensibility and females have higher levels of continuance commitment. On the contrary, Feldman (2011) indicates there was no significant relationship between sense of coherence and gender.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

The relationship between organisational commitment and sense of coherence is complex. This chapter focused on comparing and contrasting the findings of the current study with that of other researchers on the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment. The view of various authors were also documented. It has given insight to the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment, including biographical variables. It has given more understanding to the results of the current study,

which has enabled the researcher to develop recommendations which will be presented in Chapter 7.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The study embarked on exploring the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment. The results of the present study were compared with the study conducted by other researchers. The recommendations follow from the results of the study and various viewpoints emerge to assist companies to focus on employees and, the two valuable components of sense of coherence and organisational commitment. Furthermore, the chapter addresses recommendations for future studies, the limitations and concluding statements.

#### **7.2 Literature review**

Conceptualisation has taken place by utilizing the key components relating to organisational commitment and sense of coherence. An exploration of the organisational commitment components included the sub-scales of affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment; whereas comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness constituted sense of coherence.

Sense of coherence was identified as a cognitive coping tool that can be useful in stressful situations. Sense of coherence demonstrates the extent to which employees' feel that their internal and external environments are acceptable. In addition, employees with a strong sense of coherence are able to make cognitive sense of their workplace, as the environment is clear, structured and predictable. Organisational commitment was viewed as a reflection in an employee's belief in the organisation and the acceptance of the workplace and its culture, amongst others.

#### **7.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

The respondents for this study were limited to employees from a construction company. Future research can focus on surveying employees from similar situations in other industries so that a different set of results can surface.

Further research studies can investigate important aspects, such as:

- Organisations in the construction industry carries out work in many rural areas, therefore translating the questionnaire into the eleven official languages in South Africa can enhance reliability and validity.
- This study focused only on the construction industry and the relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment should be researched in multiple work environments for deeper insights so that a different set of results can emerge.
- This study used a sample of 113, researchers can obtain a much larger sample size if studies are conducted with the many provinces in South Africa.
- This study made use of quantitative research, by examining sense of coherence and organisational commitment through qualitative research can draw more rich data, and results.

#### **7.4 Recommendations based on Results of the Study**

The recommendations below aim to assist key stakeholders in the construction industry, providing insight into improving sense of coherence and organisational commitment. For example, stress affects almost all employees, especially in this industry as employees work at remote sites and shifts and therefore, employers need to be aware of this and help to create a work environment that fosters work life balance. Employers can create an organisational culture that drives results and help employees become high performing individuals in an industry that works tirelessly around timelines.

##### **7.4.1 Recommendations Based on the Key Variables of Organisational Commitment**

The recommendations relating to the key constructs of organisational commitment outline strategies for the improvement of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Considering the emerging factors that surfaced in this study, recommendations highlight some critical points for action:

###### **▪ Continuance Commitment**

Continuance commitment occurs when an individual weighs the pros and cons of leaving an organisation. The following steps can be taken to increase continuance commitment:

- Linking employee goals to that of the organisation and their job description.
  - Job crafting can be utilized to help employees find purpose in their work.
  - Prompt distribution of information relating to change processes and practices will create employee awareness of the implications on their jobs.
  - Employees need to be involved in strategic initiatives to ensure employees feel a part of the organisation.
- **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment is the degree to which an employee is emotionally attached to an organisation and want to stay associated with the organisation. The following methods can be adopted to improve affective commitment:

- The organisation needs to foster a supportive, positive work environment by encouraging employees to partake in work-life balance programs that enable employees to flourish.
- Managers should focus on giving praise to employees achieving targets and goals.
- The organisation can offer psychological support to stressed employees.

▪ **Normative Commitment**

Normative commitment refers to the extent an individual feels morally obligated to stay with an organisation. Normative commitment can be increased by using the following methods:

- Sending employees for training programs that align with job functions to ensure that employees are confident when completing tasks.
- Mentorships and coaching from experienced employees can provide valid suggestions for managing work demands.
- Engagement in addressing performance targets and achievements through frequent discussions with employees.
- Engage with employees on development and career planning options to empower employees and promote performance.

## 7.4.2 Recommendations Based on the Key Variables of Sense of Coherence

The recommendations relating to the key constructs of sense of coherence outline strategies that relate to comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Considering the emerging factors that surfaced in this study, recommendations highlight some critical points for action:

- **Comprehensibility**

Comprehensibility enables a person to environmentally and cognitively understand their environment. The employer can pay attention to:

- Ensuring that employees feel that they are in a familiar environment and situation.
- Communicating effectively, especially when working in teams to ensure that all employees understand their roles in reaching the goal.
- Ensuring that employees are comfortable with the feelings that they have.
- Assuring employees on the status of their employment and the role they play in the organisation.
- Ensuring that employees are treated fairly.

- **Manageability**

The focus with manageability is:

- To supply employees with adequate resources to complete tasks and to cope with a situation.
- Managers being available to give subordinates advice and support when required.
- Employees should be treated fairly and rewarded according to the value of their work contributions.
- Promote positive behaviours with employees, such as rewards on the completion of tasks.

- **Meaningfulness**

Meaningfulness refers to how worthy a challenge is. Meaningfulness can be increased by:

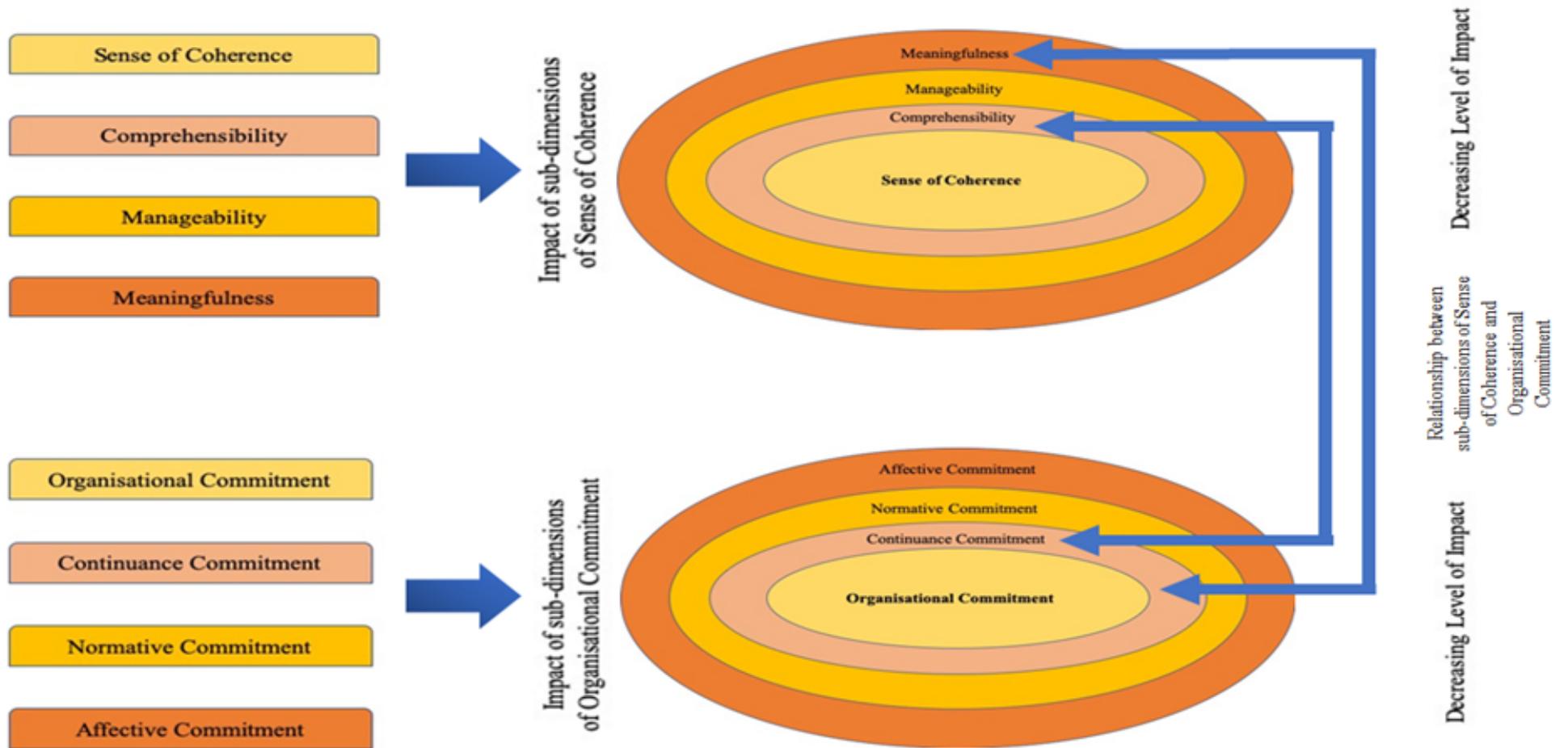
- Ensuring that employees understand how the tasks they are undertaking links to the main objectives of the organisation.
- Investing in finding out employee personal goals and link those to tasks, this can help employees see situations in a more meaningful way.
- Encouraging employees so that they care about situations in their work environment.
- Training must be implemented to help employees' find the meaning in their work in relation to the organisational goals.
- Ensuring that employees feel that there is meaning to things that they engage in.
- Ensuring that employees have pleasure in work that they do.

### **7.4.3 The Relationship between the Sub-dimensions of Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence**

The relationship between sense of coherence and organisational commitment are projected in Figure 7.1. Comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness are the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence, and impact on sense of coherence to varying degrees with comprehensibility having the greatest impact, followed by manageability, as depicted in Figure 7.1. Likewise, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment are the sub-scales for organisational commitment but impact on organisational commitment to varying degrees, with the greatest impact being continuance commitment as depicted in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1

Impact of a Sense of Coherence on Organisational Commitment Based on the Results of the Study



The results of the descriptive analysis indicate the different levels of employee commitment on each of the sub-scales of both sense of coherence and organisational commitment. Figure 7.1 which is based on the means, were used to obtain the levels of commitment regarding sense of coherence and organisational commitment. As one moves from the inner most point of each circular diagram to the outer most points, the mean values decrease.

In this study, respondents also indicated that comprehensibility correlates significantly with continuance commitment. The relationship between continuance commitment and comprehensibility needs to be considered by organisations when exploring change in the work environment as employees see the world as structured, logical and ordered and he/she understands the costs associated with leaving the organisation and how changes would impact the comprehensibility of their surroundings. Furthermore, to help improve comprehensibility with the organisation, management should ensure that roles are defined within teams and that employees are aware of their contributions to the team's successes and this may lead to the improvement of normative commitment.

In addition, meaningfulness correlates significantly but inversely with continuance commitment. As meaningfulness of the workplace situation increases, continuance commitment decreases. This implies that when employees find their jobs lacking meaning, the costs associated with leaving the organisation does not carry much importance. Organisations can use meaningfulness to increase aspects of affective commitment to strengthen the overall organisational commitment of the employees. Employees will find different situations meaningful as personal characteristics and experiences will have to be considered when understanding how to use meaningfulness as a tool to retain employees.

#### **7.4.4 The Relationship between Biographical Variables and Organisational Commitment and Sense of Coherence**

The study indicates that there is a significant difference in the normative commitment dimension of organisational commitment and age. Serious consideration needs to be given by organisations and management so that employees do not move from one company to another considering that age also plays an important role in this regard. As employees get older, their commitment in their personal lives increases. This increase in responsibility makes their jobs

more important. Organisations can use this information, especially when choosing employees that need to go on further skills development and in their succession planning processes.

The study indicates that there is a significant difference in the normative commitment dimension of organisational commitment and tenure. The greater the length of service, the greater the sense of moral obligation of the employee to remain with the organisation. Organisations can use this information to develop stronger bonds with their employees, by rewarding them on the length of service.

The study indicates that there is a significant difference in the continuance commitment dimension of organisational commitment and gender. Gender influences need to be considered by organisations; the underlying assumption was that female employees are more aware of the costs related with leaving the organisation. Organisations can put in place strategies that target males and females individually as there is inconsistency amongst the two groups.

The study indicates that there is a significant difference in the meaningfulness dimension of sense of coherence and gender. Upon further investigation, it was found that females have a higher sense of meaningfulness when compared to males. This can be used to identify the gap between meaningfulness amongst the different genders.

The above recommendations on the key constructs of the study are generated in a graphical representation to indicate the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2

Recommendations based on the Results of the Study

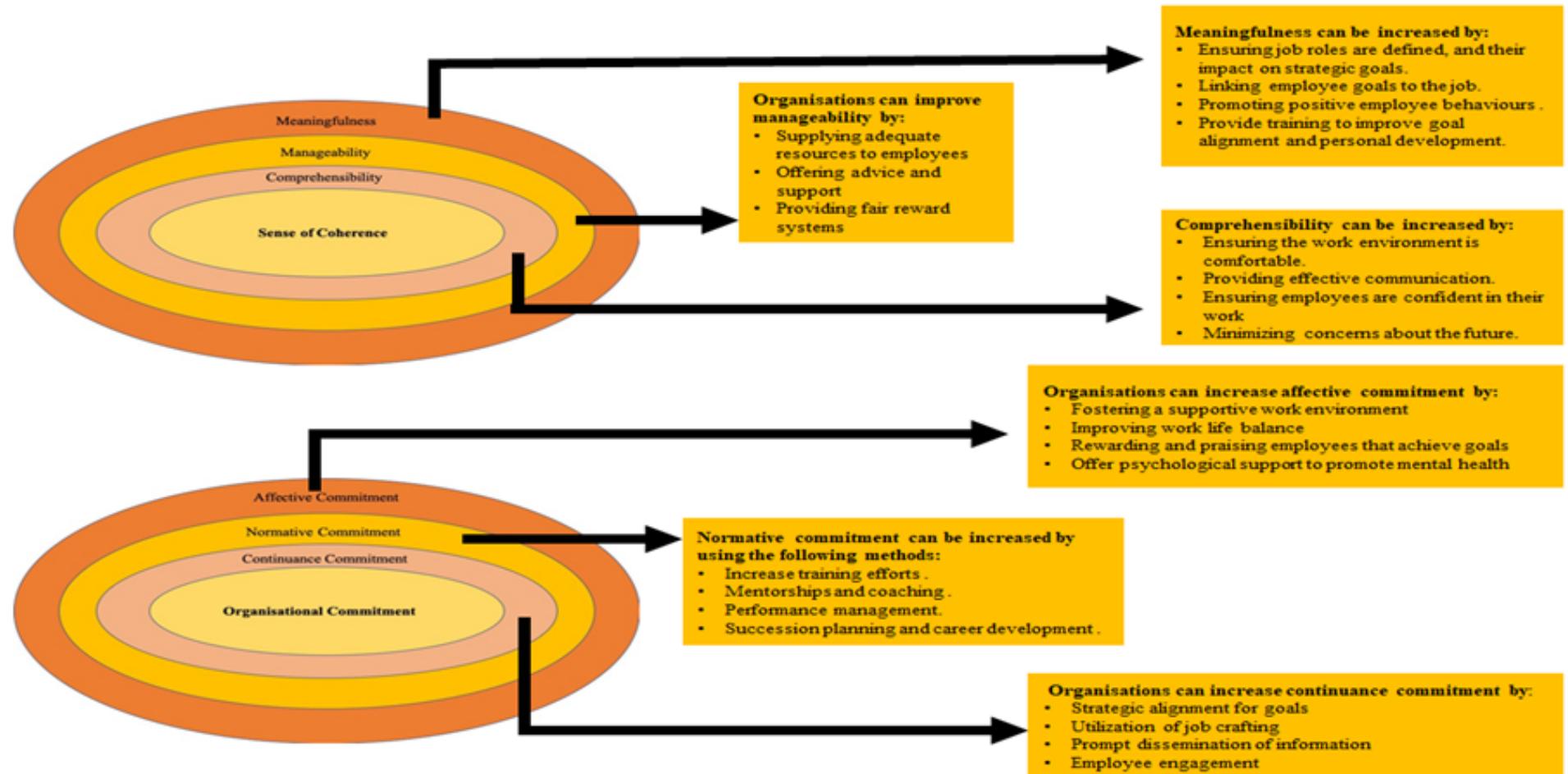


Figure 7.2 projects the recommendations graphically which specify recommendations for the study. The implementation of the strategies recommended will impact both organisational commitment and sense of coherence in various ways. The recommendations will equip organisations with the knowledge to improve the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment and sense of coherence.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

By investigating sense of coherence to determine organisational commitment, it provides a wider perspective on how an individual thinks and, also which dimension of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) is impacted the most by the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness). This study was undertaken to explore the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment. The study focused on employees from the construction industry. The literature reviewed on organisational commitment and sense of coherence presents these two concepts as the foundation of the study and highlights the importance. Organisational commitment is a unique characteristic for employees to possess. Organisations can use organisational commitment as a tool to increase productivity, ensure employees are healthy and happy and most importantly, move toward strategic objectives swiftly. Due to the volatile business environments, employees may become disillusioned as to where they stand with the organisation. The use of sense of coherence to determine organisational commitment, gave a clearer picture on how an individual thinks and which dimension of organisational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) is impacted the most by the sub-dimensions of sense of coherence (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness).

The study found that continuance commitment was significantly correlated with comprehensibility and inversely correlated to meaningfulness. Continuance commitment is the awareness of the costs attached with leaving the organisation and comprehensibility is viewing the environment as structured and ordered. The two variables can be theoretically linked, as an individual who comprehends a situation can understand how leaving the organisation would impact their lives as they know the costs associated with the lack of relationship with the organisation.

Biological variables, such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications and tenure were used to determine the levels of organisational commitment and sense of coherence. The sub-dimensions that were found to be significantly correlated with these biological variables were normative commitment and age, normative commitment and tenure and continuance commitment and gender and meaningfulness and gender.

The analysis of the study provides a holistic perspective on organisational commitment and sense of coherence and demonstrates how organisational commitment is needed in these turbulent times of business. Interesting evidence emerged in the current study. The effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment can be investigated further across various regions, multiple organisations or combined with other constructs.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### SECTION A

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- Kindly complete the details below.
- Your participation in completing this questionnaire is appreciated.
- Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

Please mark an **X** in the appropriate box.

#### 1. Gender

Male		1
Female		2

#### 2. Age

20-30 years		1
31-40 years		2
41-50 years		3
51-60 years		4
+60 years		5

#### 3. Marital Status

Single		1
Married		2
Divorced		3
Widowed		4

#### 4. Highest educational qualification

Matriculation		1
Diploma		2
Degree		3
Postgraduate		4

#### 5. Tenure

1	0-5 years		1
2	6-10 years		2
3	11-15 years		3
4	16-20 years		4
5	21+ years		5

## SECTION B

### Instructions:

The questionnaire is designed to enable the researcher to determine **the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment.**

Please indicate with an **X** the appropriate response to the statements below by using the following scales:

- |                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| (1) strongly disagree          | SD    |
| (2) moderately disagree        | MD    |
| (3) slightly disagree,         | SD    |
| (4) neither disagree nor agree | ND/NA |
| (5) slightly agree             | SA    |
| (6) moderately agree           | MA    |
| (7) strongly agree             | SA    |

### Organisational Commitment Questionnaire

No	Statement	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
		SD	MD	SD	ND / NA	SA	MA	SA
<b>Affective Commitment</b>								
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation							
2	I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside it.							
3	I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.							
4	I think that 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							

No	Statement	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
.		SD	MD	SD	ND / NA	SA	MA	SA
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>								
9	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up							
10	It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.							
11	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.							
12	It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organisation now							
13	Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire							
14	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation							
15	One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives							
16	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							
<b>Normative Commitment</b>								
17	I think that people these days move from company to company too often							
18	I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organisation							
19	Jumping from organisation to organisation does not seem at all unethical to me							
20	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain							

No	Statement	1. SD	2. MD	3. SD	4. ND / NA	5. SA	6. MA	7. SA
21	If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my organisation							
22	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organisation							
23	Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organisation for most of their careers							
24	I do not think that wanting to be a “company man” or “company woman” is sensible anymore							

## Sense of Coherence questionnaire

**Instructions:**

Please indicate with an **X** the appropriate response to the statements below by using the following scales:

- (1) never
- (2) very rarely
- (3) rarely
- (4) occasionally
- (5) very frequently
- (6) always

No.	Statement	1 Never	2 Very Rarely	3 Rarely	4 Occasionally	5 Very Frequently	6 Always
<b>Compressibility</b>							
1	Has it happened in the past that you were surprised by the behaviour of people whom you thought you knew well?						
2	Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?						
3	Do you have very mixed up feelings and ideas?						
4	Does it happen that you experience feelings that you would rather not have to endure?						
5	When certain events occurred, have you generally found that: you overestimated or underestimated their importance – you assessed the situation correctly?						
<b>Manageability</b>							
6	Has it happened that people whom you counted on disappointed you?						

No	Statement	1 Never	2 Very Rarely	3 Rarely	4 Occa- sionally	5 Very Frequently	6 Always
7	Do you have the feeling that you are being treated unfairly?						
8	Many people, even those with strong character, sometimes feel like losers in certain situations. How often have you felt this way in the past?						
9	How often do you having feelings that you are not sure you can control?						
<b>Meaningfulness</b>							
10	Do you have the feeling that you really don't care about what is going on around you?						
11	Until now your life has had: no clear goals – very clear goals and purpose						
12	Doing the things, you do every day is: a source of deep pleasure and satisfaction – a source of pain and boredom?						
13	How often do you have the feeling that there is little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?						

**Thank you for your time and cooperation.**

## Appendix B

# UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL  
For research with human participants

## INFORMED CONSENT

### Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 06/08/2018

Dear Respondent

My name is Jenny Baijnath from the School of Management, Information Technology & Governance (Discipline of HRM), University of KwaZulu-Natal. My contact details, cell number: 079 465 4132 and email address: 212534100@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on organisational commitment amongst all levels of employees in the construction industry. The aim and purpose of this research is to determine the effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment.

You are required to:

- To complete the attached questionnaire
- To complete the informed consent
- The questionnaire will be handed and collected by the researcher.

The duration of your participation is expected to be 15 minutes. The study requires that all participants honestly answer all questions. The study will provide no direct benefits to participants.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSS/1083/017H).

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. There is no penalty for refusal, withdrawal and there will be no benefit or incentives in completing the questionnaire. Furthermore, there will be no costs involved.

Confidentiality will be maintained. The data will be analysed by the researcher. Data will be collected anonymously, and the respondents' names will not appear on the questionnaire. Names will only appear in the declaration of the informed consent which will be detached from the questionnaire before analysis of data. Respondents' will not be identified by names. Data will be stored and kept with the researcher's supervisor.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 079 465 4132 or 212534100@stu.ukzn.ac.za or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

-----

Signature of researcher

## CONSENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled:  
**The effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment** by Jenny Baijnath.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 079 465 4132 or [212534100@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:212534100@stu.ukzn.ac.za) .

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

### **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

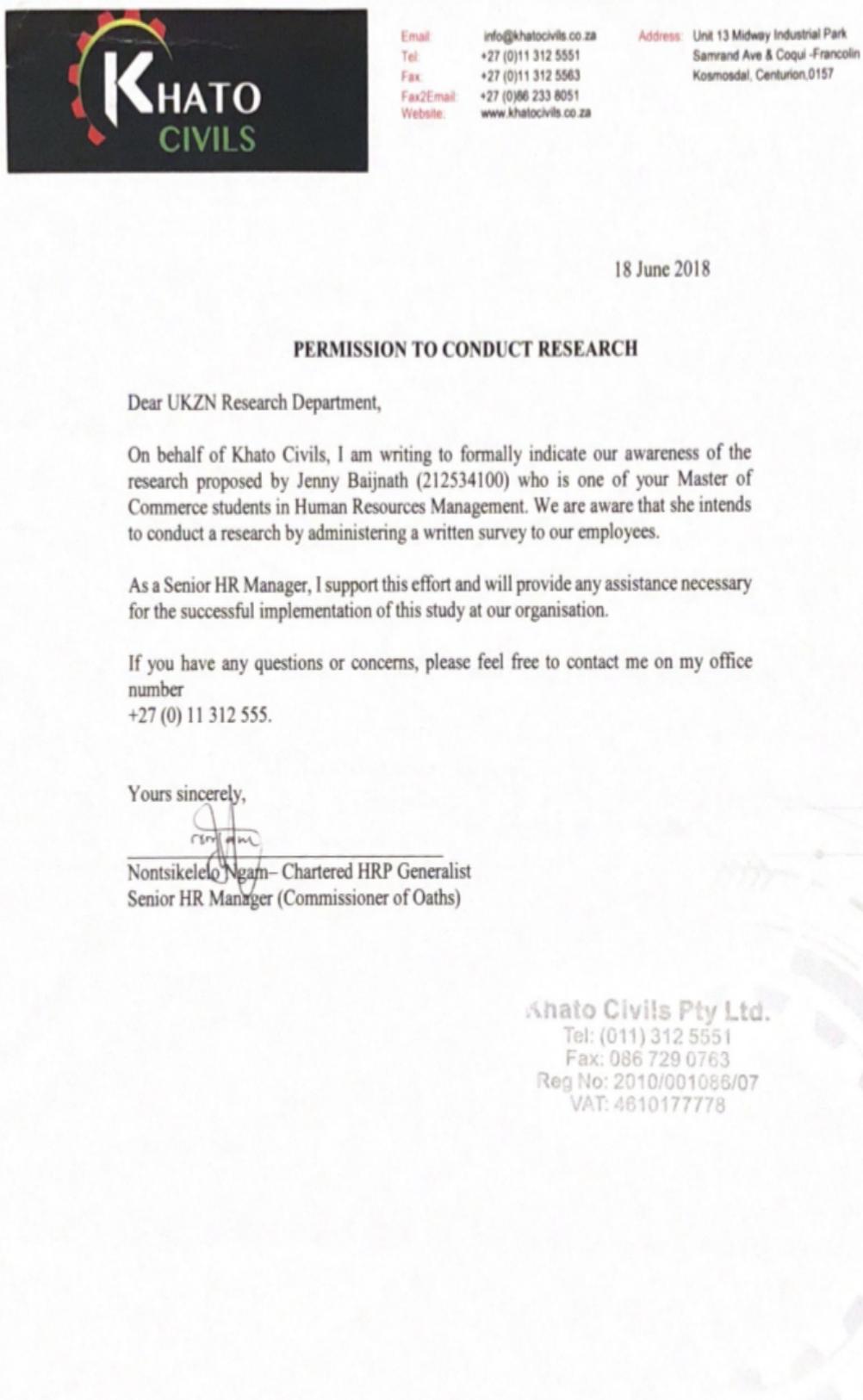
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Translator  
(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C



## Appendix D



10 October 2018

Ms Jenny Baijnath (212534100)  
School of Management, IT & Governance  
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Baijnath,

Protocol reference number: H55/1310/018M

Project title: The effect of a sense of coherence on organisational commitment

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 21 August 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Urmilla Bob  
University Dean of Research

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr P Govender  
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Isabel Martins  
cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair) / Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)  
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## Appendix E

### masters thesis

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

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